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TRUMP Indictment & Investigation



Heralding change through **FOLK MUSIC**



QUOTE OF THE DAY the pioneer It's high time opposition parties (BJP & Congress) came together, had a joint action plan to fight against the BRS government that is playing with the lives of unemployed, educated youth. Let us together march towards Pragathi Bhavan and bring KCR to task. If we fail at this moment to come together, then KCR will finish the opposition parties in spirit.

- Y S Sharmila, YSRTP chief

DON'T MISS...

No need for YSRCP to attack...

Education Minister Botsa Satyanarayana has made it clear that the Jagan Mohan Reddy government is committed to Three Capitals and there will be no going back on the decentralised policy. The minister stated that Amaravati land pooling a real estate business as there are no real farmers in the agitation except Chandrababu Naidu and his benamis. He further said that the ruling YSRCP has no need to carry out attacks on the BJP leaders.Addressing the media persons..



Remarriage of a widow cannot be a reason to deny compensation to her under the Motor Vehicles Act for the death of her husband in a road accident, the Bombay High Court has said while dismissing an insurance company's petition. Iffco Tokio General Insurance Company had filed the petition in the high court, challenging the order of a Motor Accidents Claim Tribunal (MACT), which had directed the company to pay compensation to the woman, whose husband was killed in a road...

'Financial frauds hamper country's...

Financial frauds cause "tremendous impairment" to the economy and hamper the overall growth of the country, a special court here observed while convicting three bankers in a 19year-old case of fraud. Special CBI judge D P Singade found three officials of Dena Bank, Srikant Padale (51), Vijaya Nair (46) and V Radhakrishnan (61) quilty of charges under the Prevention of Corruption Act and Indian Penal Code. The order passed on March 30 was made available on Saturday...

Why tornadoes are still hard...

Texas, As a deadly tornado headed toward Rolling Fork, Mississippi, on March 24, 2023 forecasters saw the storm developing on radar and issued a rare "tornado emergency" warning. NOAA's Weather Prediction and Storm Prediction centres had been warning for several days about the risk of severe weather in the region. But while forecasters can see the signs of potential tornadoes in advance, forecasting when and where tornadoes will form is still extremely difficult. We asked Chris Nowotarski, an atmospheric scientist who works on severe thunderstorm computer modeling, to explain why and how forecast technology is improving. Why are tornadoes still so difficult to forecast? Meteorologists have gotten.

DISQUALIFICATION OF RAHUL

KVP faults YSRCP, TDP for maintaining silence

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Congress party senior leader and former Rajya Sabha member KVP Ramachandra Rao has slammed the Jagan Mohan Reddy-led YSRCP for not opposing the disqualification of Congress MP Rahul Gandhi from Lok Sabha.

Addressing a meet-the-press programme at the Vijayawada Press Club on Saturday, KVP said that the YSRCP is maintaining closeness with the BJP due to 'special circumstances' and he did not know what they were.
"The YSRCP has neither con-

demned the disqualification of Rahul Gandhi from Lok Sabha nor opposed it," KVP said, regretting that there are 25 Lok Sabha members and 11 Rajya Sabha members of YSRCP and TDP but none of them opposed the disqualification in the Parliament.

KVP also lashed out at the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief and former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu for maintaining silence on Rahul Gandhi's disqualification from Lok Sabha. He recalled that Rahul Gandhi extended support to Naidu when he embarked on Dharma Porata Deeksha in Delhi against Narendra Modi for not granting the SCS to AP.

Naidu is fighting against the anti-people policies of the YSRCP-led government in AP, and on the same lines, Naidu should go to Delhi and



KVP pointed out that Narendra Modi spoke against the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh while addressing a programme in New York a few years ago but nobody objected to speaking against a Prime Minister of India

If the Hindenburg did not disclose the Adani scam, Adani would have emerged as the world's richest person very soon. As long YS Rajasekhar Reddy was the Chief Minister of AP, Adani could not step in AP.

"The YSRCP has neither condemned the disqualification of Rahul Gandhi from Lok Sabha nor opposed it," KVP said. regretting that there are 25 Lok Sabha members and 11 Rajya Sabha members of YSRCP and TDP but none of them opposed the disqualification in the Parliament

Disqualification of Rahul Gandhi is not his personal issue. It is a matter of national concern as such acts will be detrimental to

join the opposition parties to oppose the disqualification, KVP said.

"Disqualification of Rahul Gandhi is not his personal issue. It is a matter of national concern as such acts will be detrimental to democracy,'

he said and called upon all democrats and secular parties to be united to oppose the BJP-led Centre's 'anti-people' policies.



Half-day classes for schools in AP from tomorrow

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Starting from Monday, all schools in Andhra Pradesh will conduct half-day classes, said an official on Saturday, in keeping with the annual practice during the sum-

The classes will start from 7.45 AM to 12.30 PM for I to IX students until the last working day on April 30. However, schools hosting SSC examination centres will not conduct classes on exam days.

"These schools shall conduct compensatory classes for six days on the available public holidays during the period from April 3 to 30. The compensatory classes will also follow half day schedule," S Suresh Kumar, Commissioner of School Education said in a statement.



Kodali, Balineni may be reinducted into Cabinet

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Speculation is rife in political circles that ministers Kodali Venkateswara Rao (Nani) and Balineni Srinivasa Reddy are being considered for

reappointment to the

Jagan Mohan Reddy Cabinet. According to sources, the decision comes in the wake of the YSRCP's defeat in the recent MLC elections, which saw the

party lose all three seats in the graduate constituencies and one seat in the MLA quota.

the Chief Minister is said to have recognised that the current Cabinet lacks inspiring faces and wants to bring back Kodali Nani and Balineni Srinivasa Reddy, who have a significant following among the youth and can draw good crowds.

Sources say that CM Jagan believes the party's defeat in the MLĆ election can only be corrected by bringing back these two leaders, as he prepares

for the 2024 general elections. However, it remains to be seen who will be removed from the Cabinet Following a meeting with party to make room for their reappointment.

AP in deep debt trap: Naidu

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief Nara Chandrababu Naidu, on Saturday, said that the State is plunging into a deep debt burden with whopping Rs 10.31 lakh cr. Chandrababu Naidu sought to know where

the borrowed money is going. "I am unable to understand which way the State is moving," He said that on the one hand, the government is imposing heavy taxes on the people and on the other it is borrowing lakhs of crores and this year alone the CM borrowed Rs 96,000 cr.

The Opposition leader felt that

this will certainly lead to an economic crisis and will push the State into bankruptcy. Despite borrowing such a huge amount of funds, the Chief Minister has neither completed the Polavaram project nor constructed even a single road in any part of the State, he remarked.

I am unable to understand which way the State is moving, He said that on the one hand, the government is imposing heavy taxes on the people and on the other it is borrowing lakhs of crores and this year alone the CM borrowed Rs 96,000 crore.

Some people have given 'supari' to dent my image: PM Modi

PNS BHOPAL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said some people are hellbent to sully his image and they have given a "supari" (contract) for this purpose colluding with certain people sitting in India and also outside the country.

Modi's veiled attack on Congress comes amid a slugfest between the Grand Old Party and BJP over Rahul Gandhi's "democracy under brutal attack in India" remarks in the UK and Germany taking note of Rahul's disqualification from Lok Sabha The BIP has accused the Congress of "inviting foreign powers" for interfering in India's internal matters. The prime minister was addressing a gathering at Rani Kamalapati railway station after flagging off the semihigh-speed Bhopal-Delhi Vande

Bharat Express train. "There are some people in our country who have been determined since 2014, spoken publicly and declared their resolve that they will tarnish Modi's image. For this, they have given 'supari' (contract) to various people.

-SPORTS

India's unemployment rate at 3-month high of 7.8%

PNS MUMBAI

India's unemployment rose to a three-month high in March to 7.8 per cent as the country's labour markets deteriorated, according to data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). Unemployment rate in the

country surged in December 2022 to 8.30 per cent but declined in January to 7.14 per cent. It edged up again in February to 7.45 per cent, the CMIE data released on Saturday showed. During March, the unemploy-

ment rate in urban areas was at 8.4 per cent while in the rural areas it was at 7.5 per cent. "India's labour markets deterio-

rated in March 2023. The unemployment rate increased from 7.5 per cent in February to 7.8 per cent in March. The effect of this is compounded by the simultaneous fall in the labour force participation rate, which fell from 39.9 per cent to 39.8 per cent," CMIE managing director Mahesh Vyas told PTI. This led to a fall in the employ-

ment rate from 36.9 per cent in February to 36.7 per cent in March, Vyas said, adding that employment fell from 409.9 million to 407.6 million. Among the states, unemploy-



ment was the highest in Haryana at 26.8 per cent closely followed by Rajasthan at 26.4 per cent, Jammu and Kashmir at 23.1 per cent, Sikkim 20.7 per cent, Bihar 17.6 per cent and Jharkhand 17.5 per cent.

Unemployment was the lowest in Uttarakhand and Chhattisgarh at 0.8 per cent each followed by Puducherry at 1.5 per cent, Guiarat 1.8 per cent, Karnataka 2.3 per cent and Meghalaya and Odisha at 2.6 per cent each.

CIEL HR Services Director and CEO Aditya Mishra said that post the festive season of October-January, employment in retail, 7.14%. It edged up again in February to 7.45%, the CMIE data released on Saturday showed.

supply chain, logistics, financial services and e-commerce has declined.

"Our sectors of IT, Technology and Startups have tightened their belts leading to a slowdown in fresh hiring. Thirdly, March being the month of financial year-end and examinations, the sectors of leisure travel, tourism, entertainment and hospitality are not witnessing high



Centre hikes toll charges

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Central government has revised the toll charges once again that have come into force right from March 31 at midnight and the lorry owners across the State are feeling the heat of the increased toll

The highway tolls have increased by around 10% across the country, the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) issued a notification for the same a few days ago.
Tolls are tied to the Wholesale

Price Index of inflation and are adjusted in response to changes in that index.

The requirements of the NH Fee (Determination of Rating and Collection) Rules, 2008 govern the revision of highway toll

In FY23, the average increase maintenance. in toll prices across the nation was

The price revision for toll charges, on the other hand, varies across the country.

Lorry owners, who are already struggling to operate their vehicles due to increases in fuel prices and other hidden expenses have to face the fresh toll charges burden of

about 10 percent.

Over 3 lakh lorries and transport vehicles are in Andhra Pradesh and the transport sector and about seven lakh workers, drivers, and cleaners including lorry owners depend on the transport sector in Andhra Pradesh.

Speaking to The Pioneer, AP Lorry Owners Association general secretary YV Eswara Rao recalled the logistic policy by Prime Minister Modi as a good move to connect all national highways, and ports and provide good road conditions and



Most parts of India to reel under heatwave soon: IMD

PNS NEW DELHI

west and peninsular region, is expected to experience above-normal maximum temperatures from April to June, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Saturday. It said above-normal heatwave

Most of India, barring parts of north-

days are predicted in most parts of central, east and northwest India during this period.

"During the 2023 hot weather season (April to June), most parts of the country are expected to experience above-normal maximum temperatures, except for south peninsular India and some parts of northwest India where normal to below-normal maximum temperatures are likely, the IMD said.

'A significantly higher number of heatwave days are predicted over parts of Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh,

Odisha, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab and Haryana," IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mahapatra said in a virtual press conference. A heatwave is declared if the max-

imum temperature of a station reaches at least 40 degrees Celsius in the in 1901, according to the IMD.

plains, at least 37 degrees Celsius in coastal areas and at least 30 degrees Celsius in hilly regions, and the departure from normal is at least 4.5 degrees Celsius. India logged its hottest February

this year since record-keeping began



However, above-normal rainfall (37.6 mm against a normal of 29.9 mm) due to seven western disturbances, including five strong ones, kept temperatures in check in March.

March 2022 was the warmest ever and the third driest in 121 years. The year also saw the country's thirdwarmest April, eleventh-warmest August and eighth-warmest September since 1901.

The IMD said normal to abovenormal minimum temperatures are very likely over most parts of the country, barring some areas in northeast and northwest India and isolated pockets of the peninsular region.

Last month, the Centre For Policy Research (CPR) said a review of 37 heat action plans in India shows most of them do not explicitly carry out vulnerability assessments, leaving the IMD. authorities with little data on where to direct their scarce resources.

Heat action plans (HAPs) are the rimary policy response to economically damaging and life-threatening heatwaves. They prescribe a number of activities, disaster responses and post-heatwave response measures to reduce the impact of heatwaves.

The weather bureau said India is expected to see normal rainfall in April. Based on data collected from 1971 to 2020, the country on an average receives 39.2 mm of rainfall in April.

Normal to above-normal precipitation is expected over most parts of northwest, central and peninsular region, while below-normal rain is predicted in east and northeast India.

La Nina conditions, cooling of the waters in the Pacific Ocean near South America that favours the Indian monsoon, have weakened, according to the





6,64,152 students to appear for SSC exams from tomorrow

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Education Department has announced that the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) exams for Class 10 students will take place from April 3 to 18. Around 6,64,152 students are expected to appear for the exams across the state, and the Education Department has made all the necessary arrangements to ensure a smooth process. Minister for Education, Botsa Satyanarayana, made this announcement at a press conference on Saturday, where he was accompanied by Principal Secretary Praveen Prakash, Commissioner S Suresh Kumar, SSC Board Director D Devananda Reddy, and others at the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan Project Office on the premises of KBC ZP High School at Patamata in Vijavawada.

Minister Satyanarayana stated that the exams would begin at 9:30 am and finish at 12:45 noon every day. He emphasized that no student would be allowed to enter the examination hall after 9:30 am, but in exceptional cases, the Chief Superintendent of the concerned center would have the copying. The circular regarding the 74 teachers who com-

authority to permit a student to sit for the exam. To ensure the safety of students, government teachers would act as invigilators, even in private

and aided schools. The department has taken steps to accommodate 24 students in each room, and to conduct the exams strictly, the department has arranged 682 sitting squads and 156 flying squads. CCTV cameras have been installed in 104 examination centers this year.

Minister Satyanarayana announced that electronic gadgets would not be allowed into the examination rooms. Even invigilators would deposit their mobile phones at the mobile counters to prevent malpractice and mass

the dental course BDS. They

want to continue the contract

employees who have been

working so far and not remove

the outsourcing jobs. He

requested that appointments

should be made through inter-

views with notification to

work in Ramayapatnam port

and other ports and the rule of

the reservation should be fol-

State honorary president P

President

Seenaiah, Krishna District

Tirupayya, State Vice

President B Shekara Rao,

District Associate President

Dr Saka Nagamani, D

Srinivasa Rao also spoke on

lowed, he said.

Honorary

the occasion.

mitted illegality last year, which was issued earlier, was revoked at the request of the teachers' union leaders.

To assist students with transport, APSRTC is providing a free bus facility to SSC students. The students must carry their hall tickets during the travel time, and it would be treated as a bus pass. If any village has no bus facility, and many students need transport, RTC will send a bus following the request letter to the RTC bus depot manager through

the concerned district DEO. Half-day schools are scheduled from April 3 to 30 for classes 1 to 9, from 7:45 am to 12:30 pm. This system will be implemented in all government, ZP, Municipal, Aided, and Private Unaided schools. In schools where there are SSC examination centers, no

Navy Chief tests

classes will be held on exam days. Compensatory classes will be conducted for six days on the available public holidays during the period from April 3 to 30, with a half-day schedule.

Minister Satyanarayana announced that Summative Assessment 2 (SA2) exams for classes 1 to 9 will be conducted from 9 am to 12 noon. In view of the half-day school schedule, the government has revised the SA2 examination

Officials present at the press conference included Samagra Siksha SAPD B Srinivasa Rao, APSPD and AP Open School Society Director Dr KV Srinivasulu Reddy, School Education Joint Director (Services) M Ramalingam, and others.



PT Usha in Vja for 'Ahimsa Run' today

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president and Olympian PT Usha, who is also a Rajya Sabha Member, reached Vijayawada from New Delhi on Saturday.

Jain International Trade

Organisation (JITO) representatives, along with Andhra Pradesh Athletics Association (APAA) representatives accorded a warm welcome to PT Usha at the Gannavaram Airport. Later, she went to Vijayawada by roadway and made a night halt at Novotel.

She will be taking part in the JITO 'Ahimsa Run' that will be held at the Indira Municipal Corporation Stadium. Aiming to promote peace and non-violence, the JITO is going to conduct the 'Ahimsa Run' in 65 cities across the State on April 2. Around 2,000 athletes will be participating in the event in Vijayawada.

