

ANALYSIS 7
 NATION FIRST,
 NOT JINGOISM

VIJAYAWADA 9
 VIVA FOOTBALL
 FANS!

SPORTS 12
 GAUFF BOOKS
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VIJAYAWADA, SATURDAY AUGUST 31, 2019; PAGES 12 ₹3

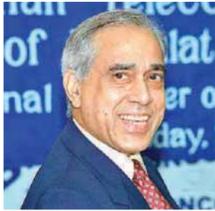


the pioneer



SAAHO REVIEW:
 'BAAHUBALI'
 COMES DOWN
 CRASHING
 Page 11

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Misra, Prin Secy to PM, wants to leave

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Principal Secretary, Nripendra Misra, has expressed his intention to be relieved of his duties, the government said on Friday. Modi has asked him to continue for two weeks, principal government spokesperson Sitanshu Kar said. Former cabinet secretary P K Sinha has been appointed as officer on special duty by the Prime Minister, he said. Misra has been with Modi in the PMO since 2014.

CBDT notifies special cell for startups

NEW DELHI: The CBDT on Friday notified creation of a five-member special cell to address the grievances of startups with relation to angel tax and other tax-related issues. An order issued by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said the 'Startup Cell' will be headed by the member (Income Tax and Computerisation) of the Board. "The cell will work towards redressal of grievances and mitigate tax-related issues in case of startup entities with respect to administration of Income-tax Act, 1961," the order, accessed by this reporter, said.

HC asks TS PCB to book cases for using plastic wrappings

HYDERABAD: The Telangana High Court on Friday asked the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation to file a report revealing its strategy to curb the use of plastic wrappings around Ganesh idols during the upcoming Ganesh festival celebrations. It also asked the Telangana State Pollution Control Board (TSPCB) to file cases against all the violators of Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 in the city and submit a detailed report on the issue. The Court passed the orders while dealing with public interest litigation (PIL) plea filed by one YV Srinivasa Colony, resident of Srinivasa Colony of LB Nagar from the city.

TODAY

ALMANAC
 Month & Paksham: Shravana & Krishna Paksha
 Panchangam
 Tithi : Pratipada: 12:13 pm
 Nakshatram: Purva Phalguni 02:08 pm
 Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)
 Rahukalam: 09:10 am - 10:43 am
 Yamagandam: 01:49 pm - 03:21 pm
 Variyam: 08:27 pm - 09:51 pm
 Gulika: 06:05 am - 07:38 am
 Good Times: (to start any important work)
 Anritakalam: 08:33 am - 09:57 am
 Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:51 am - 12:41 pm

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
 Forecast: Thunderstorm
 Temp: 36/26
 Humidity: 75%
 Sunrise: 06:01
 Sunset: 06:31
 Current Weather Conditions Updated August 30, 2019 5:00 PM

ANDHRA BANK GOES THE SBH WAY

Telugu identity to disappear from country's banking sector

Death blow to the vestige of Telugu identity and linguistic affinity

L VENKAT RAM REDDY
 HYDERABAD

For records, the amalgamation of the Union Bank of India, Andhra Bank and the Corporation Bank sounds good as it would create India's fifth largest PSB with Rs 14.6 lakh crore business and the fourth largest branch network. Still, the invaluable intangibles lost in the process, particularly the linguistic affinity that people had for Andhra Bank, not just for its name of Telugu descent but also its last-mile connectivity across the two Telugu states with unique systems designed to relate to the local people, cannot ever be replaced by the larger entity that has taken shape. For instance, Andhra Bank pioneered in launching mobile biometric ATMs, which offers convenience to illiterate and uneducated customers. These ATMs stop at predestinated sites and the customers, instead of entering their personal identification number (PIN), have to match their fingerprints in the bank database.



- Telangana lost its identity with SBH merger in April 2017
- Andhra Bank to confine to history after merger with UBI

The new amalgamated PSB, granting commitment, cannot do justice to the Telugu identity that was intertwined with Andhra Bank, which was founded by freedom-fighter

and multi-faceted genius Dr. Bhogaraju Pattabhi Sitaramayya. Sitaramayya founded Andhra Bank in Machilipatnam. It was registered on 20th November 1923 and the bank commenced business on 28th November 1923 with a paid-up capital of Rs 1.00 lakh and an authorised capital of Rs 10.00 lakh.

Continued on Page 4

Govt announces mega merger of PSBs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the biggest consolidation exercise in the banking space, the government on Friday announced four major mergers of public sector banks, bringing down their total number to 12 from 27 in 2017, a move aimed at making state-owned lenders global sized banks. United Bank of India and Oriental Bank of Commerce will be merged with Punjab National Bank, making the proposed entity the second largest public sector bank (PSB). Making the announcements, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said Syndicate Bank will be merged with Canara Bank, while Allahabad Bank will be amalgamated with Indian Bank.



Nirmala Sitharaman

Similarly, Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank will be consolidated with Union Bank of India. In place of fragmented lending capacity with 27 PSBs in 2017, now there will be only 12 state-run banks post consolidation, Sitharaman said.

Non-bailable warrant issued against Renuka

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A court in Telangana on Friday issued a non-bailable warrant against senior Congress leader and former Union Minister Renuka Chowdhury.



Renuka Chowdhury

The Second Additional First Class Judicial Magistrate's Court in Khammam district issued the warrant as she had not been attending the court proceedings in connection with a four-year-old cheating case against her. It is alleged that the Congress leader took money from an aspirant for the Telangana Assembly elections ticket in 2014, but did not return the money after failing to get him the ticket. A case of cheating was registered against her in 2015 on a complaint by a woman, B. Kalavathi, who alleged that Chowdhury took Rs 1.10 crore from her husband Bhukya Rana Chandra Naik with a promise to get him party ticket to contest from the Wyra Assembly seat in Khammam district in the 2014 elections. The then minister failed to arrange the ticket for Naik, who died subsequently. Kalavathi said the former minister did not return the money. As the Congress leader was not attending the court pro-

ceedings and had even allegedly refused to receive the summons, the court issued a non-bailable warrant against her. Renuka Chowdhury lost to TRS from the Khammam Lok Sabha seat in the General Election in May. "My husband was not given the Wyra ticket and he asked Renuka Chowdhury to return the amount. Renuka refused to pay the money and used filthy language against my husband," she said. She further complained that Renuka's assistants, Pullaiah, Rama Rao, Ranga Reddy, Pulla Reddy and Dayakar Reddy, had allegedly abused Ramji Naik taking his caste name. Ramji died later. Unable to bear the cheating by the former Union minister, Ramji Naik went into depression and died on October 14, 2014, she alleged.

Online Natl lab directory launched

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan on Friday launched an online directory, which provides information about Indian standards of various products and testing infrastructure in the country for the benefit of various stakeholders such as start-ups.

There are estimated 10,000 labs across the country. Currently, about 4,500 labs owned by public and private academic institutions are listed on the online directory. "The directory is a one-stop solution for all testing requirements and houses information about all testing facilities available in the country today," Paswan said after the launch of the directory. Consumers can also make use of the information to test the quality of the products they are using, he added. Elaborating more, the government's standard-setting body Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) director general, Surina Rajan, said the directory provides in detail what products can be tested against which standards -- Indian or international. At single click, from individual users to entrepreneurs to exporters to companies, everyone can know about testing requirements and location of testing labs in the country.

AP to develop water grid in three phases

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The State government will develop a water grid in three phases to supply safe drinking water to the people across the state, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy announced on Friday.

At a review meeting, the Chief Minister directed the officials from Andhra Pradesh Drinking Water Supply Corporation (APDWSC) to expedite works to implement the water grid scheme in three phases and ensure that clean drinking water is supplied to people.

He wanted the first phase to cover Srikakulam, East Godavari, West Godavari and Prakasam districts. He asked officials to ensure that the Uddanam water project cover the entire district of Srikakulam.

The second phase of water grid will cover Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam districts and Rayalaseema region. Krishna, Guntur and Nellore districts will be covered in the third phase of the programme.

The Chief Minister directed the officials to supply safe drinking water directly from the treatment plants to the homes of the people with kidney ailments in Uddanam area of Srikakulam. He asked them to prevent contamination of water in drinking water stor-



The Chief Minister directed Andhra Pradesh Drinking Water Supply Corporation officials to supply safe drinking water directly from the treatment plants to the homes of the people with kidney ailments in Uddanam area of Srikakulam. He asked them to prevent contamination of water in drinking water storage tanks and summer storage tanks.

Meanwhile, Jagan has prepared a work chart to address the Uddanam issue, which has drawn the attention of the entire State.

When Jana Sena Chief Pawan Kalyan had highlighted the pathetic conditions at Uddanam two years ago, he demanded the then TDP Government to declare a 'Health Emergency' in the area. Though the government failed to fulfill the assurances it had

made over Uddanam, Jagan has taken it as a priority issue and has directed officials to focus on it.

Measures should be taken to prevent contamination of water in drinking water storage tanks and summer storage tanks, he said.

Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy, District Collectors of the two Godavari districts and APDWSC officials were present at the review meeting.



Rahul targets Modi over not visiting Kerala

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not visiting flood-hit areas in Kerala and said the state was awaiting a relief package.

His criticism came through a tweet as Modi said that Kerala was "special" to him and he visited Gurusvayur Sri Krishna Temple in the state after winning his second term.

"Dear Mr Modi, After your visit to Gurusvayur - a huge flood visited Kerala, causing death and destruction. A timely visit then would have been appreciated. Kerala is suffering and still awaits a relief package, like those given to other flood hit states. This is unfair," Gandhi posted.

In his tweet, Gandhi, who was on a four-day visit to his Lok Sabha constituency Wayanad, which is among the worst-affected areas in the state, also tagged a post by the Prime Minister Office's handle.

Google reveals sites secretly hacking iPhones

AGENCIES ■ CALIFORNIA

The hackers had access to sensitive data, chat apps, and more on hacked iPhones, Google's Project Zero team says. Google on Thursday announced that it has discovered a number of hacked websites that have been found to be pushing malware to Apple iPhone users for at least two years. These websites, controlled by an unknown set of people, were being used to indiscriminately attack their visitors using a iPhone zero-day flaw. The search giant's Project Zero Team hasn't shared any details about these websites but it estimates that

The hackers had access to sensitive data, chat apps, and more on hacked iPhones, Google's Project Zero team says



they were receiving thousands of visitors per week. Earlier this year, Google had revealed this iOS zero-day flaw without sharing any specifics. "Earlier this year Google's Threat Analysis Group (TAG) discovered a small collection of hacked websites. The hacked sites were being used in indis-

criminate watering hole attacks against their visitors, using iPhone 0-day," Google's Project Zero team wrote in a blog post. "There was no target discrimination; simply visiting the hacked site was enough for the exploit server to attack your device, and if it was successful, install a monitoring implant.

We estimate that these sites receive thousands of visitors per week," the post added.

During its investigation, Google's TAG was able to spot five exploit chains, covering almost every version from iOS 10 through to iOS 12, being used by the hackers to spy the data off unsuspecting iPhone users. These exploits chains were targeting a total of 14 vulnerabilities present on the Apple iPhones, seven in the Web browser, five in the kernel, and two sandbox escapes. At least one of the privilege escalation chains was found to be zero-day (previously undiscovered) and it was reported to Apple in February this year and the com-

pany patched it soon after in iOS 12.1.4. Google had publicly revealed the zero-day but hadn't shared any details at the time.

According to Google, once the malware was successfully placed on an iPhone, it would steal files and upload live location data. It also had access to iPhone users' keychain, which is used for storing metadata and sensitive information like passwords, as well as apps like WhatsApp, iMessage, and Telegram. While the end-to-end encryption on these apps protects the messages from being snooped on during transit, the malware's presence of the device itself made the encryption moot.

CBI raids at 150 places across country

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Friday carried out joint surprise checks at 150 places across the country against corruption, officials said. The checks were conducted in Delhi, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Guwahati, Srinagar, Shillong, Chandigarh, Shimla, Chennai, Madurai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Pune, Gandhinagar, Goa, Bhopal, Jabalpur, Nagpur, Patna, Ranchi, Ghaziabad, Lucknow and Dehradun, they said. The special drive was conducted primarily at such points of corruption where



common citizens or small businessmen feel the maximum pinch of corruption in the government machinery, the officials said. They said the drive will sensitise all stakeholders about possible avenues of corruption and difficulties common citizens face while seeking services from such departments.

CAPSULE

VICE PRESIDENT TO FLAG OFF NEW TRAIN ON TOMO

VIJAYAWADA: Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu will flag off the new Intercity Express (Train No.12743/12744) between Gudur and Vijayawada, along with Suresh C Angadi, Minister for Railways on September 1 at 9:30am at Gudur Railway Station, according to a release from SCR on Friday. Accordingly, Train No. 02743 Gudur - Vijayawada Intercity Superfast Express will depart Gudur at 9:30am on September 1 (Sunday) and arrive at Vijayawada at 3pm on the same day. Enroute, the train will stop at Nellore, Kavali, Singarayakonda, Ongole, Chirala, Bapatla and Tenali stations. Regular services will commence from September 1 from Vijayawada and September 2 from Gudur respectively. Train No. 12744 Vijayawada - Gudur Intercity Super-Fast Express will depart from Vijayawada at 6pm from September 1 and arrive at Gudur at 11:30pm on the same day. In the opposite direction, Train No. 12743 Gudur - Vijayawada Intercity Super-Fast Express will depart from Gudur at 6:10am from September 2 and arrive at Vijayawada at 10:40am on the same day. Enroute, these trains will stop at Nellore, Kavali, Singarayakonda, Ongole, Chirala, Bapatla and Tenali stations. This train consists of two AC chair car and 10 second class chair car coaches.

CCVA TO HOST DANCE FESTIVAL TODAY

VIJAYAWADA: The dance festival Nrityabharathi in which seven classical dance forms of India is showcased will be held at the Cultural Centre of Vijayawada and Amaravati (CCVA) on Saturday, according to E Sivanagi Reddy, CEO, CCVA. The event is jointly organised by the AP State Creativity and Culture Commission. City Central MLA Malladi Vishnu will inaugurate the event. The festival is the 10th edition choreographed by Saraswathi Rajathesh, Director of the Dance Festival, and will showcase seven eminent dancers from across the nation on one platform. "Bharatanatyam by Moupiya Dutta from West Bengal, Kuchipudi by Manjula Indraganti from Telangana, Mohiniattam by Ramya Renjith from Kerala, Kathak by Nithin Shirale from Aurangabad, Manipuri by Macha Chaoreikamba from Manipur, Odissi by Jivana Devi from New Delhi, Sattriya by Monisha Devi Goswami from Assam, followed by a special thematic dance by Guru Shri Khaleel, will be held," he added.

COLLECTOR LAUNCHES VANA MAHOTCHAVAM

VIJAYAWADA: District Collector Md Imtiaz launched the 70th Vana Mahotchavam programme at VKR and VSP Polytechnic College Gudivada on Friday. Speaking on the occasion the collector said that everyone should feel the responsibility to protect greenery and environment for the coming generations. He said that on August 31 about ten lakh plants would be distributed across the district. He said that everyone should take part in the plantation drive and plant at least one sapling.

VIJAYAWADA BULLION RATES

GOLD	
₹ 39,160 (10 gm)	
₹ 340	↑
SILVER	
₹ 46,700 (1kg)	
₹ 600	↓

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG

Dressed/With Skin	₹129
Without Skin	₹147
Broiler at Farm	₹89

EGG RATES ₹/100

HYDERABAD	315
VIJAYAWADA	342
VISAKHAPATNAM	361
RETAIL PRICE	₹3.42

For many doctors, generic medicines are still untouchable

CH SHARMILA
VIJAYAWADA

Generic stores in the capital city are not doing huge business as most denizens are not showing interest to use them as most of the doctors are against prescribing them to patients. Though it was introduced a decade ago, there is no unanimity in the opinion regarding the use. Generic medicines require encouragement and it has to instil confidence among patients.

A generic medicine includes ingredients having the same strength and potency that a branded one has.

When medicine is developed, the pharmaceutical company, which discovers and markets it receives a patent on its new drug. These medicines are a copy of branded drugs which have the same dosage, indented use, effects, side effects, route of administration, risks, safety and strength as that of the original.

Sadly no pharmacy in the capital city seems to be in a mood to cooperate with the government in advertising the availability of generic drugs. "We buy what doctor has prescribed" is the common refrain.

The drug inspectors claim that doctors are giving lame



excuses as they don't want to lose their commission from the branded drug companies. "Though both the Central and State governments are emphasizing on the use of generic medicines, doctors in private hospitals are not prescribing those medicines. In the entire Krishna district, there are over 200 generic medical shops run by private parties across the district," said a doctor.

Drug controllers allege that doctors in private hospitals are more interested in exacting their share from the drug companies for prescribing the drugs

of the particular company.

For gastric pain, some suggest Gelsin, some Digene and others some other brand. It is just the brand that the doctor promotes.

Medical Council of India regulation states that every physician should prescribe drugs with generic names legibly and preferably in capital letters and he/she shall ensure that there is a rational prescription and use of drugs.

"However, many doctors are not following this. The usage of generic medicines would have multiplied had doctors fol-

Sadly no pharmacy in the capital city seems to be in a mood to cooperate with the government in advertising the availability of generic drugs. "We buy what doctor has prescribed" is the common refrain

lowed these guidelines," said a pharmacist at a medicine store in Madhura Nagar. Balaji, a doctor says "The molecule purity alter to a big brand and generic".

Praveen, a Pharma professor says "Generic medicines are very much genuine. Its authenticity stems from the fact that generic drugs have a similar chemical composition of compounds as branded ones. They also are a match in terms of dosage, route of administration, purity, and quality of the product that they sell as.

For that matter, they may be made in the same manufacturing unit just as branded medicines. Considering the said factors, there is enough reason to believe that generic medicines are genuine. But today the generic medicine scenario different from what it was before. The quality is not only improved but is equivalent to its branded counterpart.

The price is also much less. "Subramanyam, a former government doctor says: "Generic medicines are as safe and competent as their branded counterparts. Generic medicines exhibit the same characteristics and follow similar guidelines for their safety, quality, composition and effectiveness."

"The making of generic medicines observes the same guidelines and passes the same quality tests which branded ones do. They possess the same effectiveness as they go under the same manufacturing process but costs lesser due to no marketing and branding cost involved".

"The only thing which is not in common between a generic and branded drug is their product names and pricing in the market. I have been using generic medicines for my diabetes for about 6 months now," he added.



Saaho evokes mixed response

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The much-awaited mega film - Saaho - which created huge anticipation among fans was released on Friday, amidst mixed response.

The film's hero Prabhas, who become a pan-India star following the phenomenal success of Baahubali, is making his re-entry after two years of gap, with this film. Some fans said that action sequences were thrilling and succeeded in creating mass euphoria among audiences, while others felt that the film was a mere video game and expressed their disappointment at the lacklustre performance of their hero.

"The film has not lived up to the expectations. Prabhas' looks are shabby and hair-dos are awkward.

It is entertaining for kids," said a fan. The tickets rates were doubled as fans crowded theatres early morning. They burst crackers and celebrated the release of the movie.

Says Sri Sairam, a fan of Prabhas: "The film rides on the broad shoulders of Prabhas who carried it with aplomb. Saaho is a Prabhas show all the way and I want to watch this film again."

Veeresh, a film buff says: "Prabhas has delivered an electrifying performance, which is the highlight of the film. It has maintained Hollywood standards. Everyone has done justice to their roles. Breathtakingly shots with gorgeous cinematography are the highlights. This is definitely a must-watch film".



