

ANALYSIS 7
LONG ON VISION,
SHORT ON MEANS

MONEY 8
NEW DEBT-BASED ETF
WITHIN THIS QUARTER

SPORTS 12
0-5 SERIES WHITEWASH
HURTS: TAYLOR

HYDERABAD, MONDAY FEBRUARY 3, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



KIARA LIKELY TO
PAIR UP WITH
MAHESH AGAIN

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INDIAN-AMERICANS ORGANISE 'SIT-IN SATYAGRAHA' IN US

A group of Indian-Americans organised a 'sit-in Satyagraha' in front of the Mahatma Gandhi statue near the Indian Embassy here, highlighting the need for pluralism in an ancient and heterogeneous society like India. The sit-in-Satyagraha, two days after the 72nd death anniversary of Gandhi, was organised by 'Young India', a policy advocacy group. Speeches from community members were also made in the memory of the Mahatma. The speakers highlighted the need for pluralism in an ancient and heterogeneous society like India.



25% OF AAP NOMINEES, 20% OF BJP DECLARED CRIMINAL CASES

Twenty five per cent of AAP candidates and 20 per cent of BJP contestants in the fray for the February 8 Delhi Assembly polls have declared serious criminal cases against them in their affidavits, according to the Association of Democratic Reforms. Fifteen per cent of Congress candidates also declared serious criminal cases against them, the ADR said. In the Delhi assembly polls, 672 candidates are in the fray, one less than in 2015. The top three richest candidates are from the AAP. They are Dharampal Lakra from Mundka (Rs 292 crore), Parmila Tokas from RK Puram (Rs 80 crore) and Ram Singh Netaji from Badarpur (Rs 80 crore).



WAHEEDA TO BE CONFERRED KISHORE KUMAR SAMMAN

Noted yesteryear actor Waheeda Rehman will be conferred the Madhya Pradesh government's National Kishore Kumar Samman on Tuesday, a state official said in Bhopal. The award, for the year 2018, will be given to Waheeda at her Bandra residence in Mumbai by Madhya Pradesh Culture Minister Vijaylaxmi Sadho, the MP Public Relations Department official said. Rehman, one of Hindi film industry's most successful leading ladies with a string of box office hits and several awards, will turn 82 on Monday.



UP UNIT CHIEF OF ANTARRASHTRIYA HINDU MAHASABHA SHOT DEAD

Uttar Pradesh unit chief of Antarrashtriya Hindu Mahasabha Ranjeet Bachchan was shot dead here on Sunday by unidentified assailants when he was out on a morning walk, police said. Joint Commissioner of Police Naveen Arora said Bachchan's cousin, Aditya Srivastava, was also injured in the incident and their mobile phones were snatched by the attackers, one of whom fired on them. The officer said while the 40-year-old Bachchan died on the spot after being hit by a bullet, Srivastava has received bullet injuries on his left hand.



Owaisi hints at
'jail bhara' over
cases on Modi
critics

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IMPACT OF UNION BUDGET

KCR to cut size of TS Budget further

- Budget 2020-21 likely to be presented in the Assembly in March first week
- Union Budget imposes further cuts in Centre's allocations to Telangana

L VENKAT RAM REDDY
■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, who tore into the Union Budget on Saturday terming it 'disappointing and discriminatory', is understood to have directed the state Finance Department to whittle down further the size of the pruned state budget for 2021-22.

This has been necessitated by the cuts which the Union Budget has imposed in the state's share of central taxes.

The Telangana State Annual Budget for 2021-22 is expected to be presented in the Assembly in the first week of March.

KCR is learnt to have decid-



ed to present the budget in the Assembly himself like last year and launch a scathing attack in the House against the Centre

for reducing allocations to states. Finance minister T Harish Rao will once again be confined to presenting the

KCR is learnt to have decided to present the budget in the Assembly himself like last year and launch a scathing attack in the House against the Centre for reducing allocations to states

budget in the Legislative Council.

The preparatory exercise for the budget is underway and following CM's instructions, officials in the Finance Department are drafting revised budget proposals by imposing heavy cuts in allocations to all departments. The Chief Minister's expectations and calculations relating to TS government's earnings have gone haywire in view of the impacts which certain pro-

posals made in Union Budget will have on the state.

Last year, the Centre announced Rs 19,718 crore in budget towards state's share in central taxes, but revised it to Rs 15,987 crore i.e. a reduction of Rs 3,731 crore.

In the latest Budget, the Centre announced only Rs 16,726 crore towards TS share in central taxes due to cut in the quantum of tax devolution to states from 42% to 41%.

Continued on Page 4

CORONAVIRUS

India suspends e-visa facility for Chinese

PNS ■ BEIJING

India on Sunday temporarily suspended e-visa facility for Chinese travellers and foreigners residing in China in view of the virulent coronavirus that has killed more than 300 people, infected 14,562 others and spread to 25 countries, including India, the US and the UK.

Due to certain current developments, travel to India on e-visas stands temporarily suspended with immediate effect," the Indian Embassy announced here.

This applies to holders of Chinese passports and applicants of other nationalities residing in the People's Republic of China. Holders of already issued e-visas may note that these are no longer valid," the announcement said.

All those who have a compelling reason to visit India



may contact the Embassy of India in Beijing or the Indian consulates in Shanghai or Guangzhou, as well as the Indian Visa Application Centres in these cities," it said.

On Sunday, India airlifted a second batch of 323 stranded Indians and seven Maldivian citizens from coronavirus-hit Wuhan city, taking the total number of people evacuated to 654.

Air India's jumbo B747 made two flights to Wuhan city - the ground zero of the coronavirus epidemic.



Delhi polls:
Cong promises
unemployment
allowance

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TELANGANA OLYMPIC ASSOCIATION ELECTIONS

Jayesh, Jithender to challenge disqualification in court

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Jayesh Ranjan panel on Sunday said that it would resist the February 8 elections to the Telangana Olympic Association. The panel has termed as "null and void" the appointment of Chandrakumar as the returning officer.

The panel has objected to the very idea of Chandrakumar replacing former judge KC Bhanu as the returning officer. With the help of some bigwigs in Delhi, some persons are trying to exercise their authority in Telangana, the panel members alleged.

Meanwhile, the Telangana Handball Association presi-



Jayesh Ranjan



Jithender Reddy

dent Jagannathan Rao clarified that the Olympic Association elections would be held in Telangana at any cost, but not in Delhi. He told media persons here on Sunday that he would approach the court challeng-

ing the appointment of Chandrakumar. Rejection of Jayesh Ranjan's nomination papers was high immoral and Chandrakumar had not given satisfactory reasons till date, he said.

Continued on Page 4

Guilty in Samata case to appeal in HC today

PNS ■ ADILABAD

The three persons who were found guilty in the Samata gang-rape and murder case will go on appeal against the special court's verdict in the High Court of Telangana on Monday. On Saturday, their family members paid the fine of Rs 26,000 imposed on the accused. The Fifth Additional Sessions Court in the Adilabad district was designated as the special court for the trial in the case. The court awarded capital punishment to the accused Sahik Babu, Shaik Shabuddin and Sahik Maqdoom, after convicting them of gang-rape and murder of Samata, a balloon vendor, on November 24.

The trio gang-raped and killed Samata at Yellapatur village of Lingapur mandal in Asifabad district on Nov 24.

KTR invited to Harvard to talk on smart cities

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Minister for IT and Industries KT Rama Rao has been invited to Harvard University to address its 17th India Conference on Smart Cities in India.

The conference will be held on February 15 and 16 in Harvard Business School, Boston. The theme of the conference is "20/20 foresight".

According to observers, KTR speaking on Smart cities would be apt as the subject is linked to IT and innovation and he is helming IT and Municipal Administration departments in Telangana State. The Harvard conference is billed as the biggest conference to be held in the US on Indian aspects.

The conference, being held under the joint aegis of the Harvard University and Harvard Kennedy School, will see the presence of who is who



of prominent sectors of Indian economy. The conference will be attended by not less than 1,000 delegates from India and the US. Most importantly, young professionals, industry leaders and NRI Indians representing various industries, students and professors of various universities will attend the conference and deliberate on the topic extensively.

Other prominent persons invited to the conference are noted economist Aravind Subrahmanyam, Arun Puri, Suresh Prabha, Jayant Sinha and Ritesh Agarwal.

NIRBHAYA CASE Delhi HC reserves order

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Sunday reserved its judgment on the Centre's plea challenging the stay on the execution of four death-row convicts in the 2012 Nirbhaya gangrape and murder case.

Justice Suresh Kait said it will pass an order after all the parties concluded their arguments.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta on Sunday told the Delhi High Court that there is "deliberate, calculated and well thought of design" by Nirbhaya gang-rape and murder case convicts to "frustrate" mandate of law by getting their execution delayed.

Mehta told Justice Suresh Kait that convict Pawan Gupta's move of not filing curative or mercy petition is deliberate, calculated inaction.



Police with the seized sports cars on PVNR Expressway on Sunday

India reports second case of coronavirus from Kerala

PNS ■ KERALA

The second case of novel coronavirus has been reported from Kerala and the patient testing positive has been kept in isolation, officials said on Sunday.

"The patient has tested positive for novel coronavirus and is in isolation in a hospital," the health ministry said.

The patient is stable and is being closely monitored, it said.

However, the Kerala government said the state was awaiting the results from the National Institute of Virology (NIV) at Pune.

"We have been informed telephonically by NIV Pune that there is a possibility of another positive case."

Continued on Page 4

Corona tests in Gandhi from today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Health Etela Rajender on Sunday asked the medical and health department officials to ensure that pulmonologists working in the state are readily available in the backdrop of the accelerating spread of novel coronavirus (nCoV) in various parts of the world.

The Minister asked officials to involve all teaching hospitals in providing treatment to patients suspected to have contracted the virus.

The Gandhi Medical College and Hospital would start conducting tests from Monday, using kits provided by the Centre to detect the virus.

Continued on Page 4



TODAY

ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Magha & Shukla Paksha
Panchangam
Tithi : Navami: 09:18 pm
Nakshatram: Kritika: 01:52 am (Next Day)
Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam: 08:16 am- 09:40 am
Yamagandam: 11:05 am - 12:29 pm
Varjyam: 12:01 pm - 01:44 pm
Gulika: 01:54 pm - 03:19 pm
Good Times: (to start any important work)
Amritkalam: 10:18 pm - 12:01 am
Abhijit Muhurtham: 12:00 pm - 12:52 pm

HYDERABAD WEATHER
Forecast: Clear with periodic clouds
Temp: 29/18
Humidity: 80%
Sunrise: 06:47
Sunset: 06:12
Current Weather Conditions
Updated February 02, 2020 5:00 PM

Sports cars seized for rash driving

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Rajendranagar police on Sunday morning seized two sports cars after the drivers were found to be speeding and driving in a rash manner on the PVNR Expressway.

According to the police, around 9:30 am a Lamborghini, bearing number GA 07 AC 0001, driven by one Pratheek and an Audi car, bearing number TS 09 ET 8055, driven by one Chetan, were proceeding from

Shamshabad towards Mehdiapatnam via the PVNR Expressway when a few road users informed the police control room about rash driving.

Immediately, traffic police personnel from the Rajendra Nagar Police Station chased the vehicles with the help of Hyderabad traffic police personnel and stopped the cars at Sarojini Devi Eye Hospital. The vehicles were later seized and shifted to Rajendra Nagar Police Station.

NRI tax: Not taxing what you earn in Dubai: Nirmala

If you earn rent from a property in India, I have a sovereign right to tax: FM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Sunday clarified that the proposed tax on NRIs will not apply on bonafide Indians working in tax-free foreign countries and is intended to tax only those seeking to escape tax by exploiting their non-resident status.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget for 2020-21 had proposed to tax Non-resident Indians (NRIs) who do not pay taxes in any foreign country.



This provision raised anxiety in the minds of those working in the Gulf region where

countries don't tax income earned by individuals.

First Sitharaman clarified

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget for 2020-21 had proposed to tax Non-resident Indians (NRIs) who do not pay taxes in any foreign country

that only Indian income of NRIs is proposed to be taxed under the new provision, and

later the tax department issued a statement to say that "the new provision is not intended to include in tax net those Indian citizens who are bonafide workers in other countries".

"What we are doing now is that the income of an NRI generated in India will be taxed here. If he's earning something in a jurisdiction where there is no tax, why will I include that into mine that has been generated there," Sitharaman told reporters in Delhi on Sunday.

Continued on Page 4

Competition for shutterbugs as drones invade Jatara space

The Medaram Jatara is known not just for its antiquity, but also the seamless way in which it has preserved most of its pristine elements up to the present. Countless lensmen have captured its evolution over the decades, leaving for posterity freeze frames of the sublimity of the festival and the spiritual solace it provides to millions of devotees. However, today shutterbugs are facing competition, with understandable trepidation; not from their human peers, but drones that have invaded the Jatara space. Representing various media houses in cut-throat competition, these shutterbugs, while clicking the high points of the Jatara festivities every two years, continue to introduce novelty in capturing the installation of Sannakka and Saralamma on the consecrated platform (gadde). The customs and traditions of Adivasis and Jatara organisers are highlighted in line with the technical advances in their cameras. The trendy drones, however, have taken

some of these up-to-date shutterbugs by surprise. These lensmen landed at the venue at least a week in advance to ensure that they get the most vantage points to click pictures or record video. The four-day fair throws up endless possibilities. The difference this time is the entry of drones, which are keyed to perfection when it comes to reaching the spots that are off-limits to shutterbugs. Besides, drones can move overhead, regardless of the multitude. Shutterbugs can't afford to go deep into the crowds and come out unscathed.

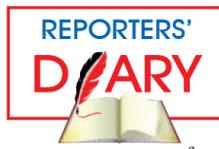
When they heeded the public

For once, dozens of smart cities, including Vizag, felt like kings. Administrators of civic bodies rarely reach out to the public when it comes to addressing civic issues. However, from January 4 to 31, Swachh Survekshan 2020 was conducted and the thrust of it was citizen engagement, whether in the

form of feedback or participation. Hence, GVMC in Vizag tried many attractive means to engage people. Many people were happy that their opinions had been given importance. Volunteers were campaigning door to door at prime locations urging citizens to give their feedback. The annual cleanliness survey has become a fierce battle among the cities to grab the top rank.

Scribes await CM's green light to enter ad hoc Secretariat

Scribes on the Secretariat beat are still facing 'no entry' board at BRKR Bhavan -- the temporary Secretariat. Last time when they approached Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, he assured them that the issue would be resolved soon. Scribes are still wondering how far still is 'soon'. The scribes who used to move freely inside the old Secretariat complex are feeling handicapped due to curbs even at the ad hoc Secretariat. The security personnel



BRKR Bhavan are strict and they do not allow scribes inside the building. Surprisingly, all are allowed, except media men. Scribes are not allowed to have even a cup of tea in BRKR Bhavan. They need to wait outside the BRKR Bhavan gate for news. It is a different matter that some scribes manage to enter BRKR Bhavan as part of common people, without flashing their respective identity cards. That is, BRKR Bhavan is one spot where currently 'press' card does not work as entry pass. Hope things will improve in the near future.

South silent

While people from the entire north

Telangana and its adjacent parts such as Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha are keen on offering prayers and participating in the Medaram Sannakka Saralamma Jatara at Warangal, those in south Telangana in general and Mahabubnagar in particular are laid-back in their attitude towards the Jatara festivities. The Chenchu tribals in Mahabubnagar and its constituent parts as well as the Adivasis tribals elsewhere have never connected to the Jatara. This time too they are keeping aloof from the Jatara. Only urban non-tribals are keen on offering prayers to the tribal deities. This season too they are participating in large numbers. Not only tribals from Mahabubnagar, Nagarkurnool, Wanaparthy, Gadwal and Narayanpet, even those from Nalgonda tribes are staying away from the Jatara.

Industry goes overboard

When praising the government, industry experts often go overboard. This was witnessed at

CREDAI Hyderabad Expo where in every speaker was praising the chief guest and IT Minister K T Rama Rao. Even reporters were wondering whether the industry wanted the encomiums paid to match the manner in which heroes are praised at audio functions of movie release. Evidently this didn't go unnoticed, with KTR himself observing "This show doesn't look like CREDAI event, but like a felicitation event for me as if I have done my job and retiring". He in fact added that in the very first event of CREDAI after formation of Telangana, their woes were heard and immediately addressed by the Chief Minister himself. So, there was nothing much for him to do, KTR conceded. "CM has done everything that needs to be done... Stable government and able leadership is what Telangana has."

Ramulo Ramula by KCR and KTR

If there is anyone who is getting

quick fame, apart from the song Ramulo Ramula - it is Ramulu and his brother, who is working in the Gulf. Ramulu is Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's cook who hails from Siricilla, KTR's constituency. Ramulu's brother works in the Gulf. Recently during a press conference, KCR said that Ramulu's brother was earning just about Rs 10,000-15,000 working in the Gulf; but construction labourers in Hyderabad were earning better in the State. Reference to Ramulu was made again by KTR at CREDAI property show. Sources said that Ramulu's example was not fictional. The sources did not vouch for the amount Ramulu's brother earns. For, what he sends home may not fully reflect what he may be earning.

(Contributed by P V Kondal Rao, Sumit Onka, Kolihetty Venkateshwarlu, Avinash Deepak Puli and Naveena Ghanate)

MEDARAM JATARA

Things are falling apart: Adivasis

PV KONDAL RAO
MULUGU

Although helicopters fly and buses ply to bring lakhs of devotees on the eve of jatara to suffice the need of commuters, the biennial tribal fair of Sannakka Saralamma jatara is unable to bring out the zeal of adivasis.

The pomp and paraphernalia of the administration on the eve of four-day jatara is seen as a major obstacle by the native adivasis of the north Telangana terrain who worship Sannakka and Saralamma as their ancestral deities.

The historic significance of the tribal fair and the customary traditions in the consecrated premises are usually seen on four days of the jatara. But since the adivasi festival has become a tourism attraction for many non tribals, the indigenous tribes are seriously thinking about the 'acharam and apacharam' (customs and uncivil acts) that are practiced during the jatara.

Since the fete attracts more than a crore devotees on the Magha Pournima day, almost all the devotees try to view the bringing of Sannakka to the sanctum sanctorum called consecrated 'Gadde'. There are certain rituals that portray the cleaning and clearing of premises a week before the fes-



tival. Adivasis observe this event with utmost devotion. However some tribal elders feel that their traditions were grossly violated with the presence of non tribal devotees at the venue much before the commencement of the jatara.

Most of the adivasis opine that things are falling apart. "We are keen on preserving our customs and traditions and we feel it customary to preserve our native traditions. But the flocking of non tribals on the tribal terrain in large numbers is slowly turning the fair a non tribal festival," an adivasi opined.

Vattem Sannaiah, a tribal in Vurattam village on the outskirts of Medaram jatara venue feels that the frequenting of devotees was not seen as the symbol of increasing faith among the non tribals about Sannakka Saralamma, but it

has become just a fashion for them. "Had it been according to our customs and traditions the tribal deity duo could have received prayers and offers only on the auspicious four days," Sannaiah quipped.

