

OPINION 6

NEED TO OBJECTIFY HISTORY

MONEY 8

IRDAI CHIEF CAUTIONS INSURERS AGAINST PREDATORY PRICING

SPORTS 12

INDIA LAUNCH OLYMPIC BID WITH PRO OPENER

HYDERABAD, SATURDAY JANUARY 18, 2020; PAGES 12-13



the pioneer



PRABHAS' PICTURE SENDS FANS INTO FRENZY
Page 11

www.dailypioneer.com

VIJAY MALLYA ALLOWED 17-BEDROOM FRENCH MANSION TO ROT, SAYS BANK

Indian tycoon Vijay Mallya's palatial island home boasts 17 bedrooms, a cinema, private helipad and even its own nightclub. But one of the banks suing him for unpaid debts alleged the former billionaire let it fall into disrepair. Mallya bought 'Le Grand Jardin' through his company Gizmo Invest SA in 2008 using a 27-million euro (\$30 million) loan facility from Ansbacher & Co., a unit of Qatar National Bank SAQ. Gizmo has since defaulted on the loan, the bank told a London high court Wednesday.



US NURSE POISONS HUSBY USING EYE DROPS, GETS 25-YEAR JAIL

A South Carolina woman was Thursday sentenced to 25 years in jail after she admitted poisoning her husband by putting eye drops in his drinking water. In a plea deal, Lana Sue Clayton, 53, pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter in the death of Steven Clayton, 64, at their home in Clover, near Charlotte, CBS-affiliate WBTW reported. She was accused of poisoning her husband by lacing his drinking water with eye drops between July 19 and 21, 2018. Her husband was initially thought to have died of natural causes but an autopsy toxicology report showed poisonous levels of tetrahydrozoline, which is found in eye drops.



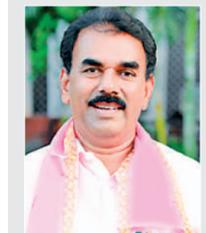
SAI GETS FOUR WEEKS TO DISPOSE SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINTS

Sports Minister Kiren Rijju on Friday said all pending complaints of sexual harassment at SAI institutes will be disposed off in the next four weeks to ensure a zero tolerance approach towards the menace. Reacting to a report which claimed that 45 cases of sexual harassment were reported from 24 Sports Authority of India (SAI) institutes over the last 10 years in which little or no action was taken, the minister asserted that the body's institutes are, in general, safe spaces. "There is zero tolerance for sexual harassment on SAI campuses. The inquiries that are underway will be speeded up," he said.



TEJAS EXPRESS COVERS AHMEDABAD-MUMBAI IN 6-HOURS

The Ahmedabad-Mumbai Tejas Express, the second premium train to be run by Railway subsidiary IRCTC, completed its inaugural run on Friday in six hours, covering the distance of 491 km. Such speeds are rarely seen on this busy route. The train was flagged off by Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani from Ahmedabad at 10.45 am, and it arrived at Mumbai Central station at 4.45 pm, almost half an hour before its scheduled travel time. As per the train tickets, it was to depart from Ahmedabad at 9.30 am for its maiden run.



MUNICIPAL POLLS

WILL BHAINSA RIOTS PROVE COSTLY FOR PINK PARTY?

L VENKAT RAM REDDY
HYDERABAD

The communal riots at Bhainsa in Nirmal district last week, ahead of the crucial municipal elections on January 22, have changed the political dynamics in north Telangana districts.

The present communally vitiated situation is being likened to that which prevailed during a phase of campaigning for the Lok Sabha polls when TRS supremo and Chief Minister K Chandrababoo Naidu reportedly uttered "Hindu gallu, Bondu gallu", while canvassing for TRS Lok Sabha candidate in Karimnagar in March 2019. The remarks of KCR were then construed by some as 'anti-Hindu' and the BJP lost



(file photo)

no time in making them its plank to win over Hindu voters. This happened though the north Telangana districts were known to be the bastion of ruling TRS.

The BJP did make a dent in

the TRS bastion in May 2019 when the Lok Sabha polls were held. The BJP shocked TRS by wresting Nizamabad, Adilabad and Karimnagar Lok Sabha seats, after trouncing TRS heavyweights in those seats.

- Recent communal clashes change political dynamics in north Telangana districts
- TRS-AIMIM 'friendship' plank for BJP to polarise votes
- Pink party withdraws candidates, facilitates AIMIM to win 3 wards unanimously in Bhainsa
- BJP capitalised on KCR's "Hindu gallu, Bondu gallu" remark during LS polls

All this happened when TRS was riding high during LS polls in the aftermath of its landslide victory in the December 2018 Assembly elections for a second consecutive term.

Continued on Page 2

KTR makes it clear there is no alliance with MIM in civic polls

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TRS working president and IT Minister KT Rama Rao has made it clear that the pink party has no truck with AIMIM for the municipal elections. In fact, TRS has fielded its candidates in all municipal wards and divisions. MIM candidates in Bhainsa got elected unanimously "due to local conditions", he told media persons here on Friday.

KTR said that BJP was intentionally spreading misinformation that TRS had an alliance with MIM. Religious and national issues would not work in the municipal elections. Developmental and welfare schemes taken up locally by the state government would influence people. BJP's propaganda against TRS would not secure votes to the saffron party, he asserted.

Mentioning that Chief Minister K Chandrababoo Naidu had many schemes in his



KTR said that BJP was intentionally spreading misinformation that TRS had an alliance with MIM

mind, KTR said that they would be implemented at the appropriate time. "The state-

ments on me becoming chief minister are mere speculations. Only media is making the ministers to speak on the issue", he said.

Reiterating that the upcoming municipal elections were a challenge to him, KTR said that the construction of 2 lakh double-bedroom houses was going on with an outlay of Rs.8,000 crore.

Continued on Page 3



Groupism in ruling TRS comes to the fore in Kollapur

4



'Nirbhaya's mother 'misguided', Delhi govt had no role'

5



'Amazon to create one million jobs in India by 2025'

8

FRESH DEATH WARRANTS ISSUED

Nirbhaya convicts to go to the gallows on Feb 1



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Fresh death warrants were issued by a Delhi court on Friday for the execution of the four convicts in the 2012 Nirbhaya gangrape-murder case on February 1, shortly after the President quickly rejected the mercy petition of one of them.

Additional Sessions Judge Satish Kumar Arora while ordering that the four men, who are lodged in Tihar jail, be hanged at 6 am on February 1, however, expressed displeasure over the delay in their hanging.

"This case presents a scenario when convicts were given the opportunity to file mercy but only one preferred. There might be delay tactics. For how long will this go on? Had death warrant not been issued, the convicts would not have initiated their legal remedies," he said.

The judge was hearing the plea by Mukesh Kumar Singh for postponement of the date of his execution scheduled for 7 am on January 22 in view of the pendency of his mercy petition.

According to the Delhi government, the Prison Rules mandate a buffer period of 14 days between the day of the rejection of the mercy petition and the day of execution.

Besides Mukesh, 32, Vinay Sharma (26), Akshay Kumar Singh (31) and Pawan Gupta (25) were to be hanged. Judge Arora issued death warrants against them on January 7. Jail authorities have made preparations and staged mock hanging sessions using sandbags with new ropes.

The curative petitions of Mukesh and Vinay have already been dismissed by the Supreme Court, the last judicial recourse to challenge the death penalty awarded to them.

Continued on Page 2

BJP to elect its new chief on Jan 21

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After months of speculation, the BJP has now made it official -- it will elect its new President on January 21, that is "if an election is at all necessary".

A communique released by BJP's national election returning officer Radha Mohan Singh says the nominations will be done on January 20.

On January 20, the nomination process for the post of BJP President will begin at 10 a.m. and will go on till 12.30 p.m. For the next hour, the filed nomination papers will be examined and another one hour till 2.30 p.m. will be provided to withdraw nominations, if any candidate wishes to.

But it's almost certain that J.P. Nadda, BJP's current working President, will win unopposed and in that case, the result will be out on January 20 itself. IANS earlier reported that the "world's largest party" will elect its new President on January 20, as it is an 'ekadashi', which is an auspicious day according to the Hindu faith.



Jagat Prakash Nadda

BRUTE FORCE



Tamers trying to stop a bull in Jallikattu festival in Alanganallur, Tamil Nadu

CBI court refuses relief for Jagan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a major setback to Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, a CBI special court here on Friday dismissed his petitions seeking all the discharge petitions to be heard at one stretch. After a lengthy argument, the court decided to hear all the petitions separately.

Jaganmohan Reddy also filed a petition requesting the CBI court to hear the ED case. However, the court dismissed this petition too.

The court posted the case to January 24.

In his second petition, Jagan appealed to the court to allow his co-accused to appear before it in his absence in the charge sheets filed by the ED

However, Jaganmohan Reddy, who appeared for court hearing last Friday, did not turn up this Friday.

His lawyers filed absent petition on behalf of the Chief Minister, seeking exemption from personal appearance which the court granted for



this week. The hearing on Jagan's disproportionate assets cases will continue next Friday on January 24.

Continued on Page 2

Gujarat IPS to be new JD of CBI

Manoj Shashidhar, a Gujarat-based IPS officer has been appointed the new Joint Director of CBI in a sudden development by the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre on Friday. The move assumes significance in the backdrop of CBI adopting a tough stand against AP CM YS Jaganmohan in disproportionate and quid pro quo cases booked by the CBI and ED.

Continued on Page 2

TODAY

ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Paus & Shukla Paksha Panchangam
Tithi: Trayodashi: 03:43 am (Next Day)
Nakshatram: Rohini: 03:51 pm
Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam: 12:22 pm - 01:45 pm
Yamagandam: 08:14 am - 09:37 am
Varjyam: 07:42 am - 09:19 am, 09:24 pm - 10:59 pm
Gulika: 10:59 am - 12:22 pm
Good Time: (to start any important work)
Amritakalam: 12:35 pm - 02:13 pm
Abhijit Muhurtham: NIL

HYDERABAD WEATHER
Forecast: Haze
Temp: 28/19
Humidity: 77%
Sunrise: 06:48
Sunset: 05:57
Current Weather Conditions Updated January 07, 2019 5:00 PM

Non-BJP states raise objections to NPR methodology at MHA meet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

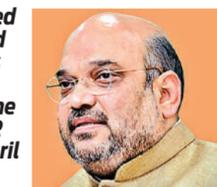
A few non-BJP-ruled states on Friday raised objections over the new methodology to be adopted in the NPR exercise but the central government defended the steps saying certain responses to be given by people are not mandatory but voluntary.

The objections by Rajasthan and a few other states were raised at a day-long conference

The objections were raised at a conference convened to discuss the modalities to be adopted during the house-listing phase of the Census 2021 and the NPR to be carried out from April 1 to Sept 30

convened by the Union Home Ministry to discuss the modalities to be adopted during the

house listing phase of the Census 2021 and the National Population Register to be car-



ried out from April 1 to September 30. Rajasthan Chief Secretary D B Gupta said he and the representatives of a few other states raised objections to a few questions to be asked by enumerators to people during the NPR exercise. "We said certain questions in NPR are impractical, like questions related to the birth place of parents.

Continued on Page 3

AP Cabinet meet advanced to decide new capital

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a strategic move, the State government has decided to hold the Cabinet meeting at 3 pm on Saturday instead of January 20, the day on which the Opposition parties and Amaravati Parirakshana Samiti are planning to organise massive protests.

Chief Secretary Neelam Sawhney on Friday evening issued orders advancing the



date of the Cabinet meeting. Earlier in the day, members of High Power Committee, who had their fourth meeting, met Chief Minister YS

The Chief Minister told us all steps will be taken for the benefit of the farmers who gave up their lands for the capital. He suggested that a better package be given to the farmers

—BOTSASATYANARAYANA
Municipal Administration Minister

Jaganmohan Reddy at his camp house in Tadepalli.

Continued on Page 2

NGT bans mining of quartz, feldspar in Nagarkurnool

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal on Friday banned mining of quartz and feldspar minerals in Nagarkurnool district and directed the Centre to conduct Environment Impact Assessment appraisal as per the EIA Notification of 2006. A bench comprising Justices Raghuvendra S Rathore and expert member S S Garbyal held that mining lease area was reduced from 29 hectares to 24 hectares to escape public hearing and rigours of EIA appraisal by the Environment Ministry in terms of EIA Notification 2006, and subsequent amendments thereunder.



We are also convinced that mining is currently being done very close to the Singotham lake in the absence of any safe distances imposed upon the project proponent for their mining operations, the bench said

"We are also convinced that the mining is currently being done very close to the Singotham lake, in fact at the edge of the lake, in the absence of any safe distances imposed upon the project proponent for their mining operations." "We, therefore, direct the MoEF to conduct Environment Impact Assessment Appraisal in terms of EIA Notification 2006, and

subsequent amendments thereunder and also to conduct public hearing and impose whatever conditions they may find necessary and appropriate for carrying out mining operation and till then mining operation will remain suspended," the bench said.

The tribunal's judgement came on a plea filed by Telangana resident C

Srinivasulu and others alleging non-application of mind by Telangana State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) in granting environment clearance on April 11, 2017 for quarrying of quartz and feldspar on 24 hectares to a private mine lease holder of Kalwakole village, Peddakothapally Mandal, Nagarkurnool District, Telangana.

The petitioners, through advocate Sanjay Upadhyay, alleged that mining area has been reduced so as to get it examined at State level and to escape more rigorous environmental assessment by the Central Committee of the central government. The mine lease holder had argued before the NGT that a buffer of 250 metre has been left from the lake boundary to the lease boundary to protect the lake.

It had also produced map of the lease area so as to show that the lake is to the north of the mining lease, whereas the mining is carried out in the south east direction from the south face of the hillock.

Stop radicalising people, BJP tells Owaisi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP Greater Hyderabad city president and MLC N Ramachander Rao on Friday strongly condemned the comment of Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi, who asked people not to cooperate government officials when they come to their houses to collect data.

"Provoking and instigating people against government officials itself is a radicalisation move and de-radicalisation is necessary when Owaisi like leaders tried to radicalise people by asking them not to show Aadhaar card and other documents to officials," the MLC said.

Criticising Asaduddin Owaisi for provoking people, Rao said his speech is nothing but similar to radicalisation and instigate people to go against officials who may eventually come to collect data which would be ultimately useful for people to receive government benefits, he exhorted.

Terming the comment of Hyderabad MP a "dangerous attitude" the BJP MLC said he may ask people not to cooperate with security people. Rao alleged that Owaisi is trying to politicise army also by making comments against Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat. Rao appealed Muslims to not get misled by such radical leaders and cooperate for registering their names in NPR for getting government benefits.



Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar at a review meeting with the officials at BRKR Bhavan on Friday

CS Somesh reviews steps for Republic Day fete

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar has directed the officials to make elaborate arrangements for the conduct of Republic Day Celebrations at Public Gardens on January, 26th in a befitting manner. The Chief Secretary held a Co-ordination meeting with the officials of various departments at BRKR Bhavan on Friday.

The Chief Secretary said proper arrangements to be made in a coordinated way with more care. Necessary arrangements be made for Security, Traffic Management, barricading etc.

Adhar Sinha, IAS, Special Chief Secretary to Govt. (GAD), Mahender Reddy, IPS, DGP, Arvind Kumar, IAS, Commissioner I&PR, Sunil Sharma, IAS, Principal Secretary (R&B), Shiva

Play active role in Telangana's growth story, ACTOs told

HYDERABAD: Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar called upon the newly-recruited Assistant Commercial Tax Officers (ACTO) to play a vital role in increasing the State's finances. He was participating in the month-long induction training programme organised by the Commercial Taxes Department at Telangana State Institute of Rural Development (TSIRD), Rajendranagar, on Friday. Addressing the trainees, the Chief Secretary said training modules were prepared in such a way that the officers will have hands-on experiences in all the important subjects. "The training programme and the modules are prepared by one of the most experienced subject experts as per the directions of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao," Somesh Kumar said. Stressing the need to acquire knowledge in latest technologies, he urged the trainee officers to be ready for day-to-day tests and utilise the training provided to them. "While good training makes you a good officer, being disciplined in real life will make you a good person," he said. Inaugurating the training camp, Commissioner of Commercial Taxes Neetu Prasad termed the training as one of the best, and asked the trainees to make good use of it. Pausumi Basu, CEO, TSIRD, and other officers from the department were present.

Shankar, IAS, (Retd.), of Police, Hyderabad and Finance Department, Anjani Kumar, IPS., Commissioner other officials attended the meeting.

DEWORMING DAY 1 cr kids to be covered in Telangana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As part of the National Deworming Day, being organised across all over India on February 20, the health officials said that 1.03 crore children and adolescents in the age group of 1-19 will be covered across Telangana. Along with providing deworming treatment, health authorities said that adapting practices to ensure cleanliness and hygiene was also important to reduce the prevalence of worm infestations in the State.

As part of the preparations needed for the smooth conduct of National Deworming Day, the State health authorities also participated in a planning and review meeting that was held by Ministry of Health, Medical and Family Welfare on Thursday.

Nirbhaya convicts to go to the gallows...

Continued from page 1

Akshay and Pawan have not filed any curative petitions yet. Also, the two men and Vinay have the option of filing mercy petitions before the President.

Pawan, meanwhile, moved the Supreme Court, against the Delhi High Court verdict rejecting his juvenility claim at the time of offence.

Nirbhaya's mother expressed disappointment at the postponement of the execution. I will fight and I will keep struggling I will wait, she said.

HYDERABAD BULLION RATES	
GOLD	
₹ 40,950 (10 gm)	
₹ 30	↓
SILVER	
₹ 47,500 (1kg)	
₹ 800	↓

CHICKEN RATES ₹/kg	
Dressed/With Skin	₹167
Without Skin	₹190
Broiler at Farm	₹115

EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	440
VIJAYAWADA	473
VISAKHAPATNAM	488
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.40

KTR QUIP ON CAPITAL DECENTRALISATION

'We formed districts without any protests'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

IT Minister K T Rama Rao, alluding to the disquiet over decentralization of capital in Andhra Pradesh, said that Telangana, under the stewardship of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, could create 33 districts from 10 without any protests. In a chat with media persons here on Friday, he said that there was need to think about the reasons for protests and agitation in Andhra Pradesh when it comes to the state capital.

