



sunday pioneer

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Petrol, diesel price hiked again...

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Six people die, a dozen missing...

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COVID and flu: how big could the dual threat be this winter?

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→ In brief ←

One more arrest in Singhu border lynching case

A second arrest was made on Saturday in connection with the lynching of a Dalit man at a farmers' protest site at the Singhu border, police said. Narain Singh, belonging to the Sikhs' Nihang order, was arrested by the Amritsar Rural police at Amarkot village in Amritsar district, they said. On Friday, Sarabjit Singh was the first person to be arrested in connection with the case. A court in Sonapat on Saturday remanded him to police custody for seven days. Shortly after being taken into custody, Narain Singh claimed that he had surrendered before the police. He claimed that before coming to Amritsar, he informed the SSP Amritsar (Rural) on a call that he wanted to surrender.

I insisted that Uddhav become Maha CM: Pawar

NCP president Sharad Pawar on Saturday said he had insisted that Uddhav Thackeray become chief minister of Maharashtra after Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) was formed two years ago, hours after BJP leader Devendra Fadnis claimed Thackeray covertly nurtured ambitions to become a CM but kept talking about installing a 'Shiv Sainik' on the post. Speaking to reporters in Pimpri Chinchwad city in the Pune district, Pawar reiterated his allegations that the Centre was misusing various agencies to destabilise the tripartite government of Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress in Maharashtra. The BJP was "keeping mum" on the issue of rising prices of fuel and accused the saffron party of not lowering rates of petrol and diesel despite a fall in the international prices of crude.

SC asks HCs to make e-filing of cases must in certain cases

The Supreme Court has taken further steps to digitise the judiciary by asking high courts in the country to make e-filing of petitions mandatory from January 1 next year before them in certain types of cases. In a communication of October 9, the chairman of the E-Committee of the apex court has asked the registries of High Courts to ensure "e-filing of cases/petitions by the government in all types of matters to be made mandatory from January 1, 2022. After such a date, there should be no physical filing of cases by the government in any matter."

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Ashwin & Shukla Paksha

Tithi : Dwadashi 17:38

Nakshatram: Shatabhisha 09:52

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

Rahukalam: 4:22 pm - 5:49 pm

Yamagandam: 12:01 pm - 1:28 pm

Variyam: 4:32 pm - 6:11 pm

Gulika: 2:55 pm - 4:22 pm

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritakalam: 2:30 am - 4:10 am

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:38 am - 12:24 pm

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Partly cloudy

Temp: 29

Humidity: 83%

Sunrise: 6:09 am

Sunset: 5:52 pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated October 16, 2021 5:00 PM

OBTUSE ANGLE



Heavy rain floods Hyderabad, IMD says more in store for TS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Several low-lying areas in Hyderabad were flooded as heavy rain lashed the city and various other parts of Telangana on Saturday.

In the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), L B Nagar (GHMC Office) received 78.5 mm of rainfall followed by Bathukamma Kunta (77.8 mm), official sources said.

Several other localities in the city witnessed moderate rainfall, they said.

Nagaram in Suryapet district received 95 mm. Ranga Reddy, Kumram Bheem, Medak, Yadadri-Bhongir, Medchal-Malkajiri and other districts also received rains, the sources said.

In Mahabubnagar district, the body of a man, said to be mentally unsound, was found in a low-lying area in Jadcherla town following the rain and the exact cause of death was not known immediately, police said.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) here said heavy to very heavy rain is very likely to occur at isolated places in Adilabad, Komaram Bheem-Asifabad and other districts from Saturday night till Sunday morning.

Also, it said heavy rain is very likely to occur at isolated places in Mancherla, Nizamabad, Jayashankar Bhupalpally and other districts during the same period.



Vehicles try to plough through knee-deep water after a spell of heavy rain lashed Hyderabad on Saturday.

Nagarjuna Sagar filled to brim

ML MELLY MAITREYI ■ HYDERABAD

All major projects and reservoirs in the State are filled to the brim following yet another spell of heavy rains due to low pressure in Bay of Bengal.

Ten gates of Nagarjuna Sagar project were lifted due to continuous inflows into the project which reached its full reservoir level of 590 feet with a full stor-

age capacity of 312.05 tmc ft. The inflows into the project are at 1,30,414 cusecs and with the same outflow.

In the Krishna Basin, all major projects are either full or close to the brim. Water level in Jurala project is at 1,043.7 feet as against the Full Reservoir Level of 1,045 feet and storage capacity is 8.85 tmc ft at 9.66 tmc ft with inflows of 40,500 cusecs and outflow at 24,711 cusecs. Tungabhadra

reached its FRL of 1,633 feet with full storage capacity of 100.86 tmc ft with inflow of 30,468 cusecs and outflow at 28,855 cusecs.

Srisailem Project's water level is at 884.9 feet as against 885 feet and present storage capacity is at 215.33 tmc ft as against full capacity of 215.81 tmc ft with inflows at 56,907 cusecs and outflow at 97,671 cusecs.

Now people have come to hate the TRS leaders, claims Eatala

Taking a break from the hectic campaigning, BJP candidate and former TRS minister Eatala Rajender speaks to The Pioneer's NAVEENA GHANATE about the upcoming by-poll. Excerpts:

Q: Do you think the momentum you gathered over the last 5.5 months will last until polling day?

A: Since the last 5.5 months, (Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao) KCR has brought the entire administration here and has contaminated the democratic environment by spending hundreds of crores supplying alcohol. But this has not influenced the people of Huzurabad. People know that I didn't resign on my own, but I was removed from the Cabinet unceremoniously. I was forced to resign and was insulted. The Telangana people feel that KCR is ignoring the public and his arrogance has touched new peaks.

How is it now meeting people as a leader not representing the ruling party?

There is so much negativity against KCR and his government. The public confidence they had in the first five years continued in the 2018 elections, but after that KCR left the people. He developed the arrogant idea that everything is running because of him, and that only he can do it. KCR believes that this (Telangana) is his jagir (fiefdom) and the people are his slaves. The Ministers and MLAs of the TRS couldn't tell KCR important things, and now the people have come to hate the TRS leaders.

You were in the PDSU during your student days and now you are in



the BJP. What do you say about this Left to Right transition?

In politics we cannot be static, we have to be dynamic. The politics of the PDSU I worked for was different. I was sent out of the party and the only alternative was the BJP as the Congress is not there any longer. The BJP is already ruling at the Centre and when we want to do something for the people, that party is important.

How will it benefit people if a non-ruling party MLA wins?

In my constituency, we were 20 years ahead in development be it four-lane roads, trains, road repairs or infrastructure. The needs of the public were met in all respects. Today across Telangana people are being suppressed. This is not about my constituency alone. People believe that Telangana

should not have such a history, and are united to fight against this rule. In the 2023 elections the TRS or their government won't be there.

What will you do if you become an MLA?

As an MLA I will work to solve the problems of the people. Laying roads is not the only solution. I will be with them as a family member and will be like a son who protects them. Today, I have been here for 20 years not because of laying roads but due to the assurance that when they are facing any issue, they know their man will be with them.

How is your bonding with the old colleagues who are camping here?

I don't have any links with these people. Our relations are strained.



Mothkupalli to join TRS on Oct 18

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The stage is set for former minister Mothkupalli Narasimulu to formally join the Telangana Rashtra Samithi. He will be joining the TRS in the presence of Chief Minister and party president K Chandrasekhar Rao at the Telangana Bhavan on October 18.

I'm full-time Congress chief, declares Sonia

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days after some sections within the Congress questioned the absence of an elected party chief, Sonia Gandhi on Saturday asserted that she is a full-time, hands-on party president and leaders need not speak to her through the media.

Without naming anyone, Gandhi, in a message to the G23, said at the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting that while every member wants the party's revival, it can happen only with unity, self-control, discipline and by keeping the party's interests paramount. Her remarks came after some leaders of the group of 23, including Kapil Sibal, who had sought organisational overhaul, recently questioned who in the Congress was taking decisions in the absence of a full-time party president.

Ghulam Nabi Azad and Sibal had also demanded an early meeting of the CWC to discuss the declining fortunes of the party in the wake of recent defections.

"I am, if you will allow me to say so, a full-time and hands-on Congress president," Sonia Gandhi asserted.

The 74-year-old leader underscored that she has always appreciated frankness and in a veiled message to G23 leaders, including Sibal who recently questioned the decision-making process in the party, said "there is no need to speak to me through the media" "So, let us all have a free and honest dis-



Rahul says 'will consider' becoming Congress chief again

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rahul Gandhi "will consider" returning as Congress President, sources said Saturday afternoon after it emerged that several senior leaders, including the chief ministers of Punjab, Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh, as well as former Defence Minister AK Antony, urged the Kerala MP to come back.

cussion. But what should get communicated outside the four walls of this room is the collective decision of the CWC," she said in her opening remarks at the meeting.

CWC: Every aspect of democracy 'diminished'

• Cong slams 'catastrophic mishandling' of economy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday hit out at the Centre over what it said was "catastrophic mishandling" of the economy and also alleged that every aspect of democracy had been "diminished" under the Modi government. The Congress Working Committee (CWC) passed three resolutions -- on the political situation of the country, on inflation and on the acute agrarian distress and diabolical attack on India's farmers.

In a resolution on the political situation in the country, the Congress Working Committee (CWC) said the "assault on democratic institutions completes the sad and shameful narrative of the

Modi government". "India is no longer regarded as a democracy, it has earned the label of an electoral autocracy. Parliament has been contemptuously disregarded. The judiciary has been debilitated by not filling vacancies in courts and tribunals," the CWC said.

In its resolution on the farmers' plight, the Congress said the "brutal" moving down of farmers in Lakhimpur Kheri was a manifestation of the government's "continuing arrogance" and slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not sacking Union minister Ajay Mishra whose son has been arrested in connection with the incident.

Huzurabad heads for close finish; slim margin to decide the winner



conducted by both the parties also indicate the same.

Local leaders are expecting that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao of TRS and Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP national president JP Nadda may campaign on behalf of their candidates. Sources in both the parties say that this is not likely. A senior TRS leader said that TRS working president KT Rama Rao has been repeatedly saying that the Huzurabad Assembly by-election is a small matter and hence KCR won't campaign.

public pulse and prospects of their candidates. Leaders of both the parties are putting on a brave face in public, expressing confidence that their candidate will win. Both parties accept that the race is too close to call, and privately, hope that their candidate will pull through.

Sources said that the surveys

RK's death would further weaken ultras, say police

PNS ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh police on Saturday said the death of senior Maoist leader Akkijaju Hargopal, alias Ramakrishna, alias RK, a central committee politburo member carrying a reward of Rs 40 lakh on his head, would further weaken the Naxal movement in the Bastar region where ultras are struggling to hold the ground and lost some senior cadres over the last two years.

RK succumbed to illness in south Bastar forest on Thursday morning, police said.

With the death of RK, the outlawed CPI (Maoist) has lost its three central committee members and as many other senior cadres in the last two years. These deaths would certainly deplete the strength of the Naxal movement which has been losing its ground. Security forces would make an all-out attempt to soon bring an end to the five-decade-long mindless violence by ultras in the region, Inspector General of Police (Bastar range) Sundarraj P said.

In June and July this year, Maoists' Central Committee (CC)



member Haribhushan, Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC) members

Ganga and Sobhroi and senior commander Vinod, were among the cadres who died apparently due to the Covid-19 infection, he said.

Earlier in December 2019, another CC member Ramanna, who was leading the Maoist movement in south Bastar, had succumbed to illness, he said.

Asserting that Bastar police have been constantly monitoring developments within the banned outfit, the IG said that over 35 camps of security forces were set up in the erstwhile Maoist-stronghold in Bastar during the last two years

while anti-Naxal operations are being carried out regularly in the interior and bordering areas.

Besides, Bastar police have also succeeded in choking the supply network and once considered safe corridors of Maoists by coordinating with the police of neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha and Maharashtra. As a result of which a large number of these senior cadres died in (due to) lack of medicines and proper treatment while several ultras quit the outfit and surrendered, the IG said.

Andhra Pradesh ready to hand over its powerhouses

AP says its willingness is subject to Telangana doing the same

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

After coming forward to hand over four components (projects) on river Krishna to the Krishna River Management Board, subject to neighbouring Telangana doing the same, the Andhra Pradesh government issued another order concurring to hand over two powerhouses to the Board.

Energy Secretary Srikanth Nagulapalli issued an order late on Thursday night on the handing over of the Srisailem Right Bank Powerhouse and the Nagarjuna Sagar Right (Jawahar) Canal Powerhouse to the KRMB in accordance with the Union Jal Shakti Ministry's Gazette Notification.

Posts sanctioned under these two components too were being diverted to the KRMB, Srikanth said in the order, but noted that all this has to happen simultaneously with Telangana projects.

The Union Jal Shakti Ministry issued a notification on July 15, as per the AP



Reorganisation Act, 2014, fixing the jurisdictions of the Godavari River Management Board and the Krishna River Management Board.

The notification formally came into force on Thursday.

The AP government, however, agreed to immediately hand over only the Srisailem project spillway and river

sluices, Pothireddypadu head regulator and Srisailem Right Main Canal, Handri-Neeva Lift Irrigation Scheme and the Muchumarri Lift Irrigation Scheme to the KRMB.

It also agreed to transfer the posts sanctioned in various cadres and respective field offices under these four

projects to the Central body.

At a special meeting of the KRMB in Hyderabad on October 12, the AP government insisted on including the powerhouses on river Krishna, the main bone of contention between the two states, in the prioritised list for handing over to the Board.

Covid-19 cases touch 20.60 lakh in AP

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The cumulative coronavirus cases in Andhra Pradesh climbed to 20.60 lakh as the state added 332 afresh in the 24 hours ending 9 am on Saturday.

The state also reported 585 recoveries and seven deaths during the period, the latest bulletin said.

The number of active cases now stood at 6,193 after 20,39,545 total recoveries and 14,302 deaths.

All districts reported less than 60 new cases each in a day.

Chittoor district added 55, Kadapa 43, Guntur 42, West Godavari 36, East Godavari and Krishna 32 each, Visakhapatnam 28, Prakasam 25 and Nellore 22 fresh cases.

Mothkupalli...

Continued from page 1

Mothkupalli was a prominent leader in the Telugu Desam Party for a long time and won from Tungathurthy constituency of the erstwhile Nalgonda district.

After bifurcation of the State and with TDP having lost its relevance in Telangana and with several of Telangana TDP leaders joining the TRS, Mothkupalli took his own time to decide about his political future and opted for the BJP in 2019.

He has been however disappointed with the State BJP leadership for not utilising his services and long political experience and resigned from the saffron party in July this year.

Prior to his parting ways from the BJP, Mothkupalli, as a Dalit leader chose to attend the all-party meeting called by KCR to discuss the Dalit Bandhu scheme. Several Dalit intellectuals, social workers and others attended the meeting and gave their views and opinions on the scheme.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹185
Without Skin	₹195
Broiler at Farm	₹225
EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	397
VIJAYAWADA	409
VISAKHAPATNAM	420
RETAIL PRICE (IN HYDERABAD)	₹3.97

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Nagarjuna Sagar filled to brim

Continued from page 1

Even Pulichintala and Musi are almost full to their capacities.

