

**NATION 5**  
AAP GOVT PROVIDING RELIEF TO RIOT-HIT PEOPLE: KEJRI

**ANALYSIS 7**  
NOT A BOOSTER SHOT

**MONEY 8**  
HAL PLANS TO PRODUCE APACHE-LIKE MILITARY CHOPPER

HYDERABAD, MONDAY MARCH 2, 2020; PAGES 12-13



# the pioneer



**DID MAHESH BABU AND DIL RAJU HAVE A FALLOUT?**

Page 11

www.dailypioneer.com

## TRUMP SAYS WILL SOON 'PERSONALLY' MEET TALIBAN LEADERS

US President Donald Trump on Saturday hailed the signing of a historic deal with the Taliban that Washington hopes will mark the beginning of the end of its longest war, and said he would meet Taliban leaders "in the not so distant future." The US leader said he believed the Taliban were ready for peace but warned that should the deal fail to take hold, "we'll go back."



## GUJARAT MAN AND WOMAN ELOPE FOR SECOND TIME

A middle-aged couple from Gujarat has eloped once again, just over a month after they had returned to their respective homes, their family sources said on Sunday. The couple—Himmat Pandav (46), who hails from Surat, and Shobhna Raval (43) of Navsari—had eloped weeks before the scheduled marriage of their respective son and daughter in January this year. They had returned to their respective families after two weeks, only to elope again it seems. Pandav and Raval left their respective homes on Saturday.



## RAHMAN TO MENTOR ALL-FEMALE MUSIC STUDIO IN DUBAI

Music maestro AR Rahman will mentor musicians and compose for a state-of-the-art, all-female music studio in Dubai, which will perform at Expo-2020 here. The Firdaus (Paradise) Women's Orchestra will become a permanent facility at District 2020 here, according to an announcement on Sunday. Other than mentoring and composing, Rahman will be attached to the studio's name. The composer, who is credited with revolutionising Indian cinema music in his over 25-year illustrious career, said: "This world-leading studio will attract the cream of the industry to Dubai."



## PEON'S HOUSE FOUND FUNCTIONING AS 'EXAM' CENTRE

In a shocking case of cheating during the ongoing Uttar Pradesh Board exams, the house of a school peon had virtually turned into an exam centre, where answer sheets were being written by acquaintances of candidates prompting the district administration to blacklist the school. Ramanand, who works at Karmayogi Shripati Babu Uchchar Madhyamik Vidyalaya (a self-financed school) located in Bhatni area of the district, is absconding.



**TRS created history in co-op polls: B. K. Suman**

4

## TS Assembly to pass resolution seeking NPR in old format

KCR is expected to write to the Registrar-cum-Census Commissioner in this regard

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State government is inclined to follow in the footsteps of the Bihar government with regard to the exercise for updation of the National Population Register (NPR) in the state.

The Bihar Legislative Assembly recently passed a resolution urging the Centre to conduct NPR exercise strictly according to the old format as was done in 2010 during the Congress-led UPA government regime.

In Bihar, the ruling Janata Dal United (JDU) is running a coalition government with BJP. The Telangana Legislative Assembly too wants to adopt a similar resolution during the upcoming Budget session, scheduled to begin from March 6.

The Telangana cabinet head-



ed by Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao recently approved the draft of the resolution to be introduced in the Assembly against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). It also appealed to Centre to abrogate CAA. Later, KCR decided to



"additional clauses" that have been inserted superseding provisions in the 2010 manual.

KCR is also expected to write an official letter to the Registrar-cum-Census Commissioner seeking the conduct of NPR exercise as per the old format.

The resolution will urge Centre that under NPR nobody would be asked to furnish information like place and date of birth of one's parents as many of the older generation, particularly in rural areas, do not remember the birthdays of their parents and do not pay much attention to these things.

The state government feels that if NPR is conducted in old format, it would ensure that no unnecessary environment of doubt, fear and bitterness is created among Muslims.

2

## KTR imposes Rs.1 lakh fine on municipal chairman

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Rashtra Samiti working president and Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister KT Ramarao on Sunday directed officials concerned to impose a fine of Rs.1 lakh on Yellendu Municipal Chairman Dammalapati Venkateshwarlu, who went out of the way to erect welcome flexis with KTR's pictures across the town. He wanted the officials to collect the fine immediately.

Giving vent to his displeasure over the erection of flexis just to please him, KTR observed: "One can't become a leader while creating hungama and erecting flexes. Real leaders would stay in the hearts of people, while serving them." The Minister then warned that he would not tolerate anybody trying to curry his favour by erecting flexis in future.

As part of his tour, KTR was in the erstwhile Khammam district on Sunday.

2



Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister KT Rama Rao addressing a gathering in Khammam on Sunday

## 8-year-old girl dies while Pattana Pragathi works in Warangal

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

An eight-year-old girl died and her brother was injured on Sunday when an earth-mover accidentally hit their house wall in Warangal during work as part of Pattana Pragathi programme, an official said here.

The incident occurred when the earth-mover while cleaning the drainage in front of the house accidentally hit the wall resulting in it collapsing on the two children, they said. The victim's family members alleged negligence on the part of the earth-mover operator.

2



**'Naxals destabilising country, misleading people'**

5

## Rumours added fuel to Delhi violence: Kishan Reddy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy on Sunday said that the rumours unleashed by a section of political parties and social media added fuel to Delhi violence.

"During last week, we have witnessed disturbances in Delhi. Unfortunately, many innocent people lost their lives and property, including a brave constable. The rumours unleashed by a section of political parties, social media and media added fuel to fire," Reddy said while speaking at the ISB Policy Conclave in the city.

Highlighting the continuous anti-CAA agitation in the country, he said the Modi government is determined to go to the bottom to unveil the truth. "The Modi government is determined to go to the bottom of the truth to unveil conspiracy, if any, that triggered the riots. I will reiterate, the CAA is not to take away the citizenship of any Indian but to give citizenship to persecuted religious minorities in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and



"The Centre is determined to go to the bottom of the truth to unveil conspiracy, if any, that triggered the riots. I will reiterate, the CAA is not to take away the citizenship of any Indian but to give citizenship to persecuted religious minorities in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan

— G KISHAN REDDY  
MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOME AFFAIRS

Afghanistan," he said.

"The Nation in 1950 was divided on religious grounds against the will of India and it was assured during the division that the rights of the minorities in the respective nations will be protected. The Citizenship Act was brought by the previous government as well, then on what basis are they opposing the law now," Reddy stated.

At least 42 people were killed in the violence that

rocked north-east Delhi over the past few days. Kishan Reddy asked the youth to debate on the Central government policies during the past five-and-a-half years.

He asked youngsters to debate and come up with new ideas for maintaining better law and order, alleviating poverty and providing health for all. He also stressed the need for new ideas, to achieve a 5 trillion dollar economy by 2024.



## Delhi riots 'targeted structural violence'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Terming the violence in north-east Delhi as "pre-planned genocide", AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi on Sunday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to break his silence and discharge his constitutional duty to bring the perpetrators to justice.

The Hyderabad MP questioned the Prime Minister's silence on the violence, not far from his official residence. He blamed the provocative statements by the BJP leaders for the large scale violence, which killed over 40 people and injured many others.

2

## 7 injured in two LPG explosions

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Seven persons were injured in separate incidents of explosion of domestic LPG cylinders in the city on Sunday. Police suspect gas leak to be the trigger for both the explosions.

The first incident took place at Malakpet. Four members of a family received severe burn injuries when their LPG cylinder exploded at Venkatadri Nagar, late on Saturday night.

Police identified the injured persons as Laxmaiah (50), his wife, Yadamma (45) and their grandchildren, five-year-old Mokshaj and seven-year-old



Tejaswini, Mokshaj and Tejaswini are the children of the couple's youngest daughter, who stays in Saroornagar.

2

## Minor raped by uncle in Parlappally

PNS ■ WARANGAL

A six-year-old girl was raped by her own uncle at Parlappally village of Mogullapally mandal in Warangal on Sunday. The man lured his niece to a field and sexually assaulted her, according to the police.

According to the Mogullapally Police, the victim's parents live in Hyderabad, where her father works as a watchman. The victim had been staying with her grandparents, studying in 1st standard at a local school.

2

## GST collections Rs 1.05 lakh crore in February, up 8 per cent

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has collected Rs 1.05 lakh crore as GST revenue in February, up 8 per cent over the same month last year.

The collection from Goods and Services Tax (GST) in

February was, however, lower than the Rs 1.10 lakh crore collected in January 2020.

"The gross GST revenue collected in the month of February, 2020 is Rs 1,05,366 crore of which CGST is Rs 20,569 crore, SGST is Rs 27,348 crore, IGST is Rs 48,503

crore and Cess is Rs 8,947 crore," the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

The total number of GSTR 3B returns filed for the month of January up to February 29 stood at 83 lakh -- same as last month.

2

## Centre keen to retain 8.65% interest on EPF

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Labour Ministry is keen to retain an interest rate of 8.65 per cent paid on provident fund deposits to around six crore subscribers of retirement fund body EPFO for the current financial year, a source said.

The apex decision making body of Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) - Central Board of Trustees - is likely to consider the rate of interest on EPF (Employees' Provident Fund) deposits in its meeting scheduled for March 5, 2020.

"The proposal to provide interest rate on EPF deposits for 2019-20 may come up for con-

sideration and approval in the Central Board of Trustees (CBT) meeting on March 5," according to a source.

The source further stated that the ministry is keen to retain the interest rate at 8.65%, as was provided in financial year 2018-19. Speculations are rife that the interest rate on EPF may be lowered to 8.5% for the current fiscal, a tad lower than 8.65 per cent provided for 2018-19.

According to the source, the agenda for the CBT meeting has not yet been finalised and it is difficult to predict EPFO's income projections for the current fiscal, which will be the basis for fixing the interest rate.

## 160 rape cases reported on rly premises, trains

Policing on railways is a state subject which is handled largely through GRP/District Police

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over 160 rape cases have been reported on railway premises and on board running trains between 2017 and 2019, an RTI query has found.

While the number of rapes have gone down from 51 in 2017 to 44 in 2019, there was a spike in 2018 when the number of such cases rose to 70. According to the reply to the query filed by Neemuch-based activist Chandra Shekhar Gaur, there have been 136 rapes on railway premises and 29 on running trains during 2017-2019, totalling 165.

Of the 44 rapes reported last



year, 36 were committed on railway premises and eight on trains.

Of the 70 rapes reported in 2018, 59 were reported on railway premises and 11 on trains.

Of the 51 rapes reported in

**According to the reply, there have been 136 rapes on railway premises and 29 on running trains during 2017-2019, totalling 165**

2017, 41 were on railway premises and 10 on running trains. There have been 1,672 cases of crimes against women other than rapes — 802 on railway premises and 870 on trains. There were 771 cases of kidnapping and abduction in these three years, 4,718 cases of

robbery, 213 cases of attempt to murder and 542 murders on railway premises and on board trains. Policing on railways is a state subject, prevention of crime, registration of cases, their investigation and maintenance of law and order on railway premises as well as on running trains are the responsibility of state governments, which they discharge through GRP/District Police.

During 2018 and 2019, a total of 1,39,422 and 1,14,170 male passengers respectively have been prosecuted for unauthorised entry or travel in compartments reserved for women passengers.

**TODAY**

**ALMANAC**

Month & Paksham: Phalguna & Shukla Paksha

Panchangam: Triti: Sapthami: 12:52 pm

Nakshatram: Kritika: 08:55 am

Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)

Rahukalam: 08:04 am - 09:32 am

Yamagandam: 11:00 am - 12:28 pm

Variyam: 01:59 am - 03:42 am

Gulika: 01:56 pm - 03:23 pm

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritakalam: NIL

Abhijit Muhurtham: 12:04 pm - 12:51 pm

**HYDERABAD WEATHER**

Forecast: Partly Cloudy

Temp: 32/21

Humidity: 45%

Sunrise: 06:33

Sunset: 06:22

Current Weather Conditions Updated March 01, 2020 5:00 PM

Politicians love to fish in troubled waters. So do nations with imperialistic designs. Few would have imagined seeing days when common people feast, if not fish, in troubled waters occasioned by the accelerating spread of novel coronavirus (Covid-19) that has made chicken, eggs and other animal products suspected carriers of the deadly virus. What if IT Minister KT Ramarao and a few other ministers took part in Chicken and Egg Mela and publicly consumed chicken leg pieces to drive home the point that Covid-19 has nothing to do with chicken and eggs? Certainly health is wealth for people; if not for those who produce chicken and eggs or delicacies using them. On Sunday, people thronged

# 'Fishing' in troubled waters and 'chickening out' of stalls

fish stalls, instead of chicken centers. Chicken sellers looked longingly at fish sellers who (un)naturally had a field day, with the bulk of non-vegetarians switching to them. This was certainly not the case before the outbreak of coronavirus. For fish sellers, people were a big catch. In 'line' with the trend, fish sellers enhanced the prices of fish from Rs.20 to Rs.50 or more per kg. Still, health conscious non-vegetarians rushed to them. It is OK for people to heed politicians and cast their vote. When it comes to health, better go by the gut instinct seems to be their mantra.

## Cong 'hand' in BJP 'strength'

Bharatiya Janata Party leaders never tire in claiming that their party is 'disciplined' compared to other political parties, particularly the Congress. Of late, leaders of the saffron party seem to be taking a leaf out of the Congress copybook when it comes to showing 'strength'. No wonder, one gets to see 'Congress culture' in BJP shows these days. Congress leaders show their individual 'strength' whenever the national leaders or anyone from the high command comes to



the state. Towards this end, they will not hesitate to push people standing before them, whoever it may be. A similar situation is being witnessed these days in BJP programmes. A case in point is what happened during the recent visit of Union Railway Minister Piyush Goyal. State BJP leaders tried their

level best to attract the attention of Goyal. Nobody bothered to maintain decorum, regardless of whether the event was public or private. When Goyal addressed a press meet at a private hotel, the state leaders swarmed it as if it was a public meeting. Many state leaders stood right ahead of the front row meant for media personnel just to catch Goyal's eye. While blocking the view of the dais, they conversed with one another, attended phone calls, and did all sorts of things oblivious of the fact that it was a presser. The state BJP media convener tried in vain to mend

matters. Finally, many scribes had to note down points from TV journalists whose cameras, thanks to the high tri-pods, could grab Goyal's points without being blocked by the wall of BJP leaders.

## Capital conundrum

The three-capital concept seems to have compounded the confusion and wrapped it in an enigma for people across the country. At the end of 2019, the YSRCP government announced its decision to go in for three capitals, with the executive arm in Visakhapatnam, Legislative arm in Amaravati, and

the Judicial arm in Kurnool. If all goes well for the ruling YSRCP government, the state of Andhra Pradesh will have three capital cities. Some national and international agencies too have been 'positive' about the three-capital idea. Now, the moot question (be it in a quiz or whatever) is how to respond if someone asks 'What is the capital of Andhra Pradesh?' Few would like to enumerate the widely dispersed arms of the capital.

*[Contributed by Kolishetty Venkateshwarlu and Ch Pradeep]*

# Expedite drinking water supply works: Harish Rao

PNS ■ MEDAK

Finance Minister T Harish Rao on Sunday directed officials to immediately ground works to supply drinking water to Narsapur from Komatibanda in Gajwel Assembly constituency with Rs 25 crore released by the Chief Minister.

Taking part in a review meeting at the MLA's camp office here, the Minister asked District Collector Dharm Reddy to immediately identify suitable land to build a sump at Sivvampet and hand it over to authorities to ground works on Monday itself.

Tenders should be called to execute works on war-footing so that people of Sivvampet and Veldurti mandals receive drinking water in 15 days and those of other mandals by April first week.

The officials have been advised to release water on alternate days from Singur reservoir to Medak, excluding Narsapur, Andole,



Finance Minister T Harish Rao addressing a gathering in Siddipet on Sunday

Narayanakhed, Zaheerabad, Sangareddy and Pathancheru mandals. To transport sand to execute development works in panchayats and municipalities, the Minister told the officials to apply to district collector in prescribed format. Development works should not halt for want of sand, he cautioned.

Works related to Vaikuntha Dhamams and segregation sheds should be over by the

month-end. Before the end of fiscal year (March 31) the officials should ground works still grounded and submit the bills on the last day, he said.

Further, Harish asked the officials to take steps to solve the low-voltage problem and pig menace in Narsapur municipality. He told the R&B officials to prepare proposals to lay drainages on either side of Sangareddy-Toopran road and

## Harish Rao asked the officials to release water on alternate days from Singur reservoir to Medak, excluding Narsapur, Andole, Narayanakhed, Zaheerabad, and Patancheru mandals

submit the same to the MLA. He told the Marketing Department SE to prepare proposals to develop vegetarian and non-veg markets, rythu bazars in 1.5-acre on the Tahsildar's office premises.

District Collector Dharm Reddy, MLA Madan Reddy, additional collector Nagesh, municipal chairman Murali Yadav and others took part in the review meeting.

## 7 injured in two LPG...

Continued from Page 1

According to the Malakpet Police, the incident took place around 12:20 am in the night, when the family was sleeping. "The LPG cylinder in the room had an old pipe from the regulator; it was damaged and leaky. While the family was sleeping, gas filled the room from the leaky pipe. A spark emanated from the refrigerator's motor, due to which an explosion occurred," said B Balraj, Sub-Inspector, Malakpet Police.

Due to the explosion, flame engulfed the room, injuring the family and damaging articles in the house. The whole episode lasted a couple of minutes, in which the family was critically injured.

Neighbours called the police who visited the scene along with CLUES team. The four were shifted to Gandhi Hospital, where they are undergoing treatment for their injuries. Police said that while all the four received 40 per cent burn injuries, Tejaswini's condition was said to be out of danger. Laxmaiah, Yadamma and Mokshaj are still in a critical condition.

The impact of the explosion was such that the windows of nearby houses and cars were also damaged. The loud explosion at midnight triggered panic among neighbours who came running out of their homes.

# Covid-19, US-Taliban pact impact global markets

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Two factors impacted have global markets heavily. They are: spreading of novel coronavirus (Covid-19) in over 60 countries sending alarms to the whole world and inking of the pact for withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan by the Taliban and the US. On account of these two very important developments, India is put on caution.

Gold remained buoyant and closed at US \$ 1,584.74 (per ounce) while silver, followed suit and closed at \$ 16.66 (per ounce). Platinum and palladium also marched forward and closed at \$ 864 (per 10 gms) and \$ 2,489 (per 10 gms) respectively.