KTR took a dig at Jana Sena's alliance with BJP. Responding to a question on Jana Sena expanding to other locations, he said, "International level also he can align with BJP at international level. Pawan Kalyan can expand presence anywhere and we are not concerned about it".

Furious at the 'charge-sheet' released by BJP, KTR said, "Congress and BJP have been



in power for decades, but could not develop any of the cities; so people would file charge-sheet against them. Charge-sheet should be filed against BJP, which has done nothing for the state since 2014". He took a dig at BJP's Smart Cities and Amrut (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) programmes. He asked BJP president Laxman to show in which 'Amrut town' 'Amrutam' (elixir) was flowing. He said that BJP was spreading lies about releasing

fund to cities. The details of the special funds brought from the Center to the towns of Telangana during the last five and a half years would be put before the public. He challenged Union Minister Kishan Reddy to show 2BHK houses built anywhere in any BJP-ruled state, similar to double bedroom houses built in Telangana State.

KTR advised the BJP state unit president to focus on the weakness of BJP which was not able to field candidates in all seats. Congress and BJP were campaigning for TRS rebel candidates in such places. People were not ready to take B-forms and even the money that Congress and BJP offered to contest in the elections. The Congress' Vision Document was and lacked vision, he said. The Minister then observed: "We are already implementing the promises which are part of the document. The Vision Document is fraud in order to lure people during elections."

TRS diverting Central funds, says Laxman

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State BJP president Dr K Laxman accused the TRS government of diverting Central funds allotted for development of municipalities for other purpose in the state. Participating in municipal election campaign in various places, the State BJP president said the Central government releases Rs 1,030 crore every year for taking up developmental works in all municipalities across the state. Modi government has released Rs 6,000 crore during last six years for the purpose. But the state government failed to utilise it and diverted it for other purpose, he alleged.

Listing out various welfare and development schemes initiated by the Modi government, Laxman alleged that the



state government has failed to provide houses to poor people as it is not ready to construct houses sanctioned under "Pradhan Mantri Avas Yojana" to construct in all municipalities. The Central government has sanctioned 20 lakh houses in all municipalities and also released funds for the construction of houses under this

The state government has failed to provide houses to poor people as it is not ready to construct houses sanctioned under "Pradhan Mantri Avas Yojana" in all municipalities

— DR K LAXMAN, Telangana BJP state president

scheme, he said adding that the state government even collected 2.42 lakh applications under the scheme which were yet to sent to Delhi. He alleged that KCR government is deceiving people in the name of double bed room.

Laxman alleged that KCR is indulged in hampering development of the state by not releasing matching funds for the central government schemes like Gramine Sadak Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bhima and other schemes. He said the TRS government also failed to implement central

schemes like Ayusman Bharat which is most beneficial for poor.

He said efforts would be made to implement Ayusman Bharat schemes if BJP come to power in municipalities. Every insured person under this scheme would be provided Rs five lakh worth treatment in corporate hospitals. Laxman on Friday toured seven municipalities - Bhothpur, Mahabubnagar, Narayanpet, Makthal, Amarchintha, Atmakur, Kothakota and participated in election campaign in support of party candidates.

CBI court refuses relief for Jagan

Continued from page 1

The ED cases hearings will begin on January 24 itself. Jagan was not been given exemption from personal appearance before the court in ED cases also. The 11 CBI cases will be taken up for hearings separately.

The CBI has filed 11 charge sheets, besides supplementary charge sheet against Jagan in alleged cases of disproportionate assets and quid pro quo investments into his firms.

The court heard two petitions filed by Jaganmohan Reddy. One is for clubbing of all the 11 charge sheets filed by the CBI.

Gujarat IPS to be...

Continued from page 1

The Union Home Ministry issued orders confirming the appointment of Shashidhar, a 1994-batch IPS officer of Gujarat cadre. The news came after YSRC MP Vijaya Sai Reddy last week wrote to Union Home Minister Amit Shah to appoint someone from a non-Telugu State as the CBI JD. He said that earlier, VV Laxminarayana and other JDs had 'secret friendship' with TDP and they tried to fix Jagan in CBI cases on 'political grounds'.

Will Bhainsa riots prove costly for TRS?

Continued from page 1

There was a gap of just five months between the Assembly polls and the subsequent Lok Sabha polls. No adverse decisions were taken by the TRS government in those five months, giving room for any anti-incumbency factor.

Still, TRS suffered a huge blow at the hands of BJP, which, unlike the pink party, lacks organization structure or cadre in the state. There was prime opposition of sorts in the form of Congress, but BJP thrashed both TRS and the grand old party in the LS polls in north Telangana

districts. The saffron party's stupendous performance in north Telangana districts was attributed to 'polarisation of Hindu votes' by BJP.

North Telangana districts have considerable Muslim population, unlike in south Telangana districts. The undivided districts of Adilabad, Nizamabad and Karimnagar are known to be communal sensitive. With KCR publicly proclaiming repeatedly that AIMIM is 'friendly party of TRS', BJP made the very same dosti as its plank in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

The recent communal riots

in Bhainsa, followed by open display of bonhomie between TRS and AIMIM cadre in Bhainsa, has once again charged up the political atmosphere in north Telangana districts. The TRS, which has already won 77 municipal wards unanimously across the State, chose to withdraw its three candidates in Bhainsa, thus facilitating the unanimous election of AIMIM candidates. The BJP has tactically made this in-your-face "TRS-AIMIM bonhomie" as its plank in undivided Karimnagar, Nizamabad and Adilabad districts with the aim of repeating the May 2019 Lok Sabha results in the upcoming municipal polls.



Congress senior leader V Hanumantha Rao addressing the media on Friday

'Consider BC leader for TPCC chief post'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congress senior leader V Hanumantha Rao demanded the party high command to visit the districts to know the ground reality and consider the opinions of party activists before appointing TPCC chief. He reiterated his demand of appointing a leader from Backward Class (BC) as the Telangana PCC chief. He said that all political parties were chanting BC slogan and hence the Congress high command has to give TPCC chief post to a BC leader. He said AICC general secretary KC Venugopal came to Hyderabad only during the selection of CLP leader. He suggested the party high command to take the opinion of the party leaders similar to Karnataka state in regard to PCC chief.

He said that Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao is constructing 'Self Respect Bhavans' to attract BCs.

He asked upper caste leaders of Congress party to extend their cooperation in appointing a BC leader as the TPCC chief so that the party would be strengthened in the state. bSpeaking to the media on Friday, VH reiterated that he is in PCC chief race. "No doubt I am a soldier of Rajiv Gandhi. I will continue in the party as a soldier of Rajiv Gandhi. Age limit will not work. If it works, then there would not be any senior leaders in Delhi. I will not keep quiet if own party leaders tries to sidetrack me. I am a batsman and a fast bowler. Even I know spin bowling also. I bowl googlies at my opponents if they trouble me," he said.

Meanwhile, VH said that he would conduct Rajiv Gandhi International Under-19 Day and Night Twenty-20 League Cricket Championship-2020 from January 21 to 24.

CRIME CORNER

Student morphs girl's picture; held

The Cyber Police of Rachakonda on Friday arrested a 20-year-old student for posting morphed pictures of a girl on Instagram. The arrested was identified as Narra Akshay, a B-Tech student from Nalla Malla Reddy Engineering college in Narapally. He is a resident of Lalaguda. According to the police, Akshay created a fake account on Instagram to get acquainted with the victim. He sent her a follow request as she had a private account. On accepting the request, the accused downloaded photos from her account and uploaded in his fake account. He also morphed a picture of her face with a nude body and posted on the account. As the victim took serious cognizance for it, he uploaded another similarly morphed picture. Later, the accused deleted all the images and the account to hide the evidence. The family of the victim had filed a complaint regarding the stalking and harassment on Instagram. Both the accused and victim were schoolmates. The police have cautioned the public not to accept friend requests by strangers on Social Media to avoid any complications.

Man lynched for stalking woman

A 36-year-old man was allegedly beaten to death by a group of men for allegedly stalking and harassing a married woman at RK Society in Borabanda on Friday afternoon. The deceased was identified as Ajay, a private employee. Ajay was allegedly stalking and harassing a married woman from the neighbourhood. Her husband Srisailam had earlier warned Ajay against his behaviour, but the latter continued stalking her. According to the Sanathnagar Police, around 12 noon when Ajay was in his house, Srisailam, along with his associates armed with sticks and other blunt weapons came to his house and picked up a fight. "After a heated argument, the group started attacking him with sticks. Ajay suffered multiple grievous injuries on head," police said adding that the group fled the spot after attacking Ajay. The local residents rushed to his rescue and immediately shifted him to the Osmania General Hospital for treatment. He died while undergoing treatment. The Sanathnagar Police have booked a case and have launched investigation. Efforts are on to nab the killers, police said.

Man commits suicide

A 32-year-old man committed suicide at his residence in Dundigal on Friday. The deceased was identified as B Venkatesh, a private employee. The Police said that a suicide note was found in Venkatesh's pocket in which he named two persons responsible for his death. Venkatesh had taken money from Yam Sagar and Vijay for interest. However, the duo charged interest even on the interest he was supposed to pay. Despite Venkatesh paying a certain amount, the duo still harassed him and threatened him of dire consequences. Based on a complaint from Venkatesh's father, the Dundigal Police registered a case under section 306 (abetment to suicide) of the IPC and are investigating.

NY REVELLERS GET JAIL FOR DRUNK DRIVING

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

While a majority of the drunk driving (DD) violators were let off with fines, eight of them were convicted by a local court here on Friday. As many as 540 party revellers were booked by the Cyberabad Traffic Police during the New Year's night. The Cyberabad traffic officials, late on December 31 night booked 888 individuals in its jurisdiction and the highest number was booked in Madhapur area.

"However, 504 of those cases were disposed off as on January 17. Many with high BAC levels failed to appear before the court, resulting in the delay," officials said. Notably, the number of DD convictions reported in 2019 was a whopping 409. Perhaps the only year where a large number were sent behind bars on a single day, remains January 5. In comparison, 2020 has seen a significant drop in jail sentences.

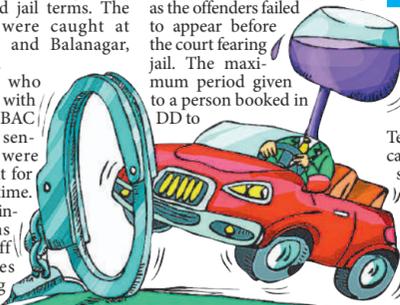
The Kukatpally court that

As many as 3,148 DD cases were booked on NY's Eve across Telangana State. Among those caught were one female, nine senior citizens and nine minors; The maximum offences were reported in twin cities with 951 cases

hears DD cases booked by four traffic police stations, witnessed an unprecedented rush on January 3. Of the 105 cases placed before the magistrate, two received jail terms. The convicted were caught at Gachibowli and Balanagar, respectively.

"Persons who were caught with above 500 BAC level were sentenced as were those caught for the second time. All the remaining persons were left-off with fines ranging

between Rs 5,000 and Rs 25,000. Unlike the previous year, hundreds got away by paying the fine. Meanwhile, as many as 344 cases are pending as the offenders failed to appear before the court fearing jail. The maximum period given to a person booked in DD to



DD CASES BOOKED BY CYB POLICE (Dec 31-Jan 1)

Cases	-	888
Convicted	-	8
Fined	-	496
Disposed	-	504

10 DAYS Highest imprisonment sentenced

appear before the court is 60 days," an official said. As many as 3,148 Drunken Drive cases were booked on New Year's Eve across Telangana State. Among those caught were one female, nine senior citizens and nine minors. The maximum offences were reported in the twin cities with 951 cases followed by Cyberabad (888) and Rachakonda (281).

SANKRANTHI FESTIVITIES

Burglars go on a looting spree

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Burglars went on a looting spree and broke into eight houses in Alwal and Meerpeth in the wee hours of Friday. The miscreants targeted locked houses of people who went out of station to celebrate Sankranti.

In the first incident, two unidentified offenders broke into two houses in Laxmi Nagar in Lothkunta around 1 am. The owners Ashok Kumar and Ramesh had locked the houses and went to their native places last week. "The offenders broke open the locks on the main door with an iron rod and gained entry. They opened the almirah and flicked cash and gold," Alwal police said, adding that the house owners returned in the morning and noticed the broken locks.

While the burglars are esti-



mated to have stolen cash of Rs 32,000 and four tolas of gold ornaments from Ashok's house, the estimation of stolen material from Ramesh's house is yet to be done. The Alwal police are examining the footage from the surveillance cameras in the surroundings.

"We suspect local offenders. Their modus operandi too is familiar. We are trying to match

it with the data we have," police said. In the second incident, as many as six houses were targeted by burglars in Gurranguda of Meerpeth. Around 2 am, two offenders who had covered their faces with masks, struck at the houses one after the other. These houses were located in a secluded residential colony with no proper illumination.

Cong candidate arrested in 5-yr-old case

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Cyberabad Police arrested Congress candidate B Gnan Abhilash Mudhiraj, who is contesting for the Telangana Municipal Elections from Bandlaguda ward, three days before the campaign trail ends.

He was picked up on Friday from his residence and was later placed under arrest at Rajendra Nagar police station in a five-year-old SC/ST atrocity case booked against him, police said. Five years ago Abhilash Mudhiraj and Sai, a software employee entered into a heated argument which resulted in Sai booking a case under SC/ST atrocity Act against Abhilash. Though the duo claim to have compromised, the case has not been closed, they said.

Congress leaders termed the arrest as a political vendetta and a well planned strategy as it comes days before the polls. They also found Friday's arrest as a plan as the courts are closed during the weekend. Abhilash Mudhiraj, formerly worked for the TRS, going by his Facebook profile.

Radhika Vemula vows to fight CAA

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Politician-activist Yogendra Yadav and Radhika Vemula, mother of PhD scholar Rohith Vemula who committed suicide, on Friday joined hands and vowed to fight against the CAA, NRC and NPR. At an event commemorating the fourth death anniversary of Vemula, a University of Hyderabad student, Yadav said the protests were being organised by "We the People", a common banner of organisations and people from across the country, against the Citizenship Amendment Act, National Register of Citizens and Nation Population Register.

"Today, the protests against CAA-NRC-NPR have grown beyond a protest. They have become a movement across the nation. It has become a movement for the Idea of India" where people of all religions will be equal citizens, he said. He alleged the CAA-NRC-NPR were challenging that very idea and trying to create "a Hindu Israel and a Hindu Pakistan."

Non-BJP states raise objections to NPR...

Continued from Page 1

There are many people in the country who even don't know what was their birth place. I don't know what is the purpose of such questions and we have told the meeting to remove such questions," Gupta told reporters after the meeting. He said the central government officials told them that answers to all such questions are not mandatory but voluntary and no one is going to force anyone to reply any question.

"They said such questions were asked earlier also and this time they have just linked with an individual's place of birth with his or her parent's place of birth. But they said answer to this question is not mandatory," he said.

An official from Kerala told the meeting that the state has put on hold the NPR exercise and it can be part of the process only after the concerns of the state are addressed by the Centre. At the same time, Kerala will cooperate with

Census operations, the official said. Rajasthan is ruled by the Congress, which has announced its opposition to the NPR exercise, while Kerala has a Left government.

Assemblies of Kerala and Punjab have adopted resolutions announcing their opposition to the exercise.

During the meeting, presentations were given on the objectives of the census and the NPR exercises and their benefits. Also, presentation was given on the use of mobile app, which will be used in the census for the first time in its history. The conference was inaugurated by Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai and attended by Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, chief secretaries and census directors of many states. A few states were represented by principal secretary, instead of the chief secretary. No official from the West Bengal government attended the meeting, though an official of the Census Directorate posted in Kolkata was present, an official said.



ICR for emergency response to come up in Hyd soon

NAVEEN KUMAR ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad will soon have an Integrated Control Room for Emergency Response (ICR-ER) in Shadnagar area as the Ministry of Home Affairs and National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), Hyderabad has signed an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) for setting up the establishment. As per the MoU, NRSC/ISRO will render its technical support for establishment of ICR-ER, as per the latest annual report release of MMA.

It also planned to augment existing National Database for Emergency Management (NDEM), a GIS-based repository of data, at Shadnagar in Hyderabad and integrate it with control room. NDEM supports the total cycle of disaster, emergency management for the country, in near real time with a complete database.

The control room will be based on state-of-the-art information technology and will be equipped with latest video walls. "Two control rooms each are contemplated at the NDCC-II Building and North Block for a total of four control rooms. There is no immediate plan for a control room at NRSC Shadnagar," said the officials at MMA.

The Ministry of Home



As per the MoU, NRSC/ISRO will render its technical support for establishment of ICR-ER, as per the latest annual report release of MMA

Affairs has expedited the process recently. However, establishing an integrated control room for emergency response was in the pipeline. The ministry's internal note states, "The Ministry of Home Affairs proposes to establish an integrated Control Room for Emergency Response in the national capital for handling natural disasters and emergency situations with situational awareness and strategic level of monitoring."

Organisers of rave party arrested

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Jubilee Hills Police on Friday arrested the organisers of the rave party at a pub in Jubilee Hills. According to the police, the arrested were identified as Vattikuti Srinivas Naidu (40), Mohammed Moin (36) and Burri Prasad Goud (43). Santosh Reddy, the owner of the pub and Bharath, the manager, are absconding.

Naidu is the Managing Director of Signova Agro Management and Moin is the Marketing Manager of the company. Prasad Goud is the event organiser who helped organise the party and get the women.