TDP leaders and party cadre staging a dharna at Dharna Chowk. CPI leaders and construction workers staging a dharna at Dasari Bhavan in Vijayawada on Friday



Telugu Desam, CPI demand release of sand

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In two separate incidents, TDP and CPI leaders staged dharnas at Dharna Chowk and Dasari Bhavan respectively on Friday, demanding the State Government to release sand for construction sector immediately.

TDP leaders MLC Buddha Venkanna, former MLA Bonda Uma, Katragadda Babu, Devineni Avinash and Pattabhi flayed the Jaganmohan Reddy led government's step-motherly treatment to construction workers.

"Owing to the dearth of

sand, construction activities have come to standstill in the State. The State Government is adopting double standards. While it is keen to implement the present excise policy even though it has decided to ban liquor, it is still waiting for the new sand policy, thus rendering lakhs of workers jobless," they said.

At Dasari Bhavan, CPI State Secretary K Ramakrishna, City Secretary Donepudi Sankar and Lorry Owners Association President Eswara Rao staged a protest and took out a 'Chalo Secretariat' rally, before the police swooped on them and

While the Government was keen to end the sand mafia to check the exorbitant price, it is selling for a premium now

arrested them amidst the melee. Senior Left leader Ramakrishna said that the State Government was keen to release only 4.5 metric tons of

sand through six stock points on September 5 but the demand for sand was around 8.5 metric tons.

"There is no cohesion between demand and supply. The tractor full of sand which was available Rs 1,800 is sold for more than Rs 15,000. While the Government was keen to end the sand mafia to check the exorbitant price, it is selling for a premium now," he said.

Sankar said that the government should explore steps to identify more reaches and take steps to meet the existing demand. "Six stock points are not sufficient, he added"

Be creative, District Collector tells students

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

District collector Md Imtiaz on Friday said that students should strive hard and bring out their creative talent to be successful in life. The collector was the chief guest of the programme organised by Red Ribbon Club of Maris Stella College on - Stay Drug-Free.

Addressing the students, asked students to be a part of humanitarian services to make the District a Disease-Free one. He suggested students plan their career with discipline and said that there was no shortcut to success and hard work is the only way.

He said better preparation and effective time management would help attain the target in the competitive exams. "Discipline, Dedication and Devotion are very important in everyone's life," he added.

Dr Illa Ravi, General Secretary, Indian Red Cross Society, explained about Indian Red Cross Society that it is a



He suggested students plan their career with discipline and said that there was no shortcut to success and hard work is the only way

non-profit and voluntary organisation serving the needy. "Service only can give self-satisfaction and every citizen in society should feel the responsibility to serve others," he

said and advised students to do a little help whatever they can to the society so that the future generations can live a life with security.

Dr Sridhar Reddy, Chairman, IRCS said that service spoke louder than words. He explained the importance of Oral Health.

College principal Dr Sr Jasintha Quadras, Red Ribbon Club Coordinator P Nitya Jeeva Prada, RRC District Coordinator, and 250 RRC student volunteers were present.

A DIVINE ACT



School children making clay idols in Visakhapatnam, two days before the Ganesh Chaturthi festival

ALC holds lecture on business trends

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A lecture on 'Recent Trends in Business and Employment' was held in Andhra Loyola College on Friday.

Ajay Sathe, Group Head Customer Experience of Bajaj Finserv Limited, and Pallavi, Chief of Certificate Courses of the college, participated.

Speaking on the occasion, Ajay said it was the responsibility students to learn and meet the requirements of the company, in which they are planning to pursue their career.

"One way to learn the job is voluntarily helping your seniors. When you ask someone to explain they may not have time or obligation to teach you. But when you go and voluntarily help them you learn the skills and the nature



of the duty expected by the company," he said.

He said companies appoint people who have skills for the required job, "Hence being unique and valuable is important. You need to develop

unique skills that are not available with competitive job seekers".

Pallavi said, "Today there is a gap between conventional education and what the companies look forward to. This

Companies appoint people who have skills for the required job, hence being unique and valuable is important

certificate course of 120 hours will definitely make you better employable and would impart the skills required for the corporate sector."

HOD Business Administration Shabana Begum, Vice Principal Fr Dr Melchior, and Coordinator of Employability Skills Centre Dr G Sahaya Baskaran were present.

YSR STATUE WORKS

VMC CHIEF RAPS OFFICIALS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner Prasanna Venkatesh on Friday directed the concerned authorities to arrange a pedestal for the statue of former Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy at the Police Control Room and speed up the other arrangements within two days.

Prasanna Venkatesh directed the concerned authorities to arrange a pedestal for the statue of former Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy at the Police Control Room

The death anniversary of the leader falls on September 2. As part of the city visit, the Commissioner made a field-

level inspection of the works for the statue near the police control room, where he spoke to officials and gave sugges-

tions on completing the works soon.

He asked officials to erect the statue of Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy on a pedestal by evening, and further ordered officials and contractors to speed up the remaining work.

Chief engineer JV Ramakrishna, Executive Engineer ASN Prasad and others were present.

ANUIC tourney schedule released

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Acharya Nagarjuna University Inter-Collegiate Tournaments (ANUIC) for the month of September was prepared in accordance with the schedule of South Zone and India Inter-University Tournaments for the year 2019-20, said a release from ANU on Friday.

Organising Secretaries should inform all colleges well in regarding the events. Lecturers from Physical

Education and interested students should contact the respective Organising Secretaries regarding their participation in the events.

The events are as follows :
Sept 6: Cross Country (KVR KVR & MKR College, Khazipalem),
Sept 13: Kho-Kho (Women) (Krishanveni Degree College, Narasaraopet),
Sept 16: Badminton (M & W) (BBH College, Vetapalem),
Sept 19: Kabaddi (Women)

(Govt. College for Women, Guntur).

Sept 20: Softball (Men) (CR College, Chilikaluripet).

Sept 21: Chess (Women) (Chalapati Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences).

Sept 24: Volleyball (Women) (DS Govt. Degree College for Women, Ongole).

Sept 26: Tennis (Men) (Department of Physical Education, ANU).

Sept 27: Volleyball (Men) (VTJM & IVTR Degree College, Mangalagiri).

Pawan Kalyan vows to fight for farmers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena President Pawan Kalyan on Friday vowed to fight for the rights of farmers of Amaravati who were worried over talks of shifting the Andhra Pradesh capital to some other place.

Visiting some villages in Amaravati and interacting with people, especially farmers, he told the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) government not to shatter the dreams of people of 29 villages by talking of shifting the capital from Amaravati.

The actor said that ministers created utter confusion among people through their statements and advised them to act responsibly. "If there were irregularities in capital city's works, the government should take action but it is not proper to create confusion with such statements," he said.

On Urban Development Minister Botsa Satyanarayana's allegation that he changed the stand on Amaravati, Pawan said he never opposed building the state capital there but only forcibly acquiring farmers' lands for the purpose.

Pawan said he would also try to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah to discuss the situation in the



Interacting with farmers, Pawan told the YSRCP government not to shatter the dreams of people from around 29 villages by talking about shifting the capital from Amaravati

State, especially with regard to the state capital.

The Jana Sena leader said the State already suffered due to bifurcation and it may suffer more with the confusion being created among people over Amaravati.

Kodela Sivaram gets notice for illegal construction in Guntur

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The Town Planning department of the Guntur Municipal Corporation (GMC) on Friday served a notice on Kodela Sivaram, son of former Legislative Assembly Speaker Kodela Siva Prasada Rao in connection with an illegally built G+2 structure in Guntur town.

It is alleged that Sivaram had built the G+2 residential building without obtaining prior permission from the Town Planning department of the GMC. The notice was issued based on a report published in a vernacular daily.

As per the notice, Sivaram has 997 square yards of land under survey numbers 281/A, 296/A and 1019 square yards under survey numbers 291/A, 296/D at Bhagyanagar Colony, Eighth Line, in the suburbs of Guntur city. About eight months ago, Sivaram, without obtaining municipal permission, went on to construct the building, which interestingly, at that time, was not questioned by the officials.



Sivaram allegedly built the G+2 residential building without obtaining prior permission from the Town Planning department of the GMC

Officials have issued notices under Sections 452 (1), 428, 461 (1) of the Hyderabad Municipal Corporation Act of 1955 and under Sections 115 (1) (2) and 116 (1) of the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Act of 2014 seeking an explanation for

the illegal construction. Earlier, Sivaram tried to regularise the building by filing an application under the BPS scheme. Town Planning officials rejected the BPS application as it was not clear as to how the building would fall under the scheme. Then, he tried to

apply for Vacant Land Tax on September 3, 2018. Officials said that the site was previously a farmland. The corporation's revenue officials inspected the site in September last year when construction of the building was not started.

It was reported that Sivaram applied for BPS for a building which was started before August last year, but the actual slab work was completed by the end of August.

It is learnt that several officials in the Town Planning department were supporting him. Intelligence surveillance is being conducted on the errant officials and the Director of Town and Country Planning (DTCP) and the municipal officials were informed about it.

It is reported that the authorities are preparing to take stern action against any town planning officer who were attempting to regularise Sivaram's illegal construction.



PV Sindhu with her parents after offering prayers at the Sri Venkateswara Temple in Tirupati on Friday

Sindhu, family offer prayers at Tirupati

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

PV Sindhu offered worship at the famed hill shrine of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala on Friday, days after becoming the first Indian to win the World Championships gold medal.

She, along with the family members visited the temple in the morning. "I prayed for good performances in all forthcoming tournaments," Sindhu said after offering

She was presented with the Lord's sacred silk cloth and prasadam by the temple management

prayers. Before leaving the temple, Sindhu was presented with the Lord's sacred silk cloth and prasadam by the temple management.

CAPSULE

PEETAM FOUNDER ALLEGES HARASSMENT

VIJAYAWADA: Bhavanipuram-based Sai Trishakti Peetam founder Achchi Reddy on Friday said that false cases were being foisted on him by his neighbor and former BSNL employee Mohan Reddy, as he was jealous of the success of the spiritual outfit that had been functioning since 1977. Speaking to media persons on Friday, he said that the Peetam was involved in aspects of spirituality and many devotees throng to seek his astrological advice and perform meditation. "I have written more than 240 books on spirituality, astrology and the Hindu religion. The authorities did not take the case registered by Mohan Reddy at Spandana programme after visiting the Peetam recently," he added. He alleged that the followers of Mohan Reddy were harassing the devotees who visited his outfit from nearby villages and towns. "I have already approached the police and I will take legal course of action against him as he is spreading canards," he added.

STUDENTS MAKE CLAY GANESH IDOLS

VIJAYAWADA: As part of environmental protection, the students of Sri Shirdi Sai Vidya Niketan and Dafne Asiatic School, jointly took part in making of clay Ganesh idols for the upcoming Ganesh festival here on Friday. Students prepared various types of Ganesh idols with clay to protect the greenery and environment. Chairman of the institution, T Sridhar, said that by using Plaster of Paris and fluorescent colours, they would pollute the environment and water bodies. "Everyone should feel the responsibility to protect the environment by using clay Ganesh idols," he said. He also said that the programme would create awareness among students to protect the environment and not to use harmful chemicals and material for preparing Ganesh idols. About 3,000 clay idols were prepared and distributed. Director T Sridhara, teachers and students participated in the programme.

BRIGHT FUTURE FOR COMPUTER COURSES: NASCOM

VIJAYAWADA: Computer science students will get the best job opportunities by sharpening their knowledge, said National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASCOM) Andhra Pradesh in-charge S Sridevi, here on Friday. She was in Vijayawada to sign an MoU with Kakaraparthy Bhavanarayana College, and said that the computer sector expansion in the country will be based on the quality of computer education. She assured that NASCOM would support the students of KBN college for the development of their knowledge in computer science.

CS acting as a BJP tool, alleges Mattaiah

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jerusalem Mattaiah, one of the key accused in the note-for-vote scam that rocked the Telugu states three years ago, has demanded that the State government immediately dismiss Chief Secretary LV Subrahmanyam from his post. After submitting a complaint against the Chief Secretary in the GAD at Secretariat, Mattaiah spoke to the media on Friday.

He demanded that a case under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act be registered against the Chief Secretary for allegedly instigating attacks on Dalit Christians in the State and placing obstacles to their religious freedom. Later, speaking to 'The Pioneer', he alleged that BJP was trying to disturb religious harmony by making Subrahmanyam, a puppet in their hands.

"We know that he is innocent. But, the BJP-led NDA Government at the Centre has been trying to create



Jerusalem Mattaiah

He demanded that a case under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act be registered against the Chief Secretary

unrest in the State, by using him as its mouthpiece, Mattaiah said.

He also alleged that RSS volunteers, Endowments department employees and police personnel have been forcibly entering the houses of Dalit Christians working in TTD, Srisailem and Dwaraka Tirumala on Sundays to prevent them from going to church.

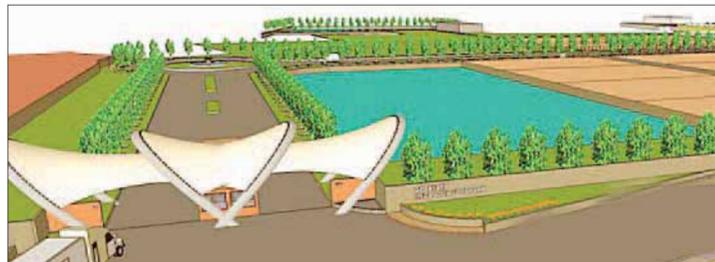
Panel raps Aqua Park over increase in effluent generation

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Consent for Establishment (CFE) Committee has directed the Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park Pvt Ltd (GMAFPPL) to explain the reasons for the increase in effluent generation from 98 KLD to 240 KLD without increasing the processing capacity.

The GMAFPPL management of Bhimavaram in West Godavari district earlier requested for permission for disposal of treated waste water into Yenamadurru drain through a pipeline laid by the RWS Department. They submitted a representation informing that as per their consented production of 60 TPD Fish / Shrimp, they would generate around 240 KLD of effluents as against the consented 98 KLD.

However, the CFE Committee has made some observations. They are as follows: The Board issued CFE and CFO for processing of fish / prawn - 60 TPD and the effluent generation is 98.0 KLD. The CFE also felt that a 26.5km pipeline from ETP of Godavari Aqua Food Park to Sea Coast at Chinagollapalem is to be laid



for discharge of treated effluents into the sea. In fact, the RWS Department has laid a pipeline from the industry to Yenamadurru drain at present and the industry proposed to discharge the treated effluents into the drain.

There are many complaints on Yenamadurru pollution and APPCB took up a special drive for restoration of quality of water in the drain, reviewing the industries located in the area which have the potential to discharge in the drain. As a long term solution, a pipeline for treated effluents up to the sea through a CETP was proposed but its progress is very poor. The land acquisition issue for CETP is also pending.

The Committee opined that the GMAFPPL could join the main pipeline after laying the full-length pipeline through CETP up to the sea for discharging treated sewage and effluents

The representatives of the project proponent have requested to amend the Consent for discharge of treated waste water (240 KLD) through the pipeline laid by the APPCB as all parameters for discharge are within the permissible limits.

After detailed discussions, the Committee opined that the industry can join the main

pipeline after laying the full-length pipeline from CETP to sea for discharging treated sewage and effluents into the sea.

The industry has developed a green belt in an area of about 24 acres of land. The treated wastewater is being used for the development of a green belt. But, during the

rainy season, it is not possible to apply the treated waste water on land to develop green belt. It seems the drain carries the waste water generated from the irrigation fields surrounding villages. Perhaps, they contribute huge quantity of discharge through the drain. The quantity of effluent discharged by the industry compared to the huge discharge in the drain may be meagre.

However, in order to take a decision on the discharge of treated effluents into the Yenamadurru drain, the information on discharge capacity of the drain, analysis reports of the samples collected from upstream and downstream of the confluence point of the effluents, an indicative map showing the industry, alignment of the pipeline, confluence point, storage capacity of treated effluents during rainy season, and justification on request of the industry for increase in quantity of effluents are required. Therefore, the Committee recommended addressing a letter to the JCEE, Zonal Office, Visakhapatnam, to furnish a detailed report covering the above points to take a decision in the matter.

KCR LAUNCHING 'NEW DRAMA': CONG

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC vice-president Mallu Ravi has alleged that Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao is using Transco CMD D Prabhakar Rao to sidetrack the discussion on corruption in power sector. He said that TPCC working president A Revanth Reddy had found fault with Prabhakar Rao for responding on the criticism of opposition parties instead of Chief Minister or Ministers.

Reminding that the Revanth Reddy made allegations against the government that huge corruption took place in power purchase and demanded CBI inquiry into the alleged corruption, Mallu Ravi asked the power employees whether Revanth Reddy doesn't have right to question the corruption.

The Chief Minister has launched a new drama with power employees only to sidetrack the issue. The state government is speaking on waste things instead of responding to the corruption allegations, he pointed out.

It was not proper to Prabhakar Rao to make his employees to stage dharnas against public representatives. He warned power employees saying "Revanth Reddy is not an individual. Revanth Reddy is a system. The government is not responding because it was committed to corruption. We are not speaking about Prabhakar Rao's character. We have no differences with power employees. The bills were stopped for the last one year. The works were stalled across



Rangareddy district Congress is organising a public meeting at Laxmidevi Palli on September 1 as part of the movement seeking irrigation water to the district

—KONDA VISHWESHWAR REDDY
Former MP

the state". On Friday, Mallu Ravi spoke to the media along with former MP Konda Vishweshwar Reddy and former MLA T Rammohan Reddy and others at Gandhi Bhavan. Konda said that Rangareddy district Congress is organising a public meeting at Laxmidevi Palli on September 1 as part of the movement seeking irrigation water to the district.

Rammohan Reddy said that TPCC Chief N Uttam Kumar Reddy, MPs A Revanth Reddy, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, Telangana state party affairs in-

'KCR misleading people'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP leader DK Aruna slammed the Chief Minister, K Chandrashekar Rao for telling blatant lies on PRLIS and cheating not just Mahabubnagar people but whole Telangana on irrigation projects. DK Aruna challenged the Chief Minister for a 'Bus Yatra' to prove his claim of giving water to 11 acres through the irrigation projects in TRS government's tenure. "KCR has said blatant lies during his visit to Mahabubnagar district on Thursday. He is saying that he will bring Godavari water to Jurala project, which is no



way possible in the near future. He even said that Palamuru-Ranga Reddy Irrigation Scheme would be completed within one year. He has been saying this for the past five years, but the situation at ground level is completely different. Even till now, several issues regarding land acquisition and rehabilitation relating to Palamuru-Rangareddy scheme are pending.

charge RC Kuntia, AICC secretaries Bose Raju and others will participate in the meeting.

The meeting will be held at Chowdharigudem mandal head quarters.

Nagam challenges CM for an open debate

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congress senior leader Dr Nagam Janardhan Reddy alleged that huge corruption had taken place in irrigation projects in the State. He has thrown a challenge at Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao that he was ready for debate on the alleged corruption in projects-Kaleswaram and Rangareddy-Palamuru, saying that he will prove KCR's corruption within one hour. He said that the day will come as Chief Minister's corruption will come out.

On Friday, Nagam said that Kaleswaram project design was 100 per cent wrong. He said that KCR has no minimum knowledge on irrigation and ruling the state in an inefficient manner. He said that the Kaleswaram project design from Medigadda was a big mistake. He said that KCR is giving an impression that he achieved Telangana but the Telangana was created through constitutional process.

Inviting KCR to come to his residence, Nagam said that he would offer coaching on projects if KCR comes to his residence. He said that he was ready to come to Padgathi Bhavan or LB Stadium or any place for the open debate with K Chandrashekar Rao.



Functioning of new TS Secretariat set to commence

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The state Secretariat will function on a full-fledged basis from the temporary Secretariat -BRKR Bhavan from September 3 onwards. The state government has directed the Secretariat employees in this regard on Friday making it clear that the employees have to sign on attendance register from BRKR Bhavan.

