



Will hold municipal polls at earliest: TS tells HC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
The Telangana Government has told the High Court that it was firm on conducting elections to the municipalities at the earliest.

Sudha Rani Relangi is CBI's new director

Continued from page 1
"Approval of Competent Authority is hereby conveyed for the appointment of Sudha Rani Relangi, Joint Secretary and Legislative Counsel, Legislative Department to the post of Director of Prosecution in CBI from the panel recommended by Central Vigilance Commission... for a period of two years," the official order said.

Junior doctors call off strike

Continued from page 1
"We told the junior doctors of the summary of the talks with the Union Health Minister," Etala said. The state government will convey the opinion of the striking doctors to the Centre when it prepares the rules and regulations, he said.

Telugu immigrants in Gulf nations...

Continued from page 1
Nangi Devender Reddy, TPCC Official Spokesperson and NRI Cell president, said, "Most of the Telugu people hail from East and West Godavari districts. During Open Houses conducted by various Telugu associations once a fortnight, many immigrants come to us and share their problems. These problems include employer harassment, sexual

Table with market rates for Gold, Silver, Chicken, and Eggs in Hyderabad, Vijayawada, and Visakhapatnam.

TRS MP flays BJP over Kaleshwaram project

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR



Party leader B Vinod Kumar warns Central government will face the wrath of Telangana people if it fails to accord national project status to the Kaleshwaram project

TRS leader and former MP Boinapalli Vinod Kumar on Friday warned the BJP to face the wrath of the Telangana public if it fails to give national project status to the Kaleshwaram Lift irrigation scheme. He said the Central Government could have taken a decision in this regard had it been sincere towards the interests of Telangana.

Congress party on redesigning the Kaleshwaram project and questioned if they were sincere why they failed to construct a project at Thummidihatti. The TRS leader rebutted the alle-

gations of Congress leadership about the demand of National project status of Kaleshwaram and blamed the BJP Minister Nithin Gadkari for not supporting the demand of TRS MPs in the Parliament. The former MP said the Kaleshwaram project would be fixed with mega pump sets of Baahubali, and the waters would reach from Ellampalli to Midmanair soon.

Media denied entry into BRKR Bhavan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



People shifting files from Secretariat to BRKR Bhavan on Friday

The State government is not allowing journalists inside the BRKR Bhavan as it is not happy with the media reports regarding Secretariat shifting. The police personnel obstructed the media from entering into temporary new Secretariat building at BRKR Bhavan on Friday. The media persons expressed their unhappiness over not allowing the media inside the BRKR Bhavan.

During discussions, SK Joshi said that media persons are being allowed inside Secretariat only in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. "No other state allows media inside the Secretariat," he claimed

Over-fishing increases mercury levels in fish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



There have been global efforts to reduce the amount of mercury entering the ocean to reduce the amount of toxic material found in fish and other marine mammals

A joint Research of Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad, Harvard University, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, a Canadian Government Agency, has been researching how climate change impacts mercury accumulation in fish.

The researchers focused on whether have these and other environmental measures alleviated or overall exacerbated the problem of elevated mercury levels in fish. This is the question that the consortium of international scientists, which included the IIT Hyderabad researcher, hoped to answer.

Modelling studies by the international team of scientists found that although there has been a decrease in levels of mercury pollution due to various environmental regulations, the amounts of mercury found in fish have been different in different species - some types of fish have less mercury than before, and some, alarmingly more.

amount of mercury entering the ocean to reduce the amount of mercury found in fish and other marine animals. The Minamata Convention of Mercury that was enforced in 2017 includes a ban on new mercury mines, phase-out of existing ones and strict control

BJP protecting white-collared offenders: Congress

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC Disciplinary Action Committee chairman M Kodanda Reddy has alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party is using the Central Bureau of Investigation against those parties and leaders that are not in favor of BJP.

Afraid of such CBI raids, TDP Rajya Sabha members CM Ramesh, Sujana Chowdhary, TG Venkatesh and Garikapati Rammohan Rao had joined BJP, he claimed. These leaders 'white-collar' offenders had become good upon joining BJP, he mocked.

There was rampant misuse of power after Narendra Modi became Prime Minister. The poor and unemployed youth had failed to get any benefit from the Union Budget, he pointed out.



can we create all facilities at a time? It takes at least 15 days", he said. Earlier in the morning, the electronic media tried to take visuals by entering into the BRKR Bhavan but the security personnel at BRKR Bhavan didn't allow the media. The security personnel stopped the media at main gate itself. On the other hand, the Chief Secretary entered into his chamber in BRKR Bhavan on Friday coinciding with auspicious day of 'Varalakshmi Vratam'.

Vivek joins BJP to fight against TRS

Continued from page 1

He has been raising voice against Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao at every possible occasion. He has even held round-table conferences against the proposed demolition of Assembly and Secretariat by bringing leaders from all political parties, civil society groups and activists on one platform.

Vivek will further boost BJP's prospects in Telangana. While TRS is looting Telangana, Congress is getting extinct. Only BJP is emerging as a strong contender to TRS," said Laxman. Kishan Reddy pointed out that G Vivek hailed from a powerful political family and his joining was not just a boost to BJP but also a big blow to TRS.

As BJP is believed to be emerging as the main opposition party and challenger to ruling TRS in Telangana, Vivek chose BJP to join forces against KCR. "Joining of a powerful leader like G

TRS troubling Adivasis, says Congress

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Congress on Friday has alleged that the TRS government led by Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao is troubling Adivasis by evicting them from the forests. The party alleged that it was harming the interests of Adivasis rights by taking away their lands. The party stated that there is no need to do anything to the Adivasis from the government side but to show mercy towards them.

"Adivasis lead their entire life in forests. During Congress rule, the government had given freedom to them to stay and use the forest lands. But now, the TRS government led by Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao is snatching away their rights by evicting them from the forests," alleged AICC member Surya Naik and Sangareddy MLA T Jagga Reddy.

They said that the former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi showed eternal love towards Adivasis. The present governments should not spoil the livelihood of the Adivasis. Congress treated Adivasis as its children. Adivasis will not live while leaving forests. The TRS government has to think in a humanitarian angle towards Adivasis, they further said.

2 NRIs donate Rs 14 crore to Lord Balaji

Continued from page 1



After offering prayers with their family members at the cash-rich hill shrine, they handed over a demand draft for Rs. 14 crore to AV Dharmar Reddy, the Special Officer of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), that governs the over 2,000 year old temple, the temple official said. The devotees requested the temple officials to use the funds for different TTD-run public welfare trusts. This is the second straight year the two have made a similar offering.

In July last year, they had donated Rs. 13.5 crore to the shrine with a request to use it for different TTD trusts, the official added.