Other economic parameters too moved northward. Brent closed at US \$ 50.50 (per barrel) while Crude MCX oil was quoted at Rs.3,263 (per barrel). Gold MCX stood at Rs.41,397 (per 10 gms), while MCX Silver closed at Rs.43,979 (per kg). Sensex and Nifty 50 closed at 38,297.29 and 11,201.80 points respectively. Leading foreign currencies' exchange rates were: US \$: Rs.72.22, British



Pound: Rs. 92.51, Euro: Rs. 79.59, Singapore \$: Rs.51.80, Swiss Franc: Rs.74.82, Australian \$: Rs.47.08, Saudi Rial: Rs. 19.24, New Zealand Dollar: 45.11, Kuwaiti Dinar: Rs.235.90, Omani Rial: Rs. 187.47 and UAE Dirham: Rs.19.65.

At home, trading was dull. However, following the global trend, both the precious metals surged ahead.

Standard gold (24 carats) appreciated by Rs.670 and closed at Rs.42,820 (per 10 gms). Ornamental gold too, moved in tandem and was quoted in the range of Rs.40,680 - 40,780 on the closing day. On the other hand, Silver (0.999) also appreciated significantly and closed at Rs.43,500 (per kg).

## COMMODITIES

The sentiment in principal wholesale commodity markets in the twin cities was moderate. Rythu bazars and the various commodity markets located in Begum Bazar, Kishangunj, Mukthyaraj, Risala Abdullah, Mir Alam Mandi, Dilukhnagar, Kukatpally, Bowenpally and General Bazar was from moderate to strong.

The inflow of agro-goods from other states, particularly Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh has been smooth. During the week, common pulses such as tuar dal, moong dal and urad dal, chillies, turmeric and masoor dal recorded a marginal appreciation, while staple food grains and common edible oils remained steady at the previous week's closing levels. Coriander, ginger and garlic remained divergent within narrow margins.

## TS Assembly to pass...

Continued from Page 1

The NPR rolled out in 2011 had 15 questions while the one scheduled to be conducted this year has 21 questions.

There are four to five new questions in the new NPR format, raising doubts and engendering fears among people. Hence, the state government wants the Centre to remove them.

People have been given the option not to answer the questions, but the enumerator will leave a dash before the unanswered questions. There is fear among people that the dash or blank responses will appear in the National Register of Citizens (NRC), expected to be taken up after NPR.

# Delhi riots 'targeted structural violence'

Continued from Page 1

Owaisi was addressing a meeting to mark the 62nd anniversary of the revival of All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM).

The MP said a 'storm of hatred' was created against the Muslims and cautioned that this is not good for the country. He, however, said those who put their lives at risk to save people from other communities offer glimmer of hope in the darkness.

Terming the Delhi violence as 'targeted structural' violence, he said that the responsibility of this lies at the

doorsteps of the BJP government. Owaisi said he had thought that Prime Minister Modi had learnt lessons from the Gujarat genocide of 2002. "Two genocides have occurred in two decades," the MP said.

He said during the last five-and-half years only hatred was spread against the Muslims. Repeatedly addressing Prime Minister, the AIMIM leader said he should speak up for the poor and innocents killed and who belong to both the communities. He also questioned the silence of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Akali Dal on the Delhi violence.

## Minor raped by uncle in...

Continued from Page 1

The accused has been identified as 38-year-old Jorika Ramesh, an agricultural labourer.

According to reports, Ramesh took her out on Sunday afternoon. He went to the nearby bushes, sexually assaulted her, and left her there. When the girl was returning home later, locals noticed that she was bleeding and questioned her. She then revealed the incident to them. Her grandmother then rushed her to a hospital.

Based on a complaint, the Mogullapally Police have registered a case under various sections of IPC and the POCSO act.

# KTR imposes Rs.1 lakh fine

Continued from Page 1

In his address at Yellendu, he said that the state government was giving priority to the development of villages and towns. Instead of spending money on flexis, which would only add to trash, leaders should utilize the same money for development of the municipality, he suggested.

KTR said that welfare schemes were being implemented satisfactorily only after the TRS government came to power. The TRS government would concentrate on further

development and welfare in the next four years. The government was spending Rs.1 lakh on each student and paying tuition fees in time to ensure that education would not be affected. The government was extending help to poor students seeking to pursue higher education in foreign countries. Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao was keen on developing all constituencies equally without showing any partiality, he underlined.

Addressing a meeting in Khammam city, KTR asked the corporators to "become KCR"

and see to it that the city's face was changed for the better. He directed officials to act tough with regard to sanitation and cleanliness in the city. He wanted officials to initiate action against people dumping refuse in vacant places and nalas.

Municipal staff should collect dry and wet dust separately, KTR said. The municipal corporation must prepare a plan for proper sanitation and ensure that there was no open defecation. The corporation must construct 400 toilets in the coming two to three months, he said.

## GST collections...

Continued from Page 1

The government has settled Rs 22,586 crore to CGST and Rs 16,553 crore to SGST from IGST as regular settlement. "The total revenue earned by Central Government and the State Governments after regular settlement in the month of February, 2020 is Rs 43,155 crore for CGST and Rs 43,901 crore for the SGST," the statement added. The GST revenues during the month of February from domestic transactions has shown a growth of 12% over the same month last year.

# Let intellectual bankruptcy not impact national interests

HC UPADHYAY ■ HYDERABAD

The open revolt by jihadi groups actively supported by pseudo-secularist, anti-national lobby has now come out in the open to challenge the sovereignty and integrity of India. One can understand the involvement of Azadi and Tukde-Tukde gangs as they are patently wedded to terrorism and have links to secessionist outfits, but one fails to understand the logic and intent behind the blind support to these anti-national elements by self-proclaimed constitutional experts and marginalised political leaders representing the so-called oppressed and neglected minorities and dalits.

Otherwise, even a child understands the plain meaning of the term "Liberty" included in the preamble to our Constitution. This liberty is the lawful freedom of expression, religion and preserving the traditions, besides free movement throughout the country. Obviously, such liberty is not unfettered, but is subject to reasonable restraints imposed by the State.

Article 19, when read in its totality, makes it very clear that the 'liberty' granted to a citizen is not and never available to the anti-national, jihadi, extremist

and other divisive forces; rather the Constitution makes it an unavoidable duty of the government of the day to crush such forces ruthlessly without losing a single moment to retain the sovereignty, integrity and unity of our great country.

However, strangely these so-called constitutional experts try to befool the gullible masses by saying that liberty means azadi, and, according to them, Kashmiri separatist and jihadi goons are perfectly right in shouting from the roof top the simple and innocent looking word: azadi. These so-called intellectuals forget that by lending support to divisive forces they are doing harm to the nation. No person with an average level of intelligence would agree to such an interpretation handed out by these experts with "coloured glasses" that liberty means azadi, which in fact, and in the present context, means the freedom to indulge in anarchism.

Unfortunately, a few of the influential and occupants of powerful positions in the scheme of things of governance too, have fallen prey to such vicious narrative. Though one may be speaking as a matter of fact that 'dissent does not mean being anti-national' in the normal situation, it carries a negative message at a time when the

**This liberty is the lawful freedom of expression, religion and preserving the traditions, besides free movement throughout the country. Obviously, such liberty or azadi is not unfettered, but is subject to reasonable restraints imposed by the State**

country is facing historic upheaval by the pogrom unleashed by criminal forces masquerading as political workers and public figures. The much-hyped anti-CAA-NRC 'peaceful' protests by the 'true' lovers of India have now come out in full public view exposing its 'real' intent: to destroy the secular, socialist democratic fabric of the country through violence and establish on our land, the Mughal Empire! To say that the acts and provocative speeches by the fanatical elements should be pardoned since some other leaders too have vented similar expressions would be unfair because the latter had simply reacted to the provocative and threatening speeches by the former.

Indeed, the present volatile situation and outbreak of violence in Delhi and other parts of the country cannot be termed as spontaneous. The seeds of these events were sown quiet a long ago in 1947 at the

time of Partition. In 1976, during the period of infamous Emergency, by amending the Preamble to the Constitution with insertion of the words "Secular and Socialist", the de facto dictator, Indira Gandhi had only put a seal of approval on the evil designs of converting India into an Islamic State.

The present government has the necessary will and wherewithal to control fissiparous tendencies but what comes in the way to do so is probably the high ambition of the leadership to get recognition as the most liberal political leaders in the world. Therefore, let the political leaders in command of the governance choose between their personal ambitions and interests of the truly nationalist forces within the country before it is too late. The message is

quiet crystal clear: History does not pardon those who put their self before national interests.

## Last-ditch attempt by a Nirbhaya convict

Even when death warrants against all the four condemned convicts are in force for their execution in the Nirbhaya case on March 3 at 6 am, in a last-ditch attempt, one of the convicts, Pavan Gupta, filed curative petition in the Supreme Court on February 28, challenging the Order of Conviction and sentence in the 2012 Delhi gang rape-murder case, which had rocked the country. The petitioner has prayed for the commutation of death penalty to life sentence, in his petition. Earlier a five-judge bench of the apex court dismissed the curative petitions of the other 3 convicts. Hope, though justice is delayed in this case, it would not be denied.

## Axe falls on 68 erring junior colleges

Acting upon a PIL petition filed by D. Rajesh, a social worker, who alleged that managements of some private junior colleges, including those run by Sri Chaitanya and Narayana groups, were not following rules relating to affiliation and facilities, the Telangana High Court has instructed the government to take action against such colleges.

In an additional affidavit filed by the TS Board of Intermediate Education, the government assured the High Court that all colleges (numbering 68) without affiliation would be closed on completion of the Intermediate Annual Examinations on March 28. Good step indeed, but a million-dollar question remains unanswered: "How could these 68 colleges manage to run without mandatory affiliation from the BIE all these years right under the nose of the government?"

## Delhi HC slams notices on top politicians

Acting upon a petition filed by an organisation called "Lawyers' Voice" seeking court's direction to order an SIT probe into the inflammatory and provocative speeches made by certain political



**LEGAL ROUNDUP**

**CRIME CORNER**  
34 kg ganja seized, one arrested

The Medak division of the Prohibition and Excise department raided a house in Sangareddy town and confiscated 34 kilograms of the banned narcotic, marijuana on Sunday. The person in possession of the substance was apprehended. The accused has been identified as Rathod Suresh, a resident of Dola Nail Thanda of Sangareddy. According to the police, a tip off was received about the contraband in a house at Shantinagar of Sangareddy. The Excise officials then conducted a raid early on Sunday morning and nabbed Suresh. 34 kg of dry ganja wrapped in 17 packets were seized from him. Officials said that Suresh was transporting the ganja from the agency area to Pune. He was earlier booked by Pune Police for a similar offence. The value of the seized narcotic is Rs 1.5 lakh, said the excise police.

**Man arrested for cheating businessmen**

The Cyber Crime Police of Hyderabad arrested a man who had cheated businessmen in the transport business. The man claimed to engage their vehicles at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Shamsabad and collected money from them, said the police. The accused has been identified as D Nageshwar Rao. A native of West Godavari of Andhra Pradesh, Rao, a driver by profession, was residing in Chintal of Quthbullapur. According to the police, Rao collected contact details of transport companies based in Hyderabad. He then contacted the owners and assured them that he would engage their vehicles at the airport on contract basis for few years. "By making them believe that he is into transport business, he collected money from the vehicle owners. They transferred huge amounts ranging from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh in the name of registration fee, expenditure towards documentation and advance," said the police officials. Based on a complaint from the victims, one who had lost Rs 2,08,000 and another who had lost Rs 70,500, the police booked a case and arrested Nageshwar Rao.

**Financiers make fast buck violating auto permit rules**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Sales of auto rickshaws have picked up in the city helping unscrupulous elements earn a fast buck. The autos are being sold in black market by the financiers at exorbitant prices on the strength of old permits as the government stopped issuing new permits long back to prevent pollution in the city.



**More than 1 lakh auto permits are in the grip of auto financiers. While the financiers make lot of money out of the cartel, they also exploit auto drivers, who in turn fleece passengers by overcharging them**

Transport experts as well as auto drivers believe the cap on the permits for autos in the city has pushed the business of three-wheelers into the hands of the auto mafia, run by a few financiers.

While the mafia makes a lot of money out of the cartel, it also exploits auto drivers, who in turn exploit their passengers by overcharging them.

The Bhurelal Committee way back in 2002 imposed restrictions on issuing permits to run new autos. When the commission issued the recommendations, the number of autos plying on city roads were only 80,000.

The committee has ordered that a new vehicle could only be introduced as a replacement if the auto becomes scrap. In such a case, the permit passed on from the old to the new.

The number of autos on the

city roads increased to 1.25 lakh as the government later issued over 45,000 permits to buy new autos. Currently, the permits are not being issued.

The financiers, who have now formed a cartel, sell the autos along with the permit at hefty prices.

While the showroom price of an auto is Rs 1.58 lakh, the financiers armed with the old permits are selling each permit

at a cost of Rs 1.5 lakh to Rs 1.6 lakh. Along with the permit, the total cost of auto rickshaw zoomed to Rs 3.6 lakh, which is almost close to the price of a Maruti Alto car priced at Rs 4 lakh. Fears are being expressed over their prices crossing the car prices too, according to auto rickshaw drivers' trade union.

The permits of auto rickshaws, which became scrap, are

great demand in today's market.

The state government stopped issuing new permits for auto rickshaw drivers. Therefore, many drivers are buying new auto rickshaws on old permits from financiers, leading to a spurt in demand.

In view of the pollution level in the city, the state government imposed restrictions on issue of auto permits, which the financiers and dealers are exploiting to the hilt.

Auto drivers buy auto rickshaws taking loan from financiers. If they fail to repay the loan, the financiers seize three-wheelers. Explaining the extent of the auto mafia's grip, an official of the transport department on condition of anonymity said 90 per cent of the autos plying in Hyderabad were controlled by the mafia.

Thus, one lakh auto permits are in the grip of auto financiers. The financiers sell the permits to auto drivers on benami names and spreading their illegal business.

Thus, the hold over financiers firms up on the drivers. Transport, police and finance departments are not able to break the vicious circle, putting lives of those who come to city for a livelihood in jeopardy.

**Child abuse: the worrying graph**

● Crimes against children rising steadily in Hyderabad

NAVEEN KUMAR ■ HYDERABAD

How vulnerable are children in India to sexual abuse? And how many of them are actually reported for the world to realise its heinous nature? As per the latest statistics published by the NCRB, a distressing trend can be seen in this category as the offences have been steadily increasing in the five southern states from 2015.

The report reveals that crimes against children rose by 20 per cent pan India-higher than overall number of crimes which rose by 3.6 per cent.

Telangana has recorded the highest number of murder of children with rape/ Protection of children under sexual offences (Pocso), with 10 victims. Meanwhile, Karnataka had the highest number of children murdered (case registered under section 302 of the IPC) among southern states at 109, and fourth highest in India after Uttar Pradesh (392), Maharashtra (161) and Madhya Pradesh (115). Karnataka also had the highest incidence across India of children kidnapped for the purpose of begging, with 60 victims.

There is a common misconception that only children from well-to-do families are immune to sexual abuse. Gender, education and income do not provide any security against this crime for them.



**There is a common misconception that only children from well-to-do families are immune to abuse. Education, gender and income do not provide any security against this crime**

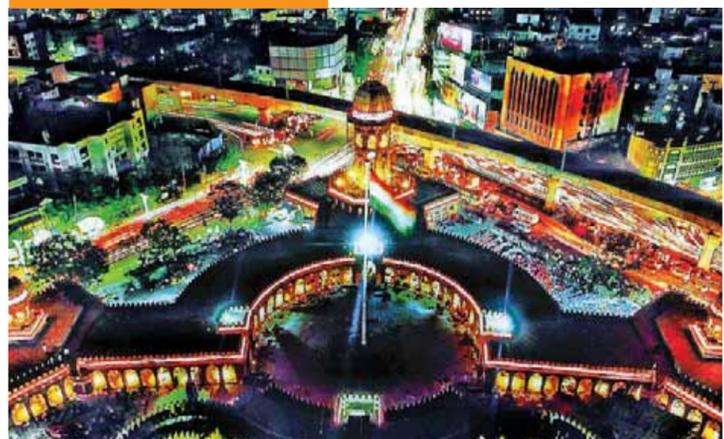
Many victims face sexual violence from persons related to them, and since the offender is a family relative or member, children do not share their trauma with anyone else.

Alerting children against strangers is easy, but how to make them watch out for abusers within the family is a big task. At some point of time, one out of every two children in India faces sexual exploitation," said Achyuta Rao, President of Balala Hakkula Sangham.

The NCRB numbers do not reflect the increasing trend of child sexual abuse material in online across platforms over the last of couple of years.

In majority of the cases, the suspect is known to the child. Identifying the abuser, who may be close to the family or a part of the family, is often a hard task.

**HERITAGE IN NEW LIGHT**



Moazzam Jahi Market stands illuminated after the lighting works on the historic structure was recently completed. MA&UD Principal Secretary Arvind Kumar IAS adopted MJ Market for its complete 'heritage restoration'.

**GHMC DIVISIONS MAY BE INCREASED TO 200**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The number of divisions in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation is likely to go up to 200 from the existing 150 as the administration has plans to create one division for every 50,000 population. The exercise will receive fillip on the promulgation of the new GHMC Act. The GHMC has plans to complete the exercise by November 2020 and release election notification by January next year.

The GHMC came into existence with the merger of 12 surrounding municipalities in 2007. Depending on 2001 census, the GHMC polls were held in 2009. Its term expired

in 2014. Many approached the court that there should be 172 divisions for a population of 67 lakh. The court asked the GHMC to delimit the



divisions. The GHMC commissioner told the government that the GHMC requires 172 divisions at the rate of 40,000 people for each division. The government did not increase divisions, but ensured that each division has only 40,000 population and fixed

new boundaries for each division. Elections were held to the GHMC in January 2016 and the new governing body assumed office the next month. The existing governing body's term expires in February of 2021.

The government machinery is toying with the idea of bringing out new GHMC Act and delimit the divisions at the rate of one division for every 50,000 people and complete the process by November 2020 and get the election notification released in 2021. Since the 2021 census will come into force from 2024, the delimitation of divisions will take place according to 2011 census.

**Pan vendor held for selling ganja laced chocolates**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Officials of the Balanagar Prohibition and Excise Station arrested a man for possessing and selling marijuana laced chocolates at Fateh Nagar on Saturday.