Even in Godavari Basin, Singur is full to 99 percent of its capacity at 29.81 tmc ft with inflows at 2,934 cusecs and outflow at 629 causes. Nizam Sagar reached its full water level of 1405 feet and storage capacity at 17.8 tmc ft. Sri Ram Sagar reached a level of 1,090.9 feet as against FRL of 1091 feet and present storage capacity 89.76 tmc ft as against full capacity of 90.31 tmc ft. Mid Manair, Lower Manair, Kaddam and Yellampally too are brimming with water.

Now people have come to hate TRS leaders, claims Eatala

Continued from page 1

There are no dark room meetings or backdoor friendships with them now. Many of them tried to contact me, but I didn't respond.

Harish Rao says he will convert Huzurabad to Siddipet?

Does Siddipet have some golden calf? They should tell what is there in Siddipet which is not there in Huzurabad. Was Telangana created only for the four of them? For who are Telangana's resources? KTR should develop, Siddipet should develop, Mr KCR, are there no suicides in Siddipet? No debts? They are presenting

a false picture. It is all about arrogance. Even my area is so well developed through the SRSP canal, but I don't have issues. Are there no diseases in my area or poverty? Problems are there in society as a whole. Neither Siddipet nor Huzurabad is immune to it.

They are raising issues like you cheating a woman entrepreneur and attacks by the BJP on you.

All those are 'chillar' (petty) things. A thief will behave like a thief. I was with them for 18.5 years. Don't they know my character, commitment and working style? If I was inefficient, why did they give

me so many responsibilities? Why did they call me brother, left hand, right hand? All these are false, how can I become a demon in six months?

Harish Rao is known to be a mastermind at winning tough elections. Will you win with a majority?

Nobody can stop my victory if elections happen here as per dharma. The TRS won't even retain its deposit if things go the right way. No 'Turumkhan' who has left people, who ignored justice, has ever survived. Harish Rao left the people and believes in suppression, money and conspiracies.

Asad attacks RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's speech

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi attacked RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat's Vijayadashami rally speech, claiming that it was full of lies and half truths.

Owaisi, who put out a series of tweets Friday night, criticised Bhagwat over the latter's comments on population policy, abrogation of Article 370 and others.

"As usual, RSS Mohan's speech today was full of lies & half-truths. He called for a population policy & repeated the lie that Muslim & Christian population has increased. Muslim population growth rate has had the sharpest decline among all. There's no 'demographic imbalance'," Owaisi said.

What one has to worry about are the social evils of child marriages and sex-selective abortions, the Hyderabad MP said.

He said "84 percent of married kids are Hindus". Between 2001-2011, Muslim female-Male ratio leaped from 936 to 951 women for every 1000 Muslim men. But, the Hindu

ratio only rose from 931 to 939, he claimed.

India has already achieved replacement level fertility rates, without any coercive population policy, he said.

"Similarly, fact-free Mohan is worried about India's ageing population & the need to have a younger population to help the ageing. He should tell his student Modi about it," he said in a tweet. "No man has destroyed India's demographic dividend like he has. Majority of India is young; they lack education, govt support & jobs. What's the future of a country whose PM cannot promise anything more than a few pakora stalls," the AIMIM leader said.

Saying that population control policy would mean fewer youths of working age, he asked how they will support an ageing population.

"Mohan called Taliban terrorists" and it is a direct attack on Modi, whose government "hosted" them in our embassy, he said.

If they are terrorists, will the government list them as such under UAPA, he wondered.

Referring to Bhagwat's

reported comments that people in Kashmir were "reaping the benefits of repealing Article 370", Owaisi asked if it is with "29 targeted killings of civilians in this year". He also asked if it is with internet shutdowns and mass detentions.

On Bhagwat "demanding" NRC, the AIMIM leader claimed that it is nothing but a weapon to doubt citizens' Indianness and harass them. Alleging that Modi failed in stopping Chinese soldiers from coming into Ladakh, Sikkim and Uttarakhand, he said Bhagwat did not utter a word about "how our brave-hearts were treated by Chinese".

Bhagwat mentioned about Muslim patriots like Ashfaqullah Khan and the Muslims who had fought in the armies of Hindu Kings against so-called Muslim invaders, Owaisi said.

Observing that Ashfaqullah Khan and Ram Prasad Bismil were great friends, he asked as to who destroyed such friendships "in the name of Fatherland and Holy land".

"The record of Muslim freedom fighters is such that even

Mohan is compelled to praise them. The same cannot be said about RSS & its ideologues. They were always epitomes of anti-national activities & cowardice. Savarkar advocated use of rape against Muslim women during war," Owaisi alleged.

RSS cannot coexist in a society that wants to progress economically, he claimed. Society must choose between RSS' cowardice and Ashfaqullah Khan's bravery. The society must choose between "RSS's betrayal of India & Gandhi's patriotism; RSS's ideology of whining/resentment & Maulana Azad's intellect & education," Owaisi tweeted.

Bhagwat on Friday said terrorists were carrying out "targeted killings" in Jammu and Kashmir to instill fear, and asserted that military preparedness on the borders must remain very high.

Addressing the annual Vijayadashmi rally of the Sangh at Reshimbagh Ground in Nagpur, he also called for a reformulation of the National Population Policy and also touched on the issue of control of Hindu temples.

J&K man held in AP on charges of raping woman

PNS ■ JAMMU

A man, who has been accused of raping a woman on the pretext of marriage, was arrested from Andhra Pradesh by the Jammu and Kashmir police within five days of registering a case against him, officials said on Saturday.

Two more persons were also arrested for defaming the victim by uploading her pictures on social media, a police spokesman said. He said a complaint was lodged by a woman in Reasi police station, claiming that Mohammad Ashfaq, a res-

ident of Sarola-Manjakote village of Poonch district, repeatedly raped her with the promise of marrying her. To harass the woman, the accused also uploaded objectionable pictures of the victim on social media, the spokesman said, adding a case was registered and investigation started to arrest them.

While a medical examination of the victim was conducted and her statement recorded before a judicial magistrate, the special investigation team (SIT) constituted by Reasi Senior Superintendent of Police

Shailender Singh located the presence of the accused in Andhra Pradesh.

A police team was dispatched and after hectic efforts with active support of the AP police, the accused was arrested from Peddapuram and brought to Reasi after obtaining a transit remand from the local court to face investigation and judicial process, the spokesman said.

Meanwhile, he said two more persons were arrested for defaming the victim by sharing her objectionable pictures on social media.

CWC: Every aspect of democracy...

Continued from page 1

The resolution alleged that the last seven years have witnessed a "diabolical design" to attack the livelihood of 'annadatas' and landless farm labourers.

Referring to the October 3 Lakhimpur Kheri violence in which eight people died, four of them farmers allegedly knocked down by a vehicle carrying BJP workers, the CWC said that "the brutal mowing down of farmers is a manifestation of the continuing arrogance".

"This incident was preceded by the Union Minister (of State) for Home Affairs, himself an accused in a case of murder in which the High Court has reserved judgment for 43 months, publicly threatening the farmers with dire consequences, while flaunting his own dubious antecedents," the Congress said.

Despite his son having been accused and arrested under relentless political pressure, Prime Minister Modi "shamelessly" refuses to remove Ajay

Mishra as the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, it said.

On October 3, after the four farmers were knocked down, infuriated people allegedly lynched some people in the vehicles. The other dead included two BJP workers and their driver.

A journalist was also killed in the incident.

Farmers claimed that Union Minister Ajay Mishra's son Ashish was in one of the vehicles, an allegation denied by him and his father who say they can produce evidence to prove he was at an event at that time.

Ashish Mishra 'Monu' was arrested in the case on October 9 after 12 hours of questioning, and a court has accepted his police custody from October 12 to October 15.

The CWC also flagged the agitation by farmers against the agri laws, saying "a government imbued with arrogance has refused to engage the farmers in talks and has stood as a mere bystander, while the police

and rogue elements in the BJP have unleashed violence upon them".

The tragic incident at Lakhimpur Kheri is a clear example of official support to the attempt to suppress the voice of the farmers, it alleged.

"The refusal of the Prime Minister to condemn the brutal murder of the farmers and to sack the Minister of State for Home Affairs have shocked the conscience of the country," the resolution said.

In its resolution on the political situation, the Congress also expressed grave concern over the Centre's move to grant more powers to the Border Security Force. The party said it will consult other political parties as well as state governments and formulate a course of action to compel the Modi government to repeal the order on it.

The resolution also stated that the aggressive posture of China and the unabated infiltrations by Pakistan have resulted in a "dramatic deterioration" in the security situa-

tion of Jammu & Kashmir.

In a resolution on inflation and the economic situation of the country, the Congress Working Committee, the party's highest decision-making body said, the "continued slide" of the economy is a matter of great concern.

"After the sharp decline in 2020-21, the Modi government boasted of a V-shaped recovery. All signs point to an uneven and struggling recovery in different sectors," the resolution said.

"The jobs that were lost during the recession and the pandemic have not been recovered, the micro and small units that were shut down have not been re-started. Millions of families face the twin hardships of unemployment and high prices," the party said.

The resolution alleged the Modi government is bent upon "robbing" the people of India by all-round inflation and is completely oblivious to the economic worries and challenges being faced by the average Indian.

RK's death would further weaken ultras, say police

Continued from page 1

He hoped the peace will be established and development carried out with the support of the people of Bastar.

RK, who has worked as secretary of Andhra Odisha Border State Committee of Maoists, was handling Naxal activities on the Andhra Pradesh-Odisha border adjoining Chhattisgarh. He was the mastermind of several deadly attacks on security forces there, the IG said.

Another senior police officer posted in Bastar informed that Maoists have issued a statement in Telugu on Friday in which they confirmed the death of Hargopal (63) due to illness on October 14 morning.

According to the statement, RK, a politburo member of the central committee, was suffering from kidney-related ailments. Reports said his wife too said the same.

I'm full-time Congress chief, declares Sonia

Continued from page 1

Sonia Gandhi also placed on the table the party's organisational election schedule before the CWC.

She also pointed out that in the last two years, a large number of Congress leaders, particularly the younger ones, have taken on leadership roles in communicating party policies and programmes to the people.

"Never have we let issues of public importance and concern go unaddressed. You are aware that I have been taking them up with the Prime Minister as have Dr Manmohan Singh and Rahul (Gandhi) ji. I have been interacting with like-minded political parties regularly," she said and added that the Opposition parties have issued joint statements on

national issues and coordinated party strategy in Parliament as well.

About the forthcoming assembly elections, the Congress chief said the party's preparations had already begun a while back and asserted that though there were many challenges, "if we are united, disciplined and focus on the party's interests alone, I am confident that we will do well". Elaborating on the issues facing the country, the Congress chief noted the CWC is meeting in the background of the continuing agitation by farmers and that it has been over a year since the "three black (farm) laws were bulldozed through Parliament".

Referring to the Lakhimpur Kheri violence in which four farmers were mowed down by an SUV on October 3, she said

the shocking incident shows the mindset of the BJP as to how it perceives the farmers' movement and how it has been dealing with this determined struggle by the farmers to protect their lives and livelihoods. Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra's son Ashish Mishra, who has been named in an FIR, was arrested on Saturday by the Uttar Pradesh Police in connection with the mowing down of four farmers on October 3 in Lakhimpur Kheri in Uttar Pradesh.

In her remarks, Gandhi also alleged that the government's only answer for economic recovery is selling off national assets and its single-point agenda was "becho, becho, becho (sell, sell, sell)".

Noting that the Government of India has changed its vac-

Rahul says 'will consider' becoming Congress chief again

Continued from page 1

Rahul Gandhi quit as Congress chief two years ago after the party's horrendous showing in the 2019 Lok Sabha election; his resignation threw the party into a leader-

ship crisis from which it has yet to fully recover and prompted the reinstatement of his mother, Sonia Gandhi, as interim chief.

Statements urging Rahul Gandhi's return as party boss were made at today's meeting

of the Congress Working Committee - the party's highest decision-making body - which sources said had all but finalised a schedule for full-scale organisational polls to be held by September next year.

a disadvantage," she alleged.

Gandhi also flagged concerns over the sudden spurt in killings in Jammu and Kashmir and said minorities have been targeted. "This must be condemned in the strongest possible terms."

She also hit out at the government over its foreign policy and said a broad consensus

that has been there on it always has been damaged because of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "continued reluctance to take the Opposition into confidence in any meaningful manner". "Foreign policy has become a diabolical instrument of electoral mobilisation and polarisation," Gandhi alleged. "We face serious chal-

lenges on our borders and other fronts. The prime minister telling the opposition leaders last year that there had not been any occupation of our territory by China and his silence ever since is costing our nation dearly." Sonia Gandhi, former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Chief Ministers Ashok Gehlot of Rajasthan, Bhupesh Baghel of Chhattisgarh and Charanjit Channi of Punjab attended the meeting -- the first such physical meeting of the party's highest decision-making body since the outbreak of the Covid pandemic.

G23 leaders -- Ghulam Nabi Azad and Anand Sharma -- were among those present at the meeting at the All India Congress Committee headquarters here.

City cops list restrictions for ‘Sunday Funday’ at Charminar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad, has issued traffic guidelines to facilitate detours on Sunday for the ‘Ek Shaam Charminar Ke Naam’ from 3 pm to 10 pm on Sundays.

Hyderabad Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar issued the guidelines designed to ensure proper control and regulation of traffic in connection with the programme at Charminar for the benefit of the people visiting the place.

Accordingly, traffic coming from Afzalgunj, Madina will be diverted at Gulzar Houz towards Mitti Ka Sher and Kalikaman, Etebar Chowk.

Traffic from Falaknuma, Himmatpura, will be diverted at Panchmohalla, Charminar towards Shah Function Hall and Moghalpura Fire Station Road, Bibi Bazar.

Traffic coming from Bibi Bazar, Moghalpura Water Tank,



Hafiz Danka Masjid will be diverted at Sardar Mahal towards Kotla Alijah, Etebar Chowk.

Traffic coming from Moosabowli, Murghi Chowk and Ghansi Bazar will be diverted

ed at Lad Bazar, Mothi Galli towards Khilwath road.

The parking places for visitors coming from Afzalgunj, Nayapool and Madina side are made inside GHMC office Sardar Mahal, Mufeed-ul-Anam

Boys High School at Kotla Alijah, SYJ Complex, near Madina, AU Hospital and at Charminar Bus Terminal ingate.

Meanwhile, parking for visitors coming from Madina, Purnapul and Goshamahall was made at the Pension Office at Motigalli, Urdu Maskan Auditorium at Motigalli, Khilwath Ground, AU Hospital and at the Charminar Bus Terminal ingate.

Parking places for visitors coming from Madina, Purnapul and Goshamahall were allotted at Quli Qutub Shah Stadium, Government City College and at MJ Bridge.

“Commuters and the general public are requested to avoid Charminar route and take alternative routes on the mentioned date and time to reach their destinations without any hindrance and cooperate with the traffic police,” the release from the Commissioner’s office said.

Raja Singh challenges KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP MLA from Goshamahall, Raja Singh, has thrown a challenge to TRS Working President and Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD) Minister K T Ramarao to come for a bike ride along with him to see the condition of Hyderabad roads during rains.