The employees had shifted their offices to the BRKR Bhavan as the state government is contemplating to construct new Secretariat after demolishing the existing buildings. Most of the offices were vacated and shifted to BRKR Bhavan. The government directed the employees to vacate their offices fully by September 3 to run their offices from BRKR Bhavan. The officials like Chief Secretary and Special Chief

Secretaries are running their activities from their residences. They have to attend their offices from September 3 onwards.

On the other hand, the Ministers' secretaries also joined their offices in BRKR Bhavan. On the other hand, the state government is contemplating to give new status to the promoted Secretariat employees. The government decided to provide new status to the employees in BRKR Bhavan. In this context, the government gave promotions to 8 assistant secretaries as deputy secretaries. Around 44 section officers have got assistant secretaries status. The government promoted 110 assistant section officers as section officers. The government also directed the officials to arrange the set ups for the newly promoted officials in BRKR Bhavan.



Gangavaram Port's assistance to students

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As a part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program, Gangavaram Port Limited distributed books and stationery to students. The program was attended by B Balakrishna, Vice-President, Vigilance (R&R and Security), LPS Ramu Naidu, Vice-President (R&R and Security) and Prabhakar Rao, Head Master along with staff members of Gangavaram Port. GPL staff distributed school bags, books and compass

boxes to nearly 90 students from elementary school in Dibbapalem and Peddantyada Mandal. This initiative was done with an objective to promote education in the neighbouring villages and create a healthy environment for the students in the school. "It's our endeavour to strengthen educational facilities. We are committed for the development and will continue to support similar initiatives for creating a healthy and happy society," said officials.

TDP protests against severe sand supply crunch

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief called for a state-wide agitation at all the districts from their respective constituencies against the scarcity of sand, which has halted the construction activities in the state, depriving livelihood, many workers on Friday organized protests across the State, including at prime locations in the district against the 'errant' State Government's sand policy.

The TDP leaders, along with the MLAs and activists, organized dharnas and rallies at various locations in the district and raised their voice against the sand policy introduced by the YSRCP government.

During a protest led by South MLA Vasuapli Ganesh Kumar, they sold sand for Rs5 per each carry bag as a novel protest near the GVMC near Gandhi statue.

"We demand the government to reopen the sand riches and deliver sufficient quantity for taking up construction works across the district," he said.



During a protest led by South MLA Vasuapli Ganesh Kumar, they sold sand for Rs5 per each carry bag as a novel protest near the GVMC near Gandhi statue

West MLA PVGR Naidu (Gana Babu) staged a protest at NAD junction and stated that due to the government policies many small and middle class families were facing tough times in constructing their own houses.

AU steps up measures to curb ragging

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

After the recent attack on a degree first-year girl student in Anakapalle, Andhra University has proposed a meeting with principals of all its affiliated colleges to take strict measures for the safety and protection of female students. The varsity has conducted an anti-ragging awareness programme in the city on Friday.

Highlighting the laws of AP Prohibition of Ragging Act, AU vice-chancellor PVGD Prasad Reddy said that there will be strict punishment for the students involved in ragging at educational institutions.

He asked the young students not to spoil their career as there are stringent laws against the ragging activities.

The VC further assured to solve the issues of girl students within 48 hours of submitting the complaint. Proving the police action practically, he made a girl student to dial 100 and all the students observed the police personnel reaching the spot

within three minutes. City deputy commissioner of police (L&O-1) S Ranga Reddy was also present on the occasion.

AU Engineering College Principal, P Srinivasa Rao said: AU will act more tougher than earlier on any complaints of ragging.

Students can approach directly or register the complaint over phone. The complainant details will be confidential and the issue will be resolved within 48 hours.

As part of spreading anti ragging message across campus and affiliated colleges AU officials had released a poster flashing the concerned higher official contact numbers. Deputy Commissioner of Police, S Ranga Reddy said the seniors should not comment or tease their juniors or harass either psychologically, physically, or else be booked for ragging.

"If any student was booked under ragging, entire life will be ruined. So, no student should commit such mistake ever and lead their life happily by achieving their goal."

SBI Card integrates ILA' chatbot on mobile app

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In its latest innovation, SBI Card has rolled out its chatbot 'ILA' (Interactive Live Assistant), on its mobile app to further enhance consumer experience. ILA has 40 plus innovative features making SBI Card one of the first in the industry to offer a complete suite of self-service functionalities increasing convenience for the customers, according to Hardayal Prasad, MD & CEO, SBI Card.

He said that in continuation of the State Bank of India legacy, the latest version of the chatbot enables advanced features like EMI conversions, balance transfer options and loan on credit card among other account management options.

On mobile app, ILA acts as a digital assistant, by providing a number of self-service features through answering questions, offering suggestions and navigating customers to the right mobile app screens. It's intelligent suggestion chip prompts customers to the next best action after their query is resolved.

Man attempts to rape minor, alert locals foil bid

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Two-Town police on Friday launched manhunt for K Rajesh (28) alias Toni, who allegedly attempted to rape a 10-year-old girl inside an abandoned car near Bhupeshnagar area here on Tuesday evening.

The incident came to light after her parents along with leaders of Mahila Chetana organization lodged a police complaint Thursday night.

According to police, when the girl along with her friends was playing near her home Tuesday evening, Rajesh, who works in a scrap shop and has been staying in the same area for the past few months, lured the girl, who is a Class-IV student and took her inside an abandoned car. Rajesh tied the girl's hands and feet and gagged her mouth with a piece of cloth and attempted to rape her.

However, some youngsters noticed and went near the car. Fearing that he may land in trouble, Rajesh came out from the car and fled from the spot. The girl was rescued by the locals. "We have registered a case against Rajesh under various Sections of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act-2012 and launched manhunt to nab the accused," they said. The girl has been admitted in King George Hospital for medical tests.

GITAM gets best internship award from AICTE

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

GITAM Deemed to be University Institute of Technology has received Best Internship Record creation Institute award by All India Council for Technical Education for the current academic year. It is the only institute from the State selected for the award, which is in recognition of 'exemplary efforts in improving the internship-placement scenario'.

GITAM has secured an all India ranking of 17 and Zone ranking of 6 amongst 2830 colleges which participated in the Internship Day initiative.



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Well established companies Microsoft, TCS, Technovert and FIAT as well as IT start-up Firms Verticals, FURPSQ Tech Pvt Ltd, Aedita,

Prakruthika, Coursack and Robocoupler have conducted detailed selection process in GITAM campus.

GITAM Vice-Chancellor Prof K Sivaramakrishna, Registrar Prof KVG Balaji appreciated the university training & placements wing for their efforts to improve the placements and internships.

Sweat it out at Kinley Vizag Bay Marathon tonight

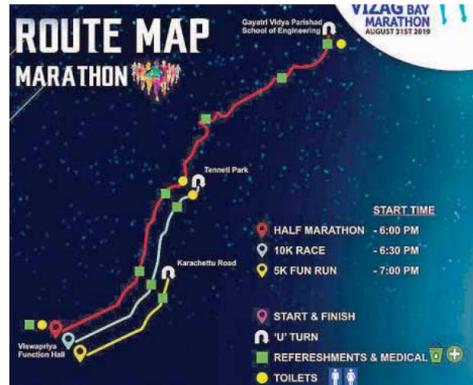
PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A sea of fitness enthusiasts are all set to run in the high-voltage Kinley Vizag Bay Marathon 2019 on Beach Road in the Bay city here on Saturday, representing the love and compassion the people of Vizag share for their city. Being held for the fourth time, over 7,500 entries have been received, although the number could go up.

On Friday, all participants collected their T-shirts and bibs from a marathon expo conducted near Viswapriya Community Hall.

The marathon will commence from 5pm on Saturday evening at RK beach. As many as 4,500 registered for the 5K category while 2500 and 500 enthusiasts would be running for the 10k and 21k category. The run is unique in its way, being organised at night, and has been receiving tremendous response from its first stint.

Vikas Sunkad, Director Operations, Coca-Cola India



Pvt Ltd said, "We are honored to be part of this initiative. Physical fitness is most essential in everything that we do. Stay hydrated with Kinley water. Stay fit."

Event organizer Leadraft Entertainment said the Vizag Bay Marathon is an excellent opportunity for people of Vizag to be a part of an initiative for creat-

ing awareness on health related activities and also show case their talents. On registration, as is the usual practice across the world, the runners or participants get a T-shirt, goody Bag, timing chip, bibs, medal, energy drinks and snacks.

GVMC Commissioner Dr G Srijana IAS launched the

marathon poster on August 21, and Vizag MP MVV Satyanarayana unveiled the T-shirts. Care Hospital will be providing medical emergency and first-aid services.

All Participants need to be present at 5:30pm on August 31 near Viswapriya Community Hall. For further information, people can contact Susanta Subudhi at 97015-12346.

TIMING
21K or Half Marathon: 6 PM
10K - 6:30 PM, 5K - 7 PM

ROUTE MAP
21K Half Marathon- Start from Viswapriya Community Hall to Gayatri Vidya Parishad School of Engineering and again back to the start.
10K - Start from Viswa priya Community Hall to Tenneti Park and back to start.
5K- Starts from Viswa priya Community Hall to Karachettu Road again back to start.

Revanth likens Genco CMD to Charles Sobhraj

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC working president A Revanth Reddy said that he will stand by his words to gun down TSGenco CMD Devulapalli Rao, as latter has been acting hand in glove with KCR in looting thousands of crores of public money in name of power deals and mis-using Telangana sentiment.

"I had criticised Devulapalli Prabhakar Rao as instead of CM KCR, he came forward and tried to divert people's attention

from the corruption in power deals. Instead of explaining technical issues, Devulapalli Prabhakar Rao is trying to politicise the issue. He is influencing some employees unions leaders to hold protests to divert attention from the real issue," he said.

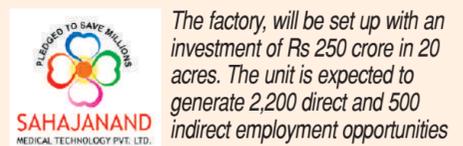
"Not all electricity employees are in favour of protesting against me. Protest was held on Friday by closing Vidut Soudha gates and forcibly keeping employees inside. Even Charles Shobharaj has some fans," he said.

Foundation to be laid for Asia's biggest stent unit

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a major boost to the medical devices manufacturing in Telangana, Health Minister Etela Rajender and Labour and Employment Minister Ch Malla Reddy, along with TSIIC Chairman G Ballamallu, will lay the foundation stone for Asia's largest Stent Manufacturing Unit of Sahajanand Medical Technologies on 1 September 2019 at the Medical Devices Park in Sultanpur, Sangareddy.

The factory, will be set up with an investment of Rs 250 crore in 20 acres. The unit is expected to generate 2,200 direct and 500 indirect employment opportunities.



The factory, will be set up with an investment of Rs 250 crore in 20 acres. The unit is expected to generate 2,200 direct and 500 indirect employment opportunities

The unit will have a manufacturing capacity of more than 1.25 million stents per annum. Surat-based SMT is currently the number 2 player in the Indian market for stents and hopes to capture the pole position in two years.

Sahajanand Medical Technologies (SMT) is India's first and largest stent manufacturing company with a market share of over 30%, with presence in more than

800+ Cath labs and hospitals in India. The company is Gujarat based and is present in 70 countries worldwide. In a recently published scientific paper in the globally acclaimed international journal 'The Lancet', SMT has proven that its stents are as good as US made stents in the global market and the company has received a lot of support from hospitals and cardiologist community in India.

Telugu identity to disappear from country's banking sector

- Continued form P1

In 1956, following the linguistic division of States, Hyderabad was made the capital of then undivided Andhra Pradesh. The registered office of the bank was subsequently shifted to Andhra Bank Buildings, which even today is a landmark at Sultan Bazar here. In the second phase of nationalisation of commercial banks launched in April 1980, the bank became a wholly-owned Government bank.

Today, with a network of 2,885 branches, four extension counters, 38 satellite offices and 3,798 automated teller machines, Andhra Bank has wormed its way into the hearts of tens of millions of Telugus based not just in the two states, but across the globe. It is not without reason that most NRIs from Telugu states prefer Andhra Bank for their operations in India.

The beginning of the end of Telugu identity in the banking sector can be traced to the merger of State Bank of Hyderabad with State Bank of India in April 2017, as part of merger of the latter's associate banks.

The upshot is that people in Telugu States have never looked at SBI and Andhra Bank as just institutions that meet their financial needs. They have had deep emotional bonds and psychological attachment with them running through several generations. Because of their pre-Independence origins, both SBI and Andhra Bank have had historical significance, which, like their linguistic facets, did not diminish with nationalization of banks.

The wide branch network of SBI and Andhra Bank made banking possible in every nook and corner of the Telugu States. Most households in Telugu States have accounts in one or

Mixed reactions

Hyderabad: Even employees of Andhra Bank are not happy at the idea of amalgamation, though it has been in the works for quite some time. Those who have been serving the bank for decades are devastated at the Centre's decision.

Speaking to The Pioneer, N Pradeep Kumar, president of the All India Andhra Bank Officers' Federation, with over 30 years' service, said, "We were shocked at this news. Though the talk of merger was going on for the past few months, we never expected that the decision will come out like this all of a sudden."

more of the branches of these two banks, notwithstanding the spread of private banks since the early 2000s.

SBI was established as Hyderabad State Bank in 1941 by Nizam, the ruler of the erstwhile Hyderabad State. It was established in the imposing building at Abids, once Hyderabad's A1 commercial street, with Gunfoundry housing the cannonball factory set up in 1786 by French General Michel Raymond for the Second Nizam Mir Nizam Ali Khan. That building too continues to be a landmark in the city. In its heyday, SBH managed the Hyderabad currency - the Osmania Sikka - and public debt, besides commercial banking in the State of Hyderabad.

Later, SBH became a subsidiary of SBI in 1959, while retaining the distinction of being SBI's largest associate bank. Its total business crossed Rs 2.60 lakh crore when it was merged with SBI in April 2017.

'Civil servants can bring qualitative change'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Civil Servants, irrespective of the Service to which they belong, can bring out a qualitative change in the lives of people, especially their weaker counterparts, said K Srinivas, IAS, Additional Secretary, Department of Personnel & Training, Government of India. He was addressing trainee civil servants, representing 22 States and 15 different services, who attended the 94th Foundation Course at Dr MCR HRD Institute of Telangana.

Speaking on the occasion, he said, "The present-day dynamic and ever-changing world of work calls for a proactive rather than the traditional reactive leadership style on their part", he opined. Continuing his address, Srinivas called upon the trainee Civil Servants to diversify their skills in serving the



future agenda and effective use of resources at their disposal in achieving the pre-determined goals. "Mere technical skills, even though important in their own right, are not enough. The people-related skills, including communication, team work, and coordination and collaboration, with different internal and external stakeholders will be greatly instrumental in determining their ultimate professional success", he added.

He stated that for the

Government of India, the Foundation Course for the trainee Civil Servants is a high priority subject and that its content and delivery mechanism has been updated to enrich their skill sets. However, he stated that for achieving the cherished goals of the Foundation Course, there has to be a multifaceted improvement in the overall personality of the trainee civil servants.

He said that India to emerge as a \$ 5 trillion economy is an ambition target and the Civil

Srinivas launched the first-ever Telugu version of the reading material of e-Learning Modules of DoPT, prepared by the Institute and also a Booklet on Intensive Training Programme for about 6,000 employees of Tribal Welfare Department

Servants, through their effective leadership, should inspire and empower millions of employees at different rungs of bureaucracy.

On this occasion, Srinivas launched the first-ever Telugu version of the reading material of e-Learning Modules of DoPT, prepared by the Institute and also a Booklet on Intensive Training Programme for about 6,000 employees of Tribal Welfare Department, Govt of Telangana.

Speaking on this occasion, B P Acharya, IAS, Special Chief Secretary to Government & DG, Dr. MCR HRD Institute

said that Telugu version of the e-Learning Modules of DoPT will be greatly instrumental in addressing training needs of a huge number of employees at grassroots level in Telangana State.

He stated, with a sense of pride that Dr MCR HRD Institute, covered a whopping 40,000 employees during the last two years and plans to cover another 40,000 during the current year. "Telangana has thereby emerged as a leader, across the country, in using the e-Learning Modules for equipping the employees with the requisite skills."

SHORT READS



Aspiring actress jumps to death from Mumbai high-rise

MUMBAI: Battling depression, a 25-year-old aspiring actress allegedly ended her life on Friday by jumping off the terrace of a high-rise building here, police said. The actress, Pearl Punjabi, went to the terrace of Kenwood Apartment in Lokhandwala complex in suburban Oshiwara, where she lived, and jumped off in the wee hours, an official said. She was rushed to a nearby private hospital, where she was declared dead on arrival, he said. Punjabi was under depression and mental stress since the last few months due to which she may have taken the extreme step, a second official said. However, the exact cause of the suicide is yet to be ascertained, he said. A case of accidental death has been registered at the Oshiwara police station and a probe is underway, the second official said. "Pearl was suffering from depression. We would request some privacy and allow the family to grieve in peace, said a family member of the actor."

ED slaps Rs 62 lakh notice against Zahooh for FEMA flaws

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate on Friday said it has slapped a penalty of Rs 62 lakh on Kashmiri businessman Zahooh Ahmad Shah Watali for alleged violation of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). The case pertains to Watali opening non-resident savings accounts in a HSBC bank branch in Delhi in alleged contravention of the law. The federal probe agency has issued a final show cause notice to Watali for contravening the FEMA after completion of probe, the agency said. Watali is already under the probe scanner of the ED and the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on charges of alleged terror funding and his purported links with banned Pakistan-based terrorist outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba and its chief Hafiz Saeed. Watali is at present in jail.

Seaplane lands at Mangaluru airport for refuelling

MANGALURU: The Mangaluru International Airport (MIA) had an unusual visitor-aircraft when a seaplane landed there, an airport official said. The private flight flying from Colombo to Abu Dhabi landed on Thursday for refuelling and only the pilot was on the aircraft, he said. The flight was on its return journey to the Gulf nation after dropping a person in Colombo. A few days ago, the pilot had requested the airport authorities for permission to refuel and they agreed, the official said. The seaplane, common in foreign countries, was proposed to be used by the Kerala government for promotion of tourism, he said. Discussions were also on in Karnataka to introduce such aircraft in the coastal region, he added.

PM recommends Ayush centre for Haryana CM's sore throat

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday advised Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar to try out a newly launched Ayush health centre to get something for his sore throat, which he might have got while talking at public meetings. He made the remark in a lighter vein while inaugurating 10 Ayush health and wellness centres in Haryana, through video-conferencing from New Delhi after presenting the Yoga Awards. Khattar was listening to the speech in Panchkula, where the Haryana government had organised a function. Several BJP MLAs and other party leaders were in attendance. Modi said a hectic tour of villages in the run up to the Haryana Assembly polls has

'Centre has intimidated country through ED, CBI'

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Friday said there is an undeclared emergency in the country and the Centre has intimidated the entire nation through ED, CBI and Income Tax Department.

His comments came shortly after senior Congress leader D Shivakumar said the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has issued fresh summons to him. The agency asked the former Karnataka minister to appear before it in Delhi on Friday in a money laundering case.

The ED and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) are also probing INX Media money laundering and corruption cases against senior Congress leader P Chidambaram.

"Those who win elections should work with a big heart. Everyone should work together. Is Modi's government doing it? They have frightened the whole country through Enforcement Directorate, Income Tax Department and CBI... be it industrialists, businessmen, bureaucrats or anyone else," Gehlot told reporters at the Congress state headquarters here.