When asked about why the tribals were feeling let down when such a huge sum of revenue is netted and the share of the income is given to the tribals, an adivasi of Tadwai mandal says that the income might be increasing but the traditions were falling apart.

However, some tribals feel that the increased number of devotees and rush at the jatara was helping the terrain get widespread publicity and at the same time the popularity of their god was also increasing. There are a few differences in opinion among the tribals and non tribals of the region about the jatara.



Tourism Minister launches chopper services for jatara

HYDERABAD: For the convenience of devotees heading to Sannakka Saralamma Jatara in Medaram, Tourism Minister V Srinivas Goud on Sunday has inaugurated the helicopter services from Begumpet airport. As many as six passengers can travel to Medaram from Begumpet and return back by paying Rs.1.60 lakh. GST is charged additionally. Inaugurating the helicopter services Srinivas Goud said that

the state government is also providing an opportunity to those who want to have a bird's-eye view of jatara by paying Rs.2,999. Those who wish to avail these helicopter services can contact 9400399999. Cultural secretary Burra Venkatesam, tourism development corporation chairman Bhupati Reddy, civil aviation director Bharat Reddy, tourism corporation MD Manohar and officials of Tourism Department were present.

Coronavirus pushes investors towards gold

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The declaration of medical emergency by the World Health Organisation (WHO) over novel coronavirus (nCoV) has led the investors towards gold, which is considered as the safe mode in such situations.

Following this panicky situation, gold moved up to close at US dollars 1,591.48 (per oz). Silver also moved up and closed at dollars 18.12. Platinum and palladium followed suit and closed at dollars 961.30 and 2,290.50 respectively.

Immediate reaction of the Union Budget on share market and jewellery market has been certainly negative, though in due course, as people begin to comprehend its finer points, the trend is expected to reverse.

In the foreign exchange market, rupee weakened further during the week. US dollar was exchanged for Rs. 71.50, while Euro and British Pound appreciated and closed at Rs.79.32 and Rs.94.41 respectively. Other leading currencies also appreciated and closed as follows:

Australian Dollar Rs. 47.85,
Canadian Dollar Rs. 54.01, UAE Dirham Rs. 19.47,
Kuwaiti Dinar Rs.235.31, Saudi Riyal Rs.19.06,
Omani Riyal Rs. 185.72,
Singapore Dollar Rs.52.39 and Swiss Franc Rs.74.21.

At home, gold declined even before the announcement of the Budget proposals after the official announcement reducing the monetary limit of Rs.2 lakh to Rs.1 lakh for the purchase of gold for which PAN is mandatory. The traders were demanding lowering of import duty on gold from 12.5 per cent, but that has not come through.

Sensex and Nifty 50 closed at the lower levels of 39,649.54 and 11,642.20 points respectively. Gold MCX closed at Rs.32,657 (per 10 gms), while silver closed at Rs.47,114 (per kg). Copper closed at Rs.426.40 (per kg). The



expressed dissatisfaction over the new directive and felt that it would adversely affect buying during the current marriage season. Standard gold (24 carats) appreciated by Rs.700 and closed at Rs.40,810 (per 10 gms). Ornamental gold moved up in tandem and was quoted in the range of Rs.38,740-38,840. Silver (0.999) declined by Rs. 100 and closed at Rs. 46,900 (per kg).

COMMODITIES

The sentiment in the principal wholesale commodity markets in the Osman gunj, Maharaj gunj, Kishan gunj, Risala Abdullah, Begum Bazar, Mir Alram Mandi, Dilsukhnagar, General Bazar, Monda Market, Kukatpally, Rythu Bazar, Bowenpally and Alwal was from moderate to strong.

The announcement of various farmer-friendly schemes in the Budget has cheered up the agriculture sector.

Vegetables and eggs ruled easy with the common vegetables and NECC eggs remaining at affordable prices.

WEEKLY MARKET REVIEW

local jewellery trade also

CM mourns death of former Minister

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has expressed deep condolences on the demise of former Minister Komma Reddy and former Member of Parliament M Narayana Reddy.



In a message the CM has conveyed heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family members. The Chief Minister

has also issued instructions to the Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar to arrange funeral with official honors' to former Minister Komma Reddy and former Member of Parliament M Narayana Reddy. The Chief Minister asked Chief Secretary to issue instructions accordingly to the collector of Medchal and Nizamabad districts respectively.

'Conservecka' for awareness on energy conservation



PNS ■ WARANGAL

Chemical Engineering Association and IICHe along with NSS, NIT Warangal, in collaboration with Indian Oil Corporation Limited organised a rally to promote awareness regarding the energy conservation and sustainability as a part of Conservecka, a week-long convention which is organised to promote energy conservation awareness amongst the masses.

Prof A Venugopal, dean NIT Warangal (academic)

flagged off the rally at chemical engineering building on Sunday.

Speaking on the occasion, Venugopal said that the energy conservation is inexpensive solution to energy shortage. It is the most environment-friendly alternative to control increased energy production and its related side effects. But unfortunately, conservation of energy is hardly in practice due to the lack of awareness among people. Students and faculty of NIT Warangal participated in the programme.



Armed forces veterans relive old memories

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A large number of armed forces veterans were seen reliving old memories in Forces, with the young blood standing proud of the sacrifices made by these veterans.

Ex-Servicemen Rally was organised by Artillery Centre, Hyderabad under the aegis of Headquarters, Dakshin Bharat Area in Nizamabad on Sunday. Over 600 ex-Servicemen and their dependents took part in the rally, which served as an occasion for bonhomie and bonding with the veterans and resolution of pension related grievances as well as extending CSD facilities to them.

Apart from being a forum for the young to honour valiant veterans, arrangements were also made to provide medical examination for the Ex-Servicemen at the rally.

Lieutenant General PN Rao, AVSM, YSM, SM, General Officer Commanding, Dakshin Bharat Area, Major General RK Singh, General Officer Commanding, Telangana & Andhra Sub Area and others extended their whole hearted support to the veterans.

Provoking Hindus not in the interest of Muslims

HC UPADHYAY
HYDERABAD

Although discerning citizens could read between the lines from day one when the tamasha over CAA-NRC started soon after the passing of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), after gory incidents of Jamia Millia Islamia and Jawaharlal Nehru University, it has become crystal clear that these jihadi-tukde tukde gangs are bent upon unleashing a trail of violence in the otherwise peaceful country.

Anti-national forces, with the overt and covert support of Congress, Left and communal parties like AIMIM, have been indulging in the planned hate campaign. They openly challenge the Hindu might and vow to indulge in bloodbath. True, such extremist elements

are few, but with the modern-day reach of technology, the venom spreads beyond the limits of imagination.

The net result of such unbridled statements by the tamasha managers would be, to say the least, disastrous. Obviously in a country of 80 per cent Hindus, it would be too much to expect that everyone will be as tolerant as we, a handful of self-restrained people are. The firing incident on January 30 in Jamia Millia Islamia University by a juvenile Hindu speaks volumes for this.

Not that the tamasha organisers are not aware about the possible fall-out of their Pakistan-sponsored events, but unfortunately that is precisely what they want. True, the government will leave no stone unturned to put an end to this nuisance; still, it will take further five to ten decades to assuage

They openly challenge the Hindu might and vow to indulge in bloodbath. True, such extremist elements are few, but with the modern-day reach of technology, the venom spreads beyond the limits of imagination

the hurt feelings of Hindus who, for no fault of theirs, are insulted, humiliated, abused, challenged and provoked.

Therefore, it is high time that these fringe communal elements mended their ways in right earnest; otherwise, the Hindus who are driven to the wall may be constrained to pay them back in the same coin. And, that would not be in the interest of large peace-loving Muslim community. For, if Hindus do not declare this country as a Hindu Rashtra, it is not due to their

weakness or incapacity, but it is because of their genuine commitment to the noble ideals of peaceful coexistence and tolerance.

By provoking Hindus, some would certainly eschew these noble principles of peaceful coexistence and tolerance and some of them may even retaliate, thereby consequently throwing the country in a turmoil. Hope, wise counsel will prevail over the tamasha managers and they would wind up the ugly show of so-called peaceful

protests in different parts of the country at once.

Reprieve for Nirbhaya convicts for now

The much-hyped Nirbhaya case is winding up to its logical end. Earlier, February 1 was fixed for the hanging of all four condemned convicts, but on January 31, the Patiyala House Court in New Delhi stayed its earlier order, citing the pendency of mercy petition by a convict before the President.

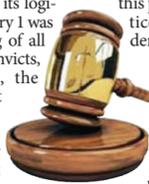
The court rightly observed that a convict has every right to exhaust all available legal remedies, irrespective of the seriousness of his crime. Though there has been a great public resentment over the long delay in punishing the perpetra-

tors of heinous crimes of gang-rape and murder, the legal process as it exists today has to be followed.

Hope, the proposed reforms in criminal laws would address this point too, because justice delayed is justice denied.

Counsel, thou shall not cross limits: SC

How long should the rope be? What should be the limit of discretion that a lawyer could exercise on behalf of his client? When could he by his conduct in the court bind his client? These were the questions dealt with by a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court in Omprakash vs. Suresh Kumar.



LEGAL ROUNDUP

The bench headed by Justice A.M Khanwilkar, in its judgment dated 30th January, held that the unequivocal statement made by a counsel in the Court on behalf of his client can be relied upon and the client will be bound by it.

Justice delayed, but not denied

Contrary to the adage: Justice delayed is justice denied, here is a case where the petitioner has got justice after 42 years with the Bombay High Court allowing the plea for the restoration of the case. The case relates to Smt. Kamala A. Bharani vs. Mohan D. Chulani. The petitioner had filed the case for eviction of tenant on the ground of bona-fide requirement and re-possession of the premises in 1978. After filing of the e-i-c, the matter got delayed considerably.

CRIME CORNER



Lucky draw fraud: 4 held, Rs 12.62 lakh recovered

The South Zone team of Commissioner's Task Force caught four persons who were allegedly cheating public by organising 'lucky draw scheme'. The cops seized Rs. 12.62 lakh cash, computer, printer and other articles from them. Acting on a tip off, the police caught Mohd Abdul Hafeez, 30, Syed Farooq Ali, 38, Syed Ghouse, 36 and Mohd Azhar, 25 all residents of old city. One of their associates Syed Ghulam Dastagir is absconding. The gang was organising a lucky draw racket 'Ever Green Enterprises' at Kalapather, Ansan Road. On 23rd of every month they were organising draw and inviting members to participate in assuring prizes including automobiles and electronic gadgets. "Lured by the offer around 3,000 people became members for a period of 12 months paying a substantial amount of money every month to the firm. To their dismay the members did not get any prizes although they were assured of 15 prizes every month during the draw," said G Chakravarthy, Additional DCP Task Force. On information a team lead by S Raghavendra, Inspector Task Force (south) raided the office and caught the four persons. The amount and other articles were seized from them. The police appealed to the public not to believe in the 'lucky draw' scheme as it is cheating. "The organisers did not have valid documents with them and intentionally they duped the public," said the official.

History sheeter stabbed to death in Old City

A 27-year-old businessman was allegedly murdered by unidentified persons at Kamathipura area of the old city on Saturday night. According to the police, the victim was identified as Syed Imran alias Ammu, against whom a history sheet is maintained at Kamathipura police station. Imran had an argument with two of his acquaintances around 10 pm over some personal issues. "During the argument, the two unidentified persons stabbed Imran with sharp articles inflicting severe injuries to the victim. Subsequently, he was rushed to Osmania General Hospital by the police where he succumbed to injuries at around 3.30 am," said B Anjaiah, ACP Charnimar. The police registered a case under Section 302 (murder) of the IPC and took up the investigation. According to sources, the two persons surrendered before the police on Sunday morning.

'Mastermind' behind gold smuggling racket at large

DRI SLEUTHS SEIZE 31.3 KILOS OF GOLD WORTH RS 13.3 CRORE

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A whopping 31.3 kilos of gold, valued at Rs 13.3 crores, was seized by the officials of Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), Hyderabad, Vijayawada and Nellore units, who intercepted various passengers travelling in trains and buses in the last two days. The operation was conducted based on specific intelligence from sources, said the DRI officials.

In the first instance, on Friday midnight, The DRI Nellore unit intercepted three passengers travelling from Chennai to Warangal in Train No 12969-Jaupur SF Express at Vijayawada railway station. "It was noticed that they were carrying gold in packets concealed inside the bags. The gold is weighing 7,228 grams and valued at Rs 3,05,77,824 in the local market. Three passengers attempting to smuggle the gold have been arrested," said the officials.

In a similar manner, on Saturday, at 1:30 pm, the DRI Vijayawada unit intercepted three passengers travelling from Chennai to Warangal in Train 12615- GT Express at Vijayawada railway station and it was noticed that they were carrying gold in packets concealed inside their clothing.



The total weight was 7,077 grams and was valued at Rs 2,99,38,375 in the local market.

In yet another instance, on Saturday evening at around 7 pm, DRI Hyderabad and Vijayawada units intercepted four passengers travelling to Warangal via Vijayawada by TSRTC bus 9 QE at Kanakadurga Varadhi bus stop in Vijayawada. "On enquiry, the passengers stated that they were traveling from Chennai to Warangal by train, but had got off the train at Kavali Railway Station and took a bus to Ongole and thereafter got on a bus from Ongole to Guntur, and subsequently a bus from Guntur to Warangal via

Vijayawada. The gold is weighing 6,470 grams and valued at Rs 2,73,68,100 in the local market," added the officials.

In the last case, on Sunday 5 am, DRI Hyderabad unit intercepted three passengers travelling from Chennai to Hyderabad by Train no 12603-Chennai-Hyderabad Superfast Express at Secunderabad railway station. It was noticed that they were carrying gold in packets secreted in their secret pockets specially stitched to their trousers. On further enquiry, the passengers admitted that they have carried cash to Chennai, purchased the smuggled gold at Chennai and travelling to Hyderabad for

The offenders stated that the gold bars were actually made out of smuggled foreign gold and they do not have any documents to prove import into the country

delivery at Hyderabad. The gold is weighing 10,709.44 grams and valued at Rs 4,53,00,927 in the local market.

"It was revealed during enquiry that the passengers admitted that they have carried cash to Chennai, purchased the smuggled gold at Chennai and travelling back to Warangal to hand over the same to a mastermind at Warangal. They stated that the gold bars purchased by them were actually made out of smuggled foreign gold and they do not have any documents to prove import into the country. We are working on the leads to trace and nab the mastermind," concluded the officials, adding that in all the above cases, the smuggled gold has been seized under the Customs Act of 1962 and further investigation is in progress.

OUTBREAK OF CORONAVIRUS

Commuters refuse breathalyser in drunk driving checks in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Commuters are citing reasons of coronavirus to evade drunk driving checks, claiming that the virus might spread through the breathalyser, traffic officials said, adding that they refuse to blow into the device.

On Saturday night, traffic officials from Madhapur traffic police station of Cyberabad Police Commissionerate in the city were conducting drunk-driving checks. After checking a few vehicles, a group of youngsters, all on motorbikes, approached the checkpoint. When the traffic personnel asked them to take the test, they refused.

The youngsters said the cops have been using the same device and detachables to conduct check for all motorists passing through the stretch. As a result, if any one of them had an infection, it could spread to other motorists. When the traffic personnel asked them to take the breathalyser test, they refused and started troubling the cops. The officials convinced the drivers to take the test. A couple of them tested positive for blood alcohol,



Commuters are citing reasons of coronavirus to evade drunk driving checks, claiming that the virus might spread through the breathalyser during the drunk driving checks

while others tested negative and were let off.

The traffic officials said drunk drivers have been creating excuses to evade checks ever since the breathalyser test was introduced. However,

they have been conducting routine checks to ensure that no drunk person is behind the wheels, thereby saving the lives of both the drunk drivers and other motorists on the road.

TECH FETE



Students display innovative working models during the three-day national level rural technical festival Antahpragnya 2020 at Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies in Basar

TSRTC serves another notice to Ashwathama

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The TSRTC management served another show cause notice to RTC JAC convener E Ashwathama Reddy on Sunday seeking his explanation within seven days failing which it would be deemed that there is no explanation to offer from him and further action will be initiated against him based on the available evidences on records.

The management stated in its notice that due to absence of Reddy from December 12, much inconvenience is caused in arranging substitute and work is dislocated, besides causing inconvenience to the public which is misconduct in terms of RTC employees Regulation 1963.

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The officials of Rachakonda Police Commissionerate conducted a vaccination drive for over 500 traffic police personnel at City Armed Reserve CAR Police Headquarters in Amberpet on Sunday. The vaccination drive by Rachakonda Police Commissionerate was organized and supported by Bharat Biotech, United Ways of Hyderabad, and Nice Hospital.

The chief guest at the event, Sunpreet Singh, Deputy Commissioner of Police, LB Nagar, flagged off the vaccination drive in the presence of Dr Jalachari Ella, Head-Corporate Strategy, Bharat Biotech, Rekha Srinivasan, CEO, United Way of Hyderabad and Rakhi Nair, programme officer, NICE Foundation.

The purpose of the vaccination drive was solely to help the traffic police who are at risk to spend odd



hours on the field to immunise them against typhoid infection. Despite honest efforts from the department, many times they end up having no access to safe water and food, while on duty. This puts them at risk for typhoid infection.

Sunpreet Singh said, "This is a great initiative, we vaccinated over 500 police staff." Adding, when our policemen are at work they may consume contaminated water or food and are prone to typhoid, I am happy they are now immunised against typhoid infection."

Actor files complaint over online harassment

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A film artist and comedian Kalyani Padala, filed a complaint with the Cybercrimes police of Hyderabad after she was harassed online by miscreants.

According to the complaint, Padala received obscene video clips on her mobile phone, lewd texts, objectionable images and morphed videos of her on the internet. Padala, popularly known as Karate Kalyani, lodged a complaint with the Cybercrimes police against the people who sent her the content and harassed her.

Kalyani said that despite blocking the miscreants, they sent obscene videos from different mobile numbers to her. She also said that her morphed photographs were uploaded on various social media platforms and her normal life has been disrupted for the past few days due to the miscreant's acts.

52 bottles of foreign liquor seized, one arrested

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



A 29-year-old man from Mumbai was arrested during a route watch by the Excise Enforcement team while he was illegally smuggling 52 bottles of foreign liquor in his vehicle, which was supposed to be delivered to a buyer in Jubilee Hills on Sunday.

The route watch was conducted on the road from Tolichowki to Mehdiapatnam and the team seized 52 bottles of foreign liquor, which includes 10 bottles of Johnny

The route watch was conducted on Tolichowki to Mehdiapatnam road. The Excise Enforcement team seized 52 bottles of foreign liquor

Walker Blue Label, 22 bottles of Johnny Walker Double Black and 20 bottles of Johnny Walker Black Label of 1 litre.

The accused was identified as Purohit Sravan, 29, a resident of Kaveri Appartements in Versova road of Andheri East in Mumbai.