Raja Singh alleged that Hyderabad’s development is confined to mere words in the Legislative Assembly. In reality, Hyderabad’s development is the worst, he said. He said that Telangana is rich only for Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao’s family, but not for the people.

Raja Singh tweeted in this regard “@KTRTRS Ji let’s take a ride on my bullet across Goshamahall constituency and old city you will have the 1st hand experience of the development that happened. What do you say? “HyderabadRains.” He also posted a video message to KTR along with his tweet.

Huzurabad voters play a ‘safe game’ as by-poll draws near

K VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

There is a great proverb in Telugu called ‘Enki Pelli Subbi Chavuku Vachinattu’ (Enki’s marriage led to Subbi’s death).

The Huzurabad voters situation perfectly suits this proverb as the by-poll (Enki Pelli) for Huzurabad constituency brought troubles (death) to its voters (Subbi) as the voters are facing troubles from the political parties particularly—ruling TRS and BJP.

To save themselves from this unexpected trouble, the Huzurabad voters learnt a safe game. Now, the Huzurabad voters are playing a safe game.

The voters are not disappointing both TRS and BJP.

They are attending programmes conducted by both parties. The village level leaders are joining one party in the morning and another one in the evening. It has become a main feature of the Huzurabad by-poll.

The situation arose because the former Minister Eatala Rajender, who is BJP candidate in the present by-poll, was the leader of TRS party till five and half months ago.

However, Eatala quit the TRS and tendered resignation to his MLA position too due to the dismissal of him from the Cabinet by the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao.

However, almost all the active leaders of the constituency are followers of Eatala. Those leaders too, followed Eatala for a couple of months after

The voters are behaving intelligently and are careful not to become the targets after the elections by identifying themselves as sympathisers of a particular party.

Eatala’s exit from the TRS.

However, the Ministers like Gangula Kamalakara and T Harish Rao entered into the constituency and started attracting those leaders one after the other successfully.

The party almost succeeded in attracting all the local leaders towards the TRS party.

In the process, several leaders joined TRS in the morning and quit in the evening and in the same manner, some other leaders joined BJP in the morning and quit in the evening.

While seeing all these developments, the common people learnt a new technique that they are not disappointing either TRS or BJP. The people are attending the programs of the two parties without any confusion though they felt embarrassed in the beginning. People are habituated to the new practices and are behaving as smart as the political

leaders. They also learnt a new thing: not to say ‘no’ to any political leader.

A voter from the Huzurabad constituency, Ramulu said that in the beginning of the election campaign he faced troubles. He said that he feared what the political leaders would do if said his opinion openly to the particular party.

He said, however, he learnt a new technique that he started satisfying all political parties’ leaders. He said he learnt a lesson that not to say a word ‘no’ to any political party leader. “I am attending the programs conducted by all political parties. I have ample time to decide to whom to cast his vote. I will decide during the election to whom I have to vote. But as of now I don’t want to get stuck in trouble by identifying myself as a particular party’s sympathiser. I have no guts to face that much stress by sticking to a particular party. Even leaders not sticking to a particular party and why should I land in trouble by sticking to a particular party”, he opined.

A political analyst opined on the Huzurabad by-poll voters behavior that the voters learnt a lesson of ‘struggle for the survival’ in a different manner is that ‘play safe game for the survival’.

The voters are behaving intelligently and are thoughtfully behaving thinking that not to become the targets after the elections by identifying themselves as sympathisers of a particular party.

Man jumps to death from multi-storied building at KPHB

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A man committed suicide by jumping from a multi-storied building at KPHB Colony on Friday.

The victim was identified as S. Bhoopathi Naidu, 25. According to the police, Naidu entered the building saying that he had come to see a person working at a service center on the 17th floor of the corporate office building.

Police suspect that Naidu was upset over some issue and after entering the building, he jumped from the open window of a room on the 18th floor.

He fell on the ground and died on the spot due to multiple injuries.

The security guard saw him on the ground and rushed to his rescue. An ambulance was called, but the paramedical staff pronounced him dead. The KPHB Police registered a suspicious death case and are checking the CCTV footage.

Two arrested with 300 kg ganja

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The North Zone Task Force team, along with the Malakpet police, seized 300 kilos of marijuana from two inter-state drug smugglers who were caught at Moosarambagh Crossroads on Saturday morning.

The police seized 10 bags of ganja which was concealed under an empty plastic tray surface in a goods carrier.

The suspects are Vilas Bhausaheb Dhokane, 33, a native of Ranjan Bagh village in Gangapur, Aurangabad, Maharashtra, and Dnyaneshwar Mohite, 26, a mason from Ahmed Nagar, Maharashtra and an accomplice of Vilas.

The duo procured ganja from the Narsipatnam area of Visakhapatnam for Rs 1,500 per kilo and were transporting it to Ahmed Nagar of Maharashtra to sell it at Rs 10,000 per kilo, said the officials, adding that their route was supposed to be from Nakkapalli Crossroad in Vizag to Annavaram-Rajahmundry-Vijayawada-Suryapet-Hyderabad-Hummadabad area of Karnataka and then to the destination in Ahmed Nagar, Maharashtra.



“The Agency areas of Visakhapatnam district are known for large scale ganja cultivation, as farmers living in the Eastern Ghats along the Andhra-Odisha border cultivate high quality cannabis. From there, the ganja is smuggled to several places including Visakhapatnam city, Vijayawada, Hyderabad, cities in Maharashtra and other places.

Vilas and his accomplice Dnyaneshwar hatched a plan for purchasing the drug at low prices through agents in the Narsipatnam area, sell it at a higher price and share the profits,” explained the police.

The duo left from Nakkapalli Crossroad with

ganja in their vehicle via Annavaram-Vijayawada-Suryapet and Hyderabad. On receiving credible information, the police nabbed them near Moosarambagh Cross Road.

“It was revealed that some of the drivers working under ganja smuggling agents from Zaheerabad area steal ganja from trucks and supply them to Hyderabad,” police said.

The suspects, along with the seized material, were handed over to the Malakpet Police for further investigation. “They were booked under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. The case is being investigated,” added the police

Three arrested for rape and extortion

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Rajendranagar police on Friday arrested three persons in connection with the a gang rape and extortion case that was reported on Thursday near Himayatsagar. The arrested persons have been identified as Narsingh Rao Yadav, 32, from Kukatpally, Nareesh Euganti, 31, from Jagathgirigutta and Bakapuram Prasad, 25, from Balanagar. All the three are auto drivers by profession, said the Police.

“The 32-year-old victim, working as a security guard, is addicted to consuming toddy. On Wednesday, the victim was at Kashipathi toddy compound and asked Nareesh to get her a toddy packet. The two were soon joined by Narsingh and Prasad. The victim then asked them for biryani and after having it, the trio took her to an isolated place on the service road of the ORR at Himayat Sagar and raped her in the bushes while she was in an inebriated condition. The trio then extorted her phone, gold chain and purse, before fleeing the scene” said K Kanakaiah, Inspector of Police, Rajendranagar.

Based on the complaint of the woman, the police registered a case and began an investigation. During the investigation, officials verified CCTV footage and the accused persons were identified. Based on a tip off, the trio were arrested on Friday. Upon interrogation, they confessed to the crime.

Cong campaign to gain momentum from today

K VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Congress will launch a full-fledged campaign from October 17 for the Huzurabad by-polls.

The party has announced its star campaigners and mandal in-charges and chief coordinators several days ago. However, most of the leaders have not gone to Huzurabad yet. Now, the party has decided to launch a vigorous campaign from Sunday onwards, making all leaders to go to Huzurabad.

On Saturday, party leaders had a Zoom meeting regarding this and decided to launch the campaign seriously from Sunday.

State Congress affairs in-charge Manickam Tagore is also coming for the campaign. Manickam will directly go to Huzurabad on Sunday evening to participate in the campaign, it is learnt.

However, the leaders will come back on Tuesday to participate

in the 31st Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavana Yatra program being held at Charminar as the Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavana Yatra Committee is presenting the Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavana Award to former Karnataka CM Veerappa Moily.

Later, the leaders will again take up serious campaigns from October 20 onwards.

It may be recalled that the Telangana Congress had announced NSUI state president Balmoor Venkat Narsing Rao as its candidate quite late, that too after conducting a long exercise changing the processes one after the other. However, only a few leaders are participating in the campaign. The main campaigners are yet to go to Huzurabad constituency.

The political parties have 12 days left for the campaign as the last date for campaigning is October 28. The election will be held on October 30, and the result will be announced on November 2.

TRS, BJP two sides of same coin: Sitakka

PNS ■ HUZURABAD

“TRS and BJP are two sides of the same coin”, Mulugu MLA Sitakka said here on Saturday.

Campaigning for Congress candidate Balmuri Venkat here, she said that the BJP and the TRS were hand in glove in staging histrionics.

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao had forgotten his assurances to the unemployed to provide jobs and the promise of giving three acres of land to landless Dalits. People would not trust the glib talk of KCR, she said.

Sitakka blamed the BJP and the TRS for the many deaths due to Covid-19. The NDA government had been trying to privatise sea ports, airways and the railways so as to entrust the nation’s infrastructure and assets to corporate players, she alleged.

“BJP wants to gift these entities set up during the Congress rule at throwaway prices to private parties,” she alleged.

Four held for daylight murder at Hashamabad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Chandrayangutta police nabbed four men for the murder of the 47 year old who was killed in broad daylight at Hashamabad on Wednesday.

The deceased, Hamed Bin Ali Zubedi, an NRI businessman was killed due to previous enmity, police said, adding that the accused were identified as Rayees Jabri, 23, Adil Jabri, 32, Syeed Saleh Jabri, 29, and Saad Bin

Saleh Jabri, 34, all from Chandrayangutta.

“Zubedi, who was a permanent resident of Dubai, was currently living at Salala in Barkas and previously was working with Jabri in Dubai. In 2019, while Jabri was returning to India, Zubedi handed over a bag containing gold, without informing him. Jabri was arrested by the Central Excise and Customs officials at the RGLA along with the smuggled gold weighing one

kilo and his passport was seized as well,” said the DCP of South Zone, Gajarao Bhupal.

At that time, Zubedi had promised Jabri and his family that he would provide employment to him and also take care of the case booked against him and further release the passport. “However, even after three years, he did not get the passport released or provide him employment. On Wednesday morning, the suspects went to

the victim’s house and confronted him about the promised help. However, he refused to help in any manner whatsoever,” added the official.

Boring a grudge, they decided to kill Zubedi and stabbed him with knives. He sustained injuries and succumbed on the spot. Officials seized two bikes, two knives and four mobile phones from them and they were produced before the court and remanded in judicial custody.

Sajjanar imposes fine on MGBS shop owners

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TSRTC Chairman VC Sajjanar has left his mark on his work. He has been concentrating on the development of the RTC as well as the welfare of RTC workers. At the same time he is also attending to other issues. He paid a surprise visit to MGBS and warned shops selling goods at high prices. He also imposed a big fine (Rs 1000) on small traders for selling biscuit packets at Rs 5 more than the prescribed prices.

Sajjanar also found fault with the toilet supervisors for collecting Rs 5 although the toilets are free to use. He also imposed a Rs 1000 fine on them too for collecting Rs 5 per person. He also warned shop owners not to sell the goods at prices more than the prescribed ones.

Sajjanar also asked people to lodge a complaint with him if shops overcharge on bottled water, biscuit packets and other things.



Heavy rush of Bhavani devotees at Durga temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Vijayawada Railway Station and Pandit Nehru Bus Station (PNBS) in the city were flooded with passengers after the Dasara Navaratri celebrations that concluded on Friday. General devotees, along with Bhavanis from various places, visited Goddess Kanaka Durga temple atop the Indrakeeladri hill and are on their way back to their native places, resulting in huge rush at the railway and bus stations.

The APSRTC has made arrangements for special services to help passengers reach their destinations.

Devotees from various parts of the State like Vizianagaram,

Visakhapatnam and Rayalaseema also visited the temple for Darshan. The RTC officials said that special buses are being run in view of the passengers returning to their respective places.

The RTC bus services are run following strict Covid guidelines and the RTC staff are alerting the passengers time and again to follow Covid rules who are in groups in the bus station. The Railways also runs special services to remote areas for the convenience of the passengers to reach them to their destinations.

Bhavani devotees in large numbers started visiting the temple from October 14 with ‘Jai Bhavani’ chants.

Telangana logs 111 new Covid cases, 1 death

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana on Saturday recorded 111 new Covid-19 cases, pushing the tally to 6,68,833 while the death toll rose to 3,937 with one more fatality.

The GHMC accounted for the most number of cases with 29, followed by Khammam (11) and Ranga Reddy districts (eight), a bulletin said while providing details as of 5.30 PM today.

The number of recoveries outnumbered fresh cases with 187 people recuperating from the infectious disease. The cumulative number of recoveries till date was 6,60,917.

The number of active cases was 3,979, the bulletin said. It said 30,050 samples were tested today and the total number of samples tested till date was 2,69,95,481. The samples tested per 10 lakh population were 7,25,295.

The case fatality rate in the State was 0.58 percent while it was 1.3 percent at the national-level. Similarly, the recovery rates were 98.81 percent and 98.07 percent respectively.

Telangana Congress leaders hope PCC ex-chief D Srinivas would rejoin party

K VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC chief A. Revanth Reddy’s meeting with the TRS Rajya Sabha Member and former PCC Chief D. Srinivas at the latter’s residence have sparked interest in Congress leaders.

Congress leaders are speculating that Revanth Reddy went to DS’s residence not only to call on the latter, but also to invite DS to join the Congress. The meeting succeeded in giving scope for hot discussions on DS’s re-entry into the Congress.

However, some Congress leaders are stating that DS may not join the Congress as his two sons are in different parties. His elder son and the first mayor of Nizamabad, D. Sanjay, is trying to join the Congress and younger son D. Arvind is an MP of the BJP from Nizamabad constituency, and hence it is not that easy for DS to rejoin the Congress.

Some are saying that DS’s re-entry into the Congress may impact his younger son D. Arvind and hence DS may not rejoin the Congress.

One Congress leader said that the present Telangana

Congress affairs in-charge Manickam Tagore made some leaders convince DS to rejoin the Congress. Some leaders approached DS, however, he refused to rejoin the party then. It is learnt that DS showed interest towards Congress during those discussions.

It is also learnt that even Revanth Reddy too went to DS’s residence following directions of the party high command. It may be recalled that DS met AICC chief Sonia Gandhi more than a year ago. However, DS didn’t join Congress then. It is learnt that

DS is interested in joining the Congress as he wants to continue in the party without quitting it in future.

However, his sons who are in two different political parties may not allow him to make a final decision.

However, Congress leaders are hoping that DS may join the Congress on December 9 on the birthday of Sonia Gandhi and on the same day the Telangana Congress is conducting a Vidyarthi Nirudyoga Jung Siren at the Parade Grounds on a grand note in which Rahul Gandhi is also participating.

Gaddiannaram fruit market shifted to Batasingaram

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The state government has shifted the Gaddiannaram Fruit Market from Kothapet to the Batasingaram Logistics Park of Abdullapurmet in Ranga Reddy district.

