



No power cuts in AP

Dip in power purchase cost brings much-needed relief to state

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 through 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 19,000 MTs. 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.

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I am 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.

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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.

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 leadership crisis,

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RK's death would further weaken ultras, say police

PNS ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh police on Saturday said the death of senior Maoist leader Akkijaru 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 Sobhro and senior commander Vinod, were among the cadres who died apparently due to the Covid-19 infection, he said.

2

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

* Sajjala with *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.

Andhra is witnessing revolutionary change:

Aside from being a part of the present government, as a senior journalist I have seen the evolution of the state. What I have witnessed in the last two years is a revolutionary change taking place in the whole system of governance under the leadership of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy. By introducing a volunteer network across the state, and by setting up village/ward secretariats, the Chief Minister has literally taken governance to the doorstep of every household. In the process of taking governance to people's doorstep, this additional



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.

layer of administration at the grassroots level has provided employment to more than 1.3 lakh youngsters. This employment was provided by means of recruitment done in the most transparent manner, without giving any room for misgivings. Introducing such a robust sys-

tem, which has now become an integral part of society, in just one year, is something that is unheard-of in the history of Andhra Pradesh.

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 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



By setting up village/ward secretariats, Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy has literally taken governance to the doorstep of every household.

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.

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Financial experts across the world have been suggesting that money be put in the pockets of people, especially those from the lower income groups.

Well done Pioneer! Keep it up!

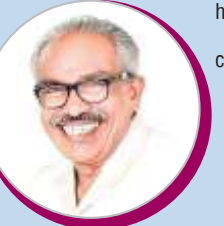
Warmest greetings to *The Pioneer* on the 4th anniversary of its Vijayawada Edition. Wishing you and every member of *The Pioneer* family a nostalgic rewind of cherished, rewarding and defining moments of the daily. Besides the daily news, sports and business, readers are served refreshing columns and features related to the theme of the day. **-V Prasanna Venkatesh, Commissioner, VMC**



The Pioneer has emerged as a high-quality English language publication that raises pertinent issues of public interest. It has something for everyone, from the lay reader looking to be well informed to the discerning citizen looking for a critical analysis of the burning issues of the day. I wish all the very best to *The Pioneer* in its journey in AP. **-Siddharth Kaushal, SP, Krishna District**



I congratulate *The Pioneer* daily on its Vijayawada Edition completing three years of its formation and for always focusing on the people's issues that are connected to day-to-day life. I am a regular reader of your paper and feel happy that the newspaper is providing ample space for covering reports and special stories that are closely connected to the common people. The 'Dil Se' stories are fabulous. **-Syed Naseer Ahmed, Writer**



Welfare agenda stood Jagan in good stead

SEELAM AROZIE
■ AP NEWS DESK IN-CHARGE

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) government, which replaced the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) government in Andhra Pradesh, almost two-and-a-half years ago, has balanced consolidation of power and implementation of welfare schemes promised to the people during the Praja Sankalpa Yatra undertaken by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy much ahead of the elections.

May 31, 2019 – the day on which YS Jaganmohan Reddy was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh – was the watershed in AP politics as it marked the emergence of a powerful alternative to the TDP headed by N Chandrababu Naidu,



who is known for his political acumen. The humiliating defeat of TDP at the hands of the YSRCP allowing just 23 seats has not only emboldened Jaganmohan Reddy but also caused a serious dent to Naidu as a popular leader.

Since then, it has been no stopping the new Chief Minister who was brimming with confidence with the burgeoning support he received at the hustings which translated into 151 seats. Left with no other option, the bruised TDP has started taking on the Jagan juggernaut using all the weapons in its armoury.

Keeping his promises in the election manifesto, Jaganmohan Reddy, however, stuck to his guns in implementation of the government flag-

ship 'Navaratnalu' scheme in the face of criticism. When the chips were down due to economic slow-down under the impact of the Covid pandemic, he managed to deliver the fruits of the welfare schemes to the beneficiaries. Though this has brought him closer to the masses, he drew flak from the Opposition for keeping the welfare agenda afloat at the cost of development with loans borrowed for the purpose.

In a concomitant and unprecedented development, like never before in the history of any State in the country, the main Opposition TDP has taken the legal route to stop the government in its tracks on various issues.

2

OBTUSE ANGLE



Welfare...

