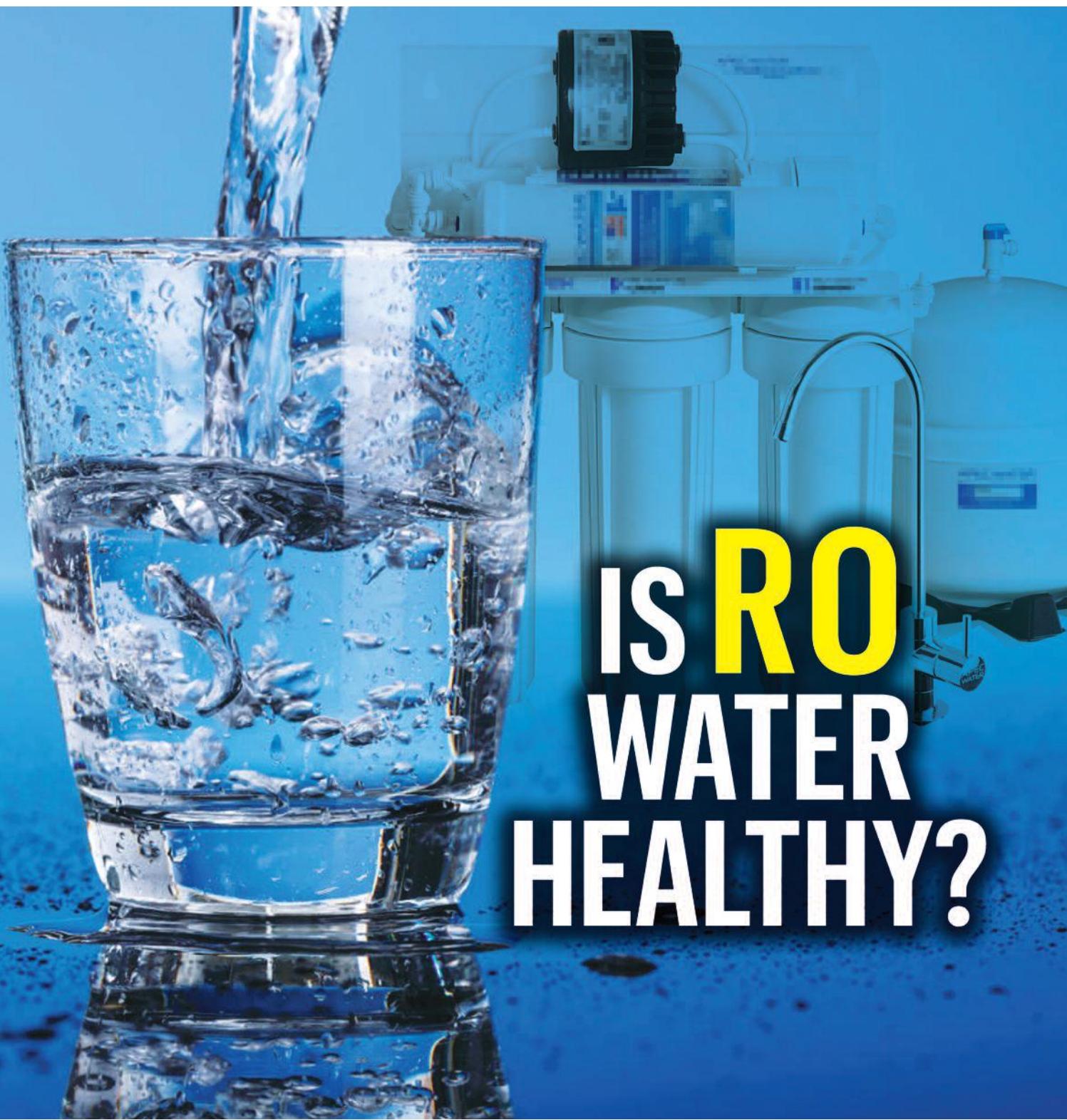


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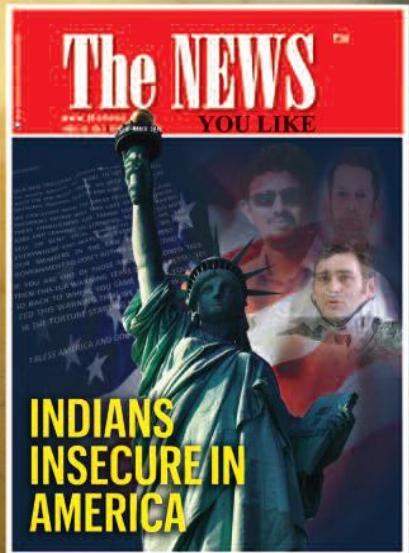
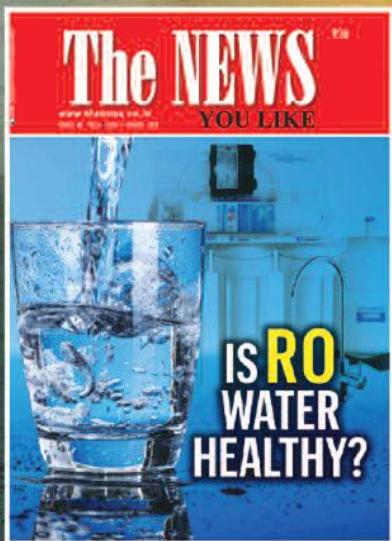


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**G**eneral elections are fast approaching. The NDA government at the centre is jubilant after defeating the no-confidence motion and the Narendra Modi government is confident of returning to power in 2019 elections.

Keeping the Opposition strengths and weaknesses and the BJPs development formula aside, there are two external issues that the BJP has to seriously think of now.

One is the Bangladeshi infiltrators issue because the complete draft of National Register of Citizens (NRC) has been published in Assam, which will decide the fate of citizenship of 1.39 crore of 3.29 crore applicants.

In view of this, separatist forces might provoke the Bangladeshi infiltrators settled across the country and use them in carrying out subversive activities, which could become a serious national security issue.

On the other hand, cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan, who is set to be the new Pakistan Prime Minister, is dancing to the tunes of Pakistan army. With no ideology and inadequate numbers, Imran Khan will continue in the position at the mercy of the Pakistan army, which is archrival of India.

The Pakistan army, through its intelligence agency ISI, had been carrying out subversive activities in India for long. However, the ISI activities are now limited only to Kashmir due to stepped up vigil by Indian security agencies.

Now that the political dispensation in Pakistan is completely dependent on its army, it will have to dance to the tunes of the army, which will revive its subversive activities in India with the help of Bangladeshi infiltrators, who are now outraged against India for publishing NRC and making attempts to send them back to their country. It is time the intelligence network of India step up its vigil to prevent any untoward incidents.

(Sudhakar)

## SP office staffer kills pregnant wife

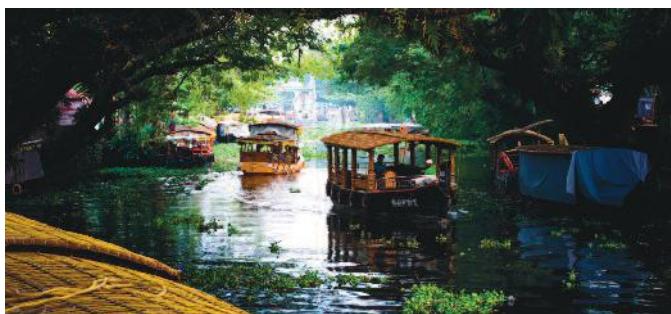
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## Special status for Andhra not feasible, Centre reiterates in SC

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The Centre reiterated that it could not grant Special Category Status (SCS) to Andhra Pradesh in a counter affidavit filed in the Supreme Court on July 4.



## Four south Indian states top governance rankings, Kerala at number 1: Report

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## Imran Khan will take oath as PM on August 11



Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has said that he will take oath as Prime Minister on August 11, according to media reports.

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## Activists write to European Union on pharma pollution

The signatories to the letter include Village Council (Panchayat) Presidents of some of the worst pharma pollution impacted villages around Hyderabad, including Edulabad, Makthala Anantharam, Chinnaraviralla and Palligudem.

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## Katrina to replace Priyanka in 'Bharat'?

After the exit of Priyanka Chopra from 'Bharat', the makers of the film are hunting for the apt leading lady for the film. In this venture, Katrina Kaif's name is in talks.



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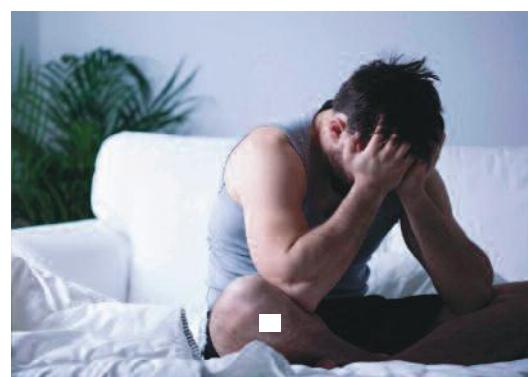


## Scientists explore bio-plastics from sorghum

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## Even men may feel bad after sex

59



# SP office staffer kills pregnant wife

## Suryapet cops allegedly helping the accused

**PVISHNUWARDHAN REDDY**

A newlywed woman, pregnant by four months, was allegedly done to death by her husband in Suryapet town of Telangana on October 2017, at the behest of his mother and brother. However, the woman's family is still running from pillar to post for justice.

**Kiran compelled Shankar to give Rs 7.5 lakh in cash, 450 grams of gold jewellery and other household articles all worth Rs 25 lakh in the presence of elders Mulguri Lingaiah, Anneboina Anjaneyulu, Medi Rama Narsaiah to marry Bhavani**

It all began when Ande Shankar, a businessman from Bhongiri performed his daughter Bhavani's marriage with Kiran Kunkudupala of Suryapet, who is a junior assistant in the office of district superintendent of police at Suryapet.

Kiran compelled Shankar to give Rs 7.5 lakh in cash, 450 grams of gold jewellery and other household articles all worth Rs 25 lakh in the presence of elders Mulguri Lingaiah, Anneboina Anjaneyulu,



*Accused Kiran and his late wife Bhavani (file pic)*



Suryapet DSP Nageswara Rao (Center)

Medi Rama Narsaiah to marry Bhavani.

Thinking that his daughter's life would be happy if he fulfills Kiran's demands, Shankar gave everything demanded by his son-in-law. However, Shankar miserably underestimated Kiran. Soon after getting the money, gold and household articles, Kiran, allegedly encouraged by his mother Kunkudupala Poolamma aka Salamma and his brother K Kranthi, began harassing his wife for more money as dowry.

In the meantime, Bhavani became pregnant. Yet, Kiran and his family did not stop harassing her for more and more money. Unable to take on the harassment anymore, the poor girl, who suffered the torture for months, called up her parents and informed about her pathetic situation.

Worried over his daughter's safety, Shankar immediately sent his wife Vijayalakshmi and a rela-

tive to talk to his son-in-law and his family members on October 14, 2017. The duo spoke to Kiran and his family members and sought some time to meet their new demands for money and returned home.

However, Shankar and family received shocking news from Kiran the very next day. Kiran called up Shankar and informed him on October 15, 2017 that Bhavani had committed suicide. But when Shankar and his family reached Kiran's house, they found Bhavani lying on the floor with some marbles on her body. They suspected foul play and lodged a complaint with the police.

Suryapet police chose to arrest only Kiran leaving his mother Poolamma and brother Kranthi. Later, Kiran also secured bail and began threatening Shankar and his family to withdraw the case. Shankar alleged that Kiran has been boasting that nothing will happen to

him since he is working in the district police chief's office and all the officials concerned are in his favour.

Consequently, Shankar and his family have been running from pillar to post seeking justice. However, sources said the deputy superintendent of police of Suryapet, Nageswar Rao is learnt to have abused Shankar and his family with filthy language and threatened them to withdraw the case against Kiran saying that the efforts were futile since Bhavani will not come back even if Kiran and his family members are punished.

Frightened by the developments, Shankar submitted representations to higher ups and also to the home minister of Telangana, besides approaching the Human Rights Commission, seeking investigation into the case by an external agency. It has to be seen whether justice will be done to Bhavani. **TN**

# Film critic externed from Hyd for hurting religious sentiments

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

Telangana Police have externed film critic Kathi Mahesh from Hyderabad on July 9 for six months for hurting religious sentiments through his alleged derogatory comments on Lord Ram and Sita.

Director General of Police M Mahendar Reddy said that Mahesh was taken out of the city to be dropped at his native place in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. The police took the action to avert any law and order problems as a Hindu religious leader had planned counter protests against Mahesh.

Earlier, the police placed Swami Paripoornananda under house arrest in Hyderabad as he was to launch 'Darmika Chaitanya Yatra'.

The religious leader had announced the three-day yatra from Shiva Temple in Bodduppal on the city outskirts to Yadadri by chanting 'Sri Rama Sankeertanas'.

There was tension at the Swami's residence as activists of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) took exception to the police action.

Officer Reddy said instructions have been issued to all the district superintendents and Commissioners to deal firmly with any attempt to create law and order problems.

The police chief said Mahesh had been externed only from Hyderabad but a decision would be taken later whether to extern him from the state.

Police had arrested the film

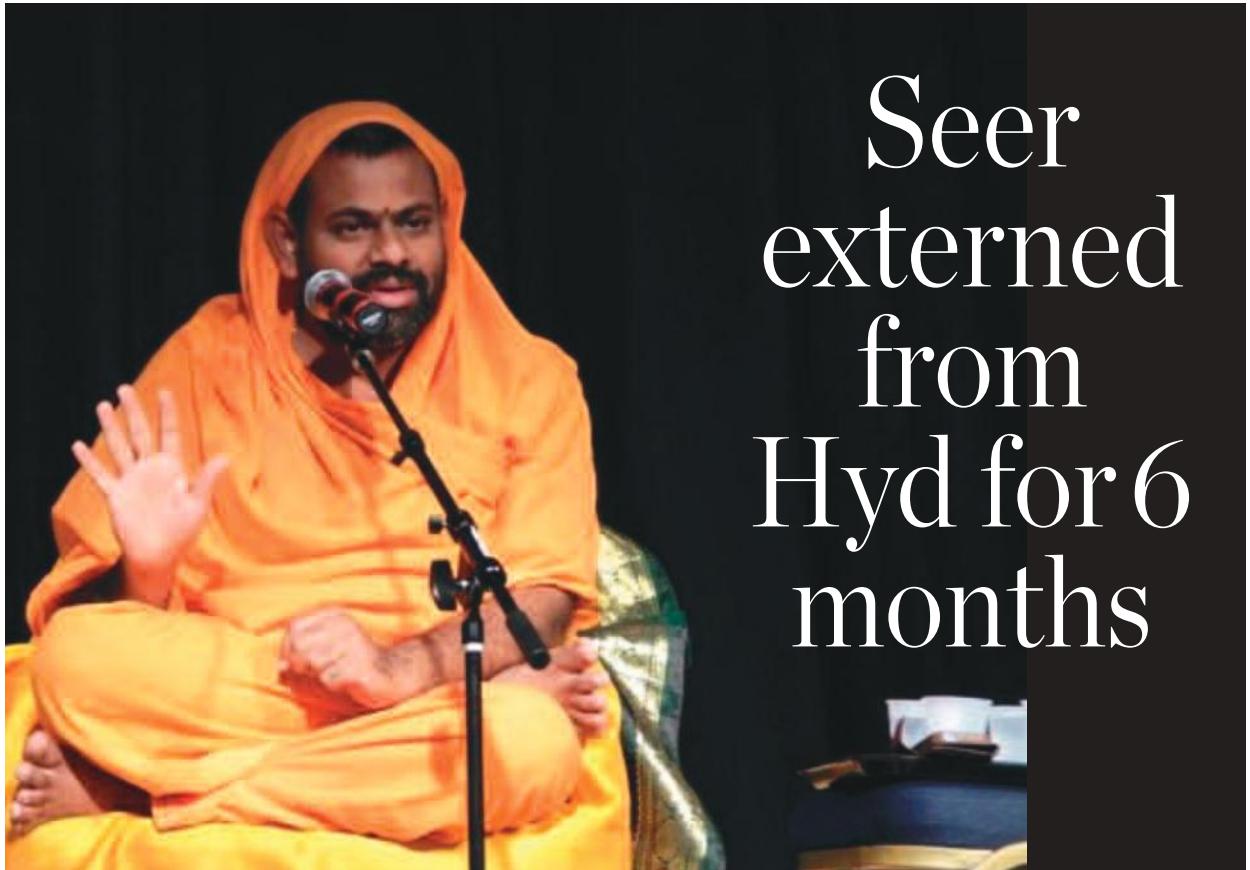


**Director General of Police M Mahendar Reddy said that Mahesh was taken out of the city to be dropped at his native place in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. The police took the action to avert any law and order problems**

critic on July 2 for making derogatory comments against Lord Rama and Sita during a debate on a television channel. Three cases were booked against him on complaints

by various organisations.

Reddy said show-cause notice was also issued to a Telugu news channel for repeatedly airing Mahesh's comments. **TN**



# Seer externed from Hyd for 6 months

**H**yderabad police have externed a Hindu religious leader on July 11 from the city for six months for allegedly making provocative statements against other communities.

Sri Peetham Swami Paripoornananda, who was under house arrest for last two days, was picked up by police early on Wednesday and was taken out of the city limits. Sources said he would be dropped at his ashram in Kakinada town in Andhra Pradesh.

Hyderabad Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar issued Swami's externment order under Telangana Prevention of Anti-Social and Hazardous Activities Act, 1980.

The move came two days after Telangana Police externed film critic Kathi Mahesh from Hyder-

**The seer had announced the three-day yatra from Shiva Temple in Bodduppal on the outskirts of Hyderabad to Yadadri.**

abad for six months for hurting religious sentiments of Hindus through his alleged derogatory comments on Lord Ram and Sita.

Mahesh was taken out of the city and dropped at his native place in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh.

The same day police had placed Swami Paripoornanda under house arrest as he had planned to launch 'Darmika Chaitanya Yatra' to protest Mahesh's comments.

The seer had announced the three-day yatra from Shiva Temple in Bodduppal on the outskirts of

Hyderabad to Yadadri. Paripoornanda was staying at a house of a real-estate businessman in posh Jubilee Hills.