Humbling, gratifying: National film award winners

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

eran actor Surekha Sikri bagged the best supporting actress. Sriram Raghavan's acclaimed "Andhadhun" bagged best Hindi film, best adapted screenplay and best actor for its lead Ayushmann, who played a blind musician in the thriller. "It's truly humbling and hugely gratifying to win the coveted National Awards. As an artist, I have always tried to back disruptive content that stands out for its quality content. Today's honour is a validation of my hard work, my belief system, my journey in movies and my reason to be an actor in the first place," Ayushmann said in a statement. Raghavan told

My heart is filled with joy. It is well deserved. It is very gratifying. Sriram and the writers deserve this award. I am so proud to be part of this film. My heart is filled with joy. It is well deserved. It is very gratifying. Sriram and the writers deserve this award. I am so proud to be part of this film. "Uri- The Surgical Strike" took home three more awards- best director for Aditya Dhar, best background music for Shashwat Sachdev and best sound design for Bishwadeep Chatterjee. Kausal said he was at a loss of words to describe his happiness. "I wish to dedicate this Award to my parents, to every member of Team URI, to our

nation and to our armed forces who put their lives on the line each day, come rain or storm," he said. Kausal said it was special to share the award with Khurana, "whom I admire, both as a person and as an actor". Dhar, nodding to the popular 'how's the josh' phrase from his film, said the josh is "very very high." "Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm. 15 years of failures, rejections and hard work has led to this moment and it just can't get better than this." The debutante director dedicated the award to "each and every brave soldier of our country and their families." Bhansali bagged the best music composer award for his work in "Padmaavat".

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Hong Kong chief warns of economic fall

Hong Kong's leader Carrie Lam warned Friday that two months of pro-democracy demonstrations were causing economic chaos in the city but ruled out making concessions to "silence the violent protesters."

US says no policy change on Kashmir

The US has said that there is no change in its policy on Kashmir as it called on India and Pakistan to maintain restraint and hold direct dialogue to resolve their differences.

Maryam Nawaz remanded in custody of Pak's anti-graft body till August 21

Pakistani court on Friday remanded Maryam Nawaz, former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's daughter, and her cousin in the custody of the country's anti-corruption authority till August 21 in a money laundering case.

UK economy shrinks for first time since 2012 as Brexit bites

The British economy shrank in the second quarter for the first time since 2012 as Brexit uncertainties weighed on business investment and firms reduced their stockpiling after Britain was granted an extension to its departure from the European Union, official figures showed Friday.

Trump names new acting intelligence director as Gordon quits

US President Donald Trump has announced that his respected Deputy Director of National Intelligence was resigning, the latest chapter in a broad reshuffle at the top of the country's spy agencies.

Qureshi visiting China to discuss Indo-Pak tensions

Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Friday dashed to China to discuss with the Chinese leadership Indo-Pak tensions after India revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

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Trump names new acting intelligence director as Gordon quits. US President Donald Trump has announced that his respected Deputy Director of National Intelligence was resigning.

19 bodies hung from bridge or hacked up in Mexico gang feud

Mexican police found nine bodies hanging from an overpass Thursday alongside a drug cartel banner threatening rivals, and seven more corpses hacked up and dumped by the road nearby.

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FIRST COLUMN

Benefits amid a climate of tariffs

The US leadership wants to show there's a new sheriff in town and things will be done differently from now on. Once all global actors toe its line, it will normalise trade relations with everyone



DINESH JOTWANI

The trade mechanism put in place after World War II to facilitate global trade and create prosperity across the globe seemingly let down tens of millions in America. Blue-collar workers felt that the system didn't work for them. Angry, they did what was unthinkable and elected Donald Trump to the most powerful office in the world. Trump espouses an "America First" policy, which American interests ahead of the corporates. The US, under Trump's leadership, has reversed its decades-old policy of enabling China's rise to containing it. This has had implications for the India-US trade. While America's modest \$24 billion trade deficit with India pales in comparison to its \$222 billion trade deficit with China, the American leadership is leaving no stone unturned in working for its people even if it means erecting tariffs on goods exported by us. To mitigate the impact of a potential trade war, the Indian leadership should understand that in the eyes of the blue-collar American voters, China is the real threat. India much less so. Consider that farmers in America, who benefited significantly from exporting soy to China, aren't fazed that the latter has erected tariffs on products they export; they see this as a necessary part of containing the Middle Kingdom, whose ascent could dramatically alter the global landscape and America's ability to lead. Americans, who value commerce, are willing to endure financial losses to ensure their country stays number one. In the minds of Americans, who voted for Trump, India is an economic and military minnow, incapable of posing any challenge whatsoever to its leadership. Furthermore, most view India as a natural ally because like America, it, too, is a democracy, which fought for independence and because the Indian diaspora in America has proven themselves in their eyes. In a trade war focussed on containing China, India should be an afterthought. Why America erected tariffs against India? The US rightly sees China as a threat. Consider that American companies, who want to do business in China, aren't often granted access to the Chinese market because of the country's protectionist stance. This view is widely shared by experts across the globe. Foreign companies enter China enthusiastically; yet are forced to retreat when local competitors abetted by the Chinese Government make it impossible for them to do business. China also regularly steals trade secrets from the US and engages in corporate espionage against American companies. It regularly violates patents as well — all of which costs billions to American corporations.

Furthermore, China doesn't share the liberal values as that of the US. Vast censorship across China, including a ban on Google and Facebook, is clear indication that the Chinese leadership is unwilling to allow its citizens access to information that might pose a threat to its leadership. Also, the Chinese leadership is creating home-grown companies capable of taking on American technology giants. Hence, rather than working alongside the US, as India does, China seeks to compete with America. Trump and those, who elected him to office, understand this well. So it's understandable why the US put tariffs on China. The latter treats American companies unfairly, manipulates its currency, commits espionage against it, prevents the flow of information to its citizens, has a league of its own on human rights violations and denies its people the right to vote. India grants American companies almost unrestrained access to its market, treats its companies fairly, works with Americans on human rights, helps it fight terrorism, exports its best minds to America and is a democracy.

America's decision to impose tariffs on Indian goods when seen in this context is puzzling unless viewed as part of a broader US strategy to ensure American dominance of the globe indefinitely. In history, the rise of a new power has rarely been peaceful. To eliminate any threat to its leadership, the US is leaving no stone unturned. Its removal of Indian exports from the Generalized System of Preferences costs Indian exporters a total of \$190 million, a pittance of India's total exports to America. However, it sends a signal to the world that America is changing. China has already capitulated somewhat to the US' pressure, as no doubt has India, yet as long as India's ambitions and those of America remain aligned, there is no reason to believe that the US will impose debilitating tariffs on us. American leadership wants to show there's a new sheriff in town and things will be done differently from now on. Once all global actors come to terms with this fact and toe the American line, it will normalise trade relations with them, although on its terms.

(The writer is an Advocate, Supreme Court of India)

WE HAVE DECIDED TO SHUT DOWN THE THAR EXPRESS AS WELL. AS LONG AS I AM THE RAILWAYS MINISTER, NO TRAIN WILL OPERATE BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND INDIA.

—PAKISTAN'S RAILWAYS MINISTER SHEIKH RASHEED

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ACTIONS TAKEN BY PAKISTAN ARE UNILATERAL. THIS HAS BEEN DONE WITHOUT CONSULTING US. WE'VE URGED THEM TO RECONSIDER THEIR DECISION.

—MEA SPOKESPERSON RAVEESH KUMAR

India's diplomatic challenge

Whether India is considering any principal, definitional or fundamental changes to the IB, LoC and their security would further shape its diplomacy in dealing with international response



VIVEK MISHRA

The internal reorganisation of the State of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) into two Union Territories presents New Delhi with a new set of diplomatic challenges internationally, besides possible domestic upheavals in the days to come. To all sovereign democratic nation States in the post-Westphalian order, the causal relationship between internal cartographic reorientation and the need for its justification through international diplomacy is a troubling one. The broader justification for such thoughts is derived from the Charter of the United Nations, which states that "nothing should authorise intervention in matters essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State."