Continued from page 1

Be it the so-called 'insider trading', introduction of English Medium education in government schools, the three Capitals issue, local body elections, appointment of the SEC, declaration of job calendar, APPSC Group 1 Main exam paper evaluation, implementation of the housing scheme for all the poor in the State, and the recent GO on takeover over of aided school/college teachers, almost all government's initiatives have landed in courts so much so that the every step taken by the government has turned controversial.

The Opposition's reliance on the judiciary for resolution of issues has exposed its political bankruptcy and the ability to convince the people, taking the local body elections as an opportunity. The Tirupati by-election result and the fallout of local body elections have proved beyond doubt the popular justification of the State government's initiatives.

New facilities at Waltair Railway Sports Complex

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Waltair Railway Sports Complex is given facelift with new facilities with the commissioning of an annex and world-class second boxing ring.

The new facility was inaugurated by president of ECoRW-WO Parijata Satpathy on Saturday along with Divisional Railway Manager Anup Satpathy. Vice President ECoRW-WO, Kalapana Gupta, ADRM Sudhir Kumar Gupta, Sports Officer Pradeep Yadav and sports personnel and members of women's welfare organisation were present.

The new boxing ring is equipped with international standards and is the second ring in the Waltair Railway Sports Complex. International standard equipment including the latest



speedball, punching bags, abdominal pads and head guards was provided in the new facility. The equipment was sponsored by the Railway Sports Promotion Board, New Delhi. Speaking on the occasion Parijata Satpathy said that the

world class facilities at Railway Sports Complex, are aimed at talent search and ignite spirit of sportsmanship.

IMD predicts squally weather in AP

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

With the prevailing low-pressure area in the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Meteorological Department has advised the fishermen not to venture into the sea till October 19. According to information from the Cyclone Warning Centre, Visakhapatnam, to the district administrations of north Andhra region, fishermen are advised not to venture into the sea along and off coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam till October 19.

The IMD predicted squally weather with wind speed reaching 40 to 50 kmph gusting to 60 kmph very likely over north Bay of Bengal on October 17, 18 and 19.

Rahul says 'will consider' becoming Cong chief again

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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.

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

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

The state government had inherited more than Rs 2 lakh crore in debts when Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy took the reins of Andhra Pradesh in the middle of 2019. The debts raised by the previous N Chandrababu Naidu government were put to unproductive use and the outcomes were nowhere to be seen, while the benefits were almost negligible. Whereas the money raised by us is being put to productive use with long-term benefits. With programmes like Nadu Nedu, we are also creating assets. Had the previous government managed its finances well, the state would not have been in such a precarious situation. There are checks and balances at every stage like FRBM limits and auditing while raising loans. The State government is not borrowing in an indiscriminate manner. It is not that we are not spending on capital expenditure or asset creation. That is a false propaganda by opposition parties. Imagine more than 30 lakh houses being built across the state. It entails spending Rs 1 lakh crore, due to which a lot of economic activity happens with a lot of cement, steel business taking place, besides providing work to lakhs of skilled and semi-skilled workers.

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 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, which is considered an integral and important part of the multi-purpose project.

No space for communal politics; Andhra Pradesh 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. Chandrababu Naidu is known for taking up such communal politics whenever it suits him. Within a span of one hour, he can say he is for Hinduism to gain some brownie points from BJP and then immediately say he is a mascot of secularism. There is no concept of minority appeasement in AP. Are they not part of our society? Shouldn't we help and support those minorities develop? How can it be called minority appeasement? A society can see progress only when there is peace and harmony with no inequalities. That is exactly the goal of our government, whereas others are involved in deriving political mileage and advantage out of religion.

Let divisive forces join hands openly; we are neither worried nor bothered:

Both Chandrababu Naidu and Jana Sena Party chief Pawan Kalyan have been working for each other since 2014 to decimate YSRCP chief YS Jaganmohan Reddy. For a few years they worked together openly and later on they did so clandestinely. Our party is against joining forces for electoral gains. We believe in, and do, value-based politics. Their alliances are unholy and unethical, made with the sole intention of defeating the government that has been working for every section of society. In the recently concluded polls for local bodies and Parishads, BJP, TDP and Jana Sena had worked clandestinely with clear understanding. However, ultimately people gave a thumping, landslide and historic win to us. They are hoping that if they join forces the anti-incumbency vote can be consolidated. Let us see what will happen to them. I am sure people are well aware about the flip flops in the stances of both Naidu and Pawan Kalyan. We are neither worried nor bothered about such unholy alliances. Let them come out in the open, and announce their alliance. How long are they going to work discreetly?