Several leaders of BJP including former Union Minister and MP Bandaru Dattatreya and local legislator Chintala Ramachandra Reddy had called on him on Tuesday. Leaders of BJP, VHP and other organisations had taken exception to the police action.

The extenment order cited several instances of Paripoornanda making statements promoting enmity between communities.

The police said Paripoornanda, who started an organisation 'Rashtriya Hindu Sena' in November 2017, made provocative remarks at meetings at Hyderabad, Kamareddy and other places in Telangana. TN

# Cinemahalls, multiplexes cannot charge over MRP rates



## THE NEWS BUREAU

The Telangana Civil Supplies Department has released a set of guidelines for cinema halls and multiplexes across the state to follow from August 1 stating that they cannot charge about the Minimum Retail Price (MRP) for food and drink items sold. If found selling water bottles, cool drinks and other food items above the Minimum Retail Price (MRP) the establishments will face heavy penalties and also imprisonment.

Despite various crackdown measures, most cinema halls and multiplexes were found violating the MRP rule, forcing officials to issue orders and set these guidelines.

As per the new rules released by the department on Sunday, the sale of food items that are sold loose in containers must be printed with weight, quantity, manufacturing date, expiry and MRP on them. The department has allowed the owners to use stickers until September 1, until existing stocks of

containers are exhausted.

The establishments must set up a board with details of weight, quantity and rates which should be displayed, clearly and be visibly to all.

Owners also must ensure that any changes in weight, quantity or rate should be immediately changed. To prevent any form of monopoly by the establishments, the department has instructed them to sell different brands of products as per the guidelines.

The foundation for the guidelines have been set in accordance with the Legal Metrology Department act which mandates manufacturers to print their product name, address, manufacturing date, expiry date, weight and MRP with customer care number on the packaged item. This includes water bottles, cool drinks and other food items.

"The first violation will result in a booking of case and Rs 25,000 penalty, the second violation this fine would go up to Rs 50,000 and if the offense is repeated for the

third time the fine would be Rs 1 lakh and also imprisonment ranging from 6 months to one year," warned Akun Sabharwal Controller for Legal Metrology Department.

Theatre owners have already been given advanced notices on the new rules. At a review meeting held on Sunday, Sabharwal ordered officials to ensure that the new rules and guidelines are followed. The department will conduct inspections across the city on August 2 and 3 to ensure the enforcement of the new rules in theaters and multiplexes. The department will also undertake state wide checks on August 4 and 5

The Legal Metrology Department, under Civil Supplies set the rules after receiving several complaints against cinema halls and multiplexes for selling food items and beverages above the MRP. Those from Hyderabad may register consumer complaints with the toll-free number 1800-42500333, or send their complaints via WhatsApp Number 7330774444. TN

# Special status for Andhra not feasible, Centre reiterates in SC

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

The Centre reiterated that it could not grant Special Category Status (SCS) to Andhra Pradesh in a counter affidavit filed in the Supreme Court on July 4.

The central government also listed out all the assistance that it had given to the state and claimed that all commitments under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, had been addressed.

The court was hearing a petition filed by Telangana Congress MLC Ponguleti Sudhakar Reddy, which had marked the Union Finance Ministry as a respondent and asked for a response on several bifurcation issues.

A state cabinet meeting is also expected to be held on Friday, which will discuss the issue.

"The Centre in its affidavit said that it had extended Rs 3,900 crore to fill the revenue deficit to the state, which had a deficit of Rs 16,000 crore when it was formed. The affidavit also mentioned that Rs 2,500 crore was given for the capital. The court was informed that the Centre gave Rs 1,000 crore for canals in Guntur and Vijayawada and Rs 1,500 crore for constructing capital and Rs 1,000 crore will be released soon according to the affidavit," minister Kaluva Srinivasulu was quoted as saying.

In March this year, a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was filed in the Hyderabad High Court asking



the court to direct the Centre to accord SCS to Andhra Pradesh, and implement the provisions of the AP Reorganization Act, 2014.

TDP had pulled out from BJP led NDA alliance in March this year alleging that the Centre had not fulfilled promises made during bifurcation. Five Lok Sabha MPs of the YSRCP had submitted their resignations on April 6 -- the last day of budget session -- to protest against the refusal of the Central government to accord special status. The Speaker accepted the resignations of the MPs with effect from June 20.

'Special category status' is a

classification given by the Centre to assist in development of those states that face geographical and socio-economic disadvantages like hilly terrains, strategic international borders, tribal population, economic and infrastructural backwardness and non-viable state finances.

During discussion on the AP Reorganization Bill, 2014, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had assured five years of SCS for the residual state of Andhra Pradesh, but the present BJP government has said that the provision was dropped by the 14th Finance Commission. **TN**

# Is RO Water HEALTHY?



**Water is essential for life. The amount of fresh water on earth is limited, and its quality is under constant pressure. Preserving the quality of fresh water is important for the drinking-water supply, food production and recreational water use.**

**D.BAL REDDY**

Water quality can be compromised by the presence of infectious agents, toxic chemicals, and radiological hazards, according to

World Health Organization.

In this background, it is important to know that many of us have heard of reverse osmosis water, but might not be completely clear as to what it actually is.

The process of producing

reverse osmosis water is a vital one. Over the years, it has meant that people in dire circumstances across the world can drink clean water. Troops and civilians in battle-torn countries that have lost every semblance of organized infrastructure



**“ Demineralised water that has not been remineralized or low-mineral content water – in the light of the absence or substantial lack of essential minerals in it – is not considered ideal drinking water**

Frantisek Kozisek,

National Institute of Public Health, Czech Republic

can use reverse osmosis to make pure, drinkable water.

But, how? Exactly what is the process? Well, imagine that you are in a situation where there is only brackish or dirty water available to drink. Drinking untreated, contaminated water like that will temporarily slake your thirst, but will almost certainly expose you to the risk of water born diseases.

Reverse osmosis works by forcing the impure water through a series of semi-permeable membranes, which effectively ‘clean’ the water. Moreover, it is the case that once water has been subjected to that process, it is very, very clean. Too clean, in fact.

Too clean? How can that be the case? Surely, the best water for us to drink is water that is completely unpolluted and pure. In the case of reverse osmosis, the water really is too clean. The filtering process removes all of the contaminants; but it also removes the good things that we need for our bodies to thrive.

Essential minerals such as calcium and magnesium are removed, which are vital for healthy teeth and bones, among other things. As a result, reverse osmosis water is often referred to as ‘dead water.’ Many people report that it does not even seem to quench thirst properly.

In addition, it is not only the fact that the reverse osmosis water does not deliver those things; the worst part – and certainly the most dangerous from a health point of view – is that the water itself becomes opportunistically parasitic.

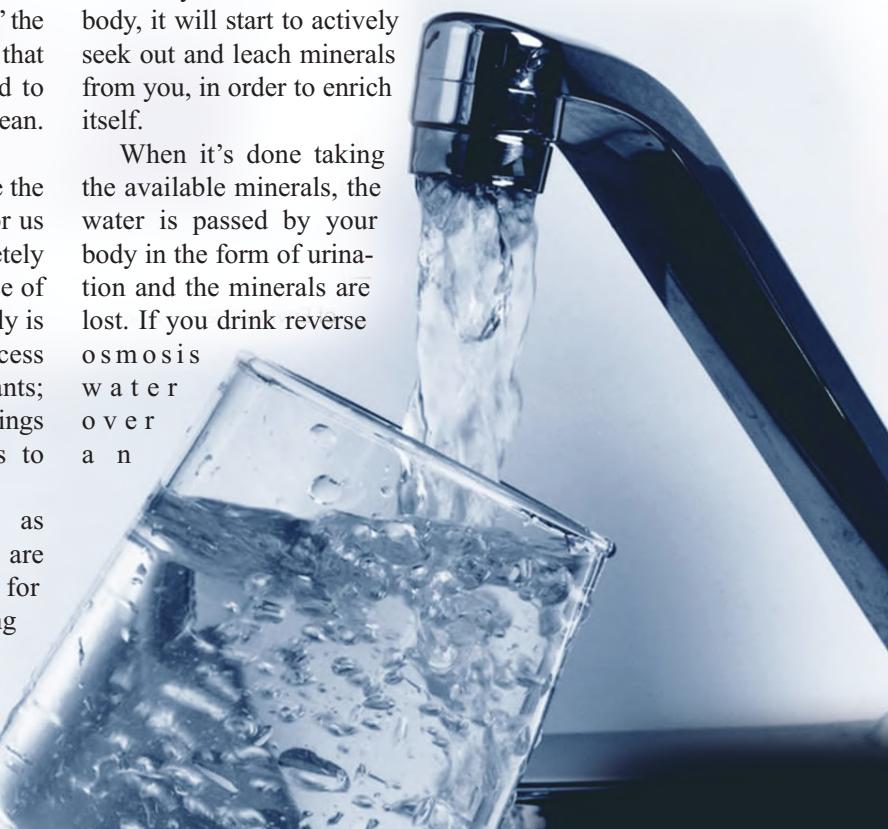
That sounds like a dramatic description but the picture it paints is accurate. It is a complex process, but essentially, reverse osmosis water wants to remineralize itself, and so to achieve that, once it is inside your mineral-rich body, it will start to actively seek out and leach minerals from you, in order to enrich itself.

When it’s done taking the available minerals, the water is passed by your body in the form of urination and the minerals are lost. If you drink reverse osmosis water over a n

extended period, there is a real risk that you would experience mineral deficiency as a result. And we’re not talking about after years of drinking low-mineral water; the effects would make themselves known after only a few months.

It is not only drinking reverse osmosis water that can impact your health. Cooking with low-mineral water can cause the food to lose over half of their essential nutritional elements. Since most nutrients are ingested with food, the use of low-mineral water for cooking and processing food may cause a marked deficiency in total intake of some essential elements that was much higher than expected with the use of such water for drinking only.

The current diet of many persons usually does not provide all necessary elements in sufficient quantities, and therefore, any factor



**The WHO has previously made its advice plain, stating that reverse osmosis water has a definite adverse influence on the animal and human organism.**

that results in the loss of essential elements and nutrients during the processing and preparation of food could be detrimental for them.

Reverse osmosis water carries a greater risk of bacterial infection and because of its inherently unstable nature, low-mineral water can have a dissolving effect on metals. This means that any pipes, holding tanks or containers for reverse osmosis water can become corroded by the water, with dangerous metals – including lead in some reported cases – leaching into the water; which is then consumed.

Reverse osmosis water is very acidic. It is possible to treat the water with minerals to stabilize and remineralize the water, which should increase its alkalinity. This is frequently achieved by the addition of limestone. However, the mineral composition of limestone is itself variable, with quantities of calcium carbonate and magnesium

carbonate as well as other minerals. The World Health Organization (WHO) has previously expressed concern in a report that the minerals used for stabilizing low mineral water are not always food-grade quality.

The WHO has previously made its advice plain, stating that reverse osmosis water has a definite adverse influence on the animal and human organism.

Just about everyone knows that Reverse Osmosis (RO) systems excel at removing water impurities, but few are aware that they also remove the beneficial minerals. In fact, the reverse osmosis process removes 92-99% of beneficial calcium and magnesium. What's the big deal?

After analyzing hundreds of scientific studies concerning demineralized or reverse osmosis water, the World Health Organization released a report stating that such water has

a definite adverse influence on the animal and human organism."

Consumers have been so concerned with removing as many things from water as possible that they have forgotten to ask if the resulting water actually improves health or causes health problems. It is assumed that no toxins equals better health, but there is simply more to healthful water than a lack of toxins, as the World Health Organization clearly points out.

What is alarming is that consuming reverse osmosis water for even just a few months can create serious side effects. The effects of most chemicals commonly found in drinking water manifest themselves after long exposure. However, only a few months exposure may be sufficient 'consumption time effects' from water that is low in magnesium and/or calcium. Illustrative of such short-term exposures are cases in the Czech and Slovak populations who began using reverse osmosis-based systems for final treatment of drinking water at their home taps in 2000-2002. Within several weeks or months various health com-



Water Sample	Color	pH	Turbidity	TDS Minimum Acceptable 100	EC at 25 degree	Calcium as Ca	Chlorides as Cl	Florides as F-	Magnesium as Mg	Nitrate as NO3	Sulphate as SO4	Total Alkalinity as CaCO3	Total Hardness as CaCO3	Sodium as Na	Potassium	Total Coliform bacteria	Escherichia coli
	Acceptable Limits 5 Max to 8.5	6.5 to 8.5	NTU	Mg/l Acceptable Limits 10500-2010,500 Max	µS/cm	Mg/l Limits 75 Max	Mg/l 250 Max	Mg/l 1.0Max	Mg/l 30Max	Mg/l 45Max	Mg/l 200Max	Mg/l 200Max	Mg/l 200Max	Mg/l	Ask	Should be absent 100 ml	Should be absent 100 ml
GHMC WATER	1.0	7.6	<1.0	384	590	24.8	43.0	<0.1	4.7	<1.0	<1.0	164	156	38.1	3.4	Present	Absent
GHMC TO SUZU ALKALINE	<1.0	7.8	<1.0	376	577	23.2	42.9	<0.1	21.0	<1.0	<1.0	172	174	36.8	3.5	Absent	Absent
BORE WATER	1.0	7.2	<1.0	994	1530	78.5	111	<0.1	70	<0.1	<0.1	390	24.2	77.3	2.2	Present	Absent
BORE WATER TO SUZU ALKALINE WATER	<1.0	7.9	<1.0	316	487	24.8	25	<0.1	13.6	<0.1	<0.1	150	118	38.0	1.0	Absent	Absent
AQUAFINA BOTTLE	1.0	7.0	<1.0	40	60	40.0	10.5	<0.1	14	<1	<1	16.0	16.0	3.6	<1.0	Absent	Absent
BISLERI BOTTLE	1.0	7.3	<1.0	26	40.1	<1	5.7	<0.1	<1	<1	<1	10.0	4.0	3.0	1.2	Absent	Absent
KINLEY BOTTLE	1.0	8.1	<1.0	36	58.2	2.4	10.7	<0.1	0.5	<1	<1	2.0	8.0	<1.0	<1.0	Present	Absent
EVIAN WATER BOTTLE	<0.1	7.1	<1.0	448	635	79.3	14.3	<0.1	4.4	<1	<1	300	218	5.0	1.0	Absent	Absent

Note : The above reports are basing on National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories ( NABL ) LUCID Laboratories Pvt Ltd

plaints suggestive of acute magnesium (and possibly calcium) deficiency were reported. Among these complaints were cardiovascular disorders, tiredness, weakness or muscular cramps.

But it gets even worse. Because reverse osmosis water does not have enough minerals, it also leaches minerals from the body. This means that the minerals being consumed in food and vitamins are being urinated away. Less minerals consumed plus more minerals being excreted equals serious negative side effects and big health problems. In a scientific study performed to see if minerals consumed in food can make up for the lack of minerals in reverse osmosis water, scientists concluded that "reduced mineral intake from water was not compensated by their diets...low-mineral water was responsible for an increased elimination of minerals from the body.

It has been adequately demonstrated that consuming water of low mineral content has a negative effect on homeostasis mechanisms, compromising the mineral and water metabolism in the body. Consumption of reverse osmosis water leads to the dilution of the electrolytes dissolved in the body water. Inadequate body water redistribution between compartments may compromise the function of vital organs. Side effects at the very beginning of this condition include

tiredness, weakness and headache; more severe symptoms are muscular cramps and impaired heart rate.

Calcium and magnesium are both essential elements. Calcium is a substantial component of bones and teeth. In addition, it plays a role in neuromuscular excitability, the proper function of the conducting myocardial system, heart and muscle contractility, intracellular information transmission and the coagulability of blood. Magnesium plays an important role as a cofactor and activator of more than 300 enzymatic reactions including glycolysis, ATP metabolism, transport of elements such as sodium, potassium, and calcium through membranes, synthesis of proteins and nucleic acids, neuromuscular excitability and muscle contraction.

Since the early 1960's, epidemiological studies in many countries all over the world have reported that water low in calcium and magnesium is associated with increased morbidity and mortality from cardiovascular disease.

Recent studies also suggest that the intake of water low in calcium (reverse osmosis water) may be associated with higher risk of fracture in children, certain neurodegenerative diseases, pre-term birth and low weight at birth and some types of cancer. In addition to an increased risk of sudden death, the intake of water low in magnesium seems to be associated with a

higher risk of motor neuronal disease, pregnancy disorders and some types of cancer.

Recent epidemiological studies suggest that reverse osmosis water may be a risk factor for hypertension and coronary heart disease, gastric and duodenal ulcers, chronic gastritis, goitre, pregnancy complications and several complications in newborns and infants, including jaundice, anemia, fractures and growth disorders.

When used for cooking, reverse osmosis water was found to cause substantial losses of all essential elements from food (vegetables, meat, cereals). Such losses may reach up to 60 % for magnesium and calcium or even more for some other microelements (e.g., copper 66 %, manganese 70 %, cobalt 86 %). In contrast, when mineralized water is used for cooking, the loss of these elements is much lower, and in some cases, even higher calcium content was reported in food because of cooking.

Demineralised water that has not been remineralized, or low-mineral content water – in the light of the absence or substantial lack of essential minerals in it – is not considered ideal drinking water, and therefore, its regular consumption may not be providing adequate levels of some beneficial nutrients. It is time people start looking for alternatives to find safe drinking water. TN

# Alert motorman saves thousands of lives in Mumbai

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

The Gokhale foot over bridge that collapsed on July 2 morning bringing Mumbai railways to a complete halt could have further claimed thousands of lives had the motorman Chandrashekhar Sawant not pulled the emergency brake and stopped the train.

Witnessing the impending danger, the motorman of the train used his common sense and applied the emergency brake of the train in

no time. Railway Minister Piyush Goyal rewarded Rs 5 lakh to Sawant for his alertness.

Sawant started the journey from Andheri on July 2 morning. The train was running at a steady speed of 50kmph when he spotted the debris of the collapsed bridge approximately 60 meters away from him and also saw a part of the bridge collapsing. He immediately pulled the emergency brake and stopped the train. This saved thousands of lives of the passengers

traveling in the train.

The narrow escape was only possible because of Sawant's alertness and is appreciated by one and all around.