However, because of its historically fraught nature, early internationalisation of the issue and major power interventions in the past, the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan has not been insulated from international mediation. The latest round of arbitration offers between India and Pakistan from US President Donald Trump and Pakistan's attempt to reach out to other countries and organisations internationally, is a desperate shot at creating space for international intervention in the Kashmir dispute. Any attempts to offer international mediation in the Kashmir dispute, especially in the aftermath of the 1972 Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration of 1999, which emphasise bilateral mechanisms to resolve disputes, will not be entertained by India.

In the latest round of diplomatic offensives, Pakistan has downgraded its diplomatic relations with India, sent back the Indian Ambassador, suspended trade, stopped the Samjhauta Express linking Lahore and New Delhi and partially closed its airspace. Besides, Islamabad has formed a seven-member committee to guide legal, political and diplomatic response to India on the Kashmir decision. Internationally, it has upped the ante on diplomatic outreach to the United Nations — promising to take the issue to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), and has tried to involve the leaders of Malaysia, Turkey and the United States, besides reaching out to the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC). The question is how much will these efforts create a space for international mediation on Kashmir?

The measured response from the UN and the OIC and balance from Turkey and Malaysia depict that most countries would be careful in wading into this complex bilateral issue. Earlier in March this year, India categorically rejected the OIC's criticism on Kashmir saying, "We reaffirm that Jammu & Kashmir is an integral part of India and is a matter strictly internal to India." At least two OIC countries — Maldives and the UAE — have termed India's decision an internal matter. The United Nations remains guarded in its harmless standard tone, "exercise maximum restraint" and the UN Secretary General spokesperson has declined to comment on India's decision to scrap the special status of Jammu & Kashmir.

If anything, the response shows that the UN is aware of its limitations in internal matters of countries and that it wouldn't want to pre-empt a diplomatic response from India, possibly in the



downgrading or diluting the role of the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) — a body established in 1949 to observe and report on ceasefire violations along and across the Line of Control (LoC) and the working boundary in Jammu & Kashmir as well as report developments that could lead to ceasefire violations.

Moreover, questions remain on the nature of impact, if any, that the decision to internally reorganise Jammu & Kashmir will have on the International Border (IB) and LoC. Whether India is considering any principal, definitional or fundamental changes to the IB, LoC and their security would further shape its diplomacy in dealing with international response. Although the decision to remove special status of Jammu & Kashmir wouldn't necessary solve India's problems of cross-border terrorism and other sub-conventionally destabilising efforts from Pakistan, it has the potential to reshape internal and border security in a manner that raises stakes for such activities significantly in the future, especially in the light of federal handling of Jammu & Kashmir's security.

So how did we navigate major powers? There is enough convergence that Pakistan's attempt to bring the US as a mediator in the Kashmir bilateral dispute once again might have triggered or at least hastened India's decision on Jammu & Kashmir. President Trump's offer to mediate between the two countries is a result of Pakistan's repeated attempt to internationalise the issue in violation of the existing mechanisms, which forbade internalisation. The US State Department's clarification that India did not inform it before taking the big decision together with lack of any directed condemnation of India's actions, favourably plays

THE MEASURED RESPONSE FROM THE UN AND THE OIC AND BALANCE FROM TURKEY AND MALAYSIA DEPICT THAT MOST COUNTRIES WOULD BE CAREFUL IN WADING INTO THIS COMPLEX BILATERAL ISSUE. IF ANYTHING, THE RESPONSE SHOWS THAT THE UN IS AWARE OF ITS LIMITATIONS IN INTERNAL MATTERS OF COUNTRIES AND THAT IT WOULDN'T WANT TO PRE-EMPT A DIPLOMATIC RESPONSE FROM INDIA

for New Delhi. First, it vindicates India's stand that the decision is an internal matter. Second, it is indicative of India's independent decision-making and strategic autonomy despite close ties with the US. The only way in which the US' much-needed clarification on India's decision can be explained is the signaling to Islamabad that Washington officially hasn't sided with New Delhi on the decision. This signalling is important for the short-term interests of the US-Pakistan relations in solving the Afghanistan imbroglio and comes as a face-saver for the visit of the US Assistant Secretary for South Asia Alice Wells that was underway.

The creation the Union Territory of Ladakh has drawn strong opposition from China, followed by India's strong rejection of its concerns. Ladakh borders Tibet to the east, the Lahaul and Spiti regions to the south, the Kashmir Valley, Jammu and Baltistan regions to the west, and the southwest corner of Xinjiang across the Karakoram Pass in the far north. It borders Aksai Chin, which both India and China claim. The recent decision places Ladakh in a contested geography with federal security structures, further complicating border talks between India and China.

While its new status provides an opportunity to view Pakistan-occupied Gilgit Baltistan and China-occupied Aksai Chin as two distinct conflicts, China's opposition is likely to continue. As such, in the broad spectrum of international ripples created by the recent decision on Kashmir, China's opposition is likely to test New Delhi's diplomacy in the most challenging way. (The writer is Visiting Fellow at the Stimson Center in Washington D.C & Deputy Director Kalinga Institute for Indo-Pacific Studies)

Protect reproductive rights

There's a strong need to present counter-narratives to voices in the US calling for restricting access to safe abortion services. The discourse must be shaped keeping the woman and her alone at the centre



VINOJ MANNING

A group of people walking the red carpet at the Cannes film festival this year turned heads and made headlines — not for their peculiar outfits but for the green scarves they were waving. Repeating chants of "solidarity for women," this bunch comprised campaigners. They were drawing attention to the urgent need being felt to preserve women's reproductive rights.

This and similar protests have become even more critical in the face of an accelerated trend in many States in the US, advocating a ban on abortions. Since early this year, several provinces in America have proposed and successfully passed what they call a "Heartbeat Bill," that

restricts women's access to safe abortion services.

While Mississippi signed a Bill to ban all abortions beyond five to six weeks, Georgia and Missouri passed Bills to ban abortions after six and eight weeks respectively. Most recently, Alabama passed a draconian Bill that bans nearly all abortions, including in cases of rape and incest, making it punishable for the providers by up to 99 years in prison.

In a country where abortion so far is legal, women's rights have come under serious threat and would cease to exist if these Bills become laws. Such bans will have more profound ramifications for young women, and those from poor backgrounds. Their access to safe abortion services will be constrained due to their inability to travel to other States to seek abortion, with detrimental impacts on their health and rights.

These recent developments in the US' policy environment on reproductive health and rights is a well-orchestrated, concerted move by the anti-choice groups to eventual-



ly overturn the Roe vs Wade judgement, which guarantees the right to abortion. The Supreme Court of the United States classified the right to choose to abort as a "fundamental right." The judgement requires courts to evaluate challenged abortion laws under the "strict scrutiny" standard — the highest level of judicial review in America.

The legal strategy of the anti-choice groups backed by ultra conservative legislators will have a direct foreseeable impact on abortion policy, access and discourse across

the globe.

These amendments could set a wrong precedent for countries across the world reviewing their abortion laws, potentially restraining and reversing the progress made in women's reproductive rights historically. It has been well documented that restrictive abortion laws can only have one consequence — increased unsafe abortions and maternal deaths. If a woman decides to get an abortion, she will get it no matter what. Whether it is through safe means or clandestine and unsafe methods, depends on

its legality and accessibility. Banning abortion, contrary to common misconceptions, would not lead to a fall in abortion rates but more unsafe abortions and subsequently, higher maternal deaths.