ALL IN THE NAME OF FAITH

The annual 'Banni' festival at Devaragattu in Kurnool district has turned violent this year as well. There have been objections for many years to the permission for the festival. However, the government has allowed it in the name of tradition, devotion and faith. As part of the festival, locals fight each other with sticks. In the process, many sustain grievous head injuries and some even die on the spot. This time around, thousands of people took part in the festival. About 100 people were injured while four were hospitalised in critical condition.



RK's death would further...

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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.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/kg	
Dressed/With Skin	₹185
Without Skin	₹195
Broiler at Farm	₹225

EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	409
HYDERABAD	397
VISAKHAPATNAM	420
RETAIL PRICE (₹/4.09)	

I am full-time Congress chief...

Continued from page 1

"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 discussion. 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

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 our 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 vaccine procurement policy since the CWC last met in May, she said this has been done in response to the states' demands and was one of those rare occasions when the states were heard and the country benefited

"Even so, cooperative federalism remains only a slogan and the Centre loses no opportunity to put non-BJP states at 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

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.

On the other hand, Bhavani devotees in large numbers started visiting the temple from October 14 with Jai



Bhavani' chants. Many Bhavani devotees started visiting the presiding deity on Dasara - the Vijayadashami day on Friday. The Durga ghat was totally occupied with the Bhavani devotees taking bath at the bathing ghat and the Indrakeeladri hill was totally occupied with the Bhavani devotees since Friday.

Krishna District Collector J Nivas said that VIP visit to the temple is being cancelled for two days as Bhavani devotees are visiting the temple in large numbers. All the devotees will get a general darshan of the deity. In all, 12 prasadam counters are being arranged due to heavy rush at the prasadam counters, the Collector said.



Lokesh slams CM over power tariff hike

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP National General Secretary Nara Lokesh on Saturday said that the ceiling fans stopped whirring at the homes of AP people just because they voted for the fan symbol and brought the YSRCP to power in 2019.

Lokesh slammed Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy for going on punishing the people with hikes in current charges instead of fulfilling election promises to go on handing more benefits to the people. The Central Government has alerted the State 40 days in advance about the emerging coal shortage but the AP CM did not take timely measures to save the people from power cuts.

In a statement here, Nara Lokesh said that the people of Andhra Pradesh put lots of hopes but Jaganmohan Reddy has turned AP into 'Andhakaraandhra Pradesh' (Darkness filled State) in just two and half years. The Chief Minister toured all corners of the State with fan symbol before the polls but now he was bent on stopping the household fans of the common public.

Lokesh asked why the Jagan Government did not pay Rs 215 Cr of pending bills to the coal producing companies. The Government has paid Rs 200 Cr to the CM's own media in the name of advertisements but it has no foresight to prevent the coal crisis. This once instance was enough to say how Jaganmohan Reddy was interested only in his personal agenda but not the well being of the five crore of the State.



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 newborn with the parents within a few hours.

Police said that a ward boy, Hema Varun, stole the three-day-old infant 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 grandmother and paternal grandmother of the infant took him to the veranda for fresh air. Taking it as an advantage, 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. Circle Inspector Srinivasa Reddy handed over the infant to the parents in the presence of GGH superintendent Prabhavati.

Woman Maoist surrenders

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Area Committee Member (ACM) 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 encourage-



ment 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 Pedabalyu Dalam. She is a key member in Pedabalyu Committee. She is well familiarized with inte-

rior 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 participated in 46 offences and six murder cases, the Superintendent of Police said.

తేజ్వియే వార్షికోత్సవే శేఖరారక్షకులు

CELEBRATION

3rd

ANNIVERSARY

CELEBRATION

శిర్డా సుధీర్ కుమార్

యువ పారిశ్రామికవేత్త
వైఎస్ఆర్సిపి నాయకులు,
ప్రకాశం జిల్లా

DL to ‘stage comeback’, to contest 2024 elections

PNS ■ KADAPA

Former Minister D L Ravindra Reddy announced that he would take part in the active politics and contest in the 2024 elections. But he did not say on behalf of which party he would contest in the election.