"Basing on his information, it was found that Rahul Phadte of Mumbai was supplying foreign liquor to Jitendar Agrawal, who stays in Jubilee Hills. During the course of investigation, it was revealed that Rahul was supplying foreign liquor to needy customers at Hyderabad

and sending the same through private travel buses. Our officials further seized two mobile phones from the accused who confessed that he brought the foreign liquor bottles from Mumbai to Hyderabad to deliver to Jitendar Agrawal of Jubilee Hills as per instructions of Rahul in a private travel bus," said the Assistant Excise Superintendent of Hyderabad Enforcement, N Anjireddy.

Further, the team handed over contraband, case papers and accused person to Golconda Police for further action.



Drunk driver runs over a puppy, assaults man

NAVEEN KUMAR ■ HYDERABAD

A criminal case was booked against drunk drivers who ran over a puppy and further assaulted a man who asked them to help and rescue the injured animal.

"I wasn't even worried when I killed a human, you're botherred about the dog?" said the drunk driver when stopped, claims the man who approached the Saroor Nagar police to register a complaint.

Speaking to this newspaper, Sai Teja Peddineni, 27, a Defense tech entrepreneur, who chased the car and confronted the men, said that they picked up a fight and assaulted him before fleeing the place.

"The incident occurred on Saturday night near Kranti Colony when I noticed a car running over a puppy sleeping on the roadside, gravely injuring it. I then followed the car and stopped them to ask for help by taking the animal to give medical attention when they picked up a fight and ganged up on me," the complainant said.

"While the driver of the car choked me, the other one pushed me and further started threatening me that they won't let me leave the place. Both were drunk," he said.

"It took about 10 minutes for the altercation to dissolve, following which I called dial 100 and explained them the whole issue," said the man, adding that he was asked by the police to register a complaint and action will be taken.

Accordingly, following the complaint, cases were booked under sections 279, 506 IPC and sec 11(1)4a of Prevention of Cruelty to Animal Act and section 84 of MV Act.

The condition of the puppy is said to be critical as it is in a paraplegic state. "The police told me that the car is being traced and by Monday, they will be apprehending the man" added Teja.

The vehicle is registered to Ashish Reddy Alva and has pending challans of Rs 2,570 from 2016.

It is yet to be ascertained whether it was Ashish Reddy Alva driving the car.

Police registered a case and started investigation.

Prez inaugurates world's largest meditation centre

RAMNATH KOVIND ADDRESSES 40,000 PRACTITIONERS OF HEARTFULNESS ON SUNDAY

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Kanha Shantivanam the global headquarters of Heartfulness was inaugurated by the President of India Ramnath Kovind. Kovind an avid Heartfulness practitioner addressed 40,000 audience at the recently inaugurated meditation centre which is the world's largest and located in Kanha Shantivanam.

Commenting on the inauguration Daaji Guide of Heartfulness said, "The readiness of Kanha Shantivanam as a seat of transformation through meditation is testimony to human endurance. Over five years Kanha Shantivanam's evolution into a magnificent wellness destination complete with the world's largest meditation centre was possible due to relentless efforts of thousands of our practitioners. Our work to ensure that Heartfulness remains Timeless has just begun."

The 1400-acre Kanha Shantivanam along with iconic meditation centre has evolved



into an epicentre of human transformation. This once barren, rocky, dry and drought prone area is now a green oasis with half million trees nurtured to create a microclimate in the region. It is a completely self-sufficient and

sustainable ecosystem designed for highest quality of habitation - be it human, flora or fauna. Kanha Shantivanam has another milestone for the President to commemorate - the plantation of the half a millionth tree at the pristine Kanha

Shantivanam. The tree that was planted was Diospyros Candolleana - Paniced Ebony, an IUCN redlisted threatened species.

Kovind said, "Inner self through development practices of Sahaj Marg and Heartfulness

President plants the half millionth tree at the global Headquarters of Heartfulness. He had also planted the 1,00,000 tree in the year 2017

learning will help in bringing about individual and collective transformation across the globe. It is reassuring to see that Shri Ram Chandra Mission is continuously expanding its outreach for the benefit of world community. Efforts of the mission in developing Kanha Shantivanam an impressive headquarters of the Heartfulness peace movement deserves special commendation."

As the global headquarters of Heartfulness Kanha Shantivanam is attracting practitioners

across the globe each year and to mark the 75th year of its formation the ongoing celebrations including the visit of President of India will see 1.20 lakh visitors over a period of 13 days from January 28 to February 9, 2020.

Three 3-day sessions spanning January 28-30, February 1-3 and February 7-9, 2020 will host 1.2 lakh practitioners who will part of mass meditation activity to commemorate the milestone of 75 years. Anna Hazare will address the practitioners on February 8.

The Heartfulness facility is spread over 1400 acres and is a self-sustained ecosystem that can host 40,000 plus people, self-sustained kitchen that can make food 1,00,000 people a day, an upcoming 350 bed Ayush medical facility, nursery of 6 lakh saplings several lakh trees planted over last four years, Heartfulness Learning Centre to catch young minds at an early age, water harvesting systems amongst many more.

Union Minister lashes out at CM for criticising Centre

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Union Minister of state for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy has lashed at Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao saying that the latter is making criticism without knowing the facts.

The Centre also has problems similar to states, Kishan Reddy said praising the Union Budget as farmers' Budget. He said that the Centre had taken up several welfare schemes and has allotted funds equally and described the budget as a good one. There is no truth in the allegation that the Centre is showing discrimination towards some states, he said while questioning that whom will centre release funds instead of states. Making it clear that the centre never stated that it will accord national status to Kaleswaram project, Kishan Reddy said that the centre allotted funds to Telangana state in its budget.

Kishan Reddy found fault with the free schemes introducing by the states and alleged that political leaders were misguiding the people aiming to become Chief Minister. Targeting Delhi elections, Kishan Reddy said that the people were not asking free schemes. The people were wishing to have infrastructure, construction of houses, pollution-free Delhi, he said.

Kishan Reddy had conduct-



Kishan Reddy alleged that political leaders were misguiding the people aiming to become Chief Minister. He alleged that the Congress hatched a conspiracy to defeat BJP in Delhi elections

ed a cordial meeting with the Telugu people living in Delhi at his residence at Delhi on Sunday. While speaking to the media on the occasion, Kishan Reddy exuded confidence that BJP would come to

power in Delhi this time winning upcoming Assembly elections.

"The conditions were changed now in Delhi when compared with the past. The Delhi people are wishing to

'Go AAP' and 'Come BJP'. Aam Admi Party (AAP) is misusing the funds released by the centre. AAP is ruling Delhi joining hands with anti-nationals and separatists. Kejriwal is influencing the people to stage dharnas at Shahinbhag," he alleged.

Kishan Reddy alleged that the Congress hatched a conspiracy to defeat BJP in Delhi elections. The Congress withdrawn from elections to ensure the victory of AAP in Delhi, he said alleging that Congress is wishing AAP to come to power in Delhi.

Cong criticises Centre for cut in TS share in Budget

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Accusing the BJP Government at the Centre of doing injustice to Telangana State in the Union Budget, former minister and ex-leader of Opposition in Legislative Council Mohammed Ali Shabbir on Sunday demanded that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao take an all party delegation to New Delhi to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi over state's financial expectations with the Centre in the year 2020-21.

Shabbir Ali, in a media statement, said that the BJP Government has been neglecting Telangana ever since it came to power in 2014. He said Telangana neither benefited from any flagship scheme of Central government nor it received any Central funding for state projects.

He said the Centre has drastically reduced the state's share in Central Taxes and avoided releasing the dues. "In 2019-20 budget, Telangana was promised Rs 19,718 crore as its share in Central taxes.



Mohammed Ali Shabbir demanded that the state government release a white paper on total funds released by the Centre for Telangana since 2014

In the Revised Estimates, it has been reduced to Rs 15,987 crore. This was a straight reduction of Rs 3,731 crore or almost 18.9 per cent. Further, for 2020-21 only Rs 16,726 crore has been earmarked. The Central government owes an explanation on why Telangana is being discriminated," he said.

The Congress leader also blamed the TRS government for not pressuring the Centre over fulfillment of promises made in the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act and other benefits. "Not a single project

from Telangana received Central funding during the last six years. Going by

the present attitude of BJP government, it is most unlikely that the promises which were made with Telangana will be fulfilled. TRS government is equally responsible for the present situation as it failed to make effective and timely representations with the Centre. In fact, Chief

Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao focussed more on increasing the borrowing limits for Telangana than seeking direct funding from the Centre.

Corona tests in Gandhi from today

Continued from page 1

It would take at least 10 hours to determine whether a patient tested positive or negative for the virus.

So far, not a single case of nCoV has been registered across Telangana. He said that he had been appealing to all travelers/returnees to the city from China to visit Fever, Gandhi and Chest hospitals.

Meanwhile, all arrangements have been made to treat patients admitted to these hospitals. Necessary staff and equipment like masks and sanitizers have been made available. He said that the state government would adhere to the Central Government's directions in diagnosing the virus.

The medical and health department was fully geared up to meet any health emergency. The situation was being monitored on hourly basis, he said and urged people not to be frightened.

India reports second case of Coronavirus...

Continued from page 1

But since there is a possibility we have to be extremely vigilant. We are yet to receive the results.

The suspected case is of a student of Wuhan University," state Health Minister K K Shailaja told the media at Kollam."

She said the student, who had returned from China on January 24, and currently at an isolation ward in Alappuzha Medical College Hospital, was being closely monitored and the condition of the patient is stable.

"The patient has minor symptoms. But we are not taking any chances. We have taken proper precautions even though we have not received any confirmation. We expect the results by evening," she said.

India's first novel coronavirus case in India was reported from Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala with a student testing positive.

Till date, 1,793 people who traveled from coronavirus affected countries have been identified and placed under surveillance in Kerala.

Of this, 70 people have been admitted in selected isolation facilities and 1723 are under home isolation, a medical bulletin said.

Another 4,562 new suspected cases were reported on Saturday, said the commission. In all 315 patients became seriously ill, and 85 people were discharged from hospital after recovery

Meanwhile, Chinese health authorities on Sunday said it received reports of 2,590 new confirmed cases of novel coronavirus infection and 45 deaths on Saturday from 31 provincial-level regions and the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps.

All the deaths are in Hubei Province, according to China's National Health Commission, Xinhua news agency reported.

Another 4,562 new suspected cases were reported on Saturday, said the commission.

On Saturday, 315 patients became seriously ill, and 85 people were discharged from hospital after recovery.

KCR to cut size of TS...

Continued from page 1

KCR had sought a vote-on-account for 2019-20 in February 2019 before the general election with an outlay of Rs 1.82 lakh crore.

After the General Election, KCR presented a full-fledged budget in September 2019, but sprang a big surprise by cutting the budget size by 20 per cent to Rs 1.46 lakh crore citing recession and cut in central allocations.

In March 2015, KCR had estimated that the budget size of Telangana for the next five years would be Rs. 6 lakh crore on the basis of its economic growth rate, permissible FRBM levels, and other parameters.

But he is now forced to pare down the budget further due to dwindling government earnings on account of recession, unexpected cuts imposed by Centre in taxes, and non-release of grants as promised.

BJP is promoting divisive politics for votes, says KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TRS working president and IT Minister KT Rama Rao launched a blistering attack against the BJP on Sunday for promoting divisive politics in the country and discriminating Telangana on all fronts. "The BJP, instead of taking decisive and concrete steps to benefit the people and focus on development, is only trying to divide them with their 'India-Pakistan, Hindu-Muslim' chants to garner votes," he said.

Addressing TDP leaders from Shamshabad who joined the TRS at Telangana Bhavan, KTR pointed out that the BJP government which has presented six Union budgets so far, had only meted out injustice to Telangana despite the State's



significant contribution to the nation's economy. "Except for devolution of funds as mandated in the Constitution of India, the BJP government did not allocate even single paise to the state. But the BJP leaders in the

'Impose ban on liquor in Sangareddy'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congress MLA from Sangareddy T Jagga Reddy has decided to take up a movement demanding the state government to prohibit liquor in his constituency.

Jagga Reddy said that the people of his constituency were demanding for a liquor ban. He informed that he will launch his anti-liquor movement at beer factories located in his constituency.

Jagga Reddy said that he is preparing an action plan for proposed liquor ban movement.

The Congress MLA said that he will not speak anything about politics for the three months.

"I will bring out the problems of the people in Sangareddy constituency for the coming three months. Wine shops in Sangareddy constituency are selling liquor indiscriminately. Women are opposing liquor sales. Intoxication will turn the human being as a monster," the minister said.

Owaisi hints at 'jail bharo' over slapping of cases on Modi critics

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief Asaduddin Owaisi on Sunday said that a long battle over Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 was ahead and urged secular minds to be ready for the fight.

"Let me tell you that our battle is with the forces, which have spent all their lives nurtured with the ideology of RSS and Hindutva," he said at a women's conference protesting against the contentious CAA organised by the Muslim United Action Committee at Darul Uloom in Shivrampally.

In regard to the recent spate of firing incidents in Delhi, Asaduddin said, "It is surprising that a Minister at public meeting shouts 'deshe ke gaddaaro ko goli marro', slogans and within hours persons start firing at people. I salute Jamia University student Shadab who took the bullet fired by a person called Gopal," he said.

He questioned the action and response of the Delhi Police and added that they

"If we have to make more sacrifices we will do it. In a democratic way, we will fight and defeat them"
— ASADUDDIN OWAIISI, AIMIM chief

behaved in an unprofessional manner while handling the two gunmen who shot at people at Jamia and Shaheen Bagh last week.

Taking at a dig at the sedition case against a school teacher and parents for staging a play at a school, the MIM chief said, "Bhartiya Janata Party-led government is trying to intimidate Muslims by invoking 'sedition' law. Soon we will be forced to announce a 'jail bharo' programme. Let them fill the jail. Capacity of Indian jails is only three lakh," he said.

He said the MIM is with the Jamia Millia Islamic University, Aligarh Muslim

University and students of all the other universities who are fighting against communal forces.

He reiterated that the on-going agitation is to save the constitution of the country and secular fabric of the country. "If we have to make more sacrifices we will do it. In a democratic way, we will fight and defeat them," he said.

Another meeting was organised by the Alliance against CAA/NRC & NPR at Darul ul Huda in Pahadishareef on Sunday morning. Participants at the meeting demanded the government rescind the CAA, NRC and others on hold.



BON VOIAGE



Government Tamilisai Soundararajan and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao give send-off to President Ram Nath Kovind at Begumpet Airport on Sunday

Jayesh, Jitender to challenge...

Continued from page 1

In the elections, which became the bone of contention between the TRS and the BJP, Telangana IT Industries Department principal secretary Jayesh Ranjan and former MP and BJP leader Jitender Reddy's nominations were rejected, upsetting all calculations.

Only three persons filed their nomination papers. But the nomination papers of two persons were rejected. The panel found the nomination of K Ranga Rao, who represented the Olympic Association of Telangana, was intact.

'NRI tax: Not taxing what you earn in Dubai'

Continued from page 1

She said Indian earnings of NRIs such as rental income from property in the country is what was intended to be taxed by way of the new provision.

"Whereas if you have rent out of it, but because you are living there, you carry this rent into your income there and pay no tax there, pay no tax here... since the property is in India, I have got a sovereign right to tax," she said in a post Budget interaction with media.

"I am not taxing what you're earning in Dubai but that property which is giving you rent here, you may be an NRI, you may be living there but that is revenue being generated here for you. So, that's the issue."

The Union Budget for 2020-21 presented on Saturday had tightened the screws on those seeking to escape tax by exploiting their non-resident status. While earlier it was possible to be classified as a non-resident by staying out of the country for 183 days or about six months in a year, this has now been, in effect, enhanced to 245 days.

Clarification issued to ease confusion

Revenue Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey said the new

rule was "an anti-abuse provision planned to plug loopholes in the system and not intended to tax income earned by those working overseas".

He said the wording in the Budget document may have created confusion and so a clarification has been issued now.

Pandey said Indians working in the Middle East, as well as those in Merchant Navy, will not be taxed using the new provision.

"Somebody who is a citizen of India and sitting in a tax haven and not paying taxes then he has to pay tax," he said. "By issuing clarification, we have kept them (workers in the Middle East) out. Same for merchant navy because their income is also not arising out of India."

Asked if raising the duration of overseas stay to qualify for NRI status would not deter Indians from making visits home, he said: "These are anti-abuse provisions. If someone faces any difficulty because of this, we will see what can be done. The policy that you make, you have to see that a larger section of people is benefited because of this. If he is a non-resident, he has to live substantially out of India. Now, substantially out of India means what? Earlier it was 50:50. Now we have made



2/3rd: 1/3rd." He said the new provision was brought in because people were taking advantage of the existing one. "These are the anti-abuse provisions, and not to inconvenience any genuine persons."

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) in a statement said the new provision is not intended to include those Indian citizens in the taxation net, who are bonafide workers in other countries.

An "Indian citizen shall be deemed to be resident in India if he is not liable to be taxed in any country or jurisdiction. This is an anti-abuse provision since it is noticed that some Indian citizens shift their stay in low or no tax jurisdictions to avoid payment of tax in India," it said.

"The new provision is not intended to include in tax net

those Indian citizens who are bonafide workers in other countries," it said.

It stated that it was not correct to say that those Indians who are bonafide workers in other countries, including in the Middle East, and who are not liable to tax in these countries will be taxed in India on the income that they have earned there.

"In order to avoid any misinterpretation, it is clarified that in case of an Indian citizen who becomes deemed resident of India under this proposed provision, income earned outside India by him shall not be taxed in India unless it is derived from an Indian business or profession. Necessary clarification, if required, shall be incorporated in the relevant provision of the law," it added.

At present, if an Indian or a person of Indian origin managed his stay in India such that he remained a non-resident in perpetuity, he was not liable to pay tax on his global income in India.

The Union Budget has proposed to introduce a deeming provision that every Indian citizen who is not liable to tax in any other country, by virtue of his domicile or residence, shall be deemed as a resident of India. Consequently, his global income would be taxable in India.

Senior TDP leader Ganesh Guptha along with eight newly elected councillors joined TRS. Rama Rao welcomed them into the party fold and assured all support in their efforts to serve people of Shamshabad

criticise Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao unnecessarily and instead, use their influence, if they had any, to get funds from the Centre for State projects like Kaleswaram Lift Irrigation Scheme. He pointed out that the BJP government at the Centre did not release funds for Mission Bhagiratha and Mission Kakatiya despite recommendations from NITI Aayog constituted by it.

Stating that the BJP won four MP seats by fluke as was evident from the fact that it could not stand up to the TRS wave in any other election, KTR said the nexus between Congress and BJP was out in the open during the municipal elections where they supported each other to keep TRS away from coming to power in three municipalities. "People have lost faith in Congress across the nation and it is time that the

grand old party gets into introspection to correct its mistakes and connect with the people," he said.

"The Chief Minister's leadership is the only protective shield for people of Telangana State," he added.

Senior TDP leader Ganesh Guptha along with eight newly elected councillors in Shamshabad municipality, joined TRS. Rama Rao welcomed them into the party fold and assured all support in their efforts to serve people of Shamshabad. He promised to extend Hyderabad Metro Rail upto Shamshabad as part of the airport corridor.

Chevella MP G Ranjith Reddy, MLAs Prakash Goud, A Jeevan Reddy, MLC M Srinivas Reddy and other senior leaders were also present.