As a result of the narrative shaping up in the US, supported by the global gag rule, one could expect reverberations in the delivery of safe abortion services across the world. The withdrawal of funds for the provision of abortion care, coupled with the counter-narratives creeping in have an impact on the attitudes of health systems and abortion providers, with an increased fear or reluctance among them to terminate pregnancies. The alternative can have a particularly dampening effect by way of confusing and hampering the efforts of organisations and providers, who have been working on safe abortions globally.

The language and positioning of the issue also have a vital influence in shaping discussions and debate across the abortion eco-system.

To cite an example, the emotive use of terms like "fetal heartbeat"

rather than the clinical term "cardiac activity" is a deliberate attempt to imply personhood of the foetus and is a medical inaccuracy as the term "fetal heartbeat" is used in pregnancies beyond eight weeks.

A Missouri Republican State Representative used the term "consensual rape" when arguing in favour of a proposal that would ban abortions in the State after eight weeks of pregnancy — even in cases of incest or rape, though he apologised later. The abortion discourse must be shaped keeping the woman and her alone at the centre. It is a humiliation if in this day, women feel the need to fight for their rights to control their own bodies.

It is imperative to recognise and call out such an ultra-conservative and regressive mindset with complete disregard for women's rights and health that is behind this concerted moment to curb abortion access and shield ourselves from the insidious consequences of the legal changes happening in the US.

(The writer is CEO, Ipas Development Foundation)



FOREIGN EYE



GOLDEN AGE

Creative verve and business acumen have shifted from Tinseltown to Silicon Valley. While Hollywood squeezes its franchises until their pips squeak, Netflix does business differently, ruthlessly cancelling TV series after two or three seasons, the better to fulfil their remit of maximising subscribers. If we live in TV's new golden age, where the big screen has been eclipsed creatively and financially by the small screen, Netflix and Amazon are largely responsible for it. (The Guardian editorial)

SUPER 7 FOR T'WOOD IN NATIONAL FILM AWARDS

'Best actress' Keerthy Suresh tops in Tollywood's hour of reckoning, writes K RAMYA SREE

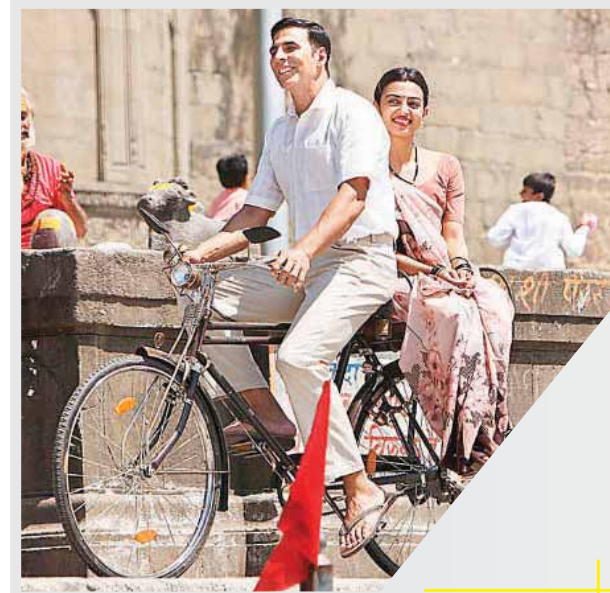
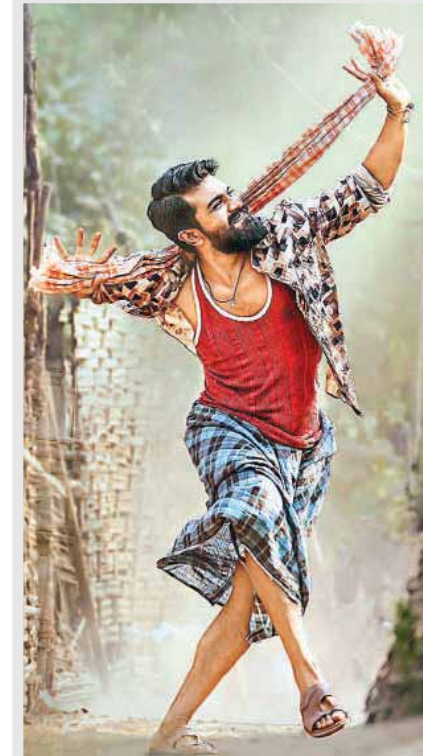
The delay in the announcement of the coveted 66th National Film Awards has come as a blessing in disguise for Tollywood. It is celebration time for all those associated with Telugu film industry as it has bagged an overwhelming seven awards this year, which were announced on Friday.

In a way, Tollywood has outshone itself with the icing on the cake coming in the form of a triple crown for Mahanati, a biopic on the legendary actress

Savitri. Awe received two, while Rangasthalam and Chi La Sow were bestowed with an honour each. If the Best Film award was clinched by Gujarati film Hellaro and the best film in Hindi was won by Sriram Raghavan's Andha Dhun, the one cornering glory in the debutant category was Sudhakar Reddy Yakanthi, who was conferred the Indira Gandhi Award for Best Debut Film Director for his Naal.

Khurrana had to share the best actor award with Vicky Kaushal for his equally captivating performance in Uri: The Surgical Strike. The war movie also won the best director award for Aditya Dhar. Keerthy Suresh won the best actress award for playing the role of Savitri in Mahanati. Mahanati starring Samantha Akkineni, Vijay Devarakonda and Dulquer Salmaan romped home the Best Telugu film category. Making it a triple success was the 'Best Costume Award'. Awe made its mark by receiving 'Best Make-Up' and 'Best

VFX' awards. Rahul Ravindran's debut movie as a director, Chi La Sow, won best original screenplay award. Rangasthalam, which was a huge hit at the box office, won an award for 'Best Sound Mixing'. The much hyped Kannada star Yash's film KGF has won the 'Best Action' film award. Ayushmann's Badhai Ho has won the 'Best Wholesome Entertainment'. Last year, Village Rockstars won Best Film award, while Baahubali 2 won 'Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment'.