Education Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy inaugurated the temporary market at Batasingaram along with MLAs D. Sudhir Reddy and M. Kishan Reddy.

The Minister said the government has decided to construct a super specialty hospital at the Gaddiannaram Fruit



Market. It will also help to control the traffic.

She urged traders and com-

mission agents to extend their cooperation to the government.

Sabitha Indra Reddy said that the government will construct a permanent fruit market at Koheda of international standards as soon as possible if traders extend their support to the government.

She said that the government will take all measures to see that there is no problem in the sale and purchase of fruits. She also made it clear that the government is ready to solve any problem that may arise.

Marketing Department Director Laxmibai, the Collector, the SP and public representatives attended the programme.

Cops book 47,224 MV Act cases, collect Rs 1.44 cr

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Rachakonda Traffic Police have booked 47,224 traffic rule violators and have imposed fines amounting to Rs 1.44 crore during an enforcement drive to ensure road safety.

The traffic police have launched regular enforcement and special drives and have booked 47,224 cases under the MV Act and have imposed a fine of Rs 1,44,58,100. The police also held traffic awareness programmes for the general public from October 9 to October 15, the officials said.

The officials also conducted a drive to check drunk driving during the week and have booked 107 cases. The violators were counseled by TTI staff in the presence of parents and proper records are being maintained. After that 49 people were produced in court, and they were fined Rs 1,57,500.

“Out of the 107 cases, 86 were bikers, six three-wheelers



and 15 four-wheelers. Among the offenders 45 were aged between 21-30, 34 between 31-40, 20 between 21-50, 20 between 51-60, two between 18-20 and two aged above 60,” said the officials.

As part of the objective to eliminate accidents, the Rachakonda Police have been conducting traffic awareness programmes to raise awareness among the public, students and drivers. Police said 1,633 persons attended the 66 programmes on awareness and 66 attended drunk driving coun-

seling sessions.

Between October 9 and 15, 55 road accidents, including 10 fatal and 45 non-fatal in which 43 individuals were injured, were reported in Rachakonda.

“As per the road accident data analysis it was found that most of the accidents occurred due to human error and road defects. The negligence of drivers, speeding, driving after consuming alcohol, and skidding were the most common reasons for accidents. “Traffic engineering cell staff

Without helmet	26,508
Fine amount	49,05,100
Without seatbelt	254
Fine amount	25,400
Without driving license	1,014
Fine amount	5,07,000
Extra passengers	45
Fine amount	8,900
Extra projection	355
Fine amount	35,500
Speeding	1,479
Fine amount	14,79,000
Signal jumping	265
Fine amount	Rs 2,65,000
Dangerous driving	36
Fine amount	36,000
Cell phone driving	91
Fine amount	91,000

and other stakeholders visited eight fatal accident spots. Law and order and traffic police studied the reasons for the road accidents. Short term, midterm and long term remedial measures to prevent accidents were taken,” the officials said.

Biker killed in road mishap

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A person was killed and another was injured in a road accident at Moinabad on Saturday after the rider of a bike lost control.

The deceased, Pinuel Sabar, 36, was riding the bike, bearing the number AP 29 AT 4672, while one Ajay was riding pillion, said the police.

They were proceeding from Gandipet to Sujatha School on their motorcycle and the biker is suspected to have lost control near Aziznagar Masjid turning and fell down. They sustained bleeding injuries on their heads and were rushed to a private hospital by a patrol van of Moinabad Police. The doctors declared that Sabar had died and Ajay was shifted to the Osmania Hospital for treatment,” the police said.

TS coal for State only: Vinod Kumar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Planning Board vice-president B Vinod Kumar on Saturday urged the authorities of the Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) not to move coal elsewhere from the Bhupalapally mines and to use the coal produced in Tadicharla mines for the thermal power plant at Bhupalapally.

Vinod made these remarks in view of the severe coal shortage being experienced in thermal power stations across the country due to logistical and other reasons.

In view of the crisis, coal

producer states were not willing to move coal elsewhere as they wanted the coal for their captive power generation, he said.

Some elders in the government are understood to have issued oral orders to

SCCL authorities, asking them to move coal to other places from Tadicharla mines.

Vinod Kumar questioned the rationale of the Centre in starving Bhupalapally Thermal Power Station to benefit other thermal power stations in the country. He demanded the Centre to put a full stop to the idea of sourcing coal from the Tadicharla coal mines.



Woman Maoist surrenders

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Area Committee Member of Maoist party Korra Kumari and Seed Mettoguda village, G K Veedhi mandal, voluntarily surrendered before Krishna Ran, Superintendent of Police, Visakhapatnam District and Commandant, CRPF Kavindra Kumar Chand on Saturday.

The 26-year-old Kumari was very much attracted towards revolutionary speeches and songs of the Maoists and their acts joined in the party in 2009. She was also influenced by her uncle G Jambon, who was already an active member in the dalam with the encouragement of Galikonda Dalam Commander Krishna and Vasantha. Later, she was promoted as a Dalam Member in 2010 and Area Committee Member (ACM) in 2015. Since 2015, she has been working as ACM in Pedabylu Dalam. She is a key member in Pedabayalu Committee. She is well familiarized with interior villages and places as she belongs to the local Kondu tribe. She played a crucial role in several exchanges of fires held at Thadakapalli, Tergalametta and Landulu. She was also involved in several landmine blasts and murder incidents. She was an accused in 46 offences and six murder cases, the SP said.

Konda backs Eatala in Huzurabad by-poll

PNS ■ HUZURABAD

Former Member of Parliament Konda Visweswar Reddy has been supporting Eatala Rajender for his victory in the Huzurabad by-elections.

Visweswar Reddy, who quit the Congress, has not joined any party. Therefore, he said, he was free to support Rajender. He described the by-election as "a fight between egoism of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao and the people".

Claiming to have no love lost for Eatala, Visweswar Reddy, recalling how Eatala had played a major role to defeat him in the elections last time, said that Eatala was



working for liberating Telangana from the clutches of the father-son duo. So, he was setting aside minor differences with Eatala.

Visweswar Reddy wished Eatala would win in the Huzurabad by-poll. He said TRS was no longer a party that

had spearheaded the movement for statehood to Telangana. He called it as the party of 'Telangana saboteurs'. Those who had sabotaged the interests of Telangana had become ministers in the KCR Cabinet, he pointed out. It was Eatala who really fought for Telangana. For his mistake of raising his voice against the father and son duo, Eatala was shown the door from the party on charges of land encroachments. In fact, the way to CM K Chandrasekhar Rao's farmhouse was through assigned lands. Mentioning that many in the TRS were involved in land encroachments, he wondered why the government had failed to take action against them.

Police reunite stolen infant with parents within hours

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The police unravelled the mystery behind the stealing of an infant from the delivery ward in the Government General Hospital and reunited the new-born with the parents within a few hours.

Police said that a ward boy, Hema Varun, stole the three-day-old boy. The police examined the CCTV footage and found the ward boy taking away the infant in a bag.

Three days ago a woman, Priyanka gave birth to a baby boy in the GGH. The maternal and paternal grandmothers of the infant took him to the veranda for fresh air. However, the ward boy stole the infant from them. The parents of the infant Mahesh and Priynaka lodged a complaint with the Kothapet police station.

The police noticed the ward boy, along with a woman, Padma, taking the infant from the hospital in a bag. The police arrested the ward boy and Padma in a house in Nehru Nagar here on Friday night.

No power cuts in AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The power purchase price in the open market dropped from Rs 20 to Rs 6.11 per unit on Friday, giving the much-needed relief to the AP government to ensure no power cuts in the state.

The power purchase price in the open market dropped from Rs 20 to Rs 6.11 per unit on Friday, giving the much-needed relief to the AP government which has been looking to scale up electricity generation.

The coal supply has also improved to eight rakes though the State government had sought the Centre to allot 20 more coal rakes. However, the GENCO plants have coal stocks that will last only three-and-a-half days while power plants usually keep the buffer stock for a week to 15 days.

High power purchase cost in the open market was a tipping point for a week as Andhra Pradesh, along with other states, has been struggling to generate power due to meagre supply of coal and is dependent upon the open market purchases.

As of Saturday, the RTPP has the coal stock that lasts for 3.66 days. The Krishnapatnam plant has had the stocks for



3.15 days. VTPS has coal stocks left for 0.61 days. RTPP requires around 21,000 MTs of coal per day for full power generation and Krishnapatnam requires 19,000MTs. VTPS requires around 28,500 MTs of coal per day. APGENCO thermal plants received 24,000 tons of coal on an average per day in September-2021 as against the total requirement of 70,000

tons per day which was improved to 40,000 tons per day on the request of the Andhra Pradesh government recently. Now, eight more rakes have been added to the daily supply. Incidentally, as per the data available in the last five days, Andhra Pradesh's power deficit was less than 1.22 MU when compared to other states that had been facing a deficit of an average of 8 to 10 MU.

‘Jagan has a long-term vision, big picture in mind’

Sajjala tells The Pioneer

Top aide of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy and Government Advisor (Public affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy is a vital link between the YSRCP government and the public. Known for his knack to gauge the public mood and understand their needs, Ramakrishna Reddy, endearingly called 'SRK', acts as a bridge between people and the Chief Minister's Office. Also the general secretary of the ruling YSRCP, SRK, in an interview with The Pioneer's AP Bureau chief SNV SUDHIR, discussed wide-ranging issues related to the state government's performance, state's finances, welfare thrust of the YSRCP government, infrastructure development, Centre-state relations, flip flops in stances of TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu and Jana Sena supremo Pawan Kalyan, among others.



vision behind every promise he made then. Since the promises were made after deep thinking, they are being implemented in the state without any hitches. Over a period of two years of the government all those dots have been connected for people to envision the big picture of the welfare state in the making. Delivering all those promises in the first two years of the government is a record of sorts. Schemes like Amma Vodi, Nadu Nedu in the education sector; and introducing English as the medium of instruction in government schools will enable the state to reap rich benefits in the long run. Such is the long-term vision of the Chief Minister. Such efforts should be sustained and continued for the state's progress and prosperity of the future generations. And, to help the government continue those efforts, I am sure people will give a mandate again to Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy; it is also a historic necessity.

Govt put money in the hands of the public to save families from going into financial distress due to Covid

In view of the unprecedented and precarious times of the Covid-19 pandemic, financial experts and wizards across the world have been suggesting that money should be put in the pockets of people, especially those from the lower income groups. And, that is what our government has been doing over the last one and half years, while keeping the wheels of the economy running. The government could put at least Rs 1 lakh crore in the hands of the public through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) under various schemes that have helped every family in the state tide over their financial crisis. For that to happen, the state government has to borrow some money and this is being done by many other states and the Centre as well.

Connecting the dots for realizing the big picture

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has a long-term vision and it has been proved beyond doubt in the last two years of his governance. During the historic 'Praja Sankalpa Yatra' that he undertook before the polls, we were all a little apprehensive whether the series of promises he had been making then could be implemented. However, it is now clear that there was a deep thought process and a long-term

Visibility of infrastructure and developmental programmes low, but a lot is happening in the ground:

It is a false propaganda that the state government is not focusing on development and infrastructure creation in the state. Due to the resounding success of our welfare schemes, the visibility of developmental works is low. The Chief Minister deals with every issue from the basics and goes to the very crux. The state government has already launched works to develop sea ports that will drive the state's economy. EMC and the Industrial Park in Koppurthy are taking shape, for which a few investments have already been lined up. An integrated steel plant will come up in Kadapa sooner or

The Jagan govt inherited debts that had been used for unproductive works by the previous administration

later. Tirupati EMC has again started attracting new investments. Plans are afoot to develop new airports. Are these not part of developing infrastructure for overall growth of the state? Many irrigation projects are also being built and they will help the farming sector in the long run and benefit the state's economy.

Centre-State relations fine; hopeful of the Centre's help when needed:

We are hopeful that the Centre will extend a helping hand to Andhra Pradesh if there is a need to sustain welfare schemes that benefit people, especially those from the underprivileged and marginalised classes. Our government's policy is to do whatever it takes to get the maximum from the Centre for the benefit of our state. The interests of the state are paramount for this government. Politics can wait. If there be need, we will not hesitate to assert ourselves over the Centre and bring pressure to safeguard the interests of Andhra Pradesh.

Naidu lost god-sent golden opportunity to develop AP:

Telugu Desam Party chief N Chandrababu Naidu lost and did not utilise a god-sent golden opportunity to develop the state. He could have constructed the Polavaram irrigation project, which is considered the lifeline of Andhra Pradesh. He destroyed the State during his rule between 2014 and 2019, though people gave him an opportunity and elected him in 2014. Since he could not utilise the opportunity properly, he was sent packing by people. For the first two years of his rule, he was sitting quiet without any progress on the Polavaram works. When the Centre handed over the project to the state, then he started work on the Polavaram and that too moved at a snail's pace. Now, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy is ready to unveil a historic milestone of completing the spillway of the Polavaram project.

No space for communal politics; AP state is known for religious harmony:

Unfortunately, certain forces are trying to ignite passions in the name of faith as well as religion and bring communal politics to the centre-stage in Andhra Pradesh. However, they will not be successful in their attempts. Our state has never witnessed such communal agenda in the past. Andhra Pradesh is known for co-existence of people amid religious harmony. Attempts to disturb such harmony will be thwarted.

Liquor worth Rs 100 cr sold on Dasara day

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Liquor worth Rs 100 crore was sold in the state on Dasara day. On Thursday alone, liquor worth Rs 178 crore was sent to wine shops and bars from depots.

Moreover, due to a let-up in the Covid-19 situation, beer sales have improved by 53 per cent and liquor sales by 34 per cent, according to excise officials.

With the pandemic situation largely under control, beer sales have increased far more than that of hard liquor. Earlier, people did not show interest in consuming beer out of fear of contracting the virus. Until two months ago, beer sales were at their lowest levels. However, beer sales have increased all of a sudden.

Thanks to the completion of the vaccination programme at many places, weakening of the grip of the virus, beer sales have increased by 53 per cent. Along with it, liquor sales have



also increased. The increase in the sales of liquor was put at 34 per cent. In October last year, liquor sales were pegged at Rs 2,623 crore, as against Rs 1,400 crore in 11 days in October this

year. Going by the sales progress, October this year will account for sales of over Rs 3,000 crore worth liquor.

The state government had set a target of earning Rs

30,000 crore this year through sales of liquor during the current year. The government will reach the target without fail, say excise officials exuding confidence.

Six people die, a dozen missing as rains lash Kerala

PNS ■ KOTTAYAM/IDUKKI

At least six people died and a dozen were missing on Saturday as heavy rains pounded south and central Kerala causing flash floods and landslides in many parts, prompting the state government to seek the assistance of the defence forces for rescue operations.

Several people have been injured and displaced in rain-related incidents in the southern state where dams in many districts are nearing its full capacity and small towns and villages in the hilly areas are totally cut off from the outside world.

Many hilly areas of Kottayam, Idukki and Pathanamthitta are experiencing almost similar to that of the situation the state faced during the time of devastating floods of 2018 and 2019 but authorities said everything was under control and there was no need for any panic.