SHORT READS



Karnataka cabinet expansion on February 6: CM

BENGALURU: Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Sunday said that the cabinet expansion would take place on February 6, with 13 MLAs taking oath of office. "The cabinet expansion will take place on February 6 with the oath-taking ceremony at the Raj Bhavan at 10.30 AM," he told reporters here. Thirteen MLAs, including 10 who had joined BJP from parties, including Congress and the JD(S), will take oath, he said. The cabinet expansion is on the cards for nearly two months ever since the BJP won the maximum number of seats in the December 5 2019 bypolls and got a majority in the Karnataka assembly.

MIA bomb case: Suspect remanded to 14 days' judicial custody

MANGALURU: A local court on Saturday remanded Aditya Rao, the suspect in the Mangaluru International Airport (MIA) bomb case, to two weeks judicial custody. Rao was produced before the Sixth Judicial First Class Magistrate Court after the 10-day police custody expired. Rao has been in police custody since January 22 after he surrendered before the police in Bengaluru on January 21 and was later brought here. He had allegedly planted an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) at the airport on January 20 triggering panic and later made a hoax call to the airport terminal that a bomb had been planted in an IndiGo flight. During the last ten days, police took the accused to several places in the city and Udipi where he had frequented in the recent past.

AAP demands campaign ban on Adityanath in Delhi

NEW DELHI: The Aam Aadmi Party on Sunday demanded the Election Commission to ban Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath from campaigning in the national capital over his alleged provocative speeches. AAP leader Sanjay Singh also demanded an FIR against him for his remarks. Singh told a press conference here that it has been 48 hours since the AAP asked the Election Commission time to meet them but it has not been granted. "If the EC does not give us time, we will stage a sit-in in front of the ECI office on Monday," Singh said.

India sends aid to cyclone-hit Madagascar

NEW DELHI: India has sent relief supplies to cyclone-hit Madagascar using its naval ship INS Airavat, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Sunday. In a tweet, Jaishankar said India was an early responder to the natural disaster that hit the island nation. "INS Airavat delivers relief supplies to cyclone-hit #Madagascar. #SAGAR Policy at work - India as an early responder," he said in a tweet. Madagascar has been hit by a cyclone and there has been heavy flooding and landslides since last month, causing loss of lives and displacement of a number of people. According to reports, more than 92,000 people have been affected.

2 CRPF jawans, 7 civilians injured in grenade attack

SRINAGAR: Two security force jawans and seven civilians were injured in a grenade attack by militants on CRPF personnel in Lal Chowk area of the city on Sunday, police said. The militants hurled a grenade on the CRPF personnel posted on duty near Pratap Park in busy Lal Chowk area of the city, a police official said. The nine injured persons were shifted to a hospital, he said. The loud explosion caused panic among the people, especially those who had come to the weekly flea market, also known as Sunday market, the official said. Security forces have cordoned off the area, he added.

DELHI POLLS: CONG PROMISES UNEMPLOYMENT ALLOWANCE

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday promised to implement unemployment allowance of Rs 5,000-7,500 per month, cash-back schemes for water and power consumers and challenge the contentious CAA in the Supreme Court if voted to power in Delhi.

The manifesto presented by Delhi Congress chief Subhash Chopra also committed to spend 25 per cent budget each year on fighting pollution and improving transport facilities. The party has promised to provide free electricity up to 300 units per month.

He said the Congress will open 100 Indira Canteens in the city to give subsidised meals at Rs 15, Chopra said.

An unemployment allowance of Rs 5,000 for graduates and Rs 7,500 for post graduates will be provided monthly under the Yuva



Swabhiman Yojna, he said. The announcements come in the backdrop of promises and initiatives by its rivals AAP and BJP.

The Congress will challenge the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in the Supreme Court and demand the Centre to withdraw the law. The party will also not implement the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the exist-

ing form of the National Population Register (NPR), if voted to power in Delhi.

The manifesto, titled 'Aisi Hogi Hamari Delhi', was released at the Delhi Congress office in presence of senior leaders Anand Sharma, manifesto committee chairman Ajay Maken, Rajiv Gowda, Sharmishtha Mukherjee among others.

"We will get a strong Lokpal

in first six months," Chopra said. The Congress will launch flagship cashback schemes for power and water supply to benefit consumers saving these resources.

If voted to power, the Congress will launch Sheila Pension Yojna under which Rs 5,000 per month will be provided to senior citizens, persons with disabilities and transgender.

Arrested militant ferried Jaish terrorists in December 2019 too: Officials

PNS ■ JAMMU/SRINAGAR

Sameer Dar, the cousin of the February 2019 Pulwama suicide bomber Adil Dar, has told interrogators that he had dropped a batch of terrorists to the Valley in December last year, officials said here on Sunday, two days after the former was arrested while attempting to ferry Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists to Kashmir.

Sameer was nabbed by police when he was trying to escape from Nagrota on Friday after Jaish terrorists opened fire on security forces.

Hailing from Kakpora area of Pulwama district in South Kashmir, Sameer confessed he had been successful in ferrying JeM terrorists to the Kashmir Valley last year and dropped them to Pulwama, the officials said.

Sameer claimed he was not aware about their whereabouts since but told the interrogators that they were carrying large ammunition including 'steel core bullets' - which can pierce through a



normal bullet-proof vehicle. This has triggered an alarm bell within the security establishment especially Border Security Force (BSF), which guards the International Border with Pakistan, as the force has been maintaining in its inter-departmental meetings that there has been no infiltration from the border.

On February 14 last year, Sameer's cousin Adil blew himself in an explosive-laden car next to a CRPF bus killing 40 personnel.

Sameer told his interroga-

tors that infiltration from across the border has been continuing and the militants were fanning in various parts of the South Kashmir especially in Pulwama and Tral areas, the officials said.

Sameer also told them that the militants were dropped at Kareemabad in South Kashmir. He also gave the details of the arms and ammunition being carried by the terrorists, indicating that the group also had M-4 carbine and ammunition of steel core bullets.

Govt pegs UIDAI's allocation at Rs 985 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has raised fund allocation for the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) - which issues biometric ID to residents - by 17 per cent to Rs 985 crore for the next fiscal starting April 1.

In the current fiscal, the UIDAI was originally allocated Rs 1,227 crore when the Modi-2.0 government presented the Union Budget on July 5 last year. But the amount was revised downwards to Rs 836.7 crore, according to Budget 2020-21 documents.

The document did not provide reasons for the downward revision but it could be because of non-utilisation of all the funds allocated to the UIDAI. The UIDAI is the nodal body for Aadhaar, an identity infrastructure for delivery of various social welfare programs and effective targeting of these services.



In December last year, the UIDAI had said that 125 crore residents of India have Aadhaar, the 12-digit unique identity number.

"The achievement comes along with the rapidly increasing use of Aadhaar as the primary identity document by the Aadhaar holders. 'This is evident from the fact that Aadhaar-based authentication services have been used close to 37,000 crore times since inception," it had then said.

The UIDAI receives about 3 crore authentication requests every day. Also, it receives about 3-4 lakh Aadhaar update requests daily.

Pinarayi slams communal elements

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Hitting out at the Centre over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Sunday said the "communal elements" today were using the British colonisers' strategy of disrupting people's unity by dividing them on communal lines.

He also said that while India's freedom struggle was against the colonisers, the current movement is against those who stood with the colonisers. Vijayan was speaking at the 'Mumbai Collective' here on the topic of 'National struggle against communalism'.

"In the past, our movement was against the colonisers, but presently our struggle against communalism is a movement against those who stood with the colonisers," he said.

Coronavirus: 3 persons with symptoms in hospital

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Three persons suspected to have symptoms of coronavirus were admitted to SMS Government Hospital here, an official said on Sunday.

"They were admitted to the hospital on Saturday. Their blood samples have been collected and the report is expected to come by Sunday evening," Dr D S Meena, Superintendent of SMS hospital said.

He added that the patients have been kept in isolation.

Meanwhile, arrangements have been made in ESIC Medical College of Alwar for keeping nearly 300 Indians airlifted from Wuhan city of China where the international virus outbreak began.

The batch of passengers are likely to reach Alwar on Sunday evening for quarantine.

Ravi Sharma, a state health department official coordinating with the Centre, said 300 beds have been prepared in two hostels and adequate staff has been deployed.

Deputy CMHO, Alwar, Dr Chhabil Kumar said the passengers will be quarantined and kept under observation for 28 days.

JK DSP case: NIA raids multiple places in south Kashmir

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

The National Investigation Agency on Sunday morning carried out searches in connection with a case in which a senior Jammu and Kashmir police officer was arrested while ferrying terrorists outside the valley, officials said here.

Multiple NIA teams fanned in various parts of south Kashmir and carried out the searches at some private offices and residences, they said.

The NIA had taken over the case in which Jammu and Kashmir's Deputy Superintendent of Police Davinder Singh, who has since been suspended, was caught in south Kashmir while ferrying two terrorists out of the valley on January 11.

The searches come days after NIA officers interrogated all the accused arrested in the case.

Besides Singh, the others arrested were: Syed Naveed Mushtaq Ahmed alias Naveed



Babu, who is a self-styled commander of Hizbul Mujahideen, Rafi Ahmed Rather and Irfan Shafi Mir, who claims to be an advocate.

They were arrested from the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway near Qazigund in South Kashmir.

Later, Naveed's brother, Syed Irfan Ahmed, was also arrested on January 23 after he was brought from Punjab.

He was in constant touch with his brother and had asked

him to look for an accommodation in Chandigarh where they could escape the harsh winters months of Kashmir.

Mir, who was driving the vehicle when they were caught by the police from a national highway in Kulgam district, may become a prize catch for the NIA as it is alleged he was acting on the orders of his masters in Pakistan.

He had visited the neighbouring country five times on an Indian passport.



Poll officials, police meet to discuss situation in Shaheen Bagh

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Amid ongoing anti-CAA protests, local poll officials and police authorities held a meeting to take stock of the situation in Shaheen Bagh ahead of the elections, officials said on Sunday.

"A meeting was called for Saturday evening at the Shaheen Bagh Police Station. But due to a firing incident near the protest site, some of the officers could not join. So, we sat and discussed the situation afterwards," a senior poll official in Okhla constituency said.

A man fired two rounds in the air at Shaheen Bagh before being taken into custody on Saturday. Shaheen Bagh has been the epicentre of protests against the country's new citizenship law and the incident had created panic among people.

Asked if the environment is conducive to hold elections, another senior officer said, "Yes, nothing to worry, authorities are extra vigilant".

"The situation is being assessed across the city on a daily basis," he added.

Saturday's firing incident came two days after a youth fired a pistol at a group of anti-CAA protesters near the Jamia university in which a student was wounded.

Amid the ongoing protests, Delhi CEO Ranbir Singh had on Friday visited the area to assess the situation and preparedness ahead of the assembly elections, and said there was no obstruction in areas where poll activities will be conducted.

Elderly woman dies after falling ill at Kolkata

PNS ■ KOLKATA

An elderly woman, who was part of the ongoing demonstration by women against the CAA and the proposed nationwide NRC at the Park Circus Maidan here, died on Sunday after falling ill, police said. The 57-year-old woman fell unconscious at the protest site around 2 am and was taken to a nearby hospital, they said. Samida Khatun, a resident of Entally area, died at the hospital after some-time, police said.

Around 60 women have been staging protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) at Park Circus Maidan, on the lines of the Shaheen Bagh agitation in Delhi.

The woman's last rites will be performed later in the day after her son arrives from Iran, a fellow protestor said.



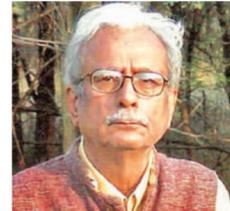
Vinod bags 1st Mathrubhumi Book of the Year award

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Noted Hindi poet-novelist and Sahitya Akademi honouree Vinod Kumar Shukla has bagged the inaugural Mathrubhumi Book of the Year award for his translated book "Blue Is Like Blue".

The stories in "Blue Is Like Blue", translated into English by Arvind Krishna Mehrotra and Sara Rai, deal with common people and their daily struggles. The 83-year-old Shukla, who is regarded the finest living writer in Hindi, has been quietly forging his own idiosyncratic path away from the public gaze in Raipur in Chhattisgarh.

His book, published under HarperCollins India's translations imprint Harper



Vinod Kumar Shukla

Perennial, beat "Ib's Endless Search for Satisfaction" (Roshan Ali); "The City and the Sea" (Raj Kamal Jha); "A Secret History of Compassion" (Paul Zachariah); "The Far Field" (Madhuri Vijay); "The Scent of God" (Saikat Majumdar) and "There is Gunpowder in the Air"

This year's jury comprised Shashi Tharoor, Chandrashekhara Kambara and Sumana Roy

(Manoranjan Byapari). The award, given to the best fictional work released in the previous year, carries a cash prize of Rs 5 lakh, a plaque designed by Riyas Komu and a certificate. This year's jury comprised Shashi Tharoor, Chandrashekhara Kambara and Sumana Roy.

The award was presented at the Mathrubhumi International Festival of Letters 2020 which concluded here on

Sunday. This is the second award for this book, the previous being the Atta Galatta Bangalore Literature Festival Book Prize 2019 for best fiction.

The characters in these stories live in rented accommodation, often in single rooms, where one electric bulb does for light. When the light dims because of low voltage, it is like air escaping from a punctured bicycle tube. There's a nail to hang clothes from and a wall-to-wall string for the washing. When the clothes are dry, the character places the carefully folded shirt under a pillow and lies down to sleep.

Money is a concern, but the bazaar is the place to go and spend time in, especially if the character has nothing to buy.

Researcher work on battery power sharing

PNS ■ KOTA

Researchers are working on two electric vehicle solutions, including a technology that would allow sharing of stored battery power with another EV and even sell excess energy to make a fast buck, for making the clean vehicles more economical, a professor at BITS Pilani said.

Along with the power sharing tool vehicle-to-everything (V2X), researchers are also examining the feasibility of battery swapping stations where an EV owner would simply replace the batteries like refilling of gas cylinders, Hitesh Datt Mathur, associate professor at the Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS), Pilani, said.

The two solutions can make EVs economical as customers



would not need to buy expensive heavy batteries which account for around 25-30 per cent of the total cost of an EV currently.

The research projects are sponsored by the Department of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Mathur, who has designed an EV with V2X technology,

said the model is capable of sharing stored power with another EV, a grid, hotels, malls etc.

"The incentive could be seen by an example where a customer is charging EV with V2X feature at home at Rs 8 per unit and discharging some part of stored power at any commercial place at Rs 15 as commercial rates are higher

The research projects are sponsored by the Department of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Human Resource Development

than domestic rates of electricity," he suggested.

When the EV is not in use, some part of stored energy may be sold to others including the grid, another EV customer, even to some offices or homes.

If a customer sells 20 units equivalent of power during this discharge, he will have Rs 140 earned. The power grid, at large, during peak hour, can also be supplemented by orderly managed owners of EVs with V2X feature.

"One can imagine a parking lot of a mall where, hundreds

of V2X electric cars are parked for more than 6-7 hours in a day which is equivalent to a mid-sized power plant of 5 to 10 megawatt range since each electric car has battery power of 20-25 kilowatts. Even if 30-40 per cent customers decide to sell power to grid, it would be good enough for that mall itself. All this would be executed through a mobile app," he said.

"The project will develop a cyber physical network using artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms," Mathur said.

'Nirbhaya convicts trying to frustrate mandate of law'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta on Sunday told the Delhi High Court that there is deliberate, calculated and well thought of design by Nirbhaya gangrape and murder case convicts to "frustrate mandate of law" by getting their execution delayed.

Mehta told Justice Suresh Kait that convict Pawan Gupta's move of not filing curative or mercy petition is deliberate, calculated inaction.

"There is deliberate, calculated and well thought of design to frustrate mandate of law," Mehta told HC.

The high court is hearing Centre's plea challenging stay on the execution of four death row convicts in the Nirbhaya

Centre against stay of execution

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court on Sunday commenced hearing on Centre's plea challenging stay on the execution of four death row convicts in the Nirbhaya gangrape and murder case.

The proceedings are currently underway before Justice Suresh Kait. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta is advancing arguments for the Centre.

gangrape and murder case. The proceedings are currently underway.

PAPER WITH PASSION

A road to nowhere

Some lower rate income taxpayers might be happy but what else exactly did this budget achieve? Nothing really



The Bombay Stock Exchange dropped nearly 1000 points a couple of hours after Finance Minister (FM) Nirmala Sitharaman finished delivering her Budget speech. As far as percentage drops go, there have been worse single-day collapses in the Indian capital markets but this time even corporate titans and financial experts were far from divided on the Budget. There was a universal feeling that it had missed the opportunity for big bang structural reforms that could have given a sense of direction and purpose to the economy. Of

particular irritation was the sense that the Government did not acknowledge that India is in the midst of an economic crisis and it was telling to hear even talking heads sympathetic to the government feeling a bit down after the speech. And what a speech it was; even with the standard deduction for couplets by classical poets, it was just short of three hours. Possibly that was the biggest disappointment with the Budget, a lot of talk but not all that much action. The headline that almost everyone will concentrate on is the rejig in personal income taxes, a slight reduction in income tax slabs which will help those Indians who earn less than ₹15 lakh a year. But there is a massive rider there, the old income tax regime remains because the new tax slabs allow for fewer exemptions. So effectively, older taxpayers who make tax-linked investments will most likely not shift away from the existing tax regime. In fact, while the FM spoke about "simplification" of the income tax system, it is likely that most taxpayers, other than those in the lower slabs, will have to sit down with professionals and work out how best to structure their taxes. The Government has long spoken about the need to rationalise income taxes and reduce exemptions and that is an achievable ideal. If that needed to be done, a more radical change in tax slabs would have been in order than having a confusing and parallel income tax system in place. Removing exemptions, including most under Section 80, medical insurance and house rent allowance among others, will almost ensure that few, if any, Indian tax payers will move to the new regime. That said, the abolishing of dividend distribution tax is a net positive for investors, albeit resident Indian promoters and high net-worth individuals might be desperately unhappy as their dividends will now be taxed at their regular tax rates. Then there is the fiscal deficit, with several economic experts openly questioning the Government's maths. It is very possible that it can mop up funds from divesting its share in several public sector units. The FM said that the Government would divest a portion of its holding in Life Insurance Company of India (LIC) but given that the overall disinvestment process has been haphazard under the Narendra Modi government, there are open questions about how this will be done.

While negativity will take us nowhere, this is the first budget in several years where Indian industry has been so highly critical of the Government. Of course, several industrialists and bankers realise that Sitharaman has to walk a tightrope between maintaining fiscal prudence and the profligacy of overspending. The latter has been relatively constrained. There are some interesting new spends such as investment in clean air, which are welcome. However, as we close the chapter on yet another budget, there is this overwhelming sense that this could have been so much more. This is not just a bad budget, it is a disappointing one.