In fact, he made efforts to contest in the 2019 elections and approached N Chandrababu Naidu in this regard. However, the TDP had given ticket to Sudhakar Yadav which disappointed him. After about three years of silence he announced to resume active politics soon.

Ravindra Reddy played a key role in Kadapa district when he was in the Congress party. He differed with the then Chief Minister N Kiran Kumar Reddy and he was removed from the Cabinet. He supported Y S Vivekananda Reddy in the MLC elections and joined the YSRCP in the



presence of Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy.

However, Ravindra Reddy was ignored in the YSRCP and was not given any importance. During the local body elections, he tried field his followers but YSRCP MLA Raghurami Reddy did not allow to extend support to the

followers of Ravindra Reddy.

Irked over this, Ravindra Reddy followers contested in the elections as independent candidates and won in many places. The MLAs followers held press meet and openly lambasted Ravindra Reddy. Disgusted with this, Ravindra Reddy tried to meet Chief

Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy but he was not given him appointment.

Talking to the media, Ravindra Reddy came down heavily on the YSRCP government. He also targeted Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy for holding press meets. Ravindra Reddy described the minister as ‘dummies’.

“Those who wanted ‘Reddy’ government have learned lesson. Unfortunate situation has prevailed in the state. The farm sector has fallen in a crisis and there is no one to take care of farmers”, he flayed.

Ravindra Reddy found fault with the government for giving agriculture adviser post to Ambati Krishna Reddy. He regretted that 70 per cent of people were not consuming the subsidized rice being distributed through the PDS and they were selling the rice because the rice is so poor quality that it did not fit to consume.

DIG asks police officials to use tech, show professionalism to resolve cases

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Dr.C M Thirivikrama Varma directed the police officers to complete the investigation of UI cases as soon as possible, apprehend the culprits using professionalism and technology and bring justice to the victims.

The DIG, along with SP Malika Garg conducted annual inspection of Yarragonda palem Circle Office on Saturday.

The DIG scrutinized case diaries, registers and other records of the Yarragondapalem Circle office and enquired about their progress of the Grave cases pending in the Circle, how the investigation is going in those cases.

The DIG told the officers to intensify the visible policing and patrolling system. The DIG directed the officers to register the complaints as Zero FIR even if the victims come to the police station irrespective of the jurisdiction of the PS.



The DIG interacted with Mahila police and stated that they integral are part of police system and asked about their well-being. The DIG told them about their roles and responsibilities.

The DIG also suggested them to be aware of the details of rowdy sheeters, suspects and old offenders, crime prone areas and other aspects within their village /ward. Mahila police were to make public aware of Disha app so that everyone can download the

app on their smartphone. The DIG told them to convey information to the hierarchical police officers from time to time.

The SP directed the police officials to take strong measures in curbing the smuggling of Ganja (cannabis) and liquor, prevent the sale of gutka, khaini and other prohibited drugs by the government, and take effective measures to

She told officers to take strong steps to ensure good conduct among the rowdy elements who have committed crimes in the district and to take legal action against them if they do not mend their ways. The SP directed officers to implement Friendly policing, quickly respond to Spandana complaints and resolve them within the stipulated time. The SP also told them to strictly enforce the Covid rules. She directed them to update every single record in CCTNS.

The SP told officers to hold regular meetings with the village defense committees for the protection of the temples under their police station and ensure that the important temples being kept under CCTV surveillance. The SP directed the officers to solve the issues in the villages by frequent visits and keep a close watch on the movements of the old criminals to prevent thefts. The DIG and the SP planted saplings at the police office suggested them to make premises of Yarragonda Palam Circle & Police Station environmental-friendly.

BJP demands ‘White Paper’ on development of rural areas

PNS ■ ELURU

BJP state president Somu Veerajulu demanded the Jagan Mohan Reddy headed government to release a “White Paper” on the development of rural areas during the last two-and-half years.

The BJP president inaugurated a guest house, constructed in the premises in a temple at Madhavaram village in Tadepalligudem rural mandal on Saturday. The guest house was constructed by donations given by the devotees. The BJP state president worshipped the goddess.

Later, talking to the media, the Union government had extended Rs.4000 crore funds under MGNREGA to the Jagan Mohan Reddy headed government and Rs 5,000 crore to the erstwhile Chandrababu



Naidu headed government.

The government did not take steps to repair and reconstruct the damaged roads in the state.

The government should release a “White Paper” on the steps taken to provide basic

amenities in the rural areas, construct, develop and repair damaged roads.