The police seized 200 chocolates that were laced with the narcotic. The accused has been identified as Jayanth Pradhan, 41, a pan shop vendor. According to the police, a tip-off was received about the chocolates. Subsequently, searches were conducted and Pradhan was arrested. Preliminary enquiry revealed that Pradhan procured the chocolate from a person identified as Akash Das. Officials seized 1.2 kg of chocolates in five packets.

**Cops lock down EFLU to prevent protests**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The students of English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU) alleged that Hyderabad City Police locked all gates of the University to stop the students from taking part in protest against Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens near Karachi Bakery at Moazzam Jahi Market in Hyderabad on Saturday.



**The Hyderabad City Police had locked the three gates of the university in the evening to prevent the protests. They opened the gates after the students made a hue and cry**

However, police officials had locked the three gates of the university in the evening to prevent the protests and opened the gates after the students clamored.

Questioning the disciplinary committee of EFLU, the Students' Union alleged, "Many faced inconvenience due to the lockdown. Students has missed their flights and had to miss emergency appointments. On

what basis did the proctor gave permission? It's our right to protest. Why did the police lock the gates? Why aren't we allowed to join the protest?" A researcher on data, governance & internet Srinivas Kodali tweeted, "Big Uncle

@hydcitypolice locks students inside their own university. You know who else hates educated people? Boko Haram." However, according to the police, not many students had wanted to go outside, at that point of time.

**Cyberabad City cops join hands with Google to fight cybercrime**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In view of growing cyber frauds through Google's business listing services, Cyberabad City Police have instructed the internet giant to put stricter checks to prevent cybercriminals from posting fake addresses and contact details. A coordination meeting was organised by Cyberabad Police and Google authorities to discuss preventive measures.



**Google nodal official of Cyberabad zone promised to take preventive steps technically in not allowing their platforms to be used by cyber fraudsters**

Cyberabad Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar and Gitanjali, a nodal officer from Google, Rohini Priyadarshini, DCP Crimes, and D Kavitha, Additional DCP Crimes, participated in the meeting. Officials discussed the various cyber frauds taking place through Google services, issues faced by investigating officers, vulnerabilities in Google service exploited by cybercriminals and remedial measures taken by Google so far. They studied the steps taken to pre-

vent customers from being cheated. At a review meeting held with the Google's Cyberabad officials along with the police personnel dealing with cybercrimes, VC Sajjanar said the search engine major needs to take measures by implementing advanced technologies to prevent fraudsters posting fake business details.

According to the police, posting of fake websites and mobile numbers of reputed e-commerce portals, food product

portals, travel portals, banking portals, e-wallets, payment gateways, courier services etc, and trapping citizens in need of genuine customer care services, were being reported.

Officials said cyber fraudsters were sending fake Google view form links to citizens, asking them to fill confidential information like UPI Pin, UPI Id, Internet banking username and password in the guise of giving services to them and defrauding them.

**Officials told to act tough against illegal realty ventures**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The officials have taken steps to destroy roads and drainages in illegal real estate ventures shocking the people who bought plots in the ventures. The officials have identified at least 250 places in villages.

However, the realtors who made a killing of at least Rs 300 crores selling plots have vanished into thin air.

The GO stipulates that the farmer is permitted to build structures only in 10 per cent of the agriculture land. Moreover, the structures should not obstruct flow of underground water channels. CM K Chandrasekhar Rao directed officials to get tough with the realtors who developed illegal ventures. Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao was also angry at such ventures. The officials have took steps to destroy roads and drainages in 250 ventures.

**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA**  
Revenue (LA) Department  
**FORM-C**  
NOTIFICATION  
(Under Section 11 of the Act where 10A Exemption is given)  
(See Rule 6/12)

**Gazette No.RRD -38**  
**No. C/174/SRDP/2019**

Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana / Special Collector (Land Acquisition), & Commissioner, GHMC, Hyderabad, that a total of 4194.02 Sq.Yds. of land is required in the Kothaguda, Kondapur & Gachibowli Villages, Serilingampally Mandal, Ranga Reddy District for public purpose, namely, Strategic Road Development for widening from Botanical Garden to Kondapur RTA Officer (Via Kothaguda cross roads) under SRDP Project.

Therefore it is notified that for the above said project in the Villages, Kothaguda and Kondapur Villages, Serilingampally Mandal, Ranga Reddy District land measuring more or less 4194.02 Sq. Yds. of Standard measurement, whose detail description is as following, is proposed for acquisition.

Sl. No.	Survey No.	Type of Title	Type of Land	Area under acquisition Sq. Yds	Name & Address of person interested	Boundaries				Trees		Structures	
						North	South	East	West	Variety	No.	Type	Open area / Plinth Area in Sq. Yds
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	34/2	Owner	Patta Land	353.61	Sri Rajendra Prasad H.No.2-15&16A	2-19/1	2-17	Owners Property	Road	-	-	Tin Shed	-
2	35/2	Owner	Patta Land	136.79	Sri N. Govardhan H.No.2-17	2-17	2-17/2	Owners Property	Road	-	-	Tin Shed	-
3	35/3	Owner	Patta Land	211.52	Sri Iqbal Ali Khan H.No.2-17/2	2-17	2-17/2	Owners Property	Road	-	-	Tin Shed	-
4	36/2	Owner	Patta Land	70.66	Smt. Balamani Sy. No. 36	Grave Yard	2-14/ G	Owners Property	Road	-	-	Tin Shed	-
5	37/2	Owner	Patta Land	232.22	Sri Venkat Reddy	Sy. No. 36	2-13/ 36	Owners Property	Road	-	-	Tin Shed	-
6	37/3	Owner	Patta Land	21.29	Sri Srinu H.No.2-13/36	Sy. No. 36	2-13/ 15	Owners Property	Road	-	-	Open	-
7	6/3	Owner	Patta Land	19.13	Sri Balaraj H.No.2-13/15	2-13- 38	2-13- 15	Owners Property	Road	-	-	Open	-
8	6/2	Owner	Patta Land	82.12	Sri D. Rajesh Kumar Sy. No. 58	2-9/1/1	Open	Owners Property	Road	-	-	Tin Shed	-
9	6/4	Owner	Patta Land	335.83	Sri N. Venugopal H.No.29/1/1	Road	Plot No.4	Owners Property	Road	-	-	Tin Shed	-
10	6/5	Owner	Patta Land	348.78	Smt.Chalasani Rajini Plot No.01	2-9/1/1	Plot No.1	Owners Property	Road	-	-	Tin Shed	-
11	6/6	Owner	Patta Land	422.74	Sri Anil	Plot No. 1	Pista House	Owners Property	Road	-	-	Open	-
12	6/7	Owner	Patta Land	211.47	Smt. Madhavi P.No.09	Road	Plot No.9	Owners Property	Road	-	-	Tin Shed	-
13	6/8	Owner	Patta Land	211.88	Sri Rajendra Prasad P.No.09	Open	Open	Owners Property	Road	-	-	Tin Shed	-
14	134/2	Owner	Sarkari	662.91	Smt. Jhansi Laxmi H.No.1-80/30/162/134/2	Plot No.9	Road	Owners Property	Road	-	-	Tin Shed	-
15	134/3	Owner	Sarkari	246.42	Smt. N.Venkata Sai Lakshmi, Sy.No.134/32	Road	Open	Owners Property	Road	-	-	Tin Shed	-
16	134/4	Owner	Sarkari	232.88		Sy.No. 131/2	1-60/ 30/9/E	Owners Property	Road	-	-	Tin Shed	-
17	134/5	Owner	Sarkari	395.77	Sri Mohammed Qureshi, H.No. 1-80/30/9/E	Open	Road	Owners Property	Road	-	-	Tin Shed	-
				<b>Total</b>	<b>4194.02</b>								

This notification is made under the provisions of Section-11(1) of The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (Central Act No.30/2013), as amended by the Right to Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Telangana Amendment) Act, 2016 (Act No.21 of 2017) to all whom it may concern.

A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the Special Collector (LA), MA & UD Dept & Commissioner, GHMC, Hyderabad and Special Deputy Collector, Land Acquisition, GHMC, 6th Floor, Tank Bund, Hyderabad, on any working day during the working hours. The Government of Telangana / Special Collector -cum-Appropriate Government is pleased to authorize Officer i.e. Special Deputy Collector, Land Acquisition, GHMC, Hyderabad and his staff to enter upon and survey land, take levels of any land, dig or bore into the sub-soil & do all other acts required for the proper execution of their work as provided and specified in section -12 of the said Act.

Under Section 11(4) of the Act, no person shall make any transaction or cause any transaction of land i.e., sale/purchase etc., or create any encumbrances on such land from the date of publication of notification without prior approval of the Special Collector.

Objections to the acquisition, if any, and claims from all the persons interested / affected for settlement by negotiation of the compensation, may be filed by the person interested in the land within 60 (Sixty days) from the date of publication of this Notification as provided under section 15 of the Act before the Special Collector/ Authorized Officer.

**Sd/- Special Deputy Collector (LA)**  
**GHMC, Hyderabad**

**Sd/- Special Collector (LA) & Commissioner, GHMC, Hyderabad**

DIPR Ro.No.1370/LA/PP/Agency/2019-20

# BHADRACHALAM TEMPLE HIT BY FUND CRUNCH

PNS ■ BHADRACHALAM

As Rama Navami is fast approaching, the state government till date has not released any funds for kalyanam arrangements at Bhadrachalam temple. The financial problem of Bhadrachalam Temple Devasthanam is such that the employees are not being paid regularly for the past four months.

The state government did not declare the celestial wedding of Bhadrachalam deities as state festival nor did it release funds to the shrine to celebrate the event.

Also, for the past six years, Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao didn't even attend the Rama Navami event and presented silk clothes and pearls to presiding deities. He last presented silk clothes and pearls in 2015. Afterwards, elected people's representatives and officials have been presenting them to the deities.

The devotees are of an opinion that if Chief Minister visits temple at least annually once on Rama Navami day, it would serve the twin purpose of continuing the age-old tradition and gaining firsthand knowledge of problems here.

Annually, temple hundi funds are expended to buy silk clothes and pearls. The income from the temple hundis is not at all encouraging this time causing worry to the authorities. In undivided Andhra



**Till date, the govt has not released any funds for kalyanam arrangements at Bhadrachalam temple. The financial problem of temple Devasthanam is such that the employees are not being paid for the past four months**

Pradesh, the temple devasthanam governing body adopted a resolution to the effect that the state government should fund the celebration of events like Srirama Navami and Mukkoti Ekadasi in the temple. But the resolution is gathering dust.

Since 2013-14, the temple hundi earnings and expenditure are more or less. The average income of the temple annually is Rs 23 crore. Of which, 51 per cent constitutes salary bill. This works out to be around Rs 11 crore towards salaries and pensions of existing and past employees of devasthanam. The temple pays Rs

4.5 crore, which roughly constitutes 21 per cent of its annual revenue to the government by way of endowment administration fund, common good fund, priests' welfare fund, audit fees and so on. The devasthanam defaulted payment of the amount for several years and it accumulated to Rs 14 crore.

For want of funds, the temple devasthanam did not pay wages to outsourced employees for the past two months and sanitation and housekeeping staff are yet to receive wages for four months.

The expenditure of Rs 15,000 incurred to buy silk

clothes and pearls to the deities is being met from the temple hundi. The state government has to release the funds upon officials presenting the bill for the same. But the state government is not releasing the funds for the past several years.

The temple's Vedic Committee decided to celebrate Thiru Kalyanam at the temple from March 25 to April 8, including Srirama Navami on April 2 and Sitarama Kalyanam on April 3. The events attract devotees from all parts of the country. According to a conservative estimate, the expenses for the event would be around Rs 85,000 to Rs 1 crore.

But the quarterly temple hundi income does not exceed Rs 70 lakh. The footfalls of devotees to the temple have come down drastically, of late. It has affected the temple's hundi earnings too.

The temple authorities are worried over how to mobilise funds for the event. Since the boat tragedy in Godavari River in September last year, the flow of devotees to the temple has come down.

On an average at least 5,000 devotees visit the temple on normal days as against the current 3,000 devotees. The temple executive officer Gadaraju Narsimhulu admitted that the devasthanam has been undergoing cash crunch. The estimated cost of celebration of Sri Rama Navami is put at Rs 85 lakh.

# TRS created history in co-op polls: Balka Suman

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The TRS has created history by winning the governing bodies of nine DCCBs and DCMS, said Government Whip Balka Suman.

Addressing media at Telangana Bhavan on Sunday, Suman pointed out how the people are giving mandate to the TRS for the past one year in a series of elections. The TRS has a balanced approach in seeking votes from people, he said. "The TRS gave priority to Dalits, BCs and Minorities in DCCB, DCMS governing body elections. The credit of establishing quota in market committee chairman posts goes to Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao," he said.

Of the total Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies, 95 per cent have gone the TRS supported candidates way, Suman said adding that elections are being conducted in state in a peaceful atmosphere.

In the DCCB and DCMS governing body polls, the TRS



**In the DCCB and DCMS governing body polls, the TRS gave priority to leaders who have taken active part in Telangana movement, said Balka Suman**

gave priority to leaders who have taken active part in Telangana movement. During the Congress rule, farmers migrated to other places for want of irrigation facility. Congress leaders did not build godowns and siphoned off funds, he alleged.

The Congress rule is characterized by migration of farmers from Mahabubnagar and fluorosis menace in Nalgonda water. The Congress has for-

feited its right to represent the farmers' problems, he said.

Balka Suman demanded TPCC working president Revanth Reddy to return the 'encroached lands'. Jeevan Reddy is not able to tolerate the rapid progress taking place under the TRS regime. The farmers are happy, but the Congress leaders are in trauma. He called the politics being practiced by Revanth Reddy as black mail politics.

## 0.6 tmc water released from Babli

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

The CWC officials released 0.6 tmc of water to the SRSP from the Babli project on Sunday. As per the Supreme Court orders, water should be released to the SRSP on March 1 every year to fulfil drinking water needs of cattle along the Godavari stretch between the two projects.

CWC executive engineer V Gangadhar, SRSP EE B Ramarao, DEE T Jagadish and Nanded EE NP Gawane supervised the water release.



Congress MP from Bhongir Komatireddy Venkat Reddy at a programme in Nakerekal on Sunday

# TRS failed to curb farmer suicides: Cong

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congress MP from Bhongir Komatireddy Venkat Reddy on Sunday blamed Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao for farmer suicides in the state. "The Chief Minister has failed to prevent farmers from committing suicide. He even failed to construct 2BHK units for the poor in the state," the MP said.

The MP called upon the people to launch a movement against the TRS government for failing to fulfil promises.

"The Chief Minister had said that he would adopt Nalgonda district, but still there is no talk about that," the MP said. He also alleged that there is no representation to the Mala community in state Cabinet. Participating in the oath taking ceremony of Kethepally Primary Agriculture Cooperative Society chairman in Nakerekal constituency in Nalgonda district, Komatireddy slammed the Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao for allegedly looting the state by

Development in TS is taking place with the help of funds allotted by the Centre. There are no funds with the state as KCR looted them

— KOMATIREDDY VENKAT REDDY  
Bhongir MP

neglecting the poor. "People shouldn't be afraid of the government. The then Congress government used to help people from other political parties too. I will chase the Ministers and TRS MLAs if they harass people and Congress activists," the MP said. Komatireddy claimed that the Congress party registered victory in 9 municipalities in Bhongir Parliament constituency, however, the TRS leaders ensured the victory of TRS candidates as municipal chairmen in illegally. "Development in the state is taking place with the help of funds allotted by the Centre. There are no funds with the state government as the Chief Minister looted them," the MP alleged.

## RULES? WHO CARES!



Forget helmet, five of a family seen commuting on a bike in gross violation of traffic rules at Gachibowli — SV Charly

# 300 2BHKs allotted in Khammam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The state government has handed over 300 double bed room houses to the poor in erstwhile Khammam district on Sunday.

Ministers KT Rama Rao, Vemula Prashanth Reddy, Puvvada Ajay Kumar, V Srinivas Goud and local MP Nama Nageshwara Rao inaugurated the 2BHK units constructed for the poor.

The government constructed 240 2BHK units in YSR Colony with Rs 134 crore. The Ministers renamed the colony as 'KCR Colony'.

Later, the Ministers also inaugurated 60 houses in Raghunathapalem and handed over them to beneficiaries.

In a statement, Roads and Buildings Minister Vemula

**The government constructed 240 2BHK units in YSR Colony with Rs 134 crore. The Ministers renamed the colony as 'KCR Colony'**

Prashanth Reddy thanked Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao for striving hard for the welfare of people continuously. Rythu Samanvaya Samithi president Palla Rajeshwar Reddy, MLAs Sandra Venkata Veeraiah, Ramulu Naik and others participated in the programme.



The newly-inaugurated 2BHK units in Khammam district

## 63 candidates appear for KNRUHS exam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The computer-based recruitment test for the post of statistical officer in Kaloji Narayana Rao University of Health Sciences (KNRUHS), Warangal, was held peacefully in Hyderabad on Sunday.

In a release, Telangana State Public Service Commission (TSPSC) said of the 146 candidates, 63 candidates appeared for the examination which was conducted in the morning and afternoon sessions.

The exam was monitored from the command centre established TSPSC office, it said, adding that special squads were appointed for monitoring exam at respective centre.

The Commission had issued notification for one vacancy of statistical officer in KNRUHS, Warangal on December 18, 2019.

# Pensions at doorstep bring smile on beneficiaries' faces

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Even before the Sunrise, Village Volunteers are on their toes distributing pensions to the beneficiaries at their doorstep. On Sunday, Minister for Transport Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani) made surprise visits on how the pensions are being disbursed to the beneficiaries in Machilipatnam in Ward No 21. He personally distributed pensions to the beneficiaries in a few places.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister said that the pensioners expressed their delight on receiving pension at their doorstep on the first of the month.

Nani recalled that earlier the pensioners (senior citizens, differently-abled, widows and patients) have to wait at the pension centres the whole day and repeatedly visit the centre till they receive their pensions. However, those pensioners are now getting pensions on the first of every month at their doorstep with the initiative taken by Chief Minister

YS Jaganmohan Reddy. He said that welfare benefits are being disbursed to all the beneficiaries irrespective of caste, religion, sects and political affiliations of beneficiaries.

This became a reality, thanks to visionary Chief Minister, who decided to establish Village and Ward Secretariats and a volunteer for every 50 families. The beneficiaries are identified by the volunteers transparently and eligible who did not get welfare schemes can contact the Village Secretariats with their details, he said.