Social message

Without a result-oriented revamp, the social sector allocations end up being plain vacuous



Just as we are left confused as to whether the Budget is a vision document meant for a conclave or indeed about fund allocations for sectoral growth, many would find the announcements and the length devoted on the social sector encouraging. But just as we are finding the god of deliverance in the small things, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman offered some to both the health and education sectors, albeit in the nature of a summary dole than pondering on the practicalities of implementation. She announced an outlay of

₹69,000 crore for healthcare, up from ₹62,398 crore last year and still short of the 2.5 per cent of the GDP promised by the Government. This is way off the ₹1,50,000 crore that health industry bigwigs had sought to drive the sector forward. And way lesser than what other emerging economies, BRICS and even Afghanistan and Nepal are spending. For a nation that has an increasing disease burden and a rapidly ageing population, a fact we disregard as we obsess over our young productive age group, there is no major policy overhaul that is indicated. That probably has got to do with the fact the Ayushman Bharat Yojna, which provides a cover of up to ₹5 lakh per poor family, has yet to overcome hurdles of execution. Private hospitals are yet to rationalise their packages with the subsidised costs and at the micro-level are turning away applicants who do not understand the fine print of medical conditions and what makes them eligible for entitlement and what not. There's a question hovering over the number of marginalised people it has managed to shield. So the Government has played safe by just apportioning a part of the total allocation, ₹6,400 crore, for the scheme. Instead, it would have been far more prudent for the Government to route some funds to smaller hospitals in Tier II and III cities and net them in as providers of Ayushman Bharat. Of course, the Government has been responsive in addressing the gaps in the public health delivery system by provisioning for local medical colleges to be attached to district hospitals in the private-public partnership (PPP) mode, with some exemptions on land to be acquired for this purpose. The FM also announced a special bridge course for medicare professionals. India's doctor to patient ratio is 1:1,445, against the WHO benchmark of 1:1,000. Duties on imports and special incentives for using medical devices "Made In India" may sound good but what really needs to be addressed are their quality and standardisation. Neither is there any mention of insurance, which experts have been suggesting should be tiered, for employees, the self-employed and elders, and backing them up with increased tax deductions.

The FM has allocated ₹99,300 crore to the education sector, ₹3,000 crore for skill development and even proposed FDIs. Clearly responding to criticism that our teaching modules fall way behind employability indices, she has announced apprenticeships at 150 higher education institutions and urban local bodies. The degree-level online education programmes to be offered by 100 top institutions would work only in terms of outreach at best. But what our education sector really needs is standardisation, quality and dynamic evolution of teaching systems. Some reports say that 63 per cent of school students will be unemployable when the fourth industrial revolution takes place and our universities, except IITs, do not even make it to the global top 100 list. Without a result-oriented revamp, the social sector allocations end up being plain vacuous.

No growth in this story

The Indian economy is demand-constrained and investment-starved.

The FM has not acknowledged these two challenges



GOURAV VALLABH

This budget was meant to increase consumption, encourage spends among the middle class, stimulate growth and primarily put the economy back on the road to recovery. Yet the reality is that far from being memorable, it is a damp squib without any sense of urgency to mean business. The story can be summed up easily. The GDP growth is the lowest in 11 years. The government estimates nominal GDP for 2020-21 at 10 per cent. It is lower than the 12 per cent that was projected in 2019-20, which turned out to be only 7.5 per cent. Private consumption is at its lowest in seven years. Investment growth is at its slowest in 17 years. Manufacturing is the lowest in 15 years. Tax growth is the lowest in 20 years. Food inflation is the highest in six years.

The government has done very little to revitalise the economy, stimulate growth rate, promote private investment, increase efficiency, create jobs or boost the rapidly shrinking exports. In a nutshell, this budget has nothing to address the problems the country faces. I am totally confused with the multiple themes, segments and programmes. Ongoing programmes have failed but still this government is throwing more (and in some cases less) money into them. Will that change anything? There is no clear vision or articulated plan for market economy, competition or higher trade intensity. This government is in complete denial that the economy faces a grave macro-economic challenge and the growth rate has declined in six successive quarters. Show me one thing in this Budget that will revive growth in 2020-21. The claim of 6 to 6.5 per cent growth next year is shocking.

It seems to me that the government's main source of revenue will be through the disinvestment of PSUs. The remaining government stake in IDBI Bank will be sold off. Also, a part of the government's stake in LIC will be sold through an IPO. This explains the doubling of the disinvestment target from the current fiscal to the next one — from ₹1 lakh crore in FY20 to ₹2.1 lakh crore in FY21. Even the disinvestment target for the current fiscal has not been met — with only ₹65,000 crore raised.

The Finance Minister (FM) stated that the government debt came down to 48.9 per cent from 52.2 per cent. This may be in part due to the unprecedented transfer of surplus from the RBI to the Central Government, to the tune of ₹1,76,051 crore (0.8 per cent of GDP), in August 2019. This "quasi fiscal deficit" practice is against the basic principles of prudent fiscal management.

The FM claimed that "Inflation is well contained." Yet inflation was 7.4 per cent in December 2019, a record high since July 2014. It is higher than the upper limit of the target inflation rate set by the RBI. (Target of four per cent, with upper tolerance level of six per cent, for the period between June 2016-March 2021).

The Minister claimed that the



Government's policy of Make in India has yielded "great dividends." The scheme has not yielded its target dividends. Its first target was to increase the manufacturing sector's growth rate to 12-14 per cent per annum, but the sector has only grown, on an average, at half of the targeted growth rate. In FY20, the manufacturing sector growth plummeted to a paltry two per cent. The second goal of increasing the share of manufacturing in GDP to 25 per cent by 2020 has also not been met since this figure has remained only around 15 per cent. The government is also clearly unable to meet its third target of creating 100 million additional jobs by 2022 in the manufacturing sector, given its refusal to provide numbers on how many jobs were actually created as a result of the scheme and the devastating figures provided by the NSSO, estimating the unemployment rate in 2017-18 at a 45-year high of 6.1 per cent.

The Budget emphasises the importance of building a statistical system that has strong credibility and supplies data in real time. Yet, this Government has triggered the dismantling of statistical institutions in India — from mass resignations by statisticians, to leaked reports

which the government refuses to acknowledge.

Five newer smart cities will be created. This is a meagre increment from the 100 designated already. Further, the Smart Cities Mission has been proceeding at a slow rate. At present, only 25 per cent projects proposed have been completed (1296 out of 5151) and a corresponding 11 per cent of funds have been spent on these completed projects out of the total proposed investment in the Mission.

And for all the bluster about development in Kashmir, the Minister made just a token reference to it, reciting lines from a poem by Pandit Dinanath Kaul. This is a mockery of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, who cannot even hear the FM because of the communications blockade still present in many parts of the region. Of course, she conveniently omitted his full name, which is Pandit Dinanath Kaul 'Nadim.' Clearly, the honorific was politically inconvenient.

With the Budget's focus on wealth creation and a "caring society" and "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas," the question remains for whom? According to last month's Oxfam report, the top one per cent richest people in

India owns 42 per cent of the wealth of the nation, which is more than four times the wealth of the bottom 70 per cent. The rhetoric of compassion and caring has no real world implications as the BJP has launched a campaign of vitriol against peaceful anti-CAA protestors, often provoking violence against them.

The Indian economy is demand-constrained and investment-starved. The FM has not acknowledged these two challenges. Consequently, she has proposed no measures or solutions to those two challenges. If the twin obstacles remain, the economy will not turn around and there will be no relief to the millions of poor and the middle class. This government has done nothing to get us out of the financial crisis we are in. Our past track record with this government shows it failed miserably on attaining any key targets — nominal GDP growth, fiscal deficit, net tax revenue collection, disinvestment revenue or total expenditure. What is the assurance that it will meet the targets set for 2020-21? It looks like the FM has outright rejected every reform idea contained in the Economic Survey.

(The author is national spokesman, Congress)

“THE BUDGET HAS CONFUSED EVERYBODY WITH MULTIPLE THEMES, SEGMENTS AND PROGRAMMES. ONGOING PROGRAMMES HAVE FAILED BUT STILL THIS GOVERNMENT IS THROWING MORE (AND IN SOME CASES LESS) MONEY INTO THEM. WILL THAT CHANGE ANYTHING?”

SOUNDBITE

The Government is ready to talk to protesters of Shaheen Bagh but it should be in a structured form. To clear their doubts on CAA.

Union Minister
—Ravi Shankar Prasad



When I decide to wear an outfit, I'm not really nervous because when I walk out of the door, I'm secure. I don't like wardrobe malfunction!

Actor
—Priyanka Chopra Jonas



If you ask if I would have been able to make Haider today, then I would be lying. All that is happening in the country is sad and pains Indians.

Film director
—Vishal Bhardwaj



I have served in various capacities for India and most importantly I am still involved with the game. We will look to do an honest job.

Former cricketer
—Madan Lal



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Create opportunities

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Indians at the fore" (February 1). There is no dearth of corporate professionals who bring laurels to India by getting the most coveted positions in their respective organisations. Microsoft, Google and IBM are the top-notch IT organisations of the world and heading them is a dream and honour for any professional. Arvind Krishna deserves all the credit for reaching this position. But, as rightly mentioned in your editorial, there is a flip side to this issue as well. Because we have been talking about brain drain for long. As a country, we have not been able to create a necessary ecosystem for Indian companies to transform to another level so that they compete with global counterparts and create an environment for young professionals to flourish and progress in India rather than thinking about going to the USA or the UK.

Nothing but the pathetic education system of the country is to be blamed for this. Apart from a few IITs, which still manage to appear in the ranks of top glob-

BJP must dissuade its followers from violence

The chilling words "kisko chahiye aazadi, mai doonga aazadi (who wants freedom, I shall give freedom)" shouted by the assailant, moments before shooting at the peaceful anti-CAA march in Delhi, and "Shaheen Bagh khel khatam (The game is over for Shaheen Bagh)" posted on his Facebook page, revealed the teenager's identity, indoctrination and intention. The appalling incident appeared to be a corollary of the chant of "desh ke gaddaron ko, goli maaro sa***n ko (shoot the traitors)" at a BJP rally and an inspired attack to intimidate the anti-CAA protesters to call off the stir. We quite understand the adversarial nature of two opposing forces representing Hinduva and secularism in the political arena. But we are perturbed at the call to violence and its actualisation as witnessed with frightening vividness in Delhi. The Hindu Mahasabha has hailed the attacker as a "national hero" and expressed its wish to "honour" him. Perhaps the Chief of Defence Staff Bipin Rawat would like to put the attacker in a de-radicalisation camp.

The subtext is that the current national crisis stems from Hindu revivalism, with religious profiling as a tool to target a section of the population, becoming the order of the day. The crux of the matter is that the BJP categorises people as "us-and-them" on the basis of religion. It is their second nature to do so. Zealots are consumed with hatred, a failure of imagination and do not accept compatriots as such,

al institutions, we have nothing worthwhile to offer to our youth in terms of world-class education that fosters innovation, critical thinking and leadership qualities. Every now and then India Inc. complains about the poor



irrespective of religion. Religious hatred is calamitous and must be an anathema to our great nation.

The ruling elite arrogate to themselves the right to define "treason" and "patriotism" and decide "who is a traitor" and "who is a patriot." The Jamia shooting should be a wake-up call for the BJP to dissuade its supporters from violence. No nation divided against itself can realise its full potential. We are all obliged to be truly secular and altruistic so that we, who make up the mass of humanity in this beautiful country, can live in peace and prosper. Our prayer and hope is that the youth will save the country from going the Syrian or Rwanda way.

David Milton
Maruthancode

standard of graduates coming out of our universities and their unemployability. However, no one seems to listen to their voice and address this core issue. The need of the hour is regular and close interaction

between global organisations and all top 100 colleges in the country so that the quality of education can be improved manifold.

Bal Govind
Noida

Motormouth Thakur

Sir — This refers to the Election Commission (EC) barring BJP Minister Anurag Thakur from addressing any election rally for three days after he delivered a hate speech recently.

First, is this enough? We have a procedure laid down by the law under which he should be put on trial. But we are still waiting for that to happen. Expecting some bold steps from the current EC would be a waste of time. None in that department deserve to be a successor of the late TN Seshan. The present dispensation has got a lot of motormouths who spew venom whenever they get a chance. Worryingly, Thakur is also a part of the Sikh Regiment of the Territorial Army and serves in the capacity of a Lieutenant. Hate speeches are a recipe for mutiny and they aren't good for the integrity of the forces. Stripping Thakur of his rank would be the apt punishment and shall send the right signals across all quarters.

DS Thakral
Ambala

Send your feedback to:
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FIRST COLUMN

Marketing new perspectives

The overarching dominance of the Planning Commission and then the NITI Aayog have blurred the focus on regional development



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

The change in nature of markets has created several universes within its fold, so as to almost require an interpreter to talk from one segment to another. Yet in a country like India, all marketing instrumentalities, from hawking to internet communication, seem relevant. Their pertinence in the social segment in which they operate determines the robustness of that economy. Each segment has its own significance and it determines to a large extent the prosperity of the region where it operates. This economic growth is central to the community's welfare because livelihoods depend on that. However, there remains a catch-22 situation as each marketing method in a socio-economic segment can and does evolve. Leaving it frozen at a given level is unwise for the overall well-being of that division. Nature, being what it is, will induce change and its own evolution does not need a policy decision. But this progression may be slow and may be excluding migrant segments of that given economic division from returning to it for their livelihood and with a level of comfort. Thus it is that remaining migrant groups are reluctant to go back to where they originated from and settle down where they have moved to. Thereby they almost delink themselves from the base community from which they emerged. Marketing methods are a major determinant of this process.

Just as it is difficult to visualise a so-called avant-garde marketing method in a remote village cluster which does not even have proper amenities for food and shelter, so also the marketing methods have to be at peace with lifestyles and communities. The catch-22 referred to above, can be worked out by resolving this dilemma. Instruments of change have to carry out the upgradation of the affected communities without disrupting their livelihoods. This requires thought and proactive designs of intervention. Unfortunately this is a perspective which many social interventionists seem to miss altogether. The crescendo of modernisation does not help the case of graduated and gradual change. People often mistake the toolkit for substance. In the course of participation in many planning processes, it becomes evident that the interventionist paradigm of the leader, especially if he is a powerful one, gets smoother endorsement with the powers that actually control that segment. The result is many square pegs in round holes. In view of the competitiveness, India is often seen to adopt a method which appears prima-facie acceptable but undouble with immediate effect in many contexts in which it is attempted.

India is not the only country where periodically such interventions have been attempted in different pockets. Turkey, under Kemal Ataturk, attempted mediations which were not confined to economics and livelihood but also covered social engineering, where the national leader attempted to catapult the country into European social norms from the more conventional Middle Eastern ones. In many cases these intrusions did not take root and created a self-defeating environment where social practices lapsed into the original mould from where the political intervention had sought to leverage the community. In-built levels and echelons of hierarchy which were going to be affected by the changes, fought hard against them. It would be useful to remind ourselves that in a country as large as ours, it is possible and even desirable to have a certain degree of economic modeling, common at a pan-India level. At the same time, the economic diversities are so large that regional models of development will have to be crafted, evolved and practiced. Work in that direction is yet to begin in earnest. The overarching dominance of the Planning Commission and subsequently the NITI Aayog, coupled with the penchant of continuously highlighting emotive issues like caste, religion and language, have blurred the focus on regional development. It is difficult to conceive how a river valley culture of say West Bengal could be the receptacle of the same kind of economic philosophy which would work in the woodlands of Mizoram. The limited ability of economists to visualise a sociogram good enough for our agro-climatic realities and the wealth of soil and land, had high prices to pay. It is true that there are literally millions of people below the poverty line but the definition of poverty line alone reflects an overarching emphasis on the monetised version of economic development. There are substantial parts of India where forest produces are the primary resource of livelihood and where the money economy has still to make its entry in a significant enough manner to affect and create social interventions which result in positive change.

A window on the whole process can be created by extensive field-work in trying to understand what it is that moves livelihoods in a given agro-climatic zone. The first step towards the initial documentation of the ground realities is to smoothen and strengthen the conventional process in a manner in which wastage is reduced, longevity of the products is increased and the awareness of its availability is universalised in a relevant social segment where it can be bought. Socio-economic engineering based on the fulcrum of the local productivity process can move the world quicker. The lever has to be the intention and the will to give this alternate economics, rooted in local conditions, a chance to prove itself.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

THE UNION BUDGET GIVES THE OUTLINE OF A NEW AND CONFIDENT INDIA; IT WILL MAKE COUNTRY HEALTHY AND WEALTHY IN COMING YEARS.
 —DEFENCE MINISTER
 RAJNATH SINGH



IT (THE BUDGET) DESCRIBES THE GOVERNMENT WELL, LOT OF REPETITION, RAMBLING. ALL TALK BUT NOTHING HAPPENING FOR CITIZENS.
 —CONGRESS LEADER
 RAHUL GANDHI

Long on vision, short on means

The credibility of the fiscal consolidation glide path has been dented which is also reflected in the Sensex falling by over 1,000 points after the Budget announcements



UTTAM GUPTA

The Union Budget for 2020-21 presented to the Parliament by Finance Minister (FM) Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1 confirms apprehensions that the actual fiscal deficit (FD) for 2019-20 would exceed the Budget Estimate (BE) by a significant margin. Sitharaman puts it at 3.8 per cent of the GDP against the target of 3.3 per cent. However, she has justified this deviation in terms of the recommendation of the NK Singh Committee on review of the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003 which permits breach of the target in case of "far-reaching structural reforms with unanticipated fiscal implications."

For 2020-21, the FM has provided for a FD of 3.5 per cent as against 3.0 per cent as stipulated under the FRBM Act. Here also, she has justified the deviation of five per cent in terms of the "unanticipated fiscal implications". One wonders whether this could be a credible justification considering that there is no major announcement in the Budget which could qualify in the category of structural reforms. However, she has candidly acknowledged the existence of so-called off-budget liabilities and extra-budgetary resources (EBRs) — a euphemism for borrowings by agencies and PSUs made on behalf of the Government — and mentioned these in an annexure. She has also stated that it is the responsibility of the Government to service these liabilities. Having done so, logically these should have been brought on to the balance sheet and accordingly, revised the FD upward. In essence, the projected health of the Budget continues to be misleading.

The credibility of the fiscal consolidation glide path has been dented, which is also reflected in the Sensex declining by over 1,000 points or 2.5 per cent. Going through an unusually lengthy speech, one fails to come across any major reform measure that would either have the effect of bringing about drastic reduction in any of the major subsidies viz. food, fertilisers, fuel, electricity and so on or indicative of any major dilution in Government intervention or boost to market forces (as alluded to in the Economic Survey: 2019-20).

Even as the Budget is replete with welfare schemes being implemented under the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode to prevent pilferage, there is no mention of implementing DBT in the above-mentioned areas wherein subsidies guzzle over ₹300,000 crore every year. The recommendation of the Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) for attempting some reduction in food subsidy by limiting coverage (over 800 million people are covered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA)) and increase in the issue price — currently ₹12/3 per kg for coarse cereals, wheat and rice — remains unheeded.

In electricity, the proposal for smart meters, pre-paid meters and giving choice to consumers to choose their suppliers as a way forward to address the issues facing power distribution companies (PDs) does nothing to deal with fundamental ailments afflicting the sector. These arise due to supply of electricity to a certain category of consumers viz. poor households and farmers either at a fraction of the cost of purchase and distribution or even free; large-scale theft (very often abetted by political brass) and inflated tariff allowed to generators under power purchase agreements (PPAs). One wonders whether these would be addressed under New Tariff Policy (NTP).