I would like to thank motorman Chandrashekhar Sawant who stopped the train as soon he saw an over head electric line snap & averted a bigger mishap. He will be awarded Rs 5 lakh: Union Railway Minister Piyush Goyal on road over-bridge collapse incident in #Mumbai's Andheri West 

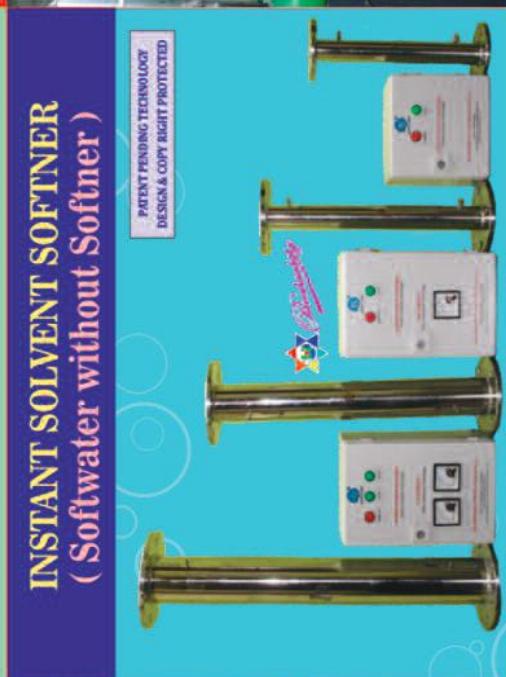




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# Four south Indian states top governance rankings, KERALA AT NUMBER 1: REPORT



## THE NEWS BUREAU

Kerala stands as the best governed state in the country and Karnataka is in the fourth position, said the Public Affairs Index 2018 released by the think tank Public Affairs Centre (PAC) here.

"Kerala has topped the Public Affairs Index (PAI) for 2018 as the best governed state for the third consecutive year since 2016 among large states," said Bengaluru-based PAC at an event in the city on July 21 evening to release its third annual PAI.

Released annually since 2016, the index examines governance performance in the states through a data-based framework, ranking

them on social and economic development they are able to provide.

Founded in 1994 by renowned Indian economist and scholar late Samuel Paul, the think tank works to mobilise a demand for better governance in the country.

Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka and Gujarat followed Kerala among the top five states delivering good governance, according to the report.

Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar ranked the lowest on the PAI, indicating higher social and economic inequalities in the states.

Among smaller states (with population less than two crore), Himachal Pradesh topped the list, followed by Goa, Mizoram, Sikkim

and Tripura which figured among the top five states with good governance.

Nagaland, Manipur and Meghalaya were ranked at the bottom of the index among small states.

As a young country with growing population, India needs to assess and address its developmental challenges, said the Chairman of PAC, K. Kasturirangan, on the occasion.

"The PAI 2018 is one example of a data-based framework that provides some basis, even if rudimentary, to assess the performance of states in India," added Kasturirangan, the former Chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

The think tank has undertaken the study across all the Indian states considering them across 10 themes such as essential infrastructure, support to human development, social protection, women and children as well as law and order.

"The index provides a multi-dimensional and comprehensive matrix that attempts to capture the complexities of governing the plural and diverse people of this sub-continent," added Senior Fellow at PAC C.K. Mathew.

The states were divided into two categories -- large and small -- on the basis of their population. States with more than two crore population were considered large.

A total of 30 focus subjects and 100 indicators were measured to derive the PAI, relying solely upon government data.

The PAC said it was not keen to access private data sources that may be interpreted as "biased".



This year's PAI also included a separate index on the children of India, giving a measure of how child-friendly each of the states are.

Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Mizoram topped the index on being the states to provide better living conditions for all children.

The former chairperson of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Shantha

Sinha, who was present on the occasion, delivered the Samuel Paul Memorial Lecture, drawing attention to children's rights in the country.

"Children growing up in poverty cannot be blamed for their situation and it is the state's responsibility to ensure that they are provided with opportunities for a better living," Sinha said. TN

## Royals Wedding Car: Wedding Planner Remodels Rolls Royce

**W**ith an aim to give middle-class couples a royal feeling on their wedding day, a wedding planner in Madhya Pradesh's Bhopal has remodeled a car, which is originally a Rolls Royce, a car that is believed to be a synonym for richness and luxury in India. The wedding planner, identified as Hamid Khan, has named his revamped car as 'Royals Wedding Car'.

Khan says he has not decided as to how much he would charge the newlywed couples. "I have not decided the charges for this yet but I want even the middle-class couples to feel like royals", he said.

In another similar incident, a Mahindra Scorpio SUV was seen 'dancing' during a Baraat at a wedding in June. A close look at the video showed the Scorpio SUV performing unique dance steps



leaving onlookers startled. Reports inform that one of the fans of Anand Mahindra posted one such video on Twitter. To this, Mahindra tweeted, "Kya Kehna! Naach Meri Jaan... Now I'm just not sure we can provide that as a factory-built feature.. !!"

## Ramon Magsaysay Award

# Indian doctor, education reformist among 6 selected for this year's award

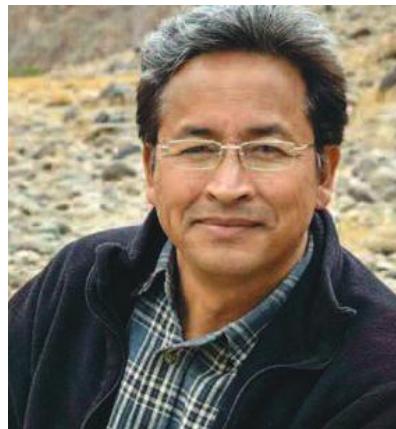
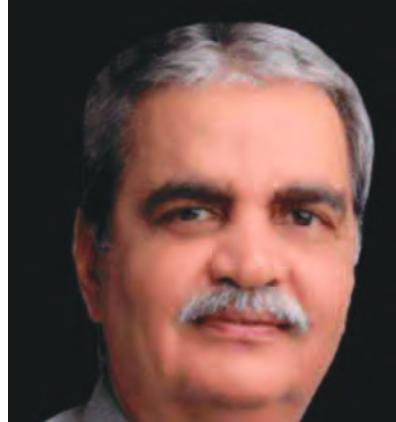
**THE NEWS BUREAU**

A Mumbai-based doctor, who set up a rehabilitation foundation to rescue mentally-ill persons living on the streets, along with a widely known Ladakhi engineer and education reformist, are among the six personalities named for this year's Ramon Magsaysay Award.

Bharat Vatwani, who has been recognised for "his tremendous courage and healing compassion in embracing India's mentally-afflicted destitute", started an informal operation of bringing mentally-ill street persons to their private clinic for treatment.

Vatwani established Shraddha Rehabilitation Foundation in 1988, aimed at rescuing mentally-ill persons living on the streets; providing free shelter, food, and psychiatric treatment; and reuniting them with their families.

"Their rescue work has been aided by the police, social workers, and referrals. Shraddha's free custodial care and treatment ranges from personal hygiene, medical check-ups, psychiatric treatment, to appropriate medication -- all done in the open, healing environment of the Karjat facility," the board of



trustees noted in a statement.

Sonam Wangchuk, who inspired actor Aamir Khan's character in "Three Idiots", has been recognised for "his uniquely systematic, collaborative and community-driven reform of learning systems in remote northern India,

thus improving the life opportunities of Ladakhi youth, and his constructive engagement of all sectors in local society to harness science and culture creatively for economic progress, thus setting an example for minority peoples in the world".

Wangchuk was a 19-year-old

engineering student at the National Institute of Technology in Srinagar when he went into tutoring to finance his schooling and help woefully unprepared students pass the national college matriculation exams.

In 1988, after earning his engineering degree, Wangchuk founded Students' Education and Cultural Movement of Ladakh (SECMOL) and started coaching Ladakhi students, 95 per cent of whom used to fail the government exams. In 1994, with Wangchuk in the lead, "Operation New Hope" (ONH) was launched to expand and consolidate the partnership-driven educational reform programme.

"Taking a life of its own, to date ONH has trained 700 teachers,

1,000 VEC leaders, and dramatically increased the success rate of students in matriculation exams from just 5 per cent in 1996 to 75 per cent by 2015," the board of trustees said in a statement.

The other recipients of the annual honour include Cambodia's Youk Chhang, who has been honoured for "preserving historical memory for healing and justice"; Maria de Lourdes Martins Cruz from East Timor for "building a caring society brick by brick"; Howard Dee of Philippines for "Championing the human face of peace, justice and economic growth"; and Vietnam's Vo Thi Hoang Yen for "Claiming opportunities for the differently abled".

The Ramon Magsaysay Award,

recognised as Asia's premier prize, is now in its 60th year of "honouring greatness of spirit and transformative leadership in selfless service to the peoples of Asia".

Since its inception, over 330 individuals and organisations have joined the distinguished community of Ramon Magsaysay awardees.

The prestigious award is given to persons -- regardless of race, nationality, creed or gender -- who address issues of human development in Asia with courage and creativity, and in doing so have made contributions which have transformed their societies for the better.

The awards will be presented on August 31 at Main Theatre, Cultural Center of the Philippines. TN

## WhatsApp rolls out group calling for voice, video

**F**acebook-owned WhatsApp rolled out its group calling feature -- for both voice and video options -- on iOS and Android devices for its 1.5 billion users.

The group calling feature supports up to four people simultaneously. "You can make a group call with up to four people total -- anytime and anywhere. Just start a

one-on-one voice or video call and tap the new "add participant" button in the top right corner to add more contacts to the call," WhatsApp said in a statement.

WhatsApp users currently spend over two billion minutes on calls per day. "Group calls are always end-to-end encrypted, and we've designed calling to work re-

liably around the world in different network conditions," WhatsApp added.

At Facebook's F8 developer conference in May, WhatsApp had announced to bring group calling support on its platform.

The instant messaging service unveiled video chatting in 2016 and voice calling in 2014.

## MIM MLA denies allegations

**A**ll India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) MLA, Mumtaz Ahmed Khan denied in a statement that he had encroached any burial ground. Reacting on a news report published in these columns in its June 2018 issue, the legislator said that the allegations of encroachment of a burial ground admeasuring 6014.88 square yards in survey number 309/1 to 5, TS No.1, Block G, Ward No.275, Kandikal village, Bandlaguda Mandal, Hyderabad district were false. The legislator further said that he had constructed a mosque on 300 square yards of land which is a private land for which the Tahsildar and government has given NOC. He also demanded unconditional apology and withdrawal of the news report.

However, the legislator did not send any documents in support of his contention. Yet, The News team respects the position of the legislator and offers apology if the news report has hurt him in any manner.



# We paid high cost for democracy for 70 years: NITI Aayog VC

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

**N**ITI Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar has said people have paid a "very high cost" for democracy in the last 70 years and it is now time to reap the dividends. He insisted that NITI Aayog, as a "principal change agent", can help garner those dues.

"We have paid a very high cost for our democracy in the past 70 years. It's very clear. Otherwise we could have...anyway. But now is the time when NITI Aayog will help us in earning the democratic dividend," Kumar said in response to a query by news agency IANS on how NITI's role was different from the erstwhile Planning Commission.

"It is time to get the democratic dividend which would come from states competing for good governance and good delivery of public services and not by having competitive populism," he said.

Kumar said that the Aayog is a "complete new entity" as compared to the Planning Commission because it works as "partners to the states" and not as "people who hand out doles to the states".

"We, therefore, don't hold durbars in the NITI Bhavan. I have actually taken the trouble and met Chief Ministers of 21 states in their state capitals. I visit them. Completely the reverse of what Plan-

ning Commission used to be," he told IANS.

Speaking about NITI Aayog not having any financial powers, he said it had the "power of ideas and the power to implement them".

"By the way, some of my friends tell me that I have come at a wrong time when the NITI Aayog has lost all powers to disburse money. But we have got the power of ideas and the power of implementing those ideas, both at the

the potential and the ambition to do it. "We can bring the states on the same page, we can make them compete with each other," Kumar said.

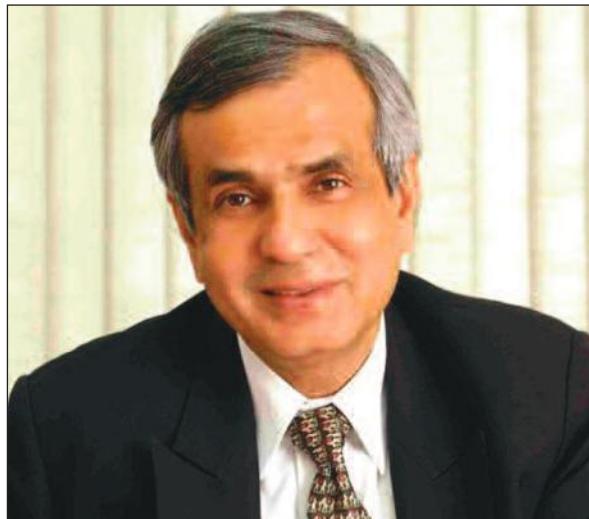
On the question of economy not creating enough jobs, Kumar said the allegation of "jobless growth" is "mithya" (falsehood) and has no substance.

He, in line with what the Prime Minister said recently, insisted that not enough data is available on the jobs.

Asked if the government is shifting the goalposts after four years by hiding behind the pretext of not having sufficient data on growth, Kumar said: "Not at all. We are not shifting the goalpost. My predecessor (Arvind Panagariya) had taken this up in a major way in the second year itself. It takes time to tackle such an important question."

"The decisions have been taken, the financial resources have all been allocated. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has already had a household survey in the field.

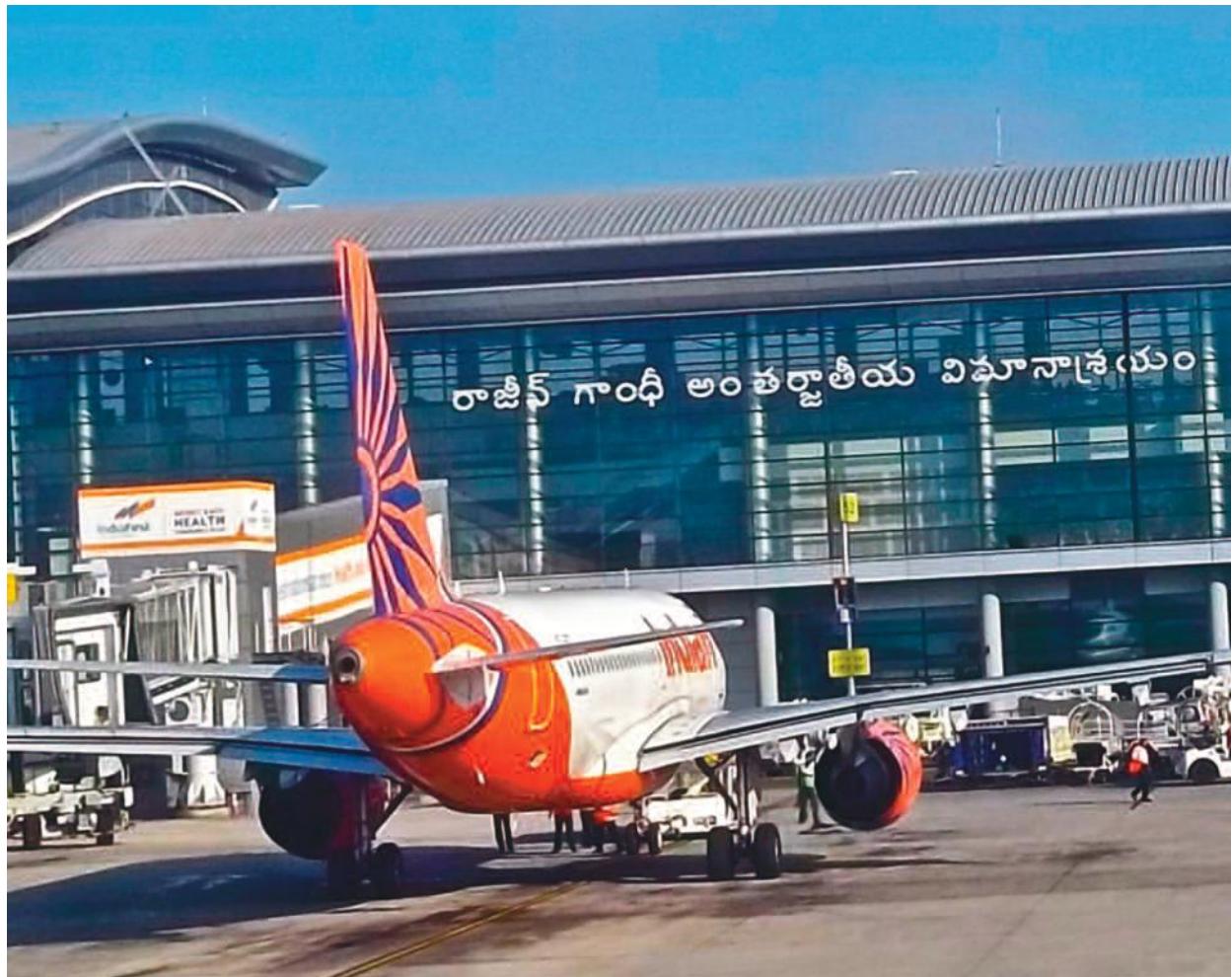
"The change in employment can only come when the first quarter is repeated in the 5th quarter. Then only you know the change Quarter-to-Quarter. Therefore it is taking time. But we will get the best data every year, not just once in five years," he said. **TN**



central level and much more at the state level, trying to get them (states) replicate the best practices," Kumar said.

"And here let me say -- and this is my wish and hope -- that if we go along the way we are going, on which the Prime Minister has been sort of directing us all the time to go, we will become one of the principal change agents in this economy," he added.

He said that the NITI Aayog has



# Air fares on many routes cheaper than railways' premium trains: CAG

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

**T**ickets on the Indian Railways' premium trains were much higher as compared to airfares, says a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report, tabled in parliament on July 20.

Coming down heavily on the

flexi-fare scheme of the Indian Railways, the CAG report said: "For the 120 advance reservation period (ARP) of 120 days, travel by air was found to be cheapest mode in 17 directions of travel.

"In the remaining nine directions though, the air fare was higher and the difference in fare

was only up to Rs 600," it pointed out. The government auditor also said that for 90 days ARP, travel was found to be cheapest mode in the 18 directions of travel.