1,168 appointments approved on compassionate grounds in APSRTC

PNS VIJAYAWADA

As many as 1,168 people would get compassionate appointments in APSRTC. To this effect, the state government has issued orders for appointments in APSRTC to the family members of the RTC employees who died from 2016 to 2019.

During the TDP regime, as many as 1,168 RTC employees died during 2016-19 and Chandrababu refused to give jobs to family members under compassionate appointments. Even though RTC was a corporation, the government did not show mercy for compassionate appointments and

ignored the union's request. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy took up the issue with humanity towards compassionate appointments. It is noteworthy that RTC was merged into the government and agreed to give jobs under compassionate appointments. The government has issued

orders to give jobs to 1,168 people under compassionate

appointments. APSRTC MD Ch Dwaraka Tirumala Rao issued an order to provide jobs to 34 people as junior assistants, 146 as RTC constables, 175 as conductors, 368 as drivers, and 445 as workers/assistant mechanics

based on the qualifications. The RTC unions thanked Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for sanctioning the long pending compassionate appointments. They

expressed happiness in issuing

orders to provide jobs to 1,168

people in various categories. PV Ramana Reddy, President of the National Mazdoor Union, expressed joy and stated that this is proof that the government is dealing with RTC employees with a positive attitude. Employees

Union State general secretary P Damodar Rao thanked the government for resolving the long-pending issue.

No one is happy under YSRCP rule: Lokesh

PNS VIJAYAWADA

TDP general secretary Nara Lokesh has said that all sections of people are suffering a lot and no one is happy with the YSRCP rule. On Saturday, Lokesh's 'padayatra' entered the Dharmavaram Assembly segment, and the followers of Paritala Sriram received the leader. Later, he inspected the TIDCO houses.

Lokesh alleged that Chief Minister, Jagan Mohan Reddy, is reducing the number of beneficiaries of all the welfare schemes. "The TIDCO houses were built during the TDP regime and Jagan is now repainting these houses to claim them to be that of his Government," he stated



Strongly condemning the State government's policy to neglect the Satya Sai Water Works project meant for drinking water Lokesh said that the non-payment of the power bills and the salaries of the employees clearly indicate the bankruptcy of the Jagan

PNS NEW DELHI

China has issued visas to

Lokesh interacted with those who have come to meet him and inquired about the problems they are facing. The majority of them complained that the prices of essentials are skyrocketing and no welfare schemes are being implemented. Lokesh met the handloom workers who narrated their woes. They said that the handloom sector has completely collapsed, particularly after the Covid pandemic and those who are dependent on the handlooms.

Lokesh assured them that the party will certainly stand by them and Chandranna Bheema will be implemented once the party is back in

Action sought against culprits in Dr Atchanna murder case

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The members of the Andhra Pradesh state SC/ST Gazetted Officers Association have demanded that attacks against SC and ST community people in Andhra Pradesh be stopped. They demanded that the accused in the brutal murder of Dr. Atchanna, Deputy Director in the Animal Husbandry Department in Kadapa be prosecuted as per law and ensure that the accused is hanged to death. The association members appealed to implement GO No 2 and 5 properly for the reservation of SC/ST employees' promotion in government departments.

Joint Krishna District president N Jagadish said that the problems of SCs and STs have not been resolved in any office in the government and they

positive for Covid PNS NEW DELHI are not being allowed to ask the concerned officials. It has Navy Chief Admiral R Hari been requested grant dental Kumar on Saturday tested surgeon posts in all PHCs and VHCs of the State to positive for COVID-19 that forced him to skip the valethose who have completed dictory session of the three-

> Bhopal, people familiar with the matter said. The valedictory session of the conference was attended by Prime Minister

Commanders' Conference in

Combined

"The Chief of Naval Staff tested positive for COVID-19 ahead of the concluding session. He did not attend the session," said one of the people cited above. Admiral Kumar attended the conference on Thursday and

"He is asymptomatic and doing fine," the person said. The Navy Chief has returned to Delhi.

Fight BRS Govt jointly; Sharmila tells Bandi Sanjay, Revanth

PNS HYDERABAD

YSRTP President YS Sharmila phoned Telangana BJP President Bandi Sanjay Kumar and TPCC President Revanth Reddy and asked them to fight jointly against the BRS government for the unemployed. She urged Sanjay and Revanth to join hands and march to the Pragathi Bhavan.

She told them that there is a need for the opposition to unite to tackle Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao. She added that KCR will not allow opposition parties in Telangana if they do not fight jointly. Responding to Sharmila's appeal, Sanjay said, "It is true

that Sharmila phoned me on Saturday. I made it clear to her that the BJP will fight for anyone who faces injustice from KCR. But I told Sharmila that the BJP will not fight along with the Congress as the Congress and the BRS are actually one. Congress leaders themselves are saying that the Congress and the BRS will contest elections together. Jana Reddy said the same thing on Friday. Both the Congress and the BRS may give the impression that they are fighting each other but the Congress has been saying that they will join hands before or after the elections. How can we work the Congress then? The BJP is a disciplined party. We will take a decision on which

the party." Revanth said the time has come for the opposition to fight KCR jointly. A final decision will be taken after discussing the issue, Revanth

party to work with after dis-

cussing it with everyone in

Atmeeya Sammelan cancelled due to BRS leader's death

PNS JAGITYAL

The Atmeeya Sammelan under way in the town on Saturday was cancelled following the death of BRS councilor Bandari Narender.

According to reports, Narender who is the spouse of BRS woman leader Bandari Rajani suffered a heart attack while cultural programmes were under wav.

Continued from Page 1

AP in deep...

Maintaining that the per capita income of Telangana has now reached Rs 3.08 lakh taking the State to the top in the country, the former chief minister said that this is all because of the decisions taken earlier which yielded the best results now.

But the per capita income of Andhra Pradesh is Rs 2.19 lakh and one can easily imagine the difference between the two States, he stated.

He questioned Jagan Mohan Reddy where this whole money is being diverted. People are totally unhappy with the functioning of the Jagan Government, he said, and asked those YSRCP leaders who are unhappy with their party leadership to think of their self-respect.

over 18,000 Indians in the last three months, a Chinese diplomat said. Interacting with a group of journalists in Minister Kolkata. Counsellor of the Chinese Embassy in India, Chen ing forward to more medicine were stranded Chinese being given visas back home due to the

China has granted visas

to over 18,000 Indians

since January

by India. "The number of visa restrictions Jianjun said China was applications for China has been on the rise. Since January, we have given visas to 18,560 Indians,"

he said. "Since August, 9,409 student visas have been issued to Indian students,"

However, Jianjun said, the number of visa applications is yet to reach the pre-pandemic levels.

In June last year, China announced plans to provide visas to Indian professionals and their families stranded in India following the strict restrictions imposed by Beijing due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Separately, it also started processing visa appli-cations of thousands of Indian students studying in Chinese universities who conveyed their interest to rejoin their colleges and universities. About 23,000 Indian students, mostly studying ronment in India.

working with India for an early resumption of direct flights between the two countries. Flight services between the two countries have

been disrupted ever since coronavirus was first reported in Wuhan in late 2019 and spread across the world. The flight disruption

turned out to be a major problem for hundreds of Indian students as well as families of Indians working in China and businessmen to travel back and forth.

Indians are currently travelling to China through Sri Lanka, Nepal and Myanmar, and some other countries, shelling out an exorbitant amount of money on steep airfares.

Jianjun also said that his country was looking forward to a more fair and friendly business envi-

OU Dean Ravinder Nath appointed VC of University of Kashmir

PNS HYDERABAD

The Union Ministry of Education on Friday appointed Prof A Ravinder Nath, Dean, Faculty of Technology, Osmania University, Hyderabad, as the Vice Chancellor of Central University of Kashmir (CUK) for a period of five years.

As per an order, the appointment has been made as per Statute 2 of Central Universities

Act, 2009. "The appointment has been made for a term of five years from the date on which he enters upon his office, or until he attains the age of seventy years, whichever is earlier," the order reads. As per the order, the terms and conditions of the services of Prof A Ravinder Nath as the Vice Chancellor of the Central University of Kashmir will be those as set forth in the Act, Statutes and Ordinances of the University.

Half-day classes...

Continued from Page 1

The second Saturday in April, usually a holiday, will be a working day for schools this year, Kumar said.

Considering the scorching summer days during which children would attend schools, the Commissioner directed officials to supply adequate drinking water with the support of the gram panchayats and the RWS department. Further, he cautioned them to

avoid classes in open areas or under the trees and asked the authorities to stock up on some oral rehydration solution (ORS) sachets in every school for use in the event of a sunstroke.

Likewise, Kumar instructed officials to provide butter milk along with mid-day meals with the latter being supplied at the end of class-

TODAY **ALMANAC** Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha Apr 02 04:20 AM to Apr 03 06:24 AM Tithi:Dwadashi: Nakshatram: Apr 02 04:48 AM to Apr 03 07:24 AM 4:54 PM to 6:25 PM Rahukalam: 12:20 PM to 1:51 PM Yamagandam: Varjyam: 06:06 PM to 07:52 PM 3:23 PM to 4:54 PM Gulika: Amritakalam Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:55 AM to 12:44 PM VIJAYAWADA WEATHER Forecast: Partly Cloudy **Temp:** 36[∞] Humidity: 66% Sunrise: 6:02 AM

Updated: April 1, 2023 5:00 PM

Sunset: 6:20 PM

Some people have given...

Continued from Page 1

"Some people are sitting inside the country to support these people and some are doing their work sitting outside the country. These people have been continuously trying to spoil and tarnish Modi's image," he said. But India's poor, the middle class, tribals, Dalits, backward classes and every Indian has become the security cover of Modi, which made these people furious forcing them to adopt new tricks, he said.

Modi said such people have taken a pledge that "Modi Teri Kabra Khudegi". "Amidst their conspiracies, every countryman has to pay attention to the development of the country and pay attention to build-ing the nation," he said.

Slamming Congress Modi said previous governas his government is busy the first family of the country. They ignored the poor and middle class, and the Railway is a living example of this (ignorance)," he said.

leader Digvijaya Singh on Thursday thanked the

without taking its name, ments were busy with vote bank appeasement wheresatisfying people. "They (the previous governments) considered one family as

The prime minister also expressed deep grief over the stepwell roof collapse tragedy in a temple in Indore which killed 36 people and injured 16 on Ram Navami. As Germany took note of Rahul Gandhi's disqualification from Lok Sabha, senior Congress

German foreign ministry

Most parts of India to reel... the Indian Ocean near

Continued from Page 1

"Forecast indicates ENSO neutral conditions are likely from April to June. A transition to El Ni o is favoured by July-September, with chances of El Ni o increasing through the fall," Mahapatra said. El Ni o, the warming of the waters in the Pacific Ocean near South America, is associated with the weakening of monsoon winds and less rainfall in India.

However, the Met office said that several models indicate the development of a positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) in the coming months. The Bureau of Meteorology model also indicates the development of positive IOD by May 2023.

IOD is defined by the difference in the sea surface temperatures between the western part of the Indian Ocean near Africa and the eastern part of

Indonesia. A positive IOD is considered good for the Indian monsoon. The monsoon accounts for around 70 per cent of the country's annual rainfall and irrigates 60 per cent of its net sown area. Nearly half of the population depends on agriculture directly or indirectly.

The weatherman said at least 100 weather stations across the country reported heavy rain events (64.5 mm to 115.5 mm), the highest since 2018. The prolonged spell of pre-

monsoon rain, thunderstorms, hailstorms and lightning strikes damaged crops in many parts of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and other states. The mango crop in the country has been damaged up to 20 per cent because of the untimely rains, hailstorm and strong wind, according to

KVP faults YSRCP..

Continued from Page 1

KVP pointed out that Narendra Modi spoke against the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh while addressing a pro-gramme in New York a few years ago but nobody objected to speaking against a Prime Minister of India

Meanwhile, launching a scathing attack against Narendra Modi, KVP described 'Modi and Adani' as 'conjoined twins'. Adani started rising swiftly only after Narendra Modi became

the Prime Minister. "If the

Hindenburg did not disclose the Adani scam, Adani would have emerged as the world's richest person very soon. As long YS Rajasekhar Reddy was the Chief Minister of AP, Adani could not step in AP," KVP stated.

KVP claimed that the Congress party has been questioning for the last few years the extending of unjust favour to Adani by the Modi-led Centre. KVP made it clear that he

opposed the TDP-Congress

alliance in Telangana state in

the 2018 elections and he did

not participate in the elec-

tion campaign either. He

deplored the congress party in AP and bore the brunt of the bifurcation of the combined AP state. Those who supported the bifurcation including the BJP, CPI, and TDP did not suffer but the Congress was badly affected

appropriate time. AICC Kolanukonda Sivaji and

other leaders were present.

When asked whether he tried to give advice to AP CM Jagan Mohan Reddy as he was very close to his father Rajasekhar Reddy, KVP said that he would explain it in detail later at an

government wanted to bring the two-digit transportation cost to single-digit which is

Continued from Page 1

He said that the central

also a good move, but it is possible only when fuel prices are rolled back and withdraw the decision of increasing the toll tax on the national highways. He said the diesel price in

litre and the lorry owners are already facing the burden of road tax, insurance, and maintenance expenses. He said the Central government has given permission

to the toll tax collecting contractors to increase the toll tax every year. He demanded the Union government change the policy and increase the toll once in five years instead of one

Centre hikes toll...

G Suman Kumar a retired HM said that with their knowledge the toll charges are deducted from the fastag account. He said that we Vijayawada crossed Rs 99 a don't even know how much the toll charge is being increased and said that as senior citizens we cannot travel by public transport and have to bear such hidden charges, he added.

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VIJAYAWADA | SUNDAY | APRIL 2, 2023

MGNREGA SCHEME

75L person days allocated to combined Krishna & NTR dist

The Panchayat Raj and Rural Development (PR & RD) has allocated 75 lakh person days for the combined Krishna and NTR district to provide employment opportunities for poor families. Out of these, Krishna district has been allotted 30 lakh person days, while NTR district will have 45 lakh person days. However, the person days allocated for Krishna district have decreased by 1 crore when compared to the previous financial year.

The Ministry of Rural Development has increased the wage rate for this financial year by Rs 15 for NREGA laborers in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in the new fiscal year of 2023-24, effective

The District Water and Management Agency (DWAMA) officials, who



oversee the implementation of the Upadhi scheme in the districts, mentioned that during the financial year 2022-23, Krishna district provided 70 lakh person days and paid Rs. 274.57 crores in wages. On the other hand, the NTR district had created 75 lakh person days and paid Rs 225.78 crore in wages. They further added that the central government would increase person days whenever the allotted days are completed. For instance, Krishna district was allotted 30 lakh person days, but it has been provided with 70 lakh person days. Similarly, the NTR district had provided 75 lakh person days as against the

is a positive development that allotted 45 lakh person days. The NTR District DWAMA Project Director (PD) Jujjavarapu Suneetha spoke to 'The Pioneer' and said that during the 2022-23 financial year, the district administration paid Rs. 245 wages per day, against

the fixed wage rate of Rs. 252 She also mentioned that the Upadhi scheme implementation department is aiming to pay the maximum wage rate of Rs 272, and a plan of action has been prepared to provide employment opportunities for poor people in the district. She further stated that with the support of the district collector Dr. S Dilli Rao, DWAMA would complete its target. During the summer season, the department is prepared to employ anyone who asks for Overall, the increase in

wages for the Upadhi laborers

will benefit many poor families in the region. The government's commitment to providing employment opportunities to those in need is commendable, and it is hoped that the implementation of the scheme will proceed smoothly.

Vishnu flays BJP propaganda against CM

State Planning Board Vice Chairman Malladi Vishnu has criticised BJP leader Y Satya Kumar for speaking lies. He strongly condemned the false propaganda being done by the BJP leaders against Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. He said that the Centre had earlier said that the decision of the capital is entirely up to the State.