The minister further stated that people, who have three acres of cultivatable land, are not eligible for ration and pension cards. Whose annual income is less than Rs 2.5 lakh are eligible for the 'Jagannana Fees Reimbursement' scheme and whose annual income is less than Rs 5 lakh are eligible for 'YSR Arogyasree' scheme and all the volunteers should explain the beneficiaries about the schemes, the minister said.



Minister for Transport Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani) handing over pension papers to an elderly man in Machilipatnam on Sunday

## Waltair Railway Division records highest loading

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

With the concerted efforts of traffic department, the Waltair Division has achieved highest ever loading of 72 rakes (3,782 wagons) in a single day on February 29.

Beating the previous all time best 68 rakes per day in the last year. With 147 freight trains interchange and 92.3% punctuality of mail and express trains, the Waltair Division is moving fast towards achieving Railway Board's target of 68 million tonnes loading for this year. The gross earnings of Waltair Division till the end of January 2020 is Rs 7,222 crore, which is more than 10% compared to last year for the same corresponding period.

Divisional Railway Manager Chetan Kumar Shrivastava appreciated the efforts of the traffic department and other departments in accomplish this feat despite global economic recession and heading towards to reach target.

# KCR diverted NABARD funds: Revanth

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congress MP from Malkajgiri Revanth Reddy demanded the state government to release funds for the construction of 2BHK units for the poor in the state.

"In the last six years, the state government has failed to allot even a single 2BHK unit," the MP claimed. "The government gave houses to the people built by the then Congress government, by just changing the colour of the houses. The TRS government has failed to address the problems being faced by the people. I demand



Malkajgiri MP Revanth Reddy addressing the gathering in Malkajgiri on Sunday

the state to release funds before the end of March so as to complete the construction of 2BHK units, which are underway. Also,

the government has to build 2BHK units in their slums only," the MP said.

The MP demanded the state

# Raghunathpur-Adelli road becomes a reality

PNS ■ ADILABAD

In a move that meets the long-pending demand of the people of Boath constituency, the State government granted a road between Adelli village in Sarangapur and Raghunathpur village in Boath mandal. Minister for Forests, Environment, Endowments and Housing Allola Indrakaran Reddy laid foundation stone for the road on Sunday. The estimated cost of the road is Rs

4.65 crore. Speaking on the occasion, Indrakaran Reddy opined that the facility would strengthen bond between Nirmal and Boath constituencies and travelling distance between two villages was going to be reduced by 40 kilometers.

Devotees of Boath region could easily visit the famous Pochamma temple in Adelli, with the advent of the facility, he added. The Minister underlined the need to protect forest cover. He appealed the

public not to cut the trees and damage the environment. He expressed concern over climate change and said that Adilabad was registering maximum temperatures around 48 degrees. He instructed officials concerned to complete the works at the earliest.

Indrakaran urged public to extend their cooperation in laying the road and assured that he would invite people of Raghunathpur to Adelli village at the time of inauguration. He

stated that he would offer sumptuous lunch for residents of the village. Boath MLA Rathod Babu Rao, who was at the function, said that the government realised long pending dream by granting funds to build the road. He expressed gratitude to Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao for sanctioning the facility. He thanked the Minister for extending his support in creating the stretch. Residents of Raghunathpur and many other villages in

Boath expressed happiness over the creation of the facility. They said that their hardships in reaching the temple and relatives living in Sarangapur mandal would be a thing of past soon. They recalled that they were forced to travel Boath, Kuchulapur, Kandipalli, Kannur and Sarangapur for visiting the shrine of the goddess.

Adilabad Collector A Sridevasena and other officials were present.

## New Revenue Act to draw upon tech

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

To link Revenue Act with technology, the state government has stepped up efforts and is going to take revenue employees' associations into confidence by holding a meet with their leaders in a day or two to apprise them the salient features of the New Revenue Act. Their suggestions will be incorporated into the proposed Act.

Arrangements are being made to achieve automatic mutation of land records after the sale of lands. A technical system is going to be introduced to complete the mutation in two days automatically. So far, 96 per cent of the land records have been cleansed and uploaded onto Dharani portal. The government wants the mutation to be automatic on the lines of core banking services.

If the system comes into vogue, the need for deployment of VROs at the grassroots level is eliminated. The government has plans to transfer them to other departments.

SHORT READS



**Former India hockey player and Olympic bronze medallist Balbir Singh Kullar dies**

**NEWDELHI:** Former India hockey player Balbir Singh Kullar, who was a part of the 1968 Olympics bronze-winning team, has died after suffering a heart attack at his home in Punjab. He died on Friday afternoon at the age of 77. Kullar is survived by his wife, one son and two daughters. "My father was to travel with me to the US but suddenly he had a massive heart attack and he died on Friday afternoon at our family home in Sansarpur in Jalandhar district," his son Kamalbir Singh, who is based in US, said on Sunday. Kullar's cremation will be conducted on Monday. "His last rites will be done on Monday because my son and his grandson just arrived from the US. One of my elder sisters is based in Canada and the other is in US, they also arrived on Sunday," he added. Born at Sansarpur village of Jalandhar district in Punjab, Kullar made his India debut in 1963 in Lyon in France. He gained reputation as an inside forward in the Indian team and toured several countries like Belgium, England, the Netherlands, New Zealand and West Germany.

**NDA united in Bihar, asserts Nitish at JD(U) workers' rally**

**PATNA:** Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Sunday asserted that the NDA, of which his JD(U) is a part, was "united" in Bihar as he sought to dispel "confusions" arising from his recent meetings with RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav. Addressing a "karyakartta sammelan" of the party here, Kumar underscored that with the state assembly having passed a unanimous resolution against the NRC and the NPR, "patience" should be kept on the CAA and "controversies" avoided until the matter was before the court. He also told JD(U) workers "let us resolve to ensure NDA will win more than 200 seats in Bihar assembly polls" Kumar also slammed the opposition Congress-RJD alliance over the 1989 Bhagalpur riots and pointed out that it was only after his government came to power in 2005 that the guilty were brought to book and the victims got justice.



**BJP workers raise 'goli maro...' slogan en route Shah rally**

**PNS ■ KOLKATA**  
A section of BJP workers on Sunday raised the incendiary "goli maro..." (shoot the traitors) slogan on their way to a rally addressed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The group, carrying party flags, were heard shouting the slogan en route to the Shahid Minar ground. When contacted, a senior officer of the Kolkata Police declined to comment anything on the incident, but said "strict action will be taken against anybody trying to disrupt the law and order situation in the city". The home minister is on a day-long visit to Kolkata. There has been a controversy over raising of such slogans during BJP rallies during Delhi Assembly polls and protests in favour of the CAA due to allegations that they provoke violence.

**Akshay donates Rs 1.5cr to provide shelter to transgenders**

**PNS ■ MUMBAI**  
Superstar Akshay Kumar has donated Rs 1.5 crore for building home for transgenders, an initiative started by his "Laxmmi Bomb" director Raghav Lawrence's charitable trust. Lawrence took to Facebook to thank the 52-year-old Bollywood actor. "Our trust is now entering into its 15th year. We wanted to celebrate this 15th year by initiating a new project for uplifting transgenders by providing shelter for them. Our trust has provided the land and we were looking forward to raise funds for the building, so during 'Laxmmi Bomb' shoot I was talking to Akshay sir about the trust projects and transgender's home, immediately after hearing this without even me asking he told he will donate 1.5 cores for building transgenders' home. "I consider everyone who helps as god, so now Akshay kumar sir is a god for us. I thank him for lending his huge support for this project. Our trust's next vision is to uplift transgenders and provide shelter for them all over India with Akshay Kumar's sir support. I thank him in behalf of all transgenders," the director posted on Facebook. "Laxmmi Bomb" is a remake of 2011's Tamil horror comedy "Kanchana". Produced by Cape of Good Films, Fox Star Studios, Tusshar Kapoor and Shabina Khan, the movie also features Kiara Advani.

**NAXALS DESTABILISING COUNTRY, MISLEADING PEOPLE, SAYS PATIL**



**PNS ■ SHIRDI**  
Amidst protests against the new citizenship law, Maharashtra BJP chief Chandrakant Patil on Sunday accused the "Leftists, urban and rural Naxals" of trying to destabilise the country and mislead people over different issues. The former Maharashtra minister also said that as the government has crushed the Naxals in the last five years, "silent Naxalism" has started and misleading people was part of it. He said the Congress, NCP and the Muslim community should realise that the Leftists were trying to disturb the country's peace and push their own agenda. Patil was addressing a press conference during his visit to the Saibaba Samadhi in Shirdi town in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra. "Muslims in the country, Congress and NCP are not able to understand that Leftists, Maoists, urban Naxals and rural Naxals, who are on the rise, want to destabilise the country. Urban Naxals are trying to mislead the people on various issues," he said in response to a query on the forces behind the anti-CAA protests. "I appeal to our opponents Congress and NCP that elections and running a government are different things. Sometimes you win, sometimes we. But they should take note of the incidents that are destabilising the country," he added. Patil said members of the Muslim community should tell in a debate what their problems are (concerning the CAA). "It is being fed in your mind that you have a problem. Anywhere it is being said that (PM Narendra) Modi is going to build a jail in Delhi and Muslims from across the country will be put there. Is it possible? So how does this get into the minds of Muslims?" he added. "In this, Muslims are harming themselves...disturbing the long-established brotherhood. This disturbance will make life difficult. They don't realise that they are being trapped. "Congress, NCP don't realise that they are opposing the CAA in favour of Muslims, but the Leftists are benefiting from it. They want to disturb the country. It is not about any political party. It is all the agenda of the Leftists," he said. "For years, despite using guns, they did not get success through rural Naxals. The government completely drove them away. In five years, the Naxals were finished. Now 'silent Naxalism' has started and misleading people is part of it," he alleged.

Muslims in the country, Congress and NCP are not able to understand that Leftists, Maoists, urban Naxals and rural Naxals, who are on the rise, want to destabilise the country. Urban Naxals are trying to mislead the people on various issues

CHANDRAKANT PATIL, Maharashtra BJP chief

When asked whether the use of abusive language allegedly by BJP leader Narayan Rane and his politician sons against Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut suits the party's culture, Patil said he hasn't noticed anything like this. "The BJP believes in culture, but it does not mean that we are cowards. Everyone has a different personality. If anyone says anything wrong, then the party will act against it. I have not noticed anything like it," he said. "If Shiv Sena does whatever it wants, and if Raut writes whatever he wants in the editorial of 'Saamana' (Sena mouthpiece)...does it suit their culture?" he asked.

**Maha Speaker backs demand for caste-based Census**



**PNS ■ JALNA**  
Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Speaker Nana Patole on Sunday said he would support the demand of OBC leaders to boycott the exercise to conduct the General Census 2021 if a caste-based enumeration is not allowed. Speaking at an event here, the Speaker said leadership across the party lines had demanded that a delegation be sent to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for allowing the caste-based Census to find the population of people from OBCs. "OBC leaders have decided that if the caste Census is not conducted they would boycott the General Census (exercise) and I would support them. "If a government does not follow the norms of the Constitution, then an individual has the freedom to boycott (any exercise mandated by the government). We will follow the mantra of Mahatma Gandhi," he said. Patole said since the prime minister belongs to a OBC he should understand the pains of the people. The Maharashtra Legislative Assembly on January 8 unanimously passed a resolution urging the Centre for a caste-based Census to find out the population of OBCs across the country. The resolution was moved suo moto ("on its own") by the Speaker. Referring to that resolution, Patole said the state government can examine if a separate Census exercise can be undertaken in Maharashtra like the demands made in Tamil Nadu and Bihar.

**Islam does not teach breaching peace: Ajmer dargah deewan**

**PNS ■ JAIPUR**

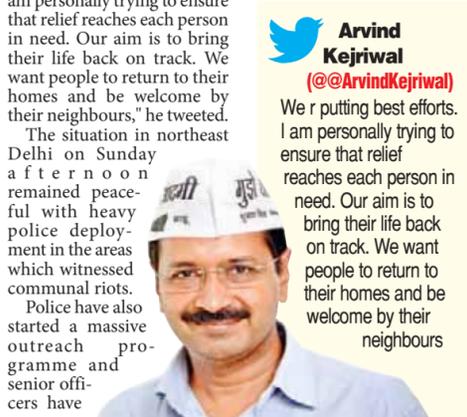
Ajmer dargah deewan Syed Zainul Abedin Ali Khan on Sunday said there is no place in Islam for anything which weakens the atmosphere of peace. "It is impossible to solve a problem with violence. People need to recognise the conspiracy created by instilling fear in the society for deviating people from mainstream due to political selfishness," he said in a statement. "Anything that weakens the atmosphere of peace has no place in Islam. It is impossible to solve a problem with violence. Human history testifies that the atmosphere of peace and positivity is the basis of progress and development in the world. "The essence of the teachings of Islam is that in a society where there is unrest, people will fall behind and out of the mainstream of the nation," Abedin said while addressing a gathering on the eve of 808th Urs. In this traditional event, religious heads of country's various Chistiya Dargahs were also present. Expressing concern over the current situation in the country, the dargah deewan said people are being forced to come on road by fears triggered in the society out of political selfishness. He lamented that at a time when these fears should be mitigated, negative forces are working to deepen them.



**AAP govt providing relief to riot-hit people: Kejriwal**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said the AAP government is putting best efforts to provide relief to the people affected by communal riots in northeast Delhi. Taking to Twitter, Kejriwal said he is personally trying to ensure that relief reaches each person in need, asserting that the government wants people to return to their homes and be welcomed by their neighbours. "We r putting best efforts. I am personally trying to ensure that relief reaches each person in need. Our aim is to bring their life back on track. We want people to return to their homes and be welcome by their neighbours," he tweeted. The situation in northeast Delhi on Sunday afternoon remained peaceful with heavy police deployment in the areas which witnessed communal riots. Police have also started a massive outreach programme and senior officers have been meeting and speaking with people from every community in order to build confidence among them. The violence in Jaffrabad, Maujpur, Babarpur, Chand Bagh, Shiv Vihar, Bhajan Pura, Yamuna Vihar areas of northeast Delhi has claimed at least 42 lives and left over 200 injured. A large number of properties have been damaged. Frenzied mobs torched houses, shops, vehicles, a petrol pump and pelted stones at locals and police personnel.



**Display names, addresses of those arrested in Delhi riots: Activists to CP**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Human rights activists on Sunday wrote to the Delhi Police Commissioner demanding that the names and addresses of those arrested in connection with the violence in the national capital be publicised as mandated by the law. In a letter, signed by activists Anjali Bharadwaj, co-convenor of the National Campaign for People's Right to Information, advocate Prashant Bhusan, CPI leader Annie Raja, Amrita Johri among others, said Section 41-C of the CrPC mandatorily requires that a police control room be established in all districts and section 41-C(2) demands that the names and addresses of all persons arrested be displayed on the notice board outside the control room. "Compliance with Section 41-C and providing information regarding details of those arrested and in custody is necessary to provide families of those persons with clarity about their whereabouts to ensure that the correct information is reaching all concerned and their suffering is not worsened by the spread of misinformation," the letter posted on Twitter by Bharadwaj said. "Despite the express mandate of law, the names and addresses of all arrested persons are not being displayed at the Police Control Room in North-East and Shahdara districts and police stations falling within the area," it said. A total of 885 people have been detained and arrested, while 167 FIRs have been registered.



**BSF man gets Rs 10 lakh from Odisha CM**

**BHUBANESWAR:** Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik sanctioned a relief of Rs 10 lakh to BSF constable Mohammad Anees, whose house was burnt in the communal violence in northeast Delhi. The chief minister, who was saddened to know that the constable's house was set on fire by mob, spoke to him, a statement from CMO said. Patnaik has also sanctioned Rs 10 lakh to the constable from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund, it said. Anees is associated with the 9th battalion of the border guarding force deployed in Maoist affected district of Malkangiri in Odisha.



**Polish student asked to leave India for taking part in anti-CAA rally**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

A Polish student of Jadavpur University has been asked by the Foreigner Regional Registration Office (FRRO) to leave the country after he participated in an anti-CAA rally in the West Bengal capital, varsity sources said on Sunday. The incident comes close on the heels of a Bangladeshi student of Visva Bharati University being issued a similar directive by the FRRO after she posted photographs of an anti-CAA demonstration, held on the campus, on social media. A JU source told PTI that Kamil Siedcynski, a Polish student of Comparative Literature, was asked by the FRRO to visit its Kolkata office, which he did on February 22. "Siedcynski was served a notice by the FRRO asking him to leave the country within a fortnight on receipt of the notice for alleged conduct deemed inappropriate for a foreign national staying in India on a student visa," the source said. The JU source said several teachers and Left-leaning students of the varsity were of the view that Siedcynski was paying the price for attending an anti-CAA rally at Moulali area in the city in December last year where he was interviewed by a Bengali daily and a brief report on him was published the next day. "Some people probably forwarded a copy of the report to the FRRO. Siedcynski has no political leanings but his enthusiasm to attend the protest rally and click photographs landed him in trouble," the source said. Siedcynski, who was supposed to write his third-semester examinations this year, could not be contacted. JU vice-chancellor Suranjan Das and Registrar Snehamanju Basu also did not take calls. The Polish student had earlier studied Bengali at the Visva Bharati University. Recently Afsara Anika Meem, a first-year Bangladeshi undergraduate student in the Fine Arts department of the Visva-Bharati University was served an FRRO notice for reportedly engaging in "anti-government" activities.



**Siedcynski, who was supposed to write his third-semester examinations this year, could not be contacted**

**SC to consider curative plea of Pawan Gupta**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The Supreme Court will on Monday consider in chamber the curative plea of one of the four death row convicts, Pawan Kumar Gupta, in the 2012 Nirbhaya gang rape and murder case, a day before their scheduled hanging. The curative petition will be considered by a bench of justices N V Ramana, Arun Mishra, R F Nariman, R Banumathi and Ashok Bhushan in the chamber of Justice Ramana. Pawan, 25, against whom the death warrant has been issued for execution on March 3 along with the three other condemned prisoners, has claimed juvenility to seek commutation of sentence to life imprisonment. He has filed the curative plea through lawyer A P Singh seeking setting aside of the apex court's earlier verdicts on appeals and review petitions in the case. Advocate A P Singh said he has filed an application in the apex court registry on Sunday seeking an oral hearing on Pawan's curative plea in the open court. Pawan is the last death row convict in the case to move the top court with his curative plea, the final legal remedy available to a person. A 23-year-old physiotherapy intern, who came to be known as 'Nirbhaya' (fearless), was gang raped and savagely assaulted in a moving bus in South Delhi on December 16, 2012. She died a fortnight later. Pawan and another convict Akshay Singh also moved a trial court here on Saturday seeking stay on the execution of death warrants. The trial court has issued notice to Tihar Jail authorities on the pleas, directing the officials to file their response by Monday. While Akshay has claimed that he has filed a fresh mercy petition before the President of India, which is pending, Pawan said he has moved a curative plea before the Supreme Court.