The report also highlighted that for the 60 days ARP, travel by air was found to be cheapest mode in 19 directions for travel and for 30

days ARP, travel by air was cheapest mode in 17 directions.

It also said that in Hyderabad-New Delhi, New Delhi-Hyderabad, Bengaluru-New Delhi, New Delhi-Bengaluru, Bhubaneshwar-New Delhi, New Delhi-Bhubaneshwar, New Delhi-Chennai and Bengaluru-Kolkata sectors, the air fare was cheaper when the tickets were booked 30 days to 120 days in advance.

The report highlighted that the airlines reported growth in number of passengers in 26 directions whereas occupancy in Rajdhani or Duronto Express trains increased only in four directions.

"When compared to the cost and time taken for travel by AC2 and AC3 tier, air travel by economy class worked out to be cheaper and preferable mode of travel. This is corroborated by decreasing trend of occupancy in premier trains post flexi fare scheme, while the number of the passenger carried out by airlines increased during the same period of post-flexi as compared to pre-flexi," it said.

The CAG also pointed out that the flexi fare scheme has led to decrease in ticket sales in all classes except sleeper class of Duronto trains.

"Even in AC 3 class, which was one of the most profitable classes, the occupancy dropped significantly after the introduction of flexi fare and the vacant berths increased from 0.66 per cent in pre-flexi period to 4.46 per cent in post-flexi period. In terms of absolute numbers, the Premier trains carried 2,40,79,899 passengers during post flexi period as compared to 2,47,36,469 passengers during pre-flexi period," said the CAG in its report.

However, the CAG said that through the flexi fare scheme, Indian Railways has earned Rs 552 crore. "Railway earned Rs 552 crore from passenger earnings from the Premier trains post flexi fare system during September 9, 2016 to July 31, 2017, and there was de-growth of 2.65 per cent in number of passengers despite the availability of berths or seats," the CAG

said. The CAG also advised the national transporter to fine tune the flexi fare scheme so that not only revenue but also the number of passengers increase.

"After the introduction of the flexi fare system, passengers preferred to travel by mail or express trains over the Rajdhani or Duronto or Shatabdi Express trains despite a higher travel time for mail or express trains."

It also said that the introduction of flexi fare in AC3 tier class, which was already a profit making class, was not fair.

On September 9, 2016, Railways introduced flexi-fare for premier trains - Rajdhani, Duronto and Shatabdi.

Under this, the base fare increases by 10 per cent with every 10 per cent of berths sold, subject to a prescribed limit. There was no change in the existing fare for first AC and EC class of travel. However, on December 19, Railways started to provide 10 per cent rebate on any seat left vacant after the preparation of the chart. **TN**



# YSRCP supports simultaneous elections

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

The YSR Congress Party has supported Centre's proposal to conduct simultaneous elections, becoming the fifth party in the country to do so.

In an 8-page letter submitted to the Law Commission on July 10, the YSRCP said that the party decided to support simultaneous elections after studying the advantages and disadvantages of simultaneous elections.

The idea to conduct simultaneous elections has been proposed by the government as part of its 'One

Nation One Election' concept. Subsequently, the Law Commission sent an invite to seven national and 59 regional parties for their consultation and opinions.

The YSRCP has stated that simultaneous elections will reduce the expenditure incurred by the Election Commission but, at the same time, pointed out that there is no guarantee that the overall expenditure of political parties will come down. "Political parties may spend entire fund at once rather than in phases," the party said.

However, the party has backed simultaneous elections, thereby

joining All India Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), Telangana Rashtra Samithi, Samajwadi Party and the Shiromani Akali Dal in supporting Centre's proposal.

"The YSRCP is in favour of simultaneous elections as there have been simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and Andhra Pradesh State Assembly from 1951 to 1967 and 1999 to 2014. Now as per the existing position, we are likely to have simultaneous elections for LS and AP Assembly. YSRCP supports the move and efforts in this regard by the Law Commission of India," the party wrote. **TN**





## Simultaneous polls against federal structure: TDP tells Law Commission

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) opposed the idea of simultaneous polls to the Lok Sabha and the state assemblies, saying the proposal was "impracticable" and "against the spirit of the Constitution and federal structure".

"As per the Constitution, it is not possible and is impracticable. For simultaneous polls, either you have to extend or reduce the tenures of some state governments, which is against the spirit of the Constitution and federal structure," party MP K. Ravindra Kumar said.

Changing the tenure of a government is not permissible under the Constitution and the provisions of Representation of the People Act, Ravindra Kumar told reporters after attending a meeting convened by the Law Commission over its proposal of simultaneous polls.

"We submitted a representation to the Law Commission stating

that under the guise of simultaneous elections, the Central government is making hectic efforts to curtail the liberty of regional parties and to curtail the powers of the governments where regional parties are ruling," he said.

Ravindra Kumar, who accompanied TDP Parliamentary Party leader and Kakinada MP Thota Narasimham at the meeting, also said as the proposal was not permissible under the Constitution, any attempt to amend the Constitution would directly affect the federal nature of the Union.

He noted that the country, as per Article 1 of the Constitution of India, is a union of states and the Central government is not supposed to curtail the rights of the states under the guise of simultaneous elections.

Many regional parties are apprehensive that the Central government may use Constitutional and statutory bodies under its control against the governments and political leaders who are op-

osing the NDA government, which is not permissible under democracy, he said.

On the issue of electronic voting machines (EVMs), the TDP leader said: "EVM machines can be used subject to provision of a printout saying who the voter voted to. If voters' slip is not possible by the Election Commission, go back to the ballot paper to conduct elections in traditional way."

The Law Commission has invited all the national and recognised state political parties to hold consultations on Saturday and Sunday on the practicality of conducting simultaneous polls.

The Commission has prepared a draft paper on "Simultaneous Elections - Constitutional and Legal Perspectives" and has sought opinions of "all stakeholders" including political parties, constitutional experts, bureaucrats, academia and others on the paper before finalising its report and sending it to the government. **TN**

# KCR backs simultaneous polls



## THE NEWS BUREAU

TRS, the ruling party in Telangana, has come out in support of the Centre's proposal to hold simultaneous elections in the country.

Earlier this year, the Law Commission had invited all national and state parties to hold consultations on the issue, sparking intense debate across the country. The Commission has prepared a draft paper titled "Simultaneous Elections - Constitutional and Legal Perspectives" and has sought opinions of "all stakeholders" including political parties, constitutional experts, bureaucrats, academia, among others. It will then finalise its report and send it to the government.

In a letter to Law Commission Chairman Justice BS Chauhan, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao said, "We all know that four to six months of time is

being spent in conducting elections each time to the Lok Sabha and the State Legislatures. The entire State and District level administrative and security machinery is very busy with conduct of elections twice in a period of five years as per the current practice."

"Likewise, imposition of model code of conduct for such a long period is also hampering development and welfare activities being undertaken by the state government. Further, huge amount of money – public money as well as of the political parties and candidates - is being spent twice in a period of five years, if elections are not held simultaneously," KCR pointed out in his letter.

"In the above backdrop, our party i.e. the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) is strongly in favour of holding simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and the state Legislative Assemblies," KCR said.

Stating that he was busy with

pre-scheduled engagements, the Telangana CM said that he was deputing Karimnagar MP B Vinod Kumar on his behalf to participate in the discussions in New Delhi.

This also comes a day after the ruling TDP in Andhra Pradesh said that conducting simultaneous polls would weaken leaders of regional parties across the country. In a statement, Andhra Finance Minister Yanamala Ramakrishnudu said, "Simultaneous polls are a move to weaken regional leaders. No national party is in a position to form government at the Centre on its own and support of regional parties has become mandatory. Strengthening of regional parties has become a big obstacle for national parties."

However, opposition parties have generally dismissed the suggestion mooted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as an alleged ploy by him to divert attention from other, more important, issues. **TN**

# Modi government sails through no trust vote

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

The National Democratic Alliance government sailed through its first floor test in Lok Sabha by defeating the no-confidence motion moved by Telugu Desam Party on July 20.

Narendra Modi led government had a comfortable majority of 325 votes in its favour, who voted against the motion compared to 126 votes by the opposition parties out of total 451 members of Parliament present in Lok Sabha.

Biju Janata Dal members had staged a walk-out while NDA ally Shiv Sena did not participate in the voting.

The NDA victory came after a 12-hour debate, followed by a 90-



minute reply by the prime minister, during which he listed out the achievements of his government and underlined the failures of the Congress and its allies during their

previous terms.

This was also the first major unity strength of the Opposition parties that are planning to come together for 'Grand Alliance' hoping to fight the Bharatiya Janata Party in the 2019 general elections.

Before the voting, Modi asked the Opposition to bring a similar motion again in 2024, clearly indicating that the BJP will be back in power again in 2019.

The motion moved by the TDP saw the MPs accusing the NDA government of neglecting Andhra Pradesh and not giving it Special Category Status.

However, Telangana Rashtra Samiti, the other party affected by the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, supported the NDA. **TN**

## Modi thanks Opposition for no-trust vote

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi told BJP MPs that he was "thankful" to the opposition parties for bringing a no-confidence motion against his government which, according to him, provided the ruling dispensation an opportunity to expose their political "hollowness".

The Prime Minister's remarks came during a meeting of BJP parliamentary party on July 31, which felicitated Modi for defeating the no-confidence motion.

"The Prime Minister double-thanked and gave multiple compliments to opposition parties which brought the no-confidence

motion and helped the ruling party to bring before public its achievements and pro-poor policies. It also provided an opportunity to expose their hollowness," said a senior BJP leader who was present in the meeting.

The Prime Minister also said that at this stage no political party would have moved the motion.

"The BJP and NDA utilised the opportunity provided by the immature opposition parties. This has given us a chance to explain the success story of NDA to the whole nation," the BJP leader quoted Modi as saying.

Talking to reporters after the first BJP parliamentary party meeting in the ongoing Monsoon Session, Parliamentary Affairs

Minister Ananth Kumar said the opposition brought the no-confidence motion despite knowing that the numbers were not in their favour. The motion was defeated by 195 votes.

"They used the occasion to target us without facts and figures. Their hollowness was exposed before the people," Kumar quoted Modi as saying.

Kumar said that Modi also praised Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh's speech on the motion and asked party members to take it to the people.

Besides Modi, BJP chief Amit Shah, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Land and Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari addressed the meeting.

# Amar Singh attends Modi event, sparks BJP switch rumours

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

Veteran politician and former Samajwadi Party leader Amar Singh on July 29 attended an event addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi here, dropping hints of joining the saffron party. Modi launched as many as 81 investment projects worth over Rs 60,000 crore in the capital city of Uttar Pradesh.

The prime minister said he was not afraid of being seen with industrialists playing a key role in the nation's development, as he slammed the opposition parties for the "mistakes" made during 70 years after India's independence.

"You cannot have blot on you simply by standing with anyone if

your intentions are good and clear. Gandhiji's intentions were so pure that he never hesitated in staying with Birla family," he said.

"Public mey milna nahi, parde ke peeche sab kuch karna hai. Woh dartey rahtey hain. (Those who do not meet publicly and do everything behind curtains remain scared)," he said. Amar Singh, former SP leader, is sitting here and he can give you all the details, Modi said with a laughter.

Singh was also seen at the inauguration and flagging-off of electric buses by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at his official residence later in the day.

On July 23, Singh had met Adityanath, triggering speculation in political circles that he might be

planning to join the BJP.

Though the meeting was confirmed by official sources, it was not immediately known what transpired between them.

Rumour is rife that Singh, who was a Rajya Sabha MP from the Samajwadi Party but was expelled from the outfit last year, has been toying with the idea of embracing the saffron party.

Singh had recently said that he was not averse to joining the BJP, but he did not have any invite from it, nor had he applied to it.

"The BJP is a very big political party. I won't say that I will not join the BJP if I get a chance, but who is giving me the chance? I have not sent them any request letter either," he said. **TN**



# Pakistan opposition unanimously rejects results, demands re-election

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

A multi-party conference (MPC) and Pakistan Peoples' Party have rejected the just-concluded Pakistan election results, demanding a transparent and free and fair re-election.

A multi-party conference (MPC), called to devise a joint strategy over alleged rigging in the 2018 general elections of Pakistan, demanded a "transparent" re-election and said the polls were "rigged massively" and the results were manipulated.

Attended by leaders of various parties, the MPC was chaired by PML-N President Shahbaz Sharif and Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) President Maulana Fazlur Rehman. It was held at the Islamabad residence of MMA leader Mian Aslam, Dawn reported.

"The APC (all parties conference) has completely rejected the July 25 elections with consensus," announced Rehman while addressing the media after the conference concluded. "We do not consider this election to be the mandate of the public."

The Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) had earlier on Friday decided not to attend the conference, with a spokesperson saying its leadership will devise its own strategy regarding alleged poll irregularities.

The chairperson Bilawal Bhutto Zardari rejected the election process and claimed the General Election 2018 was not free and fair, Geo News reported.



**Attended by leaders of various parties, the MPC was chaired by PML-N President Shahbaz Sharif and Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) President Maulana Fazlur Rehman. It was held at the Islamabad residence of MMA leader Mian Aslam, Dawn reported.**

Bilawal, while addressing a press conference on Friday, demanded the resignation of the chief election commissioner over failure to conduct transparent polls.

He said the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is responsible for carrying out transparent polls and that the electoral body failed in its task.

"We don't accept the results of the elections," he said.

In attendance at the MPC were Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) chief Senator Sirajul Haq, Sindh Governor Mohammad Zubair, Gilgit-Baltistan

Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman, Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider, Awami National Party chief Asfandyar Wali Khan, Qaumi Watan Party chairman Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao, National Party's Senator Mir Hasil Bizenjo and several MMA leaders.

PML-N leaders Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Ayaz Sadiq, Marriyum Aurangzeb, Chaudhry Tanveer and Khurram Dastagir and Pak Sarzameen Party (PSP) leaders Mustafa Kamal, Raza Haroon and Waseem Ahmed also participated.

# IMRAN KHAN WILL TAKE OATH AS PM ON AUGUST 11

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has said that he will take oath as Prime Minister on August 11, according to media reports.

Talking to the newly-elected members from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Islamabad, he said a decision regarding nomination of the Chief Minister will be taken soon and in the best interest of the people, according to Radio Pakistan. Although PTI has emerged as the single largest party in the National Assembly in the July 25 polls, it is short of numbers to form its government independently.

To meet the required number of votes, the PTI leadership has reportedly approached the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA), PML-Quaid (PML-Q) and the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), as well as Independents. Mean-



while, former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and Bilawal Bhutto-led Pakistan Peoples

Party agreed on formulation of a "coordinated joint strategy" in an attempt to give a tough time to PTI in Parliament.

Interestingly, Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM-P) leader Farooq Sattar also showed up to the conference, despite reports that his party has agreed to join the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-led government in the centre after a contact between PTI leader Jehangir Tareen and Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui.

Speaking at the MPC, Sattar alleged that the July 25 polls were

"rigged massively" and the results were altered. "Results of their choice were devised and the party of their choice was made to win," he claimed.

The MMA had on Thursday rejected the poll results outright, calling for declaring the entire electoral exercise "null and void".

The recently revived alliance of five religio-political parties suffered a drubbing in the elections

and even its chief, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, and JI chief Sirajul Haq tasted defeat in their native constituencies.

The PML-N too had decided to take all major parties, including the PPP and obviously excluding the PTI, on board to formulate a joint strategy to take up the rigging issue that it believes has deprived it of majority in the coming National Assembly. TN

# Activists write to European Union on pharma pollution

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

Rights groups and villagers affected by pollution caused by pharmaceutical industry have called upon the European Commission (EC) to tackle the 'grave environmental and human health crisis' unfolding due to the production of drugs in the country.

**The signatories to the letter include Village Council (Panchayat) Presidents of some of the worst pharma pollution impacted villages around Hyderabad, including Edulabad, Makthala Anantharam, Chinnaraviralla and Palligudem.**

In a letter to the President and Vice-President of the European Commission and the European Union Commissioners for the Environment, Industry, Health and Trade, the petitioners have called upon the EC to revise Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) by including compulsory environmental standards in factory inspections.

The signatories to the letter include Village Council (Panchayat) Presidents of some of the

worst pharma pollution impacted villages around Hyderabad, including Edulabad, Makthala Anantharam, Chinnaraviralla and Palligudem. The letter states, "The devastating environmental and human health impacts from the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals

are well-documented. India's Environment Ministry classifies pharmaceutical manufacturing as a "red category" activity owing to the hazardous waste it produces. However, Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API) discharges from factories are currently not regulated, and en-



forcement of existing pollution norms is extremely inadequate, as demonstrated by several studies and media stories. As a result of this, the lives of many people living in India's pharmaceutical manufacturing hubs, such as Hyderabad, the capital of the southern Indian state of Telangana, Baddi Barotiwalla Nalagarh Industrial town in the foothills of Himachal Pradesh, SIPCOT Cuddalore in Tamil Nadu, have been blighted by rampant pollution." "Successive studies have shown that air, water and soil at around the pharma manufacturing facilities in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh are significantly contaminated by toxic chemicals and Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients

(APIs), notably from the production of antimicrobial drugs such as antibiotics," Anil Dayakar of Gamana, a Hyderabad-based NGO and a signatory to the letter said.

"However, API discharges from factories are currently not regulated, and enforcement of existing pollution norms is extremely lacking and inadequate," Anil added.

The letter also highlights India's huge antimicrobial resistance (AMR) problem and states that every year, 58,000 babies die in India as a result of contracting a multi-drug resistant infection.

It also quotes a study in March 2017 by scientists from the University of Leipzig, which showed that

insufficient wastewater management by drug manufacturing facilities in India is leading to "unprecedented" contamination of water resources with antimicrobial pharmaceuticals.

"The researchers found concentrations of antibiotics and antifungal substances that were several hundred times, or even several thousand times, higher than the levels predicted to select for resistance. In addition, 95% of all samples tested positively for multi drug-resistant bacteria," a press release said.

"In light of the looming and severe public health crisis posed by AMR fuelled by, inter alia, pollution caused by pharmaceuticals throughout their life-cycle, we underline that only a multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder approach can generate the required results for the continued health of people, animals and ecosystems, in Europe and globally," Dr Sree Karuna Murthy Kolly, President, Indian Public Health Association (IPHA) Andhra Pradesh State, another signatory of the letter.