On Saturday, during 'Gadapa Gadapaku Mana Prabhutvam', at 278 ward secretariat under 63rd Division, Vishnu said that whatever affidavit was filed by the Centre in the ongoing case in the Supreme Court, the same was filed in the AP High Court at that time. In that affidavit, the Centre clearly stated that the State government did not consult the Centre while enacting the CRDA Act. He said that the relevant matter is completely related to the state government. The center has nothing to do

Vishnu pointed out that the BJP leader Satya Prasad was telling the other way around confusing the people. He

demanded that the BJP's stand on Amaravati should be made clear by giving up their dual stance. On the other hand, Vishnu criticized the petty politics of Telugu Desam Party

leaders as disgusting. He pointed out that the opposition leaders have finally come down to the level of mudslinging on the police sys-

He recalled that during the TDP regime, all the public representatives used to register their protests at the Dharna Chowk. But it is a shame to come on the roads and threaten the police system. Vishnu criticized and warned that this is not Chandrababu's TDP government to keep calm, while attacking police stations and attacking the Transport Commissioner. He urged the opposition leaders to change

their attitude



New bus service from Gannavaram to BHEL

PNS VIJAYAWADA

APSRTC Gannavaram depot has started the new bus service from Gannavaram to BHEL, Hyderabad to facilitate the Hyderabad passengers. This bus service will start at 9 pm at the Gannavaram bus stand every day. Also, another bus service is available from BHEL to Gannavaram.

Gannavaram MLA Dr. Vallabhaneni Vamsi Mohan flagged off the bus service along with the APSRTC Tatineni Chairperson Padmavati at the Gannavaram

depot on Saturday. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Vamsi Mohan said that the state government is taking all steps for the development of APSRTC. Public transport

is available at less cost with the RTC, he said. The government runs the buses to all villages and people have had bus facilities in his constituency, he

Zonal Chairperson T Padmavathi said that the Gannavaradm depot has a history and she suggested to the employees live up to it in the future. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is ready to fulfil all needs of the employees, she added.

ĀPŚRTC Executive Director Zone 2) Gidigu Venkate Rao, Krishna District PTDO NVR Vara Prasad, Gannavaram MPP Anagani Ravi, ZPTC member A Elizbeth Rani, Co Option Member Md Gousani, Gannavaram Depot Manager Sivaji and others participated.

'No need for YSRCP to attack BJP leaders

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Education Minister Botsa Satyanarayana has made it clear that the Jagan Mohan Reddy government is committed to Three Capitals and there will be no going back on the decentralised policy. The minister stated that Amaravati land pooling a real estate business as there are no real farmers in the agitation except Chandrababu Naidu and his benamis. He further said that the ruling YSRCP has no need to carry out attacks on the BJP

Addressing the media persons on Saturday, the minister alleged agitation in the name of Amaravati is being carried out to benefit Chandrababu and the company. He said that from the beginning he was saying Amaravati cannot be fulfilled as lakhs of crores of rupees belonging to the people cannot be poured

into silos in Amaravati villages and it is not correct to bring all the national wealth and put Minister Satyanarayana said

that the party will go for elec-tions with the decentralization slogan for all-round development of the state. He opined that administrative capital should function at Vizag right from tomorrow. However, due to some evil forces, the shifting of the administrative capital is being delayed due to ceedings. The YSRCP government is 'decentralisation of development'. We are going to elections with the slogan of three capitals," said

the minister. The Minister stated that Chandrababu is anticipating early polls and if the polls are conducted now, TDP will further deteriorate in the election results. He claimed that People's trust in our government as it is stable under the leadership of CM Jagan Mohan Reddy. He affirmed that when people give us the opportunity to govern for five years, it works for the good of the people till the end.

Admitting the failure in the MLC elections, the Minister said "YSRCP will review the developments related to the MLC elections. Defects will be checked. If there is a communication gap anywhere in the party, we will identify it and correct the mistakes. We will try to overcome such failures."

The Minister stated that the YSRCP has no need to carry out attacks on BJP leader Y Satya Kumar. "What is the spirit of the movement in Amaravati as there were only tents and provocative speeches. Why do we need to attack BJP leader Sathya Kumar? Political mudslinging attempts on our party. Neither our gov-



RO plant comes up at Vizag zoo

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As part of the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign, the Directorate General of GST Intelligence, Visakhapatnam Zonal Unit has donated a Reverse Osmosis (RO) +UV water plant to the Indira Gandhi Zoological Park, Visakhapatnam and was inau-gurated Saturday by Y Bhaskara Rao, Joint Director of Directorate General of GST Intelligence, Visakhapatnam Zonal Unit. The plant has been set up as part of the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign by the Government of India to used as part of the summer arrangements to cater to the

Speaking on the occasion, Bhaskara Rao, emphasized the importance of the availability of clean and potable water and maintaining cleanliness and hygienic water in public places.

He also urged visitors to the park to use the facilities responsibly and help in keeping the IGŹP clean and green. The RO + UV water plant has a capacity of producing 500 litres of purified water per hour. It has been equipped with the latest technology and will help in providing clean drinking water to visitors to the park. IGZP authorities have

expressed their gratitude to the DG GST Intelligence, Visakhapatnam Zonal Unit, for providing the RO + UV water plant and for supporting their efforts in providing better facilities to G Mangamma, ACF, Assistant Curators, Forest Section Officers, and P Krishna Rao, Deputy Director, Staff of DG Intelligence, Visakhapatnam Zonal Unit, and others participated in the

DRM releases poster on summer camp

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

Summer camp-2023 will be organized by East Coast Railway Sports Association-Waltair, for a period of Two months from April 3 to May 30.

In this connection, Divisional Railway Manager Anup Satpathy released a poster camps will be conducted among the children in two sessions in the morning and evening sessions for children of age between 5 years to 15 years. The coaching will be organized in the athletics, boxing, basketball, cricket, ball badminton, football, shuttle badminton, skating, swimming, table tennis, tennis, and vol-



leyball disciplines. Divisional Railway Manager Shri Anup Satpathy said that the summer coaching is open for all and it is a free coaching camp. Coaching will be given to boys and girls in various disciplines. Boys will be

given in athletics, boxing, basketball, cricket, ball badminton, football, shuttle badminton, skating, swimming, table tennis, tennis and volleyball disciplines whereas girls will be given in athletics, boxing, basketball, shuttle badminton, skating, swimming, table tennis and ten-The entries for this coaching camp

open for all whereas the coaching for cricket, swimming, and tennis is restrictneeds of visitors to the park. ed entry as per the norms. For details and admission interest people can contact Shri VH Kiran (Mobile No. 8977355229 and General Secretary Shri R Srinivasa Rao at the Sports office, ECoRSA, Waltair

Congress to go ahead with like-minded parties

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president and former MLC Gidugu Rudra Raju has made it clear that the Congress party would move forward with like-minded parties. His party had a strong cadre not only in the State but also in the country and it would fight against people's problems, he

APCC president Rudra Raju

 $\begin{array}{cccc} addressed \ the \ media \ persons \ along \\ with & former & MP & KVR \end{array}$ Ramachandra Rao at the Andhra Ratna Bhavan in Vijayawada on Saturday.

He said that the BJP-led central government cancelled his party's senior MP Rahul Gandhi's membership for asking about the central government's failures. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government are cowardly, he commented.

Rao demanded that the Ccentral government tell where Rs 20,000 crore from shell companies went. The Modi government is unable to answer Rahul's questions and that's why it suspended his membership,

AP State affairs in-charges CD Meyyappan, M Christopher Tilak, Media and Social Media Committee Chairman Dr N Tulasi Reddy and others were present.



Sportswear presented to KRU softball team members

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Krishna University Softball (Men) team has been selected to take part in the All India Inter-University Softball (Men) Championship that will be conducted at Punjab University in Chandigarh from April 5 to 9. The Krishna University team will leave Vijayawada on April 2 for Chandigarh to take part in this tournament.

In this connection, the sportswear presentation programme for the Krishna Softball (Men) team was held at the Vikas College of Physical Education at Nunna near Vijayawada on Saturday. Vikas Educational Group of Institutions Secretary and Correspondent Naredla Satyanarayana Reddy presented sportswear to the Krishna University team players.



Speaking on the occasion, he said that players should participate with sportsmen's spirit and win the All India Inter-University Championship. He said that outstanding sports persons would get employment in the central govern-ment departments. Also, they would get special reservations in the admissions of higher

education courses, he added. Vikas College of Physical Education Principal Dr. G Raju, vice principal B Uday Kumar, lecturers G Raghunath, D Ratna Babu, and others

Krishna University Team: Ch Gopikrishna Reddy, J Lokram Karthik, M Salmon, B

Sai (Andhra Loyola College, Vijayawada), V Sagar Babu, B Madhu, Md Rafi, V Ramakrishna, P Vijay Kumar (Vikas BPED College, Nunna), K Ajay Kumar, K Siva Venkata Subrahmanyam, R Raju (AG & SG Siddhartha College, Vuyyuru), K Lokesh, Y Sampath (SRR & CVR Government Degree College, Vijayawada), P Munna (Dr LHR GDC, Mylavaram).

'State govt hiked taxes by 50% in three years'

Andhra Pradesh Pattana Poura Samakhya State convener Ch Babu Rao has alleged that the State government has increased taxes by 50% over the past three years, with the pressure of the BJP-led Central government. He further claimed that the tax burden might increase by 100% in the next two years. The state government has imposed taxes such as garbage cess, water taxes, and petrol, gas, cement, and drinking water taxes in addition to property tax, which is an additional burden for the 1.50 crore people living in cities and towns, he alleged. Rao also accused the state and central governments of viewing local bodies as tax collection organizations.

Babu Rao Rao criticised the Central government's decision



to impose tax based on the asset value and claimed that the state government is implementing it. He further alleged that the state government increases taxes by 15% every year, and in the past two years, has reached 32%. Additionally, the state govern-

ment is ready to collect a 15%

additional tax over the previous

He further claimed that the tax burden might increase by 100% in the next two years. year's tax in the new fiscal year. Rao demanded that the State

government fix nominal penalties instead of the current 24%. He also criticized the government's failure to prepare a plan of action to prevent the drinking water problem in cities and towns. He alleged that at the government's pressure, all local bodies, including Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, and other corporations' officials, are focusing on collecting taxes. In this situation, AP Pattana Poura Samakhya would organise agitations regarding people's problems, he added

VMC chief Swapnil inspects outfall drain

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Municipal Vijayawada Corporation Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar inspected the outfall drain at the New Rajarajeswari Peta in

New Rajarajeswari Peta in Vijayawada on Saturday.
One-Town and Old Rajarajeswaripet areas are being submerged due to the obstacles created by the Railway department for the flow of the drainage water that comes from One Town, and the railway line One Town, and the railway line at the New Rajarajeswaripet.

Local people are facing inconvenience so the civic chief directed the officials concerned

to remove the barriers immediately. Also, he has given instructions for removing the encroachments that are obstructing the drainage flow. Further, he directed the

Engineering department to prepare estimates for constructing the RCC canal in place of the earth canal.

VMC Chief Engineer M Prabhakara Rao, Executive Engineers V Srinivas, Narayana Murthy, Deputy City Planner Jubin Siran Roy, Health Officer Dr Suresh Babu, Railway ADEN Ashok and others accompanied







Tension in Puttaprthi as TDP, YSRC activists clash

Police resort to lathi-charge to quell warring groups

PNS ANANTAPUR

Tension prevailed in the spiritual town Puttaparthi in Sri Satya Sai district as the YSRCP and TDP activists clashed and the police resorted to lathicharge to disperse the clashing activists on Saturday. YSRCP MLA Sridhar Reddy uploaded some posts, criticising the TDP and Nara Lokesh, on social media and the TDP countered

Former minister Palle Raghunath Reddy dared the YSRCP MLA Sridhar Reddy for an open debate on the development of the constituency and the district during the YSRCP

The ex-minister challenged the MLA to come to the Sattemma temple for an open debate and went to the TDP office. When the MLA and the ex-minister were trying to go to the temple, the police detained the ex-minister in the TDP office itself. The police also



the Hanuman Junction area. On seeing Raghunatha Reddy, the furious YSRCP activists attacked his car by pelting stones at which the windscreens of the vehicle smashed. The TDP activists also countered the YSRCP

of the TDP office and reached

activists leading to a clash. The police resorted to lathialleged.

charge and dispersed the clashing activists which led to a Nara Lokesh described the tense situation in the area. Later the police arrested ex-minister Palle Raghunatha Reddy and whisked him away to the police station. However, he was freed

Reddy indulged in corruption and they have the evidence. "If the MLA comes for an open debate, we will show the

later. The ex-minister, sometime

later, went to the Sattemma

temple, took 'harathi', and stat-

ed that YSRCP MLA Sridhar

evidence of his corruption," Raghunatha Reddy challenged. The ex-minister said that with the fear of defeat and frustration, the YSRCP activists attacked them and they also spread false news against Nara Lokesh, he

Meanwhile, TDP national president and ex-chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu condemned the attack on Palle Raghunath Reddy. The YSRCP resorted to attacking when the resorted to attacking when the Opposition questioned their misdeeds, he alleged.

attack as a crowdie act of YSRCP. He spoke to the TDP leaders over the phone from Raptadu. Lokesh alleged that the YSRCP was creating anarchy in the spiritual town of Puttaparthi. TDP state president K Atcchannaidu also condemned the attack on the ex-minister. He alleged that the police lathicharged the TDP activists leaving the YSRCP activists scot-



Students should develop all-round skills: APSCHE chief

PNS VIJAYAWADA

AP State Council of Higher Education (APSCHE) Chairman Prof Chairman Prof Hemachandra Reddy has said that in the current competi-tive world, students should develop an interest in all fields and grow as all-rounders. Bloomingdale International School's 5th Annual Founder's Day was held on Saturday held on Saturday.

On the occasion, Prof Hemachandra Reddy, who was the chief guest of the programme, said that many changes are coming in the field of education and correspondingly there have been changes in the teaching pattern. He said that there should be an education system that can develop creativity especially among chil-dren.

NARAYANA MAY CONTEST FROM NELLORE

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Ever since the ruling YSRCP won the 2019 elections with a landslide victory, TDP senior leader, former minister Narayana Group of Institutions chairman Ponguru Narayana has been keeping away from the TDP political activities. Party president Chandrababu Naidu has been struggling to bring back the glory ever since the party faced a massive defeat in the 2019 elections four years back. Narayana is not seen anywhere in the TDP programmes, agitations, and

meetings.
On the other hand, he has been facing criminal cases in various scams - Amaravati land scam, outer ring road scam, and Class X question paper leakage scam. Though the party has stood by him, Narayana has hardly been taking part in the agitations, but trying to save his own skin.

There are rumours that Narayana might seek the help of the BJP by quitting the TDP and joining the BJP to protect his business interests. So, the TDP leadership appointed senior leader Kotamreddy Srinivasulu



Reddy as the in-charge of the Nellore (urban) constituency from where Narayana lost to YSRCP's Dr Anil Kumar Yadav.

Now that the elections are just a year away, Narayana has once again started lobbying for the TDP ticket from Nellore (urban). Sources say Narayana had reportedly met Naidu recently and requested that he be given the ticket again.

Interestingly, Chandrababu responded positively to the request made by Narayana and even announced his candidature, despite the fact that he is facing several criminal cases and is likely to get arrested in any one of the cases.

Sources say that it was not a request from Narayana, but blackmailed Naidu for the ticket because both were hand in glove in the Amaravati land issue. Narayana, who was the municipal administration and urban development minister during the TDP regime, played a crucial role in land allotments, If Naidu denies him the ticket, there is no surprise he may leak crucial information with regard to many of these land deals. The other fact is that Narayana can help the party financially for the next assembly elections. So, Naidu has no other option but to give

TDP promises creation of Markapuram district

PNS ONGOLE

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leader and former MLA Kandula Narayana Reddy has promised to carve out the Markapuram district and the completion of the Veligonda project at the earliest if the TDP is voted to power in the

next elections.
The ex-MLA embarked on a padayatra demanding the completion of the Veligonda project at the earliest. Narayana Reddy reached Kalujuvvalapadu village in Tarlapadu mandal where a meeting was organised to appreciate the former MLA for his padayatra. Speaking on the occasion, former MLA Damacharla Janardhan appreciated Narayana Reddy for this 'Praja Chaitanya'



Kandula Narayana Reddy had striven a lot for the development of Markapuram constituency and to complete the Veligonda project works expectedly when he was the MLA, Damacharla said.

Narayana Reddy said that he promised the people during his padayatra that he would strive hard for the creation of the Markapuram district and for the completion of the Veligonda project expeditiously if the TDP was voted to power in the next elections. TDP leaders Kamepalli Srinivasa Rao, Seshikanth Bhusan, and Bandaru Madan were among those who were present.

Women defeated TDP in the last election for betrayal: MLC

PNS ■ GUNTUR

MLC Lella Appireddy has claimed that the women defeated the Telugu Desam party in the 2019 election for the betrayal.

However, Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy aimed at making the women self-reliant and giving priority in politics, he stated while addressing DWACRA women here on

Since assuming office as Chief Minister of the state, Jagan Mohan Reddy has been giving importance to the welfare of women and giving important posts to the women, he recalled. Even during the Caronavirus crisis, the government implemented welfare schemes in the state," he said, adding that education only can eradicate pover-

ty.
The Chief Minister intro-



duced various schemes including Amma Vodi to encourage women to send their children to schools. House sites were given to all eligible women and the land was registered in the name of women, he added. If the women want the government to implement welfare schemes for them, they should vote for the YSRCP in the next election, he told the women.

MLA Maddali Giridhar said that women are excelling in all grammes being implemented for them by the Chief Minister in the state. The efficient secretariat system has come as a boon to the common men as they are

the welfare schemes. Chandragiri Yesuratnam said that from infants to elderly women, all eligible are getting the benefits of various welfare schemes in the

enrolling their names easily for

Health Minister inspects arrangements for CM's visit

PNS NARASARAOPET

Minister for Health Vidadala Rajini inspected the arrangements being made for the Chief Minister's programme in

Chilakaluripet on Saturday.
The Health minister along with officials including principal secretary Krishna Babu, Collector L Shiva Shakar, and SP Ravi Shankar Reddy, inspected the arrangements at the venue at Lingamguntla

Mohan Reddy would inaugurate the Family Doctor concept at a programme to be held on April 6. Later talking to the media, Minister Vidadala Rajini said that the Family Doctor concept trial run was launched on Öctober 21.

She said that a secretariat was set up for the 2000 population and also YSR urban health clinic. MLC and CM programme coordinator JC Shyam Prasad and other officials were among those who accompanied the minister.



31 red sanders logs seized, one arrested

PNS TIRUPATI

sanders logs worth Rs 1 crore and arrested one smuggler at Yerravaripalyam village Bakarapet circle.

Parames war Reddy told the media here on Saturday that on a tip-off the

police team led by Dwakra pet CI conducted a combing in the forest area. The police found the red sander smugglers in the forest area. After noticing the police team, the smugglers fled the scene leaving the 31 red sander logs.

The police seized the 31 red sander logs, worth Rs 1 crore, two cars, and a bike. Four smugglers managed to escape and the police launched a search to arrest them.

BJP stages dharna against attack on Satya Kumar

PNS GUNTUR

The BJP activists led by senior leaders Jupudi Ranga Raju and constituency convenor Thota Rama Krishna organised a dharna in protest against the attack on BJP national secretary Satya Kumar's car.

The BJP activists staged a dharna at Lodge centre here on Saturday holding banners, placards, and raising slogans condemning the attack. They denounced MP Nandigam Suresh and the YSRCP for the attack on Satya Kumar's car. A heated argument took place between the police and the BJP Yova Morcha activists during

the programme.

Addressing the gathering,
Jupudi Ranga Raju flayed that
the anarchy of the YSRCP regime had reached its peak. The followers of MP Nandigam Suresh attacked Satya Kumar's car with stones and sticks which reflects how the law and



order situation deteriorated in the state. The BJP organised the protests across the state today, ĥe added.

The police are acting like YSRCP activists. The police behaved excessively on Yuva Morcha activists when we were organising a protest peacefully. The YSRCP will pay a heavy price for its misdeeds and anti-people policies," Ranga

Raju lashed out.
The YSRCP government is extending patronage to the anti-socials and encouraging them to attack the opposition party leaders. BJP leaders including Dr.Shanakkayala Shanakkayala Aruna, Umashankar, Eemani Madhav

Meanwhile, the police acted high-handedly with BJP Yuva Morcha leader Kokkera Srinivasa Yadav. The police dragged him from the place and kicked him with the legs which he injured. He was shifted to the GGH where he was undergoing treatment. The police also arrested Maila Harikrishna and took him to Arandalpet police station.

PNS GUNTUR

The police arrested the person, who hurled stones and smashed the windscreen of the car in which BJP national secretary Satya Kumar was travelling. The police arrested Dunna Nitin alias George, who is a resident of Tallayapalem village in Thullur mandal for hurling stones at Satya Kumar's car.

SP K Arif Hafeez told the media here on Saturday that a jostle took place between the YSRCP and BJP activists on March 31. Cases were registered in Thullur police station on the complaints lodged by the BJP and YSRCP leaders.

The police identified the person, who hurled stones at Satya Kumar's car as Dunna Nitin alias George and arrest-



ed him. The accused was issued a notice under 41 (A) CRPC and actions would also be taken against those who abused the Chief Minister.

The SP said that BJP leader C Adinaravana Reddy made some controversial comments against the Chief Minister which made the YSRCP activists angry that led to the clash. The police responded immediately and brought the situation under control.

The SP claimed that nobody knew that BJP national secretary Satya Kumar was travelling in the car. The intention of the accused was only to express protest and not to attack Satya Kumar.

Thousands of names removed from voters' list: TDP Ex-MLA

PNS NARASARAOPET

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) senior leader and former MLA GV Anjaneyulu alleged that thousands of votes of TDP sympathizers were removed from the voters' list.

The TDP activists took out a rally here on Saturday from the RTC bus station to Shivaiah stupa in protest against the removal of a large number of TDP sympathizers' votes. The TDP leaders and activists squatted in front of the Tahasildar office on the main road.

Speaking on the occasion, ex-MLA Anjaneyulu said that YSRCP local MLA Bolla Brahma Naidu had resorted to many corrupt practices and the people would defeat him in the next election.

"The votes of TDP sympathizers are being removed from the voters' list. So far 6000 votes in five mandal have been removed. The names of those who are working at other places were removed without intimation to the voter. Removing the names from the voter's list without intimation is an illegal act," the ex-MLA stat-



He said that a large number of people belonging to the SC/ST/ BC and minorities, who migrate to other places seeking livelihood were removed. They are working at various places temporarily and they will come back to cast their votes during elections," the ex-MLA observed. The BLO and VRO are working in favour of the ruling party and removing the votes violating the norms, he flayed. Later the TDP leaders submitted a memorandum to Vinukonda Tahsildar Kiran Kumar.

operators to stop delivering PDS items

PNS ■ ONGOLE

The Mobile Dispensing Unit (MDU) vehicle operators expressed their inability to deliver ration in the month of April if their problems were not

The MDU vehicle operators deliver ration including rice and other commodities at the doorsteps of ration card holders every month. The MDU vehicles were given to the operators with subsidies by the SC/ST and BC corporations.

The MDU operators have to pay instalments to the Bank of Baroda. The government pays Rs 21,000 to the MDU vehicle operators and some of the amount they should pay as a monthly instalment to the

Moreover, the MDU vehicle operators have to bear the oil expenditure and pay remuneration to the helper. Initially, the



MDU operators were promised that the banks would pay an insurance premium to the vehi-

cles but that did not happen. MDU vehicle operators association leaders said that there are

385 Mobile Dispensing Units in the district that distribute ration to the 6,59,576 families at their doorsteps every month in the Prakasam district

Out of the Rs 21,000 payment

by the government, the bank deducts Rs 3000 as payment of the loan for the vehicle. The MDU operator is to spend another Rs 8000 towards oil

expenditure and payment of

remuneration to the helper. The officials recently handed over the responsibility of deliv-

ering commodities to the anganwadi centres and schools and the officials assured of additional payment for the same. But even after several months, not a single rupee has been paid additionally. Now the Mobile Dispense

Unit operators have to begin distributing ration from April 1. However, the MDU operators announced that they would not operate the vehicles to deliver ration till their problems are resolved.

The MDU operators told the media that they have already taken their problems to the notice of Tahasildar and brought all their vehicles to the Tahasildar office parked there. Following the strike of MDU operators, the distribution of rations in the month of April is

Shah appeals to Northeast militants to join mainstream

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday appealed to the remaining active militants of the Northeast to join the mainstream.

Addressing a rally in Aizawl after virtually inaugurating and laying the foundation stone for 11 projects worth Rs 2,414 crore, he asserted that the establishment of peace in Mizoram is an example of the victory of Indian democracy.

"I appeal to the few remaining active militant organisations in the Northeast to return to the mainstream, become a part of the democratic process and contribute to the development of the region and the country as a whole," he said.

Peace has been established in Mizoram, which had faced This is an unprecedented

example of the victory of India's democracy," he said. Shah inaugurated the new

Assam Rifles battalion headquarters complex in the state. He said that the Northeast



was suffering from insurgencies, lack of rail, road and air connectivity and there was "no trace of development" when the Modi government came to power at the Centre in

"In the last nine years, we have succeeded in bringing peace in Northeast, improved connectivity and brought the region at par with other parts of the country in terms of development," Shah said.

Noting that the Centre is dedicated to the development

down by 83 per cent. "Around 8,000 militants in

have reduced by 60 per cent and civilian deaths have gone

the region have surrendered since 2014. We have signed a peace agreement with NLFT in Tripura in 2019, rehabilitated 17: Aripura in 2019, rehabilitated 37,000 Brus in Tripura, and brought peace in Assam by signing the Bodo Accord in 2020 and a peace agreement in Karbi Anglong in 2022. Also, there has been a 70 per cent reduction of areas under the reduction of areas under the jurisdiction of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958." he said.

Noting that Mizoram's economy grew by 12.15 per cent in the last decade, especially under the leadership of Chief Minister Zoramthanga, Shah said the Centre will explore possibilities of investment in the tourism, bamboo and solar energy sectors in the state.

He said the Kaladan multimodal transit transport project will connect Mizoram with Myanmar and bring about economic growth in the north-

MVA rally, BJP's Savarkar Gaurav Yatra today

PNS AURANGABAD

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, for-merly Aurangabad, in Maharashtra will be at the centre of the state's political action on Sunday with a rally by the Maha Vikas Aghadi as well as the Savarkar Gaurav Yatra being organised by the ruling Bharatiya Ianata Party, both events coming just days after Marathwada's

largest city saw rioting and arson.

A top police official said security arrangements were in place to ensure both events pass off without any untoward incident. The intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday saw rioting and arson in the city's Kiradpura area amid Ram Navami, leaving one person dead, several policemen injured and property, including vehicles, damaged and gutted. The MVA rally will be held on Sunday evening at Marathwada Sanskrutik Mandal ground, with speakers being led by Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, senior Nationalist Congress Party leader Ajit Pawar and Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole.

Courts should ensure speedy conclusion of trials: SC

yet, if trials are not concluded

According to the Union Home

Ministry's response to

Parliament, the National

Jails are overcrowded and their living conditions appalling and the courts should ensure that trials, especially in cases where special laws enact stringent provisions, are taken up and concluded speedily, the Supreme Court has said.

The top court said if the tri-als are not concluded in time, the injustice wrecked on the individual is immeasurable.

A bench of Justices S Ravindra Bhat and Dipankar Datta made the observation while enlarging a man accused under the the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act on bail.

"Incarceration has further deleterious effects, where the accused belongs to the weakest economic strata: immediate loss of livelihood, and in several cases, scattering of families as well as loss of family bonds and alienation from "The courts, therefore, have

to be sensitive to these aspects, and ensure that trials, especially in cases where special laws enact stringent provisions, are taken up and concluded speed-



INDIA CORNER

NIA arrests two suppliers of

explosives, detonators in WB

agency's investigation into a case registered last year, a

found transporting around 81,000 electric detonators.

Ashis Keora, the driver of the vehicle, was arrested and his

in January this year. "Nuruzzaman had supplied 27,000 kg

ammonium nitrate to Rintu while Khan had supplied electric

detonators and gelatine sticks to him," the spokesperson said

spokesperson of the federal agency said. In June 2022, an SUV was intercepted by the Special Task Force (STF) Kolkata and it was

questioning led the police to a stash of illegally stored explosives,

sticks and 2,325 more electric detonators, the spokesperson said.

Station in Birbhum and was taken over by the NIA in September

The official said the case was initially registered at Md Bazar Police

last year. The agency made the first arrest in the case -- Rintu Sk --

including 27,000 kg of ammonium nitrate, 1,625 kg of gelatine

in time, the injustice wrecked bench said. on the individual is immeasur-The top court, while ordering release of the man on bail, said he has been in custody for "Jails are overcrowded and their living conditions, more over seven years and four often than not, appalling.

4,27,165 were undertrials," the

The progress of the trial has been at a snail's pace as 30 witnesses have been examined, Crime Records Bureau had whereas 34 more have to be recorded that as on December examined, it said.

Agency (NIA) has

arrested two alleged

suppliers of explosives and

detonators in West Bengal.

an official said on Saturday

Merazuddin Ali Khan of

Nuruzzaman of Birbhum

were arrested from Ranigan

and Kolkata during raids on

Bokaro and Mir Mohd

Friday as part of the

Stalin bats for unity to take on right wing forces

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Saturday urged secular, democratic forces to work hard with unity for the social justice-led ideology of reformist leader Periyar E V Ramasamy to win and take on the right wing.

The historic Vaikom struggle for social justice and against untouchability was the nation's pioneering movement that inspired the whole country, Stalin said in his address at the centenary celebrations of Vaikom Sathyagraha (1924-25).

The Vaikom struggle also inspired Dr BR Ambedkar to take forward his "Mahar protest" and in Tamil Nadu, it galvanized the temple entry movement.

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minsiter recalled the revolutionary movements of Kerala and Tamil Nadu and listed legendary leaders including Sri

TK Madhavan, Ramalinga Adigalar, Ayya Vaikundar, Ayothidasar, and Periyar.

Tracing the epic 1924 Vaikom movement, he said Periyar led the protest as all the Kerala leaders were arrested. He mobilised people and created awareness among them and he was jailed.

Though other participants of the struggle were treated as political prisoners, Periyar was treated badly and he was shackled and imprisoned for 74 days and he devoted 141 days for the

Vaikom satyagraha. Periyar belongs to the whole world and his ideology is common to all the people and the entire world, Stalin said.

Humanism, self-respect, rationality, socialism, equality, non-discrimination based on blood or gender, self development, women empowerment, social justice, secular politics and scientific temper is the core of Periyarism, he

Remarriage no ground to deny compensation: High Court

of the Northeast, he said the

increased budget allocation

for the region by 276 per cent.

working towards connecting

the state capitals of all the eight

states with rail, road and air

connectivity by 2025 with a

project outlay of Rs 1,76,000

said that since 2014, incidents

of violence in the Northeast

have dipped by 67 per cent, while deaths of security forces

The Union home minister

crore," he said.

The Union government is

government has

PNS MUMBAI

Remarriage of a widow cannot be a reason to deny compensation to her under the Motor Vehicles Act for the death of her husband in a road accident, the Bombay High Court has said while dismissing an insurance company's petition. Iffco Tokio General

Insurance Company had filed the petition in the high court, challenging the order of a Motor Accidents Claim Tribunal (MACT), which had directed the company to pay compensation to the woman, whose husband was killed in a road accident in

A single-judge bench of Justice S G Dige on March 3 decided the appeal of the insurance company. Its detailed order was made

PM flags off Bhopal-Delhi Vande Bharat Express

PNS BHOPAL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday flagged off the Bhopal-Delhi Vande Bharat Express train.

The semi-high speed train was flagged off from Rani Kamalapati railway station in Bhopal city in the afternoon in the presence of Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Madhya Pradesh Governor Mangu Bhai Patel and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh

Modi, while addressing the gathering after flagging off the premium service, said the aim of his government was to transform the railway sector and make travel convenient for citizens. Onboard the train, the PM

interacted with more than 300 schoolchildren who were selected through a drawing and essay competition on the theme 'Bharatiya Rail', officials



onboard the train, the officials said. A huge crowd had assembled on platform number two of the sprawling station to witness the Vande Bharat Express flagging off ceremony, which took place on the adjoining platform number

This is the 11th Vande Bharat Express service on the Indian Railway network and will run on all days except It will depart from Rani

Kamalapati station at 5:40am

The Delhi-Bhopal leg of the train will start at 2:40pm, officials said.