In this backdrop, the proposal to allow a lower

“ THE FM HAS ATTEMPTED A DETAILED BLUEPRINT OF WHAT ALL NEEDS TO BE DONE TO PURSUE THE THREE THEMES VIZ. 'ASPIRATIONAL INDIA', 'ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT' AND 'CARING SOCIETY'. BUT, IN THE ABSENCE OF CREDIBLE PLANS FOR ARRANGING RESOURCES (WITHOUT DESTABILISING THE FISCAL APPLECART) AND GARNERING NECESSARY POLITICAL WILL FOR EXECUTION, IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER THE RESULTS WILL MATCH THE INTENT ”



corporate tax rate of 15 per cent to existing power generation companies on par with that applicable to new enterprises (this was announced under the package of steep reduction in the corporate tax last year) will be of no consequence. A concession in tax rate helps only when the generator makes profit. But in a situation wherein it does not even get paid for its supplies (courtesy, mess in discoms), this won't be of any use.

Meanwhile, the FM has revealed the Government's decision to accept the interim recommendations of the 15th Finance Commission (FC) for 2020-21. This may not be good news for the States already facing stress on their balance sheets (due to shortfall in their own revenue and pending dues from the Centre under the GST) as the FC has recommended a significant cut in devolution of Central taxes even while proposing greater help through grant-in-aid. The Budget talks about giving a big boost to the agriculture and rural sector and reiterates the Government's overarching commitment to doubling farmers' income by 2022.

A number of innovative steps are suggested under a 16-point agenda — comprehensively covering almost every area that has an impact on farmers' ability to increase income. These cover *inter alia* adoption of flexible laws in sync with the model legislations passed by the Centre, creation of warehousing and cold storage facilities in the supply chain (including at the village level), setting up of solar power units on barren land, plan for use of proper manure (reducing dependence on chemical fertilisers) and minimising use of water, strengthening and expanding scope of Farmers Producers Organisations (FPOs) to include fisheries, increase in credit availability, increase in piped water supply to all households and so on. Agriculture being a Concurrent subject under the Constitution, all of the above is sought to be achieved by giving incentives to the States plus involvement

of agencies like the Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC), Food Corporation of India (FCI), viability gap funding plus financial support from organisations like NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) and so on.

When viewed in the backdrop of States continuing with archaic laws such as Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) under which millions of farmers and even FPOs are held hostage to politically-backed intermediaries/traders at the *mandis*, these would remain as pious declarations as always in the past. Even so, the allocation for agriculture and allied sectors and rural development at ₹283,000 crore for 2020-21 is just about ₹23,000 crore higher than the allocation for 2019-20 which is "modest" for the intended gigantic transformation. Curiously, the provision includes ₹60,000 crore for PM - KISAN which is essentially consumption oriented; it can't be deemed as augmenting the income-raising ability of farmers.

The lack of demand and investment are identified as two major constraints to growth. Continuing with a spate of stimulants provided during August/September 2019, this Budget has attempted to leave extra money in the pockets of salary earners by creating a highly differentiated slab structure. Under the new scheme of things, the highest tax rate of 30 per cent kicks in at an income of ₹15 lakh against the current threshold of ₹10 lakh. So, a person earning ₹15 lakh will save about ₹75,000 (as per the FM's calculation).

For the corporates, the dividend distribution tax (DDT) has been abolished, sparing them the double whammy of taxing profit first at the distribution stage and then in the recipient's hand. The Budget contains a spate of concessions for MSMEs, start-ups, exporters and the real estate sector, given their importance from the perspective of employment generation. A number of innovative steps are envisaged for MSMEs to help with the timely payment of their dues from large enter-

prises and increase in financing (especially through "invoice financing" by NBFCs).

The Budget reiterates the Government's commitment to continue with consolidation of public sector banks (PSBs), giving tax incentives under their mergers and amalgamations, effective use of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) for recovery of NPAs, recapitalisation for adequate provisioning and credit growth, improvement in the quality of lending and so on.

There will also be greater focus on continuous monitoring of loans and creation of a data bank to detect early signs of delinquency. The building of infrastructure commensurate with making India a \$5 trillion economy has received much attention. A comprehensive roadmap for projects to be taken up under the National Infrastructure Project (NIP) scheme is laid out. This is welcome but there remains a big question mark over funding it which entails a mammoth investment of ₹100 lakh crore over the next five years.

The Budget seeks to give a boost to "Make in India" with emphasis on consolidating its lead in the digital revolution and propping up industries involving labour-intensive technologies. However, from the way the FM has made changes in customs duties, it would appear that the Modi Government could be in for "over-protectionism." This won't be in the long-term interest of India wanting to derive a good slice of its growth potential from increasing participation in global trade.

The FM has attempted a detailed blueprint of what all needs to be done to pursue the three themes viz. "Aspirational India", "Economic Development", "Caring Society." But, in the absence of credible plans for arranging resources (without destabilising the fiscal applecart) and garnering necessary political will for execution, it is doubtful whether the results will match the intent.

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

No statement of accounts from the FM

Allocations and numbers don't synchronise with the projections. This Government keeps on talking of long-term solutions for every problem but should we all starve and wait in the short-term?



ABHISHEK RAJA

The biggest problem with the longest Budget speech is there was no comparative on allocations to any scheme with that of the previous year. The Budget, which is called "Book of Accounts", has no meaning without numbers. Let's try to decode the Budget on some hits and mostly misses.

The Government proposed new tax slabs for individuals. Old slabs and tax rates were as follows — ₹2.50 lakh at NIL, ₹2.50-5 lakh at five per cent, ₹5-10 lakh at 20 per cent above ₹10 lakh at 30 per cent. But if you had come up to ₹ five lakh, then the tax was zero through a rebate. The new slabs and rates proposed are as follows ₹2.50 lakh at NIL, ₹2.50-5 lakh at five

per cent, ₹5-7.5 lakh at 10 per cent, ₹7.5-10 lakh at 15 per cent, ₹10-12.50 lakh at 20 per cent, ₹12.50-15 lakh at 25 per cent, above ₹15 lakh at 30 per cent. But in the new regime, there are no exemptions and deductions. The common man has an option of going with the old regime or switching over to the new one. Thus, every person has to calculate his income in both regimes and then choose one that works for him best. Thus, when the Government talks about simplification of income tax laws and return filing mechanisms, such a tax regime just ties us down to deeper complications.

In order to boost the manufacturing sector, new provisions were introduced in September 2019, offering a concessional corporate tax rate of 15 per cent to the newly-incorporated domestic companies in the manufacturing sector, which intend to roll out by March 31, 2023. This concessional tax rate benefit of 15 per cent has now been extended to new domestic companies engaged in the generation of electricity. But is the power infrastructure ready?

This Budget allocates ₹22,000

crore for power, renewable energy sector, discom reforms. Gas grid is proposed to be extended to 27,000 km (which is 16,000 km now) and gas price discovery will also be reformed. The Budget also intends to promote smart metering with all the State and Union Territories to replace conventional electricity meters by pre-paid smart meters in next three years. Pre-paid meters are against the vision of the Government. Taking electricity to every household has been a major promise but now they are moving towards pre-paid meters and privatisation of electricity. In a country where many people are still below the poverty line pre-paid electricity meters will make electricity a luxury item whereas it is a basic necessity.

The FM has proposed to sell the balance Government holding in IDBI bank to private, retail and institutional investors through the stock exchange. Certain specified categories of Government securities would be opened fully for non-resident investors, apart from being available to domestic investors as well. The Government now proposes to sell a

part of its holding in LIC by way of Initial Public Offer (IPO), ostensibly to keep it transparent. Sale of stake in LIC is a one-off event and it is important to note that on an ex-LIC basis, the fiscal deficit may be well above four per cent next year. As LIC has stakes in almost every company in India whether private or PSU, selling its stake can also be termed against "national interest." Already there is huge stress on the economy and by selling stakes in LIC, one thing is clear. That the company that till now bailed out many PSUs will bail out the Government itself.

Any tax system requires trust between taxpayers and the administration. To improve trust between the taxation department and the assessee, the Government will amend the provisions of the Income Tax Act to mandate the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) to adopt a Taxpayers' Charter. This is a welcome step towards enhancing investor confidence and trust.

The zero-Budget natural farming, which was mentioned in the July 2019 Budget, was explained further in this

Budget. Integrated farming systems in rain-fed areas will be expanded. Multi-tier cropping, bee-keeping, solar pumps, solar energy production in non-cropping season will be added. The portal on "jaivikkheti" — online national organic products market — will also be upgraded. The PM-KUSUM scheme to provide loans to farmers for setting up stand-alone solar pumps, will be expanded. Further it is also proposed to help another 15 lakh farmers solarise their grid-connected pump sets. In addition, a scheme to enable farmers to set up solar power generation capacity on their fallow/barren lands and to sell it to the grid would be operationalised.

For the sector comprising agriculture and allied activities, irrigation and rural development, an allocation of about ₹2.83 lakh crore has been made for the year 2020-21. The problem with such an approach is that most of it is just repackaging and rewording of existing schemes.

To connect farm with markets it is proposed that railways will introduce a Kisan Express and Ministry of Civil Aviation will launch Krishi

Udaan to help farmers transport perishable goods quickly. The Kisan Rail will be set up through PPP arrangement to transport perishable goods across the country at a faster pace. Further the Railways will also build cold supply chain for milk, meat and fish by setting up train services for the purpose. However, an amount for the same has not been allocated and the Government has simply expressed its intent to move in this direction but doing nothing concrete.

To achieve the twin objectives of giving impetus to the domestic industry and also to generate resource for health services, the Budget imposes a nominal health cess, by way of a duty of customs, on imports of medical equipment, keeping in view that these goods are now being made significantly in India. Further it is proposed that the proceeds from this cess shall be used for creating infrastructure for health services in the aspirational districts. Given the fact that the generic drugs are yet to take off and patient trust is hard-earned, there is no mention of how India-made equipment can be pushed in terms of quality and

volumes.

To achieve higher export credit disbursement, a new scheme, NIRVIK, is being launched, which provides for higher insurance coverage, reduction in premium for small exporters and simplified procedure for claim settlements.

The best thing about this scheme is that it proposes to digitally refund to exporters, duties and taxes levied at the Central, State and local levels, such as electricity duties and VAT on fuel used for transportation, which are not getting exempted or refunded under any other existing mechanism. Electricity Duty and VAT on Petroleum goods constitutes substantial part of costs.

This Budget is full of promises with dreams for the future. But how these dreams will be achieved has not been explained. Also, allocations and numbers don't synchronise with the projections. This Government keeps on talking of long-term solutions for every problem but should we all starve and wait in the short-term?

(The writer is an author and GST and economics specialist)

CAPSULE



Hyundai to unveil all new Creta, Tuscon at Auto Expo

NEW DELHI: Hyundai Motor India plans to showcase a range of products and future technologies, including the all new Creta and updated version of Tuscon, at the upcoming Auto Expo. The 2020 Tucson will be unveiled on February 5, while the new generation Creta will debut a day later on February 6, Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) said in a statement. The company will showcase 13 exciting cars and future ready technologies and concepts under the theme "Freedom in Future Mobility", it said. "Hyundai as a customer centric organisation will showcase the technology prowess...and unveil the upcoming trendsetter SUV's for the Indian market," HMIL MD and CEO S S Kim said. The company has also plans to showcase Kona Electric along with NEXO FCEV at the biennial event, which will be held from February 5 to February 12 at Greater Noida.



Urus to drive future growth of Lamborghini in India

NEW DELHI: Italian super sports car maker Lamborghini expects its premium luxury SUV Urus to drive future growth in India with the model accounting for 50 per cent of its sales in the country, a senior company official said. The company, which delivered its 50th Urus in India last year, has an eight-month waiting period on the model at present. "Urus is playing a big role and is contributing 50 per cent of our business. Order bank is still very healthy for the car," Lamborghini India Head Sharad Agarwal told PTI. He further said, "Our future growth in India will also be largely driven by Urus while sports car will remain at the core of our operations."

ONGC, IOC, other oil PSUs to invest Rs 98,521 cr

NEW DELHI: ONGC, IOC and other oil PSUs will invest over Rs 98,521 crore in the coming fiscal starting April 1 in exploring for oil and gas, refineries, petrochemicals and laying pipelines to meet needs of the world's fastest-growing energy consuming nation. The investment proposed in 2020-21 is almost 4 per cent higher than Rs 94,974 crore spending by the state-owned oil firms in the current fiscal year that ends on March 31, according to Budget 2020-21 documents. Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) leads the pack with a 19 per cent rise in its capital spending at Rs 32,501 crore. The company is investing in finding new reserves of oil and gas and bringing to production discoveries it has already made. It is developing discoveries on both east and west coast of the country.

New debt-based ETF within this quarter

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday said second tranche of debt-based exchange traded fund (ETF) is likely in the current quarter. Sitharaman in her second budget on Saturday proposed to deepen the bond market and announced floating of a new debt ETF comprising primarily of government securities. The first bond ETF launched recently was a great success.



Government proposes to extend this by floating a new debt ETF consisting primarily of government securities. This will give retail investor access to government security as much as giving an attractive investment for pension funds and long-term investors

—NIRMALA SITHARAMAN Finance Minister

"Debt-based exchange traded fund (ETF) recently put out by the government was a big success. Government proposes to extend this by floating a new debt ETF consisting primarily of government securities. This will give retail investor access to government security as much as giving an attractive investment for pension funds and long-term investors," she had said on Saturday.

On Sunday, she said the second tranche of Bond ETF is likely within the current quarter. The Cabinet gave the approval to launch Bharat Bond Exchange Traded Fund or Bharat Bond ETF in December 2019. It was the first corporate bond ETF launched in India.

Green certificate sales down 29 pc to 5.7 lakh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sales of renewable energy certificates declined by 29 per cent to 5.7 lakh units in January compared to 8.05 lakh in the same month a year ago due to lower supply, according to official data. A total of 3.63 lakh RECs were traded on Indian Energy Exchange (IEX) in January compared to 6.44 lakh in the same month last year.

Power Exchange of India (PXIL) recorded sale of 2.07 lakh RECs in the month against 1.61 lakh in January 2019.



FPIs remain net buyers in Jan; invest Rs 12,000 cr in equities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign investors have pumped in more than Rs 12,000 crore in stock markets in January, remaining net buyers of Indian equities for the fifth consecutive month helped by easing concerns pertaining to geopolitical tension between the US and Iran coupled with US-China trade war.

In the equities segment, FPIs invested Rs 7,547.8 crore in September, Rs 12,367.9 crore in October, Rs 25,230.6 crore in November and Rs 7,338.4 crore in December.

According to depositories data, a net sum of Rs 12,122 crore was pumped into equities last month by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs).

However, a net amount of Rs 11,119 crore was withdrawn from the debt segment during the same period. This translated into a net investment of Rs 1,003 crore.

In the equities segment, FPIs invested Rs 7,547.8 crore in September, Rs 12,367.9 crore in October, Rs 25,230.6 crore in November and Rs 7,338.4 crore in December

"Starting off on a rather placid note on account of brewing geopolitical tension between the US and Iran and fast changing trend with regards to the US-China trade war, FPIs regained their risk appetite as these concerns started to wane," said Himanshu Srivastava, senior analyst manager research at Morningstar Investment Adviser India.

'Direct tax collection target scaled down in budget'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The direct tax collection target has been downward revised to Rs 11.80 lakh crore in the Union Budget after making a "realistic assessment" of various economic factors, a top government official said.

The set target for revenue collection (personal income tax, corporate tax and others) was Rs 13.35 lakh crore for the 2019-20 financial year that ends on March 31.

"Those (earlier) estimates have been revised in the budget and our new target would be about Rs 11.80 lakh crore which I am pretty confident that we will achieve it," CBDT Chairman P C Mody told PTI in a post-budget interview. Asked about the reasons for

the recalibration of the target, Mody said, "It was just a realistic assessment of what is achievable and also it has to be taken into account that we have had a lot of revenue forgone."

The revenue foregone is essentially on two accounts - huge refunds issued and cut in corporate tax. "It is a realistic assessment of the whole system."

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) is the policy-making body for the Income

Tax Department that collects revenue for the government under the direct taxes category. Mody said the I-T Department has mopped up about Rs 7.40 lakh tax in the government kitty so far.

"We are very very hopeful (of achieving the revised target) because past experience shows that the last quarter (January-March) is the period when the maximum revenue comes in."

New I-T slabs

Talking about the new personal income tax regime and slabs proposed by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her budget speech on Saturday, the CBDT chairman said the aim of the government is to "give benefit of lower taxes to both corporates and individuals".

This starts from basic government

policy to phase out deductions and exemptions, he said.

"First this was attempted when we tried to lower the corporate rate tax (last year). This time (personal income tax), it has been provided that you can avail the new tax structure rate only if you forego deductions or exemptions." Mody said it was thought that when the money is in the hands of taxpayers, they will be better judge as to what tax saving instrument would they like to put their money in rather than "induced saving" which may not fetch them the required rate of return.

So, we are not trying to put any kind of direction in the investment behaviour of taxpayer, we just want our tax structure to be straight and easy to comply with, he said.

It was just a realistic assessment of what is achievable and also it has to be taken into account that we have had a lot of revenue forgone

P C MODY, CBDT Chairman



BUDGET PROPOSAL

Amazon, Flipkart may approach govt for clarity

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amazon India and Flipkart are studying the Budget proposal on levy of one per cent TDS, and may reach out to the government for clarifications.

"We are studying the details, and will reach out to the government for clarifications. We hope the tax regime is simple and uniform so that millions of small and medium businesses can go online, digitise their operations and continue to contribute to growing the economy," an Amazon India spokesman said in response to an e-mailed query. Flipkart also said it was going through the proposal.

"We are studying the details,



We will discuss further with our seller partners, and engage with government and other stakeholders in due course

—FLIPKART

particularly how it impacts the MSMEs and Sellers on our marketplace platform. We will discuss further with our seller partners, and engage with government and other stakeholders in due course," Flipkart said in its response.

The government on Saturday proposed a new levy

of 1 per cent TDS (tax deducted at source) on e-commerce transactions, a move that could increase burdens on sellers on such platforms.

"In order to widen and deepen the tax net by bringing participants of e-commerce (sellers) within tax net, it is proposed to insert a new section

194-O in the Act so as to provide for a new levy of TDS at the rate of one per cent," according to Budget 2020-21 documents.

The amendments will take effect from April 1, 2020.

The documents said the e-commerce operator -- an entity owning, operating or managing the digital platform -- will have to deduct 1 per cent TDS on the gross amount of sales or service or both. This provision will not apply in cases where the seller's gross amount of sales during the previous year through e-commerce operator is less than Rs 5 lakh and the seller has furnished his PAN or Aadhaar number.

Seven of top 10 firms suffer combined loss of Rs 1.89L cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Seven of the 10 most valued companies suffered a combined loss of Rs 1.89 lakh crore in market valuation last week, led by Reliance Industries which alone took a hit of Rs 87,732.8 crore.