"India is one of the world's largest manufacturers of pharmaceuticals and the EU one of its key export markets. Indian and multi-national drug companies operate here because of cheap labour and lax implementation of environmental laws. The communities affected by pollution have already tried national legal avenues and won several landmark court cases, but this has not led to an improvement in the situation on the ground. This is why the EU cannot turn a blind eye to this problem," said Shweta Narayan of Community Environmental Monitoring, a program that provides support to pollution impacted communities in India. TN



# RESTORE TAJ MAHAL OR DEMOLISH IT, SC TELLS GOVERNMENT

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

The Supreme Court on July 11 came down heavily on the Centre and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for not being able to protect the iconic Taj Mahal, issuing a warning it will "shut it down" and the authorities should "demolish or restore" the Mughal structure.

The apex court was unhappy as the Uttar Pradesh government failed to come out with a vision document to protect the Taj Mahal.

A bench of Justice Madan B. Lokur and Justice Deepak was upset with the authorities for not taking any step to preserve the Taj Mahal and said its "sheer lethargy" on the part of the authorities.

"There is absolutely no willingness to protect the Taj Mahal. Taj Mahal has to be protected. Either we will shut it down or you demolish or restore it," the bench ob-

served. The court said the Taj Mahal is more beautiful than the Eiffel Tower and could have solved the country's foreign exchange problem.

"Eighty million go to watch Eiffel Tower which looks like a TV Tower. Our Taj is more beautiful. If you had looked after it your foreign exchange problem would have been solved.

"Do you realise the loss caused to the country due to your apathy?" observed the bench.

The Uttar Pradesh government had earlier told the bench that it would place before the court a draft of vision document on protection and preservation of the Taj Mahal that was built by Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal.

Saying it would hear the case next on July 31 on a day-to-day basis, the bench told the Centre to

furnish full details of the steps taken and action it intends to take for protecting the Taj Mahal.

The court also sought personal appearance of the chairman of Taj Trapezium Zone (TTZ) -- a 10,400 sq km area spread over the districts of Agra, Firozabad, Mathura, Hathras and Etah in Uttar Pradesh and Bharatpur in Rajasthan -- to explain violation of its orders prohibiting expansion of industrial units in the zone.

The Uttar Pradesh government had said it was also trying to take care of the environment around the structure so that the historic monument could be there for another 400 years and not just for a generation.

The court has been hearing a plea filed by environmentalist M.C. Mehta seeking protection of the Taj from the ill-effects of polluting gases and deforestation in and around the area. TN



# 1,000 'war rockets' of Tipu Sultan unearthed from Karnataka fort

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

Over 1,000 "war rockets" of the 18th century ruler of the erstwhile Mysore state, Tipu Sultan, were found in an abandoned open well at Bidanooru Fort in Karnataka's Shivamogga district, said an official on July 28.

"Excavation of the open well in the fort at Nagara near Shivamogga led to unearthing of over 1,000 corroded rockets that were stored during Tipu's time for use in wars," state Archaeology Department Assistant Director R. Shejeshwara Nayaka told IANS from the site, 385km northwest of here.

A chance discovery of 160 unused rusted rockets in the vicinity in 2002 and their identification after five year's of research in 2007 into the Tipu era made the department explore if more such ammunition was lying buried in the fort.

"Digging of the dry well where its mud was smelling like gun powder led to the discovery of the rockets and shells in a pile, each filled with potassium nitrate, charcoal, and magnesium powder used to fire or lob them using an artillery," Nayaka noted.

A 15-member team of archaeologists, excavators and labourers took three days from Wednesday to unearth the rockets along with gun powder and cast in rustic iron.

"The war rockets are in different sizes, measuring 23-26 cm or 12-14 inches. They were found buried in a secure place in the well-shaped place beneath the surface,"



Nayaka pointed out. The rockets will be kept for public display at the department's museum in Shivamogga city in the Malnad region.

"The iron-cased rockets clearly show Tipu's technology was used in making them. Some of them could even belong to Keladi Dynasty and the Wodeyar rulers of the Mysore kingdom after Tipu's reign," added Nayaka.

According to historical records with the department, the Malnad region, including the fort area in Shivamogga was part of Tipu's Mysore kingdom from 1750-99 and the rockets were used in the wars Tipu fought against the East

India Company of the British empire.

Tipu was killed in the fourth Anglo-Mysore war in 1799 at Srinagarpatna near Mysore after successive victories in battles against the British rulers.

A pioneer in using rocket artillery, Tipu used to deploy the rockets to deter the advancing British forces from advancing into his territory.

For developing the rockets, Tipu took the help of the French army, which used the British Congreve rockets in the wars its commander-in-chief Napoleon Bonaparte fought in Europe. **TN**

# Katrina to replace Priyanka in 'Bharat'?

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

**A**fter the exit of Priyanka Chopra from 'Bharat', the makers of the film are hunting for the apt leading lady for the film. In this venture, Katrina Kaif's name is in talks.

If this happens then 'Tiger Zinda Hai' Jodi to reunite for yet another film. Salman and Katrina have shared the screen space for five films in the past like 'Maine Pyar Kyun Kiya', 'Yuvvraaj', 'Partner' and 'Ek Tha Tiger'.

According to the reports of a leading portal, Katrina will join the film in September. Producers of 'Bharat' Atul and Alvira Agnihotri had a meeting with the 'Fitoor' actress and sorted out her dates.

Reportedly, Kareena was also in talks to rope in the film but the actress is busy with her other projects. So, Katrina is all set for the commitments before September and she will join the 'Bharat' team in September.

However, there is no official confirmation of the news. But as the director Ali Abbas Zafar had tweeted, that he will announce the name of the leading lady, he might come up with Katrina's name.

On a related note, Salman and Katrina gave a blockbuster hit 'Tiger Zinda Hai' in the direction of Ali Abbas. The superhit trio may team up for yet another film. **TN**



# AP tops ease of doing business rankings, Telangana second

## THE NEWS BUREAU

**A**ndhra Pradesh emerged as the top ranked state in the Union governments latest ease of doing business index for states released on July 10.

As per the index, jointly prepared by the World Bank and the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Andhra Pradesh is followed by neighbouring Telangana, and Haryana is in third place. Jharkhand and Gujarat stood fourth and fifth, respectively.

According to the Commerce Ministry, the final rankings under the Business Reforms Action Plan were arrived at after combining the various "reform evi-

dence score" and "feedback score".

The "reform evidence score" is allotted on the basis of 372 recommendations for reforms on regulatory processes, policies, practices and procedures

Commerce Ministry statement said.

Jharkhand and Telangana scored 100 per cent score in their reform evidence scores.

This year's top five states figure ahead of the industrialised states such as Gujarat, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

Maharashtra ranked

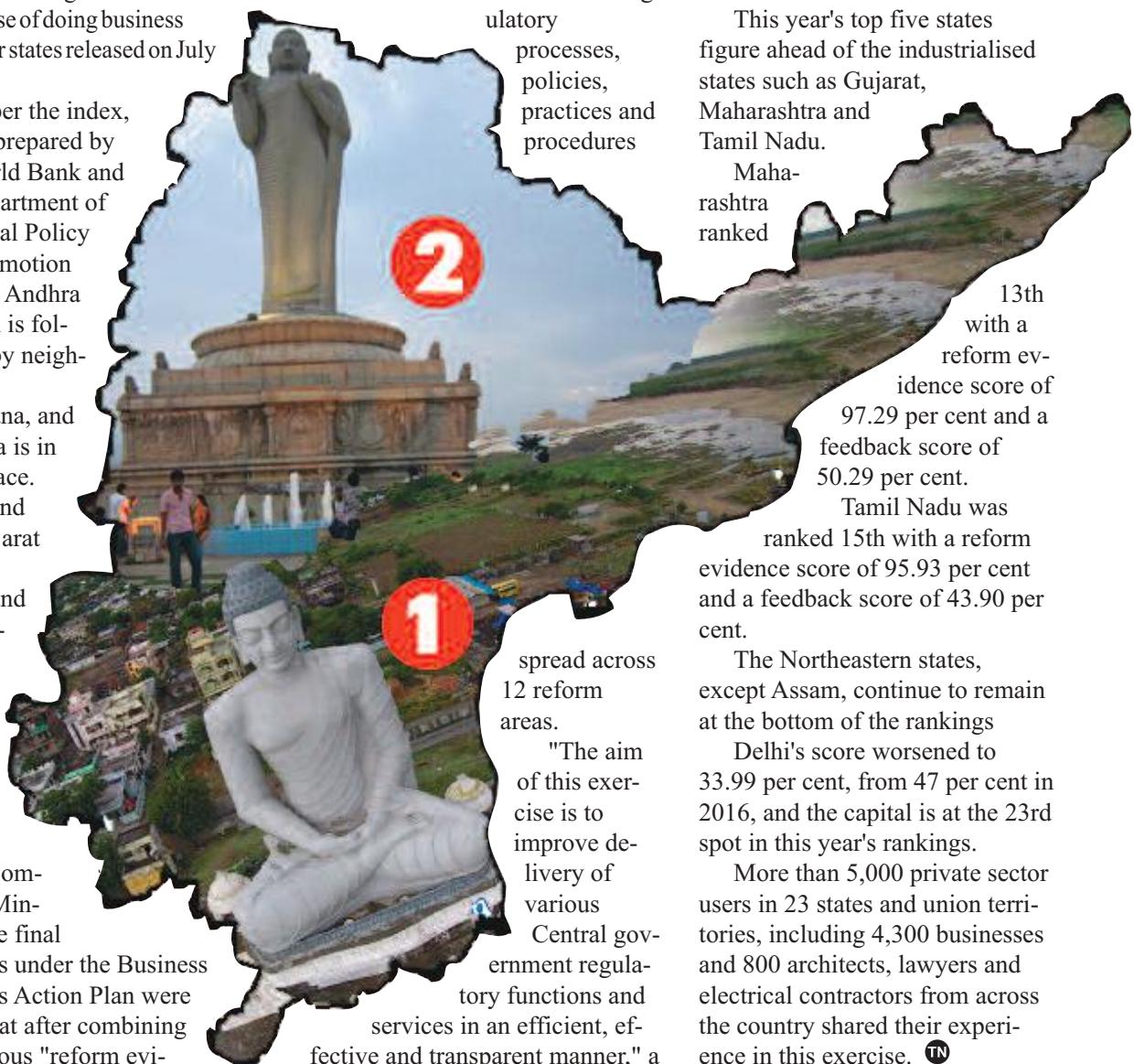
13th with a reform evidence score of 97.29 per cent and a feedback score of 50.29 per cent.

Tamil Nadu was ranked 15th with a reform evidence score of 95.93 per cent and a feedback score of 43.90 per cent.

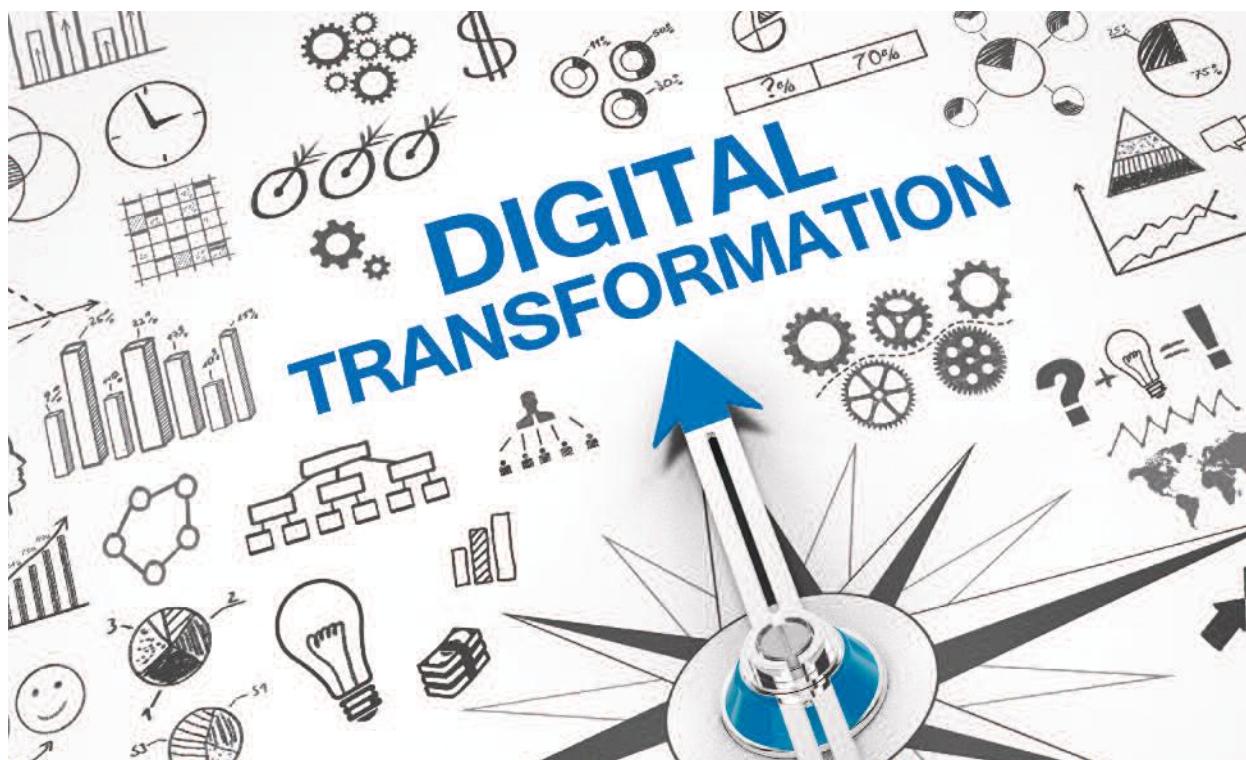
The Northeastern states, except Assam, continue to remain at the bottom of the rankings

Delhi's score worsened to 33.99 per cent, from 47 per cent in 2016, and the capital is at the 23rd spot in this year's rankings.

More than 5,000 private sector users in 23 states and union territories, including 4,300 businesses and 800 architects, lawyers and electrical contractors from across the country shared their experience in this exercise. **TN**



# Demand for data scientists in India up by over 400 percent



## THE NEWS BUREAU

**D**riven by increased focus on digital transformation, the demand for data scientists in India shot up by 417 per cent in the past one year, according to a new study.

People seeking data scientists job during the same period increased by just 19 per cent, according to the study titled "Talent Supply Index" (TSI) by data-driven hiring solution provider Belong Technologies India Pvt Ltd.

The demand for security engineers in the past year increased by 120 per cent while the supply has been able to match up by only 14

per cent, showed the 2018 edition of TSI.

"If the TSI 2017 data proved that we are in a candidate-driven market, the 2018 numbers should be a wake-up call for talent acquisition to adopt data-driven and a candidate-first approach to attract the best talent," said Rishabh Kaul, Co-Founder, Belong.

"Companies can no longer solely expect candidates to apply to them and should invest in going 'outbound' to have a greater chance at attracting this scarce talent," Kaul added.

The TSI measures how competitive the market is for a given job by dividing the total number of

people with relevant skills by the total number of active opportunities for that job.

Its 2018 edition took into consideration a randomised sample set of over 1.5 million jobs spread across the last two years in India along with over 500,000 candidates.

The findings showed that engineering managers and architects are moving jobs more frequently and the average tenure for these roles dropped by 30 to 35 per cent last year.

Female representation in technology roles stood at an average of just 12 per cent across roles, according to the study. **TN**

# India developing technologies for manned space mission

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

India is developing critical technologies for launching manned missions in space and preparing a document on it, a top official said on July 7.

"Critical technologies are being developed for our human space programme as it is India's dream to put a man in space. A mission document is in the making," Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman K. Sivan told the media at an aerospace event here.

Citing the space agency's successful maiden unmanned pad abort test on July 5 at its Sriharikota spaceport in Andhra Pradesh for the safe escape of the crew in an emergency, Sivan said that very complex technology was used for the trial, with a unique motor for fast-burning.

"The technology is very essential for our manned missions in the future, as the motor's performance was very good. Using aerodynamics, the module was turned in a favourable direction to open the parachutes," he said.

The state-run ISRO's technology demonstrator is the first in a series of tests to qualify as a crew escape system, critical for a manned mission.

"We are only in the preparation stage. We need to develop much more. We are in the process of refining a document on the manned mission

for review and interactions with stakeholders, including the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL)," said Sivan.

The crew escape system is an emergency escape measure designed to quickly pull the crew module along with the astronauts to a safe distance from the launch vehicle in the event of a launch abort.

The first pad abort test demonstrated the safe recovery of the crew module in case of any exigency at the launch pad," ISRO said in a statement earlier.

Admitting that the scientists had to work on the next strategy for the manned mission testing, Sivan said ISRO's work was two-

pronged, with one on approved projects and the other for research and development (R&D).

"The pad abort test for the crew escape system is part of our R&D work," he noted.

The space agency also tested five new technologies during the pad abort test, as part of its strategy to develop long-term technologies.

"We and the government work on a three-year plan, with a seven-year strategy and a 15-year vision," asserted Sivan.

Noting that space tourism would happen in the near future, the rocket scientist said it would take at least 15 years to develop the vehicle to go to space and return to the earth.

"We are not close to that. We need to work a lot towards achieving the dream of putting a man into space," added Sivan.

After a five-hour countdown, the crew escape system lifted off with the 12.6 tonne simulated crew module from the spaceport and plunged into the sea (Bay of Bengal) 4 minutes and 19 seconds later with two parachutes, around 2.9 km away from Sriharikota, about 90km northeast of Chennai.

"The crew module soared 2.7 km altitude on thrust of its seven solid motors without exceeding the safe G (gravity) levels," added the statement. TN



# IIT Delhi, IISc among 6 Institutions of Eminence

## THE NEWS BUREAU

The Union Human Resource Development(HRD) Ministry on July 9 announced that six institutes -- three private and three public -- as Institutions of Eminence(IoE), entitling them to more autonomy and grants from the government.

The Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi, Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay and Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru were the three public institutes announced as IoE. They will get Rs 1,000 crore from the government in the next five years.

From the private sector, BITS Pilani, Manipal Academy of Higher Education and JIO Institute by Reliance Foundation were granted the status.