However, the rescue teams



BJP holds protest march in Latur for affected farmers

LATUR: The BJP began a protest padayatra (foot march) from Ausa in Latur to Tuljapur in Osmanabad on Saturday demanding relief for farmers whose crops were damaged in heavy rains recently. BJP MLA Abhimanyu Pawar, who led the protest, said farmers have been left penniless as their Kharif crop has been destroyed, and demanded that the MVA government issue compensation without delay, so that sowing for the Rabi season is not affected.

of the state police and fire force could not reach the affected areas due to floods and adverse weather conditions prevailing

there. "The situation is serious", Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said. He, however, said the lat-

est weather forecast indicates that the situation is not going to get worse.

Officials said personnel of the Army, Air Force and the Navy were on the way to Kootickal and Peruvanthanam--the two hilly villages falling under Kottayam and Idukki districts respectively--where an overflowing river swept through houses, displacing and isolating many.

State Cooperation Minister V N Vasavan, who reached the neighbourhood of these landslide-hit villages, said bodies of two women and a child who died, were recovered while search was on to recover the body of a man who also lost his life in the incident.

He said at least 12 people are missing from these villages.

In a separate rain related incident, a man and a woman--both 30-years-old-- died as their car was swept away in the flood waters in Kanjar in Idukki district, police said. Their bodies have been recovered, they said.

LeT commander among two militants killed in encounter in J&K's Pulwama

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Two militants, including Lashkar-e-Taiba commander Umar Mushtaq Khandey, were killed in an encounter with security forces in Pampore area of Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district on Saturday, a senior police officer said.

Khandey was allegedly involved in the killing of two policemen here earlier this year. "LeT terrorist Umar Mustaq Khandey who martyred our 2 colleagues SgCT Mohammad Yousf and Ct Suhail Ah in Baghat Srinagar while they were having tea, #neutralised in Drangbal, Pampore. Amongst various other crimes of the terrorists, this stands out as most unforgivable," Inspector General of Police, Kashmir, Vijay Kumar said in a tweet.

"We are committed to hunt down these terrorists who try to create fear among masses and spread mischief & tumult in the valley. Such elements and their name should be excised from society," he said.

Another unidentified militant was also killed in the

Senior police officer denies security lapse

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

A senior Jammu and Kashmir Police officer on Saturday ruled out any security lapse behind the recent civilian killings in the Valley and said that it is not possible to provide security to all those who may be soft targets for terrorists. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a function here, Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir, Vijay Kumar said that none of the civilians killed last week had been provided security by the police. Seven civilians, including four from minority communities, were killed by terrorists in Kashmir last week, triggering fear among the people in the Valley and criticism of the security apparatus by political parties. "There was no lapse in security... They (terrorists)



chose soft targets, we had not provided security to them (civilians). It is not possible to provide security to all soft targets," Kumar said. He said security forces acted swiftly and identified all five terrorists involved in the killings. "Two of them have been neutralised and the other three will also be tracked down

soon," he added. Dismissing criticism of the security apparatus by politicians, Kumar said the police are dealing with the situation professionally. "It is the job of politicians to make all kinds of statements. I am a professional and I know how to deal with it (situation). We are dealing with it professionally," he said. The IGP said that 11 terrorists have been killed in nine encounters since October 8. "Two more are trapped (in an encounter at Pampore) and they will also be killed soon," he said. Many political leaders had criticised the Centre and the security forces over the civilian killings in Kashmir. Some had also demanded that accountability be fixed for the "repeated security lapses" and security be provided to members of minority communities living in the Valley.

Pampore encounter, a police official said, adding that arms and ammunition were recov-

ered from the spot. Khandey's name figured in the list of top 10 militants who the security

forces were targeting since the hit list was released by the police in August this year.

4 CRPF jawans injured after fuse box goes off on train

PNS ■ RAIPUR/NEW DELHI

Four CRPF jawans were injured when an ammunition fuse box exploded when it was being loaded on a train at the Raipur station on Saturday, according to an official statement.

On Saturday morning, the 211 Company of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) was in the train when ammunition was being loaded, it said.

"Boxes of arms and ammunition were being loaded on the train by Head Constable Vikas Lakshman and other jawans. The ammunition fuse box exploded in Lakshman's hand near the toilet of the train's compartment," the CRPF statement said.

Due to the fuse box explosion, Lakshman got injured and he was immediately admitted to the Sreenarayana hospital in Raipur, it said.

Pragya Thakur irked over posters calling her 'missing MP'

PNS ■ BHOPAL

Lashing out at a Madhya Pradesh Congress legislator over posters which declared her to be missing during the Covid-19 pandemic, BJP MP from Bhopal Pragya Thakur has said "such Congressmen and traitors" have no place in India.

After her outburst during a Dussehra program held here on Friday night, Congress MLA from Bhopal South PC Sharma, who was present, left in a huff.

During the program, Thakur also took a veiled swipe at Congress veteran Digvijaya Singh, saying a person cannot become pious only by undertaking Narmada Parikrama, a pilgrimage along the banks of the Narmada river.

"Animals also have feelings. When its offspring dies or falls sick, an animal cries. But these people are worse than animals. (They) Do not treat the sick as sick. At first, they tortured (me) and when I got sick, they put up missing posters about me," Thakur told the gathering at



MVM Ground here.

"Shame on such people that they become MLAs. Such people do not deserve to become MLAs, but they did. Such people call themselves Hindu, but they are insensitive. They attack us. They weep over those who kill us. Shame on such Congressmen, shame on such traitors and I say there is no place for them in India. Only patriots will remain in India," she said.

The nation is with Hindus as "they are patriots," Thakur added.

"If patriots understand their strength, then the country's borders will be protected, India will be integrated and the country will achieve glory," said the Member of Parliament who is an accused in the 2008 Malegaon blast case.

Thakur also said no 'adhar-mi' (heretic) can become pious by undertaking Narmada Parikrama, an apparent reference to Digvijaya Singh. The senior Congress leader had undertaken the 3,300-km pilgrimage in 2017.

Thakur, who defeated Singh in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, has targeted the Congress leader in the past too.

Congress MLA Sharma, who left the event halfway through after Thakur attacked him in her speech, told PTI on Saturday, "It was a social platform and not a political one where she made political comments. It was a Dussehra program, but she insulted those who undertake Narmada Parikrama, whoever her target may be. This is condemnable.

NC leader Abdul Rahim's son Hilal Rather joins People's Conference

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Hilal Rather, son of veteran National Conference leader Abdul Rahim Rather, joined the Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference on Saturday.

Rather, who is out on bail in a case related to diversion of loan money taken from Jammu and Kashmir Bank, joined the People's Conference in the presence of party chairman Sajad Gani Lone.

Asked if he had consulted his father and NC leader Abdul Rahim Rather on joining Lone's party, Rather replied in the negative.

"I respect my father and he has been magnanimous in giving me space to take my own decisions. I have taken this decision on my own," he said.

Rather said he chose People's Conference as he wanted to work for the youth of Jammu and Kashmir who have immensely suffered due to the ongoing conflict.

Asked why he did not join the National Conference, he said he did not want to do "negative politics".

"I want to do positive politics," he asserted.

While welcoming Rather into the party, Lone said the People's Conference has arrived.

"Let there be no delusions...There are many who refuse to see reality as it exists and want to create reality as they want to see it.

"We have come, we have arrived and we will conquer for the betterment of people of Jammu and Kashmir," Lone added.



REJECTION OF TESTIMONIES

Delay in recording eyewitness statement not valid ground: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mere delay in recording the statements of eyewitnesses cannot result in rejection of their testimonies, the Supreme Court has said while dismissing an appeal by four people challenging their conviction in a murder case. A bench headed by Justice U U Lalit said the material on record definitely establishes the fear created by the accused persons.

"It is true that there was some delay in recording the statements of the eyewitnesses concerned but mere factum of delay by itself cannot result in rejection of their testimonies," the bench, also comprising Justice S Ravindra Bhat and Justice Bela M Trivedi, said. The top court said if witness-



es felt terrorised and frightened and did not come forward for some time, the delay in recording their statements stood adequately explained.

Nothing has been brought on record to suggest that during the interregnum, the witnesses were carrying on their ordinary pursuits, the bench said in its October 7 order.

The top court was hearing appeals filed by four accused challenging the order passed by the Calcutta High Court dismissing their pleas and confirming their conviction and sentence recorded by the Sessions Judge, Malda, under Sections 302 (murder), 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code read with Section 27(3) of the Arms Act, 1959.

The counsel appearing for the appellants told the apex court about the testimonies of two eyewitnesses and submitted that the delay in recording their statements respectively would be fatal to the case of the prosecution. He submitted that no explanation was forthcoming why there was a delay in recording their statements and apart from the testimonies of the two witnesses, there was nothing on record to justify the conviction of the appellants. The counsel appearing for the State on the other hand submitted that the terror unleashed by the accused was of such magnitude that the concerned witnesses had fled and that it was only after the appropriate steps were taken by the investigating machinery, including the arrest of the accused, that the witnesses came forward.

NSG's counter-drone protection to IAF J&K stations

PNS ■ GURGAON

Counter-terrorism commando force National Security Guard has been deployed at the IAF Srinagar and Jammu stations to provide anti-drone cover to these vital installations, the force's director general M A Ganapathy said on Saturday.

The first-ever drone attack took place on June 27 at the Indian Air Force (IAF) station in Jammu where two unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), which came from across the border, dropped bombs, injuring two airmen and damaging a portion of a building.

The two IAF facilities in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir are located close to the Pakistan border and are categorised as "sensitive" installations.

The National Security Guard (NSG) chief said the



federal counter-terrorist and counter-hijack commando force is enhancing its "counter-terrorism profile" and preparing itself to meet emerging security challenges.

He was speaking during the 37th raising day celebrations of the force, also known as 'black cats', at its garrison in Manesar here.

Ganapathy said the NSG "has been deployed" at the Srinagar and Jammu IAF stations to provide security cover

to the facilities against drone attacks and this system is working "successfully."

A senior officer added that this deployment "will continue till full-fledged counter-drone weapons and gadgets are deployed at these two bases".

He said the NSG has an array of anti-drone equipment, radars, jammers and drone killer guns that essentially work for perimeter security.

Soon after the drone attack on the Jammu IAF base, he said, an NSG 'technical surveillance' team was sent to the station which deployed its equipment there and the arrangement was stationed at the base.

Officiating as the chief guest of the event, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai lauded the commando force for its operations and said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has brought an "independent security policy" for the country.

Imtiaz Ali appointed as ambassador of Russian Film Festival

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Director-producer Imtiaz Ali has been roped in as the ambassador of the Russian Film Festival in India.

As part of the festival, ten notable Russian films of various genres will be premiered for Indian audiences on Disney+ Hotstar from October 16 to November 27.

Ali said the festival will act as a ground for many future cinematic collaborations between the India and Russia. "Russia and India have cultural ties that go back a long way. Film stars like Raj Kapoor and Mithun Chakraborty have

been very popular in Russia and at the same time, Russian music and cinema have been a part of popular culture in India.

"I invite all Indian viewers to catch them from 16th October onwards and forge many more cinematic collaborations between the two great cultures," the filmmaker, known for movies like "Love Aaj Kal", "Jab We Met", "Rockstar" and "Tamasha", said in a statement.

Olga Lyubimova, Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation said the Russian Film Festival is one of the most effective ways to promote the domestic content abroad.



"The international audience shows interest in Russian films and animation. The festival will help to strengthen the current links between the film

industries and exchange ideas.

"Russia and India are already cooperating in the field of cinematography through the BRICS. I am sure that thanks to the convenient online format of the festival, we will be able to expand the audience of the Russian projects and attract new viewers," Lyubimova said.

Sarfraz Alam, festival director, Russian Film Festival said they intend to bring films from Russia regularly to India in future.

"Russian films offer emotions and genres of all kinds and cover a wide range of stories that everyone can relate to. As the Indian audience watch-

es more international content now, this film festival offers them a new form of content to explore and enjoy," Alam said.

Spokesperson, Disney+ Hotstar said they are delighted to present Russian movies on their platform to the audience.

"Our endeavour is to provide viewers with quality entertainment experiences in a manner that allows them to immerse themselves in stories they wish to see," the spokesperson said.

The festival brings celebrated and popular romances, dramas, and comedies from Russia like "Ice", "On the Edge", "Tell Her", "Doctor Liza", "The

Relatives", "Another Woman!", "Jetlag", among others, which will be shown with English subtitles.

The first-ever online Russian Film Festival in India is organized by ROSKINO with the support of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, the Cinema Fund, the Moscow City Tourism Committee, Discover Moscow, Rosstrudnichestvo, and with the assistance of Kartina Entertainment.

The festival was launched in 2020 and has already been successfully held in 14 countries, with more than 200 thousand viewers.

INDIA CORNER

Two arrested for threatening to kill vocalist Ustad Rashid Khan



Two persons were arrested for allegedly threatening to kill renowned vocalist Ustad Rashid Khan, police said on Saturday. The duo, former employees of Khan, also demanded money from him, they said. One of the accused, an ex-office assistant of the ace musician, was apprehended from Uttar

Pradesh, while his former driver was nabbed from Kolkata, a senior police officer said. "They initially demanded Rs 50 lakh as 'protection money' and later reduced the amount to Rs 20 lakh, and threatened to kill Khan if the sum was not paid," he said. Khan, a stalwart of Indian classical music honoured with the Padma Shri and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, told reporters that his family members had filed a complaint at Netaji Nagar Police Station on October 9. "My daughter could make out from the messages that they were our former driver and his assistant. They had threatened to attack my family with snipers and drones and we couldn't ignore this," he said.

PM Modi to visit Kedarnath on November 5



Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Kedarnath on November 5 to offer prayers and inaugurate Kedarpuri reconstruction projects worth Rs 250 crore. This will be his second visit to the state within a month. The prime minister had visited the All Indian Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Rishikesh on October 7 to inaugurate an oxygen plant there. Confirming Modi's visit to Kedarnath next month, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said apart from offering prayers at the Himalayan temple, the prime minister is likely to inaugurate Kedarpuri reconstruction projects worth Rs 250 crore, including the rebuilt Samadhi of Adi Guru Shankaracharya. The prime minister is also likely to lay foundation stones of second phase of Kedarpuri reconstruction projects worth Rs 150 crore, Dhami said. Modi has visited Kedarnath several times since becoming prime minister in 2014. He could not come to Kedarnath last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ex-PM Manmohan Singh diagnosed with dengue



Former prime minister Manmohan Singh has been diagnosed with dengue but his health condition is improving, AIIMS officials said Saturday. The 89-year-old Congress leader was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here Wednesday evening after he complained of weakness following a fever. "He has been diagnosed with

dengue but his platelet count is now increasing and his condition is improving," an AIIMS official said Saturday. Singh has been admitted to a private ward in the cardio-neuro centre of the hospital and is under the care of a team of cardiologists led by Dr Nitish Naik. Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya met Singh on Thursday and enquired about his health. A row erupted after Mandaviya's visit as he allegedly took a photographer with him while visiting the former prime minister. Manmohan Singh's daughter, Daman Singh, had hit out at Mandaviya for getting a photographer against the wishes of the family.