As part of the company's

marketing plan, Naidu and Moin planned to host a rave party for their distributors in order to get more business. Burri Prasad Goud is an event organiser running 'New Style Dance Academy', without an office and arranges dancers or singers for parties.

The Police said that the dancers were allowed to be exploited by the customers upto the extent of getting sexual favors done.

The party started at 4.45 pm and all the dancers were dancing obscenely with the distributors of Signova Agro. At about 7 PM, based on a tip off, the Jubilee Hills Police reached the pub and rescued the dancers.

UoH scholar receives 'Best Poster Award'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

N Linga Murthy, Ph D scholar at Advanced Centre for Research in Higher Energy Material (ACRHEM), School of Physics, University of Hyderabad (UoH) has received the 'Best Poster Award' for the poster titled 'Identification of Metals and Metal Alloys from the Femtosecond Laser Induced Plasma Emissions using Machine Learning' in DAE-BRNS National Laser Symposium (NLS-28) 2020 held at Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT), Chennai from 8 to 11 January. Murthy is currently working under the guidance of Prof. Soma Venugopal Rao at ACRHEM, School of Physics, UoH.

KTR makes it clear that no...

Continued from Page 1

The TRS government was friendly towards employees. The employees had full confidence in the government. The Congress and BJP had totally failed to field candidates in 25 towns, he said.

KTR said that opposition parties were not appreciating the good works of the TRS government. The TRS would seek votes on the basis of its performance. For, the pink party enjoyed the confidence of people.

On disservice, KTR said it was very common during elections on the part of aspiring candidates who failed to get tickets. The TRS had already settled such issues.

Indian Railways extend 'Coach-Mitra' to 2,167 trains

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Following tremendous response for 'Coach-Mitra', the Indian Railways has now extended the facility to 2,167 trains. 'Coach-Mitra' is an online digital application introduced by Indian Railways for the benefit of rail users especially passengers on board to provide assistance with regard to problem/deficiency in travel comforts like coach cleaning, watering, lighting etc. in trains.

The main objective of this facility is to assist the On-board passengers in maintaining coach cleanliness. It is a single window interface for the passengers to register coach related requirements such as cleaning, disinfection, linen, train lighting, air conditioning and watering of coaches. Initially



Coach Mitra' facility has been introduced in about 800 trains over Indian Railways which are provided with On Board House Keeping Services (OBHS).

On South Central Railway, this facility is available in 72 pairs of trains which are provided with OBHS services. Plans are on hand to introduce

The main objective of 'Coach-Mitra', an online digital application introduced by Indian Railways, is to assist the on-board passengers in maintaining coach cleanliness

OBHS service along with Coach Mitra facility in another 2 pairs of trains shortly. On an average, SCR is receiving 470 requests per month in 'Coach-Mitra' to assist in resolving various issues related to Cleaning, Watering, lighting etc through Phone/App/Website. Main complaints/assistance is sought by the passengers in case of Cleaning and Watering issues

To avail this facility, passenger has to send a message

through mobile phone in the form of SMS to the mobile numbers earmarked for the exclusive use of this service. Alternatively, passenger can also use an android app or webpage for logging the request. Passenger's request is immediately acknowledged via SMS on mobile phone along with a code.

The Railway Administration will also simultaneously receive an intimation of such requests for follow up. A message is also

sent by the server to the mobile number of OBHS staff travelling on the same train along with the details of the passengers such as coach number, berth number.

As per the message received, the OBHS staff travelling by the train shall contact the passenger and carries out the work as per demand.

If the passenger is satisfied with the work being executed by OBHS staff, he discloses the code received during acknowledgement and OBHS staff in turn sends the same code through SMS.

Gajanan Mallya, General Manager, South Central Railway advised the officials to bring some more trains under OBHS scheme along with Coach-Mitra facility for the benefit of rail users.

RK Singh calls on CS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Major General RK Singh, General Officer Commanding (GOC), Telangana and Andhra Sub Area (TASA) called on the Chief Secretary Suresh Kumar at the Secretariat on Friday and congratulated him on his elevation

as Chief Secretary of the state.

They discussed several issues related to better Civil and Military relations in the state. Proposals on issues related to common concerns, infrastructure development and welfare of serving soldiers and Ex-servicemen were discussed with the Chief Secretary.





URBAN POLL 2020



Cakewalk for TRS in Khammam

Lack of candidates for opposition in the district is making things easy for the ruling party

BAKKA TENNYSON
KHAMMAM

The ruling TRS is keen on proving its mettle in the ensuing urban local body elections in Khammam as the party is trying to show its supremacy after the Parliament and Assembly elections. Despite the massive mandate for the TRS in the Assembly polls, KCR was upset with the dismal performance of the party in Khammam and Bhadrachalam districts. The TRS could only register a solitary win. During the Assembly elections, the district has sent more Congress MLAs than the ruling TRS, but in the subsequent period, excluding the Bhadrachalam and MLA Oodem Veeriah, all the Congress MLAs deserted Congress and joined the TRS.

Name of the ULB	No. of Wards	BJP	BSP	CPI	CPM	INC	TDP	YSRCP	TRS	OTHERS	IND
Kothagudem	33	-	-	8	-	12	4	1	1	1	6
Yellandu	24	-	-	3	-	8	4	-	3	-	6
Sattupalli	20	-	-	-	-	-	17	3	-	-	-
Madhira	20	-	-	2	4	4	6	3	-	-	1
Total	97	0	0	13	4	24	31	7	4	1	13

Despite the massive mandate for the TRS in the Assembly polls, KCR was upset with the dismal performance of the party in Khammam and Bhadrachalam districts. The TRS could only register a solitary win



In the subsequent rural local body polls too, the TRS emerged victorious and it routed the Congress and Communists in the previous bastions of those parties. The erstwhile Khammam district is witnessing a one-sided election in five urban local bodies though the Congress could show its supremacy at the

Assembly hustings hitherto. Communists have got some sizeable vote bank in certain industrial towns but in Vaira, Madhira and Sattupalli municipalities, the TRS is all set to wrest the municipalities without any hassle. The Khammam municipal elections are not due immediately but in Viara, a total of twenty wards are going for polls. The municipality is reserved for SC general. In Madhira, the municipality is reserved for SC women and here too, a total of 22 wards are going for polls. In Saththupalli municipality, the election is witnessing some interesting contest as the municipality is in the general category.

DISTRICTS GOING TO POLL

Name of ULB	No of Wards
Khammam	23
Sattupalli	22
Madhira	20
Yellandu	24
B. Kothagudem	36

Similarly in Koththagudem, a total of 36 wards are going for polls and the municipality is reserved for general female category. Ellandu Municipality is also in the general female category and has got 24 wards. Since the TRS is inching ahead of all the opponents, the opposition parties in the districts are unable to garner the required numbers in fielding the candidates, thus making it easy for the TRS in the crucial polls of urban local bodies.



'Will resolve drinking water issues in Narsapur'

PNS ■ MEDAK

Finance Minister T Harish Rao on Friday said the government would resolve the drinking water issues being faced by the people of Narsapur soon. Addressing a meeting during an election campaign at Narsapur in Medak district, the senior TRS leader said after completing Kaleshwaram Project, Godavari water would be brought from Gajwel through a pipeline to meet the drinking and irrigation needs of Narsapur area.

Assuring to provide all basic amenities at the emerging town, Rao said a vegetable and meat market, and dhoighat would be built, besides completing the TSRTC depot works within three months. Talking about various initiatives of TRS government for the welfare of Minorities in Telangana in 14th and 15th wards of the Municipality, Harish Rao said TRS was a true secular party and was committed to the welfare of minorities. Later, he also campaigned in Ramayampet Municipality.



Minister talks tough on corruption

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

Excise Minister V Srinivas Goud, during his campaign in support of TRS candidates in Yenugonda locality of Mahabubnagar town on Friday, said that any Councillor indulging in corrupt activities in Mahabubnagar municipality would be suspended and dismissed. Addressing the people of Yenugonda while going door-to-door as part of campaigning for municipal elections, he said soon an urban development authority would be formed comprising Mahabubnagar, Jadcharla and Bhothpur towns, and, all these towns would be developed on par with Hyderabad.



'CM keen on developing Suryapet'

PNS ■ SURYAPET

Energy Minister G Jagadish Reddy on Friday asked the people to take part in the development of Suryapet town by electing TRS candidates in the ensuing municipal elections. Participating in election campaign in 31st ward of Suryapet, Reddy said electing ruling party candidates as councillors would speed up development in the town. He said Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao was keen on developing Suryapet town, for which he had sanctioned funds. Medical College was also coming up in Suryapet that would make super speciality health services accessible to the people of the area, he said.

GROUPISM IN TRS COMES TO THE FORE

Jupally Krishna Rao rues ticket distribution in Kollapur, fields rebel candidates

AVINASH DEEPAK PULI
MAHABUBNAGAR

The ruling TRS in Telangana seems to be facing a unique problem. While the Opposition is no match for the TRS, the party is finding itself riven by groupism. The Municipal election in Kollapur is witnessing a battle of strength between the two TRS leaders - former Minister Jupalli Krishna Rao and the sitting legislator Harshavardhan Reddy. The internal rivalry among these two leaders has entailed in a multicornered contest in this municipality which has got 20 wards in its jurisdiction.

During the 2018 Assembly polls, Jupalli Krishna Rao was defeated by the then Congress nominee Harshavardhan Reddy. But post election results, Reddy joined the TRS and this aspect has ultimately created a group division in the constituency limits. There were internal rivalries and clumsy



Finding that the sitting MLA is holding key to the distribution of tickets, Jupally has put up rebel candidates in Kollapur

scuffles between the two groups in the consequent period and municipal elections has come as a testing time for them to prove their supremacy. The municipality has a total of 19,478 votes, which includes 9,753 male voters and 9,725 female voters. The B Forms of TRS were handed over to the MLA Harshavardhan Reddy. Since he enjoyed considerable support base, Reddy fielded his men in the seats. Apparently perturbed Jupalli fielded his group members as well in all

the seats. Sources say that Jupalli was securing B Forms from the All India Forward Block for his supporters in Kollapur. The district Minister Singireddi Niranjan Reddy tried to pacify the duo by giving a 60-40 ratio proposal but the supporters are keen on continuing in the fray. Since the BJP and Congress are also fielding their nominees a keen multicornered contest seemed imminent in this prestigious municipality.

FLYING HIGH



Minister Venula Prashanth Reddy and others flying kites, which feature KCR's picture, during the municipal election campaign in Bheemgal on Friday

'Will bring back Cong to power'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress MP from Bhongir Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said that his aim is bring Congress back to power in the state by taking up 'Intintiki Padayatra'. He alleged that the CM Chandrasekhar Rao constructed a farm house for himself but failed to construct houses for the poor. Finding fault with KCR for stating that people are his bosses, Komatireddy alleged that KCR made people his slaves.

CAUSE FOR CHANGE

Professionals jump into poll fray

PV KONDAL RAO
WARANGAL

The municipal elections this year is witnessing people from different walks of life taking the political plunge. In all 52 professionals, including doctors, engineers and advocates have joined the rough and tumble of politics in erstwhile Warangal district.

A cursory glance at the contesting candidates reveal that the nine municipalities spread across six districts of Warangal have been witnessing some interesting tussle as the educated youths have joined the fray. In all, a total of 18 wards in the nine municipalities have elected members unanimously.

While the TRS fielded candidates in all the 200 seats with 18 unanimous victories, Congress fielded 165 candidates in these districts. BJP has fielded 144 nominees, TDP 21, CPI 30, All India Forward

In all 52 professionals, including doctors, engineers and advocates have joined the rough and tumble of politics in erstwhile Warangal district. Across the state, 326 professionals are in the fray this time

Block 21, TJS 2, MTSSP and independents 221 are in the fray in all these municipalities. Among these, 52 professional candidates have joined the fray. In Wardhanappet, a total of four graduates and post graduates are in the fray. Of these, one candidate is presently working as a lecturer. In Jangaon municipality, 13 candidates in the fray are either graduates, or post graduates or engineering graduates. In Narsampet municipality, a total of four candidates have completed their post graduation. One among these is an NRI. In Thorur municipality, a

total of four candidates in the fray are engineering graduates. Among these, one candidate is presently working as a lecturer while in Parakal, three candidates have completed post graduation. One advocate is in the fray in this municipality. In Mahabubabad, three candidates have completed Post graduation and one Medical Doctor is also in the fray in this municipality. In Dornakal municipality, six post graduates and in Maripeda, six graduates are in the fray at the urban local body polls. Sancharan, a pharmacy graduate is in the fray from Dornakal municipal-

ity, while Anitha, an assistant professor is in the fray from Jangaon. Keerthi, an MSC graduate is in the fray in Narsampet municipality. Rojarani an MBA graduate is in the contest from Narsampet. Sambaiah, an advocate is competing in the Narsampet municipality. All these candidates say that they were keen on joining the public life hence they chose the urban local body as the stepping stone for their entry. Reports from various other rural Telangana districts reveal that more than 40 per cent of the candidates in the fray at the hustings are either graduates or post graduates and in certain parts, the professional graduates have joined the fray to prove their mettle. Numbers revealed by the pollsters say that about 326 professionals have been in the fray in all the rural district urban local bodies spread across the Telangana state.

'Oppn leaders obstructing development'

PNS ■ WARANGAL RURAL

The State government sanctioned Rs 200 crore for the development of Narsampet town. Development works including central lighting system were going on, said MLA Peddi Sudharshan Reddy. He along with Government Chief Whip Dasyam Vinay Bhaskar participated in the election campaign in Narsampet Municipality in the district on Friday.



Peddi Sudharshan Reddy

Oppn leaders trying to obstruct development by filing cases in court, said MLA Sudharshan Reddy

told people while asking them to vote for TRS candidates. He said the Opposition leaders were trying to obstruct the development by filing cases in

court. I appeal to you to question the Opposition leaders when they come to seek votes why they have filed cases against developmental works," he said. Meanwhile, party town president Nayani Narsaiah announced that the party had expelled Gampa Rajeshwar, who filed nomination against the party candidate. Rajeshwar is in fray from 11th ward and TRS party has fielded Mandala Sridevi Srinivasulu from the same ward.

TRS 'managing' elections, says Uttam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD / HUZURNAGAR

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president and Nalgonda MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy blamed the erratic and illogical poll schedule for lack of Congress candidates in a few seats in municipal elections.

Uttam said there was minimal or no time gap between the date of notification and nomination and therefore, the opposition parties could not finalise appropriate candidates. Since TRS knew the ward reservations in advance, it took unfair advantage. For the same reason, he said that the Congress party went to High Court challenging the election schedule and seeking time gap between the release of notification and nomination process. However, he said the issue could not be addressed.

Strongly condemning TRS working president and Minister KT Rama Rao for his statement



TPCC president Uttam Kumar Reddy during an election campaign in Huzurnagar on Friday

saying that Congress could not field candidates in nearly 500 seats for municipal elections, Uttam said it was due to the manipulation of polling process done by TRS govern-

ment and not due to the weakness of Congress party. "TRS leaders, with the help of local police, either lured or intimidated Congress leaders to prevent them from filing

nomination papers. Those who filed their nominations were beaten up in the presence of local police and forced to withdraw their candidatures. Many Congress leaders

Those who filed their nominations were beaten up in the presence of local police and forced to withdraw their candidatures. Many Congress leaders who refused TRS offers were implicated in false cases — UTTAM KUMAR REDDY, TPCC president

who refused TRS offers were implicated in false cases. A few newspapers also reported the incidents with pictures. Formal complaint was also lodged with the State Election Commission. But, as usual, the poll authorities remained inert apparently to favour ruling TRS. It is highly shameful that despite indulging in such poll irregularities to ensure victory through backdoor methods, KTR is making false claims of Congress absence in over 500 seats," alleged Uttam. Addressing different meetings as part of campaign for municipal elections in Huzurnagar on Friday, the TPCC president alleged that the TRS party has been winning elections only on the

basis of money and muscle power and by misusing official machinery. He said TRS would not win a single seat if elections were held in a free, fair and transparent manner. He said TRS was 'managing' elections and not really 'contesting' them. Stating that TRS has made more than 500 major election promises since 2014, he challenged KTR to list out at least 10 major promises which have been fulfilled. "TRS leaders are habitual of claiming false ownership of things owned by others. TRS Govt did not complete a single irrigation project nor did the power projects started by KCR Govt generate a single unit of power," he said.

'TRS govt is known for development'

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Welfare of the poorer sections of the society has been the main priority of TRS government led by Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, asserted Khammam MP Nama Nageswar Rao. The MP was campaigning for the TRS candidates contesting municipal elections in Kothagudem and Wyra Municipalities on Friday. Massive rallies were taken out in the towns by the party workers and supporters in support of the TRS nominees. The MP told the public that TRS government was known for development. The government has launched development and welfare

schemes on large scale and the party candidates have to be elected in the municipal elections to ensure all round growth of towns. No government in the past was able to supply uninterrupted power in towns and villages. Supply of drinking water under Mission Bhagiratha and construction of double-bedroom houses were unique programmes which no other government implemented, Nageswar Rao noted. Similarly, Kalyana Lakshmi, Shadi Mubarak, Kanti Velugu and KCR kits have benefited lakhs of families living in urban and rural areas in the State. Many State governments have been emulating the welfare schemes implemented by the TRS government, he added.

SHORT READS



Dravidian outfit accuses Rajinikanth of lying on Periyar

CHENNAI: Dravidar Viduthala Kazhagam on Friday accused superstar Rajinikanth of "uttering a blatant lie" in connection with a 1971 rally held by social reformer Periyar, demanded his apology and also filed a police complaint, seeking action against him. DVK president Kolathur Mani, in a statement, alleged that the actor uttered a "blatant lie that the images of Lord Ram and Sita were taken nude in a rally, held as part of superstition eradication conference held in 1971 at Salem." The actor made the remarks at an event held by a magazine on January 14, the outfit said.