"This decision is a landmark decision for the following reasons: this was never thought of and tried; it is more than a graded autonomy, it is really full autonomy to the institutes; the institutes can take their own decisions," HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar tweeted.

As per the University Grants Commission (Institutions of Eminence Deemed to be Universities) Regulations, 2017, the Ministry

was to select 20 IoEs -- 10 private and 10 public -- and had formed a high-level committee to shortlist the entries solicited from the institutes on the basis of their research calibre and other criteria.

According to a government statement issued earlier, these IoEs will have greater autonomy in that they will be able to admit foreign students up to 30 per cent of the admitted students and recruit foreign faculty up to 25 per cent of the faculty strength.

They can also offer online courses up to 20 per cent of its programmes. **TN**



# Modi second most influential leader on Twitter after Trump

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

With over 42 million followers on his personal Twitter account, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is behind US President Donald Trump (52 million) and Pope Francis (47 million) but in terms of influence on the microblogging site, Modi is the second most important world leader, a global study said on July 10.

With over 11 million followers, India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj is not only the most followed female world leader but also the most followed foreign minister in the world, according to the 2018 "Twiplomacy" study by BCW -- a global communications

agency.

The study analysed the activity of 951 Twitter accounts of heads of state and government and foreign ministers for a year -- from May 2017 to May 2018 -- using aggregate data from a content discovery and social monitoring platform.

While Modi currently has 43.4 million followers on Twitter, Trump has 53.4 million while Swaraj has 11.8 million followers.

Trump became the most followed world leader in October 2017 when he passed Pope Francis (@Pontifex) who is the second most followed world leader with more than 47 million followers on his nine language accounts.

Trump's followers on his @re-

alDonaldTrump account has more than doubled since taking office on January 20, 2017.

Tweets from the US President generated 264 million interactions (likes and retweets) over the past 12 months, more than five times as many as Modi, with 52 million interactions, and 12 times as many as Pope Francis's tweets which generated 22 million interactions, the study showed.

As of May 18, 2018, the heads of state and government and foreign ministers of 187 countries had a presence on Twitter, representing 97 per cent of all 193 UN member states, the findings showed.

The governments of only six countries, namely Laos, Mauritania, Nicaragua, North Korea, Swaziland and Turkmenistan do not have an official presence on the platform, the study said.

Even the Chinese government's State Council Information Office maintains a presence on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

**Most Followed World Leaders on Facebook**

Facebook is the second-most popular network among government leaders, and it is where they have the biggest audience, according to the study.

Facebook-owned Instagram has become the third-most popular social network for governments, with 81 per cent of all UN member states having set up an account and many of them are sharing daily Instagram stories. **TN**





### THE NEWS BUREAU

In the early 1940s, Henry Ford experimented with making plastic parts for automobiles. He came up with what was called the "plastic car made from soybeans."

Since that decade, when mass plastic production began from oil-based materials, its use has surged dramatically, becoming a big part of our daily lives. The resulting unwanted plastic pollution crisis and awareness of depleting fossil fuel reserves has driven research toward alternative, sustainable materials.

Extending the hunt for sustainable materials as an alternative to fossil fuel-derived plastics, Indian scientists at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) are working with the humble drylands crop plant sorghum (jowar) and a bunch of microbial minions to help shape a bio-based plastic future.

Commonly used bioplastic feedstocks (raw materials) are: cellulose, starch, glucose and vegetable oil.

"We need a good amount of feedstock. Sorghum is a rich source of starch like corn and potato. Starch based edible cutlery is popular across the world," A. Ashok Kumar, sorghum breeder at ICRISAT, told Mongabay India.

For example, Bakeys, a Hyderabad-based company produces edible spoons made by baking a dough consisting primarily of sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor*), with some additional wheat and rice flour.

A start-up in the Czech Republic is experimenting with producing an edible coffee cup composed of a cereal-based crisp waffle.

"Currently people are using sugarcane bagasse as source material for bioplastic but here we have developed a sorghum that is far more

effective for biomass-based plastic and will be much cheaper and more sustainable," Ashok Kumar said.

He was referring to sorghum cultivars (RVICSH 28 and ICSV 18542) that have high biomass yields and more ratoonability (yielding more than one harvest from a single planting) making them amenable for crafting into bioplastics.

"In line with sugarcane, corn, cassava and sugar beet, high biomass sorghum has very good potential with wider adaptability, is fast growing (completes life cycle in four months), and has high biomass production with its efficient C4 photosynthetic pathway. It can be grown in rain fed conditions with low-nutrients," Ashok Kumar said.

High biomass sorghum hybrids, grown in a hectare, churn out 20 tonnes of dry mass in four months that is double that of normal

sorghum and four times when compared to paddy.

Specific techniques are employed to convert these feedstocks into thermoplastic starch, polylactic acid, polyhydroxylalkanoates, poly-3-hydroxybutyrate, polyamide 11 and biopolyethylene, which can be processed into biodegradable polymers.

Sorghum biomass specifically, is transformed into polylactic acid which is further processed into bio-plastic. In the transformation process, sorghum bagasse has to go through sphaerification, fermentation and polymerisation. Bacterial fermentation of sugars derived from sorghum biomass produce lactic acid which is then synthesised by polymerisation to produce polylactic acid.

Ashok Kumar explained when starch is used as feedstock it is put through a sphaerification process using enzymes to produce liquid glucose. Special bacteria or fungi can

produce lactic acid monomers from liquid glucose. The monomer is then polymerised to

produce polylactic acid, a biodegradable polymer.

"Whatever chemicals are used for generating normal plastic from oil, the same are

used here. The major difference is that you are tapping into plant-based raw material. So it is biodegradable but you make it synthetically," Kumar said.

A single search online is indicative of the slowly changing narrative, in favour of bioplastics. Carry bags for shopping, packing material for food items and meats, bin liners for hotels, cutlery, nursery plant pots and trays, wet waste compost bag, plant seed bag, cling wrap, food wrapper and a plethora of products made from plant-based materials vie for attention.

Do-it-yourself (DIY) "plastic from starch" videos are also part of the throng on sustainable solutions.

The production and use of bioplastics is considered as a sustainable solution due to low emission of greenhouse gasses.

However, there are challenges too at both ends of the production cycle. It takes a significant amount of energy to manufacture these plastics and there are question marks on their biodegradability.

Can bioplastic fit in within the current industry infrastructure and does it put pressure on forests (to convert into land for growing feedstock plants)?

For starters, the ICRISAT Microbiology Team has in hand three microbial strains that can speed up the breakdown of the used bioplastic mass (64 percent degradation in 60 days).

"We identified certain microbes (*Myceliophthora thermophila* ATCC-48104, *Aspergillus awamori* and *Bacillus subtilis*) that will degrade the bioplastic very quickly. They are also biodegradable by themselves but you can hasten up the degradation with any of the microbes," he said.

Although, at this stage bioplas-

tics are slightly costlier than normal petrochemical-derived plastics and can't be moulded into a variety of things, Ashok Kumar asserts it is worth the effort and expense.

Currently, bioplastics represent about one percent of the about 320 million tons of plastic produced annually.

But with rising demand and with more sophisticated materials, applications and products emerging, the market is already growing by about 20 to 100 percent each year.

"It is worth the effort of making bio-plastics, as it is partly or wholly made from sustainable plant sources and it will blend in with the mainstream plastic supply chain except the usage of raw material and the production process. Going forward it is the era of 'green technologies' and irrespective of the cost considerations we need to embrace them for sustenance of life on earth," Ashok Kumar added.

A report by UN Environment that assesses the potential of replacing certain conventional plastics applications with alternative materials states that is neither possible nor desirable to remove all plastics from society, but alternatives can have a significant role in reducing our dependence.

It further adds that "purposeful agricultural production of biomass to supply the biopolymer industry has to be balanced against the need to support food production and preserve biodiversity."

"The use of alternatives must be part of a broader strategy towards more sustainable production patterns, particularly for packaging and other single-use items, including the principles of redesign, reduce, reuse and facilitating recycling," the report said. **TN**



# Man seeks divorce from net addict wife

## THE NEWS BUREAU

**F**ed up with his wife's "addiction" to social media, a man in Delhi has sought a court's intervention to get them divorced.

Petitioner Narendra Singh, 30, a software professional, has filed the divorce plea in a family court on the ground that his wife was so obsessed with social media that she spared no time for him and the family. Hardly a year into the marriage, Narendra claimed that his wife, since the "first day of marriage", showed interest in the "virtual world" rather than him, and their marriage has not consummated till date.

The husband, in the petition, alleged that he was disturbed with his wife's late-night chats on WhatsApp with her male friends and whenever he tried to stop her, she would get furious and threaten him with serious consequences. Manish Bhaduria, the counsel appearing for the man, told Mail Today that the court has ac-

cepted the divorce petition. The counsel for the wife, however, has denied all allegations levelled against her. The court has referred the couple for a counselling session in July.

"Being well-educated, the husband gave the wife ample time to adjust into the new atmosphere of the matrimonial home, but spending time on social media and ignoring household responsibilities as a wife had become her habit," said Bhaduria, further alleging that the wife would often stop her husband from spending money on his other family members.

Marriage counsellors in family courts are quite surprised with the trend. "Earlier the reason of matrimonial disputes was dowry, family arguments and property-related matters. There was hardly any mention of social media as the reason for conflict or divorce," said Pooja Mehta, a Delhi based counselor.

"When couples spend more time on social media, communication gap

becomes quite natural. Social media also make couples have unrealistic expectations from each other and when the spouse fails to meet them, they think of it as a compatibility issue," she added.

Expressing concern over this trend, Justice Hima Kohli of Delhi High Court had also noted that social media was emerging as a threat to the institution of marriage.

Speaking at a seminar on "Mirage or Marriage", she said, "In today's age of social media, there is least or no secrecy in terms of sharing of personal data. In these circumstances, the wonderful institution of marriage is almost turning into a threat."

Recently, the Supreme Court had annulled the marriage of a young couple on the condition that they would not take to social media to malign each other. The court noted that both husband and wife abused each other Internet by means of vulgar messages and obscene photographs. **TN**

# Facebook sorry for labelling 65,000 Russians 'interested in treason'

## THE NEWS BUREAU

**F**acebook has apologised for labelling 65,000 Russians as "interested in treason," putting them at potential probe risk by the Russian law enforcement officials and the government, the media reported. According to a report in The Guardian on Thursday, the advertising tools algorithmically labelled 65,000 Russians as "interested in treason".

Facebook later said the label was intended to only identify historical treason.

"Treason was included as a category, given its historical significance. Given it's an illegal activity, we've removed it as an interest category," a spokesperson was quoted as saying.

The social media giant generally tags users based on their behaviour on its platform for advertisers to select and target people interested in specific topics.

"Treason was included as a category, given its historical significance. Given it's an illegal activity, we've removed it as an interest category," a Facebook spokesperson told the Guardian.

The labelling raises new concerns over data-driven profiling and targeting of users on the

website, which has already faced criticism for the same tool algorithmically inferring information about users' race, sexuality and political views despite data protection legislation requiring explicit consent to hold such information. The Danish Broadcasting Corporation first raised this problem with Facebook.

The issue at hand has "raised a number of important questions about the way Facebook's advertising systems work. Our goal is

ad account or even report the advertiser to law enforcement," it added.

In a latest admission, Facebook said it entered into data-sharing partnership with 52 technology companies, including Chinese companies like Alibaba, Huawei, Lenovo and Oppo.

In its 747-page response to questions raised by a US committee, Facebook said it had already ended partnerships with 38 of them with seven more due to



to ensure people see ads that are relevant and useful. It's better for the people using our service, as well as for advertisers," Facebook said in a statement.

"When we identify misuse of our ads products, we take action. Depending on the violation, we may remove the ad, suspend the

expire in July and one more in October this year.

The UK's data protection watchdog also plans to slap a fine of 500,000 pounds (\$662,501) on Facebook over the Cambridge Analytica data leak scandal. This is the highest permitted fine under Britain's data protection law. **TN**

# Govt warns WhatsApp against misuse of its platform



## THE NEWS BUREAU

The government has asked WhatsApp to take immediate action to end the menace of spreading messages that impact the country's law and order situation and ensure that the platform is not used for such malafide activities, according to an official statement.

"Instances of lynching of innocent people have been noticed recently because of large number of irresponsible and explosive messages filled with rumours and provocation are being circulated on WhatsApp. The unfortunate killing in many states such as Assam, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tripura and west Bengal are deeply painful and regrettable," the statement from the IT Ministry said.

It added: "While the Law and

order machinery is taking steps to apprehend the culprits, the abuse of platform like WhatsApp for repeated circulation of such

culation in such platforms.

"Deep disapproval of such developments has been conveyed to the senior management of the

WhatsApp and they have been advised that necessary remedial measures should be taken to prevent proliferation of these fake and at times motivated/sensational messages," the statement said.

The government has also directed that spread of such messages should be immediately contained through the application of appropriate technology.

It has also been pointed out that "such platform cannot evade accountability and responsibility specially when good technological inventions are abused by some miscreants who resort to provocative messages which lead to spread of violence." TN



provocative content are equally a matter of deep concern."

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has taken serious note of these irresponsible messages and their cir-

# Sexual abuse 'endemic' in international aid sector: Report

## THE NEWS BUREAU

**S**exual abuse of vulnerable women and girls by international aid workers is "endemic" and has been happening for years, with perpetrators easily moving around the sector undetected, a UK government report revealed.

An inquiry heard "horrifying" stories of aid staff sexually exploiting the people they were meant to be helping, including one homeless girl in Haiti who was given \$1 by a worker for a nongovernmental organisation (NGO) and raped, CNN quoted the report by the House of Commons International Development Committee as saying.

The scathing report comes after historical allegations of harassment and sexual misconduct by employees of several top NGOs, including Oxfam and Save the Children, surfaced earlier this year.

Those allegations prompted the Committee to launch the inquiry into abuse in the aid sector in February.

Tuesday's report noted that sexual misconduct by aid workers and peacekeepers had a "documented history stretching back nearly 20 years".

It also recounted the sexual exploitation and abuse of girls between the ages of 13 and 18 by UN and aid agency staff in refugee camps in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone in 2001.

Abuses ranged from unwanted

sexual comments to rape. Victims suffered problems including abortions and exposure to sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.

"The power imbalance is predominantly, although not exclusively, men abusing women and girls," said the report, which warned that the cases that had

over period of at least 16 years by the aid sector to address sexual exploitation and abuse".

He said that in effect, organisations had often put "their reputation ahead of women, children and other victims of sexual exploitation and abuse".

Oxfam Chair of Trustees Caroline Thomson told CNN that



come to light were likely just the "tip of the iceberg".

The committee also criticized aid groups for failing to tackle the problem despite being aware of reports of abuse for years.

"Repeatedly, reports of sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers and/or peacekeepers have emerged, the sector has reacted, but then the focus has faded," the report found.

Chair of the committee, MP Stephen Twigg, told CNN that the report set out "the collective failure

Tuesday's report made for "incredibly painful reading" for Oxfam and the wider aid sector.

"Oxfam exists to help improve the lives of the world's most vulnerable people; we know we failed to protect vulnerable women in Haiti... We are truly sorry," Thomson said.

Save the Children UK's CEO Kevin Watkins said that the organisation had "made mistakes in our own handling of historical sexual harassment complaints from staff in the UK". **TN**

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

**W**omen inmates of Indian prisons struggle to get free legal aid leading to delays in securing bail and justice. Not just the women, but at times their children who are born inside the jail also invisibly become a victim of such situation.

The situation is so alarming that the Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) recently recommended that women prisoners, who have served a third of their terms, should be released on bail.

According to a data shared by free and competent legal service provider National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) to IANS, the number of women inmates in the country across both the central and district levels is around 19,000. Of these, more than 13,000 are under-trials and only around 6,000 are convicts.

Among the states, Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of women prisoners -- around 4,000, while the number of children growing up in its prisons is more than 350 -- followed by Maharashtra and West Bengal with around 1,500 female inmates in both their states.

"Legal aid is hardly available for women. They are poor and they cannot afford bail for themselves; and when they are in jail, nobody in the family is much bothered. They usually don't get support from their families. It is extremely sad to see that not much are being done for the women



inmates," says advocate and social activist Flavia Agnes.

There are a few factors that leave women behind bars and delays securing bail. And the primary reason, according to legal experts, is that the female inmates remain ignorant of access to free legal services.

"Women prisoners are entitled to free legal aid. They will get aid if they ask... but many women don't ask because they suffer from lack of awareness about their

rights inside jail. And when the lawyers visit, they skip the sessions," said advocate Meera Bhatia, who has provided free legal aid in the Delhi High Court and currently functions as an amicus curiae in the Supreme Court said.

Legal experts also stated that a majority of the women inmates are not well educated and mostly belong to the lower socio-economic strata. Therefore, not just the woman but her families too



**Women prisoners are entitled to free legal aid. They will get aid if they ask... but many women don't ask because they suffer from lack of awareness about their rights inside jail. And when the lawyers visit, they skip the sessions**

the female inmates. They (lawyers) take up cases where they can draw good money," Agnes explained.

In the states, at the district and local levels, legal aid is provided by SLSA (State Legal Services Authorities), DLSA (District Legal Services Authorities) and TLSA (Taluka Legal Services Authorities), respectively. Add to this the lawyers at the national level, the number comes to more than 61,000, of whom 11,000 are women.

"The perspective is different with the different free legal aid authorities. Whether to give bail or not is a prerogative of the court and not of the legal aid authorities. If a woman fails to get a lawyer on her own she can approach for free legal aid when the representatives visit the jails. The lawyers will then put ahead the bail application," Sunil Chauhan, an advocate associated with the national-level authority pointed out.

However, Chauhan added that once the case goes to court, the matter is considered on the basis of the crime and not the individual. "The bail is for the court to decide. These hearings are like any other and it is not necessary that bail will be granted," he added. **TN**

remain ignorant of the legal services available. "They can be easily bailed out for a small amount but nobody bothers to do so. Families do not usually prefer to get their ladies back because it will harm to their image in society," Agnes pointed out.

"A majority of the women are convicted for cases like theft, domestic violence and human trafficking, and they belong to economically poor families. And the families are not keen on spend-

ing money on a woman and helping her secure bail," Agnes added.