Jharkhand Congress leader found murdered at home



A 60-year-old Congress leader was found murdered and his wife critically injured at their residence in Jharkhand's Ramgarh district on Saturday, police said. During preliminary investigation, it was found that unidentified people entered the residence of former Congress district general secretary Kamlesh Narayan Sharma in Central Saunda Colony in Bhurkunda police outpost area through a window on Friday night and bludgeoned him to death with an iron rod and critically injured his wife Chanchala Sharma, an officer said. The 55-year-old woman was rushed to Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) in Ranchi, where her condition is stated to be critical, he said. Ramgarh Superintendent of Police Prabhat Kumar said that it is a case of murder and all possible angles are being investigated to ascertain the motive.

FM meets top WTO official in US

India's push for IPR waiver on COVID-19 vaccine

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday met the Director General of WTO Ngozi Okonjo Iweala here in the US amidst India's proposal for a temporary waiver of intellectual property rights on COVID-19 vaccines and medicines worldwide.

The meeting between Sitharaman and Iweala took place on the sidelines of the World Bank and IMF annual meetings. "Union Finance Minister Smt. @nsitharaman interacts with Dr. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala @NOIweala, Director General @WTO on the sidelines of @WorldBank-@IMFNews Annual Meetings 2021 in Washington D.C., today," the Ministry of Finance said on Twitter.

The meeting assumes significance as India along with South Africa has been pushing



for a temporary waiver of intellectual property rights on COVID-19 vaccines and medicines globally.

India in June suggested to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) members to begin text-based negotiations on the temporary TRIPs waiver proposal to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. In October 2020,

India and South Africa had submitted the first proposal, suggesting a waiver for all WTO members on the implementation of certain provisions of the TRIPs Agreement in relation to the prevention, containment or treatment of COVID-19.

In May this year, a revised proposal was submitted by 62 co-sponsors, including India,

South Africa and Indonesia.

The agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights or TRIPs came into effect in January 1995. It is a multilateral agreement on Intellectual Property (IP) rights such as copyright, industrial designs, patents and protection of undisclosed information or trade secrets.

IMF hails India's 'swift and substantial' response

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

Describing the Indian government's response to the COVID-19 situation as "swift and substantial", the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said the country continued with labour reforms and privatisation despite the pandemic. The IMF in its report based on "consultations" among members, however, sounded a note of caution saying that the economic outlook remains "clouded" due to pandemic-related uncertainties, contributing to both downside and upside risks.

In its "Article IV" consultations report, it further said that a persistent negative impact of COVID-19 on investment and other growth drivers could prolong the economic recovery.

Another hike takes petrol, diesel prices to new record

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Petrol and diesel price on Saturday was hiked again by 35 paise a litre to take retail rates across the country to new record highs.

With this hike, petrol is now at Rs 100-a-litre mark or more in all state capitals, while diesel has touched the 100-level in a dozen states. Diesel is nearing Rs 100-a-litre mark in Goa and Bengaluru.

The price of petrol in Delhi rose to its highest-ever level of Rs 105.49 a litre and Rs 111.43 per litre in Mumbai, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

In Mumbai, diesel now comes for Rs 102.15 a litre; while in Delhi, it costs Rs 94.22. This is the third straight day of 35 paise per litre hike in petrol and diesel prices. There was no change in rates on October 12 and 13.

Since ending of a three-week long hiatus in rate revision in the last week of September, this is the 15th increase in petrol price and the 18th time that diesel rates have gone up.

While petrol price in most of the country is already above Rs 100-a-litre mark, diesel rates have crossed that level in



a dozen states/UT including Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chattisgarh, Bihar, Kerala, Karnataka and Ladakh. In Panaji, diesel now costs Rs 99.56 a litre while in Bengaluru it comes for Rs 99.97 per litre and Silvassa for Rs 99.86.

Prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes.

Shedding the modest price change policy, state-owned fuel retailers have since October 6 started passing on the larger incidence of cost to consumers.

This is because the international benchmark Brent crude is trading at USD 84.8 per barrel for the first time in seven years.

A month back, Brent was trading at USD 73.51.

Being a net importer of oil, India prices petrol and diesel at rates equivalent to international prices.

The surge in international oil prices ended a three-week hiatus in rates on September 28 for petrol and September 24 for diesel. Since then, diesel rates have gone up by Rs 5.6 per litre and petrol price has increased by Rs 4.30 a litre.

Sitharaman discusses climate with World Bank chief

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman discussed the post-pandemic economic recovery, India's major role in the global fight against COVID-19 and preparations for the upcoming Climate Change Conference among other issues during her meeting with World Bank President David Malpass.

Sitharaman met Malpass at the World Bank headquarters in Washington DC on Friday.

"Both sides discussed various issues including #COVID

#vaccination, #economicrecovery, preparations for #CoP26, initiative of #WBG for increasing lending space for India, IDA 20 replenishment, knowledge partnership with @WorldBank," Finance Ministry said in a series of tweets.

During the meeting, Sitharaman shared the measures being taken by India to contain the spread of the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic, including the major role played by India on the global COVID-19 effort, the ministry said.

She appreciated the World

Bank Group for their initiative for increasing lending space for India to enhance availability of finance for development.

The minister also mentioned that the focus should be on technologies that need to be moved from lab to field and those that require targeted global research in the pursuit of low carbon growth.

She "highlighted three broad suggestions, including strengthening #Lighthouse India, #technology and special focus on #Financial Sector Reforms and #infrastructure sector to strengthen the knowledge partnership with

#WBG," it said.

Earlier, in her address to the Development Committee of the World Bank, she said India has not only faced the COVID-19 crisis with great resilience and fortitude but has also played a major role and "walked the talk" on the global fight against the pandemic.

She highlighted that the measures taken by the government have set a strong foundation of the country's sustained economic growth.

She said the Indian government, besides taking economic relief measures, has also

undertaken significant structural reforms to turn the crisis into an opportunity and emerge stronger.

The minister also discussed the preparations for the upcoming Climate Change Conference in Glasgow.

From here, she will go to New York for an interactive session with the business community before flying back home. She started her week-long trip from Boston.

In addition to her meetings at the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, Sitharaman had more than 25 bilateral engagements.



MM Forgings acquires CAFOMA Autoparts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Auto components maker MM Forgings Ltd (MMF) on Saturday said it has acquired CAFOMA Autoparts for a total consideration of Rs 33 crore. The deal to acquire CAFOMA, one of the large independent suppliers of machined crankshafts catering to the tractor and industrial segments, includes a sum of Rs 28 crore in cash and Rs 5 crore in debt, the company said in a regulatory filing. The acquisition will

help the company reach 60,000 machined crankshafts per month, MMF said adding the combined entity is expected to become a full-fledged supplier of machined crankshafts to various sectors including automotive, commercial vehicles, exports, farm equipment, industrial and marine applications. CAFOMA has a capacity to produce 15,000 crankshafts per month and is presently machining 5,000 crankshafts per month on job work basis, it added.

Brexit fears started hitting UK trade as early as 2015 – new research

PNS ■ LONDON

After the UK formally left the EU at the end of 2020, it experienced a dramatic fall in trade. The media was full of stories about lengthy hold-ups at customs and empty shelves in supermarkets.

This has included cliff-edge falls in exports of agricultural produce like beef, milk and cheese, for example, after the UK and EU failed to agree an alignment in standards that would have enabled free trade to continue.

There has since been some improvement, with the latest figures showing that exports and imports with the EU in the three months to August 2021 were better than the three months before. Equally, however, there

is evidence that the UK has lost market share in Europe due to Brexit, as the EU's imports from other countries have picked up following the COVID crisis.

Yet the raw export and import figures alone can only tell you so much about what has happened to British trade. You need to disentangle the effects of Brexit from from a myriad of other variables that can skew the numbers – not least COVID. This is a complicated problem that will take some time to resolve, even though the large relative fall in UK exports to Europe suggests that Brexit is the main culprit.

At the same time, however, it would be wrong to focus too much on 2021 when looking at the effects of Brexit on UK trade.

It shows for the first time that fears about Brexit weakened the UK's trading position long before the vote to leave the EU even took place. It also points to a long-term adjustment in trading relationships that will continue for many years to come.

Our approach

We originally started examining the effects of the Brexit vote back in 2017. Using the same method that has in fact just won the Nobel prize for economics, we sought to screen out other effects on the data by comparing the UK's exports to particular EU countries before and after the June 2016 referendum with other pairs of comparable trading nations.

India seeks Observer status for International Solar Alliance

PNS ■ UNITED NATIONS

Underlining that the International Solar Alliance will usher in a new era of "green energy diplomacy", India introduced a draft resolution in the UN General Assembly for granting Observer Status for the global initiative that would help provide for regular cooperation between ISA and the United Nations, benefiting global energy growth and development.

The ISA was jointly launched by India and France in 2015 at the 21st Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework



Convention on Climate Change (COP21) held in Paris.

"It is my honour to introduce the draft resolution...for

granting Observer Status for the International Solar Alliance on behalf of India and France" and about 80 co-sponsors, India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador T S Tirumurti said on Friday.

"The International Solar Alliance through its efforts to bring about just and equitable energy solutions through the deployment of solar energy is expected to usher in a new era of green energy diplomacy," Tirumurti said in the General Assembly as he introduced the draft resolution in the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly that deals with legal questions.

HDFC Bank Q2 consolidated profit rises 18 pc to Rs 9,096 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

HDFC Bank on Saturday reported an 18 per cent increase in its consolidated net profit at Rs 9,096 crore for the second quarter ended September 2021.

The country's biggest private sector lender had posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 7,703 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago.

Total consolidated income during the quarter under review rose to Rs 41,436.36 crore from Rs 38,438.47 crore in July-September 2020, HDFC Bank said in a statement.

On a standalone basis, after providing Rs 3,048.3 crore for taxation, it earned a net profit of Rs 8,834.3 crore, an increase



of 17.6 per cent over the quarter ended September 30, 2020.

The bank had earned a net profit Rs 7,513.1 crore on standalone basis in the same quarter a year ago, the statement said.

Total income (standalone) grew to Rs 38,754.16 crore in the second quarter of FY2022 from Rs 36,069.42 crore in the year-ago quarter.

"Upon clearance at port(s), such goods have been found to be distributed throughout India by way of out-of-books cash transactions," the statement said.



Cars with lower running costs will attract buyers in India: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With fuel prices going up by 35 per cent over the past 15 months thereby impacting overall vehicle running costs, cars that have higher fuel efficiency and lower maintenance costs are expected to gain higher traction among buyers in India, specially in the sub-Rs 10 lakh category, according to a report.

Considering the fact that 70 per cent of the passenger vehicles market in India is still accounted for by vehicles costing less than Rs 10 lakh, the

development augurs well for market leader Maruti Suzuki India Ltd (MSIL), said the report by HSBC Global Research.

"Over the past 15 months, fuel prices have gone up 35 per cent, impacting overall vehicle running costs...Our channel interactions suggest that customers are increasingly becoming considerate of the recent rise in fuel prices," it said. Citing the example of Maruti Suzuki's Swift petrol, the report said for a compact passenger vehicle fuel now accounts for around 40 per

cent of the vehicle's life-time cost compared with 30 per cent in mid-2020. "In the current environment, we believe cars that have higher fuel efficiency and lower maintenance costs should gain relatively higher traction among buyers, especially in the less than Rs 10 lakh category, which is still 70 per cent of the market in India," it said.

Stating that MSIL continues to score well in that regard, HSBC Global Research said, "In our analysis, both in absolute terms and relative to competition, MSIL remains

the market leader in fuel efficiency and total cost of ownership (COO)."

MSIL's competitive positioning should remain compelling given the fact that it has around 65 per cent market share in the less-than-Rs 10 lakh price category, it added. The report also pointed out that MSIL's fuel efficiency has improved by 15-30 per cent in the past 10 years, citing the examples of fuel efficiency of Swift/Swift Dzire, which was 18 km per litre (kmpl) nearly 10 years back to 23.3 kmpl.



D-Mart Q2 profit rises twofold to Rs 417 cr



Avenue Supermarts Ltd, which owns and operates retail chain D-Mart, on Saturday reported a twofold increase in its consolidated net profit to Rs 417.76 crore for the second quarter ended September 2021. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 198.53 crore in the July-October quarter a year ago, Avenue Supermarts said in a BSE filing. Its revenue from operations was up 46.79 per cent to Rs 7,788.94 crore during the quarter under review as against Rs 5,306.20 crore in the corresponding quarter of the last fiscal. Total expenses were at Rs 7,248.74 crore, up 43.63 per cent in the second quarter of 2021-22 as against Rs 5,046.69 crore of the year-ago quarter. "Total Revenue for H1FY22 stood at Rs 12,972 crore, as compared to Rs 9,189 crore in the same period last year," the company said. On a standalone basis, Avenue Supermarts' revenue from operations during the quarter was at Rs 7,649.64 crore, up 46.6 per cent, in comparison to Rs 5,218.15 crore in the second quarter of 2020-21. Avenue Supermarts CEO & Managing Director Neville Noronha said, "Covid-19-related lockdown restrictions were eased further during this quarter. Revenue in the D-Mart stores grew by 46.6 per cent over the corresponding quarter of last year. Two years and older D-Mart stores grew by 23.7 per cent in the month of September 2021 as compared to September 2020."

the pioneer agenda

FROM THE INSIDE



Get closer to God

To relive the glory of *bhanja* Ram, Chhattisgarh launches a new religious circuit covering the spots touched by Lord Ram during the exile

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THE DEATH STING

At present, Delhi is witnessing a rise in Dengue patients, reporting the maximum number of cases since 2018 due to prolonged monsoon.

You are only as great as the opportunities that are given to you
— Charlize Theron



EATING OUT RIGHT

Weight loss is a journey that must be traversed with patience, over time. This festive season, when you are most likely to eat out, keeping a few things in mind while selecting the dishes should do the trick, writes author **KAVITA DEVGAN** in her new book *The Don't-Diet Plan*, An edited excerpt:

Eating out is a part of life, be it for leisure or due to travel. However, the more frequently you eat out, the more calories you ingest, getting heavier in the bargain. You don't need me to tell you that, you know it already.

Besides, every time you eat out, you ruin your happiness guessing, wishing you knew everything you were wolfing down-fat, calories, sodium, etc. and wondering if you had made a wrong choice and sabotaged your heart's health yet again.

Faced with an extensive tempting menu, it's easy to get carried away and forget all about healthy eating, but making healthier choices need not be a nightmare. Let me show you how.

GET CUISINE WISE

Here is a brief 'eating out manual' to help you navigate these four very popular cuisines when you go out to enjoy them the next time.

Italian

Here the basics are trim and healthy but the offenders to look out for are surplus oil, cream and butter (which are poured freely into most dishes).

Are you wondering what to pick then? Learn to differentiate between Northern and Southern Italian cuisines. Southern Italy traditionally follows a Mediterranean diet, which is rich in grains, fruits and vegetables, contains very little meat and uses olive oil in place of butter. Northern Italian cuisine, on the other hand, is heavy on the beef, butter and cream. Start with plain Italian bread rather than buttered garlic bread. Be careful of fresh Italian bread soaked with deliciously flavoured olive oil too. Salads can be a good starter and filler but make sure that you ask for the dressing and vinegar on the side. An all-vegetable antipasto, insalata-green salad, Panzanella, a tomato and mozzarella salad and fish in cartoccio are some good options. Do you want to eat pasta? Then skip cheese-filled ones in favour of those with red clam sauce or meat sauce. Classic pasta with marinara sauce is a lean choice. And if you want to have a heavier entrée like lasagne, then have only half of it. At the end of the meal, skip the dessert, resist the cannoli or cream-filled pastry and have a decaf cappuccino, made with low fat milk or have fresh fruit.