Junior engineer shot dead by unidentified assailants in Mathura

MATHURA (UP): A 35-year-old junior engineer of state power department was shot dead by unidentified assailants in Uttar Pradesh's Mathura district, an official said on Friday. Pradeep Kumar was shot at in the stomach around 9.30 pm on Thursday in Jamuna Paar area when he was returning from Panigaon power sub station, said Superintendent of Police Ashok Kumar Meena. He said it is unlikely to be a case of loot as Pradeep's belongings, including his motorcycle, laptop and purse, were found at the crime scene. The junior engineer was transferred from his home town Agra to Mathura around five months ago, a power department official said. Pradeep is survived by his wife and two children.

ED files charge sheet before Delhi court against ex BPSL CMD

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate on Friday filed a charge sheet against former Bhusan Power and Steel Ltd CMD Sanjay Singal and others in a multi-crore money laundering case linked to an alleged bank loan fraud. The charge sheet was filed before Special Judge Arun Bhargava. Singal was placed under arrest on November 22 last year under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) after he was questioned in connection with the case.

Rahul has no knowledge about amended citizenship

NEW DELHI: BJP working president J P Nadda on Friday took a dig at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, saying he has no knowledge and understanding of the amended Citizenship Act and dared him to speak 10 sentences on the law. Accusing Gandhi of misleading the country, Nadda said at an event here that the amended law is for minorities who faced religious persecution in neighbouring countries for years and had taken shelter in India. He said that those opposing the amended citizenship law were essentially "weakening" the country.

CORONAVIRUS SPREAD IN CHINA

India issues travel advisory

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has issued a travel advisory asking citizens to follow certain precautionary measures while visiting China in the wake of the outbreak of an infection there because of a new strain of virus which is causing respiratory problems.

The advisory issued by the Union health ministry stated that even though the mode of transmission of the novel coronavirus is unclear as of now, those visiting China are advised to avoid travel to farms, live animal markets or where animals are slaughtered, and refrain consuming "raw or undercooked meat".

It suggested avoiding close contact with people who are unwell or showing symptoms of illness, such as cough, runny nose among others. The travellers are advised to wear a mask if they have symptoms of respiratory problem.

The advisory asks travellers to China to follow some "public health measures at all times" like observing good personal hygiene, practice frequent



hand-washing with soap and follow etiquettes like covering mouth when coughing or sneezing. It also stated that as on January 11, as many as 41 confirmed cases of infection with the novel coronavirus have been reported so far, of which one person has died.

"Only travel-related cases have been reported (one each) in Thailand and Japan. The clinical signs and symptoms are mainly fever with a few patients having difficulty in breathing. The mode of transmission

is unclear as of now. However, so far there is little evidence of significant human-to-human transmission. Although as per the World Health Organisation's risk assessment, the risk for global spread has been stated as low," the advisory read.

All travellers to China, in particular to Wuhan city, have been advised to monitor their health closely.

"If you feel sick on flight, while travelling back to India: Inform the airlines crew about illness, seek mask from the air-

It also stated that as on January 11, as many as 41 confirmed cases of infection with the novel coronavirus have been reported so far, of which one person has died

lines crew, avoid close contact with family members or fellow travellers and follow the directions of airline crew while disembarking," the advisory read.

It asked travellers who feel sick on flight or at the time of disembarkation to report to airport health authorities or immigration and follow the directions of the airport health officer.

"If you feel sick with in a span of one month after return from China: Report the illness to the nearest health facility and also inform the treating doctor regarding your travel history," the advisory states.

Chennithala justifies approaching Governor against ward recast

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Senior Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala on Friday justified his party's decision to approach Governor Arif Mohammed Khan against the Left government's ordinance on the civic body ward-reorganisation. The ward-reorganisation, envisaged through the ordinance, was solely to protect the "political interest" of the Marxist party, he told reporters here.

"We had approached the Governor against the ordinance as he has to give his assent. The LDF government's inefficiency and lapses had made complex, matters related to the ward-reorganisation and voters' list of Local self-governments in the state," Chennithala said.

Asked about the Governor's criticism against the LDF government for not informing him in advance about moving the Supreme Court against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the senior



Ramesh Chennithala

Arif Mohammed Khan

The LDF government's inefficiency and lapses had made complex, matters related to the ward-reorganisation and voters' list of Local self-governments in the state," Chennithala said

Congress leader said he does not know the legal procedures in this regard.

"The Constitution demands that state governments consult the Governor on certain subjects...while it is not mandatory in the case of some other matters. Here, I had suggested that the government move the apex court against the CAA. They have the right for the

same. But I do not know if the Governor has to be consulted before moving the court. It is up to the government to examine it," he said. Chennithala also said it was not appropriate for the Governor to hold press meets. The Congress had always expressed its sharp criticism and opposition against the stand taken by Khan on CAA, he added.

HC sets aside ex-Delhi law minister's election

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court Friday set aside the election of former law minister Jitender Singh Tomar for giving false declaration regarding his educational qualification in his nomination papers for the 2015 Assembly polls. The court passed the order on a plea by a BJP leader seeking to set aside Tomar's election. "The petition is allowed," Justice Rajeev Sahai Endlaw said. It is pertinent to mention that Tomar is also contesting the upcoming Delhi Assembly election and is likely to file his nomination from Tri Nagar constituency on Saturday. Tomar had contested on an Aam Aadmi Party ticket. BJP leader Nand Kishore Garg had alleged in his plea that Tomar's election had been "materially affected by deliberate concealment, misrepresentation, wrong declaration and wilful suppression of the educational qualification in the affidavit filed along with the nomination form".

DELAY IN HANGING CONVICTS

'Nirbhaya's mother 'misguided', Delhi govt had no role'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Denying the Delhi government's role in delaying the hanging of the Nirbhaya case convicts, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday said the victim's mother is being "misguided" and accused BJP leader Prakash Javadekar of politicising the matter.

Kejriwal, who is the AAP's national convener, told reporters that whatever responsibilities the Delhi government had, it had finished them within a few hours.

"We sent the mercy petition within hours, so the Delhi government has no role in delaying the hanging of the convicts," he said.

On Javadekar's allegations that the Delhi government is delaying the convicts' hanging,



Arvind Kejriwal

Kejriwal said the BJP leader is doing politics over the matter and this is not good.

Union minister Javadekar had also said that all the four convicts would have been hanged by now, had the AAP government acted quickly and served notices to them immediately after the Supreme Court rejected their appeal against death sentence in 2017.

Reacting to reports that

"We sent the mercy petition within hours, so the Delhi government has no role in delaying the hanging of the convicts," he said.

Nirbhaya's mother said those people who held protests on streets in 2012, today they are only playing with her daughter's death for political gains, Kejriwal said she is being 'misguided'.

"Why would our government try to delay, we want them hanged at the earliest. I think she is being misguided. The Delhi government barely has any role in the whole process," he said.



Russian army delegation visits key military sites

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

An army delegation from Russia visited the key military logistics' installations and the iconic Taj Mahal in Agra as it wrapped up its two-day tour to the Uttar Pradesh city on Friday. The five-member delegation, led by Major General Andrei Kozlov, Chief of the

Directorate of the Military Railway Service of the Eastern Military District, visited the Army Base Workshop and the Central Ordnance Depot in Agra, an official release issued here said.

The delegation was briefed about the modernised logistics installation, which provides important electrical and technical equipment to the Indian Army, it said.

The visit of the Russian delegation to various Indian Army logistics establishment further strengthens the cooperation and military ties between the two nations, the release said. India and Russia have a history of strong strategic, military, economic and diplomatic relations, which has witnessed further growth and development in the recent times, it said.

NIRBHAYA CASE

Tihar jail seeks from court fresh death warrants against 4 convicts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tihar jail authorities Friday sought from a Delhi court issuance of fresh death warrants against the four convicts in the Nirbhaya gang rape and murder case.

Additional Sessions Judge Satish Kumar Arora directed the jail authorities to inform the court by 4:30 pm on whether Mukesh, one of the four convicts, has been informed that his mercy petition was dismissed by the President.

Public Prosecutor Irfan Ahmed told the court that Mukesh's mercy plea was

rejected by President Ram Nath Kovind on Friday.

The court was hearing a plea by one of the four death row convicts in the case, Mukesh Kumar Singh, seeking postponement of the date of his execution on January 22.

The 23-year-old paramedic student, referred to as Nirbhaya, was gang raped and brutally assaulted on the intervening night of December 16-17, 2012 inside a moving bus in south Delhi by six persons before being thrown out on the road.

She died on December 29, 2012 at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore.

WATER CRISIS

Punjab CM convenes all-party meet

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has convened an all-party meeting on January 23 to evolve a comprehensive strategy to tackle the critical water situation in the state.

Intervening in a discussion on 'The Punjab Water Resources (Management and Regulation) Bill 2020', introduced by his government, Singh said invitations for the meeting have already been sent out.

All matters related to water issues, including the Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) issue, poor quality of ground water and pollution caused by industrial and domestic waste, would be discussed during the meeting in a

Both the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) supported the Bill while expressing concern over scarce water resources and depleting ground water table in the state

bid to evolve consensus and chalk out a detailed strategy to address these problems.

The Bill introduced by Irrigation Minister Sukhbinder Singh Sarkaria was later passed



Amarinder Singh

by the House unanimously, paving the way for creation of Punjab Water Regulation and Development Authority to manage critical water resources in the state.

Both the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) supported the

Bill while expressing concern over scarce water resources and depleting ground water table in the state.

In response to issues raised by the Leader of the Opposition Harpal Singh Cheema, the chief minister flayed the Opposition for criticising his government on the issue, while themselves failing to help tackle the problem.

Pointing out that he and his colleagues have already given up power subsidy for tubewells, Singh challenged Opposition leaders to show if any of them had headed to his appeal and done the same.

The appeal, he said, was aimed at ensuring judicious use of groundwater and inculcating the habit of water saving.

J-K LG reviews Jammu lake project to expedite works

PNS ■ JAMMU

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Girish Chandra Murmu reviewed the progress of a number of projects in the winter capital of the Union territory on Friday and said the administration will expedite the works.

He visited the market place and tourism reception centre to assess the facilities there. During a visit to the Tawi river bank the L-G was briefed by Ajeet Sahu, the principal secretary of the Irrigation and Flood Control Department, about the progress of its beautification project and the Jammu lake project.

During his visits, Murmu was accompanied by top divisional-level officials and heads of departments. Asserting that the adminis-



tration was trying to expedite the projects, the L-G said, "We don't know what had happened in the past, but we will carry it from here and see to it that these are completed."

In June last year, the Jammu and Kashmir government had cancelled GR Infra Projects Limited's contract for developing the artificial Tawi lake.

The administration is set to release fresh tenders to resume work.

A revised detailed project report was framed, according to which Rs 51.57 crore shall be required to complete the project and Rs 4.97 crore to undo the damage caused due to floods till date, officials said.

Aadhaar required to get benefits under scheme for civilian victims of terror, communal violence

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aadhaar will be required for getting benefits under a central government scheme for providing financial assistance to family members of victims of violence perpetrated by terrorists or naxals, and communal riots.

In a notification, the Union Home Ministry said an eligible beneficiary desirous of receiving the benefit under the 'Central Scheme for Assistance to Civilian Victims/Family of Victims of Terrorist/Communal/LWE Violence and Cross Border Firing and Mine/IED Blasts on Indian Territory' is required to furnish proof of possession of Aadhaar number or undergo Aadhaar authentication.

Any eligible beneficiary desirous of receiving benefit under the scheme, who does



not possess the Aadhaar number or, has not yet enrolled for Aadhaar, shall have to apply for Aadhaar enrolment.

The home ministry said the notification comes into effect in all states and union territories except Assam and Meghalaya, where Aadhaar has not covered all residents.

"The assistance is given by the state governments and the home ministry reimburses the state governments when it gets their demand. The annual budget for the scheme is broadly in the range of Rs 6 to 7 crore," a senior home ministry official said.

ministry through the implementing agency is required to offer Aadhaar enrolment facilities for the eligible beneficiary, who is not yet enrolled for Aadhaar and in case there is no Aadhaar enrolment centre located in the respective Block or Taluka or Tehsil.

Till the time Aadhaar is assigned to the beneficiary, benefit under the scheme shall be given to such beneficiary subject to the production of the Aadhaar enrolment identification slip if he or she has

enrolled and any one of the following: bank or post office passbook with photo; or voter identification card; or PAN card; or ration card; or passport; or kisan photo passbook; or driving licence or certificate of identity having photo of such person issued by a gazetted officer or a tehsildar on an official letter head; or Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme Job Card; or any other document as specified by the ministry.

Talks with Pakistan?

While UNSC backs India on Kashmir and insists on it being discussed bilaterally, our SCO invite is a smart move



Pakistan may have nudged its all-weather friend China into raising the Kashmir dispute at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) yet again — perhaps going by Western concerns about the continued lockdowns in the erstwhile State that is now a Union Territory — but failed with a big thud. This is the second time that such an attempt, either in the nature of informal consultations or closed door meetings of the Council's permanent members, has been thwarted convincingly. The message is quite clear. The remaining Big Four

(US, Russia, France, UK) are still committed to their position that Kashmir is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan to be settled within the paradigm of dialogue set by existing agreements among the neighbours. It also means that the UK and the US, while responding to criticism on shutdown in the Valley, have delinked it from the larger Kashmir question and would much rather address it one-to-one. At the same time, certain facts cannot be ignored like China being allowed to raise the issue despite no significant change in collective viewpoints. Or that Pakistan's lobbying is high-pitch, with its Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi believed to be in New York while China moved the motion. He even met the UN Secretary-General. Clearly, given the emphasis on bilaterals, at some point both India and Pakistan have to sit across the table and look to engage with each other. Perhaps, India's invitation to Pakistan for a meeting of the regional alliance called Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is an opportunity to thaw relations and set up some sort of interaction on the sidelines. Besides, China is scheduled to take over the rotational presidency at UNSC in March and without some movement from India, it will have no point to neutralise Pakistan with, much as it would want to keep its working relationship with India going. Besides, it has to show something for giving assent to the declaration of Jaish chief Masood Azhar as a UN-designated global terrorist. China and Pakistan back each other up on the world stage, representing each other in official groups of nations where the other is not present. For instance, Pakistan stands up for China in the Non-Aligned Movement and in return, it gets China's veto power in the UNSC.

India's bigger challenge though is to manage the SCO, where both China and Pakistan are key members, for its strategic imperatives. Already, we have made noises about jointly strengthening the fight against terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking and organised crime to corner Pakistan as a sponsor of terror. India has to also walk cautiously on economic cooperation with members and ensure that China does not surreptitiously ensure its overlordship as the latter has proposed a free trade area for all. Most members are yet to feel comfortable on multi-lateral trade and cooperation. Besides, all other SCO members have embraced the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which India is opposing. In fact, Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan formed the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), which has signed a non-preferential trade and economic cooperation agreement with China. For all of India's efforts to highlight its connectivity corridors, like the Chabahar port and India-Myanmar-Thailand highway, Pakistan will always counter their significance with that of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Negotiating terrain with both Pakistan and China, India must find its feet in the SCO if it wants to strengthen its footprint in Central Asia, a diplomatic initiative that the Modi Government is keen on. India's other counter-balancing act is between Russia and China, both of whom have come closer but are wary of eating into each other's sphere of influence. India can be the counterweight and use that status to extract its gains. Besides, India needs to work on its economic heft vis-a-vis the SCO majors. Our trade with Russia stands at about a little over \$10 billion and is projected to be \$30 billion by 2025. In contrast, China's trade with Russia has already crossed \$100 billion. A similar lopsided volume prevails with Central Asian republics. The lack of connectivity has stifled energy cooperation between the hydrocarbon-rich region and India. We cannot miss the bus as the SCO accounts for 20 per cent of the world's GDP and can guarantee its relevance in the region. But can its bilateral differences with Pakistan and China mean SCO members could set up their own mini-groupings of mutual benefit and derail its very purpose? That's for India to understand and move adroitly.

Bezos' bumper trip

From getting a Gandhi quote wrong to drawing the ire of the BJP, the Amazon CEO's latest trip didn't go that well



In terms of disastrous visits to India, Amazon's Chief Executive Jeffery Bezos's latest trip wasn't quite up there. No, it will take a lot more to top the stupendous failure of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's visit a few years ago. Despite misquoting Gandhi. Yet, Bezos' rap on the knuckles delivered by Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, where he straight up accused Amazon of funding its losses in India with its latest investment, was harsh. Even though Goyal was forced to backtrack and claimed that his quote was taken "out of context," it was strange that a Minister, who speaks decent English, is taken out of context time and again. But the message was clear: Bezos' ownership of *The Washington Post* and articles published by it against Prime Minister Narendra Modi counted against him. Also the fact that the BJP still draws huge support from the trading community, which has deeply been affected by the advent of online retailing, has meant that Bezos has had a problematic visit to the country this time. He has even eschewed both the Government and media interactions. Indeed, Bezos' most high-profile interactions were in Mumbai where he celebrated the success of Amazon's video streaming service *Amazon Prime* with Bollywood's elite and the honchos of several Indian conglomerates.

While Goyal was surprised by the way some reacted to his comments, they did have an element of truth. Although reactions were delivered with the grace of a dancer wearing work boots and quickly retracted, there was no hiding from the fact that the Government wanted Bezos to know it is not very happy with Amazon and his ownership of *The Washington Post*. While Bezos is unlikely to interfere in the editorial process of his newspaper, it is also clear that he needs India as a market. Most American internet giants are locked out of China and India is the "it" market. This is the case not just for Amazon but also Google, Facebook and Uber. And as India becomes more aware of this, it will flex its muscles economically. Recent actions against Malaysia are a case in point and a decision is also likely to be taken against Turkey for its support to Pakistan-sponsored separatists. It is unlikely that India will act against Amazon in the immediate future but the firm does need to answer some questions as to how it is abusing (or not) its market position. The BJP, too, should understand that it cannot control the narrative in the foreign media. It needs to have better spokespersons who can defend the Government's position or change perceptions.