The chief minister claimed the people of the country are living in fear. "There is an atmosphere of



There is an atmosphere of an undeclared emergency in the country. The new generation has to understand this ASHOK GEHLOT Rajasthan Chief Minister

small and big ones, have started committing suicide," he said. "One million people in the automobile sector have lost their jobs. A well known company in the country making biscuits has fired 10,000 people due to the imposition of GST," he said.

"This central government does not understand anything. The exemptions which were announced recently are not enough. They are late and they are not enough. So they have to think how to get the economy back on track," he added.

The chief minister also claimed that the law and order situation is deteriorating due to people losing their jobs. Accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi of misleading people with his speeches, Gehlot said the truth is different from what people are being told.

an undeclared emergency in the country. The new generation has to understand this," he said.

Gehlot claimed the country is going through a recession and the Centre is not doing enough to tackle it.

"There is a period of severe recession in the entire country. People are committing suicides. Earlier, only farmers used to commit suicide. Now businessmen, industrialists,

Centre committed to ensuring media freedom: Javadekar

PNS ■ KOCHI

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar on Friday said the BJP-led government at the Centre was committed to ensuring media freedom and recalled the party leaders' fight against emergency in 1975 to protect press freedom.

"During the students movement days, we fought against emergency in 1975 and went to jail to protect media freedom.

"That commitment will remain today also and for ever to protect the freedom of media," the minister said while speaking on 'New India: Government and Media' at the Malayala Manorama News Conclave here.

Noting that there were more than one lakh publications, over 700 TV channels, many web and news portals in the country, the minister said with the help of social media plat-



Minister Prakash Javadekar

The minister further said responsible freedom is the essence of democratic society. He said responsible freedom does not mean regulated freedom but means being responsible while enjoying freedom

forms now, nobody can stop anybody from communicating. That is the power of communication, he said.

The minister further said responsible freedom is the essence of democratic society. He said responsible freedom does not mean regulated freedom but means being responsible while enjoying freedom.

Asserting that the government was committed to media freedom, freedom of expres-

sion and protests, he said, "That freedom is essence of democracy and we will ensure that a vibrant democracy wants all these freedoms. That we will ensure."

He said the essence of Narendra Modi government's concept of New India is "corruption-free New India, terror-free New India, casteism-free New India, communalism-free New India, poverty-free New India and dirt-free New India."

CBI seeks extension of PC custody

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI Friday sought extension of P Chidambaram's custodial interrogation by five days in a Delhi court in the INX Media case.

He was produced before Special Judge Ajay Kumar Kuhar on expiry of his 4-day CBI custody.

Chidambaram, 73, was arrested on August 21 and produced before the court the next day; since then he is in the CBI custody.

He has already undergone custodial interrogation for eight days since he was arrested on the night of August 21.

His son Karti was also present in the court.

Additional Solicitor General (ASG) K M Nataraj, representing the CBI, said Chidambaram has been partially interrogated and he is required to be confronted with further documents.

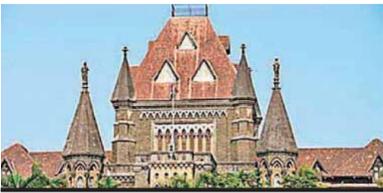
Bombay HC declines to quash CBN notice regulating import of poppy seeds

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court has refused to quash a notice issued by the Central Bureau of Narcotics regulating the import of poppy seeds into the country after noting the document provides guidelines and restrains "unfettered discretion".

A division bench of justices S C Dharmadhikari and G S Patel on Wednesday dismissed petitions filed by companies Chaibihari Trading Pvt Ltd and Amrut Impex challenging the June 25 notice issued by the Central Bureau of Narcotics (CBN) to regulate the import of poppy seeds into India.

The CBN notice laid down guidelines for registration of sales contract with regard to



The two companies, which import poppy seeds, believe the guidelines in the notice are an unconstitutional restriction on their right to trade and carry on business.

poppy seeds import from Turkey.

The two companies, which import poppy seeds, believe the guidelines in the notice are an unconstitutional restriction on their right to trade and carry on business.

Poppy plants are cultivated mainly to produce poppy seeds for human consumption, opium for pharmaceutical use, and

heroin and other synthetic opioids.

The bench said the petitioner's arguments held no merit.

"There is no fundamental right to be an importer. There is no fundamental right to import poppy seeds. There is no fundamental right to import anything without restrictions, or only on terms beneficial to a particular person," the court

observed. The bench noted that the CBN's notice provides guidelines and restrains the exercise of "unfettered discretion".

"The notification guidelines serve to filter out all but genuine and bona fide importers and prevent cartelisation, artificial blocking of country caps and artificial raising of re-sale prices," the court said in its order.

National Herald case: Swamy objects to questions in Hindi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP leader Subramanian Swamy on Friday objected to the lawyer for Congress leader Sonia Gandhi for asking questions in Hindi while being cross-examination in National Herald case, saying he was a 'Tamil'.

The exchange of words took place between Swamy and senior advocate R S Cheema, appearing for Gandhi, before the court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Samar Vishal, who was recording the cross examination of the BJP leader who is the complainant in the case.

On being asked, "Dr Swamy jis sadak pe Indian Express building bana (Dr Swamy, the road on which Indian Express building was built)...", Swamy said, "Please speak in English. You must remember I am a Tamil. English is the language of the court."

However, before the debate could escalate, the judge intervened, saying, "Both English and Hindi are the languages of the court."

To this Swamy said he only understood Sanskritised Hindi and not Urdu-Hindi.

However, Cheema, thereafter, refrained from using Hindi while cross examining Swamy. During the cross examination, Swamy told the



Subramanian Swamy

However, before the debate could escalate, the judge intervened, saying, "Both English and Hindi are the languages of the court"

court that the office bearers of Congress party were cheats while the Congress workers were the victims of cheating.

"The publication of National Herald was later resumed from another site from April 7, 2016. This was well after the summons in this case was issued on 26 June 2014. Therefore, it was an after thought that despite 8 years elapsing, the publication was started. Soon after the closure of publication, the entire staff, journalists and workmen were given VRS..", he said.

The publication was resumed "because the DDA and the Ministry of Urban Affairs have initiated litigation to acquire Herald House", he added.

The BJP leader was being cross-examined in the National Herald case filed by him against Congress leader Rahul

Gandhi, his mother Sonia Gandhi and others.

Swamy, in his private criminal complaint, had accused the Gandhis and others of conspiring to cheat and misappropriate funds by paying just Rs 50 lakh, through which the Young Indian (YI) Private Limited obtained the right to recover the Rs 90.25 crore the publisher, Associate Journals Limited, owed to the Congress.

All the seven accused in the case -- Sonia and Rahul Gandhi, Vora, senior Congress leaders Oscar Fernandes, Suman Dubey and Sam Pitroda and the YI -- have denied the allegations levelled against them.

The Gandhis, Vora, Fernandes, Dubey and Pitroda are accused of misappropriation of property, criminal breach of trust, cheating and criminal conspiracy.

Training in RSS shakhas will improve guards' prowess

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Railway Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said sending private security guards for training in RSS shakhas will improve their mental and physical capabilities.

Addressing a gathering at the 'Private Security Industry Conclave-2019', Goyal said during the Lok Sabha polls held in April-May, lakhs of people became 'chowkidar' (guard) of the country and for the first time, the dignity reserved for the armed forces and police was given to private security guards.

"I urge you to look at training in a big way...the training we get in RSS shakhas is far superior to some of the training I think some of these security guards get. That is not to suggest that you should send all these people to shakhas, but it will not be bad, they will learn something."

"They will improve both their mental and physical capabilities. I am only trying to mention that training is a very essential element in the work that your industry does," he said. Goyal said the industry should not look at its 20 per cent growth within the country, but should expand internationally.

He said it should invest more in training and make a focussed effort to develop a "certification" system like giving merit-based three or four stars, so that it provides avenues of promotion to the employees as well as allows people to select the security guards of their choice.

"We can look at public-private partnership to ensure both aspects of private security -- the personnel coming from recognised agencies and the industry being able to provide such guards. The government is ready to play the role of facilitator to work on preparing an organised framework, in which the private security industry works, including licensing, registration and training," the minister said.

He further said the industry should ensure that the security guards get minimum wages, the promised benefits of the job and that they come from accredited agencies.

"If we ensure that the 70 lakh number turns two crore...urge everyone to check the credentials of the security guards under the Private Security Regulation Act in your respective societies. If they are not trained, it will harm us in the long run," Goyal said.



They will improve both their mental and physical capabilities. I am only trying to mention that training is a very essential element in the work that your industry does PIYUSH GOYAL Railway Minister

'Curbs in J-K being lifted progressively'

PNS ■ KOCHI

Restrictions in the Kashmir Valley are being lifted every day progressively, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar said on Friday as he promised a "completely normal new Kashmir".

He also criticised certain international media outlets for telecasting "fake news" on the Kashmir situation and said they are being "exposed everyday".

The Minister for Information and Broadcasting, who was interacting with the audience at the Malayala Manorama News Conclave here, rejected suggestions that there was a media blackout in the valley. Representatives of newspapers and TV news channels were on the field, he added. Kashmiri newspapers are getting printed daily in all languages, and in Srinagar radio and news channels are reaching to the people, Javadekar said. He was responding to a query on the alleged media blackout since August 5 when the Centre revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special status under Article 370 and divided the state into two Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

"There was a phase of reasonable restrictions. Now these restrictions are lifted everyday progressively and you will have completely normal new Kashmir and new India," the minister said.

On international media reportage on Kashmir he said, "Now everybody has come to a situation where they realise that fake won't survive. It is people's power. They won't tolerate fake news."

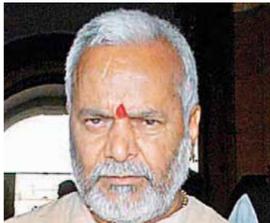
Chinmayanand case: SC asks UP govt to produce harassed woman before it on Friday

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Friday asked the Uttar Pradesh government to produce before it during the day the woman law student who had gone missing after levelling harassment allegations against former Union minister and BJP leader Swami Chinmayanand, and was found in Rajasthan.

The apex court was informed by the counsel appearing for the state government that she was found in Rajasthan on Friday and was being taken to Shahjahanpur to meet her parents.

After a bench of justices R Banumathi and A S Bopanna asked the state's counsel to apprise it as to when the woman can be produced before the court, the lawyer said that she, along with the police team, is enroute to Shahjahanpur



Swami Chinmayanand

The bench said it would interact with the woman in-camera and the bench will assemble after that to pass appropriate orders

and has reached Fatehpur Sikri.

The counsel said that if the court asks the authorities to produce the woman before it on Friday itself, she can be brought within two-and-a-half hours.

After hearing the submissions, the court directed the state government to produce the woman before it during the day. The bench said it would

interact with the woman in-camera and the bench will assemble after that to pass appropriate orders.

The top court had taken cognisance on its own in the matter after a group of lawyers had written a letter to Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi requesting him to do so.

The Shahjahanpur police had on Tuesday lodged an FIR

against Chinmayanand after the student went missing following her allegation in a video clip that he had been harassing her. The woman also spoke about threat to her and her family's life in the video clip.

Her father had filed a complaint with police accusing Chinmayanand of sexually harassing her, a charge refuted by the BJP leader's lawyer who claimed it was a "conspiracy" to blackmail him.

The woman's father had alleged that she went missing at the behest of the 72-year-old BJP leader, who heads Mumukshu ashram. She is a post-graduate student in one of the colleges run by the ashram.

The group of lawyers, in a letter addressed to CJI, Gogoi, had requested him to take suo motu action based on media reports that the student had

gone missing for the past three days. "Your lordships, we the undersigned members of the legal fraternity and practising lawyers of this court are extremely disturbed and concerned about the wellbeing of the girl concerned. We as a society cannot allow another 'Unnao case' to happen. This court has been interfering in letter petitions when it comes to protection of human rights," the letter said.

In the Unnao case of Uttar Pradesh, a 19-year-old woman, who levelled rape allegations against MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar, had suffered critical injuries in a road accident, along with her lawyer in Raebareilly district in Uttar Pradesh on July 28.

Her two aunts died in the incident and her family alleged that the accident was an attempt to eliminate her.

PAPER WITH PASSION

Go Greta!

Greta Thunberg is the face of a global revolution by young people on climate change. We need many more like her



If you have not read about Greta Thunberg and the climate revolution that this teenager from Sweden is leading, you have either been living under a rock or completely obsessed by domestic news. However, this is the time that you must pay heed to what this young girl has been saying, which is quite simply that the way we are living today is unsustainable for the environment, that the current generation is completely messing up the planet and this will make it uninhabitable for future generations. Her voice is strong

and credible, simply because she practises what she preaches, eliminating carbon footprints in her everyday life. For her journey to New York to address the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), she refused to fly. Instead, she sailed with her father, a two-man crew and a cameraperson on the 60-foot Malizia II racing yacht with solar panels and underwater turbines that generate electric power. Understandably she is being heard across many developed nations. However, she is not being heard in several others, including India. That is why it is vital that India gets a Greta Thunberg of its own, someone who can speak truth to the powers that be about the way we are treating this planet. Undoubtedly, the country will suffer some of the worst consequences of global warming and it is important that voices of young people, who will suffer the consequences of our actions and the lack of policy initiatives when it comes to the environment, are heard.

Climate change is for real and while leaders and bureaucrats in our country understand that, one presumes they are so focussed on other matters right now that environment is being swept under the carpet as a secondary concern. India and the rest of the world cannot afford to make this mistake. As the burning Amazon rainforest reminds us, the actions or inactions of nations will have long-term implications for humanity as a whole. India needs voices to pipe up and the media will play a crucial role here. Instead of the incessant jingoism and the bullying that masquerades as nationalism, we need to talk about the environment. And who better than a teenager, someone whose generation will suffer the consequences of what we do today, can do that? This effort also requires teachers in schools to make young people aware of how unbridled and unchecked development will impact the country and the world. It is a challenge though in India, not least because it is faced with the task of lifting millions out of poverty and hopelessness and giving them access to electricity and other such services, which will have an environmental impact. An aspirational population, which wants access to modern conveniences, will have an environmental impact. For better or worse, it would be desperately unfair for anyone to argue that they should not aspire towards a better future. There will be more thermal power generated and as new factories, airports and roads come up, we cannot escape all these. Ergo, it is important to teach the population at large to minimise that impact and this will be best served by someone young. While Miss Thunberg carries on with her stellar work, convincing young people and politicians in Western nations, who have contributed the most to environmental degradation, that they have to change their ways, we need an Indian inspiration.

Humanitarian woes

Those left out of the NRC will surely be allowed to prove themselves but the deep distress could work against the govt



In the end, the final list of the National Register for Citizens (NRC) in Assam, that will isolate those who came to the State after 1971, raises an all-important question. Will the political point-scoring be enough to overcome the largescale humanitarian crisis and anxieties this move is expected to spark off? More importantly, are we prepared to tackle the spinoff? For both the ruling BJP and the regional parties, who have based their politics on the influx of illegal migrants from across the border over the years and changing the demographics, this

will undoubtedly be a high point of their achievement, that of identifying bonafide citizens and lumping the rest through the most intricate process of documentation. They would claim to have restored legal rights and entitlements that were either diluted or denied to them because of the excess 41 lakh illegals preying on resources for so long. They would have exposed the Opposition, which has for years attempted a forced blend of migrants in an effort to shore up loyalist votebanks. And it is this cross-mix that has presented challenges in computing the NRC. Some of those who were there in the draft list have had their legacy papers duplicated and found their names replaced during the compilation process of the new list. Many genuine claimants have been left out while generations have been separated. Even national award recipients and Army families have been made to suffer unkind cuts. Not to mention families who actually fought against migrants from Bangladesh finding themselves out of the list while some post-1971 settlers are in. Understandably, news reports are full of the mental anxiety of affected people and the collusion with local-level officials that has generated a kind of "list economy." Even the BJP's ideological anchor, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), is now calling the entire exercise "flawed" and considers it even more dangerous than the IMDT Act if even "one genuine citizen is left out." The Rightists, who are hoping to breach Bengal after Assam and Tripura, are apprehensive about the hitback from the Bengali-speaking Hindu population about the status of their citizenship if their names vanish in the final list.

So what does it mean for those declared as foreigners almost overnight? Clearly, deportation is not on the agenda what with neighbouring Bangladesh fearing an exodus of refugees, considering it is stretched at the seams by the Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar. In fact, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had to assure Dhaka that there would be no reverse flow. What the extended timeline of ten months to those who are excluded means is that they will be caught in a fresh round of documentation and legacy-hunts besides being frayed at the edges for doing the same thing over and over again. The State police have already admitted that the post-NRC scenario would be highly challenging. One would say that those challenges have already begun with rights groups and alternative voices claiming that census data shows hardly any post-1971 foreigners in Assam and that this was nothing but a politically motivated disruption. Nobody is talking about detention centres or rehabilitation of NRC-rejects as the re-verification process will take months, maybe years, simply because people struck off the citizens' list can go to the High Court and the Supreme Court if they fail to establish their credentials at the foreigners' tribunals. Existing detention camps, part of jail premises, are already crammed. What this does is that it denies basic rights and dignity of and isolates an entire section of people, whose frustration and unsettled pride could spur another round of violence.

Give a dog a bad name

While the demand for the mass killing of stray dogs reveals a genocidal mindset, exaggerated figures whip up mass hysteria against them and spread misinformation



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

Some people spend the better part of their lives on providing education to street children; some on extending medical aid to the poor. Some devote themselves to collecting clothes for, and distributing the same, among pavement dwellers and some to running relief organisations that help those hit by natural calamities like floods and cyclones. Some live to demand ceaselessly that all stray dogs be killed.

The urge to kill — and even perpetrate mass murder — is as much a part of the human psyche as the one to extend succour to the unprivileged and the distressed. The wars, genocides and other violent activities and crimes like murders, that have occurred throughout history, bear this out and underline the fact that hatred is as central, and sometimes more powerful, an emotion as love and compassion.

The most extreme form of the desire to kill is to perpetrate it on a mass scale, which is genocide. Only a handful of people can perpetrate the latter as it would require state power or an organisation like Hitler's Sturmabteilung (SA, the original Nazi paramilitary body), to do it. More, given the opprobrium that has come to be attached to genocides, which are now regarded as crimes against humanity. Anyone calling for the slaughter of any community or class of people would find himself/herself shunned and denounced. One, therefore, should not be surprised if people redirect their genocidal instinct to stray dogs and, in the process, gain the bonus of being able to project themselves as protectors of human beings from death and from rabies numbering, according to the three figures most commonly cited, 30,000, 25,000 and 20,565 respectively.

The question is: Where do these figures come from? The first two appear in *Assessing the burden of rabies in India: WHO-sponsored national multi-centric rabies survey 2003* by the Association for Prevention and Control of Rabies in India (APRCI), which states, "However, from 1985, India continues to report every year 25,000 to 30,000 human rabies deaths, which today accounts for 60 per cent of the global report of 50,000 (WHO, 2002)."

The survey further states, "The above figure of 25,000 was an estimate worked out on the projected statistics of isolation hospitals in the country in 1985..." What we have then is not an actual figure but an estimate and that, too, arrived at on the basis of not actual but "projected" statistics. One is reminded here of the famous statement, attributed to Charles Darwin, "A mathematician is a blind man in a dark room looking for a black hat which isn't there."

As to the figure of 30,000 deaths, *WHO's World Survey of Rabies No. 34* for the year 1998 cites this as the number of rabies deaths in India in that year. The survey's annexure 3, showing "global trends and distribution by country and continent", had the entry "most parts" against India in the column under the



heading, "Geographical distribution." The space against India in the column under the heading "Trends" was left blank. *WHO's World Survey of Rabies No. 35* for the year 1999 describes the geographical distribution of the incidence of rabies in India as being confined to "limited areas." The entry in the column under the heading of "Trend" is "Decrease." How can, in the course of one year, the incidence of rabies in the country contract from "Most parts" to "Limited areas"? Even more glaring is the fact that the 1999 survey does not give any figure for the number of human deaths for rabies in India that year! Clearly, the figure of 30,000 appears far from credible.