FEATURE FILMS

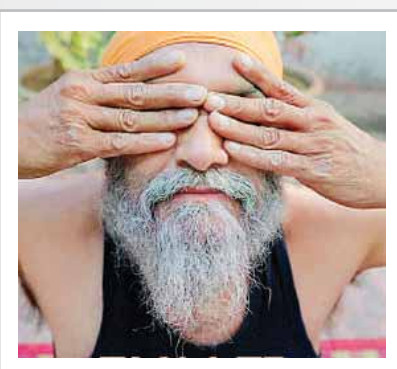
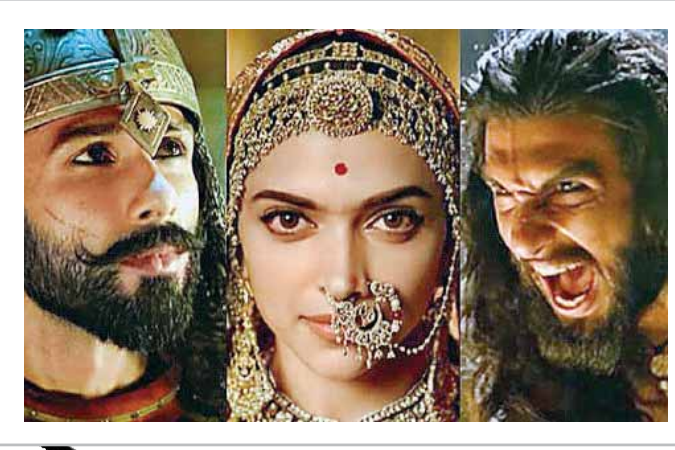
- ACTORS WHO GET SPECIAL MENTION FOR THEIR PERFORMANCE:** Sruthi Hariharan, Chandrachud Rai, Josy Joseph, Savitri
- BEST RAJASTHANI FILM:** Turtle
- BEST PANCHANGA FILM:** In The Land Of Poisonous Women
- BEST GARO FILM:** Anna
- BEST MARATHI FILM:** Bhonga
- BEST TAMIL FILM:** Baram
- BEST HINDI FILM:** Andhadhun
- BEST URDU FILM:** Hamid
- BEST BENGALI FILM:** Ek Je Chhilo Raja
- BEST MALAYALAM FILM:** Sudani From Nigeria
- BEST TELUGU FILM:** Mahanati
- BEST KANNADA FILM:** Nathicharami
- BEST KONKANI FILM:** Amori
- BEST ASSAMESE FILM:** Bulbul Can Sing
- BEST PUNJABI FILM:** Harjeeta
- BEST GUJARATI FILM:** Reva
- BEST CHEOREOPHY:** Padmaavat, Ghoomar
- BEST MUSIC DIRECTOR:** Padmaavat
- BEST SPECIAL EFFECT:** Awe, KGF
- BEST MUSIC DIRECTION:** Sanjay Leela Bhasali, Padmaavat
- BEST BACKGROUND MUSIC AWARD:** Uri
- BEST MAKEUP ARTIST:** Ranjith for Awe
- BEST COSTUME DESIGNER:** Mahanati, Rajshree Patnaik, Varun Shah and Archana Rao
- BEST ACTION:** KGF
- BEST LYRICS:** Manjutha for Nathicharami
- BEST PRODUCTION DESIGN:** Kammaru Sambhavam
- BEST EDITING:** Nathicharami
- BEST LOCATION SOUND:** Tendhya
- BEST SOUND DESIGN:** Uri
- BEST MIXED TRACK:** Rangasthalam
- BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY:** Andhadhun
- BEST DIALOGUE:** Tarikh
- BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Ulu
- BEST FEMALE PLAYBACK SINGER:** Bindu Mani for Mayavi
- BEST MALE PLAYBACK SINGER:** Arijit Singh for Binte Dil from Padmaavat
- BEST FILM ON SOCIAL ISSUES:** Pad Man
- BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS:** Surekha Sikri for Badhaai Ho
- BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR:** Swanand Kirkire for Chumbak
- BEST ACTOR:** Ayushmann Khurrana, Andhadhun, and Vicky Kaushal, Uri
- BEST ACTRESS:** Keerthy Suresh for Mahanati
- BEST DIRECTION:** Aditya Dhar for Uri
- BEST FEATURE FILM:** Helaru (Gujarati)
- BEST CHILDREN'S FILM:** Sarkari. Hi. Pra. Shale Kasaragodu, Koduge
- BEST FILM ON ENVIRONMENT CONSERVATION:** Paani
- NARGIS DUTT AWARD FOR NATIONAL INTEGRATION:** Ondanya Eradalu
- BEST POPULAR FILM PROVIDING WHOLESOME ENTERTAINMENT:** Badhaai Ho
- JURY AWARDS:** Kedara (Bengali), Helaru

BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY: Chi La Sow

- MOST FILM-FRIENDLY STATE:** UTTARAKHAND
- BEST BOOK ON CINEMA:** Malayalam book *Mano Prarthana Pulley, In A Cult Of Their Own* gets Special Mention
- BEST FILM CRITIC:** Blase Johnny (Malayalam), Ananth Vijay (Hindi)

NON-FEATURE FILM CATEGORY

- BEST FILM ON FAMILY VALUES:** Chalo Jeetey Hai
- BEST SHORT FICTION FILM:** Kasab
- SOCIAL JUSTICE FILM:** Why Me, Ekant
- BEST INVESTIGATION FILM:** Amoli
- BEST SPORTS FILM:** Swimming Through The Darkness
- BEST EDUCATIONAL FILM:** Sarlabh Virala
- BEST FILM ON SOCIAL ISSUE:** Taala Te Kunjee
- BEST ENVIRONMENTAL FILM:** The World's Most Famous Tiger
- BEST PROMOTIONAL FILM:** Rediscovering Jahannum
- BEST FILM ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:** GD Naidu: The Edison of India
- BEST ARTS AND CULTURAL FILM:** Bunkar
- BEST DEBUT NON-FEATURE FILM OF A DIRECTOR:** Feluda
- BEST NON-FEATURE FILM:** Sunrise, The Secret Life of Frogs



what's brewing?

CITY GUIDE

MUSIC

SAFARNAMA

Renowned singer Lucky Ali will take you on a ride through his soulful melodies along with his other popular numbers. August 10, 7.30 pm, Shilpakala Vedika, Madhapur.



EXHIBITION



LIKE THE AIR I BREATHE

Artist Bakula Nayak exhibits her paintings inspired by the beautiful epic love poem *Ritusamharam* and vintage ephemeras. Ongoing, until September 2, 6.30 pm, Kalakruti Art Gallery, Banjara Hills.

OXFORD DRAWINGS

This exhibition showcases exquisite works by renowned and eminent artist KG Subramanyan done in the year 1987-88 while he was at Oxford. Ongoing, until August 13, 5 to 7 pm, Taj Falaknuma Palace, Falaknuma.



WORKSHOP

KNIFE PAINTING

A free workshop organised by Suman Krishna and Nandini R Penna will deal with different techniques to use knife to paint on a canvas. Materials will be provided by organisers. August 10, 11 am, Lamakaan, Banjara Hills.

COMEDY

DON'T JUDGE

Stage Adda brings Sumit Sourav, Raunak Rajani, and Shreeja Chaturvedi together for the very first time to your city Hyderabad with a laughter dose. August 10, 7 pm, IQ Lounge, Somajigudda.



THEATRE

ANDE KE CHILKE

Set in the 1960s, about a household that primarily indulged in vegetarian meals; eggs were a taboo. Interestingly, the house's daughter-in-law would brave the troubles and resort to eating some of the yellow and white goodness. She would also secretly cooking this forbidden delight and serving it to her husband and brother-in-law. August 10, 8.15 pm, Phoenix Arena,HITEC City.



MAIDANAM

Based on one of the most famous and most controversial of Chalam's novels, it is about Rajeswari, a young, frustrated housewife. It all starts with her thorough disillusionment with her tradition-bound, unfeeling, emotionally sterile lawyer-husband who treats her as a piece of property, as one who fulfils his sexual and social needs. August 10, 7.30 pm, Lamakaan, Banjara Hills.



KAIFI AUR MEIN

A theatrical and musical journey which will be Shabana Azmi's tribute to her father Kaifi Azmi. Javed Akhtar will enact Kaifi in this venture. August 11, 7 pm, Shilpakala Vedika, Madhapur.

JAMBU DWEEPAM

This 1988 political satire starts with two characters — a king, Prajapati, and his Sevak, Nandi — finds that they are shipwrecked on an island called Jambu Dweepam. The island is ruled by Bruhaspathi, a revolutionary leader who believes in inequality and social justice. What ensues is a battle between the conflicting ideals of the two leaders. August 10, 7 pm, Phoenix Arena,HITEC City.