**The trial court has issued notice to Tihar Jail authorities on the pleas, directing the officials to file their response by Monday**

## Scarred childhood

Delhi may be picking up the pieces after a manic bout of violence but its children have been damaged forever



No matter how determinedly we pick up the pieces, we have failed our children by exposing them to Delhi's worst communal riots in decades and numbing their potential forever. For all the happiness curriculum that has been the showpiece of the city's schools as inculcating a holistic and value consciousness among them, it has taken mad fury and hate politics to demolish it in one go. We have ended up forcing a moral crisis upon them, one that we have implanted in their minds by attacking them

in their homes, their schools and their playgrounds, stripping them of every comfort zone and emotion, leaving them unchaperoned and fearful in a world of adult mess. What do the visuals of the child, distraught and slumping over a father's body, dead because he was hit by a wayward bullet, tell us? How do we tell students, who have grown up knowing that every school exam would take them closer to a better life, that they cannot attend school in the first place? Spare a thought for the boy who got hit by a stone while returning home after completing an exam, who doesn't know when the next test schedule would be announced and finds it difficult to study in a home that is in sixes and sevens overnight. The violence outside scares him further into a ghetto of fear. Tuition and coaching classes aren't safe, too, considering that a boy was shot at while returning from one at Jafraabad on February 25. He could have been saved but he did not get any medical aid or even an ambulance. Imagine the plight of board examinees, who are awaiting alternative dates and venues to clear the first crucial hurdle of student life, qualifying for a higher education. The Delhi High Court has asked the Government to sanitise convenient exam centres that aren't too far away for students and announce new dates so that their anxieties are taken care of. Yet if the mangled fans and the trail of destruction at schools are any indication, then knowledge is a futile asset in a society which has found new qualifiers for a settled, peaceful life — religion, identity and conformity with a greater cause. Arun Modern Public School principal Jyoti Rani said that she had students of all communities. Now the riots have made them conscious of where they come from. Answer sheets of exams already conducted have been destroyed as have books and computers. Students had been locked up in another school, an inhuman confinement, like lambs to the slaughter. And when men in uniform, that could have been borrowed, stolen or even original, codify a simple citizenship test, on whether you can publicly sing the anthem or chant *Vande Mataram* or not, then you are telling the young to forget history lessons and learn the new safety bar codes. The divisive politics of the times have propagated a relearning of life as it should be and is turning our children into hunter-survivors than evolved humans. With families fleeing for good, some children will never return and will have to deal with displacement. The rioters have successfully created a deep disturbia to be inhabited by new citizens, who have already been infected and hardened at birth as children of conflict. That explains why so many teenagers were among the arsonists, carrying cricket bats and rods. When prejudice becomes political capital and children are denied their innocence, it is shuddering to think what we are bequeathing as civil society.

It takes no rocket science to understand how children and adolescents exposed to communal violence are deformed in the mind. Studies worldwide have found this group susceptible to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), insecurity, faithlessness, fear, withdrawal and denial, all manifested through physical symptoms like repeated bouts of headaches and stomach aches. With all that they knew gone, the dulling emptiness is often frighteningly filled by memories of the past that will seek closure and result in either revenge or retaliation. The worst injustice we do to children, therefore, is by not punishing the perpetrators of violence. While the Government has detained and demonised protesters and dissenters, there has been no outrage over or action taken against its sympathisers and loyalists, who unleash their worst selves knowing they have the insurance cover as ideological warriors. The dossiers of the marauders at Jamia Millia and Jawaharlal Nehru University are common knowledge. Even their faces are known. But they roam free. In the darkest hour of this city, happiness has lost. And childhood has died.

## The earth is bleeding

The appearance of 'blood snow' in Antarctica may not be sinister. But it is another sign that the ice is melting



The sudden discovery of red-tinged ice around Ukraine's Vernadsky Research Base might have puzzled any casual observer but it is nothing more than an appearance of a select species of algae that thrive in near-freezing zones. So those, who see the emergence of this ice as a sign from God or something like that, can rest easy. However, this can actually be seen as a sign from earth. While the particular algae thrives in near-freezing conditions, there is a certain amount of warmth that it needs to survive. This is why climate scientists are getting concerned. Is the appearance of the red-ice yet another sign from the earth that climatic conditions are getting ever warmer and that we might be slipping past a point of no return? Facts are clear, the pack ice in the Antarctic is melting, with swathes of glaciers larger than the State of Goa breaking off. There are fears about the long-term survivability of the Emperor penguin, the isolated continent's most iconic creature. Up at the North Pole, the disappearance of the polar bear has already become a potent symbol of the rapidly declining sea ice in the Arctic. The last few years have seen record-breaking temperatures. Previous three Januaries have consecutively broken records for the warmest month ever. The wildfires in Australia devastated that part of the planet. Coral reefs are dying, salinity in groundwater near coastal areas is rising as sea levels slowly but surely keep on climbing. The climate apocalypse may not be upon us as yet but we are heading there in a runaway train. And unlike the movie, there are no heroes who can stop it because our politicians are jetting around the world to bicker about who sacrifices how much and who pays how much.

The human race has always risen up to such challenges in the past. We managed to send a man to another celestial object. We can now fly half-way around the world in a single hop. And we have successfully eliminated killer diseases such as smallpox. But currently, we have a critical problem and we must step up to the plate and solve it. Time is running out. Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg is right: We cannot mess up the planet for future generations.

## China's 'trust' deficit

Once the threat of COVID-19 is contained, it would be in Beijing's interest to introspect as to why it is distrusted by the rest of the world



KUSHAN MITRA

The outbreak of Coronavirus that has stymied economic activity across China and the rest of the world, including neighbouring Southeast Asia, has gradually been brought under control, at least in Wuhan, its epicentre. The viral outbreak, now termed as "COVID-19" by the World Health Organisation (WHO), has disrupted manufacturing supply chains across the world, crippled tourism and trade industries and sharply reduced consumption of oil, gas and coal as economic activity has come to a shuddering halt. Weirdly enough, this may not be a bad thing indeed. However, there are a couple of threads that have emerged due to the spread of this virus. It relates to the way China has tackled COVID-19 back home. This will be worth exploring.

Its initial response was actually praiseworthy. Once the Chinese Central leadership was made aware of the ramifications and the impact of this virus on its population, it acted speedily and in a way that only a nation-State with such a centralised command structure can do. Information spread was controlled, medical workers and the armed forces mobilised in a way that frankly only China, which counts among the world's largest nations, can do. Back in India, if we were to face such a situation, one can only imagine television anchors going hammer and tongs against the panelists. Political parties, too, would not desist from giving a communal angle to the viral outbreak. The speed at which it constructed hospitals and quarantine centres in the city of Wuhan and central Hubei province is noteworthy.

That said, the second issue is one that the Chinese leadership ought to be concerned about. Almost no nation on the planet trusted the statements/information coming out from China about the epidemic. Nor did anyone believe the statistics put out by it. Such fuss about a viral fever that has a low fatality rate. According to official data, Coronavirus infected less than a hundred thousand people in the four weeks it was around. *Xinhua*, the official press agency of the People's Republic of China, put these statistics on Twitter. But it likely failed to see the irony of using a social network banned in China. More people have died from the common flu in the US in the past year than have officially died from the COVID-19 virus in China and the rest of the world.

Going by the average toll of 400 deaths per day, in the past month alone, more people must have died on Indian roads. As far as official statistics released by China, the infection and fatality rates are lower than previous major outbreaks, even other flu outbreaks in the past that have emerged such as SARS.

So why this panic and a near war-like emergency in cities across China to con-



tain the outbreak? Is China hiding something? The Chinese authorities claim not to be hiding anything but then, why is everyone talking about the COVID-19 outbreak? People in India and across the world believe that China is hiding something. Is it true?

Videos, purportedly emerging from China, showed how authorities over there are forcibly detaining people and putting them into detention camps. The Chinese authorities were ham-fisted in the way they dealt with Li Wenliang, the doctor who first warned about the possibility of an outbreak and ultimately died of the new coronavirus. Some bloggers, too, have been documenting life in the worst-hit provinces. Supposed presentations by Chinese conglomerates have been leaked into the wild, which claim that the real number of deaths is many multiples of the official numbers, which at the last count stood at around 2,500 and the number of confirmed cases may possibly be in millions.

Here is the thing: All Governments lie — whether it is the Chinese or the Americans and even our own. Lies are propagated to cover up incompetence than to hide

“IT WAS AMUSING TO SEE HOW THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT SUDDENLY SENT ITS AMBASSADORS ON A PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFENSIVE EVEN AS ACCESS TO INFORMATION WAS RESTRICTED NOT ONLY FOR FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS BUT ALSO FOR ITS OWN JOURNALISTS”

malafide intentions. Well, during the Cold War, the Americans and the Soviets lied with malafide intentions. But that's another story for another day. Politicians and bureaucrats lie more often than not to cover up their incompetence and ineptitude.

The problem with lies, as almost everyone knows, is that the web just gets bigger and bigger. But when matters of public health and safety are involved, at least a degree of truth will be of help even if being economical with the truth is essential to maintain public order. It was, therefore, almost amusing to see how the Chinese Government suddenly sent its Ambassadors on a public relations offensive even as access to information was restricted not only for foreign correspondents but also for its own journalists.

Of course, coming back to the first point, the Chinese Government must be applauded for its initial response to the outbreak, once they realised the seriousness of it all, even if few Governments across the world have the necessary information about it, officially at least. But even with a new public relations outreach, it should be apparent to the Chinese

Government that almost nobody, with the exception of Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, trusts China. One suspects that in private, even he is skeptical of the Chinese stance.

What does this say about Chinese President Xi Jinping and China, a country that aspires to stand next to the US as a superpower? Forget other Governments, citizens in other countries have lost faith in China, a trend that seems to be accelerating over the past few years. The Communist Party of China (CPC) ought to introspect why this is the case and how the COVID-19 outbreak has made matters worse on the trust front.

There are lessons for other Governments as well, including India, because "trust" is important. Whether one likes the Press or not, engagement with both the local and global media is vital. We have moved ahead from an age of information to that of affirmation. It is important that this changes soon. Otherwise, we run the risk of a complete and total breakdown in "trust" with governance across the world, this contagion having been started by a real-life one.

(The writer is Managing Editor, *The Pioneer*)

## SOUNDBITE

We remain seriously concerned about the continuing job losses, which will eventually have an adverse impact on social stability and peace in the country.

Congress spokesperson  
—Anand Sharma



We are experiencing today a new kind of films and I want to be part of it. I don't want anyone to put me in a box. I want to surprise with everything that I do.

Actor  
—Radhika Madan



If the Taliban and the Afghanistan Government live up to their commitments, we will have a powerful path forward to end the war in Afghanistan and bring our troops home.

US President  
—Donald Trump



There can be no better forum than the Speaker to decide disqualification petitions under the anti-defection law. The change required is timely disposal of such petitions.

RS Deputy Chairman  
—Harivansh N Singh



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Votary of rigidity

Sir — In times when the BJP, one of the ruling alliance partners in Bihar, is treading cautiously and keeping an eye over the fast-changing political developments in the State, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's meeting with Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav on the sidelines of the ongoing Budget Session twice within a week must have triggered jitters in the party.

But then, in its singular pursuit of electoral *Ashwamedha Yagna* (horse sacrifice), the BJP may not be inclined to introspect. In its journey thus far, it has ridden roughshod over institutions and ignored the innate inclusive ethos of a nation with hoary traditions. It has never known to be any different.

After cutting a very sorry figure in Maharashtra, where its oldest ally snapped ties with it, the BJP was decimated yet again in Delhi, thanks to its overbearing attitude and pure disdain for opponents and allies alike. Now, it faces a similar situation in Bihar. If the Shiv Sena and the Congress, two parties as differ-

### No protests for better services

This refers to the editorial, "Costlier casualty" (February 28). The anti-Government stand that has exemplified the mass opposition to the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) across the country in the course of the last few days indicates that when it comes to their rights, people of this great republic do not shy from exhibiting their resentment in public. People are congregating in large numbers and expressing their anguish over the insensitive ways of a Government that came to power riding on hopes and aspirations and with assurances of better days ahead for the country. It has failed to do just what it had promised.

That there are reports of massive demonstrations in many parts of the country are proof enough of the fact that pieces of legislation that affect the people's rights and privileges will be fought tooth and nail by the masses, even if it means coming out in large numbers onto the streets to press their demands. Hence, it comes as a big surprise that when it comes to utility services and other civic amenities, the public is conspicuous by its "mute" protests against the failing standards, which have become a matter of serious concern.

The miserable condition of roads, frequent power outages, restricted water supply, shortage of cooking

gas, faulty telephones, unstable internet connections and a host of other services, which should otherwise have been faultlessly provided to the *aam janata* as a matter of their rights, elicit no adverse response from the public. Other than generating gossip material, the deteriorating services have hardly bothered the members of the public.

Pachu Menon  
Margao



### Sticky to guidelines

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Markets get the flu" (February 29). The Coronavirus spread rapidly outside China, in

countries such as South Korea, Italy and Iran among others due to the lax screening and isolation methods followed by these nations. India, where three cases were reported from Kerala, could sail the tide because we followed

due processes of screening, isolation, tracing and followed up rigorously. Thus, we could prevent the spread of the virus. All affected nations must follow the guidelines of the World Health Organisation to prevent further spread of the virus and also limit the death toll.

Sweta Sankrityan  
Noida

### Lame justification

Sir — Even if for a minute we believe that there is merit in the Government's argument that Justice S Muralidhar's transfer was routine and that the President's approval was sought a month back, one fails to understand why did it have to issue a late-night notification, especially when the judge was in the midst of a hearing? There appeared to be no urgency. The timing of the Government's decision has raised apprehensions of bias, amounting to "obstruction of justice."

Anurag Sangar  
Via email

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

**FIRST COLUMN**

## Time to study the unspoken rules

It is one of the gaps of sociological studies that social mores have rarely been subjected to scholastic scrutiny



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Life is a profound yet subtle experience. The origins of norms, values and regulations are visible only at a certain level and in the context of certain experiences. For instance, consider the almost global feeling amongst Homo sapiens that taking human life is wrong, no matter what the colour of their skin, religion or caste. It doesn't really matter if that person is from the jungles or the cities, or if he is literate or illiterate.

The list of such rules, social mores, customs and behaviours is endless. Consider the universal feeling of love, concern and care that parents have for their offspring. Like other such generic examples these sentiments need no codification. They are so universal that they have become an integral and spontaneous part of life. These may well be referred to as unspoken laws. However, the story doesn't end there.

What has been said above is generic and global. Moving beyond it can be specific and regional, probably local.

Consider perhaps, the oldest surviving institution of mankind: Marriage. A man and woman commit themselves to each other and to a lifelong partnership. Sometimes this partnership is accompanied by rituals, on other occasions it has been known to be a private contract. When backed by law there is a whole template of prerequisites and consequences. In many cases it leads to procreation, however, all procreation, in biological terms, does not need the institution of marriage.

The purpose of these lines is not to explore the depth and the reach of this institution but to indicate that basically many patterns of marriage can and are covered by the umbrella of "unspoken rules." References can be found to *gandharva* marriage (undisclosed but accepted physical relationship between two consenting adults). What can be legislated has its limitations.

To the universe of unstated rules one could add those that have to do with kindness, thoughtfulness, honesty, need for communication, sharing and more. As indicated above, there could be variations in these norms from region to region or indeed from one social unit to another. The bonding of these unstated rules creates a community. And the community can take the form of caste, creed and more.

There are people who believe that there is a certain type of topic selection which should and can be referred to as "girl talk." Similarly, there can be and there is such a thing as "men's talk." Put simply, whether it is "girl talk" or "men's talk", exceptions apart, intruders across genders are not commonly invited or welcomed. Thus it is plausible to argue that unspoken rules govern widely and in course of time become inputs to defining culture.

In a man-woman relationship, whatever be its character and locale — office, society, extended family or causal relationship, the ground rules are mostly known. Illustratively, certain references are banned even with or without intimacy. There is always a discreet sense of privacy which is maintained, not only in dress but also in the choice of words or for that matter the subject of discussion.

Consider the question of hijab for example. Many followers of Islam, men and women alike, believe it is an essential part of a woman's attire. The uniting thread is a belief in what they think their faith demands. Move from Islam to Christianity. The world view changes. Hijab is not intrinsic to Christianity and most Christian communities do not consider it necessary for women to wear a veil (except for nuns and while praying).

However, in some other religions, while wearing a veil all the time may not be necessary for women, covering the head is considered very desirable in the presence of elders and in situations requiring reverence, especially during worship. This is one more example of the unstated rules of life.

Why must one be "seeing off" the other person when that person is leaving? Surely, this is a part of a social ritual. It may be common but it is not universal. Similarly, why receive a guest at the door? Be that as it may, there are certain unspoken rules which have existed across centuries and certain unwritten rules which survived just a few generations, if even that. Consider the fact, that in certain cold, hilly communities in the world, rubbing of the nose was the accepted greeting and now after the emergence of the Coronavirus even shaking of the hands is being discouraged globally.

Perhaps it is one of the gaps of sociological studies that these unstated rules have rarely, if ever, been subjected to scholastic scrutiny. It is time the gauntlet was picked.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant)

**POINT COUNTERPOINT**

**SONIA GANDHI, PLEASE DON'T PREACH RAJ DHARMA TO US. YOUR RECORD IS FULL OF ITS VIOLATIONS FOR PLAIN AND SIMPLE VOTE BANK POLITICS.**

—UNION MINISTER  
**RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD**



**HOW CAN WE MR MINISTER? WHEN YOU DID NOT LISTEN TO VAJPAYEE// IN GUJARAT, WHY WOULD YOU LISTEN TO US?**

—CONGRESS LEADER  
**KAPIL SIBAL**

# Not a booster shot

There is quite a slack in the pace of increase in the budgetary allocations for healthcare and will result in India finding it difficult to achieve some of its objectives



KM CHERIAN

Public spending on healthcare in the country is among the lowest in the world at just a little over one per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Hence, the healthcare system is beset with various problems that include shortage of workforce, infrastructure and dismal quality and availability of services.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a set of measures to stimulate and boost the healthcare sector as an industry in the Union Budget, 2020-21 and allocated ₹69,000 crore for it, which also includes ₹6,400 crore for the Ayushman Bharat-Prime Minister Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY). In the last Budget, the appropriation was ₹62,659 crore. Though there has been an increase in the allotment, the fact remains that it is quite insignificant when adjusted to inflation. Moreover, ₹69,000 crore amounts to barely one per cent of the GDP — a far cry from the National Health Policy's much-talked about target of increasing the health budget to 2.5 per cent of the GDP by 2025.