This brings us to the APCRI's survey with its figure of 20,565 human deaths from rabies every year. Again, it is a mere projected estimate and not the total of recorded deaths from hospitals in various parts of the country. Also, it is based on critical inputs, which are themselves of questionable validity. The survey, for instance, states, "For estimating rabies incidence, the current reported incidence of three cases per 100,000 population (or 30,000 for one billion population, WHO 2002) was considered. Based on this, as per the planned precision of 90 per cent confidence level and 10 per cent error, about 9.1 million

THE ESTIMATED ANNUAL FIGURE OF 30,000 RABIES DEATHS IN INDIA NEEDS TO BE VIEWED WITH SERIOUS RESERVATIONS. IT IS AT BEST A CONJECTURE OF UNCERTAIN VALIDITY. THIS IN TURN RAISES SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ACCEPTABILITY OF THE APCRI'S SURVEY AND ITS CONCLUSIONS

or 10 million (round figure) population coverage from 21 medical coverage with marginal coverage variations due to local factors was envisaged."

As seen, the estimated annual figure of 30,000 rabies deaths in India needs to be viewed with serious reservations. It is at best a conjecture of uncertain validity. This in turn raises serious questions about the acceptability of the APCRI's survey and its conclusions. These questions appear all the more warranted given the official figures on rabies' deaths. Since 2005, the Union Government's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's Central Bureau of Health Intelligence (CBHI) has been annually publishing a *National Health Profile* for the country. According to its 2018 edition, there were 97 cases of human deaths from rabies in 2017. According to the relevant preceding annual *National Health Profiles*, there were 86 human deaths from rabies in 2016, 113 in 2015, 125 in 2014 and 132 in 2013. Nor were the figures even remotely approaching 30,000, 25,000 or 20,565 in earlier years. There, for example, were 386, 365 and 485 deaths from rabies in 1997, 1998 and 1999 respectively. The number was 486 in 2000 and 488 in 2001.

The argument that the ver-
 tiginous difference between the

actual numbers recorded and the incredibly higher estimated ones in circulation is due to under-reporting of human rabies deaths, holds little water. No amount of under-reporting can explain such a massive difference and certainly not when the reach of the print and electronic media extends to every part of the country and reports of human-animal conflict feature regularly.

Besides, the methodology of the APCRI's survey raises serious questions. These include identification by respondents, without laboratory verification, of rabies cases which could be as many as five years old in rural and three years old in urban areas. The chances of people not being able to correctly recall the symptoms of the disease killing a person, and attributing to rabies deaths caused by other diseases, are very real, particularly when almost all of the respondents are not medical practitioners.

These grossly exaggerated figures serve only to whip up mass hysteria against stray dogs, boost the sales of anti-rabies vaccines and spread disinformation about India abroad, undermining its standing as an investment destination.

(The writer is Consultant Editor, *The Pioneer*, and an author)

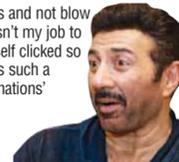
SOUNDBITE

Everyone believes now that removal of Article 370 has united the nation. Now a grand Ram Temple will be built and we all will witness it soon.



BJP MP —Pragy Singh Thakur

My job is to do things and not blow my own trumpet. It isn't my job to go there and get myself clicked so people say, 'look he is such a good man, giving donations'



Actor and BJP MP —Sunny Deol

I am concerned by the presence of foreign fighters being employed by parties to the conflict in Libya as well as by the influx of weapons.



UN Secretary General —Antonio Guterres

I believe there must be a constant and continuous dialogue between individuals and organisations irrespective of one's thought process.



Prime Minister —Narendra Modi

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Execution holds the key

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Opening up for what?" (August 30). The announcement allowing 100 per cent Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in commercial coal mining sounds good. However, its execution will be crucial. The Government failed to open the industry to competition despite liberalisation of the economy years ago because of bureaucratic indecision.

The Union Cabinet had also approved policies for opening coal mining to private miners and partially removing restrictions on the sale of coal produced at the so-called captive mines but these, too, have not been implemented.

It is a paradox that with the world's fifth-largest reserves of fuel, we imported over 40 per cent more coal during January to April this year compared to last year. That the dip in global price of coal should dictate the pace of our self-sufficiency in a vital sector as coal is but a fig leaf over goal clarity.

R Narayanan
 Navi Mumbai

The trouble lies in comparative studies

The Supreme Court's observations on a set of petitions challenging the abrogation of the special status of Jammu & Kashmir under Article 370 are well considered. These will be seen by the world positively and prove that India has its own independent judiciary to consider matters and that internationalisation of an internal matter like that of Kashmir is not welcome. In short, the apex court has sent clear signals to the world that it could be fair about Jammu & Kashmir.

That said, India is a union of many identities and some have asked if the injury to the Kashmiri identity is any different from the pain, say, of the people of Andhra Pradesh, who lost half their State a few years ago? Again, some liberals believe that plebiscite is the only real form of consent and Kashmiris should be given a choice to secede on the principle of self-determination. If this is true, are we not morally bound to have a referendum in Andhra Pradesh, too? Going back to 1947, should we not have applied this principle to the citizens of the 565

Remembering Mother

Sir — Saint Teresa's selfless and untiring service to the poorest of the poor, orphaned and sick people on the streets of Kolkata is incalculable and worthy of study and praise. Blessed with profound empathy, unwavering commitment and unshakable faith, she turned her back to worldly pleasures

and focussed on serving mankind at a young age of 18.

After years of service as a teacher and mentor, she experienced a call within her religious faith that changed her course of life, making her what she is known as today.

Who would've thought that a fragile nun from Albania could make it to India and care for the naked, the disabled and the dis-



princely States, who occupied 40 per cent of India's territory when the British left? After all, Kashmir was one of these. Finally, shouldn't Indians under the Raj have also been given a choice — to be ruled by the British or Indians?

Jayatheertha SA
 Hyderabad

Welcome measures

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Opening up for what?" (August 30). A cyclical slowdown seems to have hit the Indian economy. The Government has taken two crucial decisions pertaining to the economy. First came the Finance Minister's announcements to perk up investments. This was followed by an RBI transfer of money to the Government.

In yet another move to boost the economy, it announced new Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) rules for coal mining, contract manufacturing and digital media, while considerably easing rules for single-brand retail.

All these measures point to the fact that the Government is finally taking note of the downfall in the economy. However, the buck must not stop here. The Government must pursue economic reforms with the same zeal to bring out the best from entrepreneurs.

Gourang Naryani
 Ujjain

Jubel D'Cruz
 Mumbai

Send your feedback to:
 letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Ease these growing pains

The agro-chemical industry is struggling with poor awareness among farmers, lack of innovation and low investment in R&D



RAJESH AGGARWAL

Every business has its challenges and the agro-chemical industry is no exception to this rule. On the face of it, the industry is plagued by poor uptake of farm input materials, lack of awareness and knowledge among farmers, zero innovation and scanty investment in Research and Development (R&D). Apart from this, it is also grappling with some serious issues like the markets being flooded with spurious and low quality materials. Some may also count the advent of genetically-modified (GM) products and meeting strict regulatory needs as the other sore points. As we enter a new era of governance and welcome a new Government, it is necessary to draw the attention of the nation's policy-makers to the issues that are bogging us down and impeding our momentum.

Farmers resist change: As a professional who works with people at the grassroots, I see a problem at a deeper level — the reluctance of farmers to adopt anything that counters their traditional understanding of farming. They are resistant to anything that they think could damage their crops, even if it means that they get lower price for their yield when not using agro-chemicals. They are not aware of the right agro-chemicals, nor do they know the right time and amount to use for the type of crop they are growing. I can understand their concern over crop volumes as they struggle against volatile market prices but their lack of awareness and understanding is harming their prospects more than the prices. Hence, many companies have initiated training of farmers along with the Government but there's a long way to go.

Overdependence on generic agro-chemicals: Insecticides dominate the crop protection industry in India and have a 50 per cent market share, with herbicides, fungicides, micronutrients, plant growth regulators and biostimulants capturing the other half of the market. A bulk of domestic consumption of insecticides and herbicides is generic in nature and this demand is likely to grow in future, mainly due to the price difference with branded ones.

The fact remains that generic agro-chemicals are popular among farmers. In the absence of new, patented products in the market, they grow dependent on available varieties. Industry majors continuously try to reverse this trend by bringing in products from other countries to provide variety to farmers and introduce better products in the market. They also enter into partnerships and tie-ups with multinational corporations abroad to hasten the process.

Poor supply chain management and counterfeit products: India needs efficient distribution systems to let more farmers access these products. Problems of supply chain inefficiencies and inadequate infrastructure have plagued the agro-chemical industry, which result in post-harvest losses estimated at ₹45,000 crore every year, says a FICCI report.

The lack of an efficient distribution system also makes it difficult for agro-chemical companies to reach out to farmers to promote their products and educate them about their usage and benefits. Besides, generic products are prone to counterfeiting. These sub-standard products not only prove to be ineffective but also harm crops many times. They hurt the laboriously-built reputation of agro-chemical companies. A poor supply chain and the ignorance of farmers facilitate the entry of counterfeit products, especially in remote areas.

R&D investment is a sticking point: R&D is crucial for developing new molecules and improving existing products. But the cost is high. Apart from the cost of setting up a research facility, tracking the right resources and running it call for sustained investment while the return is slow. That prevents firms from investing in R&D as well as any other similar project. What they do not realise is that in order to improve the products and to reduce their prices, R&D is needed. While research on GM crops is being extended to almost everything that can be cultivated, not much is being done by way of research in the agro-chemical industry. Had this sector been given that amount of attention, especially in tropical countries where crops are more vulnerable than temperate climates, we may not have been struggling on issues like farmers' income and food security.

(The writer is MD of an insecticides company)

KANSHI RAM DIDN'T DIE NATURALLY. I WILL APPEAL TO THE CHIEF MINISTER TO GET IT INVESTIGATED BY THE CENTRAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION.

—BJP LEADER
GIRIRAJ SINGH DHARMESH



RAISING THIS ISSUE AFTER ONE-AND-A-HALF DECADES OF THE PARINIRVAN DIWAS OF KANSHI RAM IS IRRELEVANT AND OBSOLETE.

—BSP LEADER
SUDHINDRA BHADORIA

Nation first, not jingoism

Practising true nationalism, today's politicians should work towards creating a fear-free nation and society where the rights of the citizen are sacred and protected



RAJIV TYAGI

Over the last few years, nationalism has been the subject of discussion in practically every sphere of our society. While a healthy debate on the subject is always welcome, invariably we find this discussion on nationalism spinning out of control and evolving into arguments and political slugs. This blame game certainly does not bode well for our nation and society. Nationalism is a process that binds a country and should promote love and harmony among the citizens. It cannot be a catalyst to cause cultural, social, economic, geographical, historical or religious rift in the country. On the contrary, it is supposed to safeguard the interests of the common man and should be a catalyst in the progress and prosperity of the nation.

As per Chanakya, "The key to happiness is prosperity." As per him, it's the duty of the head of the nation to ensure prosperity of citizens. However, I doubt if this can be achieved by clashes of ideology or by demeaning each other.

Chanakya further elaborates on the four duties of the State. These duties are to expand facilities in wealth and resources, to guard the gains that have been obtained, to increase/expand what has been obtained/achieved, to equally distribute the resources and wealth among the people of the country. A great State must focus on these four principles and be guided by them.

India remained subjugated under foreign rule for a long period but never let go of its spiritual identity that propagated universal brotherhood, love, tolerance, humanity, compassion and truth. Though India is an amalgamation of myriad religions, castes, creeds, cultures and languages, our spiritual identity has kept us unified and finally led us to liberty. India's freedom fighters contributed immensely to the struggle for India's independence but by and large our fight for liberty had a unique, amazing and dominant identity — non-violence. Perhaps it was because India's DNA had non-violence and tolerance deeply embedded in it. Our respect for our diversities is the key to keeping India united.

It's incumbent upon the leaders of the country to work towards providing better services and infrastructure to the citizens. The leaders must work for more equitable distribution of resources and improvement of infrastructure. People should be free to choose and pursue traditions, lifestyle, language, religion and so on. This liberty to choose is the fundamental cornerstone of a conflict-free society and shall ensure that India stands tall among the nations of the world. Clashing on language, religion, race, colour and gender will shatter the idea that is India.

Being the guardian of the East, it's incumbent upon India and Indians to symbolise unity in diversity. India must give out a message that it looks at the world as one brotherhood populated by men and women without conflict of cast, creed or colour. If a section of people tries to tie down or define another section of people into boundaries, the consequences shall be disastrous. Every human being aspires to establish individuality and in pursuit of individuality shall try level best to break the barriers imposed by others. A nationalism governed by boundaries shall never let a nation stand united.

SADLY, IN TODAY'S INDIA THERE IS A MAD RUSH TO CERTIFY NATIONALISTS AND NATIONALISM. IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO BE A NATIONALIST; ONE HAS TO BE A CERTIFIED NATIONALIST. THE QUESTION IS DO THOSE CERTIFYING QUALIFY AS NATIONALISTS? FACT IS, AS COMPARED TO TODAY'S LEADERS, THOSE DURING INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE AND NASCENT YEARS OF THE FORMATION OF OUR NATION WERE MEN AND WOMEN OF TRUE CHARACTER AND PATRIOTS. WHEN I SAY CHARACTER, I MEAN THAT OUR FREEDOM FIGHTERS NEVER MARKETED THEIR NATIONALISM



India is a large and diverse country and can progress only if the corner stones and principles of the Constitution are respected and adhered to. The profusion of aggressive slogans and the naked display of might that we are witnessing today are damaging the nation. Hitler is a glaring example of what happens when a leader propagates racial superiority. History is witness that his actions and thought process virtually destroyed Germany while pursuing his ridiculous racial agenda.

It's imperative that citizens be left free to decide their slogan, whether it will be "Bharat Mata Ki Jai", "Vande Mataram", "Jai Hind", "Jai Bharat" or "Hindustan Zindabad." Eventually they all convey the same sentiment. A citizen serving the nation by adhering to the principles of the Constitution deserves the freedom to decide how to express love and respect for the nation. If a citizen has been responsibly fulfilling his duties towards the country, then he has the right to expect that political parties and their leaders shall fulfill their obligations towards him and the nation to the best of their abilities. Good governance certainly does not mean misleading the citizens and complicating core issues and deficiencies with aggressive slogans.

True nationalism lies in providing employment to the youth of the nation, ensuring a better minimum support price to the farmers, creating a simplified tax regime for the traders, providing protection to women, promoting communal harmony, ensuring freedom

of Press, securing and safeguarding the borders of the nation and most importantly respecting the tenants of the Constitution. Political parties and leaders should be judged and evaluated by these guiding principles of nationalism. Sports, cinema, telecom revolution, ease of transport, availability of regional food pan-India, migration of students from different regions to universities across the nation are a few factors that have been great catalysts in unifying the nation. 1985 saw three major revolutions — automobiles, television and communication — further unifying the citizens.

It's important to understand that India can best progress following the traditional progressive principles of culture. Chanakya's principle is that every citizen is free to live life in accordance with his/her beliefs and principles and if need be to lay down one's life to safeguard them. Let's consider the two main religious sects of the nation, Hindus and Muslims. Since time immemorial, the followers of Sanatan Dharma are free to worship idols or whatever form of God they choose. Sanatan Dharma stresses on freedom to pursue personal beliefs. On the other hand Islam is founded on the basic tenet of equality as it accords a uniform status to all Muslims.

Iqbal has summed it up beautifully in the following lines which state that all are equal in the eyes of the Almighty — "Sultan and slave stood side by side. Then there was no servant nor master, nothing did them divide."

These fine traditions make India a country that accords its citizens complete personal freedom.

If we reflect on the struggle for India's Independence, different people and parties took different paths in their fight for liberty but no one branded the other anti-national. Even those who did not participate in this noble cause were not criticised. Sadly, in today's India there is a mad rush to certify nationalists and nationalism. It is not enough to be a nationalist; one has to be a certified nationalist. The question is do those certifying qualify as nationalists? Fact is, as compared to today's leaders, those during the Independence struggle and nascent years of the formation of our nation were men and women of true character and patriots. When I say character, I mean that our freedom fighters never marketed their nationalism. For them, serving the nation was a privilege and not a tool to grab power. Citizens of India should be driven and inspired by the nationalism of both Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi. They both propagated a nationalism encompassing humanity and compassion.

Practising true nationalism, today's politicians should work towards creating a fear-free nation and society where the rights of the citizen are sacred and protected. In conclusion, I state that those who agree with my thoughts are as much nationalist as those who disagree with me.

(The writer is a national spokesperson, Indian National Congress)

How to tap property tax potential

The problem of municipal revenue deficit is not insurmountable and can be addressed by increasing existing local taxes. The scope of property tax has not been harnessed in India and is plagued by under-assessment, poor collection and widespread exemptions, say **SOUMYADIP CHATTOPADHYAY** and **ARJUN KUMAR**

Many Indian cities have limited municipal revenues and hence they fail to provide urban infrastructure and services, which in turn, come in the way of harnessing their potential as critical drivers of economic growth and development. However, the problem of municipal revenue deficit is not insurmountable and can be addressed by increasing existing local taxes and strengthening the revenue-raising capacity of municipal bodies or Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) by broadening sources. Such financially sound ULBs would then attract private investors. Property Tax (PT), levied on ownership of any building and land within the municipal area by ULBs, is a significant source of revenue envisaged for the development and maintenance of urban areas. However, PT collections are significantly lower and roughly constitute 0.2 per cent of India's GDP, while in countries like Canada and the US, they contribute up to 3 to 4 per cent. Even a modest increase in PT can help ULBs raise revenue and enhance development.

The potential of PT is under-utilised because of under-assessment, poor collection and widespread exemptions. Most properties are valued on the basis of gross

Annual Rental Value (ARV). Owing to the use of discretionary and corrupt practices, prevailing PT rates hardly correspond to their actual market value and yield very little tax revenue. Wide prevalence of the Rent Control Act has capped potential rent increases to a maximum of 25 per cent of the 1948 benchmark and has given original tenants the right to pass property on to their heirs, preventing any future increase in rent.

In fact, assessed values have been found to be approximate 8-10 per cent of the market value, with varying tax rates for different kinds of properties. Globally, PT is generally around one to two per cent of the market value of the property. However, given the under-assessment of market value in India, the PT rates would be merely a fraction of that. Deficiency in tax management is also pronounced and ULBs generally do not have any system in place to count the actual number of taxable properties under their jurisdiction or even carry out reforms and technological upgradation to the collection system.

On an average, only 37 per cent of the tax demanded is collected, with the corresponding figures being as low as 55 per cent for a city like Mumbai. In spite of penal pro-

vision for delayed payments or non-payments, ULBs rarely bring any penal action against defaulters, highlighting the role of local political economy and poor commitment. Further, exempted properties constitute approximately 10 per cent of total urban properties and about 11 per cent of assessed properties. Interestingly, PT is characterised as the tax everyone loves to hate because its visibility and other characteristics make people particularly aware of it and, therefore, any reform initiatives entail significant local political challenges and administrative difficulties. Primarily, PT reforms involve four key areas of intervention — broadening of tax base, assessing property valuation, setting tax rate and collecting taxes.