Need to objectify history

As India charts its course through the 21st century, the liberation we all need is not from the glories of the past but from its burdens — communal, economic and psychological



AVIK CHANDA

Why, when the nation should be focussing all its resources on remedying its economic slowdown in a fascinating but disruptive world driven by automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI), should we continue to be obsessed with the past? Well, because history is no longer the sole purview for reclusive academics tucked away amid lengths of dust-laden bookshelves. It's being revisited and morphed, banded about by politicians and re-branded in the media everyday. It's used as a veritable psychological battleground and there's a war, for our allegiance. It's a campaign characterised by selective erasure, of highlighting specific events, the systematic reduction of historical figures to mere unidimensional labels and retro-fitting them into contemporary political positions.

Take the case of Dara Shukoh, the would-be emperor of Hindustan, haloed in his timeless promise of ideal kingship. The traditional tack of pitting him against his nemesis, Aurangzeb, has imploded in recent times. So much so that even the debate of "good Muslim versus bad Muslim, good Mughal versus bad Mughal" has faded away. Dara Shukoh, rescued from centuries of indifference, has re-emerged in his new avatar as "the emblem of Indianness", confident and consummate. Dara the eternal victim is a notion of the past and we can all pretend that his belligerent brother never existed. Ample reasons are being furnished for this new, posthumous *khatab*. The Mughal prince was a deeply syncretic thinker, accomplished scholar, poet and a theologian of unusual merit; a calligraphist and connoisseur of the fine arts as well as a dutiful son and warm-hearted family man.

The first stumbling block comes in the nature of an anachronistic fallacy: The idea of retrospectively imposing the concept of "Indianness" — and by corollary, nationhood and nation-state and more specifically, the personification thereof in the form of a deified "Bharat Mata" — onto the Mughal empire of the 17th century. The fact is that in our land, the consciousness of nationhood has evolved as the end-result of a much later historical process: The idealistic, patriotic reaction to the brutal British colonial experience and rather more tenuous associations with 19th century European history such as the Germanic *Freiheitkampf* (freedom struggle) during the Napoleonic regime. This is brought out very clearly in Sugata Bose's book, *The Nation as Mother and Other Visions of Nationhood*.

There is, however, another challenge. The cherry-picking of only the syncretic attributes of Dara completely leaves out other aspects of his personality. He was habitually cold and arrogant towards the mass of courtiers and commanders, who he felt, were intellectually inferior to him. He was highly superstitious by nature, easily swayed by mystery, magic and all manner of self-styled godmen, a conspicuously uninspiring military



commander and an alarmingly poor judge of human character. One can well wonder whether, even assuming he had managed to ascend the throne, his eclectic nature but indifference towards administrative and military matters would have enabled him to hold the empire together. In the years between 1654 and September 1657, when Shah Jahan fell grievously ill — the War of Succession broke out soon thereafter — Dara was the *de facto* ruler of the empire. This period was characterised by moves to thwart campaigns of territorial expansion in the Deccan and Kashmir, coupled with a reclusive temperament and highly creative outpouring of a philosophical nature. In terms of court politics, Dara displayed a steady, cold hostility towards the senior imperial advisors and commanders and his mutually acrimonious exchanges with the seasoned *wazir*, Saadullah Khan, almost mirrors the rivalry between the crown prince Salim (later, the emperor Jahangir) and Abul Fazl. But the moot question is: Would the current unidimensional narrative about Dara have even brought up these other facets of his personality and objectively looked at the man in the context of his times?

Separated from Dara Shukoh by almost two-and-a-half centuries but basking in this same Lazarus light is Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. Stymied

through the prime of his life by the draconian prisons of the British Raj and then after Independence, even posthumously, by a succession of Congress-led Governments, only in recent years has his release from oblivion taken place. The image of the controversial political leader has been resurrected by the present administration to larger-than-life proportions and with it, his ethos of Hindutva.

This very term has come to denote a number of aspects in our common perception, the re-establishment of rituals and religious practices (including the cult of cow worship) in the heart of societal life, the retention — and at times, deepening — of the fault-lines of caste and a steadfast advocacy of vegetarianism, among other things. Consequently, the image of Savarkar looms before us as an austere, conservative traditionalist, steeped in the rituals of his faith, a sort of archetypal Hindu counterpoint to the ulama. And politically, a Hindu Jinnah.

But is that who he was, in reality? A recent biography, sourcing the treatises, letters and speeches of this polemic leader in the original Marathi, reveals a very different picture. Savarkar's conception of Hindutva, the book informs us, was essentially political, a move to galvanise the eternally splintered Hindu communities into a homogenous whole — and not an ultra-religious manifesto. In Savarkar's credo, the key to achieving this was the uniting and unionising of the Hindu polity, across caste lines. Far from being a traditionalist, this high-caste Chitpavan Brahmin established a Patit Pavan temple open to all castes, organised inter-caste dinners and marriages and did not personally care for rituals, including that of cow worship. In this more objective narrative, Savarkar emerges not as a fanatic but an astute rationalist, who rejected the Gandhian project, and wholeheartedly espoused industrialisation as the vehicle of progress in the future.



A significant aspect of Savarkar's life, unravelled in the biography, further belies the unidimensional label adduced to him. In *The Indian War of Independence*, his first major literary work that catapulted him to fame — and in the eyes of the colonial rulers, notoriety — he presented his narrative as a unified uprising against the British oppressors, stemming from a strong sense of nationhood. Savarkar's position in this book is unambiguously secular — Hindu satraps and commanders had rallied in union against the British under the flag of the Muslim Mughal titular monarch, Bahadur Shah Zafar. There's no hint of any deep-seated hatred of the Muslims, which henceforth became the quintessential trait associated with him. In fact, it was

only later, triggered by particular experiences and tribulations during his long incarceration in the Cellular Jail of the Andamans, that Savarkar developed his animosity towards the Muslims.

We're now faced with a lingering, larger question, which is central to this whole issue. Is there still a purpose to all this indulging in history in today's world? The Churchillian, though unoriginal, viewpoint purported to answer this question: "Those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it." But such aphorisms have long since dissolved into clichés.

Contemporary thinkers such as Yuval Noah Harari are not only more ambitious, they're also more persistent when demanding our participation: "Though historians occasionally try their hand at prophecy (without notable success), the study of history aims above all to make us aware of possibilities we don't normally consider. Historians study the past not in order to avoid repeating it — or perpetuate it — but in order to be liberated from it."

As India charts its course through the 21st century, the liberation we all need is not from the glories of the past but from its burdens — communal, economic and psychological.

(The writer is a columnist, business advisor and entrepreneur. He is the author of *Dara Shukoh: The Man Who Would Be King*)

SOUNDBITE

The Congress is opposing the CAA. I dare Rahul Gandhi to speak 10 sentences on the law. He should tell us in two sentences what is his problem with the CAA.



BJP working president —JP Nadha

I was very naughty in class but I was a teacher's pet. When the teacher was out, I was making dirty jokes and I was grabbing boys and kissing them. I was terrible!



Actor —Kalki Koechlin

Our Government wants peace in the neighbourhood. But we are not prepared to pay any price, certainly not without resolving the Kashmir dispute in a just manner.



Pakistan's Foreign Minister —Shah M Qureshi

I want to inform the CDS, if you want to deradicalise, then you first read the Juvenile Act. IPC is not applicable to children. What de-radicalisation are you talking about?



AIMIM chief —Asaduddin Owaisi

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Act responsibly

Sir — It is disappointing that educated politicians speak irresponsibly. Congress leader Shashi Tharoor criticised Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal by comparing him to a "eunuch." Leaders must inspire the masses, otherwise their words can adversely impact the mindset of their supporters.

Ravi
Via email

Experiment first

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "SC to the rescue" (January 16). There have been several controversies about the educational qualifications of some of our Ministers. A complete mismatch between the claims made by them and their marks in their certificates has been found. How then do they expect the citizens to have all necessary documents? If there is merit in the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), it must be explained. Before it is applied throughout the country, our leaders must first pass the CAA test. Even then questions will

Government must rise above politics

Union Minister Piyush Goyal seems to have jumped the gun by saying that Amazon is not doing a favour to the country by investing \$1 billion and that this was probably on account of a need to fund losses. To recall, Amazon had promised to create more than 25,000 jobs on a new campus in Long Island City, New York, in return for nearly \$3 billion in Government incentives. It was a cocky and raw business approach in a nation that is a votary of pure capitalism. Yet, it failed in this venture mostly due to the growing influence of the progressive Left in New York.

In its current home in Seattle, Amazon is being criticised for impacting house prices and growing inequality that has damaged the city. Now, the Minister in our own Right of the Central Government has chosen to cast a barb on its predatory pricing policies. This might well be due to the party's concerns on saving its trader vote bank. But the remarks, though credible, could as well have come from a party func-



R Narayanan
Navi Mumbai

Space dreams

Sir — The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) must be complimented for successfully launching the GSAT-30 into the orbit. After last year's setback, where the Chandrayaan-2 mission failed to touch down on the lunar surface, this is its first launch this year. GSAT-30 is

aimed at eliminating the technical bottlenecks not only for the country's communication system but also of a large number of Asian countries. Given that ISRO has helped India earn several firsts through its space missions in the recent past, hopefully, it will continue pushing the boundaries of Indian space science.

Yugal Kishore Sharma
Faridabad

Healthy lifestyle

Sir — Kudos to the Ministry of AYUSH for coming out with an excellent initiative to make people at work de-stress and refresh themselves through Y-BREAK or Yoga break — a five-minute exercise designed to make professionals at workplaces get some physical activity. It will help keep the mind tension-free and also enhance lifestyle apart from increasing productivity. This project may soon become a part of the schedule at all Government institutions and corporate bodies. Around 15 institutions, including corporate houses like Tata Chemicals, Axis Bank and Ernst & Young Global Consulting Services, have volunteered to join the project.

Booklets and videos on how to practise yoga will be given to the staff at the work places. Besides, the Ministry would also provide all possible help and support to see that this programme is inculcated among all.

M Pradyu
Kannur

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Tectonic shift in US' attitude

The US no longer views West Asia as critical to its economic well-being as it did in the past, when it depended on the oil from that region



DEEPAK SINHA

Karl Marx once wrote, "History repeats itself, first as tragedy, second as farce." But often times events tend to combine both the tragic and the farcical in equal measure, just as we are seeing them play out between the Iranians and the Americans. US President Donald Trump's recent actions remind one of the Hollywood blockbuster, *Gunfight at the OK Corral*, except for the minor aberration that West Asia is no Wild West and Trump is certainly no Marshal Wyatt Earp.

Whatever reasons he may put forward for his actions, the targeted execution of a serving Iranian General and war hero, Qasem Soleimani, while on an official visit to Iraq raises serious questions of sovereignty, morality, ethical conduct and can never be justified in any civilized society. It was, in fact, a blatant act of aggression in clear violation of international law and a war crime, made even more heinous because neither America nor Iran is at war with each other. It shows up the true face of America for what it is and has been these past decades, a global bully.

More importantly, the rationale and timing of the attack raise grave suspicions as to Trump's motives. The late General Soleimani was by no means a tactical commander and his neutralisation would hardly stop operations in progress, in this case the launch of "imminent attacks" on American embassies, as has been alleged by the President. What is more likely is that Trump ordered this rash and utterly immoral attack in the vain hope that it would divert attention from his forthcoming impeachment trial, while at the same time make him appear to be a strong and decisive leader. However, make no mistake General Soleimani's killing was a grievous loss to the Iranian establishment, especially to its "Irregular Warfare" capabilities, something that will take time to rebuild.

While Trump's action was totally transactional and short-term in nature, it coincided with the American deep state's far more long-term strategy there, the necessity to squeeze China. Over the past two decades there has been a tectonic shift in the manner the United States (US) views West Asia, ever since it became one of the world's leading oil producers, exporting more oil than Saudi Arabia. In March last year, the Energy Information Administration (EIA) reported that the US exported more crude and petroleum products than it imported. As senior partner Per Magnus Nysveen of Rystad Energy, a global oil consulting and analysis firm, put it, "The oil market is overly preoccupied with short-term US crude stocks but the big picture tells a new story. Increasingly profitable shale production and a robust global appetite for light oil and gasoline is poised to bring the US to a position of oil dominance in the next few years."

This fact obviously suggests that the US no longer views West Asia as critically important to its economic well-being as it did in the past, when its economy depended on the oil from that region. For it, the geostrategic value of that region lies more in the adverse impact that any exacerbation of tensions there would have on the Chinese economy, as it is bound to, given Chinese dependence on oil from that region. It, therefore, stands to reason that it no longer finds it necessary to maintain a large troop presence in the region and can achieve its long-term aims through the use of proxies such as Saudi Arabia and Israel. In this context, much has been made of the Russian attempts to fill the vacuum that the US withdrawal has left. However, President Putin must be aware that he is punching well above his weight given the fact that the Russian economy is just around 1/20th that of the US.

Finally, with regard to the US-Iran imbroglio, while it is certainly extremely far-fetched to suggest that World War-III is just around the corner, one can also safely assume that the existing stalemate is not going to last forever and probably the situation is going to get far worse, before it gets better. This is more so if in the coming months the Iranians attempt to utilise their considerable irregular warfare assets to force the Americans out of Iraq, if not the Middle East. Escalation in tensions would then be unavoidable and that would have serious repercussions, with unintended and unpredictable consequences for the world at large.

In this context we would do well to recall the innocuous events that triggered one of the darkest chapters in world history, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife by a 19-year-old Serbian terrorist, Gavrilo Princip. While that event may have occurred in far-away Sarajevo, it did set the world aflame, bringing untold misery to tens of millions over the next four years. It would indeed be unfortunate if this tragedy were to be repeated.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a Consultant with the Observer Research Foundation and a Senior Visiting Fellow with The Peninsula Foundation, Chennai)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

I WANT TO TELL AAP THAT AFTER THE REJECTION OF THE REVIEW PETITION, BECAUSE OF YOU THE CONVICTS COULDN'T BE HANGED IN TIME.
 —UNION MINISTER
 SMRITI IRANI



PLEASE DON'T DO POLITICS ON THIS. I DON'T BLAME THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FOR THIS. BOTH GOVERNMENTS ARE TRYING EVERYTHING THEY CAN.
 —DELHI CHIEF MINISTER
 ARVIND KEJRIWAL

Change or perish

There is no alternative to sustainability and the present trajectory of economic growth divorced from environmental considerations is dragging us towards mass extinction



BKP SINHA

Despite the concerns of policymakers and planners regarding the efficient management of natural resources, the threat to them is growing exponentially by the day. This is because the country's efforts towards market-led development are eating up our social, natural and cultural capital faster than ever. Unfortunately today, the core issue of a preferred pattern of growth is hidden behind the innocuous facade of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth as the supreme objective. Decisions on all matters related to development require the adoption of a holistic approach because the need for environmental improvement is not able to attract appropriate investments. This is mostly owing to the fact that they are essentially long-term in nature and their support to sustained economic growth is seldom appreciated or quantified. In a world which refuses to adopt the concept of a steady state of long-term economic growth, sustainability is seen as absurdity.

Gradually, however, the world is coming to realise that there is no alternative to sustainability and the present trajectory of economic growth divorced from environmental considerations is dragging us towards the reckless path of mass extinction. The fact remains that there is no alternative to a concerted effort towards sustainable management of natural resources that demands collective action at the regional, national and global level.

The key areas in which action is required are big investments designed towards land, water, and biodiversity conservation, apart from simultaneous reduction in emissions on a mass scale. That includes Herculean efforts in jealously safeguarding forests; reduction and diversion in investment in new sources of energy away from dirty sources like coal, crude and nuclear power; improvement in availability and affordability of public transport systems with metro and light rail systems everywhere; switching to material and energy-efficient houses; smart electrical grids carrying renewable energy and all these supported by massive research efforts to improve efficiencies as we move on. Considering the increase in the pressure on forests, sincere efforts to mobilise agroforestry initiatives coupled with adequate scientific support, extension and education in resource literacy are a must. This great leap, however, will necessitate the shedding of our preoccupation with short-term gains that creates hurdles in integrating economic growth-related issues and sustainable management of natural resources. In short, the planners have to accept without any inhibitions the holistic approach which considers ecology, economics and ethics as a part of a whole interconnected circle — which at present appears to have been broken.

A careful consideration of the policy impact of different sectors, the essential trade-off between different sectors for restoration and development of natural resources, would have created huge economic demand and job opportunities for a wider base of poor like tribals and others residing in far-flung areas. One cannot overlook the fact that the economic health of any society or country in the ultimate analysis is supported by its basic ecological status.

Let us take forests as their management is important. However, effective linkage of forestry with other important sectors of the economy is not yet in place. Forest-based activities have largest forward and backward economic linkages. Just to elaborate: Along with the flexibility of capital, skill and energy requirement; it has a spectrum of activities, ranging from value-

“ A CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF THE POLICY IMPACT OF DIFFERENT SECTORS, THE ESSENTIAL TRADE-OFF BETWEEN DIFFERENT SECTORS FOR RESTORATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, WOULD HAVE CREATED HUGE ECONOMIC DEMAND AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR A WIDER BASE OF POOR LIKE TRIBALS AND OTHERS RESIDING IN FAR-FLUNG AREAS. ONE CANNOT OVERLOOK THE FACT THAT THE ECONOMIC HEALTH OF ANY SOCIETY OR COUNTRY IN THE ULTIMATE ANALYSIS IS SUPPORTED BY ITS BASIC ECOLOGICAL STATUS ”



addition activity at the household level to micro industries and small sawmills to forest-based industries and to a totally computerised ayurvedic drug as also the paper industry. Policy measures and activities in other sectors mar the ability of the forests to perform their economic, social and environmental roles, as much as the policies set in forestry do.