There is quite a slack in the pace of increase in the budgetary allocations for healthcare and will result in India finding it difficult to achieve some of its objectives, like reducing infant mortality. India ranks 12 out of the 52 lower-middle income countries with a high infant mortality rate. Even though there has been a gradual increase in allocation, the dismal percentage of the GDP spent on healthcare is a concern, and will remain so for a long time, unless the Government makes some drastic changes in the future.

However, Mission Indradhanush, covering 12 new diseases including five new vaccines, is definitely a boon as it will provide the people of the country the much-needed relief and care.

Setting up of hospitals on the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model, along with medical colleges to address the shortage of doctors and opening up DNB and FNB certificate courses is a step in the right direction. Large hospitals running Residency programmes will also provide a training platform for medical professionals.

However, private hospitals which venture into PPP projects should be assured of all help by the Government and reimbursement for patients treated in them must be done within a month of the treatment/completion. This is because long delays in reimbursement will affect the volume of work done by hospitals and will not encourage private hospitals to come forward and join this genuine attempt to help the needy.

With 2020 being celebrated as the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Finance Minister's announcement of bridge courses for nurses and other healthcare professionals to match international standards, by allotting ₹3,000 crore for skill development, is a good incentive.

Skill development of Physician Assistants and paramedical personnel through courses should also be done and these courses must be recognised by regulatory bodies and other associations such as the Indian Medical Association, the Medical Council of India and so on. This is prevalent the world over but is still not implemented in the country and recognition of these courses will enhance the services provided by the healthcare sector immensely. Last year, the AB-PMJAY was able to cover over 6.9 million treatments. However, the world's largest Government-funded health insur-



“THERE IS A DIRE NEED FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO STRESS ON R&D IN BASIC MEDICAL SCIENCES AND MEDICAL RESEARCH, WHICH WILL PAVE THE WAY FOR GROWTH AND PROGRESS OF INDIGENOUS TECHNOLOGY. IN ADDITION, SPECIAL PROVISIONS SHOULD BE MADE UNDER THE 'MAKE IN INDIA' INITIATIVE FOR MANUFACTURING, WHICH WILL IN TURN CONTRIBUTE TO INDIA BECOMING A FRONTRUNNER IN MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION ACROSS THE GLOBE”

ance scheme's budgetary allocation for this year is the same as last year, i.e. ₹6,400 crore. So are the allocations for the scheme this year sufficient to make AB-PMJAY a success? There is a possibility that the payments would be delayed, leading to insurance companies not being a part of it actively. Currently, over 20,000 hospitals are empanelled in this scheme. Many hospitals, especially in smaller towns, are yet to be covered. The plan to set up 150,000 health and wellness centres by 2022 and fund them through the budgetary allocation for AB-PMJAY seems to be insufficient in regards to achieving this initiative. In order to address the shortage of hospital beds and enhance healthcare accessibility through PPP, innovative business models will be crucial. Also, cognizance about preventive healthcare and the habit of routine screening and monitoring could really reduce the liability from the entire ecosystem.

Even in the present economic scenario, India imports over 70 per cent of its medical devices, with a fourth of them coming from the USA. While the intention to impose a five per cent health cess was to strategically redistribute such earnings to set up tier-II and tier-III healthcare facilities, it does not resolve to boost the local medical devices industry. A legitimate certification authority for such devices would aid in use and adoption of equipment and devices made in India. Sadly, start-ups in medical devices, indigenous research and innovative products such as bioprosthetic valves and ventricular assist devices are not being encouraged and the attitude of the regulatory bodies in this country has to be reviewed. We have just one medical sci-

ence park in the country with Special Economic Zone approval. However, during the last eight years no progress has been made to start research units like in the Biopolis in Singapore. But, this is not due to the lack of talent in the country. Many attempts are being hindered by the attitude of financial institutions such as public sector banks and so on. Hence, loans for these intuitions should be at par with NABARD rates or the Government should give grants rather than taking the entrepreneurs to Debts Recovery Tribunals, the National Company Law Tribunal and so on. Also, medical research should be identified separately rather than clubbing it with commercial ventures.

While healthcare services are on the negative list of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) for provision of services, the basic input costs of creating such services have had an upward tax implication with GST and hence increased the overall consumer cost of such services, with the inability of healthcare services to offset such costs through input credit. Clarification in this regard would have ideally balanced the cost outcome and kept rising costs in check. With a huge focus on the Internet-of-Things, Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence and analytics, it is believed that the Budget will provide a boost to the country's digital economy. However a digital incentivisation plan is completely missing. While 2019 saw various frameworks initiated such as the National Digital Health Blueprint, guidance and adoption remains unaddressed and the fact remains that budgetary guidance for furtherance and utilisation can go a long way.

This being said, the fact remains that the Government has a holistic vision of

healthcare that translates into wellness of citizens. The Finance Minister proposed a viability gap funding window for setting up hospitals which is a good move.

The Budget also declared that the generic medicine retail outlets Jan Aushadhi stores would be available through expansion to every district. Apart from medicines, these stores in particular would also stock up on more surgical necessities. Currently the Jan Aushadhi stores sell 154 surgical instruments, which will now be expanded to about 300. This will result in a positive outcome for both SME pharma manufacturers and small domestic medical devices makers. While a lot of schemes and policies have been initiated, there are no clear roadmaps to see these through till the end. Proper channels and information centres should be set up, where potential beneficiaries can seek details and make informed decisions. A system or a special task force should be set-up to monitor each scheme. A robust feedback mechanism from the masses about the same would also help in their realisation and improvement.

There is a dire need for the Government to stress on R&D in basic medical sciences and medical research, which will pave the way for growth and progress of indigenous technology. In addition, special provisions should be made under the 'Make in India' initiative for manufacturing, which will in turn contribute to India becoming a frontrunner in medical technology and innovation across the globe.

(The writer is a Padma Sri awardee and cardiothoracic surgeon credited with India's first bypass. He is Chairman and CEO of Frontier Lifeline Hospital)

# Understand sexual harassment to nip it

Even though, environment is significantly responsible, what is of pressing concern is the reason why some people and not others, go on to exploit that permissive atmosphere and commit sexual crimes



RC JILOHA

The horrific mass molestation of students at Gargi College — where over 30 men forcibly entered the women's college — is symptomatic of an atmosphere which is permissive of sexual intimidation. No doubt, sexual harassment is a universal phenomenon, though it may differ in its manifestation, depending upon how a society takes it. Sexual harassment of women in educational institutions is one of the most common and largely underreported forms of gender-based violence, often inflicted by male colleagues, teachers or perpetrators from outside. In a significant number of cases, women adopt a culture of silence as they have learnt to

"ignore" certain forms of predatory behaviour of men, like passing lewd comments, wolf-whistling, staring and so on.

Sexual harassment infringes upon the fundamental right of a woman to gender equality under Article 14 and her right to life with dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution, which includes the right to a safe working environment.

Before the Vishaka Guidelines came into existence in 1997, sexual harassment at the workplace was dealt with under Indian Penal Code Section 354, (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty) and Section 509, punishing the guilty for using a "word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman." However, the interpretation of the provisions on "outraging a woman's modesty" was left to the police officer.

On the basis of the Vishaka Guidelines, the Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 was enacted to ensure safe working spaces for them.

Consistent with the Vishaka judgment, the Act provides a civil remedy to women and is in addition to other laws that are currently in force to pursue a criminal case. Consequently, any woman who wishes to report sexual harassment at the workplace has the right to take recourse to both civil and criminal proceedings.

While there is no denying the importance of legal protection against sexual harassment, its public health aspects and their therapeutic interventions are no less important. They need to be examined and addressed to restore the physical and mental health of the victim and go into the reasons for the deviant behaviour of the perpetrators. Even though, environment is significantly responsible, what is of pressing concern is the reason why some people and not others, go on to exploit that permissive atmosphere and commit sexual crimes.

By nature, some people are more hostile, authoritarian and sexist, which might make them more prone to becoming an aggressor. The com-

plexity of the interaction between an aggrieved woman and the perpetrator needs to be understood and the personality profile of the aggressor requires to be examined in depth to evolve effective measures to prevent the occurrence and reduce the prevalence of sexual harassment at the workplace.

Psychological studies show that sexual predators lack a social conscience; they are callous about their social commitments and have a tendency to exaggerate the situation. They justify their misdeeds and legitimise their aggression, particularly against women when it is related to the endorsement of sexually-coercive behaviour.

Studies also show that the psychopathic traits of exploitation of others and lack of empathy, are both commonly associated with rapists, stalkers and molesters. When sexual harassment escalates, it poses a potential risk of a more serious sexual crime like rape. This link highlights the fact that sexual harassers are potential rapists and to prevent rapes, those indulging in harassment

need to be treated for their deviant behaviour.

Sexual harassment not only results in strained interpersonal relations and an hostile working environment, it adversely affects the productivity of the organisation, leading to financial losses. But more than anything else, it affects the mindset of the victims, causing a wide range of mental health issues. And as physical health and emotional well-being are inter-related, victims often suffer loss of appetite, headaches, weight fluctuations and sleep disturbance. The commonly-reported negative effects included fear, concerns for safety, and post traumatic stress disorder.

No other form of discrimination has such a wide impact on the physical and mental health of the victims. Sexual harassment has emerged as a major public health problem with long-term physical and mental health consequences for the victims. However, the impact is not restricted to their health and seeps into the victim's social and professional life. This aspect often gets ignored and victims mostly remain preoccupied

with legal remedies. Clinicians have described case histories, symptom profiles, stress factors and attempts at intervention. Theoreticians working in the fields of women's development, cognitive functioning and gender-based trauma have generated a parallel body of relevant information, applying their theories to the field of harassment.

Sexual harassment presents significant challenges to a victim's internal and external stability. Primarily recognised as a legal or organisational management issue, it belongs to a clinical continuum with other gender-based abuses. If untreated, it can cause psychiatric illness and long-term negative changes in the victim's internal perception of self, others, and the world and severely hinder her potential. Appropriate clinical interventions for both, the victims and the perpetrators, can provide an opportunity to assess the seriousness of the crisis and make the workplace free from sexual harassment.

(The writer is Professor of Psychiatry at Hamdard Institute of Medical Sciences and Research)



## A HUMANITARIAN CATASTROPHE

The deaths of Turkish soldiers have raised the broader risks in Syria, but this is above all a humanitarian catastrophe. Idlib holds the Government's most committed opponents, and jihadist fighters are already planning an insurgency. Opposition once contained in the province will probably move undercover. And Syria will face a new phase of instability with repercussions that will be felt beyond its borders.

(The Guardian editorial)

CAPSULE



India's crude steel production drops 3% to 9.3 MT

**NEW DELHI:** India's crude steel production registered a decline of 3.26 per cent to 9.288 million tonnes (MT) in January this year, according to World Steel Association (worldsteel). The country had produced 9.591 MT of crude steel during the corresponding month last year, the global industry body said in its latest report. Crude steel production for the 64 countries reporting to the association was 154.4 million tonnes (MT) in January 2020, a 2.1 per cent increase compared to January 2019, the report said. The world's largest steel producing country, China, reported a crude steel output of 84.3 MT in January, an increase of 7.2 per cent compared to the year-ago period.



MG Motor Feb sales hit by component supply disruption

**NEW DELHI:** MG Motor India on Sunday reported retail sales of 1,376 units in February, hit by component supply constraints from coronavirus hit-China and other locations. The company had retailed 3,130 units in January. MG Motor India product portfolio comprises two models — SUV Hector and ZS EV. MG Motor's sales last month included 158 units of ZS EV, the carmaker's latest product offering, the company said in a statement. The company had launched ZS EV at an introductory price of Rs 20.88 lakh (ex-showroom, New Delhi). MG Motor said it has already received 3,000 bookings till date — outpacing the total number of EV cars sold in India in 2019. "The MG ZS EV has received a stupendous response in its debut month, with over 150 units delivered to our customers already," MG Motor India Director — Sales Rakesh Sidana said in a statement.



Ajanta-Orpat group plans to double turnover

**NEW DELHI:** Ajanta-Orpat Group, which operates in consumer electronic, electrical and home appliances segments, aims to double its turnover in next five years to Rs 2,400 crore, a top company official said. The group, which is also India's largest calculator and room heater manufacturer, had a combined topline of around Rs 1,200 crore in FY2018-19. The Gujarat-based company, which is also the world's largest wall clock manufacturer, expects revenue from its home appliances and fans division to be the key growth driver, contributing almost Rs 1,200 crore by fiscal year 2024-25.

# HAL plans to produce Apache like military chopper

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



**Madhavan said the HAL has completed the preliminary design of the helicopter and that initial plan is to produce at least 500 units with the first prototype set to be ready by 2023 if the government gives the go ahead to the project this year**

In an ambitious project with strategic significance, aerospace major Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) has started ground work to produce a 10 to 12 tonne attack helicopter by 2027 which will be comparable with some of the best medium-lift military choppers globally like the Apache of the Boeing.

Chairman and Managing Director of HAL R Madhavan said the aim of the mega project is to stop import of more than Rs 4 lakh crore worth of military helicopters for the three services in the coming years.

Madhavan said the HAL has completed the preliminary design of the helicopter and that initial plan is to produce at least 500 units with the first prototype set to be ready by 2023 if the government gives the go ahead to the project this year.

"One major project we are focusing on is to produce a helicopter in 10 to 12 tonnes category to replace the Mi-17 fleet. It will be an indigenous platform with the potential to manufacture around 500 helicopters. It will stop import of more than Rs 4 lakh crore worth of platforms from foreign countries," he said.

Madhavan said an amount of Rs 9,600 crore will be required

for design as well as to produce the prototype of the helicopter.

"If we get the approval in 2020, we will be able to manufacture the first chopper by 2027. We are looking at producing at least 500 helicopters of the variant. It will be a major project we are working on," he said.

A military expert described the project as the biggest by the HAL after development of the

Tejas military aircraft. "We have done the preliminary design. We have also been in discussion with the Air Force and the Navy. The 10-12 tonnes category will have two basic structures on similar platforms. The naval version will have different dimension compared to the one for the Army and the Air Force," Madhavan said on the proposed mega project.

"Like the LCH (Light Combat Helicopter) we developed from the Dhruv platform, a similar variant of 10-12 tonnes category can be produced to make it an Apache equivalent," said Madhavan.

The helicopter will be powered by twin engines and will feature blade folding option for ship deck operations. The planned roles for the helicopter will be to support air assault, air transport, combat logistics and combat search and rescue. The chopper will also have a very superior weapons package.

Madhavan said the helicopter will have a huge potential for export. The Mi-17 helicopters make up the backbone of the IAF's helicopter fleet and they are planned to be phased out by 2032.

The HAL's product range includes a number of helicopter like the LCH (Light Combat Helicopter) and multi-role ALH (Advanced Light Helicopter) and Chetak choppers.

India is one of the largest importers of arms and military platforms globally. The government has been focusing significantly on promoting defence indigenisation by taking a slew of reform initiatives including liberalising FDI in defence sector.

# Cisco says India among highest growing country in APJC region

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

**India and Cisco have a very symbiotic relationship, where we drive good business yet very high growth rates. India was the highest growing theatre for me in the APJC region during the last fiscal year**

— MIYUKI SUZUKI, Cisco President (Asia Pacific, Japan and Greater China)



India was among the highest growing country in the Asia Pacific, Japan and China (APJC) region during the last fiscal year for global networking major Cisco, a senior company official said.

"India and Cisco have a very symbiotic relationship, where we drive good business yet very high growth rates. India was the highest growing theatre for me in the APJC region during the last fiscal year," Cisco President (Asia Pacific, Japan and Greater China) Miyuki Suzuki said.

She added that the company is witnessing high returns from the Indian market, along with innovation that is being fed back into its global portfolio of products and solutions.

In fiscal 2019 (ended July 2019), Cisco delivered strong top-line growth and profitability, reporting revenue of USD 51.9 billion from USD 49.3 billion in FY18, registering a 7 per cent growth year-on-year.

During this time, India registered 19 per cent year-over-year growth, highest in the APJC region.

Cisco has a large engineering

team based in India with over 10,000 Research and development (R&D) staff.

"India is our second-largest R&D centre after San Jose for Cisco... They are involved in developing some of our core, what we call needle-moving new technologies, whether it is in cybersecurity, encrypted threat analytics... India is an important innovation hub," she explained. Suzuki said sectors like banking and financial services, telecom and manufacturing are big bets for the company in India.

"The telecommunication sector is still a significant break-

through for us, although they have a lot of debt. Telcos will work through it, as they need to be prepared when the fundamental trajectory of 5G becomes a reality in two or three years," she noted. Suzuki added that telecommunication market is an opportunity and continues to be one of the significant area of growth for Cisco. Aspects like cybersecurity are particularly important for sectors like financial services industry (FSI), she said.

"...these are some of the ongoing conversations I have had with our banking customers. Also, manufacturing sector continues to be a big area, whether it is in terms of automation or IoT," she said.

Suzuki said Internet of Things (IoT) also extends into other areas like smart cities, logistics and transportation.

"We also see opportunities in the automotive industry and the railways," she added.

# Free voice calls no excuse for poor service quality: TRAI

PNS ■ PUNE

Telcos are citing free voice calls to duck action on poor quality of service, but that will not pass regulatory muster, Trai Chairman R S Sharma said on Sunday, assuring users that the issue of call drops remains on its agenda.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) head said the watchdog's earlier provision for a penalty on telcom firms for call drops was successfully challenged in the Supreme Court, but the regulator will continue to work for improving the quality of service.

"Most of the telcos are offering voice free, their argument is that if something is free, how much can you (Trai) punish me because I am not getting anything for that, which may not be correct because they are essentially cross-subsidising," Sharma said at the Asia Economic Dialogue here.

The comments come amid continuing call drops being experienced by subscribers across the country.

# 'VIVAD SE VISHWAS' SCHEME

## CBDT to link field officers' annual appraisals, postings

PNS ■ MUMBAI



The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) will link annual appraisals and postings of field officers with their performance in terms of collection under the 'Vivad se Vishwas' scheme, according to a communication.

An office memorandum from the CBDT, dated February 21, also said that collection outcomes would play a bigger role in the future postings of the field officers.