The 30-share BSE Sensex plummeted by 1,877.66 points to close below the key 40,000-mark at 39,735.53 last week.

Rel's valuation tumbled Rs 87,732.8 crore to reach Rs 8,76,906.57 crore. The market capitalisation (m-cap) of HDFC plummeted Rs 31,148.4 crore to Rs 3,92,618.14 crore and that of HDFC Bank by Rs 24,736 crore to Rs 6,56,888.50 crore.

The m-cap of ICICI Bank

dropped Rs 19,044.7 crore to Rs 3,26,410.37 crore and that of SBI cracked Rs 18,652.4 crore to Rs 2,70,549.60 crore.

The valuation of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) declined Rs 7,317.15 crore to Rs 8,12,428.81 crore and that of Infosys dipped Rs 1,149.83 crore to Rs 3,32,280.10 crore.

In contrast, Bharti Airtel which made its entry into the top-10 list, added Rs 2,392.15 crore to Rs 2,71,332.15 crore in its valuation.

Kotak Mahindra Bank's valuation rose by Rs 1,182.02 crore to Rs 3,15,346.61 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) gained Rs 119.07 crore to Rs 4,48,895.43 crore.



MSME Ministry allocated Rs 7,572 cr in Budget

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Budget 2020-21 has earmarked an all-time high allocation of Rs 7,572.20 crore for the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises while announcing a string of initiatives for the sector including raising the turnover threshold for audit of their accounts to Rs 5 crore and a scheme to provide subordinate debt to MSME entrepreneurs.

The flagship employment generation scheme of the ministry, PM Employment Generation Programme, has got an all-time high allocation of Rs 2,500 crore for generating self-employment opportunities through establishment of micro-enterprises in non-farm sector by helping traditional artisans and rural/urban unemployed youth.

"Currently, only businesses having a turnover of more than Rs 1 crore are required to get their books of accounts audited by an accountant. In order to reduce compliance burden on small retailers, traders, shopkeepers who comprise the MSME sector, I propose to raise by five times the turnover threshold for audit from the existing Rs 1 crore to 5 crore," Finance Minister said while presenting the Budget in Parliament on Saturday.

'Cess on imported medical devices will lead to cost escalation for patients

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Medical Technology Association of India (MTAI), that represents mainly research-based medical technology companies, has said the cess imposed by the government on medical devices will lead to increase in cost of imported products and reduce affordability of healthcare.

This is against the basic ethos of Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) wherein government wants to provide affordable healthcare for all, MTAI said.

"A 5 per cent cess on custom duties for import has been imposed on medical devices in the budget which will increase

the cost of the imported medical devices. Ultimately patients will bear this cost and affordability will decrease," MTAI Director Sanjay Bhutani said in a statement.

This is a retrograde measure and goes against global companies which provide more than 80 per cent of critical care medical devices as well as the patient who gets exposed to the danger of smuggling of these low bulk and high value devices, without service & legal guarantees from neighbouring countries where the tariffs are already lower, he added.

"The domestic self-sufficiency argument of the government also needs to be taken with a grain of salt. We do hope



the government has not looked at the classes of products, on which it plans to impose this cess, monolithically. As many sub categories of these classes would not be manufactured in

India at all," Bhutani said. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday proposed to impose a nominal health cess on import of medical equipment to boost domes-

This is against the basic ethos of Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) wherein government wants to provide affordable healthcare for all, MTAI said

tic medical devices sector and generate resources for health services.

"To achieve the twin objectives of giving impetus to the domestic industry and also to generate resource for health services, I propose to impose a nominal health cess, by way of a duty of customs, on the imports of medical equipment keeping in view that these goods are now being made significantly in India," Sitharaman said.

The Association of Indian Medical Device Industry (AiMeD) also expressed disappointment and anguish over the Union Budget giving cold shoulder again to Indian medical device industry.

"This year FM announces taxation will drive public healthcare funding but the fine print states it as cess so if duty on a device was 5 per cent it becomes 5.25 per cent effectively. Only a meagre increase

of 0.25 per cent to protect domestic manufacturing and motivate traders to become manufacturers," AiMeD Forum Coordinator Rajiv Nath said.

AiMeD was expecting the government to move forward on promised reforms and anticipated conducive measures to boost domestic manufacturing of medical devices, he added.

"It is frustrating that against our expectations, the government has not included any measures to help end the 80-90 per cent import dependence forced upon us and an ever increasing import bill of over Rs 38,837 crore and promoting growth of Indian medical device industry," Nath said.

LUXURY, ELEGANCE AND BEAUTY

Beckoning a new vision, Blenders Pride Fashion Tour 2019-20 arrives in Hyderabad, where acclaimed designer Manish Malhotra showcases 'My Identity, My Pride' with Kareena Kapoor Khan at her stylish best. K RAMYA SREE takes you through this milestone fashion show

B The celebrated Blenders Pride Fashion Tour went beyond the conventional ramp walk to celebrate its milestone 15th edition and unveiled a breathtaking face of fashion. The tour travelled to Hyderabad with acclaimed designer Manish Malhotra showcasing a distinctive 'identity' through magnificent designs. To top it all, Kareena Kapoor Khan was the showstopper of the evening.

With pride as a meaningful expression of success and individuality taking the center-stage, this year was all about India and its indigenous craft, a blend of diverse influences, and a distinctive identity that was the canvas of expression.

The tour included segments such as the Collection Gallery, The Showcase and Style Forum, each of which celebrated a whole new facet of fashion. An artistic display of 58 iconic pieces, The Collection Gallery was spread over three zones — Craft, Blend and Identity — which included over 45 famed designers such as Abraham & Thakore, J.J. Valaya, Shantanu & Nikhil, Gaurav Gupta, Wendell Rodricks and so on.

It was busy day at the Hyderabad International Convention Centre on Saturday with eminent designers and celebrities gracing the event and walking the ramp.

A tour of the closet would take one through the luxurious wardrobe designed by Manish Malhotra that were filled with soothing and aesthetic off-white clothing which had intri-



cate details with a modern and traditional touch.

The event began with a tour of the static exhibition that showcased the work of the 45 designers followed by a fashion show by newbie Sushant Abrol. His collection was called 'Beyond the Clouds', which was inspired by the Indian Army and dedicated to his brother who lost his life serving the country. He likes to play with classic silhouettes with minimal technique in predominantly natural textiles — linen, blends of cot-

ton and silk, and khadi cottons.

A discussion by six panelists followed the show and they spoke about the importance of brand consistency and how being relevant in the industry plays an important role. After a small meet and greet, came the big show — Manish Malhotra's 'My Identity My Pride' - where models walked the ramp showcasing his latest wedding collection. Manish has gone for a subtle yet elegant look with his collection this time around. The event concluded with

showstoppers Kareena Kapoor Khan and Karthik Aryan taking to the ramp. It surely was an image etched in memory as Kareena walked the ramp for the first time in Hyderabad and looked elegant in the MM label.

Ram Pothineni, Manchu Lakshmi, Lavanya Tripathi and Nidhi Agerwal were among those present at the show. The fashion extravaganza will culminate in a larger-than-life finale, 'The Pride of India', in collaboration with FDCI, in Mumbai with 15 eminent designers.

In a quick interview with The Pioneer, Kareena and Manish shared tidbits about the BP fashion tour with K Ramya Sree

Today's bride is fearless, experimental: Manish

'I take pride in being a modern working mother'



Q) Tell us about your new look for this year?

A) It's been an iconic year so far, as my collection and the Blenders Pride Fashion Tour complete 15 years in the industry. This is the spring summer destination wedding collection. The most interesting thing about this collection is that there are a lot of new designs in embroidery, from Kashmiri thread work to other details.

Can you explain to us the theme behind your collection?

I think today's bride is far more experimental, fearless and I think the big trend in fashion this year is going to be individuality. Women no longer fear wearing sneakers under their lehenga or changing their dress within hours of the engagement. Everyone wants to try different things and discover themselves. That is what the collection stands for. I am inspired by architecture and the entire set for the show is structural. We had two years of monochromatic visuals so you'll see a mix of various things. The sorbet colours too, in both the set and clothing, are celebratory.

What is the significance of the theme 'My Identity, My Pride'?

I strongly believe in individuality and for people who make their own path. Coming into movies 30 years ago and seeing the change in fashion in Indian movies was tough. I'm working with a fourth generation of actors now and writing a book which will come out later this year. The last 30 years literally flew and I don't even remember what all I had designed. When I started with films I thought it was all about the movies until I started a boutique. I look back and feel that taking a chance, working hard not fearing failure is truly my identity and my pride. It's about the journey as a whole and hence it is the theme.

What was your thought behind your make-up brand?

We launched our make-up brand a year ago and it was a runaway success. In fact, I feel that I started the brand quite late. I should've done it earlier. When I got into movies, I was the first person who started questioning the make-up that will go with the dress. At that time no cos-

tume designer would bother with the make-up. I remember telling Sridevi once about her hair; In one scene it was short and in the next it was long. You need to have consistent hair, I had told her. During the shooting of *Gumra* I took her to a stylist and got her wig cut to get that consistent look. Giving an identity to the character is important. I'm very fond of make-up and still feel it can make or break a look.

Can you share about your Hyderabad connect?

When I first came to the film industry in 1990, I used to come to Hyderabad often as a lot of Bollywood films were being made here. I love the city and still remember going to a 'Black Cattle café' and Banjara hotel. I met Vijayashanti ji, Balakrishna garu and Chiranjeevi garu and I'm happy that I was able to work with them.

I remember while doing a song for Manisha Koirala, I would catch an early morning flight to Hyderabad from Bombay, go to Padmalaya studios, finish work and take a flight back. I did that for four consecutive days. My association with Hyderabad is almost 30-years-old.

From your 15 years of MM label, is there any collection you would want to revive?

We did a lot of FDCI shows in Delhi wherein the entire collection was on Phulkari. That collection was picked up by a Philadelphia museum and we recreated. I do a lot of work in Kashmir and there is a skirt in today's collection, which is made out of all the leftovers.



Q) Can you tell us about your association with Blenders Pride?

A) It is an absolute honour to be walking the ramp here for the first time for Blenders Pride that too for their 15th edition. I am very excited as it is the combination of Manish and BP and with also Manish being a dear friend of mine. We have worked together many times, be it fashion or films. I look forward for this collaboration.

What design elements of Manish can you relate to with your personal style?

Well, Manish is one fashion designer who understands the fashion dynamics and the movie business. It's very rare to find someone who understands both movies and fashion. I think he takes it to the next level and that's where even his collection is a mix and match between contemporary and tradition. He is a master at this and I love all his work. He is somebody I always adore and someone who I take great pride in walking the ramp with his work. He makes a woman look very ethereal and beautiful.

How do you see your fashion journey in these 20 years?

Well, at least my hair is not gold anymore (laughs). If I look back I will never do it anymore.

Speaking of fashion journey, I guess it's about evolution and reinvention both in terms of fashion and performance. Whether it's my clothes, films or performance, I always make sure there is a relatability factor between the audience and me. That's how I choose my films too.

Can you take us through your look for the show?

Its Manish, so I'm definitely going to look fashionable (laughs). He is one of the most glamorous Indian designers out there. Every look is nothing short of the best.

How do you keep your fitness and charm?

Fitness comes in when you want to feel good. I feel when you eat right you automatically feel good from within. That's one thing I do on a regular basis.

What do you like the most about Hyderabad? Is there anything you would want to take back?

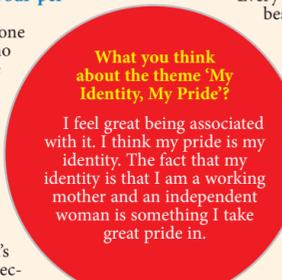
I love the food here. The idlis, dosas and appams. I have been coming here even before I became an actress as I used to come here with Karishma during her shoots. I feel this is a very clean city. In fact, I was observing the state of the roads on my way to the hotel from the airport and was very impressed. This is a spotless city and I feel very comfortable here.

What is the difference you see between the current generation actors and those of your generation?

The current generation have it a lot easier than us. Everybody is a celebrity in this generation. You just take one click and upload it on social media after adding some filters and you become famous within no time. In today's digital age, everything is so fast. As far as actors are concerned, they are all supremely talented. They are pretty fearless as actors now.

What is your go-to fashion style?

I think I'm very casual. A t-shirt, jeans and boots are something you will always spot me in and I always live in them.



What's brewing?



● Brahmani ● Upasana



● Pinky Reddy



● Rajat Kumar and Archana



● Sophie Chowdhary



● Punarnavi



● Lakshmi Manchu



● Shreya



● Jayesh Ranjan and Ruchi



● Anjali



● Ankitha



● Arushi



● Divya



● Ram



● Nidhi Agarwal



● Lavanya Tripathi

PHOTOS BY SV CHARY

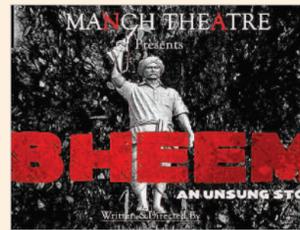
FASHION FIESTA

It was a gala affair for film celebrities, models and fashion lovers who attended in scores to witness the Blenders Pride Fashion Tour 2020 in Hyderabad. Renowned fashion designers showcased their latest works to fashion lovers and everyone enjoyed the evening

PARTY

CITY GUIDE

EVENTS



BHEEM

● *Bheem* is a Telugu patriotic play written by Harsha Chakiram based on Telangana's freedom fighter Komaram Bheem who fought for his water, forest and land. The play is being organised by Manch Theatre at Lamakaan on February 8 at 7.30 pm.

MOSAMBI NARANGI

● Taher Ali Baig in association with Page Production presents one-of-a-kind play about hopes and broken dreams, complete with odd ball characters, humour and emotion. The play is all set to be performed at Shilpakala Vedika on February 9 at 7 pm.



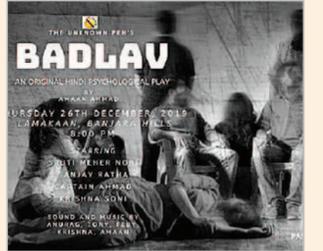
AN INSPECTOR CALLS

● *An Inspector Calls*, is the Telugu adaptation of the original English play by the same name by J B Priestly written in the year. The play revolves around the alleged suicide of a young woman named Shwetha and an unsuspecting family which is visited by a mysterious Inspector. The play will be held at Phoenix arena on February 7 at 7 pm.



CHILDREN'S ART EXHIBITION

● Children's Art Exhibition will be held on February 22 at Lamakaan from 12 pm. Children's would be trained in various art skills during the exhibition.



BADLAV

● *Badlav* is an original Hindi psychological play written and directed by Amaan Ahmad. Touching the core of Theatre of the Absurd, 'Badlav' is a one of a kind play that traverses through multiple questions concerning human consciousness in a twisted manner. Set in an indefinite timeline, the play questions the very nature of 'change'. The play will be staged on February 6 at 8 pm at Lamakaan.



STAND-UP COMEDY

● Vivek Muralidharan is one of the most seasoned comedians in the Hyderabad circuit. Vivek Muralidharan Live is his weekly one hour experimental show where he workshops his fresh bits and debuts his deeper insights, working on his craft while having the audience in splits. The programme will be held on February 16 at Phoenix Arena from 5 pm.

GET YOUR EVENT LISTED: To get your events listed, send your details along with a poster and contact number to pioneer.features@gmail.com

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



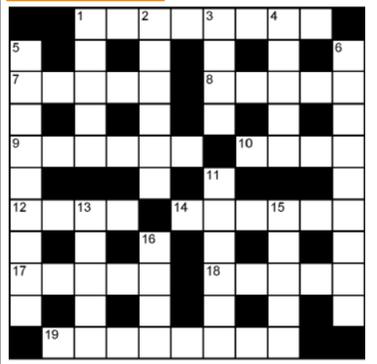
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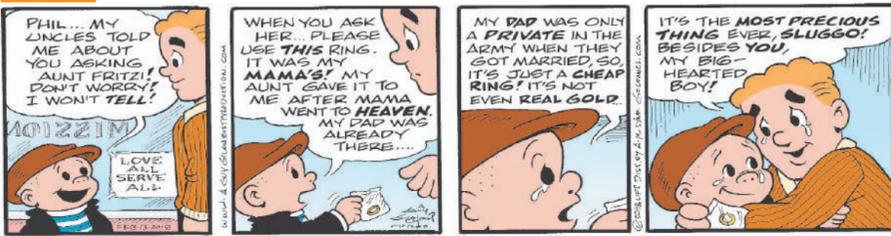
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

ACROSS

- Expecting a baby
- Similar
- Eat soup with this
- Reply
- A large furry animal
- A snake's noise
- Overtakes
- A dentist repairs these
- Living
- A game of jumping a rope
- A skydiver wears this
- Without clothing
- Honolulu is the capital of this American island state
- Say something
- A wasp's weapon
- Cut with an axe

DOWN

- Sets of two
- The number of players in a cricket team
- Smell with this
- A rope loop



GINGER MEGGS





Nani, who has made a name for himself for being able to choose the right scripts, speaks about Dil Raju remaking the Tamil hit '96 into Telugu, his friendship with Sharwa and more

I can only see Sharwa and Sam as Ram and Jaanu: Nani

Actor Nani too was of the opinion that Dil Raju shouldn't be remaking '96 in Telugu. At the trailer launch of *Jaanu* last week in Hyderabad, the producer had said that many people felt that he has gone mad to remake '96 in Telugu.

"Just to seek my opinion, Raju garu arranged a special screening of '96 for me in Chennai. Immediately after watching it, I told him, 'It's a beautiful film. Don't remake it'. Even as the news of Telugu remake was making rounds, I told people that the original shouldn't be touched. But when the makers announced that it would be fronted by Sharwa and Samantha in Telugu, I was upbeat about it. After watching the recently released trailer, the memory of watching the original

NANI SAID THAT IF HE AND SAMANTHA HAD DONE YETO VELLIPOINDHI MANASU NOW, ITS SUCCESS WOULD'VE BEEN BIGGER AND BETTER. HE SAID THAT HE IS PROUD OF SAMANTHA'S CHOICE OF MOVIES AND HER SUCCESS

faded away and I could only see Sharwa and Sam as Ram and Jaanu," Nani said. He was speaking at the pre-release event of the film in Hyderabad over the weekend.

Speaking about Sharwa, he said that the actor is one of his oldest friends in the industry. "Jaanu story transpires because of a reunion and I hope he meets his old friends occasionally," he said cheekily, alluding to Sharwa not being in touch with him off late.

On Samantha, Nani said that if they had done *Yeto Vellipoindhi Manasu* now, its success would've been on another level altogether. "I'm proud of her and her choices. If a year has 10 good films, she is there in three of them," he added.

Sharwa said that he was on his toes while shooting for *Jaanu*. "With actors like Nithya Menen, Sai Pallavi and Samantha, you have to be alert because they set the screen on fire with their performances. Sam still

works as if it's her day one on sets. I occasionally relax but she constantly keeps a tab of each shot, checking the monitor. It is the reason why she is a superstar," he said and promised that the film has content to connect audience ranging from teens to 90-year-olds. "First love is always special and this film is about that," he added. Shedding light about his bond with Nani, he said that he has been friends with him since 2008. "Although we couldn't catch up in the recent past because of our schedules, there was a time when me, him and Allari Naresh had gone on trips together," he shared.