In fact, policy decisions taken outside the forestry sector may be detrimental or beneficial for effective functioning of services from forests on a long-term basis. Let us take, for example, the development of infrastructure. The policy instruments attempting modernisation of transport, telecommunication and highways do create both positive and negative impacts for forest conservation and development. They do improve forest firefighting and public awareness of environmental issues but also create backlash in the shape of forest degradation. Pucca roads through forest habitats serve as barrier for dissemination of pollen grains, mating of smaller animals and recharging of underground water reserves, loss of hybrid vigour due to inbreeding and related extinction, noise and other disturbances resulting in the decline of reproduction or mating of many wildlife species. Measures are needed to strengthen the positive impacts and reduce the negative fallout.

Careful planning and strict implementation could avoid many such backlashes. Provision of compensatory afforestation elsewhere can never be a substitute for loss of natural forest and its ecosystem services at the point of concern.

An overarching policy of creating a platform for dialogue can remove barriers between sectors and institutions currently working with different myopic mandates. Understanding of involved trade-offs in natural ecosystems and benefits of harmony among forestry and other land-based sectors are urgently needed. Canada

already has the provision for removing barriers between institutions and orienting them towards a philosophy of common goals. An outcome of this is a model forest programme in which forests are managed by a partnership of diverse interest groups of industry, conservationists, community, aboriginals and so on.

Professional forestry in a country like India needs a radical change. Our Government, committed to social justice, has so far failed to adequately recognise that the services needed by people cannot come from the Forest Department staffed by men trained as professional foresters in the core subject.

It is well understood by now that forest ecosystems have multifarious roles to play in helping the country in halting the downward spiral of land degradation; in restoring the vitality of the land; in protecting land from wind and water erosion; in job creation in far-flung areas; in carbon sequestration and of course in combatting climate change-related problems.

A location-specific proper model of agroforestry can promote and sustain an intrinsically-sustainable and resilient agriculture system especially under marginal conditions. There is a whole range of local problems of forestry that requires different solutions based on different strategies. Placements of Indian Forest Service Officers in different development Ministries are adequate proof of the fact that forestry professionals can handle various dimensions of administrative work. Their special inputs, in fact, through provision of new insights in relating conservation and sustainable management of natural resources to their respective sectors of economy will be their most worthwhile contribution to the country.

Gradually provisions are being made for placement of environmental personnel in industries and other Government departments too. Their roles, more often

than not, are generally confined towards pollution abatement measures. It will be better if they are designated as natural resource managers with additional mandate of looking at the use or abuse of natural resources for sustainable development. In addition, the time has come for university courses to be re-designed and made compulsory in all branches of education apart from promoting and subsidising the courses of management of natural resources on a sustainable base as the core subject.

The horizon of knowledge about natural resources is ever-expanding and accordingly conservation is reinventing itself. New models in forestry as well as agriculture incorporating the role of trees that are known to exert an influence far beyond their immediate environment, can go a long way to save the farmers from committing suicides and help them go ahead on the path of sustainable development.

Conservation of resources and sustainable development is the bedrock of survival of mankind but conservation today is much more than merely a choice in favour of one's long-term economic self-interest.

It entails moral choices and responsibilities, too, involving the community of all life forms in the company of which we have evolved and to which we essentially belong. Further, it has to be alive to the issues of inter-generational equity. Conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, within this perspective, is a radical endeavour to save Earth itself and that will essentially have to derive strength from knowledge, ethical value, wealth of our dreams and an understanding of nature as a sacred space.

(The writer is Advisor at Amity University and former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Uttar Pradesh)

States also responsible for economic growth

If we take stock of all the major areas which need improvement for attracting investment then, barring fiscal and monetary policies, almost all the key items are either in the State List or the Concurrent List of the Constitution



SHSHANK SAURAV

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present her first full Union Budget on February 1 and people are expecting some out of the box initiatives to stimulate the economic growth of the country. Some of the key macroeconomic indicators like the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, tax collection, credit growth and so on, indicate that the economy is grappling with a slowdown which is largely due to a decline in demand.

Global trade protectionism, a looming oil crisis and a rise in retail inflation are further aggravating the situation. Given the current economic scenario, it would be too optimistic to believe that growth will jump and

the private sector will start investing all of a sudden in the coming fiscal. India has a federal structure where sufficient autonomy has been given to State Governments. This autonomy is not just for making legislations and administration over the territory but it extends to the fiscal arena also. The States are getting their fair share of revenue after the implementation of the recommendations of the Fourteenth Finance Commission.

Our constitutional mechanism empowers the State Governments to deal with the matters which come under the State List, as per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, and they have joint control over the matters coming under the Concurrent List.

Despite the enormous powers given to States and the responsibility entrusted upon the State Legislature, it is a fact that whenever the question of economic growth arises, people always look to the Union Government. The fact that the union is nothing but a sum of all States should be appreciated and,

therefore, the journey towards economic prosperity is the equal responsibility of both the Centre and the States. A common man doesn't want to be entangled in a tug of war between warring politicians but unfortunately, gaining and retaining power is more important for people who are sitting at the helm of affairs than the welfare of the people who put them there.

There is a general perception that a State which is ruled by the same political faction for a relatively longer period offers far more policy certainty and enhances its ability to attract investors. It is also perceived that having a Government of the same party/coalition at both the Centre and State helps in the unimpeded growth of the State.

However, if we see the data for the two most populous States of the country viz. Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Bihar, then these notions will prove to be a myth.

Bihar has been continuously ruled by Nitish Kumar for the last 15 years (except for a short while when Jitan Ram Manjhi was at the helm).

In the case of UP, most of the time the State was ruled by Governments which had allies at the Centre.

However, despite this favourable political environment, these States are not doing well economically and are called the BIMARU States. This means that the State-level politicians are not doing good enough work for their development. This lackadaisical attitude of State Governments stems from the fact that economic growth and job creation are considered the sole responsibility of the Union Government, which it is not.

For Chief Ministers it is easy to pass the buck on to the Centre in case questions regarding the economy and development are asked.

The persona-centric politics of the major parties like the BJP and the Congress is also to be blamed for not grooming the State leadership and not pushing regional leaders to present a development role model for others.

The people of the country all want jobs and a higher income and

a better quality of life. For this, we have to start making State-level leaders accountable and question their inability to deliver on their promises made during the election campaigns.

Economic reforms are an ongoing process and investors continuously evaluate various investment options before committing their resources. Land and labour reforms are the most critical of all the structural changes which this country needs. Land comes under the State List and matters related to labour are part of the Concurrent List. Among various things, an investor looks for infrastructure and the law and order situation. These two vital prerequisites for development also fall under the domain of States. If we take stock of all the major areas which need improvement for attracting investment then, barring fiscal and monetary policies, almost all the key items are either in the State List or the Concurrent List of the Constitution.

The rural economy and the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector are fac-

ing severe distress. The rural economy is largely driven by agricultural activities and as a matter of fact, the farm sector accounts for almost half of the workforce employed in our country and contributes 18 per cent to the GDP. Similarly, the MSME sector contributes almost 29 per cent to the GDP and more than 45 per cent of product exports come from this sector. State Governments are uniquely positioned to understand local needs and tailor schemes as per those requirements, including tax concessions by reducing State Goods and Services Tax rates. Central schemes are applied across the country and "one size fits all" may not be true in every situation.

If India has to grow, then State Governments should take ownership for development and people should also ask regional leaders to deliver on their promises. This nation belongs to all and therefore development is the collective responsibility of all of us, particularly those who have been given the mandate to rule.

(The writer is a Chartered Accountant)



TRUMP'S TRIAL A DEFINING MOMENT

US President Trump's trial is not just a defining moment for him but also for the presidency and the Senate. If the Senate votes on party lines to acquit and Trump is then re-elected, this would be an infamous outcome. The idea that a president can abuse his office would be accepted. A new and lawless presidential legitimacy would be sanctioned. And the checks and balances of the US constitution would no longer exist and would need to be built afresh.

(The Guardian editorial)

'Amazon to create one mn jobs in India by 2025'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

World's largest online shopping platform Amazon on Friday announced plans to create one million new jobs in India over the next five years as it firefights comments from Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on the firm not doing a favour to the country by making the investments.

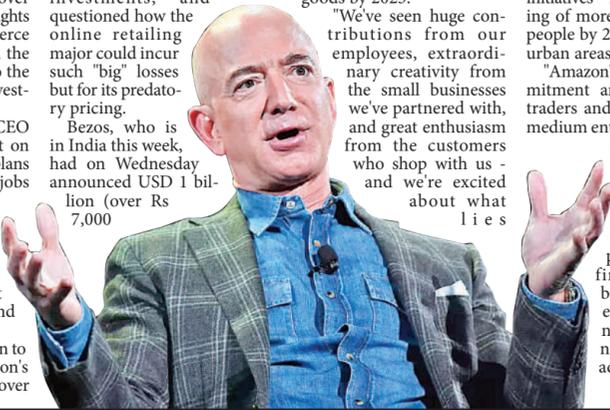
Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos, in a statement on Friday, said the company plans to create one million new jobs in India over the next five years. The new jobs - created both directly and indirectly - will be across industries, including IT, skill development, content creation, retail, logistics, and manufacturing.

These jobs are in addition to the seven lakh jobs Amazon's investments have enabled over

the last six years in the country.

The statement comes a day after Goyal said the US-based company was not doing a favour to the country by the investments, and questioned how the online retailing major could incur such "big" losses but for its predatory pricing.

Bezos, who is in India this week, had on Wednesday announced USD 1 billion (over Rs 7,000



crore) investment in the country to help bring small and medium businesses online and committed to exporting USD 10 billion worth of India-made goods by 2025.

"We've seen huge contributions from our employees, extraordinary creativity from the small businesses we've partnered with, and great enthusiasm from the customers who shop with us - and we're excited about what lies

ahead," Bezos said in the statement on Friday.

The company noted that the Indian government has prioritised job creation and skilling initiatives - including the training of more than 400 million people by 2022 - in rural and urban areas.

"Amazon's job creation commitment and investment in traders and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) complement these social inclusion and social mobility efforts by creating more opportunities for people in India to find employment, build skills, and expand entrepreneurship opportunities," the statement added.

The company's

The statement comes a day after Goyal said the US-based company was not doing a favour to the country by the investments, and questioned how the online retailing major could incur such "big" losses but for its predatory pricing.

new investments will help hiring talent to fill roles across the company in India, including software development engineering, cloud computing, content creation, and customer support, it said.

Since 2014, Amazon has grown its employee base more than four times, and last year inaugurated its new campus building in Hyderabad - Amazon's first fully-owned campus outside the United States and the largest building globally in terms of employees (15,000) and space (9.5 acres).

The e-tail giant had previously committed USD 5.5 billion investments in India - Amazon's most important market outside of the US and a key growth driver.

The investments, Amazon said, will also help in expanding growth opportunities for the more than 5.5 lakh traders and micro, small, and medium-sized businesses - including local shops - through programs like Saheli, Karigar,

and "I Have Space".

In a post on the Amazon.in website, Bezos said more than 60,000 businesses are exporting 'Make in India' products globally with cumulative exports exceeding USD 1 billion.

"I fall more in love with India every time I return here. The boundless energy, innovation, and the grit of the Indian people always inspire me," he wrote.

Bezos' visit has been marked by Competition Commission of India initiating a formal investigation into alleged deep discounts, preferential listing and exclusionary tactics adopted by Amazon and Walmart-owned Flipkart. Many store owners, led by traders' body Confederation of

All India Traders, had also organised protests in 300 cities against online retailers alleging that these e-commerce companies were violating FDI rules and following predatory pricing in India.

Last year, the government had tightened rules for e-commerce marketplaces with foreign investment. These rules barred such platforms from offering products of sellers in which they hold a stake and banned exclusive marketing arrangements among other clauses. Following this, Amazon restructured its joint ventures to ensure compliance.

The government has asserted that e-commerce companies have to follow Indian rules in letter and spirit and not find loopholes to make a backdoor entry into multi-brand retail segment.



CAPSULE



Xiaomi India spins off POCO as independent brand

NEW DELHI: Smartphone maker Xiaomi on Friday said it is spinning off 'POCO' as a standalone brand. With this restructuring, POCO will run independent of Xiaomi with its own team and go-to-market strategy, a statement said. "POCO started as a sub-brand of Xiaomi in 2018 with a small team. It's first smartphone, POCO F1, was incredibly successful and remains an extremely popular phone till date," it added. Xiaomi Vice President and India Managing Director Manu Jain said POCO has grown into its own identity in a short span of time. "We feel the time is right to let POCO operate on its own now, which is why we're excited to announce that POCO will spin off as an independent brand," he added.



Adani, Azure top bidders for solar tenders

NEW DELHI: Adani Green Energy and Azure Power have emerged as successful bidders in Solar Energy Corporation of India's first manufacturing-linked solar tender, a top government official said on Friday. Adani has bid for 1.5 GW solar cell manufacturing capacity and 6 GW generation capacity, MIRE Secretary Anand Kumar said on the sidelines of India Energy Forum-Renewable Energy Summit here. He also said that Azure Power bid for 500 MW solar cell manufacturing capacity and 2 GW generation capacity. With the green shoe option, the capacity for Adani would increase to 2 GW of solar cell manufacturing capacity and 8 GW generation capacity, Kumar said.

Auto Expo to focus on new emission technology

LUCKNOW: The upcoming Auto Expo at the India Expo Mart in Greater Noida will feature new emission technology products and act as a launchpad for some key brands entering the Indian market and unveiling new products. The biggest bi-annual extravaganza of the automotive industry is slated to be inaugurated on February 6, Co-chairman, SIAM Trade Fair Group and Vice President, Corporate Communications, Maruti Suzuki India Sanjeev Handa said here on Friday. The week-long show will feature new emission technology products and vehicles with more stringent safety standards under one roof, Handa said, adding that the event will showcase Indian automotive industry's preparedness to adopt the BS-VI norms ahead of the government's specified deadline.

India must continue structural reforms to boost growth: UN report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A UN report on Friday said continued structural reforms are necessary to boost growth in India, which is currently facing an economic slowdown.

The World Economic Situation and Prospects 2020 (WESP) report has also lowered GDP growth estimate for India while expressing hope that combination of fiscal stimulus and financial sector reforms will help boost consumption.

"After experiencing a sharp economic slowdown from 6.8 per cent in 2018 to 5.7 per cent in 2019, India has committed to an ambitious fiscal expansion to complement the country's already loose monetary policy."

"The combination of fiscal stimulus and financial sector reforms, boosting investment and consumption, is expected to support a recovery in growth to 6.6 per cent, but it will take continued structural reforms to bring India's growth back to its previous levels," it said.

However, the data related to India was revised to 5 per cent for the current fiscal and 5.8-



5.9 per cent for the next financial year, Nagesh Kumar, Head, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, said.

While presenting the report, he said the GDP forecast in WESP did not take into account the latest growth numbers released by India's National Statistical Office (NSO).

The report, he said was computed in October 2019 and NSO's advanced growth estimates were released in January 2020 suggesting coun-

try's growth would slip to 5 per cent during 2019-20 fiscal.

Kumar further said India's macro economic fundamentals are strong as ever and recovery in growth is expected in the next fiscal.

According to the UN study, one in five countries will see per capita income stagnate or decline this year, but listed India among few countries where the per capita GDP growth rate could exceed 4 per cent level in 2020.

A prolonged weakness in

However, the data related to India was revised to 5 per cent for the current fiscal and 5.8-5.9 per cent for the next financial year.

—NAGESH KUMAR Head of SSWA, UNESCAP

global economic activity may cause significant setbacks for sustainable development, including the goals to eradicate poverty and create decent jobs for all. At the same time, pervasive inequalities and the deepening climate crisis are fuelling growing discontent in many parts of the world.

In the European Union, manufacturing will continue to be held back by global uncertainty, but this will be partially offset by steady growth in private consumption, allowing a modest rise in GDP growth from 1.4 per cent in 2019 to 1.6 per cent in 2020.

IRDAI chief cautions insurers against predatory pricing

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) chairman S C Khuntia on Friday cautioned insurers against indulging in predatory pricing, saying it is not a sustainable model while citing examples of airline and telecom sectors.

Highlighting that the insurance industry is different from other business, he said if an insurer fails, it has bearing on customers as well.

"I would like to give a word of caution here. Though your (insurance brokers) share is very high in group health insurance, the loss ratio in group health insurance is also very high. Probably, it is not very sustainable at present," he said at an event organised by Insurance Brokers Association of India here.

"So the insurance companies, intermediaries and policyholders need to unite to create a sustainable atmosphere. In other industries if there is unfair competition, the industry suffers but the client



I would like to give a word of caution here. Though your (insurance brokers) share is very high in group health insurance, the loss ratio in group health insurance is also very high. Probably, it is not very sustainable at present

S C KHUNTIA (IRDAI) chairman

tele don't suffer. While this has happened in airlines and telecom industries but we cannot afford that kind of a situation in the insurance industry because insurance is an industry for protection," he said.

"So if the industry suffers, then clientele also suffers. And as a regulator we would not like that to happen. One should not overcharge and also not undercharge," he said, adding, there is need to create efficiencies so that to bring down premium and minimise the risk.

Asked if companies are engaging in predatory pricing

to up their volume, the regulator acknowledged it by saying "of course, of course."

"Regulator will have to ensure that the industry runs sustainably. There will be host of actions not one kind of action (to check predatory pricing) but we will ensure that the health of insurance industry does not deteriorate," he said.

To a query on LIC stake reduction roadmap for IDBI Bank, Khuntia said IRDAI has reminded LIC and they are yet to come forward with it.

He, however, expressed hope that it will be done quickly.

Shipping Ministry seeks land from Bengal for CEZ

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The Shipping Ministry has sought land from the West Bengal government for setting up a coastal employment zone (CEZ), an official said.

Setting up CEZs across the country will promote port-led development conceived under the 'Sagarmala' project of the government.

The ministry is in talks with the state government for getting the land, Director (Sagarmala), Shipping Ministry, Abhishek Chandra said at a BCCI event here on Friday. Under the plan, the state government will give the land as equity while funding will be done by the Centre.