Past experiences have shown that a well-functioning tax system applies a low tax rate across a broad taxbase. Up-to-date information on properties are required for taking tough decisions like what to tax or exempt and whom to make liable for this taxation. ULBs, presumably endowed with local knowledge of land and property use, are best placed to develop such physical cadastre. Harmonising existing property records with data from utility companies, records from Government departments

and digitising these dynamic databases can be useful for bringing a higher number of properties under the tax net and enhance development. Serious rethinking on PT exemptions is required to minimise revenue loss. Sometimes exemptions are justified for providing tax incentives to attract businesses. However, such incentives, as evident from experiences in US cities, may turn out to be counter-productive with a deterioration of the tax base and financial health of the ULBs. This in turn results in lower levels of urban service delivery.

Two distinct assessment methodologies in India — value-based assessment and area-based assessment (with the former being divided into rental and capital value approaches) — have failed to capture the real value of properties. Non-availability of extensive data on market transactions of properties (or the corresponding from revenue departments) makes the valuation under capital value approach inaccurate.

Cities like Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Indore, Kolkata, Patna and Pune have introduced the Self-Assessment System as a reform measure. Self-assessment, if supported by a proper legal frame-

work, is genuinely an appealing procedure for our cities with little administrative capacity.

However, the possibility of underestimation could produce significant revenue losses. Fair initial assessment and periodic re-evaluation of properties reflecting changes in value could be useful for addressing PT inelasticity and volatility. While most ULBs follow a progressive PT rate structure, Bengaluru and Ludhiana have a flat tax rate, with differentiation between residential and non-residential units and lower rates for owner-occupied as compared to rented houses. Differential tax rates increase complexity as well as administrative costs. Given the low administrative capacity of ULBs, a single rate may be the best option for policymakers. It is crucial to allow ULBs to set the tax rate as that would make them accountable for tax decisions at the municipal level, leading to improved municipal services with accountability.

Such PT reforms may result in major tax shifts. Attendant political resistance and public resentment can be mitigated by strengthening the linkages between local taxes and local expenditure and involving citizens at each stage of the

design and implementation of municipal tax policy processes. Undoubtedly, people are happier to pay taxes when they relate them with improvements in service delivery and when they are consulted and kept informed about the reform processes and a firm, predictable policy.

Phase-in mechanism, in which tax changes are spread out over several years along with improved services, can also be used to make tax reform acceptable and sustainable. Instead of tax rebate, tax deferral schemes, that defer tax increases until the property is passed to someone else, can also be used to help asset-rich but lower income people. It is important to make people aware about PT payments by showcasing various costs and benefits of compliance or non-compliance.

The Centre's push for urbanisation and competitiveness among cities (Smart Cities Mission), rankings (Swachh Survekshan), ratings (credit ratings of ULBs), should also prioritise empowerment of ULBs through capacity development to harness PT as a primary source of revenue.

(Chattopadhyay is Assistant Professor of Economics at Visva Bharati University and Kumar is Director of IMPRI)

CAPSULE



Onion prices continue to rule at around Rs 50 per kg in Delhi

NEW DELHI: Onion prices in the national capital continue to rule high at around Rs 50 per kg on Friday due to sluggish supply from flood-hit growing states, according to a trade source. However, data maintained by the consumer affairs ministry showed average retail onion prices at Rs 42 per kg in the national capital. According to trade sources, prices of onion vary depending on the quality and locality. In most place, onion is being sold at around Rs 50 per kg in the past few days. Whereas e-retailer Amazon was selling at Rs 32 per kg, Big Basket at Rs 37 per kg and Grofers at Rs 40.40 per kg on Friday. Due to the central government's intervention, state-run Mother Dairy and cooperative Nafed have started selling onion at a subsidised rate of Rs 23.90 per kg in the national capital to boost availability and curb price rise.



Kalpataru bags orders worth Rs 1,263 cr

NEW DELHI: Kalpataru Power Transmission Ltd (KPTL) on Friday said it has secured new orders worth about Rs 1,263 crore. These orders include transmission and distribution works from Power Grid Corporation and South America, according to a statement by the company. The company also got orders for design, supply, erection, testing and commissioning for railway electrification and associated works in India from RVNL (Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd), it added. It also got EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) order for oil and gas pipeline-laying and associated works in India from Indian Oil. The firm's international subsidiary has secured new transmission and distribution (T&D) projects in Europe. KPTL Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Manish Mohnot said, "We are delighted with the new order wins in our T&D, railways and oil & gas businesses."

8.65 pc interest on EPF to be notified soon: Gangwar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The labour ministry will soon notify 8.65 per cent rate of interest on Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) for 2018-19 as the finance ministry does not disagree on this rate, said Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar on Friday.

A notification by the labour ministry is required regarding the interest rate for crediting the interest amount into accounts of over 6 crore subscribers.

Besides, it would enable retirement fund body Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) to settle on withdrawal claims on this rate. Now, the EPFO is paying an interest rate of 8.55 per cent for 2018-19 under PF withdrawal claims. The 8.55 per cent interest rate on PF deposits was fixed for 2017-18.

"The finance ministry does not disagree with 8.65 per cent interest on EPF for 2018-19. I believe that it will soon be notified," Gangwar told reporters on the sidelines of a conference on private security guards at FICCI here.



Meanwhile, FICCI Committee on Private Security Industry chair Rituraj Sinha said that amid the current slowdown, private security continues to grow and create jobs. "Assurance from senior

ministers to resolve issues related with GST, Code on Wages, Credit Access for smaller companies and enabling rather than enforcing compliance to labour reforms is reassuring." In February, the EPFO's apex decision-making body Central Board of Trustees, headed by the labour minister, had decided to raise the interest rate on EPF to 8.65 per cent for 2018-19, which was the first increase in the past three years.

A notification by the labour ministry is required regarding the interest rate for crediting the interest amount into accounts of over 6 crore subscribers

In April, the Department of Financial Services (DFS), a wing of the finance ministry, had given its concurrence to the EPFO's decision to provide 8.65 per cent rate of interest for 2018-19.

The rate was raised to 8.65 per cent for the previous financial year from 8.55 per cent provided in 2017-18. The EPFO had earlier reduced the interest rate for 2016-17 to 8.65 per cent as compared with 8.8 per cent for 2015-16.

After the finance ministry's concurrence, the income tax department and the labour ministry are required to notify the rate of interest for 2018-19. Thereafter, the EPFO would give directions to its over 136 field offices to credit the rate of interest into subscribers' account and settle their claims accordingly.

According to the EPFO estimates, there would be a surplus of Rs 151.67 crore after providing 8.65 per cent rate of interest for 2018-19 on EPF. There would have been a deficit of Rs 158 crore on providing 8.7 per cent rate of interest on EPF for the previous financial year. That is why the body decided to provide 8.65 per cent rate of interest for 2018-19.

The EPFO had provided a five-year-low interest rate of 8.55 per cent to its subscribers for 2017-18.



NTPC creates separate company for coal mining

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned power giant NTPC on Friday announced incorporation of a subsidiary NTPC Mining Ltd, paving the way for its foray into commercial coal mining.

The power sector behemoth also has plans to list the coal subsidiary on stock exchanges.

"NTPC Ltd has incorporated a wholly owned subsidiary in the name of 'NTPC Mining Ltd' with Registrar of Companies, NCT of Delhi on August 29, 2019 for taking up coal mining business," the company said a BSE filing.

An official on the condition of anonymity said NTPC has the plan to set a coal subsidiary, which would cover operations of its all coal mines and will be run like a coal company.

The official also said the coal mining arm will have a culture of coal mining and will eventually help in recruiting professional with a different cadre as it would help in their career progression.

The power PSU has been allotted 10 coal mines to meet its fuel requirement, and operations five mines have already started.

Last year, the Niti Aayog had already given its approval for setting up a separate subsidiary for coal mining business. However, the approval of the coal ministry was awaited on this.

The official further said that since the coal ministry has approved the proposal to set up an arm for coal mining, the NTPC went ahead to incorporate a separate firm.

The power PSU has been allotted 10 coal mines to meet its fuel requirement, and operations five mines have already started

However, the official did not divulge any details about listing of the coal mining arm of NTPC on stock exchanges.

The main objective of the coal mining arm will be to sell coal to others from its mines in open market after meeting its own requirement.

NTPC has been allotted 10 coal blocks - Pakri Barwadih, Chhatti Bariatu (including Chhatti Bariatu-South), Kerandari, Dulanga, Talaipalli, Bhalumuda, Banai, Mandakini-B, Banhardih (allotted to Patratu Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Ltd, a subsidiary company) and Badam Coal block with geological reserves of over 7.3 billion tonnes and production potential of about 113 million tonnes per annum.

NTPC's first coal block - Pakri-Barwadih - has been declared commercial from April 1, 2019. It is a basket mine. As much as 11.85 MT of coal has been extracted from it till Jun 2019. The production target for this mine in 2019-20 is 8.48 million tonnes.

'Need to monitor data to prevent unprecedented mkt power'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Data is critical for e-commerce and there is a need to keep close watch on its usage to prevent creation of "unprecedented market power", and it should not be controlled by a central authority as that could kill all trade and commerce, a senior Niti Aayog official said on Friday.

The underlying comparative advantage and strength of the fast growing e-commerce sector comes from data, Niti Aayog Vice-Chairman Rajiv Kumar said. "Data is something which we need to be carefully looking at as to how this is going to be used by people who are in e-commerce because as access to data, access to much bigger data when combined through the modern technologies can give immense power, not just to these individuals, (but) we can get directed in our lives, and our taste and preferences will be changed if they use this data," he said.

Kumar was speaking at a workshop of Competition Commission of India (CCI) on e-commerce. He said CCI and

other authorities that are looking into cyber issues can look at ways to bring a balanced situation "where data is not used to create unprecedented market power".

"This is a very nuanced situation. Very clearly, you can not have a situation where data is controlled by any central authority that will kill all trade and commerce and advances and progress. So, you have to have a situation where you permit data to be available, to be

accessible. "I am not sure how you will do it. But I think it is something which we need to work very closely with the industry and other stakeholders, because they are the ones who are using it"

—RAJIV KUMAR, Niti Aayog Vice-Chairman



Talking about the foreign investment regime in the e-commerce sector, Kumar said he always advocates and talks about liberal FDI regime in retail trade and even in e-commerce.

"This industry is going to be critical...Our retail trade is not matching up needs of the 21st century. In new India, retail sector should be technology driven and modern," he said. Further he said the CCI have to look at the degree of cross-subsidisation to be permitted in the sector because there could be a situation where "you cross-subsidies from one business to other that become predatory".

Kumar also said that a big problem can arise if an e-commerce player combine its business with its own brick and mortar facilities or shops, which can be very large.

NDRF, Wipro to work aerospace systems

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The National Design and Research Forum joined hands with Wipro 3D to work together in design for additive manufacturing of aerospace systems and developing related industry standards.

According to an MoU signed on Friday, NDRF and Wipro 3D would also offer competency building and advisory programmes relating to additive manufacturing.

The MoU was inked by NDRF Chairman, Dr M Annadurai and Wipro 3D's Vice-President & Business Head, Ajay Parikh.

"NDRF and Wipro 3D are joining together to create industry standards and generate design for additive manufacturing pedigree for aerospace systems," Annadurai told reporters here.



According to him, 3D printing/additive manufacturing is a technology which is going to "revolutionise the future world", requiring industry standards and pioneering attempts in terms of design.

NDRF, an autonomous forum of the Institution of Engineers (India), promotes research, design, development, production and innovation through collaborative efforts since 1969, according to an NDRF statement.

NDRF is celebrating its 50th year of formation during 2019-20, with a string of new initiatives.

TVS Motor's HLX series surpasses 1-mn sales mark

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Two- and three-wheeler maker TVS Motor Company on Friday said its motorcycle under the HLX series has surpassed the one-million sale-mark globally. The series, launched in 2013 in the African market, has been witnessing growing presence in Middle-East and South America, a press release said here.

"We are extremely happy that the TVS HLX family is now one-million strong. HLX series first forayed in Africa and the brand was developed to cater to tough conditions," TVS Motor director and CEO KN Radhakrishnan was quoted as saying in the release.

"This milestone is a reinforcement of our endeavour to continue offering superior products and complement them with dedicated customer satisfaction initiatives," he said.

PMO seeks litigation update from CBDT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The PMO has sought an update from the CBDT about the number of appeals it has withdrawn from various courts after a direction was recently issued to enhance monetary limits for filing appeals in various legal forums in order to reduce litigation between the Income-Tax department and the taxpayers.

The Prime Ministers Office (PMO) has sought data on withdrawal of cases and the cases identified for withdrawal till August 31, official sources told PTI.

All the regional heads of the Income-Tax department have been asked to compile this data in a tabular format and send it to the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) by September 5, they said.

The entire exercise of withdrawal of cases, on the basis of an order issued on August 8 for enhancement of monetary limits for filing of appeals in



IDBI Bank launches repo-linked home, auto loans

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

IDBI Bank on Friday said it will offer repo-linked home and auto loans with interest rates starting from 8.30 per cent per annum.

The products -- Suvridha Plus Home Loan and Suvridha Plus Auto Loan -- will be benchmarked to the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) repo rate and will be available to customers with effect from September 10, IDBI Bank said in a release.

The private sector lender said these loans will be offered to new customers having good credit score and a minimum income of Rs 6 lakh per annum.

Home loans up to Rs 75 lakh with a tenure of up to 35 years will be offered at interest rate of 8.30 per cent per annum onwards.

The bank will also offer balance transfer with top-up facility under the new variant with zero processing fees, it added. Customers will be able to avail auto loans up to Rs 25 lakh covering the on-road price with tenure up to 7 years with interest rate beginning from 8.90 per cent per annum.

The loan will be extended for new four-wheeler loans and to promote green initiative, additional discount of 10 basis points will be offered for purchase of electric car under Suvridha Plus Auto Loan.

"Our retail segment loan book is growing at 19 per cent year-on-year and this measure will surely help us to improve the business under the segment," said IDBI Bank Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Rakesh Sharma.

Gold slips below Rs 40,000, falls Rs 500

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After crossing record Rs 40,000-mark, gold price on Friday declined Rs 500 to Rs 39,720 per 10 gram in the national capital, according to the All India Sarafa Association, as positive developments in US-China trade talks reduced safe-haven appeal of the yellow metal.

The yellow metal on Thursday rose by Rs 250 to touch a record high of Rs 40,220 per 10 gram in the national capital.

Silver also dropped Rs 450 to Rs 48,600 per kg on



reduced offtake by industrial units and coin makers.

Easing in demand from jewellers in the domestic spot market amid sluggish trend overseas mainly led to a decline in gold prices, traders said.

Besides, appreciation in the rupee also weighed on precious metal, they added. In the early trade on Friday, the rupee was trading 12 paise higher at 71.67 vis-a-vis dollar. Rise in the domestic currency makes the import of gold cheaper.

Globally, gold was trading lower at USD 1,526.80 an ounce in New York, while silver was up at USD 18.52 an ounce.

"Globally, spot gold corrected slightly but hovering well above USD 1,500 an ounce due to positive comments from US President

(Donald Trump) on US-China trade discussions which eased gold's safe-haven appeal," said Hareesh V, head (commodity research), Geojit Financial Services.

On the domestic market, prices dipped lower from an all-time high hit on Thursday due to a strong Indian rupee and cues from the benchmark international market, he added.

In the national capital, gold of 99.9 per cent purity reduced by Rs 500 to Rs 39,720 per 10 gram while that of 99.5 purity fell Rs 520 to Rs 39,530 per 10 gram.

ONGC targets \$ 15-16 billion investment for new 'avatar'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's top oil and gas producer ONGC on Friday unveiled a USD 15-16 billion investment plan to double output from its domestic and overseas fields and expand its refining capacity three folds alongside diversification into renewables in a new vision document for 2040.

"The new strategy document aims to transform ONGC in a new 'avatar' in this new energy landscape as a diversified energy company with strong contribution from non-E&P businesses," Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) Chairman and Managing Director Shashi Shanker told reporters here.

ONGC Energy Strategy 2040 envisions the company as "A diversified energy company

with a strong contribution from non E&P business; 3x revenues and about 5-6x market capitalisation," he said.

The firm produced 24.23 million tonne of crude oil in the 2018-19 fiscal year and 25.81 billion cubic metres of natural gas from its domestic fields. Another 10.1 million tonne of oil and 4.736 bcm of gas was produced from its overseas assets.

It had a turnover of Rs 1,09,654 crore and a net profit of Rs 26,715 crore in the year ended March 31, 2019. As on August 16, it had a market capitalisation of Rs 1,64,458 crore.

"Our fields are old and ageing, 30-50 years old and have reached plateau. So we are investing in re-development projects to arrest the fall and extend the life," he said.



The company is investing around Rs 86,000 crore in 27 major projects to boost oil and gas production, which has stagnated over the last few years. These projects will yield 76 million tonnes of oil and 121 bcm of gas.

The company is investing around Rs 86,000 crore in 27 major projects to boost oil and gas production, which has stagnated over the last few years

"These numbers will change as we progress," ONGC Director (Finance) Subhash Kumar said.

Shanker said the 'Energy Strategy 2040' entails ONGC achieving "three times revenue distributed across exploration and production, refining, marketing and other businesses; four times current profit-after-tax (PAT), with 10 per cent contribution from non-oil and gas business; and 5-6 times current market capitalization."

"The strategic roadmap envisions a future-ready organization whose growth is predicated on a few important planks: consolidation of our core upstream business (domestic and international); expansion into value accreting adjacencies in the oil and gas value chain (downstream and petrochemicals) and diversification into renewables (offshore wind) and select new frontier plays through dedicated venture fund," he said.

It targets cumulative upstream output (local and overseas) almost doubling from current levels with 2 per cent

and 5 per cent CAGR in domestic and international operations respectively. With two 35 million tonnes per annum of oil refining capacity vested in its two subsidiaries -- HPCL and MRPL, ONGC is targeting to raise this capacity to around 90-100 million tonnes. Also, expansion in petrochemicals will be prioritised.

Besides, ONGC plans to make investments in renewables energy sources with a target to create 5-10 gigawatts portfolio with a focus on offshore wind power, he said.

ONGC has been under pressure to reverse the falling output from its aging fields, where natural decline has set in. It is investing heavily to arrest the domestic fall while at the same time aggressively look for assets overseas.



A festival makeover for homes

A study conducted by an online site noted the top three services demanded by consumers during the last festive season

Festive seasons are special. They bring family closer and add festive goodness to it with tasty food, and sweets. Not to mention, the new dresses that you want to try for the festivals. The season also marks decorative changes in our homes. Sometimes it is as simple as a diya on the porch — or covering the house — and times it is a complete makeover for the house.

Sulekha, a digital platform, has revealed interesting insights about how Indians love spending on their homes, especially during the festive season. This study is based on visits and searches by nearly 35,000 consumers across Indian cities that landed on Sulekha during the last festive season — covering major festivals like Dussehra, Durga Puja, Onam, Eid, Diwali and Christmas.

The first and foremost home makeover would be painting the house. The study noted that painting services grew over 165% during the festive season in comparison to the regular period. This is remarkable when it comes to Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, both of which were keen on painting services during the festive season. The requests from these states alone grew over 270% during the period.

Consumers also got their lawns landscaped, a service that grew over 160%.

Another major service would be pest control in anticipation of the guests they will have. Pest control services grow by 163% and Tamil Nadu and Karnataka generated more requests, over 200%, during the period.

Other aspects of the study noted an increase in demand for modular kitchen services (more than 132%) and Rajasthan and Haryana's requests grew over 250%.

This study is indicative of what we will see in the upcoming festive season as well.

An ode to design

Hyderabad Design Week, a five-day festival of design, brings together leading design practitioners to explore their role as change-makers, present the best in human-centric design innovation, and tackle some of the biggest challenges facing the world today.