Mexican

In Mexican cuisine, the common offenders to look out for are enchiladas (tortillas fried in oil) and tacos (deep-fried tortillas), chimichangas, chilli rellenos, tostadas and flautas-all of them are deep fried. Cheese and sour cream toppings add extra fat and calories, so

do the side-dishes like chips and nachos.

Are you wondering what to pick then? Take your cue from the names of the menu items. Foods that are prepared 'asada' are grilled, which is a non-fat cooking process. 'Fajitas' are made up of grilled meat or chicken. Use salsa on your main course instead of sour cream and cheese, as 'salsa' made with tomato, onion, chillies and herbs is virtually fat-free and bursting with vitamins A and C. Be extremely careful of the portion size. Choose the dessert carefully-a fruit plate of mangoes, guavas and papaya tastes as good and is far less calorie-dense than sopapillas (deep-fried sweet pastries) or fried ice cream.

Greek

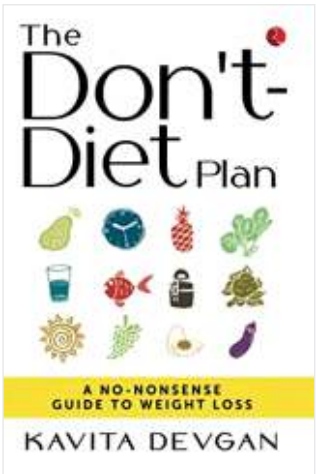
Greek food is super healthy and comprises of grains, fruits and vegetables, olive oil and very little meat. Sauces are based on wine, stocks, tomato and yoghurt, rather than milk or cream. Lentils, beans and vegetables are commonly used in soups, appetizers and main courses. So far so good, but still, you can't be careful enough.

Are you wondering what to pick? The signature of a Greek salad, the 'Greek' olives and feta cheese, are very high in sodium, so go easy. You can even ask to have the feta rinsed before it is served to limit your sodium intake. Be wary of taramasalata, a delicious, though calorie-rich, cream-based dip. Instead, have pita bread spread with a yoghurt-based dip like tzatziki, made with yoghurt, garlic and cucumber. Breadsticks dipped in hummus (sesame paste and chickpeas) or baba ghanoush (eggplant and olive oil) are other good options. For soup, skip the better-known avgolemono soup, which has a lemon and egg base and go for torato, chilled eggplant, peppers and yoghurt soup as this has more fibre and less cholesterol. If you're watching your fat and cholesterol numbers, then pass up moussaka and pastitsio casseroles made from eggs and cheese, and opt for grilled or broiled meat, poultry or seafood.

Some more good options are fish in 'plaki' sauce (broiled with tomato sauce and garlic), souvlaki (lamb marinated in lemon juice, olive oil and herbs, and then skewered and grilled) and dolmas (grape leaves stuffed with ground meat, rice and pine nuts). These are all steamed or baked dishes. And if you will simply perish without baklava for dessert, remember that the usual single portion size can serve two or three people more than adequately. Therefore, order accordingly.

Chinese

Chinese food has its share of offenders-hefty sodium content, high fat and big portion sizes, usually due to the Indianization of the



FACED WITH AN EXTENSIVE TEMPTING MENU, IT'S EASY TO GET CARRIED AWAY AND FORGET ALL ABOUT HEALTHY EATING, BUT MAKING HEALTHIER CHOICES NEED NOT BE A NIGHTMARE



Are you diabetic?

Look for high fibre, low-fat dishes. A few great choices are beans, peas and lentils, and dark green vegetables like broccoli, cabbage, spinach and kale. Choose whole grain foods like brown rice, whole wheat bread and pasta and opt for fruits. Everyone, including people with diabetes, should eat three servings of fruit a day.

Are you watching your heart?

Skip foods high in saturated fat-foods that are fried or have a crispy coating, cream-based soups and salad dressings, and creamy cheese sauces and gravies. Don't add extra salt anything.

Are you watching your waist?

All the above rules apply. Also watch your portions, skip the desserts and go slow on carbs (breads). Load up on fibre (salad and grains) and protein (lean cuts).

Do you have a long day ahead?

Add nuts to your salad and an olive oil-based dressing; have a decent-sized helping of whole wheat bread or brown rice and substantial amounts of grilled chicken or fish.

Chinese recipes-the so-called 'Indian Chinese food' (because traditional Chinese cooking is rather light and healthy).

Are you wondering what to pick? Oyster, black bean and soy sauces are full of sodium and monosodium glutamate (MSG). Look out for these words on the menu card and don't hesitate to ask the chef about the ingredients before ordering anything. Deep fat frying is very common, especially in the appetizers, so go easy on fried wontons and egg or spring rolls. Instead, try steamed egg or spring rolls. Order steamed white rice or plain noodles instead of the fried versions (steamed Chinese brown rice is tasty and filling). Be wary of the word 'crispy' as this indicates that the dish is usually deep-fried, as is most of the meat in any dish labelled 'sweet and sour'. Instead, choose a roasted or grilled meat with the sweet and sour sauce on the side (always order sauce on the side and just drizzle some on top).

Eat the way the Chinese really do to stay healthy for the long haul-eat a lot of vegetables. Besides, nowhere else do vegetables taste as delicious as they do in Chinese dishes. Always start with a soup, especially a vegetable base one and round off with a cup of Chinese tea to help wash all the food down.

Excerpted with permission from The Don't - Diet Plan: A no-nonsense guide to weight loss by Kavita Devgan, Rupa, Rs 295



On Ram's trail



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF RAM

To relive the glory of *bhanja* Ram, Chhattisgarh Tourism launches a new religious tourism circuit, titled Ram Van Gaman Paripath, covering the spots touched by Lord Ram, Mata Sita and brother Lakshman during their exile in the state. **NAVNEET MENDIRATTA** shares the story of the grand launch of the trail

There is a quaint little village near Raipur in Chhattisgarh that is said to be the parental home of Mata Kaushalya, Raja Dashrath's wife and mother of Lord Ram. In the village is the only temple in the world that is dedicated to her. The region was said to be a part of Dakshin Kaushal or Kaushal *raaj*, where Mata Kaushalya came from.

Taking pride in being his maternal home, people of the state see Ram as the nephew of the land (*bhanja* in Hindi). It is said that Ram spent 10 out of 14 years of his exile in the forests of Dakshin Kaushal.

The people of the region, in fact, have unique tradition binds the *mama* and *bhanja* together in a deeper and reverent way. In honour of Lord Ram, even today, the people put the nephew on a pedestal and, irrespective of the age, the uncle (*mama*) pays obeisance to the nephew (*bhanja*) instead of the other way around.

And now for the very first time, the Chhattisgarh government has taken it upon itself to mark the trail and promote it as a tourism circuit. Called Ram Van Gaman Paripath (RGVP), this circuit will cover nine spots along the forested route taken by Lord Ram, before he entered Maharashtra.

Covering a length of 3,000 kms, the Chhattisgarh section of the path starts from Koria district in the north to Sukma in the southern-most part of the state. The nine sites that make a part of the first phase include: Sitamarhi-Harchowka, Ramgarh, Shivrinarayan, Turturiya, Chandkhuri, Rajim, Sihawa, Jagdalpur and Ramaram.

It is believed Lord Ram entered Chhattisgarh from Sitamarhi-Harchauka area in Koriya district. Located on the banks of Mawai River, the Seetamadhi-Harchauka's cave houses 17 chambers in it. A structure marked *Sita ki rasoi* is indicative of their stay here, believe the locals. People also believe that Ram worshipped the Shivling during his stay in the cave.

Moving onward with his journey, Ram left Gaghra and arrived at Kotadol, crossing the Ramgarh hills in Sarguja district. Ramgarh is known for Sita Bengra and Jogimara caves. The locals believe Lord Ram spent a few days of his exile along with Mata Sita and brother Lakshman in these caves. The caves also find a mention in Kalidasa's famous piece of literary art *Meghdootam*. Ramgarh is also renowned for one of the oldest '*natyashala*' (amphitheatre) where *meghdootam* was composed.

The next location is where Lord Ram is said to have accepted the berries offered by Shabari. It is said that Shabari (a tribal woman) had tasted the berries one by one to ensure that she fed only the sweetest ones to Ram. Called Shivrinarayan, the location is a now small town located at the Triveni Sangam (the intersection of 3



CHHATTISGARH
TOURISM BOARD HELD
A GRAND LAUNCH OF A
NEW CIRCUIT, TITLED
THE RAM VAN GAMAN
PARIPATH, ON THE
FIRST DAY OF
NAVRATRAS. A 51-FEET
HIGH STATUE OF RAM
SET AGAINST THE
ANCIENT MATA
KAUSHALYA TEMPLE
WAS ALSO UNVEILED



rivers) — Shivanth, Jonk and Mahanadi in the Janjgir Champa district.

The village of Turturiya is where Rishi Valmiki had his *ashram*. The ashram is said to be where Sita gave birth to the twins, Luv and Kush. This place is of great religious and cultural significance as it here where Maharishi Valmiki is said to written his epic work, *Ramayana*, that brought the legend of Ram to the world.

Chandkhuri sits in the middle of the trail. As you move south, you come to Rajim, where Lord Ram is said to have spent some time of his exile in the ashram of Rishi Lomash. Rajim is located at the confluence of the Mahanadi, Sondhur and Pairi rivers and is also known as the *Prayag* of Chhattisgarh. The Shivling, believed to have been established by Mata Sita, is now housed inside the famous Kuleshwar Mahadev temple. It is said that even today during the floods, the Shivling does not get submerged.

Sihawa, the revered place of *Sapt rishis* (seven sages) is the place of origin of the divine Mahanadi River. According to a folklore, Lord Ram spent a significant amount of his time at this place meeting and consulting the seven great sages — namely Shringeri Rishi, Muchkund Rishi, Agastya Rishi, Amara Rishi, Kankar Rishi, Sharabhang Rishi and Gautama Rishi.

In Jagdalpur are situated the historic Kutumsar Caves, where Lord Ram

is said to have spent considerable time. Located in the famous Bastar district, Jagdalpur was the capital of the erstwhile princely state of Bastar. Even today, a 500-year-old festival, 'Bastar Dussehra', is held that runs for 75 days a year.

The ninth destination in the trail is Ramaram in the Sukma district. This is where Lord Ram is said to have worshipped Bhoomi Devi, a Hindu deity representing the earth. It is believed that you can see the footprints of Lord Ram even today.

The entire trail can be covered over

a period of 10 days, shared Anbalagan P, Secretary Tourism, Chhattisgarh. According to him, these are only nine of the 75 locations on the trail that the state plans to develop over time.

The state is also looking at hosting several festivals to push tourism in the state over the next few years, shared the State Chief Minis, Bhupesh Baghel. "We want the tourists to experience the state hospitality and view it as a religious, cultural and ethnic tourist destination," he said.

It was with this objective that the Chhattisgarh Tourism Board held a

grand launch of the trail on the first day of Navratras. A 51-foot high statue of Ram set against the ancient Mata Kaushalya temple was unveiled. The temple complex wears a grand look following the beautification drive undertaken by the government.

The grand event, curated by Yasmin Kidwai of Springbox Films along with Brandwidth Events, saw a musical opening dedicated to Lord Ram. Local as well as famous national artistes, such as Shankar Mahadevan, Indian Ocean, Kabir Café, Sukriti Sen and V.Unbeatable, participated in the event that was heavily attended by the locals. Noted actor Ashish Vidyarthi played the emcee of the evening. A 3-D film showcasing Ram's story and connect with Chhattisgarh was also showcased. The tourism board also released a special song written by *Indian Ocean's* Himanshu Joshi that evokes the glory of Lord Ram and speaks of his relevance through the ages.

This, in fact, is the first of the many tourism campaigns that the state is planning to launch. Chhattisgarh is looking at hosting traditional as well as contemporary festivals and events to create an inclusive tourism strategy. For a state that has been able to settle internal unrest, there is a lot to showcase to the world. The state is also working on creating a Buddhist circuit and connecting it to the existing one. There is a lot that the travellers can expect from Chhattisgarh.



THE DEATH STING

At present, Delhi is witnessing a rise in Dengue patients, reporting the maximum number of cases since 2018 due to prolonged monsoon. SUPRIYA RAMESH talks to experts to know more

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Dengue cases have grown dramatically around the world in recent decades. A vast majority of cases are asymptomatic or mild and self-managed, and hence the actual numbers of Dengue cases are under-reported. Many cases are also misdiagnosed as other febrile illnesses.

With the advent of the rainy season, we surely get some respite from the scorching summer heat but many water-borne diseases tag along. And one of the most common diseases is Dengue, a mosquito-borne viral infection that is common in warm, tropical climates. It is caused by any one of four closely related antigenically distinct groups called serotypes that are DENV-1, DENV-2, DENV-3 and DENV-4, which means that it is possible to be infected four times in a lifetime. A particular serotype can be predominant at different times in a geographical area. It gives space to a wide number of symptoms that can be extremely mild (unnoticeable) to extremely severe. In severe cases, it can also be fatal.

Currently, Delhi is witnessing a surge in cases, reporting the maximum number of cases since 2018 for the same period due to prolonged monsoon. Whereas Punjab which observed 8,400 cases last year has reported only 5,889 cases this year, Hoshiarpur topping the list with 933 cases.

While many Dengue infections cause only mild illness, there have been cases where it has also caused an acute flu-like illness. Over time, this forms into a potentially lethal complication, called severe Dengue. WHO states that severe Dengue is a leading cause of serious illness and death in some Asian and Latin American countries and requires management by medical professionals.

As per a comparative study published in Clinical Infectious Diseases, the incidence of Dengue has grown dramatically around the world in recent decades. A vast majority of cases are asymptomatic or mild and self-managed, and hence the actual numbers of Dengue cases are under-reported. Many cases are also misdiagnosed as other febrile illnesses.

The number of Dengue cases reported to WHO increased eight times over the last two decades, from 505,430 cases in 2000 to over 2.4 million in 2010, and 5.2 million in 2019. Reported deaths between the years 2000 and 2015 increased from 960 to 4032.

But why are we talking about DENV-2 at the moment? Is it more severe than all other serotypes? How worried should we be? These are the questions our mind is flooded with and it is high time we all should understand the seriousness of the disease and keep an ear to the ground.

The DENV-2 or D2 variant of

Dengue was struck many cases of fever and deaths in western UP districts of Firozabad, Agra, Mathura and Aligarh. The term severe Dengue is in circulation now. It was earlier known as Dengue haemorrhagic fever and Dengue shock syndrome.

The new variant has been observed in 11 states and has become a topic of discussion amongst medical experts and organisations. "With DENV-2 type there seems to be a higher incidence of Dengue hemorrhagic fever where there is a capillary leak and bleed with low platelets and it may eventually progress to Dengue shock syndrome where blood pressure drops," Dr Dilip Gude, Sr Consultant Physician, Yashoda Hospitals Hyderabad tells you.