"CEZs will be set up using the challenge methodology of Niti Aayog," Chandra said.

Under this system, all projects under different ministries will be rated on more than a half-dozen parameters on a scale of zero-to-100 and the state that gets the highest score will get the project automatically.



Gowda launches bid to revive three sick urea units; unveils logo, slogan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Fertiliser Minister D V Sadananda Gowda on Friday unveiled the logo and brand 'Apna Urea Sona Ugle' of Hindustan Urvarak and Rasayan Ltd (HURL), which is in the process of reviving three sick urea units.

The sick urea units are located at Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh), Barauni (Bihar) and Sindri (Jharkhand).

HURL, a joint venture firm promoted by three PSUs -- Coal India Limited (CIL), NTPC Ltd and Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) -- is in the process of putting in place all logistic and marketing infrastructure.

After the launch, Gowda said five sick urea units are being revived at present.

HURL's three units are

The sick urea units are located at Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh), Barauni (Bihar) and Sindri (Jharkhand)

expected to be commissioned in February 2021, while Ramagundam (Telangana) and Talcher (Odisha) units are also likely to commence operations next year.

"I hope all units will be commissioned on schedule. This is the need of the hour," he said.

At each location, a new plant with 12.7 lakh tonnes capacity of neem coated urea is being set up which will make the country self-sufficient in urea, Gowda said,

adding that the country still imports about 70-80 lakh tonnes of urea annually.

Fertiliser Secretary Chhabildendra Roul asked HURL to promote balanced use of fertilisers and not just focus on marketing its urea product.

He also advised the company not to focus on single brand urea, but diversify its product portfolio to include agro-chemicals, compost, and nanofertilizers.

Senior officials of Fertiliser Ministry, CIL, NTPC, and HURL were also present at the event.

According to HURL, the commissioning of three units in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand will open forward and backward linkages for business activity in the eastern part of the country.

Centre pushes centres for vehicle tracking system

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With little progress on setting up monitoring centres by states on vehicle tracking system, the Centre has stepped in to ensure effective implementation of the project under the Nirbhaya Framework with an assistance of Rs 332 crore.

In a letter to Principal Secretaries of states and UTs, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has asked them to apply for the assistance by February 15.

"Since very little progress could be achieved on setting up the Monitoring Centers, it was felt necessary to support the

States under Nirbhaya Framework at the earliest so as to effectively implement the vehicle tracking system and ensure safe commute to the women and children in public passenger transport vehicles," the letter said.

The ministry earlier had mandated vehicle location tracking device and emergency buttons be fitted in all public service vehicle w e f from April 1, 2018, which was re-examined and it was decided to give exemption to all public service vehicles that were registered till December 31, 2018 (old vehicles) from these requirements till notified by state/UT governments.



Vodafone Idea shares nosedive over 39 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Vodafone Idea on Friday plunged over 39 per cent after the Supreme Court dismissed review petitions of top telecom firms seeking review of its earlier order asking them to pay Rs 1.47 lakh crore in past statutory dues by January 23.

The company's scrip tanked 39.30 per cent to Rs 3.66 on the BSE.

On the NSE, it plummeted 39.16 per cent to Rs 3.65. Bharti Airtel, however, was trading in the green after initial losses of 0.83 per cent on the BSE.

The Supreme Court Thursday dismissed review petitions of top telecom firms including Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea seeking review of its earlier order asking them to pay Rs 1.47 lakh crore in past statutory dues by January 23 saying it did not find any "justifiable reason" to entertain them.

In a big blow to telecom sector, India's apex court has dismissed the review petition filed by telecom companies to grant a relief on AGR liabilities, said a report by Motilal Oswal Institutional Equities.

China's economy slumps to 6.1%, lowest in 29 years

PNS ■ BEIJING

China's GDP grew by 6.1 per cent last year, the lowest in 29 years, the government said on Friday, as weak domestic demand and the bruising 18-month trade war with the US took their toll on the world's second-largest economy.

The new data released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) comes a day after China and the US signed a long-awaited phase one deal, marking a ceasefire in the 18-month-long trade war which saw the world's two largest economies slap 25 per cent tariffs on about half a trillion-dollar worth of each other's exports.



The world's second-largest economy grew by 6.1 per cent last year, its worst performance since 1990, but it remained above the psychologically important six per cent mark.

The GDP growth remained well within the 6 to 6.5 target set by the government, the NBS said.

However, significant from the Chinese government's per-

The world's second-largest economy grew by 6.1 per cent last year, its worst performance since 1990, but it remained above the psychologically important six per cent mark.

spective, the GDP expanded to USD 14.38 trillion from last year's USD 13.1 trillion.

In 2018, China's economy sank to a 28-year low slowing down to 6.6 per cent year on year, lower than the 6.8 per cent growth registered in 2017 as it grappled with the continued slowdown amid the trade war with US and declining exports.

There is a sense of relief among the officials here as the official growth rate remained above the psychologically important 6 per cent as mandated by Chinese President Xi Jinping who in the past directed that GDP should not go down below six per cent, which could cause serious disruption to the world's second largest economy.

Chinese economy was hit hard by the US tariffs as a result of the trade war between the two countries.

After signing the phase one deal on Wednesday, US President Donald Trump said 25 per cent tariff hike on USD 360 billion worth of Chinese products would continue until the phase-2 deal is worked out.

"The phase one deal is only an interim agreement between China and the US. In fact, to push for negotiation in the next stage, the US will keep existing tariffs on imports from China unless the two countries manage to reach a phase two deal," said Alicia Garcia Herrero, chief Asia Pacific economist at Natixis.

Hyderabad

the pioneer

Follow us on
@TheDailyPioneer
facebook.com/
dailypioneer

Saturday
January 18, 2020



Hyd was treated to a celebration of dance by the Battery Dance Company from New York. SIDDHESH SUMAN writes about the performance of the troupe and their mission to bring people together through dance

A WORLD UNITED BY DANCE

event and the performance was received well. The show started off by Shreenath Muthyala, founder of the Monsoon Raga Foundation, and Jonathan Hollander, director of Battery Dance, introducing the performances to the audience. The performances that followed were presented in three parts. The first segment 'Observatory' kicked off the show with an energetic performance and was choreographed by South African choreographer Thero Ndindwa. Its pulsating rhythm kept the audience at their edge of the seats. The second segment 'The Red Line' choreographed by Tadej Brdnik was emotionally moving and heartwarming. The final segment and the main element of the show 'Shakti' featured guest artist Unnath Hassan Rathnaraju, an Indian Classical contemporary dancer. The final act was a fusion of Bharatanatyam and modern contemporary and featured Indian music. The show also featured two incredible solo acts from guest artist Guru Swathi

THE DANCE COMPANY PERFORMED ITS CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED PRODUCTION, SHAKTI: A RETURN TO THE SOURCE, AT THE SHILPA KALA VEDIKA. A THEATRICAL ELEMENT OF THE SHOW WAS THAT EACH PART OF THE SHOW WAS A STORY TOLD IN DANCE AND THE MEANING WAS LEFT TO THE AUDIENCE TO INTERPRET

Gundapuneedi Atluri, a highly respected Kuchipudi artist. The final part of the show ended with the artists receiving a standing ovation in the auditorium. The sound of applause electrified the hall and people left with tears and a big smile because of the connection the performance and the artistes made with the audience. A theatrical element of the show was that each part of the show was a story told in dance and the meaning was left to the audience to interpret. Vivake Khamsingsavath, dancer and choreographer of the Battery Dance, discussed with *The Pioneer* his experience of performing and teaching in Hyderabad. He says, "It was an honour to teach and perform in Hyderabad. Bethany, also a dancer and choreographer at the Battery dance, and I taught a workshop specifically connecting emotions to movement. It was inspirational to watch the students work



through their feelings and find a way to show what they felt through dance. Our host at the school, Anjali, from HY dance studio created a safe environment for the students to learn and try new things. Shreenath took amazing care of the company in preparation of our performance. The stage was spacious allowing us to go bigger than any other show we have done so far. Afterwards, the reception we received from the audience was an

overwhelming feeling of appreciation and admiration. It was a true privilege to share our work in Hyderabad." The Hyderabad tour of Battery dance lasted for three days. A screening of Moving Stories was held followed by a panel discussion on January 8 at the Prasad's Labs. Three workshops on personality development for children and adults were also conducted. The Battery Dance Company is a New York-

based dance company which has been performing and teaching dance around the world for 44 years. From integrating refugees into dance to presenting NYC's longest-running public dance festival and bringing education in the arts to thousands of youngsters in public schools, Battery Dance redefined the meaning of dance and its power in bringing the world together. India has always been their favourite spot where the company

has appeared several times in various cities bringing the east and the west together. Jonathan Hollander expressed his love towards Indian music and especially Indian classical dance which has always been an inspiration for his work. The India tour team of Battery Dance included Robin Cantrell, Sarah Housepian, Bethany Mitchell, Sean Scantlebury and Vivake Khamsingsavath.

Dance as an art form has always served as a medium of emotional communication. Artists have used dance as a platform to express joy and sadness and find common ground among communities for centuries around the world. Recently, the Monsoon Raga Foundation, in association with the United States Embassy and SBI, presented the Battery Dance Company from New York in Hyderabad. The dance company performed its critically acclaimed production, Shakti: A Return to the Source, at the Shilpa Kala Vedita. People from across Hyderabad turned up for the



Turn the page for a better future

Hyderabad-based P Narayana Rao, through his magazine, Environment and People, seeks to inspire people to join the fight against the climate crisis, finds V SATEESH REDDY

In recent times, we have seen marches being held by people from all walks of lives globally to spread awareness on the climate change. Many experts warn that the optimum climatic conditions necessary for our survival are in danger and immediate action need to be taken to save it for future generations. One cannot forget Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg's speech at the Climate Action Summit, 2019 at the United Nations General Assembly. "We are at the beginning of mass extinction and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!" she had lashed out at the governments of the world. Like Greta, many people are doing their bit to safeguard the present environmental state. Hyderabad-based Dr P. Narayana Rao started a monthly maga-

THE MAGAZINE HAS 36 PAGES THAT HAS ARTICLES ABOUT GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES, HUMAN INTEREST STORIES AND CARTOONS ABOUT THE CAUSE. EVERY MONTH A QUIZ IS FEATURED IN THE MAGAZINE URGING THE READERS TO TEST THEIR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT

zine called Environment and People in 1994 and has been publishing articles on environmental issues and about people who were working hard to save the environment. The magazine carries articles written by eminent journalists, academicians and administrators. Narayana Rao said, "I was interested in social activities since my childhood and used to participate in various programmes. I started my NGO, Society For Environment and Education, in 1993 after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992, in Rio de Janeiro. I thought there is a need to explain to the youth about the impor-

importance of saving mother earth for future generations. I go to various colleges in Hyderabad and explained students about the issues regarding the climate crisis. Later, in 1994, I started printing a monthly magazine titled Environment and People to forward the same cause." The magazine has 36 pages that has articles about good environmental practices, human interest stories and cartoons about the cause. Every month a quiz is featured in the magazine urging the readers to test their knowledge about the environment. The money to run the magazine is obtained by crowdfunding, said Rao.

climate issues and the action required to save ourselves for drastic climate change, he said. Narayana Rao had also worked as a Pollution Control Board member from 1994 to 1998 which opened his eyes to the various problems plaguing the environment. He said that after the Earth Summit in 2002 at Johannesburg in South Africa, he began working on the issues highlighted at the conference - water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity also called as WEHAB. "As I worked as a PCB member, I know many people who work for the environment. I meet and learned from them their methods. Later with their permission, I published their work. I also read various newspapers, magazines, websites to check people who were working hard for the environment and publish their stories by referring the particular media name as a source," he said. "Till date, we got a great response from people regarding the magazine. I believe that more should involve themselves in working towards the issues regarding the climate to make earth safer for the next generations," he added.

"I started my NGO, Society For Environment and Education, in 1993 after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992, in Rio de Janeiro. I thought there is a need to explain to the youth about the importance of saving mother earth for future generations



PARTY



● Monica and Umesh Madhyan



● Mariyam



● Nidhi Agerwal



● Siri



● Sneha



● Mahka



● Swetha

ULTRA VOGUE

SUTRAA, a well-known fashion and lifestyle exhibition, was held at the HICC Novotel. The exhibition, curated by Umesh Madhyan and Monica Madhyan, featured the work of more than 250 designers from the fashion industry that showcased new cultural and contemporary masterpieces. Several celebrities and models including actress Nidhi Agerwal were seen in attendance at the event.



● Deepshika



● Simran

CITY GUIDE

COMEDY



OH HELLO!

● Crowd favourite Rahul Dua starts his country tour again, this time travelling solo with his brand new stand up special 'Oh Hello!' He will be touring multiple venues in the city till January 25.

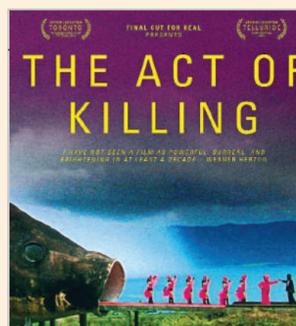


EK DURACHARI RAJA

● Shudrka Hyderabad is staging a play Ek Durachari Raja on January 19 at Lamakaan from 7:30 pm. Ek Durachari Raja, has drawn from Camus' 'Caligula' the concept of deification of emperors which was common to the pagan world, the Greek and Macedonian.

THE ACT OF KILLING

● Cinephiles Film Club is screening a film The Act of Killing on January 29 at Lamakaan from 7:30 pm. Filmmakers expose the horrifying mass executions of accused communists in Indonesia and those who are celebrated in their country for perpetrating the crime.



BEYOND THOUGHT

● In a world full of constant change, we are always aware of what's going on and what we think about it. Cinephiles Film Club is presenting a documentary titled Beyond Thought on January 22 at 7 pm at Lamakaan.



SPLENDOR OF MASTERS

● Banyan Tree's Splendor of Masters aims at showcasing a bouquet of maestros from the world of Indian music in combinations that are not only rare but also aesthetic and enriching. Every year this festival has received an overwhelming response from music lovers in various cities. The event will be organised at Shilpakala Vedita on January 25 at 6 pm.



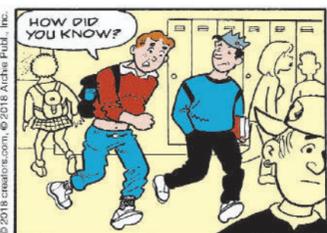
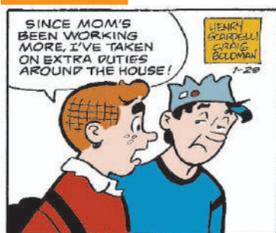
TELGU RUCHULU

● Rediscover the rich, authentic cuisine of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh through a unique food festival - Telugu Ruchulu. MTR Foods brings a scrumptious array of over 80 dishes prepared by expert home cooks representing 6 regional cuisine trails across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The food festival will begin today at Banjara Function Hall, Banjara Hills from 11:30 am.

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



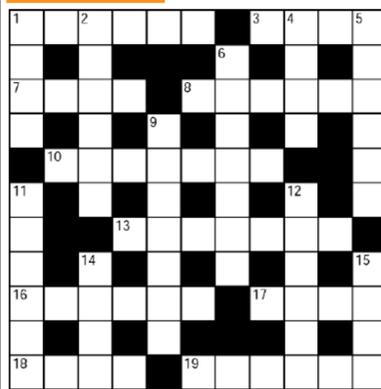
REALITY CHECK



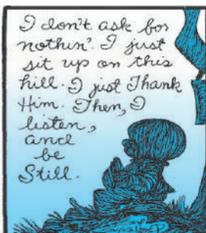
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

- Sour-tasting
- A fruit with a stone
- Hit with your hand open
- Ran after trying to catch
- Assistants
- Went in
- Having a doze
- Very small
- Scramble, boil or fry these
- A light wind

DOWN

- Finest
- Go on a journey
- Mislaid
- Noon

6 Reduce the length of
9 Loosen or tighten nuts with this tool
11 Store a car in here
12 Make up your mind
14 A slimy creature that eats lettuce leaves
15 A rubber cover on a wheel

SOLUTION

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

GINGER MEGGS



PRABHAS' picture sends fans into frenzy

For the past couple of months, Prabhas' fans have been patiently waiting for an update or two about their darling's next with *Jil* fame Radha Krishna. While they expected some news by New Year's eve or during Sankranti festivities, it didn't happen, leaving them dejected. Finally, to bring back their smiles, the macho actor posted a picture of him on the sets of the yet-to-be-titled film, on Friday.

"Elated to share that I'm resuming shooting for my upcoming film. Looking forward to a fun schedule (sic)," he wrote on his social media pages. Soon #Prabhas20Update became a nationwide trend for a good part of Friday evening.

It's been more than six months since the *Baahubali* star faced arc lights. Although he shot for the film in a couple of short schedules last year, post-*Saaho* release he chose to take an extended break, which he utilised to work on his looks and physique.

Set in Europe in the 1970s, the film is a love story between a schoolteacher (Pooja Hedge) and a palm reader (Prabhas). It won't boast of any action and would be high on music. Sets depicting bygone era have been erected at multiple studios across the city under the supervision of production designer S. Ravinder.

Being made simultaneously in Telugu, Tamil and Hindi, the film is a joint production venture between Gopi Krishna Movies and UV Creations. Amit Trivedi is the tunesmith.



DIL RAJU targets May release for *Pink* remake

Pink, which became a nationwide phenomenon for its take on women's rights and patriarchy, will be seen in Telugu too. The shooting for the remake will begin on Monday and Dil Raju is planning the release date keeping PK's popularity in mind

With Pawan Kalyan's return to celluloid attached to the Telugu remake of the Hindi movie *Pink*, the anticipation surrounding the film is high. The film's shooting will kick-off in Hyderabad beginning Monday, with director Venu Sreeram set to film scenes with Anjali, Nivetha Thomas and Ananya on day-one, while Pawan, as has been a norm with him, will join the sets later. According to the grapevine, producer Raju already has a release date in mind. It is said that he is toying with the idea of releasing the film for Eid — in the fourth week of May. Although May 23 is favoured, it wouldn't be a surprise if the film arrives a day early. Some of Pawan's biggest blockbusters *Kushi* and *Gabbar Singh* were a summer treat.