The train is scheduled to halt at Gwalior and Agra enroute, they added. The state-of-the-art semi-

high speed train has an intelligent regenerative braking mechanism that would save up to 30 per cent electricity, fully sealed gangways and inter-connecting doors for dustfree environment as well as an improved air-conditioning sys-

Chicken is treated as animal under law: Guj Govt tells HC



hicken and other varieties of poultry birds Ifall in the `animal' category under the Food Safety and Standards Act, the Gujarat Government told the High Court on Friday. It prompted senior lawyer Percy Kavina, who is representing chicken shops which have faced action for violation of rules, to say that

in that case poultry shops will have to engage veterinary doctors to comply fully with law. In January, two NGOs filed a PIL in the High Court seeking a ban on supply of poultry birds to meat shops contending that birds were illegally slaughtered in these establishments instead of being sent to slaughterhouses. The HC then directed the authorities to take action against unlicensed meat shops. Civic bodies across the state raided meat shops and issued closure notices to several of them for violation of rules. Several chicken shops were also shut during this drive. The owners of these sealed meat shops and chicken shops approached the High Court for relief. The bench of Justice NV Aniaria and Justice Niral Mehta was hearing these civil applications. During the hearing on these applications on Friday, Government Pleader Manisha Lavkumar said the definition of 'animal' under the Act also includes poultry. Fish is not included because they are not "slaughtered" but only taken out of water, the lawver said

Teen detained for 3 yrs of rehabilitation under POCSO Act



board has detained a 17-year-old boy for three years of rehabilitation in a case under the POCSO act, police said on Saturday. In 2019, the juvenile allegedly raped a four-year-old girl at a daycare centre run by his mother. According to the police, the incident came to

was teaching her about good touch and bad touch. The minor revealed that the boy used to undress her first before sexually assaulting her at the centre, where her parents dropped her off daily in the morning and picked her up in the evening. After learning about the incident, her father moved to the police and filed a complaint. In June 2019 when the boy was detained after an FIR was registered under sections 6,8,12 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act at sector 9 A police station. He was produced before the juvenile justice board and was sent to a correction home in Faridabad. The girl was then sent to the child welfare committee (CWC) for counselling and child welfare services (CWS) has also issued a notice to the daycare centre owner, the boy's mother, to join the investigation. On March 29, the juvenile justice board decided the case and detained the teenager for 3

CENTRAL MINISTER ON FOREST AMENDMENT BILL

Cong creating doubts in minds of people

Union Minister Bhupender Yadav Saturday slammed the Congress for protesting the decision to forward the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill, 2023 to a joint committee, saying it is involved in a "nefarious project" to create doubts in people's minds about all democratic institutions and processes.

The environment minister also tweeted a short video listing bills that he claimed were referred to joint committees during the Congress rule.

"Jairam Ramesh says referring the Forest Conservation Amendment Bill to a Joint Committee is 'devaluation and denigration' of processes. Will serve him well to take a hard look at how many Bills introduced in Lok Sabha & Rajya Sabha were sent by Cong govts



to the Joint Committee (sic),

Yadav tweeted. "The Congress is involved in a nefarious project to create doubts in the minds of people regarding all democratic institutions and democratic processes. They are doing this in India and also on foreign soil. This is a dangerous trend and must stop," he said, in an apparent reference to former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi's lecture last month at the UK's Cambridge University that

Modi govt weakening environment: Congress

The Congress on Saturday accused the government of weakening environment and forest laws and institutions working for conserving environment in order to facilitate ease of doing business. On the 50th anniversary of Project Tiger which was started by the then prime minister Indira Gandhi on this day, Congress spokesperson Jairam Ramesh said the legacies of both this project and the Chipko movement which also completed 50 years a few days ago are under threat from this government. "This government is deliberately weakening the laws and institutions working towards forest conservation and environment," he told reporters. "We are against this

liberalisation and the laws should be strictly enforced and institutions should be strengthened while dealing with today's biggest challenge of changes in the environment," he also noted. Attacking the government, he said, "They have a mindset that environment laws are against the ease of doing business. So they want to weaken these laws so that people do not feel that projects are delayed because of environment laws." Noting that our laws say that the project can be implemented only after the rights of those living in forests are given, the Congress leader said that is why Adani project in Jharkhand is being opposed by our government there.

RAJ INSTITUTIONS

JITENDRA SINGH TELLS PANCHAYATI

Carry Modi's welfare schemes to last mile

PNS AMROHA

Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Saturday urged representatives of the Panchayati Raj Institution to take Prime Minister Narendra Modi's welfare schemes to the last mile.

Presiding over a meeting of PRI representatives from Amroha district in Uttar Pradesh, he said they can be the most important messengers of Prime Minister Modi's peoplecentric initiatives and programmes as they are directly in touch with the grassroot people.

"Panchayats are continuously being empowered under Modi," said Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel. The minister said the PRI representatives being elected representatives, know who are the most needy among the lowest strata of the society and can ensure that the benefits reach them without any vote bank consideration.

He said Modi symbolises grassroot level democracy which is liberated from any dynasty politics as he himself has risen from the grassroots.

The minister said the prime minister's faith in PRIs and grassroot level democracy is evident from the fact that after 70 years, it was due to his intervention that Jammu and Kashmir district development council (DDC) elections were held for

People support some forms of govt surveillance: survey

PNS NEW DELHI

A survey has shown a "highlevel" of public support for certain forms of government surveillance like through CCTV cameras even as the poor and groups such as Dalits and Muslims have the "least" trust

in the police. Surveyors from NGO Common Cause and the Lokniti programme of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies spoke to a total of 9,779 individuals in 12 states and Union Territories before they released the "Status of Policing in India Report 2023: Surveillance and the Question of Privacy" on Friday

in the national capital.

The study also involved focus group discussions with domain experts, in-depth interviews with serving police officials, and an analysis of media coverage of surveillance-related issues," according to a state-

The findings of the survey, according to the statement, indicate a "high-level of public support for certain forms of government surveillance, but also a lack of public awareness regarding critical issues such as the Pegasus scandal and the

Puttaswamy case." While the Pegasus refers to the alleged usage of military grade spyware for surveillance,



judgment in the Puttaswamy case formally recognised right to privacy as a fundamental right.

The survey report states that the support for any form of sur-

veillance is "directly proportional" to the respondent's socio-economic status, i.e. the richer the respondent the more the support, the survey found. The poor, Adivasis, Dalits,

and Muslims trust the police the least, it found. Some of the key findings of the survey state that "only one

in four people strongly feel that CCTVs carry a risk of illegal mass surveillance." "Nearly three out of four

people strongly believe that CCTVs help monitor and reduce crimes," it said. The survey found, according

to the press statement, that about half of the respondents supported the collection of biometric details of suspects while Adivasis and Muslims were "most critical" of the police collecting biometric details of all suspects.

More than one out of two

people strongly support the use of drones by the armed forces, government, and police. However, farmers and the poorest are most likely to oppose drone usage by govern-ment agencies, the survey

found "One out of two people fully support the use of FRT (facial recognition technology) by the government, and police. People are four times more likely to strongly support the use of FRT by government agencies, compared to its use by private entities," the survey found.

Nearly two out of three respondents believe that political parties surveil citizens for electoral gains, it said.

'More and more vendors should onboard GeM'

PNS MUMBAI

Procurement of goods and services from Government e Marketplace (GeM) crossed the Rs 2 lakh crore mark in 2022-23, witnessing participation from women entrepreneurs, MSMEs and startups across the country, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Saturday.

The Rs 2 lakh crore procurement by the government within 12 months through GeM truly reflects the thinking of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is very demanding that the government should run with the highest level of integrity and transparency," Goyal said.

This is evident from the participation by all across the country in the government procurement cycle and an ability of women entrepreneurs, startups and MSMEs to participate in a fair and equitable manner, Goyal told

GST mop-up rises 13% to Rs 1.60 lakh cr in March

O Second highest collection ever

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

GST collection grew 13 per cent in March to Rs 1.60 lakh crore the second highest mop-up since the rollout of the indirect tax regime.

The return filing during March 2023 has been the high-

Gross GST revenue collected in March 2023 is Rs 1,60,122 crore, of which Central GST is Rs 29,546 crore, State GST is Rs 37,314 crore, Integrated GST is Rs 82,907 crore (including Rs 42,503 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is Rs 10,355 crore, the finance ministry said in a statement.

The total gross collection for full 2022-23 fiscal stands at Rs 18.10 lakh crore, 22 per cent



higher than the previous year. The average gross monthly collection for the full year is Rs 1.51 lakh crore.

It is for the fourth time in the just gone by financial year that the gross GST collection has crossed Rs 1.5 lakh croremark, registering the second highest collection in March since the implementation of

Last month also witnessed

the highest IGST collection ever, the ministry said. In April last year, GST collection had touched a record

high of Rs 1.68 lakh crore.

Revenue for the month of March 2023 is 13 per cent higher than the GST revenue in the same month last year, the ministry said.

During the month, revenue from import of goods was 8 per cent higher and revenue from domestic transaction (including import of services) is 14 per cent higher than the revenue from these sources during the same month last year.

The return filing during March 2023 has been the highest ever. 93.2 per cent of statement of invoices (in GSTR-1) and 91.4 per cent of returns (in GSTR-3B) of February were filed till March 2023 as compared to 83.1 per cent and 84.7 per cent, respectively a year

Global uncertainties hit office

demand, gross leasing down

Small tea growers make India self-reliant

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Emergence of small tea growers (STGs) has made the country self-reliant in the production of the beverage and to meet domestic requirements and exports, Tea Board said. STGs have also helped local economic conditions and livelihood of the people, the Tea Board said in a statement.

India annually produces nearly 1400 million kg of tea, out of which the contribution of STGs is more than 50 per cent, it said. Tea exports from India in value terms is close to USD 800 million. It attained a positive growth of 15 per cent in volume of around 220 million kg in 2022, the board said.

The country is now the second largest producer of the beverage after China and tea industry is one of the largest employers.

India is also the fourth largest exporter after China, Kenya and Sri Lanka, it

making by occupiers amidst continued economic uncer-

Bengaluru and Delhi-NCR

accounted for half of the total

leasing during the first quarter

of this calendar year.
As per the data, the gross

leasing of office space in Bengaluru fell 20 per cent to

3.2 million square feet in

January-March from 4 million

square feet.In Chennai, the

leasing rose 7 per cent to 1.6

Delhi-ÑCR saw an 18 per

tainties".

MONEY MATTERS

Sebi bans 3 individuals from securities mkt for 2 years



individuals from the Securities market for two years and imposed penalty totalling Rs 90 lakh on them in a case pertaining to insider trading activities in the scrip of Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL). The three individuals banned by the regulator -- Bijal Shah, Gopal Ritolia and Jatin Chawla -- have also been

directed to pay the fine within 45 days. In addition, Ritolia and Chawla have been directed to disgorge illegal gains to the tune of Rs 7.52 crore and Rs 2.09 crore respectively along with interest, the regulator said in its 152-page final order on Friday. The case relates to insider trading activities by certain entities in the scrip of ZEEL, while in possession of unpublished price sensitive information (UPSI) pertaining to audited financial results of the media company for the quarter ended June 30, 2020 as well as launch of ZEEPLEX by the company on September 1, 2020.

Royal Enfield total sales up 7% at 72,235 units in March



Royal Enfield on Saturday reported a 7 per cent growth in total sales at 72,235 units in March, as compared to 67.677 units in the same month last year. Domestic sales were at 59,884 units in the month under review, as against 58,477 units in

the year-ago month, a growth of 2 per cent, the company said in a statement. Exports grew 34 per cent last month at 12,351 units, as compared to 9,200 months in March 2022. For the fiscal 2022-23, Royal Enfield said it posted a 39 per cent growth with a record total sales of 8,34,895 motorcycles. The company's sales stood at 6,02,268 units in FY22. Exports were also at record high at 1,00,055 units in FY23, as compared to 81,032 units in FY22, up 23 per cent. Royal Enfield CEO B Govindarajan said it was a remarkable year for the company achieving new heights in sales and market share, and crossed 1,00,000 international volumes for the first time. "Our motorcycles, like the Hunter 350 and Super Meteor 650, have exceeded expectations and attracted new customers into our fold," he said, adding the Hunter 350 clocked over a lakh sales within six



MCL reaches new high in coal



production, despatch

ahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) on Saturday said the company has registered a record 193.3 million tons of coal production during the 2022-23 financial year. The MCL also posted the highest ever 192.7 million ton coal despatch to

consumers. Chairman-

cum-Managing Director Om Prakash Singh, said while addressing the AGM here. "The MCL registered a growth of 15 per cent for the financial year 2023-23, while coal despatch showed nine per cent the previous financial year 2021-22 " Singh said company has achieved all its targets much ahead of schedule and has helped Coal India surpass its target of 700 million tons set for the financial year 2022-23, the CMD said. He said 97 per cent of total production of MCL was through eco-friendly equipment surface miners. He said that the coal despatch to the power sector also increased from 127.12 million tons 2,922 to 148.8 million tons in 2022-23 with a growth of 17 per cent. Strengthening its business activities, the company made Capital Expenditure (CapEx) of Rs 3,850 crore during the financial year 2022-23, he said adding that MCL enjoys being the top company in Odisha contributing under

Ultra Tech Cement FY23 production

Govt's total liabilities rise 2.6% to Rs 150.95L cr

PNS NEW DELHI

The government's total liabilities rose to Rs 150.95 lakh crore in December quarter from Rs 147.19 lakh crore in the three months ended September 2022, according to the latest public debt management report.

The increase reflects a quarter-on-quarter increase of 2.6 per cent in October-December

In absolute terms, the total liabilities, including liabilities under the 'Public Account' of the government, jumped to Rs 1,50,95,970.8 crore at the end of December 2022.

As of September 30, the total liabilities stood at Rs 1,47,19,572.2 crore.

The report released by the finance ministry on Saturday said public debt accounted for 89 per cent of the total outstanding liabilities in December quarter, compared to 89.1 per cent at the end of

Financial frauds cause

"tremendous impairment" to

the economy and hamper the

overall growth of the country,

a special court here observed

while convicting three bankers

in a 19-year-old case of fraud.

Singade found three officials

of Dena Bank, Srikant Padale

(51), Vijaya Nair (46) and V

Radhakrishnan (61) guilty of

charges under the Prevention

of Corruption Act and Indian

Special CBI judge D P

PNS MUMBAI



September. Nearly 28.29 per cent of the outstanding dated securities had a residual matu-

rity of less than 5 years. During Q3 of FY23, it said, the Centre raised an amount worth Rs 3,51,000 crore through dated securities, as against notified amount of Rs 3,18,000 crore in the borrowing calendar.

During the quarter an amount of Rs 85,377.9 crore due for redemption was repaid on maturity date, it said.

Weighted average yield of primary issuances hardened to 7.38 per cent in Q3 FY23, from 7.33 per cent in Q2 of FY23,

Kia India sales dip 5% in March

PNS NEW DELHI

Automaker Kia India on Saturday said its sales wholesales declined by 5 per cent to 21,501 units last month, as compared to 22,622 units in March 2022.

The company dispatched 8,677 units of Sonet, 6,554 units of Seltos, and 6,102 units of Carens last month to dealers. For the 2022-23 fiscal, the automaker sold 2,69,229 units, growth of 44 per cent over 1,86,787 units in 2021-22.

"Our focus on offering futuristic design, combined with cutting-edge technology, has helped us in winning the Indian market and new-age customers alike. "With additional features and improvements in engine and transmission combinations in RDE-compliant vehicles, we are confident that we will continue our winning spree," Kia India VP and Head of Sales & Marketing Hardeep Singh Brar

'Financial frauds hamper country's overall growth'

from 12.5 million square feet PNS NEW DELHI

India's office demand has been affected by global economic uncertainties with gross leasing of workspace falling 19 per cent in January-March across six major cities, according to

Diventry (49) guilty in the case stantiated the charges against

Real estate consultant Colliers India on Saturday released data on the office market, which showed that the gross leasing fell to 10.1 million square feet in January-March

Colliers India.

in the corresponding period of the previous year.

New supply declined 34 per cent during January-March to 9.5 million square feet from 14.4 million square feet in the year-ago period. Gross leasing does not include lease renewals, pre-commitments and deals where only a letter of Intent has been signed.

Colliers India said that the leasing of office space has fall-

doubt. There cannot be two

opinions on a proposition that

bank money is public money,

it said, adding that these crimes

are more heinous in nature, as

they intend to destroy the

economic fabric and financial

in plenty and have resulted in

stultifying overall growth of

the nation and have also caused tremendous impair-

ment to the economy of the

"Such offences are occurring

edifice of the state.

million square feet from 1.5 million square feet. cent rise in the absorption of

office demand to 2.2 million square feet from 1.9 million square feet. The demand for office space in Hyderabad fell 30 per cent to 1.3 million square feet from 1.8 million square feet. Office leasing in Mumbai

fell 19 per cent to 1 million

square feet from 1.2 million

square feet.

India, Malaysia can now trade in Indian rupee

PNS NEW DELHI

India and Malaysia can now use the Indian rupee to settle trade in addition to other currencies, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Saturday.

The move follows the decision by the Reserve Bank of India in July last year to allow settlement of international trade in Indian curren-

cy.
"Trade between India and Malavsia can now be settled in Indian Rupee (INR) in addition to the current modes of settlement in other currencies," the MEA said.