The latest missive assumes significance as there have been concerns over alleged 'tax terrorism' and undue harassment of genuine taxpayers by tax officials. The economic growth is also slowing down.

Soon after the dispute settlement scheme was announced, the department asked the field officers to work on holidays/Saturdays so that when the scheme is formally launched they get a head-start on the collection front.

'Vivad se Vishwas' scheme for resolving income tax cases was announced during the 2020-21 Budget presentation by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

A target of mopping up Rs 2 lakh crore by March 31 has been set.

The scheme would formally be launched on Monday, when Parliament resumes the

**The latest missive assumes significance as there have been concerns over alleged 'tax terrorism' and undue harassment of genuine taxpayers by tax officials. The economic growth is also slowing down**

second leg of the Budget session.

There are 4.83 lakh direct tax cases worth over Rs 9 lakh crore pending in various appellate forums — Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT), high courts and the Supreme Court.

According to the memorandum, the department has told field officers that their annual performance and increments would be linked to the collection outcomes of the disputes they handle.

Latest official data showed that economic growth slowed to a near seven-year low of 4.7

per cent in October-December 2019.

The CBDT's missive also comes as the government is desperate to meet fiscal deficit targets. Fiscal deficit has already crossed 128.5 per cent of the full year target as of end-January.

"As already conveyed, the performance of the field officers in respect of the Vivad se Vishwas scheme, shall be an essential factor in finalising their Annual Performance Appraisal Reports (APARs) and shall also be an important factor in determining their future postings," it said.

# Govt to infuse Rs 200 cr in IFCI next fiscal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Revised Estimate. Established in 1948 as a statutory corporation, IFCI currently has subsidiaries and one associate under its fold.

By the early 1990s, it was recognised that there was need for greater flexibility to respond to the changing financial system. It was also felt that IFCI should directly access the capital markets for its funding needs.

It is with this objective that the constitution of IFCI was changed in 1993 from a statutory corporation to a company under the Indian Companies Act, 1956.

Subsequently, the name of the company was also changed to 'IFCI Ltd' with effect from October 1999.

However in 2015, the government again raised its stake in the firm to over 51 per cent, making it a public sector company.



The government has decided to pump Rs 200 crore into IFCI, the country's oldest term lending institution, through the preferential allotment route next fiscal to shore up its capital and enhance operations, sources said.

Government of India holding in the non-banking finance company, which stood at 56.42 per cent at the end of December 2019, would increase after the capital infusion.

"The (Rs 200 crore) provision is for equity support to Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI) keeping in view the business programme and capital requirement," as per the Budget documents presented in Parliament last month. For the current fiscal as well, the government has earmarked Rs 200 crore capital infusion for IFCI, as per the

# Maxxis bets big on India as it eyes to enter top 5 club

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Taiwanese tyre major Maxxis Group is betting big on India, where it plans to build up to five factories, as it expects the country to play a crucial role in its chase to become a top five global player by 2025, according to a senior company official.

The company, which clocked revenue of around USD 4 billion in 2019, is currently the world's 9th largest tyre brand and sees India along with Indonesia to play significant part in meeting its 2025 target.

The company is investing USD 400 million on its first manufacturing plant at Sanand in Gujarat, where it is working to hike output to 60,000 units of two-wheeler tyres per day from the current 20,000 units a day, as part of the project's phase I expansion.

# 'India can fill up export market space vacated by China due to Covid-19'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Deepak Sood

With the Chinese economy getting impacted due to the coronavirus outbreak, India can push its exports in the global markets to fill up the space vacated by the neighbouring country, industry body Assocham said on Sunday.

It said Indian exporters of electronics, pharmaceuticals, speciality chemicals and automobile segments depend on China for raw material and are facing supply constraints, but there are several areas where

large number of engineering exports from India can fill up the market vacated by China; so is the case with products like leather and leather goods," Assocham Secretary General Deepak Sood said.

He said India can also tap the opportunities in segments like agriculture and carpets.

"We also need to scale up several of our sectors to compete effectively with China even when the Chinese exporters are able to normalise their global supply chain," Sood said. He also said while the

health emergency of the Coronavirus epidemic is a matter of grave concern for the entire world, it is incumbent on larger economies like India to fill up the gaps in the global market and there is a need to approach the issue with a clear strategy.

According to the latest PMI (Purchasing Managers' Index) data, China's factory output level in February has plummeted to the lowest in about two decades, and the consequences are bound to be felt in the global market, Assocham said.

# India Inc gradually shifting to recruiting firms for quality talent: Study

PNS ■ MUMBAI



junior, mid and senior-level positions.

Titled, 'CIELWorks 2020: Latest Trends in Indian Talent

Companies are increasingly entrusting recruitment tasks in the hands of professional organisations for quality talent acquisition even as social media platforms and job sites are still one of the key hiring channels, says a study.

According to a study by CIEL HR Services, that focused on the latest trends in Indian talent market, companies are now resorting to recruiting companies for quality talent acquisition across

Market 2020' the study noted that social media platforms and job sites were still relevant at hiring candidates, however, an increasing number of companies now prefer to go through employment agencies.

"The main reason behind companies shifting gradually to recruiting companies is because these firms are cutting down their work and time by screening and selecting relevant and quality talent," Aditya Narayan Mishra of CIEL HR Services said.

# Bill to bring cooperative banks under RBI regulation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to address weaknesses in cooperative banking sector, the Parliament is likely to clear a Bill to amend Banking Regulation Act to bring multi-state cooperative banks under effective regulation of RBI during the Budget session.

The proposed legislation will help prevent a repeat of Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank-like crisis, sources said. There are 1,540 cooperative banks with a depositor base of 8.60 cr having total savings of about Rs 5 lakh crore.

The Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last month gave approval to amend Banking Regulation

**The proposed legislation will help prevent a repeat of Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank-like crisis, sources said. There are 1,540 cooperative banks with a depositor base of 8.60 cr having total savings of about Rs 5 lakh cr**

Act. The Bill in this regard is likely to be passed during the second leg of Budget session starting Monday. The session ends on April 3.

Having undertaken a slew of measures, including clean up of public sector banks (PSBs), private sector banks, financial institution like IL&FS, non-bank financial corporations (NBFCs), housing finance cor-

porations (HFCs), auditors, rating agencies, this is the last step in making the entire financial ecosystem almost impossible to be gamed, with security of depositors' money being paramount.

To further bolster the confidence of customers, the govern-

ment has increased deposit insurance cover by five-fold to Rs 5 lakh to ensure security of public money in banks.

In the last couple of years, the Department of Financial Services has taken several steps to promote responsible and responsible banking.

As part of clean banking initiative, project cash flows were ring-fenced, enforcement of terms of loan agreements and prior validation of backward and forward linkages

were made integral to lending processes.

Besides, the number of banks in loan consortium was capped, reducing borrowers' ability to play one lender off against another.

This was accompanied by data driven risk scoring and scrutiny, comprehensive diligence across data sources and strengthened credit assessment. To ensure financial health of public sector banks (PSBs), recapitalization of Rs 4 lakh crore was undertaken in the last five years. Prudent coverage ratio reached a record high of 77 per cent. NPA and slippages are declining with improved asset quality.

As a result of various initia-



## FOR THE LOVE OF EVERGREEN MELODIES

Speaking to V SATEESH REDDY, playback singer Aditya Iyengar looks back on his entry into the industry, significance of his melodies, effect of cinema on singers and more

**S**inger Aditya Iyengar's melody has become synonymous with hit Telugu songs. Aditya has sung many songs in Telugu movies including popular numbers such as *Delhiwala* from *Disco Raja*, *Vastava Pilla* from *Kavacham*, *Cycle from Size Zero*, the English version of *Dheevara* from *Baahubali* and more. Besides having sung for over 70 movies, he has also written songs for movies like *Baahubali* and several others in Telugu, Hindi and English.

"Melodies will stay fresh forever when compared to songs with fast beats. Melodies stay forever in the heart whereas fast beats fade away eventually. For example, we can still listen to AR Rahman's song *Ee Hridayam* from 2009 and feel the same no matter how many times we listen to it. Singers always love to sing melodies," says Aditya, who did his MA from the Madras University. "My parents have always encouraged me to learn singing since my childhood. I used to explore singing various genres and songs. After my intermediate, I started putting my talent

“

We, singers, prepare for each song by discussing it with the music directors about the context and the type of mood it would convey. We sing according to the requirements of the music director and the film director. As a singer, I always love to explore new genres.

ADITYA IYENGAR SINGER

out there. In South India music composition is different from western ideas. Every country has great singers and we have great musicians like AR Rahman, Ilayaraja and more. I learnt from analysing their songs and music."

He said that he got his first chance to sing in a group with MM Kiravani. He shares, "I learned Indian classical music with music gurus V Bala Subramanyam and K Ramachari. When Kiravani sir was doing *Sree Ramadasu* movie, he asked my gurus to send some singers for semi classical songs. That turned out to be my first group performance. Later I sung in many songs in movies like *Happy Days*. I sang my first solo song in *Kai Raja Kai* in 2014. My breakthrough song was the English version of *Dheevara* song in *Baahubali*. Even though it was not included in the movie, the song made my name in the industry. I sung in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and English languages."

When asked about his role model, Aditya says, "Shankar Mahadevan sir

is my favourite singer. He learned Carnatic classical music and made his mark in movies. I feel my journey is similar to



tors about changes in the music or lyrics and modulations that will help improve the song."

Most of the times, we see that some movies don't work out well at the box-office even though they had great music.

"The way the movie fares is not in our hands. My recent song *Delhiwala* from *Disco Raja* movie went viral but the movie didn't work out. This affects us singers and music directors since we give our best but it doesn't produce the desired result for the entire movie," he says.

Aditya added that sometimes some songs were also removed from movies due to various reasons and there is nothing the singers can do about it.

Advising budding singers, Aditya says, "Knowledge of music and the industry, and the ability to never stop learning is important for everyone in this field. Updating according to the present music trends is paramount."



## Artist in the pursuit of many STYLES

Aparna Penmatsa, who is an expert at blade and porcelain painting, speaks about the importance of diversifying the pursuit of art and more, writes M SHREYA RAJ

**A**parna Penmatsa is an artist well-known for her different styles of paintings. She holds the world record in blade and porcelain painting and has displayed her work in more than 50 shows at various galleries. Aparna has done more than 200 art shows in different Telugu channels too. She has won more than 30 awards for her artwork, including the famous Bharatha Muni and Kalaratnam awards. "Art has been my hobby till I developed it into a profession. My parents encouraged my penchant for art but were also wary about the career prospects," said Aparna, who is born and brought up in Dehradun. She completed her post graduation in economics. After her marriage, she completed Masters in Fine Arts (MFA) and continued her artwork. She said that floral patterns and their beauty are the key elements of her art. "Many artists stay loyal to one type of art but I want to pursue many styles," said Aparna. Aparna always wanted to spread her knowledge and had given online art classes through Skype earlier but now teaches at her home. "I always keep

myself updated about the art world. I post videos on my YouTube channel, *Aparna Arts*, for anyone who is interested in learning art," said Aparna. Besides arts, she has also learnt dance, music, and playing the guitar. "I have sold my paintings at six international shows and across many cities in India including Bangalore, Delhi and Baroda," said Aparna who is currently working on a series of abstract paintings for a modern arts show. Her first solo show was in 2008 where around 100 boards of her artwork were displayed. She said that blade paintings require a lot of hard work and are expensive to make too. She added that she focuses on murals, landscape painting and contemporary art. Tanjore paintings, oil paintings, murals, acrylic and water colors are also something that she regularly experiments with. "I am more of a self taught artist.



The MFA only



teaches the history of the art but its the artist who has to choose what kind of work they want to focus on," said Aparna. "Learning any form of art is very tough and one can only see progress when it is worked on through interest," advised Aparna. "Undoubtedly perfection in art depends on the artist. Art resembles one's joy and happiness. Art is an expression which communicates through style," added Aparna. Aparna Penmatsa's work is being displayed at an exhibition that has been extended till March 5 at the Vista Art Gallery in Jubilee Hills, Road Number 67.



APARNA PENMATSA ARTIST

“

I always keep myself updated about the art world since I give art classes to students. I post videos of my work and my classes on my YouTube channel, *Aparna Arts*, for anyone who is interested in learning art. Many artists stay loyal to one type of art but I want to pursue many styles



● Prachi ● Ramnivas Bansal and Varun



● Catherine Tresa



● Monika



## WEDDING EXTRAVAGANZA

Pelli Sandadi — a one-day exclusive wedding exhibition — was held recently in Hyderabad. Designers from across the country showcased their latest works. Fashionistas, who attended the event, interacted with designers about their work and had a gala time.



● Deepthi



● Esha Hindocha



● Aishani



● Roma



● Prathibha



● Sruthi

**PARTY**  
Photos by SV Chary



● Snigdha



● Padmaja



● Sanju

## CITY GUIDE

### EVENTS

#### KISI AUR KA SAPNA

● Sutradhar Theatre Group is staging a play Kisi Aur Ka Sapna directed by Shahrukh Surani on March 5 at Lamakaan from 8 pm.



#### PUPPETRY DAY

● Nori Art and Puppetry Centre is conducting World Puppetry Day Celebrations on March 21 at Lamakaan from 6.30 pm.



#### MADHUBANI PAINTING

● Madhubani painting exhibition will be held on March 14 at Phoenix Arena from 2 pm onwards.



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

## FASHION FIESTA

Actress Catherine Tresa inaugurated Bazaar Hyderabad, lifestyle store, recently at Putlibowli, Hyderabad. Fashion lovers and socialites attended the launch event in large numbers and checked out the latest collections on display.

## FUN

### ARCHIE



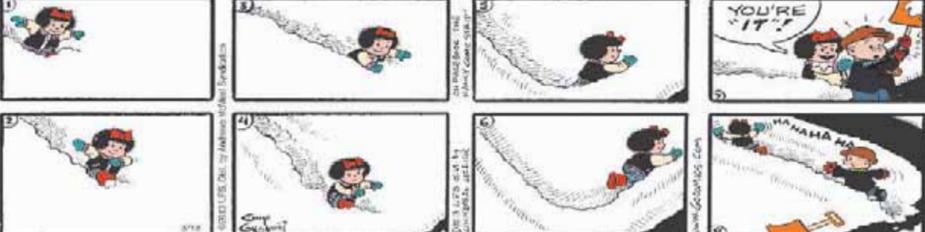
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



### NANCY



### GINGER MEGGS



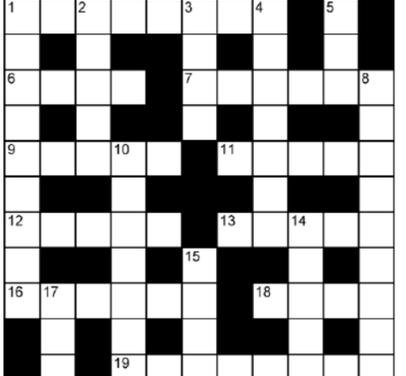
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU

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

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

**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**  
1 A spring flower  
6 You might hear this on the radio every hour  
7 Actors with small parts to play in a film  
9 The planet we live on  
11 Sweeten food with this  
12 A large sea  
13 A snake's poison  
16 A light, soft type of cake  
18 A small round piece of medicine  
19 Freed from captivity

**DOWN**  
1 Very unsafe  
2 Not as many  
3 A sword fight  
4 A green salad vegetable  
5 A hot drink  
8 A way to cook eggs  
10 Someone who prepares a sports team for a match  
14 These grow on fingers  
15 Part of the foot  
17 A tame animal

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

# NAVEEN, VARUN to battle it out in the ring

Prep for a physically intensive role must be arduous. But Naveen Chandra is enjoying the task of building himself to fit the role of a kickboxer for Varun Tej's next with Kiran Korrapati, writes NAGARAJ GOUD

**A**fter playing a kickboxer in recent Dhanush-starrer Tamil box-office smash hit, *Pattas*, Naveen Chandra will now be donning the boxing gloves for Varun Tej's next with debutant director Kiran Korrapati. The film went to floors in Visakhapatnam last week and, contrary to reports, Naveen says that his role will not be an out-and-out negative role. He said that that his role has been characterised in an interesting way and there will be a surprise for the audience. Refusing to divulge more about the role, he says, "There will be fireworks when I and Varun Tej met in the ring. We have a back story which adds to the drama as the film culminates into a climax." The actor, who believes in meticulous preparation for his roles, says that he has begun training for the

boxing drama, a joint production venture between Sidhu Mudda and Allu Venkatesh. "I'm being trained by Srikanth Kshatriya, a national-level boxer from Hyderabad. My training starts at 5 am with two-and-half hours of rigorous boxing practice. I practise again in the evening followed by an hour of swimming. I am eager to join the sets in March for a small shooting schedule, post which I've been given 45 days to achieve the desired look," he says.

**NAVEEN HAS NO COMPLAINTS EVEN THOUGH HE HAS BEEN SHOOTING NON-STOP FOR THE PAST YEAR.**

"Srikanth is monitoring my diet. I've turned vegan four months ago and my diet for this film comprises mostly of broccoli, avocado and kidney beans. There won't be any dairy products. I have to take food for every two hours," he says. Even though he has been shooting non-stop for the past year without a break, Naveen has no complaints, and is least bothered about fatigue. "I've been preparing for this phase for years and I'm glad it's happening now. I'm young so I can relax later," he says.



# Did Mahesh Babu and Dil Raju have a fallout?

**S**keletons seem to be tumbling out after Mahesh Babu's project with Vamshi Paidipally which was deferred indefinitely. Besides the script, there seems to be another reason that led Mahesh to overlook the project, whispers from the T-town indicate. And it has something to do with Mahesh Babu's paycheck for the project. The actor, who drew nearly Rs 50 crore for

*Sarileru Neekevvaru* (from non-theatrical rights), was expecting a similar package from Dil Raju, who is the producer of Paidipally's film. However, with the producer not in a mood to part Rs 50 crore, the actor moved on to another production house, buzz has it. Raju too has his own reasons. "He made very less money from *Maharshi*, which he produced along with Aswini Dutt and PVP, while the biggest beneficiary was Mahesh who got a handsome package. Yes, Raju did present the actor's Sankranti release and made money. But overall, it was Mahesh who was laughing all the way to the bank than the presenter or the producer Anil Sunkara. He felt that with the Mahesh-Paidipally film, close to Rs 75 crore to Rs 80 crore will go to the remuneration of the actors and technicians, leaving him with little to spend on the film even for its promotions. He will get a maximum of Rs 110 crore to Rs 120 crore from theatri-

cal rights. With Mahesh taking his pay from non-theatrical rights, all in all, Raju's profit margin will be less. Which is why, he asked for a pay cut but the actor was not in a mood to relent," says a source. The differences were out in the open when Mahesh thanked every major player associated with *Sarileru...*, which celebrated 50 days on Saturday, except for Raju. "50 Days of #SarileruNeekevvaru. A BIGGG hug to my director @AnilRavipudi & my producer @AnilSunkara for giving me this BLOCKBUSTER thanks to my entire team, without whom this wouldn't have been possible! @vijayashanthi\_m @iamRashmika @RathnaveluDop @prakashraaj @ThisIsDSP (sic)," he wrote on his social media platforms without mentioning Raju. The producer was instrumental in getting many screens for *Sarileru...* and despite facing competition from *Ala Vaikunthapuramlo*, he still managed to retain theatres after first week.