Samantha said she would speak more about the film post its release on February 7.

KIARA likely to pair up with MAHESH again



Kiara Advani's name has been attached to multiple projects since the middle of last year. Prominent among them includes Akhil Akkineni's next with Bommarillu Bhasker, Varun Tej's next with Kiran Korrapati and Vijay Deverakonda's next with Puri Jagannadh. The actress couldn't commit to any of them because of her Hindi assignments. But if the latest buzz in tinsel town is anything to go by, she seems to have expressed interest to feature in superstar Mahesh Babu's next with Vamshi Paidipally. The untitled film will go to floors mostly in April-May.

Apparently it was Namrata, Mahesh's wife, who rang Kiara and spoke about her role in Paidipally's next. Namrata, it is said, was keen on a pan-India face like Kiara for the project. The actor's diary wasn't a problem as she was asked to allot 40 days, spread over three phases, starting from summer. Besides the Mahesh factor, the fact that her role carries considerable weight meant that Kiara gave her in-principle nod. Mahesh Babu and Kiara Advani had previously starred in *Bharat Ane Nenu*.

In the film, a Dil Raju production, Mahesh will be seen as a gangster, a role he hitherto played in his career. The gangster portions will form the flashback episode of the film, which will be shot in Visakhapatnam. Currently, Paidipally is contemplating showing Mahesh as a lecturer or a professor. S.S. Thaman is on board to compose tunes. The film is being considered for a 2021 Sankranti release. — NG



PAYAL RAJPUT as a fighter pilot

In the making for over a year, filmmaker Jayanth C. Paranjhi's *Narendra* got a new addition. The film's makers on Sunday announced the casting of Payal Rajput in a key role. The *RX100* actress career isn't going great as her recent releases *RDX*, *Venky Mama* and *Disco Raja* hardly helped her bag plum projects.

In *Narendra*, Payal will be seen as a fighter pilot who helps the titular character (played by Nilesh Eti) to reach India from a prison in Pakistan. Former *WWE* wrestler The Great Khali will be seen as an Afghan prisoner, who sacrifices himself in his attempt to rescue the Indian prisoners, while Izabelle Leite plays a human rights activist who supports their fight for freedom.

The film, a Ram Sampath musical, tells the story of a champion ex-boxer (played by newcomer Nitesh) who won gold medals for the country, but is abandoned by the government. The sequence of events that unfolds, including on how he lands in Pakistan, are told in a thrilling way. Jayanth who has delivered super hits like *Premichukundam Raa*, *Bavagaru Bagunnara* and *Premante Idera* in the past is hoping to stage a successful comeback with *Narendra*, which is being produced by Eshaan Entertainments.



NIKHIL gets engaged in Goa

Nikhil Siddhartha, who spilled the beans of dating a doctor on a chat show with Lakshmi Manchu last year, has now got engaged to her in Goa on Saturday. The girl's name is Pallavi Varma and she hails from Bhimavaram. Interestingly, the actor chose Goa as the engagement venue as it was the same place he proposed to Pallavi last year. The ceremony was a simple affair, with families and friends of the actor and the doctor attending it. The wedding is scheduled to be held on April 16 this year. The venue hasn't been decided yet. In fact, actor Nithiin too will tie the knot on the same date but in Dubai. On the work front, Nikhil, who bounced back with *Arjun Suravaram* last year, has *Karthikeya 2*, films with new director Hanuman and Vi Anand for this year.

NITHIIN's mixed emotions

Tbnhe shoot of Nithiin-starrer *Bheeshma* was wrapped up on Saturday, with the filming of the last song on the lead pair under the supervision of choreographer Sekhar at the Ramoji Film City.



Nithiin, who hasn't had a release last year, was left with mixed feelings after the completion. The actor, taking to Twitter, wrote, "Last day of shoot for #bheeshma :(Its been awhile since I've felt this way, makes me really sad but at the same time so proud to be a part of such a fun film. But this is not the last you guys- You will see us all very soon reuniting in a much bigger way! (sic)"

Showering praise on director Venky Kudumula and his leading lady Rashmika Mandanna, the actor, who is to get engaged to doctor Shalini later this month, went on to tweet, "@VenkyKudumula i love you man. Words are too little to express myself but for starters - thankyou for #bheeshma. @iamRashmika you're my fav. Thankyou for all your hard-work and support. Cant wait to work with you again. Soon! (sic)" Replying to his co-star's comment, the actress wrote, "I can't believe it's the end man. So glad to have done this film with you. You've been my best friend. can't express well sorry about that but you know what I mean (sic)." A romantic action-entertainer with humour, *Bheeshma* will hit screens February 21.

Now, Nag and Maruthi back BA Raju's son

After filmmaker Puri Jagannadh unveiled the first glimpse of film 22, a crime-thriller, sometime back, it was the turn of Superstar Nagarjuna to unveil the film's teaser in Hyderabad on Sunday. The film marks the directorial debut of Shiva Kumar, who is the son of producer B.A. Raju and late filmmaker B.A. Jay. The film features new faces Rupesh Kumar Choudhary and Saloni Misra in lead roles. Rupesh himself is producing it under Maa Aai Productions.

Speaking later, Nag said that he close to Jaya and that he is happy to see her son follow his mother's footsteps. "Shiva should live up to reputation of his mother as a filmmaker. I welcome Rupesh to the industry. He has seen enormous success as a businessman and has entered the industry out of sheer passion for acting. The teaser looks interesting," the actor said before extending his best wishes to the unit for a successful theatrical run.

Shiva said the unit was a happy bunch with Nagarjuna launching the teaser. "As someone who has been at the forefront when it comes to encouraging newcomers, we consider ourselves lucky for Nag sir to have released the teaser. He was very impressed with it," the director noted.

At a separate press meet on Sunday, director Maruthi unveiled the film's calendar. "Shiva worked under me as an assistant director and handled the complete post-production of a film of mine. He works hard as a filmmaker. Generally first-time filmmakers choose a love story but Shiva preferred a crime-thriller, which shows his maturity. I've already seen a web series of his and was floored by the technical standards he maintained in it," the director mentioned.

Wrapped up in 35 days flat, 22 also sees Vikramjeet Virk, Devi Prasad, Jaya Prakash, Ravi Varma, Pooja Ramachandran, Krishna Chaitanya and Rajashri Nair among others in supporting roles.





India players pose for a group photo as they celebrate a 5-0 series win during the Twenty/20 cricket international between India and New Zealand

HAPPY WITH THE LEARNINGS IN NZ: BUMRAH



IANS ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI



Not thinking about T20WC at the moment: Rahul

MOUNT MAUNGANUI: Chief architect of India's rare 5-0 clean sweep over New Zealand, India opener KL Rahul on Sunday said he is not yet thinking about the T20 World Cup but wants to carry his sparkling form into the big event.

The 27-year-old from Karnataka was named the Player of the Tournament for scoring 224 runs in the five-match series at an average of 56.

"I am batting really well now and I am happy to do the roles I am doing for my side. Not thinking too much about the T20 World Cup at the moment, but hopefully I can continue batting this way," he said.

India notched up a rare 5-0 whitewash over New Zealand with a seven-run win in the fifth and final T20 International and Rahul said the team's ability to find answers in difficult situations was the key to its success.

"I am pleased. It is great to be standing here winning 5-0. Very happy that my performances could result in victories for India. We were happy to come into this series with confidence and to keep executing our skills every game. We came up with answers from every situation and it is a great result for me and the side," he said.

"I think it is a winning habit that we have cultivated wherein we want to win every time we step onto the ground. As a team we keep believing in each other. Leading up to the World Cup, there were a few strategies that we wanted to try out. It just keeps giving us more and more confidence to keep going around." India will next play three ODIs against New Zealand beginning on February 5 and Rahul said they will follow the same process to achieve success in the 50-over format.

"We'll relax a little bit over the next couple of days and enjoy the victory. But once we start with the next series, the process will remain the same," he said.

PTI

HIGH 5

Bumrah led pacers share seven wickets to help India win final T20 by 7 runs

INDIA'S OVERSEAS SERIES WINS IN T-20I			
YEAR	VENUE	OPPONENT	RESULT
2020	New Zealand	New Zealand	5-0
2016	Australia	Australia	3-0
2016	Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe	2-1
2018	South Africa	South Africa	2-1
2018	England	England	2-1

FAISEL FEATURES

PTI ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI

India choked New Zealand yet again to turn it around for a seven-run win in the fifth T20 International, giving them a rare 5-0 series whitewash in the shortest format here on Sunday.

The Indian pacers, led by ever-reliable Jasprit Bumrah, shared seven wickets among them for 25 runs in match-changing 7.2 overs to restrict the Kiwis to 156 for nine while defending 163 for three.

Bumrah conceded just 12 runs in his four overs and got rid of three batsmen, bowling block-hole deliveries during death overs.

India's total was built around stand-in skipper Rohit Sharma's 60-run knock after they elected to bat.

Tim Seifert (50) and Ross Taylor (53) kept the Black Caps in hunt for a consolation win but the hosts again fell near the finish line.

This is only third time that India have whitewashed opponents in away T20 series and first time in a five-match rubber.

42 balls. He hit five fours and two sixes.

They took 34 runs off Shivam Dube in the 10th over, after which KL Rahul, who led in absence of injured Rohit Sharma, had to take corrective measures. He brought back his frontline pacers and they both etched out wickets.

Navdeep Saini (2-23) dismissed Seifert and then Bumrah bowled Daryl Mitchell (2) with a searing yorker.

New Zealand's chase was all but over when Mitchell Santner (6) holed out of Shardul Thakur (2-38) and Manish Pandey held a fine running catch at long on. Ish Sodhi smacked 16 off 10 balls to provide some fireworks at the end but it was not enough.

Earlier, Rohit, batting at number three, was retired hurt after injuring his left calf whilst hitting a six and walked off the field in discomfort. He faced 41 balls and hit three fours as well as three sixes.

Virat Kohli was expectedly rested, with Rohit coming in, and it was the only change for India from Wellington. Rishabh Pant

was ignored once again.

For New Zealand, Kane Williamson didn't recover on time and Tim Southee led the side once again.

Despite Rohit's return, Sanju Samson (2) continued to open the innings and it didn't work again. Yet another opportunity went abegging as he hit straight to extra cover and was out for two runs.

KL Rahul (45) and Rohit added 88 runs for the second wicket, providing vital momentum to the Indian innings.

The in-form duo dominated the Black Caps' attack and put on 50 off just 35 balls. Rahul hit four fours and two sixes in his 33-ball stay.

He fell in the 12th over against the run of play and finished with 224 runs in the series, the most for an Indian batsman in any bilateral T20I series.

Sharma scored his 25th T20I half-century off 35 balls. He looked to accelerate but then injured himself in the 17th over and retired.

The loss of both Rahul and Sharma impacted the Indian innings, and they lost all momen-

India had blanked the West Indies 3-0 in 2019 and beat Australia 3-0 in 2016.

New Zealand got off to a poor start and were quickly reduced to 17 for three in the fourth over. Bumrah had Martin Gupthill (2) lbw, and Sundar bowled Colin Munro (15). Tom Bruce's run-out didn't help the sit-

uation either.

Taylor and Seifert came together at that juncture, putting on 99 runs for the fourth wicket, raising vision of an improbable win.

Seifert reached his half-century off 29 balls, including five fours and three sixes. While Taylor got to his half-century in

0-5 series whitewash hurts: Taylor

PTI ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI

Senior New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor on Sunday admitted that the 0-5 whitewash by India has hurt his side badly and the whole T20I series has been a disappointment for them.

Taylor, however, said his side played better cricket than the results suggest though they knew from the beginning that it was going to be a tough task against a strong Indian team.

"The whole series has been a disappointment, the way we put ourselves in good positions and just were not able to capitalize. When you are up against a world-class side like India, we have played a lot worse and got better results than this," Taylor said after New Zealand lost the fifth and final match by seven runs to hand India a rare series



Ross Taylor raises his bat

whitewash.

"Even though it's a different format (than ODI and Test), it still does hurt. Winning is a habit and losing those tight games. But we are going into a format that is one of our strengths. In ODI cricket, hopefully Kane's shoulder is all right, new personnel and some world-class players coming back and we are looking forward," he said of the three-match ODI series from February 5-12.

He said New Zealand have given a strong Indian side room to take advantage out of it and they had suffered from that.

"You can't give this Indian side an inch, we gave them a lot more than that and they took advantage. You got to learn a lot quicker than we are now with both bat and ball. Until then, we will get similar results," he said,

referring to the instances when New Zealand lost two matches in Super Over.

Taylor, however, hailed the Indian team for being able to win series away from home.

"More often than not it is tough to win away from home but to come over here with a couple of their star players missing that would add a different balance to their side. I am sure it is very good for Indian cricket."

"I probably say this, we were completely outplayed in the series last year and we came back and won that semi-final in the World Cup. Whenever we play India in a T20I game, we know it will be an uphill task but we know we can still beat them when it counts hopefully," he added.

Taylor, who hit 53 on

Sunday, said the target of 164 was achievable but the Kiwis came up short in a tight chase and could not recover from a poor start.

"I thought we were under pressure when I came out there. The way Tim Seifert came out and batted, we got ourselves to what once again would normally be a comfortable scenario with 66 off 60 balls. You win, maybe 95 times (from there)," said the 35-year-old right-handed batsman.

"When you got a world-class bowler like Bumrah, you have got to skin the cat slightly differently and he is able to be their X-factor for them. The way (Navdeep) Saini and others bowled put us under some pressure and wickets fell at different times," he said, explaining how New Zealand batsmen lost their plot.

We need everyone to be the best version of themselves: Kohli

PTI ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI

India captain Virat Kohli on Sunday said he wants his players to be the "best version of themselves" in order to dominate world cricket in the coming years.

India notched up a rare 5-0 whitewash over New Zealand with a seven-run win in the fifth and final T20 International here.

"We need everyone to be the best versions of themselves. It is all about laying the vision in front of the boys, the way you think, prepare. The guys are taking notice of it and they realise that the team needs 120 percent from them every time," Kohli said.

"Because only then you will find ways to win. That has been a massive change for us in the last two-three years. We have seen the results; we obviously won't win everything and these victories give a lot more pleasure than the one-sided victories."

With Kohli resting himself from the inconsequential final game, Rohit Sharma was the stand-in skipper, but the opener suffered a calf injury while batting and had to retire hurt.

In his absence, KL Rahul led the side to victory.

Heaping praise on the team at the presentation ceremony, Kohli said: "All of us are really proud of how we played. It's about finding ways to win. Today, all these young guys were on the field after Rohit's unfortunate injury and them coming together and handling the pressure."

"That gives me a lot of pleasure watching from the outside and they will take this momentum going forward for many years."

Kohli also backed under-fire New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson, saying he is the right man to lead the Black Caps despite the 0-5 drubbing.

"Kane and me have similar mindsets, similar philosophies. It is amazing that despite being from different parts of the world, we have similar thoughts and



we speak the same language," he said.

"Despite what the score-line suggests, I feel that New Zealand cricket is in the best hands and he is the right guy to lead this team. He is the perfect, perfect man to lead them. I wish him the best of luck and power to lead this side in the future. They are a side everyone loves to watch and play against."

It was the first time that New Zealand lost three or more matches in a bilateral T20I series at home. The hosts had gone down 0-2 to England back in February 2008.

New Zealand stand-in skipper Tim Southee said there wasn't much difference between the two sides.

"It's another close one, unfortunately on the wrong side again. If you give them a sniff, they take it with both hands. I don't think it is a massive gap, the scoreline does suggest that, but we only need to do the smaller things better," he said.

The two teams will next play a three-match ODI series beginning on February 5 and Southee hoped that the hosts will put up a better show with new players coming into the side.

"The ODIs are a different format, new personnel come in and it is a format where we have done well," he said.

India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, who was adjudged the Man of the Match for his three-wickets haul, said he always had the belief that a couple of good overs can change the complexion of the game.

"Feeling very good. The match got close at one point but we had belief that if we can squeeze in one or two good overs, the match can get close," he said.

Eves lose to Aussies in T20 tri-series

PTI ■ CANBERRA

Indian women suffered a four-wicket loss against the mighty Australia after a disappointing batting performance in their second match of the T20 tri-series here on Sunday.

India struggled to 103 for nine in 20 overs after being asked to bat. The visiting team's bowlers did well to stretch the game till the penultimate over but there were not enough runs on the board.

Elyse Perry was the undisputed star of the game, picking up three wickets in one before making 49 off 47 balls in Australia's chase.

India had beaten England in the tournament opener while Australia had lost to England in a Super Over finish on Saturday, leaving all three teams with a win each.

"Our lower order definitely needs to bat a lot better, especially when the top-order doesn't get runs. However, really appreciate the performance of the bowlers," said India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur at the post-match presentation.

India next play against England at the Junction Oval in Melbourne.

Barring opener Smriti Mandhana (35) and Harmanpreet (28), Indian batters showed complete lack of application on a pitch offering extra bounce. India lost their last six wickets for



Elyse Perry in action

21 runs with pacer Perry (4/13 in 4 overs) picking three of them in 14th over over, removing Harmanpreet, Taniya Bhatia and Deepti Sharma.

Sixteen-year-old Shafali Verma, touted as the next big thing in women's cricket, lasted only three balls while Jemimah Rodrigues crawled to 1 off 11 balls, leaving their team at 16 for two in three overs.

The experienced Mandhana and Harmanpreet stitched a 40-run stand before the latter's dismissal triggered a collapse.

The spin-heavy Indian bowling attack did all they could with left-arm spinner Rajeshwari taking two wickets for 18 runs in four overs. Offie Deepti, who opened the bowling, too kept things tight taking one wicket for 18 runs in four overs.

Gill smashes double century as India A save first unofficial Test

PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

Shubman Gill is expected to retain his place in India's Test squad after scoring an unbeaten 204 for the A team in the drawn four-day game against New Zealand A here on Friday.

Resuming the day four at 127 for two, India A went on to make 448 for three in their second innings with Gill scoring his second double century on an away tour (the first one came in West Indies last year).

Gill and Test regular Hanuma Vihari (100 off 113) shared an unbeaten 222-run stand for the fourth wicket to save the game for India A. Another valuable contribution came from Priyank Panchal (115 off 164).

Gill's 279-ball effort comprised 22 boundaries and four sixes. Vihari's quickfire century comprised 11 fours and three sixes.

It was a much improved batting effort from India A as the pitch eased out at the Hagley Oval. The team, captained by Vihari, made 216 in



Shubman Gill in action

the first innings in which Gill was the top-scorer with 83.

In response, New Zealand A had amassed 562 for seven before declaring the innings.

Mayank Agarwal, who will open alongside Rohit Sharma in the two-Test series against New Zealand later this month, had a forgettable

outing in the game as he got out for a duck in both the innings.

After a fine double century, Gill is certain to retain his place in the Test squad. The 20-year-old was also part of the squad in the home series against South Africa and Bangladesh but did not get a game.