"This follows the decision by the Reserve Bank of India in July 2022 to allow settlement of international trade in Indian Rupee," it said in a statement. The MEA said the RBI's initiative is aimed at facilitating the growth of trade and supporting the interests of the global trading community in the Indian rupee.

up 12.4% to 105.7 mn tn PNS NEW DELHI

Leading cement maker UltraTech's consolidated sales rose by 12.4 per cent to 105.7 million tonnes (MT) in FY2022-23, Aditya Birla group firm said in a regulatory filing on Saturday.

The company produced 94 MT of cement in FY22.

Its total sales volume in the domestic market also crossed 100 MT for the financial year that ended on March 31, 2023.

UltraTech's total sales volume for the India market in FY23 was at 101.7 MT, up 13.63 per cent compared to 89.5 MT a year ago. "We are pleased to inform the company has achieved 100 million tonnes of production, despatches and

sales in FY23," it said.

Its grey cement production in the domestic market was at 100.1 MT in FY23, reporting 13.75 per cent growth while its white cement production was 1.5 MT, up 11 per cent.

Ultra Tech's overseas production, mainly grey cement was 4.4 MT in FY23.

For the fourth quarter that ended on March 31, 2023, UltraTech's total consolidated sales volume was at 31.7 MT and its India volume was at 30.5 MT. UltraTech has a consolidated capacity of 132.35 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) of grey cement. It has 23 integrated manufacturing units, 29 grinding units, one clinkerisation unit and eight Bulk Packaging Terminals.

Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, Tata Motors excel in wholesales



Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai and Tata Motors reported their highest-ever dispatches to dealers last fiscal, enabling the domestic passenger vehicle industry to log in best-ever performance to

The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India reported its highest wholesales to date at 19,66,164 units, up 19 per cent from 16,52,653 units in

Its domestic dispatches rose to 17,06,831 units in 2022-23, up 21 per cent from 14,14,277 units in 2021-22 fiscal. Hyundai Motor India said its overall wholesales last fiscal were the highest ever since commencing operations in the country. The automaker dispatched 7,20,565 units to dealers last fiscal, up 18 per cent from 6,10,760 units in 2021-22. Its domestic dispatches rose to 5,67,546 units last fiscal, up 18 per cent from 4,81,500 units in

the 2021-22 financial year. The country's second-largest carmaker said it was its best performance to date in terms of sales volume in the domestic market in a financial year. Tata Motors also reported the bestever passenger vehicle dispatches in the domestic market last fiscal at 5,38,640 units, up 45 per cent from 3,70,372 units FY22.

Maruti Suzuki India Senior Executive Officer, Marketing and Sales, Shashank Srivastava said the company reported its highest-ever sales in a financial year despite chip shortage continuing to impact the production

He noted that the overall industry sales last fiscal rose to 38.89 lakh units, an increase of 27 per cent from 30.69 lakh units in 2021-22. "Both wholesales and retails were the highest for the industry last fiscal," Srivastava said. The industry sales were expected to rise to 4.05-4.10 million in the current fiscal, he added. "We expect the industry growth to be in the range of 5-7 per cent this fiscal and the company would like to perform better than the indus-

trv." Srivastava said. He noted that with models like Jimny and Fronx in its kitty, the company expects to corner 25 per cent of the SUV market in the current fiscal. MSI ended the last fiscal with a market share of 12.6 per cent in the SUV segment with sales of

2,02,800 units.

Godrej Properties buys 4-acre land in Pune for housing project

to two years of rigorous impris-

onment. According to the pros-

ecution, the accused officials

had entered into a criminal

conspiracy with private persons

to cheat and cause wrongful loss

to Dena Bank's Kalbadevi

The accused had favoured

some private parties for grant

of credit facilities and the

bank had lost Rs 2.35 crore in

prosecution has fairly sub-

The court held that the

Branch in 2003, here.

the fraud, it said.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The order passed on March Saturday. Apart from the trio,

Realty firm Godrej Properties has acquired a 4-acre land parcel in Pune to build a luxury housing project with an estimated revenue potential of Rs 1,000 crore.

In a regulatory filing on Saturday, Godrej Properties informed that it has acquired around 4-acre land parcel near Korgaon Park in Pune. The development on this

land will primarily be a luxu-The project will have a

ry housing project.



developable potential of approximately 7.5 lakh square feet with an estimated revenue potential of approximately Rs 1,000 crore," the company said.

details of the transaction.

The company, however, did not disclose the financial

Gaurav Pandey, the MD and CEO of Godrej Properties, said the demand for luxury homes has remained strong over the past few years. "This will be our first luxury development in the city...," he said. Godrej Properties, the real estate arm of Godrej Group, is one of the leading real estate developers in the country.

It mainly focuses on development of housing projects in four key cities -- Delhi-NCR, Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), Pune and

PNS NEW DELHI To achieve saturation under Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), the

launched a three-month campaign.
"A special 3 months campaign has been launched by DFS at Gram Panchayat Level covering all districts in the country to saturate all eligi-

ble persons under the PMJJ-

and PMSBY w.e.f 1st

Finance Ministry on Saturday



A special 3 months campaign has been launched by DFS at Gram Panchayat Level covering all districts in the country to saturate all eligipersons under the PMJJBY and PMSBY w.e.f 1st April 2023 to the 30th June 2023

April 2023 to the 30th June Department of 2023," Financial Services (DFS) said in a tweet.

Under the campaign, camps are going to be organised at the Gram Panchayat

level across all districts in the country by the banks with active participation of the State administration and other Ministries of Government of India to

ensure that benefits of the

two Jan Suraksha schemes reach the masses.

3-month finmin drive to boost micro-insurance schemes

Chief Secretaries of States/ UTs, Chairman/ MD and CEOs of Public Sector Banks (PSBs) have been advised to extend full support during the campaign, an official statement said. Lead District Managers

(LDMs) will lead the campaign in consultation with State/ UT Level Bankers Committees of the States/ UTs and District Magistrates/ Collectors of the Districts. Ministries

Government of India have reason to people in the age been advised to utilise their field functionaries for identification and mobilisation of the Scheme beneficiaries for enrolment, it said.

All Nodal Officers from DFS have been instructed to participate in the special SLBC/ UTLBC meetings and to undertake field visits for monitoring the Gram Panchayat level saturation

campaign, it added. The PMJJBY offers life insurance cover of Rs 2 lakh in case of death due to any

group of 18-50 years having a bank or post office account, who give their consent to join or enable auto-debit of premium.

On the other hand, the PMSBY offers insurance cover of Rs 2 lakh for accidental death or total permanent disability and Rs 1 lakh for partial permanent disability to people in the age group of 18-70 years with a bank or post office account, who give their consent to join or enable auto-debit of premium.

DIFFERENT, NOT LESS

April 2 is World Autism Awareness Day. This gives us the chance to introspect and act on increasing understanding, acceptance and awareness about autism, about how we can help break the hurdles that stop the community from leading their best lives. THE HEALTH PIONEER presents a macro view of the condition that affects 1 out of 89 children born in India

utism spectrum disorders (ASD) are a collection of disorders defined by issues such as social interaction and communication difficulties. It is the quickest-expanding developmental disorder in India, affecting one in 125 children between 2-6 years and one out of every 80 kids aged 6-9. As per INCLEN studies, one child out of 89 is generally on the autism spectrum. Boys are four times more likely than girls to have autism. There is no medical cure for autism, but early diagnosis and intervention helps a person to adapt and function better.

Children with Autism frequently exhibit behaviours such as difficulties transitioning from one task to another, a focus on minutiae. It's believed to be caused by environmental and genetic factors. Those with autism find social interactions difficult as well as have repetitive behaviors and focused interests. Autism is also a spectrum

interests. Autism is also a spectrum disorder, meaning the severity and range of symptoms are different from person to person.

As such, healthcare systems are not only failing to provide appropriate care to autistic adults, but also that these failures may be detrimentally affecting the length and quality of life of autistic individuals. viduals.

In India, it is estimated that around 18 million people have autism. Statistics further reveal that the number of children diagnosed with autism in India is increasing. Low awareness, a lack of basic services, and poor diagnosis, among other factors, have all led to the country's astonishing surge in the number of autism cases.

One of the main reasons why many parents keep diseases like autism hidden is a lack of informa-tion about mental health. Many individuals are unaware that such illnesses can affect children as early as a few months old. Such individuals exhibit abnormal behaviours, and a lack of public awareness of the disease makes society less compassionate and stigmatizes the disorder. In their growing years, these children are phiected to bullying filthy remarks, and humiliation, which



FACTFILE

- About 1 in 100 children has autism globally.
- Characteristics may be detected in early childhood, but autism is often not diagnosed until much later.
- ■The abilities and needs of autistic people vary and can evolve over time. While some people with autism can live independently, others have severe disabilities and require life-long care and support. ■Evidence-based psychosocial interventions can improve communication and social
- skills, with a positive impact on the well-being and quality of life of both autistic people and their caregivers.
- ■Care for people with autism needs to be accompanied by actions at community and societal levels for greater accessibil-
- ity, inclusivity and support.

 More than half (53%) have autism and attention deficit
- hyperactivity disorder. ■More than half (51%) have
- autism and anxiety. ■A quarter (25%) have autism and depression.
- ■At least 60% of children with autism will have two comorbid conditions (e.g., sleep problems, seizures, intellectual disabilities, or gastrointestinal problems).
- Autism is not a learning disability, but it can affect cogni-
- tive function. Some children on the autism spectrum have delays in speech or learning, while others do not. Because it is a spectrum disorder, these delays can range from mild to
- One-third of children with autism were classified as having an intellectual disability (IQ equal to or less than 70).
- There is no cure or medication for autism spectrum disorder. Behavioral therapy is the most effective autism treatment. However, the vast majority (95%) of children with autism have at least one cooccurring condition, which is often treatable.

drives them to seek refuge in their families.

There is no 'cure' for autism. There are, however, ways that can help people with autism learn and perform more effectively. Because there are so many options to select from; individual viewpoints and approximates as well as diverse. experiences, as well as diverse research showcasing varying results, deciding on the best intervention for an individual with autism, may be complicated and often overwhelming. Autism patients benefit substantially from cognitive behaviour therapy, behavioural management therapy, occupational therapy, social skills training, and physical therapy. Furthermore, educational and school-based therapy, medication treatment, and nutritious food should be provided to such persons. Parents might also enrol in

speech-language therapy.

Dr Deepak Gupta, a child and adolescent psychiatrist and Founder Director of Centre for Child and Adolescent Wellbeing (CCAW, says, "Autism is one of the most misunderstood neurodevelopmental conditions. A peculiar trait of children with Autism is their concern with social communication difficulties.

SYMPTOMS

- No babbling or pointing by
- No single words by age 16 months or two-word phrases by age 2
- Impaired ability to make friends with peers
- Impaired ability to initiate or sustain a conversation with oth-
- Repetitive or unusual use of language Abnormally intense or focused
- interest
- Preoccupation with particular
- objects or subjects Inflexible adherence to specific routines or rituals

daily functions in life. On the contrary, some of the children with autism are brilliant and exhibit performance which is sometimes far superior to ones who are not on the Autism spectrum. With under-standing and compassion for their special needs, we can surely induct them into the mainstream."

Agrees Dr Alok Kumar Bhuwan, Managing Secretary, Manovikas Charitable Society. explaining stigm: that they lack abilities to perform children who are neurodiverse, he cost.

suggests that the strategy to help and build confidence, self-esteem, motivation and resilience is very important when we think about such kids. "Every autistic child has such kids. Every autistic child has individual strengths and needs. We can help these kids with the concept of Universal design of learning (UDL) which can benefit them with learning and thinking differences. In fact, UDL uses a variety of teaching strategies to remove barriers to learning especially those with autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit and hyperac-

tivity disorder."

Autism is the world's third most common developmental disability, a neurological illness that usually manifests by the age of three, says Bhuwan.

K. Nageswara Rao, President, All India Disabled Rights Forum, opines that autism affects early in childhood and needs to be addressed soon. "It varies in type and severity, but therapy can improve the ability of the person the function."

In a nutshell, people with autism can live a better life if they are raised in a happy and healthy environment. Today, the only requirement is that they be accepted totally and that they not be neaned or discourage

NEWSBRIEFS



DAAJI'S HEARTFULNESS INSTITUTE AND AIIMS DELHI

Heartfulness Institute and AIIMS, Delhi have inked a pact to collaborate in education and research activities to bring meditation and sciences into dayto-day life and impact various aspects of human health and well-

being.
The MoU was recently signed between 'Daaji' Kamlesh D Patel, President of Ram Chandra Mission, Founder and Guide of Heartfulness Meditation Worldwide, and **Dr M. Srinivas** -Director of the premier health research institute.

Speaking on the occasion, Daaji (Kamlesh D Patel) Founder of Heartfulness Institute and Guide of Heartfulness Meditation Worldwide said, "This MoU will help in collaborative research and education in the sphere of meditation and science at the same time. There is a direct correlation between a healthy spirit and a healthy body. Science has time and again proven that meditation leaves positive impacts on mind and body. We want to delve deeper and make the outcomes beneficial to mankind."

Dr Srinivas was of the view that the agreement gives an opportunity to explore more beyond what is already known to medical sciences in terms of inner wellness. "The idea is to help people acquire holistic wellness backed by science. Previous research at universities abroad have already shown how Heartfulness meditation techniques are instrumental in positive behavioral changes as well".

66% PEOPLE HAVE HIGHER THEN NORMAL LEVELS OF HOMOCYSTEINE IN THEIR BLOOD: TATA 1MG LABS SURVEY

Tata 1mg Labs has claimed that ▲ data analysis of about 40,000 homocysteine, (an amino acid) tests conducted across its PAN India lab testing facilities in the last two years, indicates that more than 66 per cent of people in India have higher than-normal levels of homocysteine in their bloodstream, making them vulnerable to heart diseases, such as

blood clots, heart attack and stroke. It said that while 59 per cent of women were found with escalated levels of homocysteine, this figure was much lower for men at 40.1 per cent. The age group of 18-30 years had the lowest incidence at 15.3 per cent but rapidly climbed to the highest in the age bracket of 31-40 years at 30 per cent. This was followed by age groups of 41-50 years (about 19 per cent), above 60 years (18.3 per cent), and 51-60 years



When asked about role of homocysteine levels in individuals, Dr Tarun Kumar, Professor of Cardiology, PGIMER and Dr RML Hospital, Delhi said that homocysteine levels are relevant in cases of young patients with Heart attack or brain stroke. As hyperhomocystenemia is associated with recurrent cardiac or brain stroke (thrombosis) events, treatment is quite low cost. "Young patients with thrombotic events like vascular thrombosis (DEep venous thrombosis, Pulmonary thromboembolism), Heart attack or brain stroke patients, should go for such tests,' he said and advised that one should take vitamin B6, B-12, folic acid

supplementation.

Reframe How We Think About Autism

DEVANGANA MISHRA, founder of Brain Bristle, works with children on the autism spectrum. In conversation with THE HEALTH PIONEER, she asserts that society needs to work with autistic children individually at a deeper level to bring out their best abilities. Excerpts:



Why is autism still a subject we that I mean, I teach them every-

don't fully understand? Autism is a spectrum, ranging from severe to moderate to mild, lack of communication skills, reciprocity, eye contact, stemming and other such behaviours. Growth for each can look different or the same, how we push someone on the spectrum of autism forward is varied and with different ambitions and hopes than what might be possible for them or vice versa- as educators, what is right, what is wrong, what is enough and what has more scope is all so complicated and there's so much trial and error, who knows.

At what point do we give up on intervention for those on the spectrum of autism?

Honestly, I don't know, I do everything I humanly can until a child is 18, then I give up and see what goes on from there on. By

thing that an adult would need or read- the daily news, romance, sex, cinema, dialogues, texts to send, what to wear on a date, how to dance at prom, how to sit while at dinner, what can you do if you can't do math, how to cheat at tests, how to cheat at everything but still be as good as one can possibly be, how to just figure life as smoothly as one can while being on the spectrum - and then I cross my fingers and hope for the best results possible.

Do you think that mental health and autis, how tangled they are.

You can't say one without the other, growth or experimentation for someone on the spectrum of autism can go haywire, then get back on track, then fall all over again, then find a way again, it's so complex- imagine you decide to

run a marathon, you twist your enough to prioritize where to ankle, you have a choice to call for help and be airlifted or wobble back or let it heal while you lie back there then run or walk the marathon path until you can run again. It's all a mix of everything and that's how autism and mental health works for you and me, but even more importantly for someone on the spectrum of autism, as a teacher I could set them up for excellence but then what they do could be a total crash, who knows--it's all a guesswork for us to see.