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



Photos by SV Chary

PARTY



Sumaya Reddy

Rajayalakshmi

Shradha Sharma

Srijita

LOOM FASHION

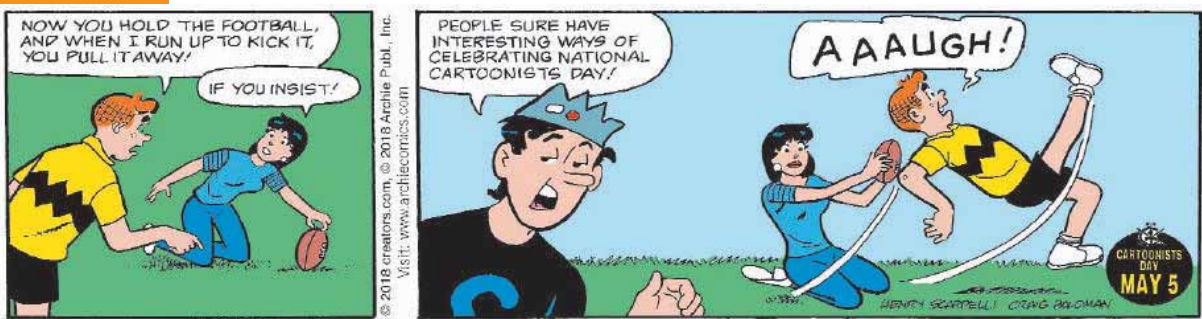
Designer Rajayalakshmi Gubba unveiled her special collection 'Forgotten weaves of Banaras', at an event, which was organised on the occasion of National Handloom Day. The event featured socialites and models wearing Banaras sarees

AWARD NIGHT

Many eminent personalities from the city were spotted at the Fifth Grand TCEI Excellence Awards 2019, organised at an exhibition centre in the city. Principle Secretary of IT Jayesh Ranjan graced the event, which saw in attendance many socialites.

FUN TIME

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



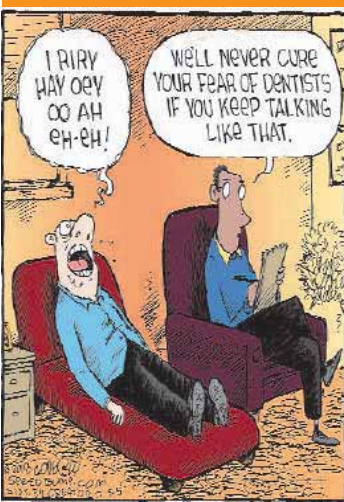
GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

- 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

- Sparkling precious stones
- A machine for weaving
- This vehicle has no wheels and is pulled over snow
- Make a rough estimate
- Clamber up
- Prepare for a sports match
- Where a cow stores its milk
- A dry land with few plants
- A long soft seat
- A group of words which makes sense
- False hair on the head
- Bears do this in the winter
- These spin webs
- Die under water
- Astound
- A female sheep

DOWN

- Extremely pleased
- Overhead
- A bird makes this
- Detected with the nose

SOLUTION

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

GINGER MEGGS



ASWINI DUTT GARU PREDICTED NATIONAL HONOUR: NAG ASHWIN

The director is excited about actress Keerthy Suresh winning the National Award for Best Actress, finds NAGARAJ GOUD

With *Mahanati*, a biopic of Savitri, which depicted the late legendary figure's rise and fall in Telugu and Tamil cinema, adjudged as the best Telugu film on Friday in New Delhi, film's director Nag Ashwin is a happy man. He, however, is more excited about his leading lady Keerthy Suresh walking away with the best actress' trophy. Keerthy's performance was raved by one and all, with many critics pointing out that her performance was similar to watching Savitri on screen. From looks to mannerisms, the Kerala girl got everything spot on. "I'm happy about the film getting its share but I'm happier about Keerthy getting the award. It's something we feel Savitri *garu* deserved. She hasn't won a National Award in her career despite being deserving of it," he told us exclusively on Friday evening.

He wants to thank the entire team for the project, for it was a "crazy project" to make on celluloid. Did he have a word with Keerthy? "I left her a message but she hasn't got back to me yet. Guess she is shooting, else, she must be bombarded with calls like me," he laughs, adding that the acknowledgement calls for a celebration. "I want to gather the whole team and raise a toast."

Ashwin adds that his wife Priyanka and sister-in-law Swapna Dutt, both of whom produced the project, are ecstatic. So is Aswini Dutt, his father-in-law who presented the film under his prestigious Vyjayanthi Movies. "He had more faith on us getting the national honour than we did. And naturally, he is chuffed to bits," he exclaims.

At this moment of glory, Ashwin wants to extend his wholehearted thanks to Savitri's daughter Vijaya Chamundeswari who has been a "great support for the film on many creative levels". "She is a part of the film as far as I'm concerned," he ends.



Nag Ashwin



Keerthy Suresh in a still from Mahanati



Aswini Dutt



Nani



Varun Tej

Gang Leader to lock horns with Valmiki

The two movies will release on September 13. Director Harish Shankar retweeted Nani's tweet and said that it will be a festival of sorts for moviegoers

One of the first casualties in Tollywood after *Saaho* was deferred to August 30 from Independence Day was Nani-starrer *Gang Leader*, which booked this month-end date three months ago. Film's production house Mythri Movie Makers confirmed their movie getting postponed to the last week of July, without announcing a new date. On Friday, Nani declared the new date as

September 13. "*Ashta Chamma. Bhale Bhale Magadivoy*. I missed you September! Let's do it one more time *Gang Leader* from Sept 13th," the actor, who is playing a crime writer in the Vikram Kumar comic caper, posted on Twitter.

The new date, however, isn't a clear window for Nani. Harish Shankar's *Valmiki*, starring Varun Tej in the titular role, is also slated to release on the same day. It was initially planned for the first

week of next month, but it was rescheduled to September 13 to give *Saaho* more mileage in the second week. The director isn't worried though, he tweeted that it will be a festival of sorts for moviegoers. "Wowwww it's going to be a festival on 13th September for movie lovers... *Valmiki* And *Gang Leader*...whole hearted wishes to the team of *Gang Leader* from the team of *Valmiki*...*(sic)*," Harish wrote, retweeting Nani's announcement.

There is a strong buzz that the director has a masala story for Rajini and the latter asked his friend Kalaipuli S Thanu to take care of production duties

Rajini nod to Siva's masala film?

When cinematographer-turned-filmmaker Siva met superstar Rajinikanth at the latter's Poes Garden residence in Chennai earlier this May, a wave of speculations triggered that they are in talks to join forces for a film. Who wouldn't think? After all, Rajini made a career out of starring in a larger than life cinema while Siva is the

poster boy for such movies right now in Tamil, with blockbusters like *Veeram*, *Vedalam* and *Viswasam* to his credit. However, speculations died down soon after it emerged that Siva was invited over for Rajini to congratulate him on the success of *Viswasam*, which the actor really liked.

Right now, there seems to be a different story developing altogether. Word in the corridors of Kollywood has it that Siva has

once again met Rajini recently and this time its work-related. Apparently, the director has a masala story for Rajini that will satisfy his legion of fans and the actor readily evinced interest to spearhead it. Work on the project is on and there's a strong buzz that Rajini asked his friend Kalaipuli S Thanu to take care of production duties. The revered name in Tamil circles produced the box-office smash *Kabali* earlier with the sexagenarian and he is credited to have given the moniker 'superstar' to the actor decades ago. The film will move in front of cameras after the actor wraps up *Darbar* with AR Murugadoss.