Award-winning animation and new media technology company, Post Office Studios, created a promotional video for the government of Telangana

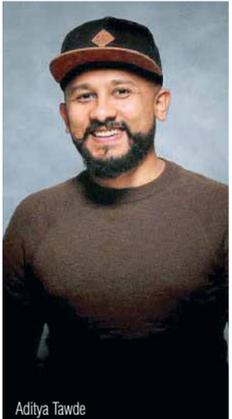
With the theme 'Humanizing Design', Hyderabad Design Week 2019 will be held from October 9 to 13, in tandem with the 31st edition of the World Design Assembly, which is taking place in India for the very first time.

To promote the event, the company released a video that takes the audience through a variety of design styles, largely depicted through 2D and 3D animation and some amount of live-action. Each visual element is tied together with a spoken word piece, conveying the thought that everything happening around us, from the simplest to the most complex, is made possible through good design.

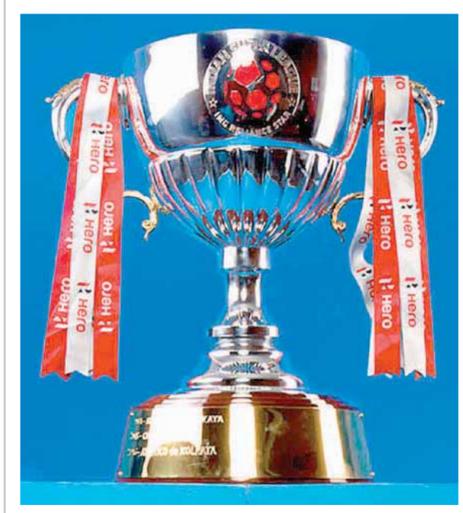


Aditya Tawde, CCO, Post Office Studios, says, "We were approached by the Government of Telangana to create a promotional video for the Hyderabad Design Week. Their main request was to make it as innovative and unconventional as possible while ensuring that we did justice to the event's theme."

Given the leeway we had for this project, as well as the nature and scale of the event, in particular, we wanted to create a content piece that, in some way, would be an ode to design. The team conceptualised a spoken-word piece highlighting how design has evolved around human experiences over the years, each of which would be visually depicted with a distinct design style.



One of the most challenging parts of the process, according to him, was to design and animate the end sequence of the video, which revealed the word 'Design'. For this, they designed 54 graphic frames and animated them together to end the video on a high and intensive note. The music and sound design was upbeat and engaging and helped elevate the viewing experience for the audience.



As Hero Indian Super League enters its sixth season, Hyderabad FC replaces FC Pune City as the new ISL franchise to add its flavour of football culture to the thriving league, writes Sridhar K Penna

There is no denying that football is the world's most popular sport. Although, India may not be as big a name as it was perhaps five to six decades back, particularly at the Olympic level, the fact of the matter is that there is a massive fan following for the beautiful game in our country.

It is true that in terms of quality, Indian football has taken a severe beating over the years, particularly since the 1960 Rome Olympics — the last time the country qualified for the greatest sport spectacle on earth. However, this has not diminished the craze of fans from following their favourite sport or its iconic stars from across the globe.

Many charismatic superstars are household names closer home. Although, the country's stock as a contender was gradually on the wane, All India Football Federation (AIFF) did devise tournaments to help it survive on the popularity charts. In its avowed quest to spot talent and help fine-tune them came events for Under-13, 15 and 18 years age groups, second division league, and I-League.

However, all said and done, they were not yielding the desired results with the last floundering because of various reasons.

Against this rather gloomy backdrop, and apparently inspired by the runaway success of Indian Premier League (IPL) that has given birth to similar experi-

ments in other disciplines, arrived Hero Indian Super League (ISL), a desi league with an overwhelming international flamboyance that spiced up its professional approach.

Today, what came across as a glimmer of hope is now all set for its sixth edition that kicks-off at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Kochi on October 20 with the opener pitting Kerala Blasters FC against ATK.

Meanwhile, much to the delight of fans from Hyderabad, there is a tremendous development, this time around.

It is a fact that Hyderabad boasts of a strong football culture, which has survived despite the highs and lows. The good augury is that the city will be debuting in the upcoming Hero ISL, thanks to the founding of Hyderabad Football Club (Hyderabad FC), which will be the sixth contender in the ensuing magnum opus. Incidentally, Hyderabad FC replaces the Wadhawan Group-owned FC Pune City, which failed to sustain itself due to financial problems.



The happening news for Hyderabad comes courtesy of two-hard

CEO of Kerala Blasters

overseas players and coaches evincing interest.

Coming to the brass-tacks, although Madduri has not been so actively involved in the sport, Tripuraneni is furthering his involvement in professional football that has seen him shoulder various responsibilities, including in ISL.

A successful IT entrepreneur with 15 years of experience in the United States, Madduri accomplished himself as the founder-CEO of Incassant Technologies, which had a rewarding exit by way of acquisition by NIIT Technologies. Hoping to invest money and resources in sports and on societal issues, and armed with an MBA from the University of Texas he endeavours to meet the educational aspirations of orphans and children from the interiors apart from promoting sports disciplines. "Sport has always been in my DNA. I am pleasantly happy that I am getting an opportunity to enrich the football culture here. I wish to play a significant part in its development across the State," explains Madduri in a matter-of-fact tone.



FC, he has had a very fruitful journey on the ISL bandwagon. Tripuraneni, a former President of Chennai Football Association, is optimistic that his team will have more than a mere presence in the showpiece event. He says, "It is a proud moment for me, to be co-owner of Hyderabad FC. I look forward to working with key stakeholders and building a strong foundation for the club, which will eventually contribute to society and do the city proud. Our immediate task is to prepare for the new season."

That is precisely what the two co-owners are doing, right now. Apart from trying to put in place a cohesive team, they are knitting together a support staff that can guide it to exalted levels.

With former Hull City manager Phil Brown as the head coach and Aidan Davison as a mentor for customers, the team has made an impressive start to their campaign and one that reveals that they are determined to be more than being mere pretenders to the throne.



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VARUN TRIPURANENI

VIJAY MADDURI



'SUITS'

ACTORS BID EMOTIONAL ADIEU TO SERIES

As the popular law drama *Suits* is coming to an end with its ninth season in September, the lead actors, including Gabriel Macht and Sarah Rafferty, became nostalgic and penned emotional posts on social media.

Thanking his wife and actress Jacinda Barrett, who was also a part of *Suits*, Macht took to Instagram to share how Barrett supported him throughout the show's journey.

He said: "Nine years ago, I started the *Suits* journey.. It all began with the most important person in my life by my side. This life that has offered us so much...some easy, many challenging, countless miles apart and hours, days, and months separating us and our loved ones not to mention years of sacrifice on so many levels. I count my blessings you sticking with me through to the bitter sweet end of this era.

"As I have thanked my wonderful crew, my talented ensemble, and the fantastic fans that keep coming back for more...I am most grateful for Jacinda Barrett because without her there is no way any of this would have happened."

Macht plays the role of lawyer Harvey Specter in *Suits*.

Actress Sarah Rafferty, who is known for essaying the role of Donna Roberta Paulsen in the show, too posted a couple of posts after wrapping the finale episode. She posted a selfie with her co-star Rick Hoffman (Louis Litt).

"And that's a series wrap on my brother Rick Hoffman. No words for this one," Rafferty captioned the image.

Like Macht, Rafferty thanked her spouse Santtu Seppala.

"Happiest wrap of all to this one. Santtu, because you say yes, because you tirelessly and single handedly man ground control, because you are always behind the scenes with my very favorite smile, all the magic happens...this whole mad migratory decade could happen. I wish I could say I'd make it up to you, but we both know I never could. I love you. Now let's go home," she added.

The final season of *Suits* will consist of 10 episodes. The series has aired on the cable network since 2011.

BRAD PITT OPENS UP ABOUT MASCULINITY



Hollywood star Brad Pitt says his upcoming sci-fi drama *Ad Astra* deals with the modern concept of "masculinity", and shows how the old beliefs act as a barrier for many.

In James Gray's *Ad Astra*, Pitt is seen in the role of an astronaut who is determined to travel to the farthest reaches of the solar system to find his lost father, and who grapples with existential questions.

"In retrospect, I look back on our early conversations. James and I and what we were really digging at, without labelling it so much, was this definition of masculinity," *deadline.com* quoted Pitt as saying.

"Having grown up in an era where we were taught to be strong, not show weakness, don't be disrespected, and so on and so forth, there's certain value in that as far as entering into the world and holding your own, but there's also a barrier that's created with this kind of embracing of the self, because you're denying, to a sense, those pains or the things (that make) you feel shame, whether real or imagined, the regrets in one's life," added the actor at the press conference at Venice Film Festival. With the film, they were looking to find answers to it.

"We were asking the question, is there a better definition for us? Does being more open provide you with a better relation with your loved ones and with yourself? At the end of the day, that's certainly what we were after," added the actor, who flaunted his beefed up look at the film fest.

PORTO SHUT DOWN FOR HRITHIK, TIGER'S SHOOT

The coastal city of Porto in Portugal was almost shut down for two days straight to shoot an intense and high-speed action sequence between Bollywood stars Hrithik Roshan and Tiger Shroff for the upcoming film *War*, says its director Siddharth Anand.

"We shot an intense, high-speed action sequence between Hrithik and Tiger in Porto. The high octane scene required Tiger to chase down Hrithik and this extensive sequence needed us to get permission to shut down the main bridge at Porto for two days," Anand said in a statement.

The director said the local authorities were extremely supportive to the cast and crew. "We got all due clearances for us to shoot this adrenaline-pumping scene. However, the locals were stunned! They had never seen their city in lockdown mode ever and they were super curious and came to see which film had locked down their bridge.

"Their reactions were priceless because they were stunned seeing the kind of action that Hrithik and Tiger were performing," he said. In *War*, Tiger is pitted against his real-life idol Hrithik. The film is set to be a visual spectacle for quintessential action lovers, who will witness some jaw-dropping stunts.

WOMEN SHOULDN'T FEAR GETTING OLDER: JLO

Singer-actress Jennifer Lopez, who has turned 50-years old, says women shouldn't fear getting older. However, the *On The Floor* hitmaker was shocked to find people questioning her for making her ageing so public.

"Everybody thought that I was crazy when I wanted to go out and let everybody know that I was 50. That was just like something, 'Ummm why are we highlighting this again?' It was important as a woman to do that — to let people know that you don't get to write women off at a certain point in their life. You don't get to write people off," Lopez said during her tour diary posted to her YouTube account, reports *femalefist.co.uk*.

"You're getting better and better as you go so long as you are open to the experience of growing and evolving," she added.

Lopez had earlier said that she "constantly" tries to "evolve" to avoid getting "stuck" as a person in life or her career. She still considers herself "just a girl from the Bronx", despite her showbiz career.



YOU'VE DEFEATED AGE: SAMANTHA TO NAG MAMA

Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu shared a heart-warming message for her father-in-law and Tollywood actor Akkineni Nagarjuna and said he continues to inspire generations.

"What everyone seeks you have found, just being around you I have learned to only look within for happiness... It is your beautiful mind, the creativity you bring to your life and the lives of the people you love..." the actress said as she posted a picture of him on *Instagram* on Thursday enjoying in the pool.

"You have defeated age my *mama*. Happy birthday king... You will continue to inspire generation after generation. You are pure goals," she captioned the image.

On the work front, Nagarjuna was seen in *Mammothudu 2* and next year he will be seen in "*Brahmastra*".



One of the most anticipated movies of the year, *Saaho* is falls way below the hype and pre-launch expectations, feels

K RAMYA SREE



'BAAHUBALI' COMES DOWN CRASHING

SAAHO REVIEW

S aaho has been Prabhas' highly anticipated film after the *Baahubali* series. It is about the power struggle that ensues in a business corporation after the death of its leader. Filled with adrenaline-rushing action sequences by Hollywood action director Kenny Bates, the movie helmed by Sujeeth Sign, also stars Shradha Kapoor, Jackie Shroff, Chunky Pandey, Neil Nitin Mukesh and Murali Sharma in lead roles.

This film is aimed at an international audience with its over-the-top VFX and graphics. Then enters Shradha Kapoor, which is not as dramatic as Prabhas' but definitely worth a mention. The plot revolves around the struggle of a few to ascend the chair after the death of Roy (Shroff), followed by a string of robberies. Prabhas and Murali Sharma — portraying the role of David — are cops on the lookout for the robber and chance upon Neil Nitin Mukesh, who is the suspect. Until the interval, the movie drags on and on and makes you wonder where things are headed. However, just before the intermission comes a big twist,

which then develops and changes the whole perception of each character. Another drawback in an otherwise drab script was the music. Songs are generally added to up the enthusiasm in the hall. Instead, the music put people to sleep and looked like an afterthought. Venela Kishore's comic timing provides a much-needed breather in the moments where the script fell flat in the first half. The latter half of the movie is filled with more action interspersed with a romance between Prabhas and Shradha. The climax had the biggest fight in the film but as mentioned earlier, it had its fair

share of twists that left the audience scratching their heads. Speaking of the actors' performances, the first half saw Prabhas' character have a slight comic streak, but in the second half, he was all brawn, brains and romance. Shradha Kapoor's character was bold in the first half but leaned towards behaving like a damsel in distress in the second. Worth mentioning here is Jacqueline Fernandes' dance moves that captivated the audience. Chunky Pandey, who plays bad boy Devraj, proved his worth as an experienced actor by convincing the audience that he is the epitome of evil.

Neil Nitin Mukesh, Mandira Bedi and Arjun Vijay marked their presence by forcing the audience to take note of their performance. **VERDICT:** A lacklustre script, poor screenplay in the first half, and put-you-to-sleep music make an already long movie seem lengthier. What possibly saves the face of the film is the action and power-packed performances of all lead actors. These are maybe the only reasons that make this film a one-time watch. In a nutshell, the film fails to live up to its hype. **RATING:** 2.5/5

Sree Vishnu signs a light-hearted entertainer

Directed by debutant Hasit, the movie gives the actor an opportunity to portray a lover as well as a husband, finds NAGARAJ GOUD



S et to start filming for his cop story with new director Pradeep Varma shortly, Sree Vishnu, who is still riding from the wave of his *Brochevaru Raa* success, has given his nod to another film. Known to encourage new talent, having introduced the likes of Sagar K Chandra, Venu Udugula and Vivek Athreya to a name a few in the past, this new project of the actor will be directed by another debutant as well, *The Pioneer* has exclusively learnt. Hasit who has travelled with Vivek Athreya on the writing front in the past will be wielding the megaphone for the film, a light-hearted romantic entertainer.

THE FILMING OF HASIT'S HYDERABAD-SET DRAMA WILL COMMENCE AS SOON AS SREE VISHNU COMPLETES HIS COP STORY WITH PRADEEP VARMA. PEOPLE MEDIA FACTORY WILL BE BANKROLLING THE FILM AND THE PRE-PRODUCTION IS ON

a lover boy as well as a husband. It's also peppered with fun and family elements. In short, the content was right up his alley and there was no way Vishnu was overlooking it. It's a Hyderabad-set drama and the filming will commence as soon as the actor completes his cop story. People Media Factory will be bankrolling the film and the pre-production is on," confirmed a well-placed source close to the unit. Meanwhile, we hear news around Vishnu's

Thippameesam's release would be revealed soon. Global Cinemas, a joint entity of Suresh Productions and Asian Cinemas, have acquired the distribution rights for the Telugu states and now that *Saaho* has made its way to cinema halls, the producers are considering releasing it after megastar Chiranjeevi-starrer *Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy* opens on October 2. An emotional drama, the film, directed by *Asura* fame Krishna Vijay, was wrapped up a long time back.

Chanakya moves to the streets of Milan

H aving wrapped up its talkie portions sometime ago in Hyderabad, the makers of Gopichand-starrer *Chanakya* recently flew to Europe to shoot a couple of numbers. The shoot is presently going on in the streets of Milan, Italy under the supervision of ace choreographer Raju Sundaram. A romantic duet and a peppy number will be shot in this leg of filming on both the lead actors Gopi and Mehreen Pirzada. The unit will return to Hyderabad early next week. Already three

months behind schedule, the makers have sped up the film's post-production process as they are eyeing a release next month. The story of a RAW agent's covert operation, *Chanakya*, a thriller, features Zarine Khan, Rajesh Khattar and Upen Patel in key roles as well. After wrapping up *Chanakya*, a production venture of Ramabhamam Sunkara under AK Entertainments, Gopi will join the sets of BVSN Prasad's next production. An adventure thriller, it will be helmed by Binu Subramanyam who assisted Santosh Sivan and Jayam Raja in the past.



MEGHAMSH IN TALKS FOR MULTIPLE FILMS

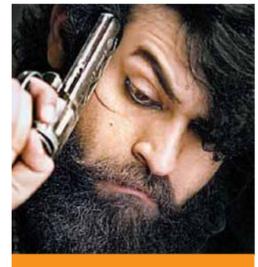
H is debut film *Rajdooth's* result might not have gone his way, but Meghamsh Srihari is happy that it found an audience on streaming giant Amazon. The film was on Prime even before it completed two weeks' theatrical run at cinema halls. "We couldn't promote the film a bit more but some things were not in my control. I've learnt my lesson and will ensure that such things are not repeated in the future," he states, adding, "The reception to the film has been good though, at least from those who watched it on Amazon! They said it was very nice. I was happy over that fact."

Up next, he is in talks with multiple new filmmakers for his sophomore effort. "There's a road drama, crime thriller and another thriller with romance woven into the narrative that I've been pitched in the past month or so. All these films have producers. I'm still figuring out which one to start first," he shares, adding that he is hitting the gym three hours daily. "In case if one of the three stories goes to floors at a short notice, I want to be physically ready."



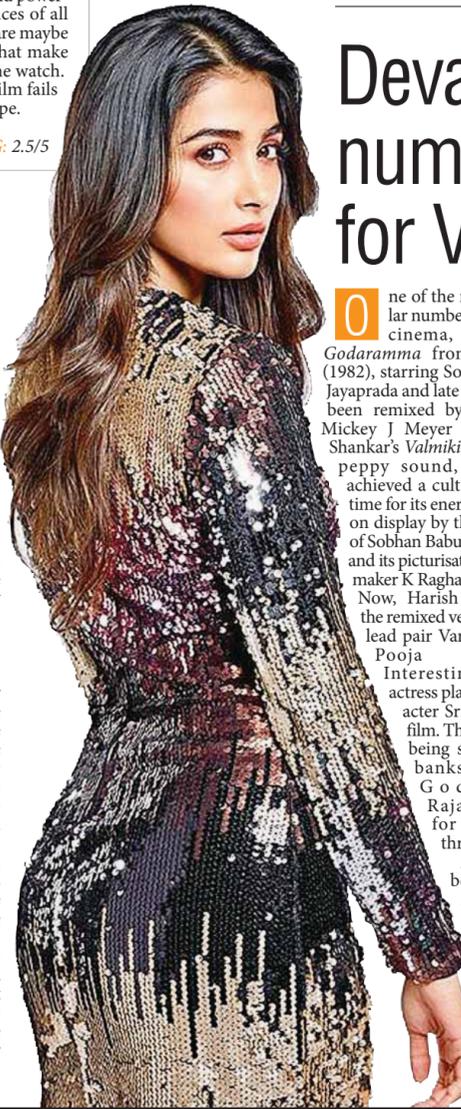
Devatha hit number remixed for Valmiki

O ne of the most popular numbers of Telugu cinema, *Yelluvachi Godaramma* from *Devatha* (1982), starring Sobhan Babu, Jayapada and late Sridevi, has been remixed by composer Mickey J Meyer for Harish Shankar's *Valmiki*. Besides its peppy sound, the song achieved a cult status over time for its energetic moves on display by the lead pair of Sobhan Babu and Sridevi and its picturisation by filmmaker K Raghavendra Rao. Now, Harish is filming the remixed version on his lead pair Varun Tej and Pooja Hegde. Interestingly, the actress plays the character Sridevi in the film. The number is being shot on the banks of river Godavari, Rajahmundry for the past three days.