Why do we historically have such few disruptions like Einstein or Bill Gates or Ramanujan or Hannah Gadsby in the space of autism, why not more such stories?

It's the same, education is so large and expansive and curricular and rule based, and the time from the ages of 3 to 18 is just not

close and where to expand for someone on the spectrum, sometimes educational interventions turn out right or sometimes a child gets an idea because of being caged and they break out and create something grand. It's all a mix of everything. It's almost like why do we have so many scientists vet so few who win the Nobel Prize eventually. But one thing is certain. Autistic children are different for a reason. They can shake up systems if given the right guidance.

What inspired you to take up the cause of people with autism?

I met my first grown-up with autism when I was 19 and the complete disregard for his giftedness led me to Columbia University, NY to study autism in detail and depth. This is how my journey with the autism spectrum began.

DOCTORSPEAK

aparoscopic surgery in kids is safe

aparoscopic intervention Laparoscopic intervention the world of surgery with its minimal invasiveness and reduced postoperative pain. While laparoscopic surgery is not new in the field of surgery, it has witnessed enormous progress in the last three decades, and in the field of paediatric surgery as well.

The first laparoscopic

cholecystectomy was performed on an adult in 1986. Since then, a significant advancement in technology and techniques has taken place in this field resulting in very positive outcome.

Laparoscopic procedures in children, on the other hand, was restricted to diagnostic purposes till the 1980s. Paediatric surgeons in select-ed centres started performing paediatric laparoscopic procedures around the world. In India, advanced laparoscopic paediatric surgery was started in December 1998 by the author himself by performing the first laparoscopic Pull surgery for through Hirschsprung's disease. It is estimated that over 80% of paediatric surgeons in the ÛSA and many other countries per-

form laparoscopic surgery in



DR. RASIKLAL SHAH Senior Consultant - Paediatric Surgery, SRCC Children's Hospital, managed by Narayana Health

recent times. At present, there are extensive applications of this technique, and several advanced-level intricate surgeries are performed safely even in small children. In India, more and more parents are opting for this kind of surgery due to its benefits.

KEY BENEFITS

The key benefits of Laparoscopic Surgery in children include less pain, less cut/small incisions that look aesthetically better, less blood loss, less risk of infection, lesser hospitalisation (parents can go back to work sooner), faster recovery, early return to school, less risk of pneumonia and lesser chances of development of adhesive cysts.

bowel obstruction. Paediatric Minimally Invasive Surgeries are commonly performed for Hernia

repair, Appendicectomy, Undescended testis, Pyeloplasty Nephrectomy, Pull through surgery for Hirschsprung's

disease and anorectal malformation, Cholecystectomy and Choledochal Diaphragmatic Hernia Repair and Empyema surgery, Fundoplication, Pyloromyotomy, Malrotation, Abdominal cyst, Ovarian cyst, Mesenteric, and other

Is there any difference between Children and Laparoscopic Procedures?

- Many surgical conditions in children ARE TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM ADULTS
- The laparoscopic hand instruments in children consists of smaller length and diameter
- In children, the inside space to work is less which makes surgery very diffi-
- Minimally Invasive surgical team needs to be highly experienced and

the pioneer



Trump has become the first former president to be indicted in a criminal case after a grand jury investigation into hush money payments made on his behalf during the 2016 presidential campaign, write ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and MEG KINNARD

onald Trump's unprecedented indictment comes as the Republican faces other legal investigations and launches a bid to return to the White House in 2024.

The indictment will test the Republican Party already divided over whether to support Trump next year, in part due to his efforts to undermine his 2020 election loss.

Trump has denied any wrongdoing and accuses prosecutors of engaging in a politically motivated "witch hunt" to damage his campaign. Here's a look at the hush money case, the

grand jury investigation and possible ramifications for Trump's presidential campaign:

WHAT'S THIS CASE ABOUT?

The grand jury spent weeks meeting in secret to probe Trump's involvement in a \$130,000 payment made in 2016 to the porn actor Stormy Daniels to keep her from going public about a exual encounter she said she l ıd with him ve: earlier. Trump lawyer Michael Cohen paid Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, through a shell company before being reimbursed by Trump, whose company, the Trump Organisation, logged the reimbursements as legal expenses.

Earlier in 2016, Cohen also arranged for former Playboy model Karen McDougal to be paid \$150,000 by the publisher of the supermarket tabloid The National Enquirer, which then squelched her story in a journalistically dubious practice known as "catch

Trump denies having sex with either woman. Trump's company "grossed up" Cohen's reimbursement for the Daniels payment to defray tax payments, according to federal prosecutors who filed criminal charges against the lawyer in connection with the payments in 2018. In all, Cohen got \$360,000 plus a \$60,000 bonus, for a total of \$420,000.

Cohen pleaded guilty to violating federal campaign finance law in connection with the payments. Federal prosecutors say the payments amounted to illegal, unreported assistance to Trump's campaign. But they declined to file charges against Trump himself.

WHAT ARE THE CHARGES?

The indictment has not yet been unsealed, so

it's not totally clear. Some experts have said they believe Trump could be charged with falsifying business records, which can be a misdemeanor or a felony under New York law. To secure a conviction on the felony charge, prosecutors would have to prove that records were falsified with the intention of committing or concealing a second crime. It's not clear what prosecutors may allege as the second crime.

WHAT HAS TRUMP'S LAWYER SAID?

Trump's lawyer, Joe Tacopina, said Thursday that the former president didn't commit any crime and vowed to "vigorously fight this political prosecution in court."

Tacopina has accused prosecutors of "distorting laws" to try to take down the former president. He has described Trump as a victim of extortion who had to pay the money because the allegations were going to be embarrassing to him "regardless of the campaign."

"He made this with personal funds to prevent something from coming out — false, but embarrassing to himself, his family, his young son. That's not a campaign finance violation, not by any stretch," Tacopina said on ABC's 'Good Morning America' before the indictment.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Law enforcement officials have been making





"THE THUGS AND CRIMINALS WHO ARE **CORRUPTING OUR** JUSTICE SYSTEM WILL BE DEFEATED, **DISCREDITED AND** TOTALLY DISGRACED" — DONALD TRUMP



security preparations for days for the possibility of an indictment and a court appearance by the

Trump was expected to surrender to authorities next week, though details were still being worked out, according to a person familiar with the matter who was not authorized to discuss a matter that remained under seal.

WHAT'S THIS GRAND JURY AND WHO TESTIFIED?

A grand jury is made up of people drawn from the community, similar to a trial jury. But unlike juries that hear trials, grand juries don't decide whether someone is guilty or innocent. They only decide whether there is sufficient evidence for someone to be charged.

Proceedings are closed to the public, including the media. New York grand juries have 23 people. At least 16 must be present to hear evidence or deliberate and 12 have to agree there is enough evidence in order to issue an indictment.

David Pecker, a longtime Trump friend and the former chief executive of the parent company of The National Enquirer, returned to the courthouse this week where the grand jury was

Pecker's company, American Media Inc., secretly assisted Trump's campaign by paying \$150,000 to McDougal in August 2016 for the rights to her story about an alleged affair with Trump. The company then suppressed

McDougal's story until after the election.

The grand jury also heard from Cohen, as well as Robert Costello, who was once a legal adviser to Cohen.

The men have since had a falling out, and Costello indicated he has information he believes undercuts Cohen's credibility and contradicts his incriminating statements about Trump. Costello testified at the invitation of prosecutors, presumably as a way to ensure that the grand jury had an opportunity to consider any testimony or evidence that might weaken the case for moving forward with an indictment.

Trump was also invited to testify, but

WHAT ARE THE POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS

Neither the indictment itself nor a running for or winning the presidency in

Last week in Waco, Texas, Trump took a defiant stance at a rally by disparaging the prosecutors investigating him and predicting his vindication as he rallied supporters in a city made famous by deadly resistance against law enforcement.

"You will be vindicated and proud," Trump said in a speech brimming with resentments and framing the probes as political attacks on himself and his followers. "The thugs and criminals who are corrupting our justice system will be defeated, discredited and totally disgraced."

Before the charges were handed down, many party leaders had also already begun to defend

the former president. During a visit this month to Iowa, former Vice President Mike Pence called the idea of indicting a former president "deeply troubling." Another 2024 Republican prospect, New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu, has said there is a sense that the former president is being

unfairly attacked. Former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, a declared candidate who also served as Trump's UN ambassador, has called Bragg's case an attempt at scoring "political points," adding, "You never want to condone any sort of prosecution that's being politicised."

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who is considering joining the 2024 Republican field, slammed the investigation as politically motivated. But he also threw one of his first jabs at the former president in a quip likely to intensify their rivalry. DeSantis said he personally doesn't "know what goes into paying hush money to a porn star to secure silence over some kind of alleged affair."

WHAT ABOUT OTHER TRUMP INVESTIGATIONS? The New York case is just one of many legal

woes Trump is facing.

The Justice Department is also investigating his retention of top secret government documents at his Florida estate, Mar-a-Lago, after leaving the White House. Federal investigators are also still probing the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the US Capitol and efforts to overturn the 2020 election that Trump falsely claimed was stolen.

In Georgia, Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis has been investigating whether Trump and his allies illegally meddled in the 2020 election. The foreperson of a special grand jury, which heard from dozens of witnesses, said last month that the panel had recommended that numerous people be indicted, and hinted Trump could be among them. It is ultimately up to Willis to decide whether to move forward.





Trump at the end of primrose path

The spectacle around Donald Trump's indictment and arraignment in a court will mark an unprecedented moment in American history that will demonstrate once again how dramatically Trump has upended democratic norms. But on a personal level, the indictment pierces the cloak of invincibility that seemed to follow Trump through his decades in business and in politics, as he faced allegations of fraud, collusion and sexual misconduct, writes JILL COLVIN

week to be arraigned in a New York courtroom, it will not only mark the first time a former US president has faced criminal charges. It will also represent a reckoning for a man long nicknamed "Teflon Don," who until now has managed to skirt serious legal jeopardy despite 40 years of legal scrutiny.

Trump, who is the early frontrunner for the Republican presidential nomination, is expected to turn himself in on Tuesday. He faces charges, including at least one felony offence, related to hush money payments to women during his 2016 campaign. Like any other person facing trial, he will be booked, fingerprinted and photographed before being given the chance to enter a plea.

The spectacle that is sure to unfold will mark an unprecedented moment in American history that will demonstrate once again how dramatically Trump - who already held the distinction of being the first president to be impeached twice - has upended democratic norms. But on a personal level, the indictment pierces the cloak of invincibility that seemed to follow Trump through his decades in business and in politics, as he faced allegations of fraud, collusion and sexual misconduct.

"Boy, after all this time it's a bit of a shock," Trump biographer Michael D'Antonio said of the indictment. "You know I always thought of him as the Gingerbread Man, shouting, 'You can't catch me!' as he ran

"Given his track record," he said, "I had trouble imagining he would ever be held account-

"These are not things that

 $W^{\text{hen Donald Trump}}_{\text{steps before a judge next}} \ \ \text{his entire life, nor I, for that} \\ \text{matter, that he would ever be}$ confronted with," Michael Cohen, Trump's longtime fixer and a key witness in the case who served jail time for the payments, told CNN.

Of course, some of the celebration by Trump's detractors may be premature. The former president could seek to have a judge quickly dismiss the case. And even if it moves forward, there's no guarantee of conviction. Intensifying investigations in Atlanta and Washington are seen as potentially more serious legal threats.

Still, Trump and his team were caught by surprise when word of the New York indictment broke Thursday evening, following news reports that the grand jury hearing the case was set for a weeks-long hiatus. As the deliberations dragged on, some in Trump's orbit had become convinced that the case had stalled and that charges might never be brought. That included Trump attorney Joe Tacopina, who said on Friday morning he had hoped the "rule of law would prevail."

Trump, he said on the "Today" show, was "initially was shocked" by news of the charges, but quickly pivoted to his usual pushback playbook.

"After he got over that," he said, Trump "put a notch on his belt and he decided we have to fight now. And he got into a typical Donald Trump posture where he's ready to be combative on something that he believes is an injustice. ... I think he's now in the posture that he's ready to fight this."

In the meantime, Trump and his team have tried to use the news to his advantage, hoping to energise his loyal base by painting the investiga-Donald Trump ever thought in tion as part of a larger plot to



derail his candidacy.

Already, the charges have been a boon to his struggling fundraising. The campaign announced Friday evening that it had raised over \$4 million in the 24 hours after the indictment became public, far smashing its previous record after the FBI search of Trump's Mar-a-Lago club.

More than 25 per cent of

donations, according to the campaign, came from firsttime donors. The average contribution: \$34.

His campaign also continued to blast out supportive statements from dozens of top Republicans who have rallied behind Trump, including several of his declared and likely challengers, underscoring his continued hold on the party.

Trump has been in contact by phone with key congressional allies, including members of House leadership and top committees, according to people familiar with the conversations, who, like others, spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the response.

Trump ally Rep. Jim Banks, R-Ind., who formally endorsed the former president on Friday,

said Trump "doesn't back down" and was going to "fight back," telling a local radio show it was "yet another chapter where Donald Trump is going to come back on top in the end."

The media maelstrom has catapulted the former president back into the spotlight he craves, at least temporarily limiting attention being paid to his rivals, including Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, who is widely expected to challenge Trump for the nomination, and has been holding events across the county to promote his book.

Trump aides have been discussing other ideas to maximise the situation, including the possibility of holding a press event either before or

after the arraignment. Trump is expected to travel from Florida to New York on Monday and stay overnight at Trump Tower in midtown Manhattan before heading to the courthouse early on Tuesday. He will return to Florida after the arraignment.

Trump has long denied that he had a sexual encounter with the porn actor known as Stormy Daniels and has blasted Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg for pursuing the years-old case.

Trump is also facing continued investigations in Georgia, over his efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election, and in Washington, where a special counsel is probing the events of January 6, 2021, as well as Trump's handling of classified documents at Mar-a-Lago and potential obstruction of the investigation.

But Sam Nunberg, a longtime former aide who broke with Trump years ago, said that while he no longer supports Trump, he believes the Manhattan case is "a waste of time," given the allegations, which remain under seal. And he said he was skeptical it would ultimately matter.

"It doesn't surprise me," he said of the indictment. "What would surprise me is if he actually ended up behind bars in prison and I don't see that hap-

D'Antonio said that sentiment - and a continued belief that Trump will somehow prevail and dodge the charges continues among the many people who have reached out to him in the last 24 hours, despite the charges.

"They're like, he's going to get away with it," he said. Somehow, he's going to get it thrown out."

PERSPECTIVE

Demystifying philosophical layers of temples

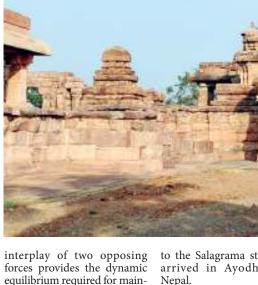
 $A {\it notion of sacred has held \atop existential imperative for} {\it peaceful conditions prevail.}$ mankind from time immemorial, bestowing meaning on material pursuits. The onslaught of rapid urbanisation and technological progress has intriguingly rendered sacred spaces all the more relevant. microcosm and macrocosm, With changes unfolding at breakneck speed, such spaces facilitate introspection and selfenquiry. People from the Indian subcontinent would generally be familiar with the sanctifying ethos of a temple, cosmic capsule, and this but a few recognise its philosophical and cosmological foundations. Temples pave the way for individual salvation and also stimulate congregational worship. It is precisely at an interface of these two processes that the philosophical moorings of a temple can be

For several centuries, Vastu-shastras have functioned as the principal textual manuals for constructing temples. Texts like Manasara and Mayamatam emphasise the need to construct temples or even towns on square grid plans. Shapes like squares, triangles, circles and even points are liberally employed in temple architecture, and they each carry a distinct meaning. In this case, a square represents the manifest territorial world that needs to be transcended. The square grid plans, which in the words of scholar Stella Kramrisch function as "forecasts for temples", are known as vastu-purusha mandalas. Gods associated with each of the squares within the mandala are ritually invoked to pacify the vastu-purusha, and ensure that

Such diagrams also illustrate the underlying impulse of Indian philosophical traditions to collapse all distinctions between man, God and cosmos. The Samkhya philosophy stresses the unity between while Advaita Vedanta extends this further in its theory of the union of atman and brahman. To that extent, each part of a temple is considered to represent the cosmos in a microimparts spiritual meaning to even the most insignificant components of a shrine. The components of a temple are generally named after parts of the human body, illustrating the organic unity underlying temple architecture in the Indian subcontinent.