With back-to-back films in his kitty, one can't help but wonder if Rajini's full-fledged political entry has taken a backseat?



Rajinikanth



Siva



Rajendra Prasad



Prudhvi Raj

Rajendra Prasad counters Prudhvi Raj's comments on Jagan

Responding to the allegations of actor and SVBC Chairman Prudhvi Raj, that Tollywood celebrities don't like YS Jaganmohan Reddy becoming Chief Minister and that is the reason why they are not meeting him since his swearing-in ceremony,

senior actor Rajendra Prasad said that celebrities are not businessmen to meet Chief Minister. He also added that there is no particular rule that urges actors to meet CM.

He made these statements on Friday after he visited Tirumala temple. Rajendra Prasad says, "I have good relations with YS Jaganmohan

Reddy. Both Telugu CMs have positive vibe towards the cinema industry. I was scheduled to meet CM Jagan on Saturday but it was postponed to three days later due to some reasons."

Even YSRCP leader and actor Posani Krishna Murali mentioned that Prudhvi's comments are wrong.

The makers of *Sarileru Neekevaru* unveiled the actor's first look from the movie on his birthday on Friday

MEET MAJOR AJAY KRISHNA

As superstar Mahesh Babu blew out 44 candles on his birthday cake on Friday, the makers of his next, *Sarileru Neekevaru*, have unveiled his first look from the film. He plays Major Ajay Krishna in the comic caper laced with action, and going by the picture, he has aced the look. He is as dashing as ever.

Earlier in the day, the makers also released his introduction video, the portions of which were shot in Kashmir last month. He is seen gazing contemplatively in one scene while the other has a slow-mo shot of him walking out of an

army camp in his signature style, as the catchy title song ran in the background. Shots of soldiers marching towards their camp with concertina wire in the foreground also dotted the video.

Meanwhile, the shoot of the film is presently progressing in Hyderabad. While a lengthy humorous episode has been shot till now in a specially erected train set at Annapurna Studios, the action has shifted to other scenes on Friday, with actor-turned-politician Vijaya Shanti joining the team. It was her first day at the sets after 14 long years. She will be shooting for another couple of days before coming back again for another schedule.

A joint production venture between Dil Raju, Anil Sunkara and G Mahesh Babu Entertainment, the film, to be wrapped up by November, also features Rajendra Prasad, Prakash Raj and Satyadev in key roles. It will fly into the cinema halls next Sankranti.

— NG



Mahesh Babu

No more traffic jams



Flying cars, which are like drones — big enough to hold humans — promise to be better than helicopters, which are expensive to maintain, noisy and require trained pilots

Japanese electronics maker NEC Corp showed a flying car, a large drone-like machine with four propellers that hovered steadily for about a minute. The test flight reaching three metres (10 feet) high was held in a gigantic cage, as a safety precaution, at an NEC facility in a Tokyo suburb. The preparations such as the repeated checks on the machine and warnings to reporters to wear helmets took up more time than the two brief demonstrations.

The Japanese government is behind flying cars, with the goal of having people zipping around in them by the 2030s.

Among the government-backed endeavour is a huge test course for flying cars that's built in an area devastated by the 2011 tsunami, quake and nuclear disasters in Fukushima in north-eastern Japan. Mie, a prefecture in central Japan that's frequently used as a resort area by Hollywood celebrities, also hopes to use flying cars to connect its various islands.

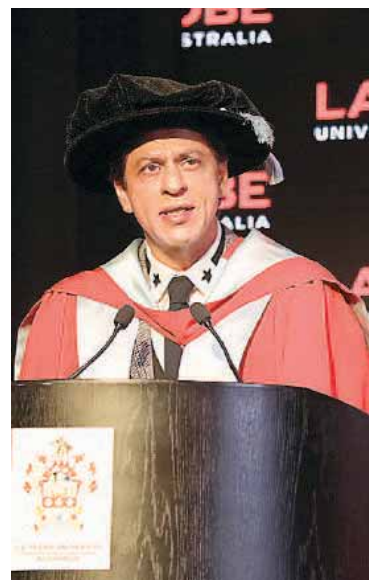
Cartivator Chief Executive Tomohiro Fukuzawa said their machines were also flying longer lately.

NEC is among the more-than-80 sponsor companies for Cartivator's flying car, which also include Toyota Motor Corp, group companies and video game company Bandai Namco Holdings. The goal is to deliver a seamless transition from driving to flight like the world of *Back to the Future*, although huge hurdles remain such as battery life, the need for regulations and safety concerns.

NEC officials said their flying car was designed for unmanned flights for deliveries but utilised the company's technology in its other operations such as space travel and cybersecurity.

Often called EVtol, for "electric vertical takeoff and landing" aircraft, a flying car is defined as an aircraft that's electric or hybrid electric, with driverless capabilities, that can land and takeoff vertically. All of the flying car concepts, which are like drones big enough to hold humans, promise to be better than helicopters. Helicopters are expensive to maintain, noisy to fly and require trained pilots. Flying cars also are being touted as useful for disaster relief.

US ride-sharing and transportation network Uber is planning demonstrator flights in 2020 and commercial operations in 2023 and has chosen Dallas, Los Angeles and Melbourne as the first cities to offer what it calls Uber Air flights. Dubai has also been aggressive about pursuing flying cars. Japanese officials say Japan has a good chance of emerging as a world leader because the government and the private sector will work closely.



Shah Rukh Khan Scholarship at Australian university

La Trobe University, Australia, on Friday announced 'Shah Rukh Khan La Trobe University PhD Scholarship', which provides a life-changing opportunity for an aspiring female researcher from India. This four-year PhD scholarship is being introduced in recognition of Mr Khan's dedication to women empowerment, through his Meer Foundation.

The announcement was made during Shah Rukh Khan's visit to La Trobe University as a chief guest of the 2019 Indian Film Festival of Melbourne. Shah Rukh Khan welcomed the announcement of a scholarship in his name. "As a passionate advocate for women's equality and empowerment, I am delighted that this scholarship will give an Indian woman a chance to pursue research in a field, which is likely to lead her towards an exciting and successful career. I thank La Trobe University wholeheartedly for giving someone this wonderful opportunity," Mr Khan said.

WON'T APOLOGISE FOR HONESTY: TAAPSEE



Taapsee Pannu has said that she will not apologise for her "double filter" comment about Kangana Ranaut, for which she has faced flak from the latter's sister and spokesperson Rangoli Chandel.

The whole argument started when Kangana's sister Rangoli Chandel attacked Taapsee on Twitter. "Kuch log Kangana ko copy kar ke he apni dukaan chalte hain, magar please note, they never acknowledge her, not even a mention of her name in praising the trailer. Last I heard, Taapsee ji said Kangana needs a double filter and Taapsee ji you need to stop being a sasti copy," Rangoli tweeted.

"Seriously, I will not apologise for my honest opinion. I did not know that she has a patent on curly hair because I was born with curly hair and my parents are responsible for that. So, I cannot apologise for that either. Rest, I do not know what else I have copied," said Taapsee, adding, "However, if I am a copy of a good actress like her (Kangana)—and I always maintain that she is a good actress — I

take it as a compliment. I am also called *sasti* (cheap). Yes, I am not the highest-paid actress, so that way you can call me *sasti*."