THE REMIX OF YELLUVACHI GODARAMMA FROM DEVATHA IS BEING SHOT BY HARISH ON THE BANKS OF RIVER GODAVARI, RAJAHMUNDRY FOR THE PAST THREE DAYS

A remake of Tamil hit *Jigarthanda*, *Valmiki* will be arriving in cinema halls on September 20. 14 Reels Plus is producing the movie, co-starring Atharvaa Murali. The original told the tale of an aspiring director (played by Siddharth) who targets a ruthless gangster (Bobby Simha) because he wants to make a violent gangster film. His discreet attempts to research the gangster fail miserably. Finally, when he gets caught snooping, things take the worst turn. Harish has tweaked the original to a slight extent. — NG



Sai Kumar, Murali Sharma join Sreekaram

Murali Sharma will be seen playing a meaty role as heroine Priyanka Arul's father



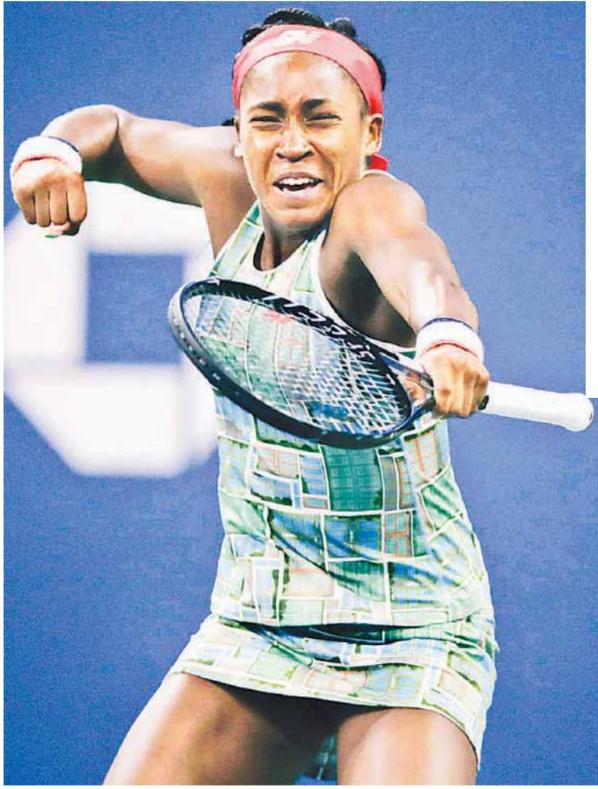
S harwanand-starrer *Sreekaram*, which already sees Satyaraj and Naresh VK in supporting roles, has got a major boost with the addition of two prominent faces — Sai Kumar and Murali Sharma, *The Pioneer* has learnt. They will be seen playing key roles in the emotional drama. "Murali Sharma will be seen as heroine Priyanka Arul's father and the part carries a lot of weight," pointed out a source.

THE FILM HAS COMPLETED A 10-DAY SCHEDULE IN HYDERABAD RECENTLY. THE SETTING WILL NEXT SHIFT TO TIRUPATI AND ANANTAPUR

The film has completed a 10-day schedule in Hyderabad recently. The setting will next shift to Tirupati and its surrounding areas and Anantapur. *Sreekaram* is an emotional drama wherein Sharwa's part will be into farming. "There are other emotions surrounding his role as well, which define the story. Plus, the film will not have any episodes of the lead part bashing the government on the state of farming," debutant director Kishore Reddy had said to us about the 14 Reels Plus production recently. The makers are planning to release it for Sankranti.

Gauff books Osaka date

15-year old sensation will face defending champion Naomi in eye-catching 3rd round clash



Coco Gauff celebrates after defeating Tímea Babos in the second round match on Thursday

AFP ■ NEW YORK

Fifteen-year-old American sensation Coco Gauff set up an eye-catching US Open showdown with defending champion Naomi Osaka while Rafael Nadal's path to the title eased further on Thursday as he received a walkover into the third round.

Reigning Wimbledon champion Simona Halep, meanwhile, crashed out early in New York for a third year run-

ning, blowing a match point in a tense three-set loss to 116th-ranked Taylor Townsend.

Gauff, who made a remarkable run to the fourth round at Wimbledon before falling to Halep, defeated Hungarian qualifier Tímea Babos 6-2, 4-6, 6-4 to become the youngest player in the last 32 at a US Open since Anna Kournikova in 1996.

"It has been amazing, I'm just so happy to get through," Gauff said as



Naomi Osaka reacts after defeating M Linette

chants of her name rang out around Louis Armstrong Stadium.

"I had to dig really deep today. I'm just proud of the way I fought and I'm glad it was all worth it in the end."

Asked about her impending clash with world number one Osaka, Gauff said her primary focus is on Friday's doubles match with 17-year-old partner Caty McNally.

"Saturday, I'm going to think about the match, but tomorrow (Friday) I'm worried about my doubles match," she said.

Three-time US Open champion Nadal advanced without striking a ball when injury-plagued Australian Thanasi Kokkinakis pulled out of their scheduled evening tie on Arthur Ashe with a right shoulder problem.

The Spanish 18-time Grand Slam winner will meet South Korean qualifier Chung Hyeon for a spot in the last 16.

His path to a fourth title, already helped with "Big Three" rivals Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer on the opposite side of the draw, cleared further having already seen four top-10 rivals dumped out in the first round.

Alexander Zverev, the sixth seed, is the highest-ranked player remaining on his side of the draw, as the German sur-

vived a second successive five-set marathon by outlasting American Frances Tiafoe 6-3, 3-6, 6-2, 2-6, 6-3 to equal his best US Open run.

'LONG JOURNEY'

Townsend upended women's fourth seed Halep 2-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/4), the Romanian consigned to another premature exit at Flushing Meadows, having been knocked out in the opening round in 2017 and 2018.

"I was not inspired at all today, but I fought. I thought when I came back that I will take it and I will win it. But sometimes it goes the other way," Halep said.

Townsend recovered from wasting two match points to then save one and force a tie-break she dominated to claim her first win over a top-10 player.

"This means a lot. It has been a long journey," said a tearful Townsend, who matched her run to the French Open third round on her Grand Slam debut in 2014.

Top seed Osaka proved too strong for 53rd-ranked Magda Linette of Poland, sweeping to a 6-2, 6-4 victory.

"I feel like I had my moments where I played really well," Osaka said. "I think the main thing for me was that I was able to adjust whenever I figured out something was going wrong, so I think I'm heading in the right direction."

Men's fifth seed Daniil Medvedev, coming off a maiden Masters title in Cincinnati, was struck down by cramp during a 6-3, 7-5, 5-7, 6-3 win over Bolivia's Hugo Dellien.

Stan Wawrinka, the 2016 US Open champion, beat Jeremy Chardy in four sets and is on a fourth-round collision course with Djokovic, while Australian 28th seed Nick Kyrgios rolled past 104th-ranked French wildcard Antoine Hoang 6-4, 6-2, 6-4.

Andrea Petkovic knocked out Czech sixth seed Petra Kvitová 6-4, 6-4, while 15th seed Bianca Andreescu and two-time runner-up Caroline Wozniacki also progressed.



Osaka needs work on doubles to team up with Nishikori

AFP ■ NEW YORK

World number one Naomi Osaka is ready to join Kei Nishikori for mixed doubles at the Tokyo Olympics, but first she needs to practice doubles for the first time ever.

Defending champion Osaka advanced to the third round of the US Open on Thursday by defeating Poland's Magda Linette 6-2, 6-4.

The 21-year-old Japanese star was asked after the match about Nishikori, a former US Open runner-up, saying he would see if she was interested in joining forces for mixed doubles at next year's Olympics.

Osaka, the reigning Australian Open champion also, is excited by the prospect, but also more than a bit intimidated.

"The thing is anyone that knows my doubles track record knows that I'm down," Osaka said. "I would play. I would definitely play with him. I just, I would actually need to practice doubles for the first time in my life."

The pride Osaka would feel in playing for her homeland is tempered by the massive responsibility such a "Dream Team" would carry.

"Because you cannot play mixed doubles with Kei Nishikori and lose in the first round of the Olympics in Tokyo," Osaka said.

"That would be the biggest — like, I would cry. I would actually cry for losing a doubles match. Definitely I think that would be so historic in a way. And I would love to do it. But I need to practice my doubles." Osaka had a fan among the spectators who burst into tears at just seeing her.

"I'd rather people don't cry. It kind of makes me emotional, too," Osaka said.

"It's really crazy for me. The past year has been, like, insane. I think it's moments like that that sort of make me realize it."

"I'm really grateful and I'm honestly really humbled by it, because I know as a kid I had my favorite players. They're kind of still playing right now. Yeah, it's crazy."

OSAKA'S PAL KOBE

Among those lucky enough to sit in Osaka's players' box for the match were five-time NBA champion Kobe Bryant, the retired Los Angeles Lakers star guard, and former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick, whose kneeling protest became a national symbol for champions of social justice and racial equality.

"I did want to play well," Osaka said of her special guests. "It's just funny to me. Last year compared to this year, there's no way Kobe would sit in my box Kaepernick, too. It's just crazy who you run into in life."

"For me, it wasn't pressure. It was just like I really didn't want them to sit in the sun too long."



Kei Nishikori reacts after scoring a point against Bradley Klahn during the second round of the US Open

honestly. That was the thing that was on my mind. I was like, I don't really want to play a third set." Bryant, a two-time Olympic champion, is a friend and adviser for Osaka.

"I know Kobe. This is actually the first time I've ever met Colin," Osaka said. "Kobe gives me real-life advice. He's someone I look up to as an athlete and also as a person. I'm really grateful that I even have the opportunity to talk to him and stuff."

Asked what causes she supports with a nod to Kaepernick's protest move, Osaka's was simple and admirable.

"It's going to sound corny as heck, but I just believe in being nice to people. Treat people like how you want to be treated," she said.

"I don't know how anyone's day has been. I don't know the circumstances that led to them being the way they are. So for me I would never judge a person, especially when I haven't walked in their shoes."

"Someone told me that for me to take one second out of my day to sign someone's ball could be the highlight of their day, and they could have had a really bad day. I took that really into perspective. Just want to spread kindness and positivity even though sometimes I don't do that on the court. But I'm working on it."

Kahn to replace Rummenigge as Bayern chairman

AFP ■ BERLIN

Ex-Germany goalkeeper Oliver Kahn will join Bayern Munich's board in January to be groomed to replace club chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, the Bundesliga giants announced on Friday amid a backroom upheaval.

The appointment of Kahn, who played for Bayern from 1994 until 2008, was approved by Bayern's board late Thursday, just hours after club president Uli Hoenes, 67, officially informed the club that he is stepping down in November.

Current chairman Rummenigge, 63, will eventually hand the reins to Kahn on December 31, 2021, after showing his successor the ropes, while former Adidas boss Herbert Hainer is poised to replace Hoenes as club president in the November elections.

Kahn, a former captain of both Germany and Bayern who made more than 600 appearances for the club, will sign a five-year contract and will join the club's board from January 1, 2020, serving a two-year apprenticeship before taking over from Rummenigge.

Hoenes sees Kahn as the "perfect solution" to replace Rummenigge as the 50-year-old has served as "an important player in the history of the club" after he won the Bundesliga title eight times and was part of the team which won the Champions League in 2001.

Kahn "carries the DNA of the club in him," added Hoenes, who stressed how important it is to have a former Bayern player directing the club at boardroom level.

"It would be very difficult to establish someone in the position who has not played football at a high level," said Hoenes, who added that Kahn made "an excellent" impression on the board during Thursday's meeting.

"When you're talking to big-name players, like Robert Lewandowski or Joshua Kimmich... It's important that they take it for granted you know how to stop a ball." Kahn said it was a "great honour" to be accepted onto the board and feels "deeply connected with the club, it has strongly shaped my life."

After retiring 11 years ago, Kahn has earned an MBA in general management and built up his own business while serving as a TV expert for broadcaster ZDF.

Sharan-Nys make early exit

PTI ■ NEW YORK

India's Divij Sharan made a first-round exit from the US Open with partner Hugo Nys after losing in straight sets to Robert Carballes Baena and Federico Delbonis, here.

The Indian and his partner from Monaco lost 4-6, 4-6 to the players, who are both ranked outside top-100 bracket.

Sharan and Nys did not get any break-point in the 72-

minute clash while their rivals broke them once each in both the sets to move to the next round.

"We probably needed to put more pressure on their service games. Delbonis made some really good returns in the games we got broken. It's obviously a tough loss as I would have liked to do better in the last slam of the year," Divij said.

"I'll look to regroup and work towards doing well in the remaining tournaments of the

year." This is the second time this season that left-handed Sharan has made a first-round exit from a Grand Slam, losing at the same stage at the Australian Open also. The result means that he is likely to drop a rung to 48 when the new rankings will be issued after the conclusion of the last Grand Slam of the season.

Reaching the Wimbledon quarterfinals in 2018 remains his best show at the Majors.

Rohan Bopanna and Leander Paes are also in the men's doubles draw with their respective partners.

Bopanna and his Canadian partner Denis Shapovalov are up against French fourth seeds Pierre-Hugues Herbert and Nicolas Mahut.

Paes has paired with Argentina's Guillermo Duran and they will open their campaign against Serbia's Miomir Kecmanovic and Norway's Casper Ruud.



Abhishek Verma, right, and Saurabh Chaudhary pose with national flag after win

Verma wins Gold, Bronze for Saurabh

PTI ■ RIO DE JANEIRO

Asian Games medallist Abhishek Verma won the Gold while teen sensation Saurabh Chaudhary claimed the Bronze as Indian shooters dominated the podium in the men's 10m air pistol event of the ongoing ISSF World Cup here.

Verma, a part-time lawyer, shot 244.2 in the eight-man final on Thursday, while the 17-year-old Chaudhary's 221.9 was good enough to get him the Bronze after five Gold medals this year.

The Silver medal went to Turkey's Ismail Keles, who aggregated 243.1 in the season's fourth ISSF World Cup for rifle and pistol shooters.

India are now placed at the top of the medals tally with two Gold, one Silver and a Bronze.

India have already exhausted the maximum Olympic quotas available per country in this event, with both Verma and Chaudhary securing the sports in the previous qualifying events.

In the qualification round on Thursday, Chaudhary was fourth with 584 points and Verma entered the finals in fifth position with 582

points, while Gaurav Rana was 44th with 571.

Verma, who won Bronze in the Jakarta Asiad last year, and Chaudhary ended the second day of competitions on a high note for India.

For a change, Chaudhary had to settle for a Bronze this time — his sixth ISSF World Cup medal of the year. He had earlier won a phenomenal five Golds.

Earlier in the day, Chinki Yadav came close to making it to the finals, finishing just a point behind the final qualifying mark in the women's 25m Pistol event.

She shot a 294 in the Rapid Fire round, ending up with a solid 584 to claim 10th spot.

Switzerland's Heidi Gerber, who bagged the eighth and final qualifying spot, shot 585 even as Hungary's Veronika Major claimed her third ISSF World Cup Gold of the year in the event.

Annu Raj Singh, making a comeback to the Indian team, shot 579 to end in 25th spot while Abhidnya Ashok Patil shot 572 to finish 53rd.

Indian shooters in the non-competition Minimum Qualification Score section also had a great day.

Sanchez joins Inter on loan



Alexis Sanchez poses for photo after joining Inter on loan

AFP ■ LONDON

Alexis Sanchez joined Italian giants Inter Milan on a season-long loan deal from Manchester United, both clubs announced on Thursday.

Sanchez, 30, has endured a miserable time in Manchester since joining the Red Devils in January 2018 as reportedly the highest paid player in the Premier League.

The Chilean scored just five goals in 45 appearances for United and has not featured so far this season.

"Alexis Sanchez is officially an Inter player. The Chilean has joined the Nerazzurri from Manchester United on a loan deal that will last until 30 June 2020," Inter said in a statement.

Sanchez will join forces with a former United teammate Romelu Lukaku, who moved to Italy in a 65-million-euro move earlier this month, as Inter hope to end Juventus' eight-year domination of Italian football in Antonio Conte's first season in charge.

Lukaku scored as Conte's reign as Inter coach got off to a perfect start with a 4-0 win over Lecce.

However, reviving Sanchez's fortunes will be a bigger ask of Conte's management after 18 months in the doldrums at Old Trafford.

United have cut their losses on the former Barcelona and Arsenal star, but are still reportedly set to pay a large chunk of Sanchez's £400,000 a week wages after his form and fitness deserted him over the past two seasons.

Halep 'not inspired at all' in defeat

AFP ■ NEW YORK

Simona Halep said she was "not inspired at all" in Thursday's US Open loss to 116th-ranked American qualifier Taylor Townsend as her miserable run in New York continued.

The reigning Wimbledon champion saved a pair of match points but then failed to convert one in the final set of a 2-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) defeat.

"I was not inspired at all today, but I fought. I thought when I came back that I will take it and I will win it. But sometimes it goes the other way," Halep said, digesting another early Flushing Meadows exit following first-round losses in 2017 and 2018.

"I'm used to it. It's the third year. I'm disappointed. I had expectations from myself that I'm confident and I feel the game. But today was different. I was very close. I had match ball. But, you know, sometimes it happens."

"She played really well. She really deserved to win it because she gave everything and she didn't think of losing. She went all



Simona Halep returns a shot to Taylor Townsend during 2nd round match

the way with 100 percent belief"

Fourth seed Halep, whose best US Open run came when she reached the semi-finals in 2015, admitted she struggled to cope with Townsend's committed serve-and-volley approach.

"Never, never. I never played with someone coming so often to the net," Halep said.

"She was way more inspired than me. Many balls I hit on the

sides, she was there. That's why I say I was not inspired. I played all the time where she was."

Halep had not dropped a set in three previous meetings with Townsend, whose victory over the Romanian represented her first over a top-10 player.

The most recent of those clashes came last March in Miami, where Halep imparted some friendly advice to Townsend after she inflicted a 6-1, 6-3 defeat on her.

"After we played together, she came in the locker room and she asked me what she has to improve to be better. So she did it today," Halep said, with a wry smile. "Next time I will not say anything."

"I played few times against her, and I knew how she's playing," she added.

"But today she changed. She went for all the balls to the net. So it was a little bit different. At one point I lost the rhythm in the second set, and I didn't really know what I have to change. Even the touch, I didn't have it."

"But always when you play with a top player, you have nothing to lose."

Mount, Abraham reward Frank's faith

AFP ■ CHELSEA

Frank Lampard's first season at Chelsea remains a work in progress but the emergence of Mason Mount and Tammy Abraham means there are already significant positives to be drawn from the new era at Stamford Bridge.

Lampard — whose side face Sheffield United at home this weekend — promised to provide opportunities to young players when he returned to his old club this summer.

The former midfielder's position was partly driven by the transfer embargo imposed on the club, but also a belief in the reserves of talent at in the club's academy that have too often been overlooked by Lampard's predecessors.

And if early season form is anything to go by, Mount and Abraham could be fea-

tures of the Chelsea line-up for some time to come.

Mount has been at Chelsea since the age of six and having spent last season on loan with Lampard at Derby County in the Championship, his abilities are well known to the manager who has demonstrated great faith in the player by starting him in all three of Chelsea's league games so far.

Mount has responded with goals in his last two games, and was joined on the scoresheet in last weekend's 3-2 win at Norwich City by Abraham who struck his first two goals for the club at Carrow Road.

Abraham showed his potential by striking 37 goals during Aston Villa's promotion-winning season before returning to Chelsea this summer.