“The government did not move though the roads are such a bad state that they are not fit for use ‘by motorists’, he criticized.

PD Act invoked against notorious criminal

PNS ■ KADAPA

The police invoked Preventive Detention (PD) Act against a notorious criminal in the district.

Superintendent of police KKN Anburajan said that PD (Act) was invoked against notorious criminal Chennupalli Prasanna Kumar, alias Prashant Reddy, alias Raja Reddy (23), who involved in many criminal cases.

The SP said that Prasanna Kumar had involved in 26 criminal cases in AP and Telangana states. He addicted to vices at young age and he discontinued his B.Tech in the first year itself. He belonging to Proddatur.

He resorted to chain snatching in 2017 and was

sent to prison. However, he was freed on bail.

Later he started befriending with girls and women in the social media and exploit them sexually and financially. He resorted to blackmailing the women by showing morphed photos and videos.

In the police investigation, it had come to light that he deceived and exploited over 100 women. He also sexually exploited some the women. He also involved in harassing a woman at Penamaluru in Vijayawada in 2020, several burglaries and cricket betting cases.

The SP warned of taking stringent action and invoking PD Act if anybody indulges such heinous crimes.

Denying BC certificate to MPTC candidate protested

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The Telugu Desam activists protested against the denial of BC certificate to Telugu Desam Duggirala MPTC candidate Jabeen.

The TDP activists demanding the officials to issue BC Certificate to Duggirala MPTC

Jabeen took out a rally from the TDP office to MLA Mustafa office here on Saturday.

However, the police dispersed the agitating TDP Muslim wing activists. Collector Vivek Yadav upheld the Duggirala Tahsildar’s certificate stating that the TDP MPTC candidate Jabeen did

not belong to the BC.

The TDP Muslim wing activists vowed to continue their agitation till BC certificate is issued to Jubeenn. The TDP leaders said that the Collector had submitted a 38-page report to the High Court and sent the copy to Duggirala MPTC Jubeen.



Grandeur marks Teppotsavam on Krishna river

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The ‘Hamsavahana Teppotsavam’ (boat ride) of Goddess Kanaka Durga and Lord Mallikarjuna Swamy in Krishna River at Durga ghat was held on a grand note on the concluding day of the nine-day Dasara Navaratri celebrations. The celestial boat was illuminated and decorated for the occasion that was an eye feast to the devotees who were chanting

Jai Durgamma Jai Jai Durgamma during the Teppotsavam.

Special pujas were performed on the occasion and the Teppotsavam programme lasted for about an hour-and-a-half witnessed by a good number of devotees. Due to heavy inflows to Krishna River near Prakasam Barrage, Teppotsavam was confined to offering pujas to the processional deities placed on the Hamsa Vahanam (a special boat

built in the shape of a mythical Hamsa) but there was no “Nadi Viharam”.

Earlier, Durga temple officials and priests brought the deities from the city’s One Town Police Station road to Durga Ghat in a procession amidst folk dances and drum beats and other performances. Special pujas were performed after placing the deities on a specially decorated boat.



Sidda Sudheer’s birthday bash a grand affair

PNS ■ ONGOLE

The birthday celebrations of young industrialist, Sidda Sudheer Kumar were held with fervour and joyful atmosphere in a grand manner here on Saturday. Sidda Sudheer Kumar is the son of former minister Sidda Raghava Rao, MD of Jyothi Granites.

Large number of admirers and followers of Sidda Raghava Rao and Sudheer Kumar thronged to his residence here and greeted him and participated in the programme.

The young Sudheer Kumar is an upcoming leader in the YSRCP and he has a huge following in the youth. Sidda Raghava Rao and his wife Lakshmi Padmavati blessed their son and offered sweets on his birthday. Large number of followers, who came from various parts of the district, showered flowers and fired crackers to celebrate the birthday event. Mr.Sudheer Kumar cut a



huge cake in the presence of a large number of relatives and friends. The friends and followers garlanded him with a giant garland. Large number industrialists, political leaders, Karur Vysya bank staff, Arya Vysya association leaders, Arya Vysya youth wing leaders, representatives of Lions club and Rotary club greeted Sudheer Kumar on the occasion.

Later, the followers of Sidda Raghava Rao and Sudheer

Kumar, led by Gumma Hanumantha Rao and Chandolu Manikanta, took out a huge car rally from Ongole to Chimakurthi Harihara Kshetram.