Another reason, the legal experts pointed out, is that many lawyers do not show interest in taking up cases where the honorarium is less.

"Lawyers are not very keen on taking up free cases because there is no money. They don't visit the jails as frequently as they should; there is hardly anyone to create awareness about the legal rights to

# London court orders seizure of Vijay Mallya's UK assets

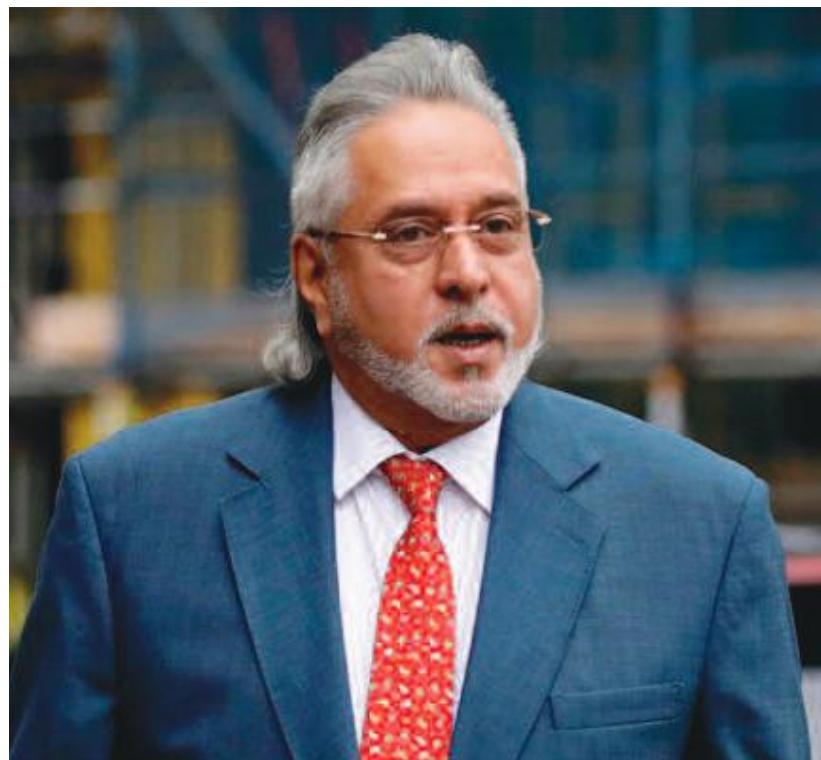
**THE NEWS BUREAU**

In light of a London court issuing an order to seize liquor baron Vijay Mallya's assets in the United Kingdom (UK), Phillip D'Costa of the Penningtons Manches law firm, on July 6, gave insight on the execution of the order.

"Once court orders, the debtor has to be given a seven-day notice. The Court's enforcement officers will then visit the property, seize goods, make an inventory and then the goods are auctioned, the proceeds of which go towards reducing the debt owed to the creditor," D'Costa said.

"There are prescribed rules on the things that can or cannot be taken. For instance, property falls outside the definition of goods, so you need a separate order to take possession of the property. Other high-value items like cars, watches, artwork, paintings, etc. Household appliances cannot be seized," he added. When asked if the seven-day notice was counter-productive as it would provide a window of opportunity to the debtor to move their assets elsewhere, D'Costa said that by law it was required to give the notice first, otherwise, the seizure of assets would be invalid.

He also mentioned that there were very limited grounds on which the order could be stayed. "The order can be stayed if it is granted by the court, however, there are very limited grounds on which an order can be stayed, one of which being if the debtor is



unable to pay the amounts due," he said.

Mallya had earlier stated that he was not a fugitive and "always had honest intentions" to repay his loans. He had earlier broken his silence over the controversy, saying in a series of tweets that he had been falsely made the "poster boy of Bank default and a lightning rod of public anger."

The 62-year-old is currently facing a trial in a UK court in connection with his extradition to India. He is facing charges for financial irregularities to the tune of Rs 9,000 crore, as well as several money laundering cases.

On the other hand, Bangalore

police through the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on July 5 submitted a report before Delhi's Patiala House Court stating that they have identified 159 properties of liquor baron Vijay Mallya and United Breweries.

The Bangalore police had also sought more time to identify other additional properties. Earlier on June 30, Mallya was summoned by a designated court under Fugitive Economic Offenders to appear before it on August 27. The notice was issued to Mallya and others in connection with ED's June 22 application for declaring him as a fugitive economic offender and to confiscate his properties. **TN**

# Facebook faces \$660,000 fine in UK for data leak

## THE NEWS BUREAU

**U**K's data protection watchdog plans to slap a fine of 500,000 pounds (\$662,501) on Facebook over the Cambridge Analytica data leak scandal. This is the highest permitted fine under Britain's data protection law.

In its investigation, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) found that Facebook broke British law by failing to safeguard people's information, and by not revealing how people's data was harvested by others.

Along with Cambridge Analytica, Facebook has been the focus of the investigation since February when evidence emerged that an app had been used to harvest the data of an estimated 87 million Facebook users across the world.

In its latest progress report, the regulator also said it intended to take criminal action against Cambridge Analytica's defunct parent company SCL Elections, the BBC reported on Wednesday.

The regulator also said Aggregate IQ -- which worked with the Vote Leave campaign -- must stop processing UK citizens' data. It has also written to UK's 11 main political parties compelling them to have their data protection practices audited.

This, the Information Commissioner's Office explained, was in part because it was concerned they could have bought lifestyle infor-

mation about members of the public from data brokers, who might have not obtained the necessary consent.

In particular, ICO raised concern about one data broker: Emma's Diary. The firm offers medical advice to pregnant women and gift packs after babies are born.

The ICO's action comes 16 months after it began the ongoing probe into political campaigns' use of personal data during the Brexit referendum campaign.

Over the period, it emerged that Facebook had failed to ensure that Cambridge Analytica had deleted personal data harvested about mil-



ICO said it was concerned about how transparent the firm had been about its political activities. The Labour Party had confirmed using the firm, but did not provide other details at this point beyond saying it intended to take some form of regulatory action.

The service's owner Lifecycle Marketing could not be reached for comment. But it has told the Guardian that it does not agree with the ICO's findings.

lions of its members in breach of the platform's rules.

Before its collapse, Cambridge Analytica insisted it had indeed wiped the data after Facebook's erasure request in December 2015.

But ICO said it had seen evidence that copies of the data had been shared with others.

"This potentially brings into question the accuracy of the deletion certificates provided to Facebook," it said. **TN**

# Fill up vacancies in information panels quickly: SC

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

The Supreme Court has directed the Centre and seven states to fill up the vacancies in the Central Information Commission (CIC) and the state level bodies in a time-bound manner.

The top court also asked the Centre to explain why the posts in CIC, for which an advertisement was issued in 2016, still remain vacant.

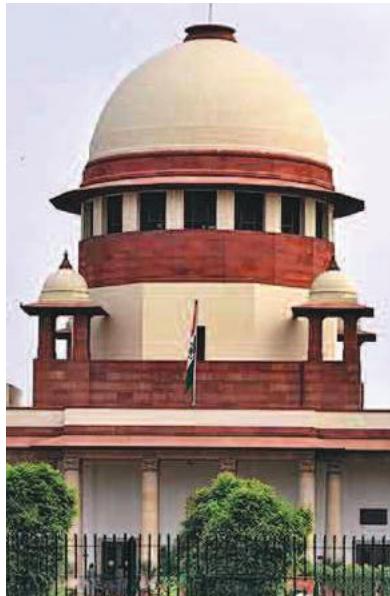
A bench of Justice A K Sikri and Justice Ashok Bhushan expressed concern over the vacancies in CIC and State Information Commissions (SICs) and asked the governments to file affidavits within four weeks, giving complete details -- the number of vacancies and the timeline for completing the appointment process.

Posting the matter for hearing after four weeks, the court clarified that no further time will be given for filing affidavits and any failure will be viewed seriously.

The seven states are Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Kerala, Odisha, and Karnataka.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for Right To Information activist Anjali Bhardwaj, told the bench that there are four vacancies in the CIC and four more will be created by December 2018. The court said it will ensure that the posts of information commissioners are filled.

Additional Solicitor General



Pinky Anand, appearing for the Centre, said that another advertisement has been released recently for filling up the four vacancies in the CIC.

The court had earlier asked the Centre why the appointments were not being made despite a huge backlog of 23,500 appeals and complaints were pending in the CIC.

The court is hearing a PIL filed by rights activists Anjali Bhardwaj, Air Commodore Lokesh K. Batra and Amrita Johri on the CIC and SIC vacancies.

"The government of India and the state governments have attempted to stifle the implementation of the RTI Act by failing to perform their statutory duty of ensuring the appointment of Commissioners in the CIC and SICs in a

timely manner," the PIL said.

Pointing out that the CIC and the SICs were set up to decide on appeals and complaints against public authorities for non-compliance with the RTI Act, 2005, the petitioners contended that the "proper functioning of these institutions is essential for its effective implementation".

While the Andhra Pradesh SIC is non-functional in the absence of any Information Commissioner, Maharashtra SIC has four vacancies and a backlog of 40,000 appeals and complaints.

In Kerala, there are 14,000 pending appeals and complaints. There is just one Information Commissioner and six vacancies. Karnataka has a backlog of 33,000 appeals and complaints.

Odisha is functioning with only three Information Commissioners while Telangana has two Information Commissioners. They have backlogs of more than 10,000 and 15,000 appeals/complaints respectively.

The West Bengal SIC is functioning with only two Commissioners and is hearing appeals/complaints filed 10 years ago, the PIL said.

The petitioners said that the Information Commissions in Gujarat, Nagaland, and Maharashtra are functioning without their respective heads, even though under the RTI Act they have a crucial role in the administration and superintendence of the commissions. TN

# Tips to get rid of dark circles

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

**D**ark circles are a common problem and are described as "tired eyes". A lot of products in the market promise to lighten the area but the reality is different and hence it is always advisable to take note of few steps like taking enough beauty sleep and adding vitamin B6 and B12 in your diet.

Cosmetologists and Make up experts list down some ways to get rid of dark circles with some remedies and taking little precautions.

**M**ake sure that you take enough beauty sleep of seven hours.

**A**dd vitamin B6 and B12, calcium and folic acid to your diet.

**A**lways stay hydrated even if you are super busy. Keep your fluid level high; drink water throughout the day. Staying hydrated will help prevent dark circles and puffy eyes.

**A**void smoking or drinking.

**A**gently applied black or green tea bag or cold compress can reduce blood vessel dilation; do



not rub the area around the eyes it will only make the condition worse.

**A**lways apply sunscreen before stepping out in the sun but if you're out in the sun especially during the peak hours of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., re-apply every two

hours. Cover up your exposed parts, wear your shades and hat too.

**A**lways moisturize the eye area well with hydrating under eye cream. You can also apply under eye mask but consult with a dermatologist before using such things.



**T**here are medical procedures available which are very useful, a non-surgical treatment that is safe and economical to treat under eye dark circles. Special creams and ointments are alternatives. They are generally needed in milder cases. There are also highly specialized medicated creams to address these problems. **TN**

# Positive attitude during pregnancy may keep your kids in shape

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

**D**id you know even your mood and attitude during pregnancy can have an effect on the body weight of your children when they grow up? A new study has found that teenagers are less likely to be overweight if their mother or father had a positive attitude during pregnancy.

Negative attitude, or a lack of self-belief in your ability to bring in changes to your lifestyle through your actions, may be associated with unhealthy weight gain in your children during teenage years, suggests the study published in the International Journal of Obesity.

"We've been able to show that a lack of self-belief in a parent's ability to influence change by healthy eating, stopping smoking or breast feeding is a contributing factor to their child being overweight by the time they are 15," said lead study author Jean Golding, Professor at University of Bristol in Britain.

For the study, the researchers analysed responses from 7,000 parents about their personality, mood and attitude during pregnancy.

Similar answers from their children at age of eight and the child's fat mass measurement up to the age of 17 were also analysed.

The results showed that a mother's psychological background during pregnancy is a factor associated with teenage weight gain.

The study examined a personality attribute known as the Locus of Control. It is a psychological measure for an individual's attitudes towards their lifestyle and a belief in being able to change outcomes, such as health, through their own actions.

Someone with an external Locus of Control would feel that there is little point in making an effort as what happens to them is due to luck and circumstance.

The researchers found that teenagers at age 15 had an excess weight of actual fat to the extent of

1.7 kg if their mothers did not think their actions would make a difference and held a laissez-faire attitude. If their fathers had this attitude the excess weight of fat was 1.49 kg and if the child later thought this way the excess was 1.5 kg, the study said.

"This is important research for health campaigners looking to change behaviours and the next steps should be looking at the differences between parents who managed to change their Locus of Control compared to those who did not change," Golding added. **TN**



# '70% north Indian women low in vitamin D, at high diabetes risk'

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

**D**espite adequate exposure to sunshine, nearly 70 per cent pre-diabetic women in north India are "deficient" in vitamin D, making them more vulnerable to the risk of developing Type-2 diabetes, finds a study.

Pre-diabetes is a condition in which blood sugar is high, but not high enough to be type 2 diabetes.

The findings showed that pre-diabetes women living in north India were 68.6 per cent vitamin D "deficient", 26 per cent have "insufficient" levels, while only 5.5 per cent have "sufficient" levels of the vitamin.

"In India, there is a need to understand this as women have a propensity to be obese, develop metabolic syndrome, consequent hyperglycaemia and thereby be at the risk of diabetes. The pace at which women are moving from the pre-diabetic stage to the diabetic stage is alarming," Anoop Misra, Chairman Fortis C-Doc, said in a statement.

"If this could be prevented by prescribing a cost effective vitamin D supplement, it would be truly amazing," he added.

According to the researchers, an inverse relationship exists between vitamin D levels and blood sugar levels indicating lower the vitamin D levels, the higher the blood sugar.

It is because vitamin D may have a direct effect on the pancreatic beta cell function, thereby increasing insulin production.

"Previous studies had already established



the link between the high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency and abdominal obesity. However, the relationship between vitamin D and the development of pre-diabetes, with a special focus on women, has remained obscure and unexplored," Misra noted.

According to a recent report by India Spend, the country currently represents 49 per cent of the world's diabetes burden, with an estimated 72 million cases in 2017, a figure expected to almost double to 134 million by 2025.

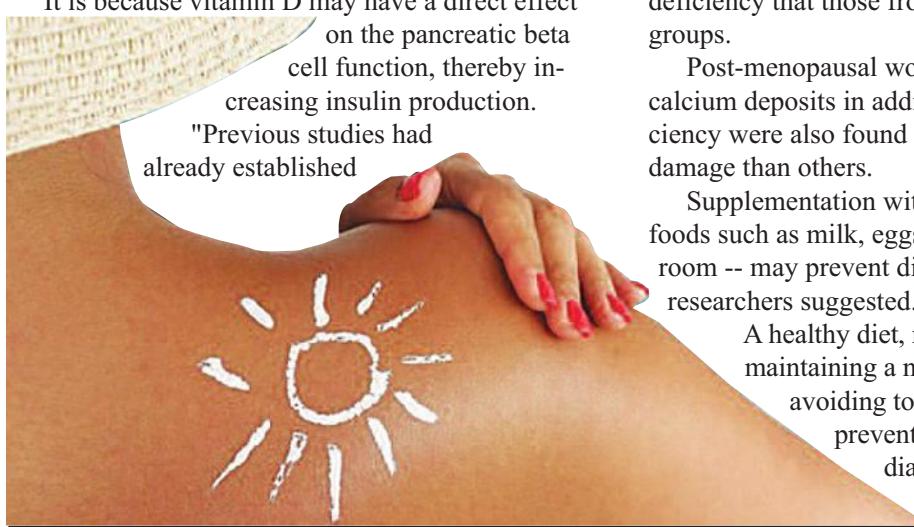
For the study, published in the British Medical Journal, the team included 797 women between the ages of 20 and 60.

The results indicated that women from lower socio-economic groups tend to have a higher vitamin deficiency than those from higher socio-economic groups.

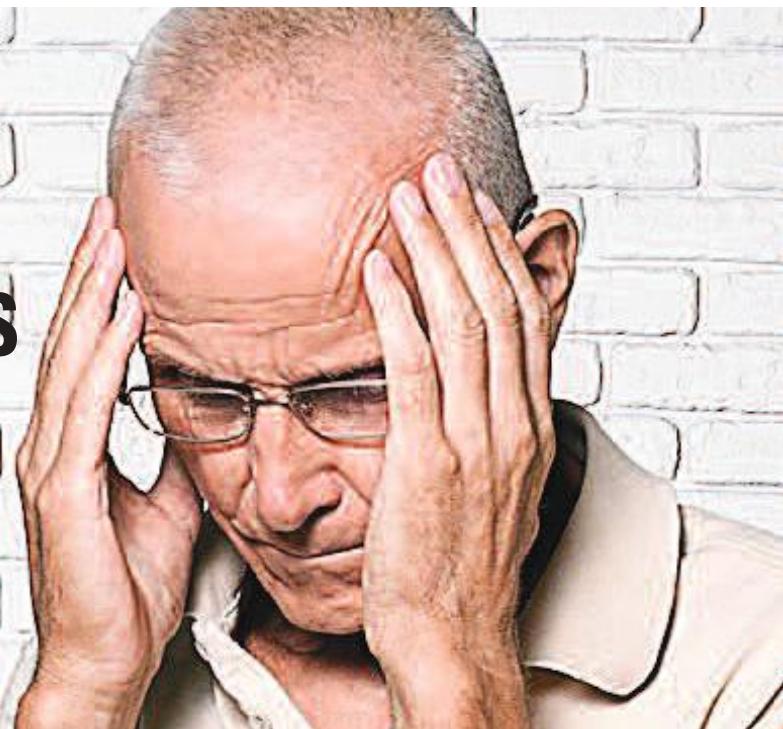
Post-menopausal women who suffer from low calcium deposits in addition to low vitamin D deficiency were also found to be at a higher risk of bone damage than others.

Supplementation with vitamin D -- present in foods such as milk, eggs, salmon, tuna, and mushroom -- may prevent diabetes in India women, the researchers suggested.