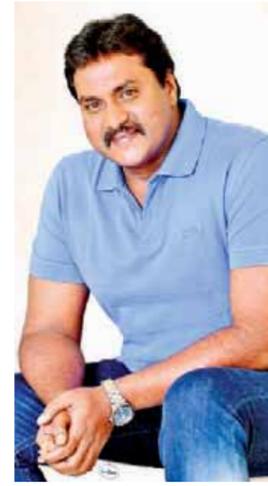
# No other actor could've shouldered my story: NAG ASHWIN

**V**yjayanthi Movies withheld the genre of their next with Prabhas even as they announced the film last week on a grand note. But film's director Nag Ashwin confirmed that the film is a scientific-thriller. Speaking to a new channel, he said that nobody other than Prabhas could've done his story. "There is no other actor who can shoulder the story other than him presently. Not just budget-wise... I'm talking about someone shouldering the story as it's filled with intense emotions," he said. As is the case with him, he took extensive time to come up with the script. The gap was more this time around because the film belongs to a genre that is rarely explored in Telugu cinema. "I didn't know how to write it, so I took time to learn how to write it. Soon after it's done, I took it to Prabhas. Even with its unique story, the script turned out to be out-and-out commercial entertainer, which Prabhas didn't expect," he noted, smiling. The untitled film, to roll towards the year-end, is eyeing a late 2021 release. Prabhas is right now filming for *Jil* fame Radha Krishna Kumar's *Radhe Shyam*. A romantic drama, its next schedule begins in Europe later this week.



# Sunil joins Pawan's next

**T**he cast of Pawan Kalyan's next with Krish is growing bigger day by day. After the likes of Bollywood faces such as Arjun Rampal and Jacqueline Fernandez joining the period drama for key supporting roles, the latest is that the makers have roped in Sunil as well for a significant part. He is believed to be playing a lengthy supporting role and will join the sets later this month. "It's a role with a great comic scope and one will get to see the 'old' Sunil. Along with Pawan, he is bound to bring the house down," says a source. The actor has earlier shared screen space with PK in films like *Balu* and *Jalsa*. Sunil, who hasn't hit peak form as a comedian in a while, has projects like *Colour Photo* and Anand Deverakonda's next with Damodar Attada in his kitty up next.



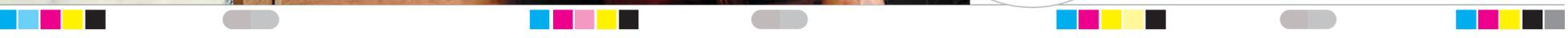
# Jagapathi, Sukumar set for a hat-trick

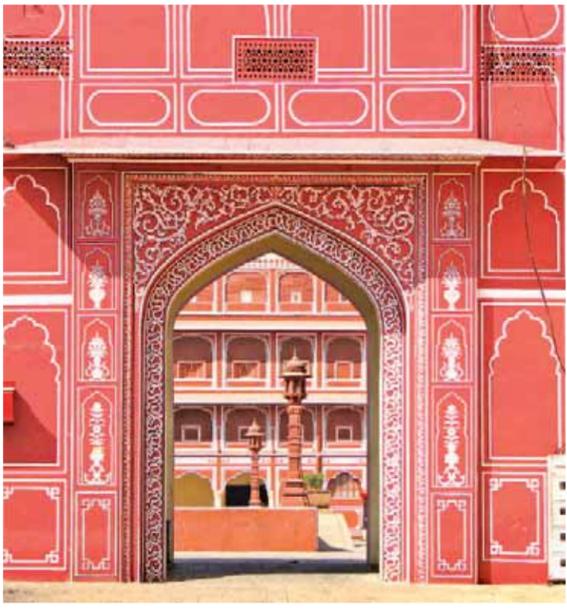
**L**egend aside, Jagapathi Babu's supporting role career has got a major fillip because of his neg-

ative turn in Sukumar's *Nannaku Prematho*. The actor-director association continued further with *Rangasthalam*, where the actor's turn as the menacing president of

the village is rated as one of his best outings till date. And they are not done yet. According to a source, Sukumar has roped in Jagapathi for his next with Allu Arjun as well. "It's become customary for Sukumar that he pens an interesting role for Jagapathi. And even if there's no scope for his presence in the story, Jagapathi's bond with Sukumar has grown so much over the years that he can ring him and ask for a role. However, for Bunny's film, the actor won't be seen in the shoes of an antagonist. It's being essayed by other actor

but he will be seen in a key supporting role which is quirky and layered. His look too will be quite different," adds the source. The fresh schedule of the still-untitled film, an action-thriller, which deals with red sanders smuggling as its core point, will begin in Kerala on March 13. After the Kerala schedule, the film will be shot in Maredumilli forests near Rajahmundry and later in Tenkasi, Tamil Nadu for over 40 days. A production venture of Mythri Movie Makers, the film is being planned for a release in October. — NG





# THE KNOWN, UNKNOWN, AND THE UNSUNG

GUSTASP and JEROO IRANI delve into the city of Jaipur to find treasures beyond the obvious

**W**ere debutante tourists in Jaipur but repeat visitors enthralled by an enchanting city. Over several visits, we had explored most of Jaipur's awesome roster of attractions and realised that the city's sights could give other great metros an inferiority complex. Throw in unforgettable cameos of proud locals in colourful turbans and handlebar moustaches; village belles in swirling skirts and chunky silver jewellery and proud camels squatting in the sand... Soon, Jaipur begins to resemble a stage set up with extravagant props.

But it's all very real and we decided to re-visit some of its known architectural marvels and scoop out some of its hidden treasures as well. A quick stop at the 18th century Hawa Mahal or Palace of Wind wasn't enough. Locals ushered us up narrow stairs, above a warren of shops opposite the monument, to get picture-postcard-perfect photographs of the palace. The pink, five-storey palace, honey-combed with over 150 latticed windows enabled ladies to watch unseen life and processions swirl on the broad street below. On a terrace across Hawa Mahal, perched precariously on a parapet, some selfie-struck tourists posed, pirouetted and pouted in front of cell phones held aloft to get the Hawa Mahal as a backdrop to their preening selves.

One of the country's first planned cities, the origins of Jaipur go back to 1727 when Jai Singh II, Raja of Amer, traded his grand palace within the fortified walls of Amer Fort for an even more magnificent city, to be named after him. Jaipur was dubbed the Pink City in 1876 when Sawai Ram Singh I who had the city painted pink in honour of the visit of Prince of Wales, who was later crowned King Edward VII. Ever since, and even today, the city has been getting a coat of fresh paint every once in a while.

To escape the traffic-clogged streets of the old city, we retreated for a while into the rambling City Palace, a maze of cool courtyards, gardens and palaces from different eras where royal memorabilia is on display. There we stumbled on a Craft Centre where visitors can view and buy goods directly from craftsmen and artists personally selected by a member of the royal family and asked to set up shop.

We sat next to an artist and watched his paintbrush glide over the paper. The crisp clean lines that danced across his canvas started to merge and a few moments later, he handed us his creation: a miniature painting of a fierce Rajput prince with a sword

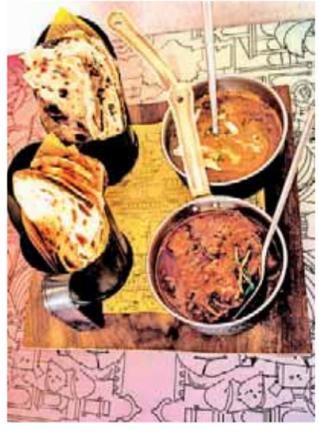


held aloft and ready to strike. The contrast between the menacing posture of the handsome young warrior in the painting and the gentle demeanour of the wrinkled old

artist who created it was striking, and in many ways captured the spirit of Jaipur. For this is a city that is both artistic and imposing; a city of fantasy with modern contours.

As a break from Jaipur's history-webbed monuments, we stopped at Channi Carpets and Textiles, a factory-cum showroom, one of the oldest in the city, where on an upper floor, hand-knotted carpets in wool, silk and a blend of silk and wool cascaded down walls or were rolled up against them. They were then strewn and unfurled on the floor for us to gawk at and perhaps buy. The carpets and rugs with Persian, Kashmiri, oriental and other designs glowed and shimmered and we realised how art and beauty are woven into the DNA of the city. In a ground floor atelier, artisans demonstrated the art of block printing with vegetable dyes and teak wood blocks. They even encouraged us to try our hand at it.

Shopping sprees can be addictive in a city where the past continues to burnish the present. We would take frequent breaks from tumultuous Jaipur, at the recently relaunched Ibis Jaipur Civil Lines hotel in the city centre. Functional, funky and the epitome of modern-day cool, the relaunched Ibis Jaipur Civil Lines offers guests the option to go green, peddle away and explore the city



on their e bikes. A gaily painted auto rickshaw, minus the beeps so typical of the city, is an arresting art installation in the porch where guests love to click some mandatory selfies. When we felt overpowered by the city's manifold charms, we would often relax in the vibrant lobby which flows seamlessly into the restaurant; pour over the inventive menu and admire the witty doodles by local artists on the walls and tables which cleverly evoke Jaipur life.

On our last evening, we headed for Amer Fort, the former capital. En route to the fort, we saw another enchanting marvel that Jaipur showcases so casually, typical of a city that suffers from an embarrassment of riches... We stopped to gaze at the recently restored Jal Mahal or water palace moored in the middle of Man Sagar Lake. A hidden gem, oft-overlooked by tourists on their way to the muscled Amer Fort, the Jal Mahal is a lake palace that exudes feminine charm and romance. It was once the playground of the maharajas in the 18th century when it resonated with the sounds of duck hunting parties, firework displays and elaborate music and dance festivals. In its heyday, the palace was strewn with silk pillows and glowing carpets, and the courtyard and corridors were shaded with rich awnings. Today, a forlorn beauty clings to it.

The 16th century Amer Fort is another eyeful and as the fading light of a post-sunset sky brushed its ramparts, we quickly explored its labyrinthine but stunning interior. Massive arched gates protect the outer courtyard which is dominated by the

many arched Diwan-e-Aam or hall of public audience. The main palace complex is tucked away behind walls and archways alive with a mosaic of inlaid images. The magnificent Diwan-e-Khas or hall of private audience, elaborate gardens and courtyards, a hall of mirrors that recreates star-studded night skies, the private residential quarters of the king and his queens cooled by breeze blowing across channels of water and filigreed walls with delicate designs speak eloquently of a love for opulence...

And as the sky darkened, the Sound and Light show brought the past back to centre stage once again as in a dramatic play, the story of Amer Fort unfolded. Twenty-eight kings of the Kachwaha dynasty ruled from this impressive fort till the capital was moved to Jaipur. Local legends and folk music enhanced the delve-into-the-past experience while the stunning setting of the Amer Fort and Palace complex in the foreground and the Jaigarh Fort to the left, back-dropped by shadowy hills reverberated with the thunder of battle and galloping horses; the thrust and parry of swords, the cries of fallen soldiers, and of bereft princesses left grieving in their opulent citadels.

After the show, we headed to Sahu Restaurant in the old city to warm up. Sahu, famed for its hot milky tea served in an earthen kulhad, turned out to be a hole-in-the-wall tea stall which was set up by the present owner's grandfather and is now a popular "watering hole" for locals.

The sweet milky tea is slowly brewed on a coal fire with a dash of their secret masala. Anything between 1,500 to 2,000 cups a day are consumed as the stall is open from 5 am to 11 pm. Political heavyweights and even royalty have stopped by for a sip of the beverage, with which they wash down the sting of mirch vadai.

But it was at the over 50-year-old Rawat Mishtan Bhandar (a takeaway with a restaurant attached) that we found the flavours of Jaipur packaged into crisp mava, potato and onion kachoris; mirch vada, lassi, sweets and other delicacies. A magnet for locals and the Indian diaspora visiting Jaipur, we were told that the kachoris are carried all the way to the US and last for seven days when refrigerated.

Our voyage of discovery ended with a taste of city at Spice It, the edgy, modern restaurant at Ibis Jaipur Civil Lines, where we savoured timeless and succulent local specialties like Laal maas and Gatta curry for which Rajasthan is famed. We were aware that in this Land of Kings, we were biting into hefty chunks of history.

## FACTFILE

Jaipur on the eastern apex of the Golden Triangle, that includes Agra and Delhi, is well-connected by road, rail and air to most major cities around the country.

Jaipur has a vast spectrum of accommodation ranging from palace hotels such as the Taj group's Rambagh Palace to more modern and functional ones like the Ibis Jaipur Civil Lines.

For more information visit Rajasthan Tourism at: [www.tourism.rajasthan.gov.in](http://www.tourism.rajasthan.gov.in)

# Eat Your Way Through New York City's Five Boroughs

**F**rom Michelin-starred restaurants to hole-in-the-wall gems, awe-inspiring global cuisine to aromatic street carts, New York City has endless dining options. The cuisine of each borough and neighbourhood tells the story of the city's history, culture and latest trends, making food tours the perfect way to experience authentic NYC. Visit the neighbourhoods that make each borough so special.

**BROOKLYN:** On A Slice of Brooklyn Pizza Tour, cover Brooklyn and pizzas from end to end via bus, stopping at iconic landmarks and movie locations. The tour company's latest is the Chocolate Bus Tour of Brooklyn, which features chocolatiers in the lesser-known neighborhoods of Red Hook, Cobble Hill and Gowanus. Learn how chocolate is made, sample traditional and artisanal chocolates and



visit Valentino Pier for a view of the Statue of Liberty. Visit four of Williamsburg's hottest restaurants and enjoy a four-course progressive meal on Avital Tours' Williamsburg

Food Tour, all the while learning about the neighbourhood's culinary history, important places and must-eat dishes.

Why not get some exercise while you taste local delicacies and take in the vibe of the borough? Dine on pizza, dessert or a combination of both on one of Brooklyn Bike Tours' offerings.

Enjoy Brooklyn's burgeoning craft beer scene on a City Brew Tour. Meet brewers, get

VIP behind-the-scenes tours and enjoy 12+ brew samples paired with gourmet food throughout the borough.

Explore three different neighbourhoods of Brooklyn during a Literary Pub Crawl Brooklyn, focusing on history, literature and, of course, drinking.

**MANHATTAN:** Dine in true luxury on City Chic Experiences' Signature Culinary Experience. This curated culinary tour features notable Michelin-starred dining establishments throughout Manhattan.

On Like A Local's Flatiron Food, History & Architecture Tour, see two of New York City's most iconic and picturesque neighbourhoods, Flatiron District and Union Square, and explore classic restaurants and hidden gems.

Experience Harlem like a local, enjoying soul food and the cuisines of the Caribbean, Africa and Italy on a Taste Harlem Food and Cultural Tours.

Learn to appreciate New York City's authentic street food on Turnstile Tours' Food

Cart Tour. Enjoy bites from some of the city's best food carts and trucks while learning about Midtown Manhattan or the Financial District.

Celebrate the Year of Pride on Urban Adventures' LGBTQ+ History, Neighbourhood and Pub Tour of Greenwich Village. Have a drink at Julius, the oldest gay bar in New York City, visit the historic Stonewall Inn and cool down with an ice cream covered in rainbow sprinkles at Big Gay Ice Cream.

**QUEENS:** With three different culinary walks in Queens, there's something for everyone



on a Culinary Backstreets tour. A full Sichuan banquet in Flushing, food trucks in Corona, the Queens Night Market and a Thai grocery store/community centre in Elmhurst are just a few of the options.

On Food On Foot Tours' International Express Food Tour of Queens, delight your taste buds in New York City's most diverse borough. Along

with food stops, your guide will take you around famous TV, movie and sports landmarks.

From traditional Greek to Brazilian, Venezuelan and Balkan food, the Noshwalks Astoria Tour unearths both the classic and lesser-known cuisines of Astoria. Groups will also stop to see the Museum of the Moving Image and Kaufman Studios along the way.

**STATEN ISLAND:** Cititrek offers a variety of Staten Island tours, including two culinary adventures. The Taste of Diversity Tour of Victory Boulevard takes visitors through Tompkinsville to discover Albanian, Sri Lankan, Ecuadorian, Caribbean and African shops and restaurants. The Pub Crawl Tour of St George by the Ferry features brewery tours, samples, wine and appetisers in St. George close to the ferry. Afterward, take a ride on the free Staten Island Ferry.

Noshwalks Staten Island Tour includes a diverse offering of food and culture in Tompkinsville. See and taste the area's rich history, shops



and cuisine from Jamaica, Poland, Honduras and Nigeria. **THE BRONX:** Follow Me New York City Adventures has two new walking tours in the Bronx centered around delicious bites.



The Arthur Avenue Adventure includes samples of meats, cheeses, seafood and baked goods. It gives a "crash course" on how Italian immigration shaped New York City. The Food and Faith Adventure incorporates these elements with neighbourhood houses of worship.

Shop for authentic culinary delights on Inside Out Tours' Bronx's Little Italy & Arthur Avenue Shopping Tour. Learn about the rich history and cultural heritage of Belmont, home to generations of Italian-American families.

Join Bronx resident and food aficionado Susan Birnbaum on a SusanSez NYC Walkabouts tour to see the neighbourhood like a local. Susan's Little Italy on Arthur Avenue tour takes you to some of her favorite spots for fresh pasta, mozzarella and cannoli.

Play ball and eat game-day classics in the greatest sports

**WE'VE GOT INDIA COVERED**  
From 11 Gateways in Europe to more than 80 destinations in India

Call Toll Free: 1800 180 1407 Visit [www.airindia.in](http://www.airindia.in) | Stay connected [f](#) /airindia [t](#) @airindia [v](#) /Air India Official [i](#) @airindia.in [a](#) Air India Mobile App