Mr.Sudheer Kumar, along with his family members, performed special pooja to the deities in Sri Harihara Kshetram and the priests blessed him. Later, the Sudheer Kumar couple cut a cake, arranged by Golden Granite Company A Giri.

Heavy downpour throws normal life out of gear

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Heavy downpour disrupted normal life in Tirupati as many roads and localities inundated in one to two feet water on Saturday.

Madhuranagar inundated in waist deep water. The drainage blocked at many places causing water stagnation.

The drainage water gushed into houses at various localities. Denizens were seen draining out water from their houses with small containers.

The parked cars and two-wheelers were submerged two feet in the rainwater. The low-lying areas of Indira Nagar, Sanjay Gandhi Colony, Shiva Jyoti Nagar, Sundarayya Nagar, Saptagiri Colony, New Indiranagar and Chennai Reddy Colony, inhabited by the poor, were inundated.

The denizens has taken the poor drainage system to the notice of municipal authorities but no action was taken, the residents said.



‘Kalam Prerana Sthal’ inaugurated

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As part of the ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’, and on the occasion of the 90 birth anniversary of former President of India Bharat Ratna Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, “Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Prerana Sthal” was inaugurated at Naval Science and Technological Laboratory (NSTL), on Friday.

Outstanding scientists PVS Ganesh Kumar, BVSS Krishna Kumar, Dr.A Srinivas Kumar,



other senior scientists, officers, NSTL Civil Employees Union and staff of NSTL were present.

A statue of Dr.APJ Abdul Kalam was unveiled by Dr. Samir V Kamat, Director General, Naval Systems and

Materials in the presence of Dr. Y Sreenivas Rao Director NSTL. The NSTL products Varunastra, TAL and Maareech were displayed at the venue.

To commemorate the ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’, DRDO and NSTL are taking various initiatives towards highlighting the importance of research and development, motivating the DRDO fraternity, and increasing awareness among the general public, in particular igniting young minds.

Flawed policies behind power crisis: Analysts

MARTHI SUBRAHMANYAM ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government is facing an electricity crisis due to coal shortage. The scarcity of coal has stood as a big hindrance to generate electricity in the thermal power stations. Implementation of a number of welfare schemes by spending thousands of crores of rupees has pushed the government in to financial doldrums, making it unable to buy the required quantity of coal.

Significantly, the Union government has made it clear that there is ‘no scarcity’ of coal as 20 lakh tonnes is ready to be supplied to the states to generate thermal power. However, the funds crunch has stood as a hurdle for the AP government to buy coal. Moreover, the AP government owed Rs 2,000 crore to the

Singareni Collieries, Rs 200 crore to Mahanadi Coalfields, Rs 215 crore to Coal India. The Coal companies have made it clear to the AP government that they could supply coal, if the arrears were paid.

Since the AP government is not in a position to clear the arrears and pay money to buy coal, the State is facing an unprecedented coal shortage, forcing AP government to shut down some of the units in various Thermal Power stations. The State government recently hiked the power tariff putting Rs 11,611 crore additional burden on the people. Moreover, the AP government had borrowed Rs 26,000 crore from various financial institutions by giving the State power companies as sureties.

Despite, AP having the capacity to generate 27,310 MW of



electricity, it is now generating only 18,648 MW. It means 8,662 MW of power generation (or 31 percent of total power generation) has been stopped. The Telangana state, out of its total capacity of 14,408 MW, is generating 13,895 MW.

Odisha state, out of its total generating capacity of 12,258 MW, is generating 9,829 MW.

Out of the total capacity of 24,659 MW, Chhattisgarh is now generating 18,266 MW which means only 6,393 MW of production was stopped. In Tamil

Nadu, out of the total power generation capacity of 37,704 MW, it is generating only 28,773 MW. Interestingly, Andhra Pradesh has stopped the generation of 8,662 MW of power due to a coal shortage.

Official sources told The Pioneer that the Guntur One Town area needs 3,497 million units of power but only 3,007 million units is being supplied. Guntur Two Town area needs 3,064 million units of electricity but only 2,379 million units of power is being supplied. These are only two examples of how AP is facing a power shortage, an official in the Electricity department said.