Pawan, who will be drawing more than Rs 50

crore for the project as his remuneration, has allotted close to a month for the film. Also, it seems the makers are in talks with Pooja Hedge for a cameo appearance in the film. They've added a track with Pawan and Pooja acting as a husband and wife, similar to the story in *Nerkonda Paarvai* (Tamil remake of *Pink* with Ajith Kumar) and it remains to be seen if negotiations with her fructify. She wouldn't be required to shoot for more than a week.



Released in 2016, *Pink* created waves in the country with its portrayal of problems young women face in a patriarchal country and made the nation understand that if a woman says no she means it. It won the National Award for the Best Film on Social Issues in 2017. The Telugu remake, a joint production venture between Boney Kapoor and Dil Raju, will have music by S.S. Thaman.

CHAY-SAM acquire a place in Goa

Besides Europe, Goa has been a preferred holiday destination for Naga Chaitanya and Samantha whenever they get time off from their schedules. They even tied the knot there three years ago. Taking their love for Goa forward, the couple has bought a place there sometime back to construct a villa. "Both Chay and Sam make it a point to visit Goa every three months for a quick getaway. In fact, they both welcomed 2020 in Goa along with their family. All this while they've stayed at rented villas. It was Sam's wish that they have their own property in Goa as she is a water girl and Chay obliged readily. It did cost them a bomb. The construction work is underway and by the end of first half of this year, they will be proud owners of a sea-facing villa," said a source.

On the work front, Chay is currently busy with Sekhar Kammula's next, *Love Story*. He is charging close to Rs 8 crore as remuneration for a project, while Sam is shooting for *The Family Man 2*. She has projects like *Mahasamudram* and Ashwin Saravanan's next in her kitty though her official participation in both the films is awaited. She is also rumoured to be in talks with another Tamil filmmaker Gopi Nainar for a hard-hitting women-centric drama. She is charging somewhere around Rs 1.25 crore to 1.50 crore per film.

SARILERU... TEAM OFFERS PRAYERS AT TIRUMALA

Celebrating the success of *Sarileru Neekevuru*, the principal cast and crew of the film — comprising Mahesh Babu, Vijaya Shanti, Rajendra Prasad, Dil Raju, Anil Sunkara and Anil Ravipudi — offered prayers to Lord Venkateswara Swamy at Tirumala, on Friday. The team left for Tirumala on Thursday evening and spent the night there. Producer N.V. Prasad received them. They took the blessing of the Lord early Friday morning.

Mahesh's wife Namrata and their children Goutham and Sitara, along with Vamshi Paidipally's family also had a darshan of the Lord of Seven Hills. Paidipally, who will direct Mahesh later this year, offered his hair to the lord. Mahesh also met TTD (Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanam board) chairperson Y.V. Subba Reddy and congratulated him on his new job. The team left for Warangal in the noon for a massive event to celebrate the film's success.



AL VIJAY in awe of ARVIND SWAMI as MGR

Extending their tribute to former chief minister of Tamil Nadu MGR on his 103rd birth anniversary on Friday, the makers of the Tamil, Telugu and Hindi trilingual, *Thalaivi*, unveiled Arvind Swami's first look from the film. The actor plays MGR in the film, directed by A.L. Vijay. Kangana Ranaut is playing J. Jayalalitha, the late CM of Tamil Nadu, on whom the title is based upon. MGR was instrumental in grooming the actress into a neta.



Vijay said they had considered many before zeroing in on Arvind. "Finally, we felt Arvind Swami would fit the role perfectly. In simple words, we are now completely drenched in extreme astonishment to find him breathe life into the legendary character. Apart from our inputs, he spent sumptuous time and energy in getting to know deeply about the legend's life," he added.

Besides the first look, the makers have also

released a small teaser of Swami as MGR filming the iconic song *Naan Ungal Veetu Pillai* from the film *Pudhiya Bhoomi* which starred Jayalalitha as lead actress. Needless to say, Arvind looked strikingly similar to MGR in both the promotional materials.

Beginning with her journey as an actress, *Thalaivi* will end with Jayalalitha becoming the CM. The ups and downs she weathered will be a part of the film.

Produced by Vishnu Vardhan Induri and Shaalish R. Singh for Vibri Motion Pictures in association with Karma Media and Entertainment, *Thalaivi* will open in cinema halls on June 26.



India launch Olympic bid with pro opener

Manpreet led side host the Netherlands in FIH pro league game today

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Olympics-bound Indian men's hockey team will kick-start its preparations for the quadrennial showpiece when it debuts in the FIH Pro League against world No.3 the Netherlands here on Saturday.

After having missed the first edition of the event, India will take on the 2019 Pro League and European Bronze medal winners, the Netherlands, in two matches in their opening tie at the Kalinga Stadium here. The second match will be played on Sunday.

With all the top teams of the world in fray, the home-and-away Pro League will be ideal preparation for world No 5 India ahead of the Summer Games later this year.

After the Dutch side, India will host world champions Belgium on February 8 and 9 followed by two more home fixtures against Australia on February 22 and 23.

The Indian team will then leave for the away games in Germany (April 25 and 26) and Great Britain (May 2 and 3).

India will return to play on home soil on May 23 and 24 against New Zealand before travelling to Argentina to play on June 5 and 6.

The Manpreet Singh-led side will play the last leg of the Pro League round-robin matches in Spain on June 13 and 14.

India's head coach Graham Reid will be aware of the challenges that await his team in the Pro League opener.

Having served as a former assistant coach to the Dutch, Reid knows exactly what to expect from Netherlands in the double header.

The matches will also provide India a chance to avenge their heart-breaking 1-2 loss in the quarterfinal of the 2018 World Cup.

A look at the previous 10 meetings between the two teams reveals



Manpreet Singh in a file picture

Manpreet Singh/Twitter

that there is little to choose between them.

The Netherlands have won five of those meetings, with India victorious on four occasions and one match ending in a draw.

Reid too insisted that they are looking at the Pro League outings as a platform for Olympic preparation.

"It will be important to start strong and sharp in the Pro League with our first three encounters against the top three teams in the world," Reid has said.

"We will be focussing on getting our structures right and honing our set plays as preparation for our Olympic campaign."

The Indians would also benefit by their familiarity with the Kalinga Stadium turf, having trained and played numerous matches here.

It is the same venue where the eight-time Olympic champions qualified for the 2020 Games after thrashing Russia 11-3 on aggregate in the two-leg FIH Qualifiers in November last year.

"The matches against India are a very important opener. Playing against India at their home ground is challenging no doubt but it is also very exciting because we love playing in Bhubaneswar," Netherlands coach Max Caldas said.

Caldas too is looking at the Pro League as preparation for Olympics.

"The players and combinations we wanted to test were experimented during the previous edition of Pro League. This edition we will have our most competitive team as this will be the stepping-stone for us to be the best at Tokyo," he said.

India will field a full-strength team which will witness the return of midfielders Chinglensana Singh and Sumit, who were out with injuries.

Chinglensana was on the sidelines with an ankle fracture since the National Championship last year, while Sumit suffered a wrist injury in June during the FIH Men's Series Final.



Sania Mirza in action during Hobart International Hobart International/Twitter

Sania storms into Hobart final

PTI ■ HOBART

Indian tennis ace Sania Mirza cruised into the women's doubles final of the Hobart International with her Ukrainian partner Nadiia Kichenok here on Friday.

Sania and Kichenok sailed past the Slovenian-Czech pair of Tamara Zidansek and Marie Bouzkova 7-6 (3) 6-2 in the semifinal contest that lasted one hour and 24 minutes.

The fifth-seeded Indo-Ukrainian combination will lock horns with second seeds Shuai Peng and Shuai Zhang of China. The Chinese pair got a walkover after Belgium's Kirsten Flipkens and Alison Van Uytvanck conceded the other semifinal match because of injury.

While Sania and Kichenok had to fight hard in the opening set, the second set was a cakewalk for the combination.

The first set was a tough contest between the two pairs, bringing the tie-breaker into the equation after it was level at 6-6.

In the tie-breaker, Sania and Kichenok upped their game by a few notches to out-

smart their opponents and take the lead.

The second set was a no contest as Saina and Kichenok broke their opponents thrice - in the second, sixth and eighth game - to easily pocket the set and a place in the summit clash.

Saina and Kichenok got 11 break chances out of which they converted four, while their opponents utilised two out of the five break chances that came their way.

The 33-year-old Sania is returning to WTA circuit after two years. During her time away from the game, she battled injury breakdowns before taking a formal break in April 2018 to give birth to her son Izhaan. She is married to Pakistani cricketer Shoaib Malik.

Before the ongoing event, Sania last played at China Open in October 2017.

A trailblazer in Indian tennis, Sania is a former world No.1 in doubles and has six Grand Slam titles to her credit.

She retired from the singles competition in 2013 after becoming the most successful Indian woman tennis player.

Title most imp goal for Salah



Mo Salah celebrates with Sadio Mane after scoring Liverpool/Twitter

AFF ■ LIVERPOOL

Mohamed Salah says Liverpool's focus is solely on ending a 30-year wait to win the Premier League title, rather than doing so by going the whole season unbeaten.

Jürgen Klopp's men have dropped just two points in 21 games to set a new record for Europe's top five leagues of 61 points from a possible 63 to start the campaign.

That has propelled the European champions into a

14-point lead over title holders Manchester City with a game in hand, but Salah insists the Reds are still taking their title challenge one game at a time ahead of Manchester United's visit to Anfield on Sunday.

"We don't think about being unbeaten until the end of the season. If we do that, it would be great, but at the end of the day we just want to win the Premier League. That's the most important thing," Salah told Premier League

Productions. "Unbeaten or not, it's not necessary - we want to win the Premier League."

Liverpool could move a massive 30 points clear of United with victory on Sunday, but the Red Devils are the only side to take points off them this season after a 1-1 draw at Old Trafford in October.

Salah missed that match through injury and is keen to make up for lost time in the clash between English football's two most successful sides.

Harry replaces Young as captain

AFF ■ MANCHESTER

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer has confirmed Harry Maguire as Manchester United's new captain less than six months after his £80 million (\$104 million) move from Leicester.

Maguire will take over as skipper from Ashley Young, who is expected to complete his move to Inter Milan on Friday.

The England international, 26, has led the side in games when Young has been absent and was an obvious choice for the role having played in every Premier League match this season.

"Harry has been wearing the captain's armband and he will keep wearing it," said Solskjaer, whose side take on runaway leaders Liverpool at Anfield on Sunday. "He's come in and been a leader in the group. I have not been surprised

but I've been impressed by his leadership skills."

"He is part of a group that we've had that have been leading this young group," added Solskjaer.

"Ashley has been of course, Marcus (Rashford) is a young lad but he has been involved, David (de Gea) and Harry, so Harry will keep on wearing the armband now."

Young, who moved to Old Trafford in 2011, will link up at the San Siro with former United teammates Romelu Lukaku and Alexis Sanchez.

"Ashley has been a good servant for the club, he's been captain, he's won trophies, the league, various cups," said Solskjaer.

"But we've got players coming through and when Ashley's head and mindset was, I want to try this, why not do it now?"

"We need to win, we need to carry on in our way - the way we've been doing since the beginning of the season and since last year," added the Egyptian.

"Of course we know it's big for the fans, for the city and for us. But at the end of the day, we play the game to win."

Yastremska downs Sabalenka for finals place

AFF ■ ADELAIDE

Ukraine's Dayana Yastremska defeated her third top 20 opponent in a row to make the Adelaide International finals with a 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) win over Aryna Sabalenka on Friday.

The 19-year-old's blitzed world number 20 Donna Vekic

in the quarter-finals of the Memorial Drive tournament a day after 18th-ranked Angelique Kerber retired from their match with back pain from a set down.

Yastremska, ranked 24th, will play for the fourth title of her career on Saturday against either Australian world number one Ashleigh Barty or American Danielle Collins.

"I'm pretty happy, this new season is off to a good start," Yastremska said after defeating Sabalenka of Belarus for their third match in as many meetings.

"I'm just doing my job on court, playing my game. I do what I can on court."

"I feel confidence heading to the Australian Open," Yastremska broke once per set while losing her own service once in the 106-minute showdown.

She finished on a third match point in the tiebreaker as Sabalenka hit the net on a return.

Yastremska claimed two WTA trophies last season at Strasbourg and Hua Hin, Thailand.

Prajesh out of Australian Open



Prajesh Gunneswaran plays a return shot AFP

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

India's top-ranked player Prajesh Gunneswaran failed to make the main draw of the Australian Open men's singles event after going down in straight sets to Ernest Gulbis of Latvia in the final round of the qualifiers here on Friday.

Prajesh, ranked 122nd in the world and seeded 17th in the qualifiers, lost 6-7 (2) 2-6 to Gulbis in his final round qualifying match. Prajesh had earlier defeated local wildcard Harry Bourchier and Germany's Yannick Hanfmann.

It was a close first set which went into tie-break, where Prajesh faltered to hand early advantage to his opponent.

In the second set, Gulbis broke Prajesh in the first and third games to race to a 3-0 lead.

From there on, the Indian found it tough as Gulbis held his serve to close out the contest that lasted for one hour and 20 minutes.

With Prajesh's ouster, India's campaign in the singles ended in the qualifiers.

Earlier, Sumit Nagal suffered a straight-set loss to Mohamed Safwat of Egypt to crash out in the first round of the qualifiers on Thursday.

AFF ■ BERLIN

Jürgen Klinsmann is planning a party if Hertha Berlin beat his former employers Bayern Munich on Sunday despite doubts about the validity of his coaching licence, as the Bundesliga resumes this weekend after a four-week break.

Since taking charge in November, the 55-year-old former Germany and US national team coach has pulled Hertha up from the relegation places to mid-table with 10 points from a possible 12 going into their clash with third-placed Bayern at Berlin's Olympic Stadium.

However Klinsmann, who led both the US and Germany at World Cup finals, has been left red-faced after it emerged his coaching licence, held since 2000, may no longer be valid and the relevant paperwork is at the family home in California.

"It's just been a bit of a chance for the media to let off a bit of steam," Klinsmann told Sky as questions over his licence became a hot topic in the German media.

Klinsmann back to hurt Bayern



Hertha BSC Berlin head coach Juergen Klinsmann attends a news conference AP

"No one has ever approached me about a licence in 20 years - whether as coach of Germany, the USA or Bayern. Now they have looked

into it and it's expired." The matter remains unresolved but Klinsmann insists he has sent the necessary paperwork to the German FA and that there is

no problem at all". He has a point to prove against Bayern, who sacked him in 2009 after just nine months and 43 games in charge.

Bayern striker Robert Lewandowski has recovered from recent groin surgery and will look to pick up where he left off after scoring 19 goals in the first 17 games.

The defending champions trail leaders RB Leipzig by four points and are without wingers Kingsley Coman (knee) and Serge Gnabry, who injured his Achilles tendon during a training camp in Qatar.

Bayern suffered a shock 2-0 defeat when they last travelled to Hertha in September 2018 and Klinsmann said a repeat result would spark a party in the capital.

"We have nothing to lose," he said. "Let's take a point - brilliant! Let's take three, then we'll have a party. "We'll go in there with the

confidence of four games without defeat." One to watch: Erling Braut Haaland

Borussia Dortmund made the league's standout signing during the winter break when they paid Red Bull Salzburg 20 million euros (\$22m) for the 19-year-old Norway striker.

Haaland attracted attention last September when, aged 19 years and 58 days, he became the third youngest player to score a Champions League hat-trick in a 6-2 victory over Genk, finishing with eight goals in six group games.

"I don't think we've had that kind of striker since Robert Lewandowski," Dortmund captain Marco Reus told Sky.

Head coach Lucien Favre has not said when Haaland will make his debut. Fourth-placed Dortmund hope a deluge of goals by their latest signing will help close the seven-point deficit to RB Leipzig, starting with a win at Augsburg on Saturday.

Quique era starts in Barca

AFF ■ MADRID

Barcelona's appointment of Quique Setien, a fervent disciple of Johan Cruyff, came the day after Zinedine Zidane won his ninth final out of nine as coach of Real Madrid.

With both teams level on points at the top of La Liga, Spain's closest title race in years will be as much a contest of identity and beliefs as points won and lost.

Real Madrid, the club that defines itself by winning, against Barcelona, where winning is seen as the result of something more profound, a style heralded by Cruyff that has become their footballing philosophy.

Atletico Madrid and Sevilla, both five points behind, are still in touch but playing catch-up.

Setien once said he would have given his little finger to play under Cruyff. Now, 34 years later, he has the chance to resuscitate those ideals after



two years under Ernesto Valverde when pragmatism took a greater hold.

Barca's new coach is not well-known outside of Spain and, at 61, he may be in the twilight years of his career.

"For me this is the pinnacle," he said at his unveiling on Tuesday.

His previous clubs are not illustrious. They include Lugo, Logrones, Las Palmas, Poli Ejido, Racing Santander, Real

Betis and one game in charge of Equatorial Guinea. His list of trophies begins and ends with one Spanish Super Cup in 1985 with Atletico Madrid.

But his work and words up to this point could leave the impression of someone that has been preparing to coach Barcelona his entire life.

"When I was a player, coaches tried to set guidelines for me," Setien, a former Spanish international, told Marca in 2018.

It remains to be seen how Setien's appointment will affect La Liga's title race. Will Real Madrid's players feel their chances are boosted or harmed by Valverde's removal? They are now up against a team with a coach that has never won, or even competed for, a top-flight trophy. But they might feel wary too, of the possibility Barcelona could be released by Setien's attacking beliefs and accelerate.