"A person previously infected with Dengue when gets infected with a different serotype has a higher chance of developing hemorrhagic fever or shock syndrome," tells Dr Anurag Aggarwal, Consultant Internal Medicine, QRG Super Speciality Hospital.

With all the talk about mosquitoes increasing during the rainy season, it is equally important to know that mosquitoes are also mainly attracted to carbon dioxide and heat, which indicates that they are equally active during summer. Moreover, DENV has the potential to infect people all year round and with this, the risk and fear remain throughout. Dr Anurag tells you more about the factors responsible for mosquito-spread. "Lack of adequate drainage, open drains and open areas of water stagnation are factors responsible for rapid spread. Increased movement of people without the adequate coverage of the body with exposed arms and legs increases their risk of getting bitten by an infected mosquito, wherein one in four people infected with Dengue virus will develop the disease."

Talking about the symptoms, they can develop four to 10 days after the mosquito bites and last anywhere from two to seven days. We might be aware of only the common, usually talked about symptoms like high fever, severe body pain and internal bleeding with falling platelets but Dr Aggarwal gives a detailed note on the same. "High-grade fever with chills, backache, abdominal pain, rash, vomiting, joint pains, muscle aches, generalised weakness and fatigue and in severe cases shock, hemorrhagic manifestation like vomiting out blood, bleeding from anus, nose, gums and blood in the urine."

He further adds that when a patient is having severe abdominal pain, recurrent vomiting and increased irritability, it may indicate the patient is developing severe Dengue. The intensity of fever has no correlation with the severity of illness a patient develops in the following days of illness.

In case one is facing possible symptoms and is sceptical about the testing, all



A person previously infected with dengue when gets infected with a different serotype has a higher chance of developing hemorrhagic fever or shock syndrome

— DR ANURAG AGGARWAL
Consultant Internal Medicine,
QRG Super Speciality Hospital

you need to know is that there are two ways to get yourself tested, a card test and ELISA. Dr Aggarwal elaborates, "Testing is done by blood. One is through the card test which is not as sensitive as another test called ELISA. Two types of antigens are of significance, NS1 which is usually detectable within 24 hrs of symptom onset and may remain positive until nine days and other is IgM which is usually detectable four to five days after symptom onset and remains positive up to 12 weeks after catching an infection or maybe even longer."

More than 20,000 confirmed Dengue cases across the country have been reported with more than 220 deaths occurring only in Uttar Pradesh. Cases have been reported from Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, MP, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana.

There are no vaccines and currently, the treatment of Dengue is through supportive care and no specific medication is available. "The management includes intravenous fluid therapy, monitoring of the clinical condition, and intensive care. This helps reduce the morbidity and mortality in Dengue fever complications. Mild and uncomplicated cases can be managed at home under the supervision of the doctor," Dr Anjali Saxena, Senior Consultant, General Pediatrics tells you.

Moreover, WHO has advised that patients should seek medical advice, rest and drink plenty of fluids. Paracetamol can be taken to bring down fever and reduce joint pains. However, aspirin or ibuprofen should not be taken since they can increase the risk of bleeding.

We can say that the Dengue outbreak is still under control but it has led to a surge in cases of high fever countrywide. As it is known to cause more morbidity than other variants, patients are having high-grade fever. Dr Gude tells you that

- Diseases that are spread to people by mosquitoes include Zika virus, West Nile virus, Chikungunya virus, yellow fever and malaria.
- Zika fever, also known as Zika virus disease or simply Zika, is a mosquito-borne disease caused by the Zika virus. In many cases, there are no symptoms, but it can present in a similar way to dengue fever.
- Yellow fever is a viral disease of typically short duration. However, approximately 30,000 people around the world die from yellow fever every year.
- Chikungunya is a viral disease transmitted to humans via infected mosquitoes. Symptoms typically include fever, joint pain, headache, muscle pain, joint swelling and rash.

there is an epidemiological hypothesis that there is a four-year cyclical spurt for Dengue outbreaks and DENV-2 serotype now is known to cause a much-complicated disease.

With this, he advises that early diagnosis, aggressive hydration, and admitting high-risk groups such as the elderly and children and immunosuppressed patients may be important.

Considering the pandemic, how worried should we be about the Dengue virus? Are there chances that it could worsen amidst the pandemic? These are again a few questions that might cross our minds. Early symptoms of both COVID and Dengue can be the same and it would be nearly impossible for a common man to self detect if he/she has been infected

by corona or Dengue. And coinfections are common and if someone gets COVID and Dengue then the outcome is going to be deadly.

"In this pandemic background, one needs to be extra careful and take all necessary precautions to prevent mosquito-borne diseases," Dr Gude tells you.

Dr Saxena tells you that during these times healthcare resources can get overwhelmed and this can be detrimental to providing medical care to the needy.

Your safety is in your hands and making sure that you are not giving a breeding ground to mosquitoes is your responsibility. Keep the surroundings of your house as dry as possible with no scope for stagnant water, cover your body with full sleeves clothes, put on mosquito repellent creams, coils, nets. Dr Gude suggests that having a high index of suspicion and taking a clinician's help as early as possible is important.

"Do not allow water to stagnate, cover drains or sprinkle oil over stagnated water, empty pots/tyres of water in your house, wear full sleeves clothes when stepping outside the house," Dr Aggarwal tells you.

He further adds that in case of fever, visit your nearest physician as soon as possible. Watch for symptoms like intense abdominal pain, bleeding from any site, restlessness and breathlessness when you need to be concerned.

"The proximity of mosquito vector breeding sites to human habitation is a significant risk factor for Dengue as well as for other diseases that Aedes mosquito transmit. At present, the main method to control or prevent the transmission of Dengue virus is to combat the mosquito vectors," WHO advises and suggest ways through which it can be achieved.

- ◆ **Prevention of mosquito breeding**
Preventing mosquitoes from accessing egg-laying habitats by environmental management and modification
Applying appropriate insecticides to water storage outdoor containers
- ◆ **Personal protection from mosquito bites**
Using of personal household protection measures, such as window screens, repellents, insecticide-treated materials, coils and vaporizer and wearing clothing that minimises skin exposure
- ◆ **Community engagement**
Educating the community on the risks of mosquito-borne diseases
- ◆ **Reactive vector control**
Emergency vector control measures such as applying insecticides as space spraying during outbreaks may be used by health authorities

In addition, there is ongoing research amongst many groups of international collaborators in search of novel tools and innovative strategies that will contribute to global efforts to interrupt the transmission of Dengue, as well as other mosquito-borne diseases.

MYTHBUSTER

You cannot get dengue fever twice
The dengue virus (DENV) known to cause dengue fever has four different but related serotypes, DENV-1, DENV-2, DENV-3 AND DENV4. When a person recovers from their first infection, they gain lifetime immunity from this single serotype only. Contracting the disease from the other three dengue types is still possible, with each subsequent infection potentially more severe than its predecessor.

Dengue is contagious
Dengue is transmitted to humans when an infected female mosquito bites, mainly the Aedes aegypti mosquito. A person cannot contract the virus through an infected person if he or she sneezes or coughs. Moreover, cases of DENV transmission through blood transfusion or organ transplantation are also rare.

An infected mosquito breeds only in dirty stagnant water
An Aedes aegypti mosquito may not necessarily lay eggs only in dirty water, it can do it in clean stagnant water too. It is important to drain or to keep the containers and surfaces around the house like basins, pots, jars and rain gutters firmly closed with a lid at all times.

Dengue fever is only prevalent during the rainy season
The sole reason why people believe this myth that dengue fever is more during the rainy season is because the Aedes aegypti lay eggs in water so it is natural to relate to it. Mosquitoes are also attracted to carbon dioxide and heat, which suggests that they are just as active during summer.

Your body may heal itself naturally from dengue fever
A person might suffer from dengue fever for a week with severe headaches, vomiting, and bone and muscle pain. People might have the ability to recover without getting hospitalised but they cannot recover without proper rest, hydration and painkillers. The disease might evolve into severe dengue if self-managed.



COVID and flu: how big could the dual threat be this winter?

Although COVID infections are currently low or in decline in most western countries aside from the UK, there's still a long way to go before the threat of the pandemic is over. A big concern this winter is if there's a resurgence of COVID with other respiratory illnesses coming back strongly alongside it – particularly influenza.

In both the southern and northern hemispheres, influenza infections rapidly declined and largely disappeared soon into pandemic. Social distancing measures used to contain COVID were even

more effective in reducing the spread of influenza. But unfortunately, this means we now need to be braced for flu to be especially bad this year.

In some ways, immune responses to COVID and influenza are the same. A relatively recent infection or vaccination provides good protection against a subsequent infection, but soon that protection starts to wane. Early reinfections, however, are generally asymptomatic or relatively mild. But the longer the gap between generating immunity and being reinfected, the more severe the subsequent infection is likely to be.

This is particularly obvious when looking at how influenza affects people who live on remote islands. Because they can go for long periods without being exposed to the flu, when they do eventually encounter it, their mortality rates are higher.

One study that looked at people living in Tristan da Cunha, a group of isolated south Atlantic islands, found that having just a few years between flu exposures appeared to increase the risk of the disease. So the concern is that, with COVID control measures having almost completely limited people's exposure to flu over the last 18 months, natural immunity will have fallen across the population. We've essentially all been living on remote islands since the beginning of 2020 thanks to the lockdowns, travel restrictions and working-from-home measures.

When flu does return, it therefore may affect more people and cause more severe disease than we would normally see in a typical flu season. The same will probably also apply to other respiratory viruses. In fact, this might already be happening – recently there have been many anecdotal reports of people getting particularly severe colds in the UK.

However, it's not easy to predict when exactly flu will return, nor how much worse or more common it will be. At present, influenza rates are still quite low in the UK, but this could change quite rapidly if the virus starts to spread.

Fortunately, we have safe and effective flu

vaccines that reduce both the risk of infection and severe disease. But they aren't as effective as most of the current COVID vaccines. Plus, how well they work varies year on year.

Flu viruses mutate more quickly, meaning multiple strains end up circulating, changing each year. If what turns out to be the dominant viral strain each winter isn't included in the vaccine, then its effectiveness will be lower.

Recommendations for which viruses to include in the annual flu vaccines – created separately for the northern and southern hemisphere winters – are made by the World Health Organisation, which assesses the strains that have been circulating beforehand.



Chinese astronauts enter space station for record six-month stay

Three Chinese astronauts, including a woman, on board the Shenzhou-13, have entered the space station core module Tianhe on Saturday, the country's space agency said, hours after the spaceship was successfully launched for a record six-month mission.

The three astronauts -- Zhai Zhigang, 55; Wang Yaping, 41; and Ye Guangfu, 41 -- successfully docked with the under-construction space station, which is composed of the core module Tianhe and the cargo crafts Tianzhou-2 and Tianzhou-3.

They will stay in the space station for six months to complete its construction -- the longest manned mission in China's history. Wang is the first Chinese woman astronaut to visit China's space



Clinton 'doing fine' and will be out of hospital soon

Bill Clinton is doing fine and will be released soon from a Southern California hospital where he's being treated for an infection, President Joe Biden said.

Biden said Friday during remarks at the University of Connecticut that he had spoken to Clinton and the former president "sends his best."

"He's doing fine; he really is," Biden said. "He's not in any serious condition," Biden said. "He is getting out shortly, as I understand it. Whether that's tomorrow or the next day, I don't know."

Clinton, 75, was admitted to the University of California Irvine Medical Center, south-east of Los Angeles, on Tuesday

Legacy? Still, I haven't left behind, says MS Dhoni

MS Dhoni in his iconic captain's style kept asking questions on his IPL retirement open-ended but did admit that a lot of things will depend on the kind of retention policy that BCCI puts in place for the big auction next year.

Dhoni, who is set to join the Indian team as Mentor for the T20 World Cup, spoke about how he would like to create a roadmap for the next 10 years of IPL that Chennai Super Kings will be playing.

When asked if he was proud to have left a legacy behind in the 12 seasons for CSK, Dhoni assured his million fans with a wide grin, "Still I haven't left behind."

But he said that he hasn't decided how he would fit into the retention scheme of things.

"Again I've said it before, it depends on BCCI. With two new teams coming in... we have to decide what is good for CSK," the skipper said after his team won the fourth IPL title by beating Kolkata Knight Riders in the final.

"It's not about me being there in top-three or four. It's about making a strong core to ensure the franchise doesn't suffer. The core group, we have to have a hard look to see who can contribute for the next 10 years," he added.

Dhoni was happy that a lot of individual match-winners have got CSK to their fourth trophy.

"We had match winners coming game after game and doing really well. Every final is special. If you look at stats, we may say we're the most consistent team to lose the final too. I feel it's important to come back strong, especially in the knockout rounds," he said.

More than 90 snakes found under Northern California home

San Francisco (US), Oct 16 (AP) Al Wolf is used to clearing one or two snakes from under houses but recently was called by a woman who said she had seen rattlesnakes scurry under her North ern California

said he crawled under the mountain home in Santa Rosa and found a rattlesnake right away, then another and another. He got out from under the house, grabbed two buckets, put on long, safety gloves, and went back in. He crawled on his hands, knees and stomach, tipping over more than 200 small rocks. "I kept finding snakes for the next almost four hours," Wolf said Friday. "I thought oh, good, it was a worthwhile call" but I was happy to get out because it's not nice, you run into spider webs and dirt and it smells

house and was surprised to find more than 90 rattlesnakes getting ready to hibernate. Wolf, director of Sonoma County Reptile Rescue,

crappy and it's musty and you're on your belly and you're dirty. I mean it was work." But the work paid off. He used a 24-inch (60-cm) snake pole to remove 22 adult rattlesnakes and 59 babies when he first visited the home in the Mayacamas Mountains on October 2. He returned another two times since and collected 11 more snakes. He also found a dead cat and dead possum.

All the snakes were Northern Pacific rattlesnakes, the only venomous snake found in Northern California, he said.



Hundreds march in Puerto Rico, outraged over power outages

More than a thousand people outraged over ongoing power outages in the US territory of Puerto Rico prepared to march Friday to decry how the lack of electricity has affected their health, work and children's schooling.

Many of them demanded the ouster of Luma, a private company that took over the island's transmission and distribution.

Some also are angry at Puerto Rico's Electric Power Authority, which owns and operates generation units that have been breaking down in recent weeks largely due to a lack of maintenance and repair.

"We're tired of getting home and discovering that we have no lights," said Mayra Rivera, 55, adding she is especially worried about her parents, who are in their 90s, and the sweltering heat they face at home.

The demonstration forced the closure of a main road in the capital of San Juan as hundreds gathered to march with participants ranging from teenagers to elderly people.

Some wore T-shirts that

read, "Go to hell, Luma." Among those preparing to march was Juan Antonio Rivera, 78, who said the most recent outage left him in the dark this week for 43 hours. Previous ones damaged his two computers. "And one of them cost dollar 200 to fix!" he exclaimed. "I have the receipts at home to send to Luma."

Power outages have occurred more frequently and lasted longer in recent months, with people complaining that they cannot give themselves respiratory therapies or have had to throw away insulin or food. Many also have complained that they're unable to work or their children unable to attend online classes, and that expensive appliances have been damaged.