Taapsee also mentioned, "I did not reply to that individual because they do not matter in my scheme of things. Why should I pay attention to people who do not matter to me? They are taking time out to say things to me, meaning I matter to them. Everyone knows how to bully, and even I know how to answer back. But there is a certain use of language and vocabulary that I have not learnt and I never will. So, I answered in my way."

The actress was speaking at a media interaction to promote her forthcoming film *Mission Mangal*. She said that negative comments like Rangoli's do not affect her spirit. "When a journalist asks me a question (on the subject), I answer because through your medium I can tell my audience who I am. So you people matter to me," she clarified, about taking in questions on the controversial issue.

The whole argument started a while back because Taapsee jocularly mentioned in an interview that Kangana needs a "double filter" because she is brutally honest and that puts her into trouble.

Kangana's sister and spokesperson Rangoli, however, was not amused, and she launched a tirade against Taapsee.

"One needs a filter when she does not have any pretension, and no filter between their mind and their mouth. I do not see this as a

derogatory comment. It is just a comment," Taapsee explained.

"Even my sister tells me to put a filter before I open my mouth in public. That is true because at times my honest opinion gets me into trouble. So my comment on 'keeping a filter' was not meant to be negative, though people on the other side took it negatively. I cannot change their perception," explained Taapsee.

— IANS



OPRAH PRAISES LATE FRIEND TONI

Oprah Winfrey praised her late friend and idol, Toni Morrison, hailing the best-selling author's "confidence and self-assuredness and nobility". Winfrey and Morrison knew each other for more than 20 years, dating back to when Winfrey was so determined to learn the author's unlisted phone number that she called the local fire department. Winfrey said that when she started her book club in 1996, she was thinking of Morrison. Winfrey recalled that when Morrison made her first appearance on *The Oprah Show*, and talked about raising her boys as a single mother.

Trend Blazers

JOHN IS ANAND'S LUCKY CHARM

Veteran producer Anand Pandit is on a success streak with his films. Having recently acquired the all-India distribution rights for three films, Pandit is riding the box office wave. *Batla House*, the second film to release under his banner in August stars John Abraham as the protagonist. He says, "*Batla House* is a gripping film and with John in the lead, it's definitely going to be a superhit. The storyline has been developed carefully and it incorporates layers of every character's personality. John is my lucky charm, my last film with him was a blockbuster and this will be no different." He has done films like, *Great Masti*, *Sarkar*, *Baazaar*, *Batti Gul Meter Chalu*, etc.

To keep the dialogue about the handloom sector going, it is important to couple it with a business module so that the youth finds it relevant and cool, says SAKSHI SHARMA



It was in 1905 when several freedom fighters had gathered in the Calcutta Town Hall to protest against the partition of Bengal by the British government and started a Swadeshi movement that aimed at boycotting all British products and reviving the use of homegrown ones. It's since then that the event marked itself in the history as the National Handloom Day. However, how much of it has been ever followed?

Designer Ritu Kumar, who was one of the panelists at a discussion at the Crafts Museum, questioned its theme, "Can our handloom heritage of the past be a springboard to the future?" How will a day's discussion help in reviving the handloom sector? Silence followed. She then stressed upon the reality of the handloom sector and asked people to talk logic rather than only working on sentiments. The reality is that handlooms are so costly, that they are not able to compete with other cheaper materials

like synthetics and cotton, which makes it quite obvious for people to prefer other clothes over handlooms. They need a solid commercial and marketing policy. She said, "We need to find out a practical solution to this rather than merely questioning our lost traditions." Giving an example of her 12-year-old project in Banaras to revive the traditions, she said that it was aimed at including the youth in restoring our values but nobody turned up signalling that they are not interested in their roots. Through this, she wanted to make the people aware about our rich heritage which makes our fashion aesthetics different from the rest of the world.

Sunil Sethi, FDCI chairman, answered her question. He said that it's the reason that baby steps are being taken today and this day is being popularised with the #handloomeveryday on social media, "since the youth is most active there, these days." Regular use would create markets, he felt. Pointing towards Padma Shri

Ramkishore Chippa Derawala, who is a master-printer of the Dabu and Bagru prints of Rajasthan, he said, "Look at him, he took a vow 39 years ago that 'I will only wear handloom.' He is living by his words even today."

To this, Ramkishore proudly responded that "yes," his kurta is of Andhra, "double ikkat (a fabric) *bolte hai isey*. Before this, I used to wear Mangalagiri." He shared that he belongs to a family where everyone wears handloom. So, when newer, cheaper products such as terry cotton and synthetics paved their way, he said, "I decided that I won't wear anything other than handloom until I am alive." Such a strong take to sustain the sector and bring it in the mainstream makes it quite evident of how keenly he wants the acceptance and revival of handloom at a broader level in the country.

He further said that this discussion would not have any effect until and unless the government is included in this. Giving an example about the weavers' service centres,



which the government has opened in various cities, he said, "They merely exist to showcase the efforts of the government but are hardly benefiting the weavers. It is important to go to the ground level and interact with the weavers to know the ground reality." He expressed his concern over the five per cent tax on weavers' products, which should be removed "to make the handlooms cheaper and the government should also provide subsidies." He added about making a powerloom mark so that people can differentiate between handloom and powerloom. He then agreed to what Ritu said over the drift between the young generation and handloom,

'THE KARVATI SAREES OF MAHARASHTRA ARE LOST BECAUSE THERE ARE NO WEAVERS TO MAKE THEM. THE TECHNIQUE USED TO CREATE THEM IS VERY FINE BUT THEIR REVIVAL IS TOUGH'

showing his concern over the same. He said, "They prefer earning ₹10,000 to ₹15,000 working on computers rather than earning ₹600 per day for manufacturing handlooms."

To this, designer David Abraham said that the issue has to be addressed at various levels and one cannot expect only the government or private sectors to take the responsibility of reviving handlooms. The needle has "shifted." He said, "Over the

years, there has been an improvement in this sector. Young designers are also engaging themselves here. But they also need to understand that this is our USP and the greatest product of luxury in the world." He urged everyone to look at handlooms from the Indian perspective of sustainability and not from the Western prism as they already are way ahead in their approach.

Textile conservationist

Madhu Jain, who is also known for her eco-friendly and sustainable production processes, added to this that we have changed the way we look at our treasure (handlooms). And it is very important for us to know the "intricacies of our products so that we are aware of its blending techniques." She stressed upon having clusters of passionate people throughout the country who focus on reviving this culture and preach the same by giving her example — it's her love for India's indigenous textiles that has been providing a livelihood to the weaver communities for more than 30 years now.

However, saree connoisseur and textile scholar, Rta Kapur Chishti pointed

towards the increase in consumption of handloom clothes only because of a sustained awareness about the artistry involved. Otherwise, the weavers and production were shrinking.

Giving an example of the Karvati sarees of Maharashtra, she said, "These sarees are lost because there are no weavers to make them. The technique used to create them is very fine but their revival is tough." She agreed to the fact that celebrating one day for handloom is not enough as it is important to remind people of its very existence since "people, nowadays, are not aware that handloom still exists." She runs "The Sari School" in the capital and believes that we can blend our heritage with "a lot of inventions and creativity" to help it sustain and grow.

The session concluded on discussing all the possible and practical solutions like — relating handloom with all quirky designers to increase the youth's connect, and rather than a discussion, initiating an interface between people and weavers. It stressed upon keeping this dialogue going so as to couple the craft and handloom industry with the fashion industry in a more open way.

Photo: Ranjan Dimri