A healthy diet, regular physical activity, maintaining a normal body weight and avoiding tobacco use are ways to prevent or delay the onset of Type-2 diabetes, the researchers said. **TN**



# Aspirin to reduce Alzheimer's disease symptoms



## THE NEWS BUREAU

Administering low-dose aspirin -- a commonly used medication to treat pain, fever, or inflammation -- may help in reducing plaques in the brain, reducing Alzheimer's disease pathology as well as protecting memory, reveals a study led by Indian-origin researcher.

The findings showed that the common over-the-counter medication decreases amyloid plaque -- major signs of Alzheimer's disease -- pathology in mice by stimulating lysosomes -- the component of animal cells that help clear cellular debris.

"The study identifies a possible new role for one of the most widely used, common, over-the-counter medications in the world," said senior author and lead research investigator Kalipada Pahan from Department of Neurological Sciences, Rush Medical College.

"The research adds another potential benefit to aspirin's already established uses for pain relief and



for the treatment of cardiovascular diseases," Pahan said.

In the study, published in Journal of Neuroscience, the team gave aspirin orally for a month to genetically modified mice with Alzheimer's pathology, then evaluated the amount of amyloid plaque in the parts of the brain affected most by Alzheimer's disease.

The results showed that the aspirin medications augmented TFEB -- a protein considered as the master regulator of waste removal, stimulated lysosomes and decreased amyloid plaque pathology in the mice.

"Understanding how plaques

are cleared is important to developing effective drugs that stop the progression of Alzheimer's disease," Pahan explained.

However, experts have questioned the potential of aspirin, citing the failure of several major recent human trials into drugs that reduce amyloid plaques.

"A number of compounds have achieved this level of amyloid reduction in mice, yet have subsequently failed in clinical trials in humans," Clive Ballard, from the University of Exeter, was quoted as saying to the newatlas.com.

"The failures may be as a result of the differences between Alzheimer mice and human pathology, and the poor translation of benefits into humans," he said.

Moreover, in human clinical trials, the drug was found to have "no beneficial effects on outcome measures and was associated with an increased risk of gastrointestinal haemorrhage," noted Rob Howard, from the University College London. TN

# This pill could end daily insulin jabs for diabetics

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

**R**esearchers, including one of Indian-origin, have developed a 'holy grail' of insulin in a pill that could help diabetics keep their blood sugar levels in check.

For up to 40 million people with Type-1 diabetes worldwide, a painful needle prick once or twice daily is necessary for delivering the insulin that their bodies cannot produce on their own, and failing to adhere to the regimen (due to pain, phobia of needles) can lead to poor glycemic control causing serious health complications.

The new approach carries insulin in an ionic liquid comprised of choline and geranic acid that is then put inside a capsule with an acid-resistant enteric coating.

"Once ingested, insulin must navigate a challenging obstacle course before it can be effectively absorbed into the bloodstream," said Samir Mitragotri, Professor at the Harvard University.

"Our approach is like a Swiss Army knife, where one pill has tools for addressing each of the obstacles that are encountered," he added.

The enteric coating is biocompatible, easy to manufacture, and can be stored for up to two months at room temperature without degrading.

This polymer coating resists the breakdown by gastric acids in the gut as well as dissolves when it reaches a more alkaline environment in the small intestine, where the ionic liquid carrying insulin is

released. The choline-geranic acid formulation also was shown to be adept at penetrating two final barriers - the layer of mucus lining the intestine and the tight cell junctions of the intestine wall, through which large-molecule drugs such as insulin cannot easily pass.

The findings, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, also showed that the oral delivery of insulin could also mitigate many of the disease's life-threatening side effects that result from patients failing to give themselves required injections.

"It has been the holy grail of drug delivery to develop ways to give protein and peptide drugs like insulin by mouth, instead of injection," the researchers said. TN



# Solid foods may help infants sleep longer



## THE NEWS BUREAU

**I**nfants introduced to solid foods early may have lesser sleep problems as compared to those who are breastfed, a new study has found.

The researchers found that babies introduced to solid foods early slept longer and woke less frequently at night and suffered fewer serious sleep problems than those exclusively breastfed for around the first six months of life.

"While the official guidance is that starting solid foods won't make babies more likely to sleep through the night, this study suggests that this advice needs to be re-examined in light of the evidence we have gathered," said lead author Gideon Lack, professor at the King's

College London. For the study published in the journal JAMA Pediatrics, the researchers involved 1,303 exclusively breastfed three-month-olds who were divided into two groups.

One group followed standard infant feeding advice and was encouraged to exclusively breastfeed for around six months. The second group, while continuing to breastfeed, was asked to introduce solid foods. Parents completed online questionnaires every month until their baby was 12 months and then every three months up to three years of age.

The questionnaires recorded the frequency of food consumption and included questions about breastfeeding frequency and duration, besides sleep duration.

Of the 1,303 infants who took part in the study, 94 per cent (1,225), completed the three-year questionnaire -- 608 from the exclusive breastfeeding group and 607 from the early introduction of food group.

Differences between the two groups peaked at six months, with the early introduction group sleeping for a quarter of an hour (16.6 minutes) longer per night (almost two hours longer per week). Its night waking frequency decreased from just over twice per night to 1.74. Feedback on maternal well-being showed that sleep problems (as defined by the parents), which were significantly associated with maternal quality of life, were reported less frequently in the group introducing solids before six months. **TM**

# Even men may feel bad after sex

## THE NEWS BUREAU

**C**hallenging a common assumption that men always desire and experience sex as pleasurable, a new study claims that there are exceptions.

Just like women, men too can and do suffer from a condition, called Postcoital Dysphoria (PCD), which results in feelings of sadness, tearfulness or irritability following sex, said the study published in the Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy.

While the condition had been recognised in women, no studies had previously identified the phenomenon among males, said the researchers from the Queensland

University of Technology (QUT) in Australia.

"The study breaks down the results of an international anonymous online survey of 1,208 men from Australia, the USA, the UK, Russia, New Zealand, Germany and elsewhere," said one of the researchers Joel Maczkowiack.

The findings showed that over 40 per cent of the participants reported experiencing PCD in their lifetime with 20 per cent reporting they had experienced it in the previous four weeks. Up to four per cent suffered from PCD on a regular basis, according to the study. Maczkowiack added that some of the comments from men who participated and who had ex-

perienced sadness following sex described experiences ranging from "I don't want to be touched and want to be left alone" to "I feel unsatisfied, annoyed and very fidgety. All I really want is to leave and distract myself from everything I participated in".

"Another described feeling 'emotionless and empty' in contrast to the men who experienced the post coital experience positively," he said.

The results indicated the male experience of sex could be far more varied and complex than previously thought, according to Professor Robert Schweitzer from QUT's School of Psychology and Counselling. TN



# Football team and coach rescued from flooded Thailand cave

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

All the 12 boys and their football coach have been rescued from a flooded cave in northern Thailand after being trapped for 18 days, bringing an end to the ordeal that prompted a huge international rescue effort.

The coach was one of the last to be extricated from the cave on July 10 in the rescue operation that began as a local search for the missing but turned into a complex mission, involving hundreds of experts who flew in from around the world to help, CNN reported.

Earlier, an ex-Navy SEAL died while placing oxygen tanks along the 4.7-kilometer (2.9-mile) evacuation route.

"The 12 Wild Boars (name of their football club) and coach have emerged from the cave and they are safe," the Thai Navy Seal unit said on its official Facebook page. It added: "Hooyah."

The final day of the operation began just after 10 a.m. on Tuesday as the first eight boys, freed in operations on Sunday and Monday, recuperated at a hospital in nearest Chiang Rai city.

The 12 young footballers, aged between 11 and 16, and their 25-year-old coach got trapped on June 23 while exploring the Tham Luang cave in northern Thailand's Chiang Rai province after soccer practice and a rainy season downpour flooded the tunnel.

The boys were found inside the cave by British rescue divers a



**The final day of the operation began just after 10 a.m. on Tuesday as the first eight boys, freed in operations on Sunday and Monday, recuperated at a hospital in nearest Chiang Rai city.**

week ago, about 4 km from the cave mouth.

Thirteen foreign cave diving experts and five Thai Navy rescuers joined the first operation on Sunday that brought out four boys from the cave. Rescuers spent about 11 hours on the mission. Another four boys were brought out by the same team on July 9.

The remaining four boys and their coach were rescued on July 10 and were sent to hospital by helicopters. They underwent X-rays and blood tests and will remain under observation in the hospital for at least seven days.

The news was greeted by global jubilation and the rescue workers

were lauded. US President Donald Trump tweeted "great job" and British Prime Minister Theresa May said: "The world was watching and will be saluting the bravery of all those involved."

Overnight, entrepreneur Elon Musk posted on social media that he had personally delivered a child-sized submarine to the site which he had developed to assist with the operation, but it was unlikely to play a role.

In response, Narongsak Osathanakorn, the head of the joint command centre coordinating the operation, said: "Although his technology is good and sophisticated, it's not practical for this mission." 



## Now a movie on Thai cave rescue

### THE NEWS BUREAU

The dramatic operation to rescue 12 boys and their coach from a cave in northern Thailand has caught the interest of Pure Flix Entertainment, which is out to secure movie rights to the story.

The banner's CEO Michael Scott on July 10 took to Facebook and posted a video to make the announcement. The film will be co-produced by Adam Smith of Kaos Entertainment and will carry a budget of \$30 million to \$60

million, reports The Hollywood Reporter.

The Thai cave rescue case is about the massive operation conducted to save the 12 boys trapped in Thailand's Tham Luang Nang Non Cave.

Scott has been doing research in the rescue areas for several days.

"The bravery and heroism I've witnessed is incredibly inspiring, so, yes, this will be a movie for us," Scott told The Hollywood Reporter during a phone call from Thailand.

Wanting to create the inspiring

film, Scott said: "I have spoken to some of the 90 divers involved in the rescue mission and some of the family members of boys who were trapped in the cave, though not the boys themselves as they are still hospitalised."

For Scott, the story is personal as he lost his wife's friend Saman Kunan while volunteering as a rescuer.

"This isn't just about a movie, it's about honoring everybody involved, including the soldier who died," Scott added. TN

# The 'hero' doc who looked after the boys

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

**T**he rescue of the 12 young boys and their 25-year-old soccer coach from the Thai cave have been described by many as no less than a miracle. But an Australian doctor who was one of the key persons involved in the rescue operation had to deal with a sudden tragedy, soon after the successful rescue operation.

#### Harris 'the hero' diver

Richard Harris, an Adelaide-based anaesthetist and underwater cave explorer learnt that his father had passed away.

"It is with great sadness that I confirm that Harry's dad passed

away last night a short time after the successful rescue operation in Thailand," his boss and MedSTAR clinical director Andrew Pearce said.

"He will be coming home soon and taking some well-earned time off to be with his family. He has asked that the family's privacy is respected at this time," it added.

Harris was hailed a hero for taking the arduous round-trip journey of the Tham Luang cave every day to keep tab of the 'Wild Boar' team's health.

A dive event organiser who knew Harris for more than a decade said that the whole team was extraordinary and he was one who

was prepared to sacrifice his own comfort, safety and well-being for others.

Praising the diver, Australia's foreign minister Julie Bishop said Harris is internationally renowned for his cave rescue expertise and heads up a cave rescue operation.

#### What put Harris on the radar

The rescue mission which propelled Harris to international renown was in 2011. He volunteered to retrieve the lifeless body of his friend, and fellow cave diver Agnes Milowka. She was diving at Tank Cave at Mount Gambier in South Australia when she ran out of air and died. **TN**



# Cleansing the Etheric Channels

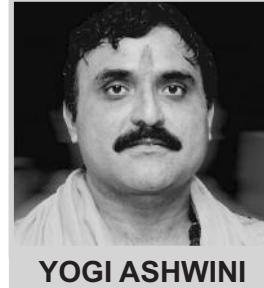
There are techniques in yoga that can regulate your breath-flow. They can keep you charged-up and disease-free all the time. Sanatan Kriya is one simple way of controlling the flow of your breath. In this article, we will learn an extremely potent pranayama to purify your mind, body and soul, the Nadi Shodhanam. Nadi, refers to the etheric channels in our body where the prana flows, Shodhan means purifying. Any congestion in the nadis, hinders the movement of prana. The stagnation of prana leads to a plethora diseases. In Nadi Shodhanam, the Eda (cold nadi, on the left side of Sushumna) and Pingla (hot nadi, on the right side of Sushumna) work as churning rods, creating

heat through friction at the base of the spine, this heat then rises through the Sushumna and from there is spread across the body to cleanse the various channels, remove heaviness, congestion, and also avidya...making the body far more receptive to subtler energies and prana.

## Steps for Nadi Shodhanam

### Pranayama:

1. Sit straight, preferably in Vajrasana. If not, keep your back absolutely straight and don't take any artificial support.
2. Put your middle finger between your eyebrows. Your ring finger presses your left nostril and your thumb is on your right nostril.
3. You inhale from your left nostril and exhale through your right. And then inhale through your right nostril and exhale through the left. This is one cycle.
4. As you inhale fill your stomach with air and push it out. There should be a hissing sound coming from your throat (like in Ujjai Pranayama). On exhalation your



**YOGI ASHWINI**

stomach is pulled in.

You inhale for the count of four and exhale to the count of twelve. It should be a rhythmic movement without any breath retention. Start with fourteen cycles and gradually increase.

There are many people at Dhyani Ashram who have ridden themselves of chronic respiratory ailments with the practice of Sanatan Kriya. In fact, one of the students, a severe asthmatic patient, only realized that her asthma had been cured when the local chemist asked, how was it that she had not purchased an inhaler in the past six months!

NOTE: While practicing any pranayama, sit in a well-ventilated room. Pranayama must not be practiced in a breezy or dusty environ. Similarly one should not sit directly under the direct blast of air cooler or fan while doing pranayamas. It is essential that pranayamas be done under the supervision of the Guru. Doing pranayama in an unsupervised manner either by copying from TV or reading from somewhere can cause long term irreparable damages in the body. **TN**



# Iranian commander accuses Israel of stealing Iran's CLOUDS and causing a drought

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

An Iranian general has accused Israel of stealing its clouds in order to manipulate weather and cause drought in the Islamic Republic.

Brigadier General Gholam Reza Jalali, head of Iran's Civil Defence Organisation said that the changing climate in Iran is 'suspect'.

'Foreign interference is suspected to have played a role in climate change,' said Jalali, who insisted results from an Iranian scientific study 'confirm' the claim. 'Israel and another country in the region have joint teams which work to ensure clouds entering Iranian skies are unable to release rain,' he said.

'On top of that, we are facing the issue of cloud and snow theft.'

Jalali cited a survey showing that above 7200 feet all mountainous areas between Afghanistan and the Mediterranean are covered in snow, except Iran.

The head of Iran's meteorological service Ahad Vazife struck a sceptical note.

He said that General Jalali 'probably has documents of which I am not aware, but on the basis of meteorological knowledge, it is not possible for a country to steal snow



or clouds'. 'Iran has suffered a prolonged drought, and this is a global trend that does not apply only to Iran,' Vazife said.

'Raising such questions not only does not solve any of our problems, but will deter us from finding the right solutions'.

The general's allegations of weather pilfering were not the first time an Iranian official has accused the country's foes of stealing its rain.

Former president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2011 accused Western countries of devising plans to 'cause drought' in Iran,

He claimed 'European countries used special equipment to force clouds to dump' their water on their continent.

'Today our country is moving towards drought, which is partly unintentional due to industry and partly intentional, as a result of the enemy destroying the clouds moving towards our country and this is a war that Iran is going to overcome,' he said.

The Iranian leader also accused Western states of creating the HIV virus to weaken the developing world and create a market for pharmaceuticals. **TN**

# Beer brewed from sewage

**THE NEWS BUREAU**

A Carlsberg-linked brewery has unveiled 'Pu:rest,' the first beer made from sewage water. The water is thoroughly purified, though.

The project, inspired by the Swedish Environmental Research Institute (IVL), saw the New Carnegie Brewery, partly owned by Carlsberg, team up with an innovative sewage treatment plant.

Having undergone "a chain of purification stages," the treated water was thoroughly tested before it was delivered to the brewery, IVL said. It took the New Carnegie Brewery only four weeks to come up with what its head, Chris Thurgeson, touted as "an ecological and crystal clear pilsner, brewed on recycled water with organic malt and hops."

The brewery staged a launch party, inviting everyone daring enough to taste the environment-friendly 4.8 percent drink. While the ac-

counts of those who worked up the courage to take a sip are unknown, the researchers argued that the main challenge they face over its distribution is not technological, but psychological, since people are generally hostile to the idea that the water contaminated with human and other waste might be safe enough to drink.

While it's hard to foretell whether commercial success is awaiting Pu:rest, the primary purpose of the project was not to sell beer, but make more people aware of the water shortage and the need to care about the environment, Filipsson said.

"The difficulties in getting this relatively cost- and energy-efficient method to be used for the production of drinking water is not technical but primarily emotional. The recycled water is as

pure and safe as normal tap water, but

most people are still skeptical about actually drinking purified wastewater," Staffan Filipsson, project manager at IVL, said.

While it's hard to foretell whether commercial success is awaiting Pu:rest, the primary purpose of the project was not to sell beer, but make more people aware of the water shortage and the need to care about the environment, Filipsson said.

"The main purpose of the project is to highlight sustainable water management and raise awareness of the global water issues and the value of clean water."

The beer will be served in several restaurants and at festivals in June, the IVL said.

While the experimental pilsner is yet to make its way to the big market, it has already earned the nickname 'crap beer' (bajsöl). **TN**



# UP Triple Talaq victim dies after month-long torture

HE NEWS BUREAU

**A** Triple Talaq victim, who was allegedly thrashed and confined to a room without food for a month by her husband, died during medical treatment on July 10.

According to Razia's sister, the victim, who has a six-year-old child, got divorced from her husband over the phone. Subsequently, she was locked inside the room without any food or water and was thrashed by her husband for dowry.

"After locking her for a month in the house, he left her at a relative's house. I got her home as soon as I was informed. We went to the police to report the incident.



However, the police didn't register any case," she said.

Founder of NGO Mera Haq, Farhat Naqvi, revealed that Razia's husband Nahim was married before and that he tortured his first wife in

the same way. "Razia was admitted to the district hospital. After that, she was transferred to Lucknow for treatment. However, her condition became critical and was transferred back," said Naqvi. TN

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