This metaphysical union can also be most prominently noticed in the image-worshipping traditions that have passed on from time immemorial. If Vedic texts stress the importance of concentrating the mind on a single object, the Puranas and Agamas are known for their pronounced sectarian predisposition. Nonetheless, continuity can be seen in the way these texts extol aniconic traditions such as the worship of bana-lingas and salagramas.

The linga and yoni manifest forces embodied by Shiva and Parvati respectively. In other words, the stone shaft known as the linga represents Shiva as a silent spectator of the world whose existence is contingent upon the creative energies released by Shakti, who resides at the base. This creative



equilibrium required for maintaining the cosmic balance. The salagramas, on the other hand, are stones resembling the discus of Vishnu, and generally acquire this shape because of weathering activity caused by

These continue to be venerated by Vaishnavites across the country, as was recently noticed in the ecstatic reception

to the Salagrama stones that arrived in Ayodhya from

A regular visit to the temple is also suffused with philosophical import. Before entering the sanctuary, a devotee is greeted by the imposing structure of a temple, which in many ways resembles a mountain. Vastu-shastras frequently liken temples to Mount Meru, which is held in high esteem by Hindus. A devotee then enters the porch and views several sculptures adorning the walls of any temple. Subsequently, the devotee sets foot into the hallowed precincts of the dimly-lit garbha-griha which - almost like a cave within a mountain — is unadorned and houses the chief deity. Texts suggest that an invisible axis connects this deity with the superstructure of a temple. In fact, it is during the consecration of a temple that the deity's

attributes are manifested by the intervention of priests. This ritual process is called "pranapratishta" and literally sug-gests instilling prana (life) within the deity.

In other words, the deity is considered to have life just like a human being, and germinates within the womb-chamber (garbha-griha) of a temple. After seeking darsan of the deity, a devotee circumambulates the shrine, and attends to the subsidiary deities placed on its side walls. This is also a profoundly meaningful exercise as it helps a devotee absorb the energies prevailing within a

The power of visual motifs can also be discerned in the narrative friezes adorning the walls of several temples in India, illustrating stories from epics and Puranas. The Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal, which is the only temple in the complex under active worship, contains such friezes and their stories are generally concerned with the restoration of dharma. The Kirat-arjuniya tale is illustrated in several temples of the region. This involves a conflict between Shiva in his incarnation as a hunter (kirata) and Arjuna, who seeks to consolidate his military powers when in exile. Arjuna is put through numerous challenges, before being blessed with the desired armoury. Such stories of perseverance, devotion and truthfulness serve to enhance a devotee's spiritual experience within a temple.

For all these reasons, the structural features of temples are chiefly responsible for making them an integral part of India's spiritual landscape. The vibrant temple culture of Bharat has withstood the ravages of time chiefly because of these empowering philosophical and cosmological concepts that subliminally enrich devotee's experience within a shrine. These need to be acknowledged to foster a society that is rooted to its traditions even as it embraces cosmopolitan

The vibrant temple culture of India has withstood the ravages of time chiefly because of the empowering philosophical and cosmological concepts that subliminally enrich devotee's experience within a shrine. These need to be acknowledged to foster a society that is rooted to its traditions even as it embraces cosmopolitan ambitions



ANIRUDH NAVEEN



WORLD NEEDS BILLIONS TO AVERT UNREST, STARVATION

thout billions of dollars more to feed millions of hungry people, the world will see mass migration, destabilized countries, and starving children and adults in the part 12 to 18 months, the head of the next 12 to 18 months, the head of the Nobel prize-winning UN World Food Program warned Friday.

David Beasley praised increased funding from the United States and Germany last year, and urged China, Gulf nations, billionaires and other countries "to step up big time."

In an interview before he hands the reins of the world's largest humanitarian organization to U.S. ambassador Cindy McCain next week, the former South Carolina governor said he's "extremely worried" that WFP won't raise about 23 billion it needs this year to help an estimated 350 million people in 49 countries who desperately need food.

"Right at this stage, I'll be surprised if we get 40% of it, quite frankly," he

WFP was in a similar crisis last year, he said, but fortunately he was able to convince the United States to increase its funding from about

3.5 billion to 7.4 billion and Germany to raise its contribution from 350 million a few years ago to 1.7 billion, but he doesn't think they'll do it again this year.

The world has to understand that the next 12 to 18 months is critical, and if we back off the funding, you will have mass migration, and you will have destabilization nations and that will all be on top of starvation among children and people around the world

Other countries need to step up now, he said, starting with China, the world's second-largest economy which gave WFP just 11 million last year.

Beasley applauded China for its success in substantially reducing hunger and poverty at home, but said it gave less than one cent per person last year compared to the United States, the world's leading economy, which gave about 22 per person.
China needs "to engage in the mul-

tilateral world" and be willing to provide help that is critical, he said. "They have a moral obligation to do

Beasley said they've done "an incred-



ible job of feeding their people," and "now we need their help in other parts of the world" on how they did it, particularly in poorer countries including

With high oil prices Gulf countries can also do more, especially Muslim nations that have relations with countries in east Africa, the Sahara and elsewhere in the Middle East, he said, expressing hope they will increase con-

Beasley said the wealthiest billionaires made unprecedented profits during the COVID-19 pandemic, and "it's not too much to ask some of the multibillionaires to step up and help us in the short-term crisis," even though charity isn't a long-term solution to the food crisis. In the long-term, he said what he'd really like to see is billionaires using their experience and success to engage "in the world's greatest need and that is food on the planet to

feed 8 billion people."

"The world has to understand that the next 12 to 18 months is critical, and if we back off the funding, you will have mass migration, and you will have destabilization nations and that will all be on top of starvation among children and people around the world," he

Beasley said WFP was just forced to cut rations by 50% to 4 million peo- and-a-half ago.

ple in Afghanistan, and "these are people who are knocking on famine's door

"We don't have enough money just to reach the most vulnerable people now," he said. "So we are in a crisis over the cliff stage right now, where we literally could have hell on earth if we're

not very careful."

Beasley said he's been telling leaders in the West and Europe that while they're focusing everything on Ukraine and Russia, "you better well not forget about what's south and southeast of you because I can assure you it is coming your way if you don't pay attention and get on top of it."

With 400 trillion worth of wealth on the planet, he said, there's no reason for any child to die of starvation.

The WFP executive director said leaders have to prioritize the humanitarian needs that are going to have the greatest impact on stability in societies around the world.

He singled out several priority places -- Africa's Sahel region as well as the east including Somalia, northern Kenya, South Sudan and Ethiopia; Syria which is having an impact on Jordan and Lebanon; and Central and South America where the number of people migrating to the United States is now five times what it was a year-



AI tool helps remove atmospheric 'blur' from images of cosmos

Scientists have adapted a well-known computer-vision algorithm, which works faster and produces more realistic images, and applied it to astronomical images from ground-based telescopes.

This innovation of the researchers of Northwestern University, US, and Tsinghua University in Beijing, China, could help remove errors and solve the "blur" in astronomical images, they said.

The research is published in the journal Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society.

"Astronomical images are used for science. By cleaning up images in the right way, we can get more accurate data. The algorithm removes the atmosphere computationally, enabling physicists to obtain better scien-

"At the end of the day, the images do look better as well, said Northwestern's Emma Alexander, the study's senior author. The blur, caused by the Earth's atmosphere through which the light coming from distant objects passes, becomes an issue when astrophysicists

mological data. Studying the apparent shapes of galaxies helps astronomers in detecting large-scale cosmological structures' gravitational effects.

analyze images to extract cos-

However, the atmospheric blur smears the image in a way that can distort the shapes of galaxies and make them appear rounder or more stretched than they are.

Removing the blur enables

shape data.

"Îf you look at an image from a ground-based telescope, a shape might be warped. It's hard to know if that's because of a gravitational effect or the atmosphere," said Alexander.

To tackle this challenge, Alexander's team combined an optimization algorithm with a deep-learning network trained on astronomical images, that included simulated data matching Vera C. Rubin Observatory's (currently under construction in Chile) expected imaging parameters.

The resulting tool produced images with 38.6 per cent less error compared to classic methods for removing blur and 7.4 per cent less error compared to modern methods.

'Hostile' parenting enhances childrens' risk of developing lasting mental health problems



end of 'hostile' parenting at age three were 1.5 times likelier than their peers to develop mental health problems qualified as 'high risk' by

Young children on the receiving end of 'hostile' parenting were 1.5 times likelier than their peers to be in the high-risk band of developing

a new study has reported.

Researchers charted the children's mental health symptoms at ages three, five and nine, studying both internalising mental health symptoms, such as anxiety and social withdrawal, and externalising ones, such as impulsivity, aggression and hyperactivity, together.

They found that 10 per cent

Engineered kidney could allow for

of over 7,500 children studied were at a high-risk for poor mental health and that those exposed to harsh parenting were likely to fall in this group.

The study involved researchers from University of Cambridge, UK, and University College Dublin (UCD), Ireland, and is published in the journal Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences.

frequent harsh discipline, that could be physical and/or psychological. It could, for example, involve shouting at children regularly, routine physical punishment, isolating children when they misbehave, damaging their self-esteem, or punishing children unpredictably depending on the par-

Why tornadoes are still hard to forecast



¬exas, As a deadly tornado headed toward Rolling Fork, Mississippi, on March 24, 2023, forecasters saw the storm developing on radar and issued a rare "tornado emergency" warning.

NOAA's Weather Prediction and Storm Prediction centres had been warning for several days about the risk of severe weather in the region. But while forecasters can see the signs of potential tornadoes in advance, forecasting when and where tornadoes will form is still extremely difficult.

We asked Ćhris Nowotarski, an atmospheric scientist who works on severe thunderstorm computer modeling, to explain why and how forecast technology is improving.

Why are tornadoes still so difficult to forecast?

Meteorologists have gotten a lot better at forecasting the conditions that make tornadoes more likely. But predicting exactly which thunderstorms will produce a tornado and when is harder, and that's where a lot of severe weather research is focused today.

Often, you'll have a line of

thunderstorms in an environment that looks favourable for tornadoes, and one storm might produce a tornado but the others don't. The differences between them could be due to small differences in meteorological variables, such

as temperature. Even changes in the land surface conditions fields, forested regions or urban environments could affect whether a tornado forms. These small changes in the storm environment can have large impacts on the processes within storms that can make or break a tor-

One of the strongest predictors of whether a thunderstorm produces a tornado relates to vertical wind shear, which is how the wind changes direction or speed with height

in the atmosphere. How wind shear interacts with rain-cooled air within storms, which we call "outflow," and how much precipitation evaporates can influence whether a tornado forms. If you've ever been in a thunderstorm, you know that right before it starts to rain, you often

get a gust of cold air surging out from the storm. The characteristics of that cold air outflow are important to whether a tornado can form, because tornadoes typically form in that cooler portion of the storm.

How far in advance can you know if a tornado is likely to be large and powerful?

It's complicated. Radar is still our biggest tool for determining when to issue a tornado warning meaning a tornado is imminent in the area and people should seek shelter.

The vast majority of violent tornadoes form from supercells, thunderstorms with a deep rotating updraft, called a "mesocyclone." Vertical wind shear can enable the midlevels of the storm to rotate, and upward suction from this mesocyclone can intensify the rotation within the storm's

outflow into a tornado If you have a supercell and it has strong rotation above the ground, that's often a precursor to a tornado. Some research suggests that a wider mesocyclone is more likely to create a stronger, longer-lasting tornado than other storms.

UNRELENTING IN US MIDWEST AND SOUTH

Unrelenting tornadoes that tore through parts of the South and Midwest killed at least 10 people, shredded homes and shopping centres, and collapsed a theatre

roof during a heavy metal concert in Illinois.

Emergency responders across the region counted the dead and surveyed the damage on Saturday morning after tornadoes touched down into the night, part of a sprawling storm system that also brought wildfires to the southern Plains and blizzard conditions to the Upper Midwest.

The dead included four in the small town of Wynne, Arkansas, Cross County Coroner Eli Long told KAIT-TV. Other deaths were reported in Alabama, Illinois, Indiana

Wynne City Councilmember Lisa Powell Carter said the town about 50 miles (80 kilometers) west of Memphis, Tennessee, was without power and roads were full of debris. "I'm in a panic trying to get home, but we can't get home," she said Friday night. "Wynne is so demolished. ..

There's houses destroyed, trees down on streets.' The storms also killed three people in Sullivan County, Indiana, Emergency Management Director Jim Pirtle said in an email. Some residents were missing in the county seat of Sullivan, near the Illinois line about 95 miles (150 kilometers) southwest of Indianapolis. At least one person was killed and more than two dozen were hurt, some critically, in the Little Rock area, authorities said.

In Belvidere, Illinois, the roof of the Apollo Theatre collapsed during a tornado, killing one person and injuring 28, five severely. Calls began coming from the theatre, about 70 miles (110 kilometers) northwest of Chicago, shortly before 8 pm, police said.

The venue's Facebook page said the bands scheduled to perform were Morbid Angel, Crypta, Skeletal Remains and

Belvidere Fire Chief Shawn Schadle said 260 people were in the venue. Responders also rescued someone from an elevator and had to deal with downed power lines outside



cientists have engineered an artificial kidney which brane (GBM) using a single step fabricaallows for an early detection process. tion of adverse drug reactions. The fundamental structural successfully replicated and functional unit in a kidney

early detection of drug toxicity

is a nephron, which encompasses an intertwined network of small blood vessels called the glomerulus. This along with glomerular capsules forms a

Researchers have fabricated a glomerular microvessel-ona-chip, which includes glomerular endothelial cells, podocyte layers, and a glomerular basement mem-

glomerular units of the kidney, which offer boundless potential for drug screening and nephrotoxicity testing clinical

practice," explained professor Dong-Woo Cho who led the study from Pohang University of Science and Technology

(POSTECH), South The research

findings have been published in the journal

Biofabrication.

While the kidnev eliminates toxic substances in the bloodstream, includ-

ing metabolic waste, and maintains homeostasis in the body, toxicity can still be induced in the kidney through

Physical exercise could offset the negative effects of unhealthy sleep on longevity'



Physical activity has been found to counterbalance some of the perative. some of the negative effects of unhealthy sleep on longevity, according to a new study.

The study, claiming to be the first one to investigate the combined effects of physical activity and sleep duration on mortality risk, included included 92,221 adults aged 40 to 73 years in the

UK Biobank cohort, who wore an accelerometer wristband for one week between 2013 and 2015. "The study showed that increased physical activity levels weakened the mortality risks associated with short or long sleep duration," said study author Jihui Zhang of The Affiliated Brain Hospital of Guangzhou Medical University, China.

In participants not meeting the WHO exercise recommendations, short and long sleep were associated with 31 per cent and 20 per cent raised risks of all-cause death, respectively. These risks disappeared in those meeting the WHO advice.

The work is published in the European Journal of Preventive Cardiology.

Both sufficient exercise and healthy sleep contribute to prolonged life expectancy. However, the interaction between physical activity and sleep duration to promote health is unclear.

The study claims objective measurements were made as accelerometer devices were used to record movements of the participants, instead of relying on participants' self-reported behaviours which is subjective.

Moderate to vigorous physical activity was classified as meeting World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines or not.

The scientists found that in people with low volumes of physical activity, short and long sleep were associated with 16 per cent and 37 per cent raised risks of all-cause death, respec-

tively. Short sleepers with low exercise had a 69 per cent elevated risk of death from cardiovascular causes, which disappeared when exercise was increased to moderate or high volumes.

Long sleepers with low exercise levels had a 21 per cent raised risk of death due to cancer which disappeared with

moderate or high volumes of exercise.

In participants with intermediate amounts of exercise, only short sleep was detrimental, with a 41 per cent raised likelihood of all-cause death.

In those with a high amount of exercise, sleep duration was

not linked with risk of death. In participants not meeting the WHO exercise recommendations, short and long sleep were associated with 31 per cent and 20 per cent raised risks of allcause death, respectively. These risks disappeared in those meet-

ing the WHO advice. For cardiovascular death, short sleepers who failed to meet the advice on intensity of exercise had a 52 per cent elevated risk which disappeared in those achieving the WHO exercise recommendations. For death from cancer, long sleepers not meeting the WHO exercise advice had a 21 per cent raised risk which disappeared in those following the WHO guidance. 'Our findings suggest that health promotion efforts targeting both physical activity and sleep duration may be more effective in preventing or delaying premature death in middle-aged and older adults than focusing on one behaviour alone," said Zhang.