Rubbing salt in the wound, the Union government’s statement that 20,000 MW of power is available now but the AP government has ‘no money’ to buy, has put the Jagan Reddy regime in a

piquant situation. The silence of the AP government indicated that it has no answer to respond, political analysts told The Pioneer.

Official sources said that the AP government is providing free power to the farmers by bearing Rs 8,500 crore. The government is spending Rs 1 lakh on an average on every household for implementing various welfare schemes. The power crisis has come as a severe blow to the AP government which is virtually facing bankruptcy, political analysts said.

Though the power crisis has created turmoil in the State, the BJP leaders in the State neither responded nor blamed the AP government on the issue. Significantly, the BJP leaders did not blame either the AP government for buying a unit at Rs 20 in other states when Telangana State is offering the same at Rs 10.

Probe into Oilfed, SWC FD fraud

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Vijayawada police registered two separate cases and started an investigation into the alleged diversion of fixed deposits pertaining to Andhra Pradesh Cooperative Oil Seeds Growers Federation Limited and Andhra Pradesh State Warehousing Corporation by forging signatures.

Vijayawada Commissioner of Police B Srinivasulu said on Saturday that the police began the probe on the alleged transfer of fixed deposits of Andhra Pradesh Oil Seeds Growers Federation Limited and Andhra Pradesh State Warehousing Corporation from the deposited banks to other banks. The CP, in a statement, said the Vijayawada police received complaints on the transfer of fixed deposits with forged signatures and fake documents.

He said The Andhra Pradesh Co-operative Oilseeds Growers Federation Limited had deposited Rs 5 crore fixed deposits in Saptagiri Grameena Bank, Veerapanenigudem village under Atkurru police station limits of Gannavaram mandal. He said the deposits were transferred to other banks with forged signatures and fake documents.

Similarly, Rs 9.6 crore belongs to Andhra Pradesh State Warehousing Corporation also diverted to other banks with fake documents and forgery signatures. The Warehousing Corporation amount of Rs 9.6 crore was deposited in Indian Overseas Bank, Bhavanipuram branch. Bhavanipuram police received a complaint about diverting fixed deposits to other banks. The CP said the culprits would be nabbed and punished.

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.

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.



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."



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-feet 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, Sukhiti 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 the existing one. There is a lot that the travellers can expect from Chhattisgarh.



the pioneer agenda

FROM THE INSIDE



Get closer to God

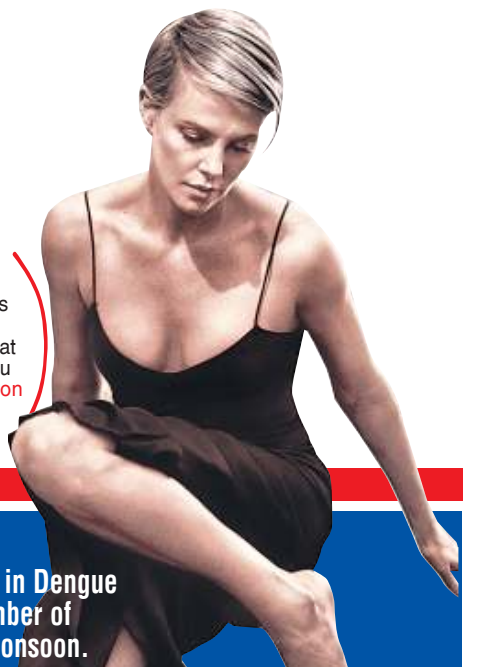
To relive the glory of *bhanja* Ram, Chhattisgarh launches a new religious circuit covering the spots touched by Lord Ram during the exile



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

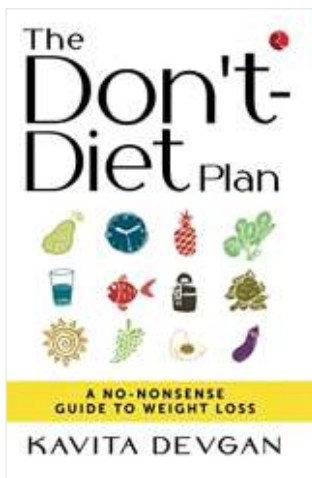
Greek food is super healthy and comprises of grains, fruits and vegetables, olive oil and very little meat. Sauces are based on wine, stocks, tomato and yoghurt, rather than milk or cream. Lentils, beans and vegetables are commonly used in soups, appetizers and main courses. So far so good, but still, 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



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.



