

Oppn not able to digest nation's progress under Modi

The nine-year rule of Prime Minister Narendra Modi reflects how a stable government at the Centre spurs development of the country. The new Parliament building inaugurated by the Prime Minister on Sunday is not only beautiful but also expansive. The construction of the structure could be accomplished in just two and half years. Every inch of the building reflects the glory of Indian architecture, sculpture, and culture. It stands as a testimony to the architectural skills of the modern era. After 75 years of India becoming independent, the people of the country managed to get rid of the colonial remnants. However, surprisingly opposition parties are not able to stomach the progress of the nation. Their approach to the celebrations suggests that they are always one step backward as the nation progresses one step forward.

As per the Constitution, the Prime Minister is the leader of Parliament. Parliament sessions

are held as per the decision of the Cabinet meetings, presided over by the Prime Minister. All decisions, such as introducing crucial bills, would be decided by the Cabinet. However, the value attached to the post of the President of India as the head of the state and as the first citizen of the country is altogether different. He convenes both the Lower and Upper Houses and discharges various constitutional obligations. But all executive powers rest with the Prime Minister and the President issues orders on the advice of the Prime Minister and affixes his signature on various orders. This being so, is there any meaning in the opposition parties boycotting the inaugural function just because the Prime Minister is inaugurating it?

In all aspects, Modi has achieved wonderful success over the past nine years. The rapid development of infrastructure in the country under the Modi regime has no parallel under the previous regimes.

In all aspects, Modi has achieved wonderful success over the past nine years. The rapid development of infrastructure in the country under the Modi regime has no parallel under the previous regimes. The widely expanded network of highways, expressways, other roads, corridors, ports, airports, and the extensively expanded railway network exemplify this.

The widely expanded network of highways, expressways, other roads, corridors, ports, airports, and the extensively expanded railway network exemplify this. The Vande Bharat Express and Udaan stand as testimony to the nation's progress. Now Metro Rails have been extended to 23 towns and cities, as against only five in 2014. The total development of national highways during the past nine years was put at 145,155 km as against 91,287 km in 2014.

The country has 148 airports now as against only 74 in 2014. The country's defence exports rose by 334 per cent. The defence exports in 2014 were put at Rs 1,941 crore as against Rs 16,000 crore as of now. The GST monthly collection in April 2023 was put at Rs 1.87 lakh crore, mirroring economic growth of the nation. The total exports from the nation are worth \$ 770.18 billion, including the \$ 23.57 billion exports of electronic goods. Direct overseas investment in



Y SATYA KUMAR
BJP National Secretary

defence sector rose by 74 per cent, taking the investments in this sector to \$84.8 billion. The investments stand as a testimony to the increased confidence of investors in Modi's leadership. Modi scrapped Article 370 and Article 35 A and made it clear that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India. During Modi's reign, the construction of the magnificent Ram Mandir and the construction of the Kashi Vishwanath

Corridor were completed.

Under Modi's leadership, the pandemic situation was tackled more efficiently compared to other nations at a time when the virus played havoc in other nations. He was instrumental in the country developing vaccines for Covid domestically and also came to the rescue of many nations.

Another significant victory of Modi is the push towards a digital economy. Even street vendors are able to do digital transactions nowadays. The government could eliminate middlemen in the implementation of welfare schemes by crediting funds to people's bank accounts directly. With the seeding of Jan dhan bank accounts, Aadhaar cards and mobile phones, over 50 crore people opened their bank accounts to receive subsidies, loans, and funds under various government schemes directly into their bank accounts.

Ayushman Bharat, Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao, weaker section housing programme, Ujjwala scheme, and economic benefits to farmers benefited millions. Over 80 crore people received free foodgrains under the Pradhan mantra Garib Kalyan Yojna. Rs 25 lakh crore has been credited directly to people's accounts. In all, 3 crore people built their own homes, over 30 crore people received life insurance cover, 11 crore people benefited under PM-Kisan programme. Under Swadidhi programme, over 34.45 lakh street vendors received benefit. Under Mudra Yojna, Rs 23.60 crore was transferred to 39.65 bank accounts of petty vendors. Under Stand-Up India programme, Rs 7,351 crore was transferred to the bank accounts of SCs and STs. The farmers are able to get MSP that is 50% more than the cost of production. The agriculture budget, which was put at Rs

21,933 crore in 2013-14, increased to Rs 1,25,036 crore by 2023-24. The Swachh Bharat scheme helped over 3 lakh villages overcome open defecation problem. In all, 11.72 crore individual sanitary toilets were built.

The Congress leaders admitted that in the past not even 10 per cent of the funds under government schemes trickled down to the actual beneficiaries. Now there is no such situation. The achievements of the Modi government in the sphere of education are considerable. After four decades, the New Education Policy has been devised. Seven IIMs and seven IITs have been set up and also 15 AIIMS and 700 medical colleges.

Under the leadership of Modi, India has achieved tremendous success. The cacophony of critical voices from opposition parties would not be able to obliterate this success from the annals of the nation.

Naidu released a 'tissue manifesto': Min

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister Jogi Ramesh took a jibe at the TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu and said that 'Dirty Babu' released a 'Tissue Manifesto' during Mahanadu in Rajahmundry on Sunday. He tore the TDP's poll manifesto and dumped it in the dust bin. He said a manifesto is a promise and one should make a sincere effort to fulfill it and not to cheat the people with false promises. Addressing a press conference on Monday here, Ramesh said the TDP leader will bite the dust in the next state elections. He dubbed the opposition leader 'dirty Babu' and TDP's 2024 election manifesto as 'tissue manifesto'. He said Naidu made 650 electoral promises in his party's previous manifesto and failed to fulfill even 10 promises from the list.

The state minister further said Naidu was the longest-serving chief minister who held the office for over thirteen years in multiple tenure and yet failed to develop the state. He said the TDP leader is no match to the present chief



minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy who put the state on the development path within 4 years of coming to power. Jogi Ramesh fired a salvo of questions at the TDP leader and asked what he did for the farmers. He asked why Naidu did not accommodate a BC leader in the State cabinet? He rebuked the opposition leader for trying to obstruct the YS Jagan government from distributing the house site pattas for the economically weaker section (EWS) people. The minister for housing said after the election defeat the TDP will be a non-entity and Naidu will have no choice but to shift his base to Singapore.

Merugu calls Naidu a copycat

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister Merugu Nagarjuna criticised TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu for exhibiting his love towards the poor during the Mahanadu programme on Sunday. Everyone knows about Babu's cunning tricks and asked what he has done to the poor in his 40 years of political career and 14 years as Chief Minister. There is no record of him making any poor person a millionaire in this state, said the minister. The minister criticised the manifesto announced by Chandrababu as a copy of the manifesto announced by the Congress party in the state of Karnataka. Addressing media persons on Monday at the party office, Minister Nagarjuna pointed out that the 'Amma Vodi' scheme currently implemented by Jagan Mohan Reddy government was copied



under the name 'Ammaku Vandanam' by the TDP. He said that Chandrababu can't bear if one cent land is given to the poor, no one will believe that TDP will provide English medium education to the poor. The Minister recalled that Chandrababu is the one who moves the court to stop every welfare scheme implemented by the YSRCP government to benefit the poor. He questioned whether Chandrababu was aware of the 'Poor to Rich' programme at the age of 75 and in the twilight of his political career.

Nagarjuna criticized Chandrababu has no history of making the poor rich, but between TDP rule from 2014 and 2019 he made the poor still poorer by deceiving them with false promises to waive of loans. He criticized Chandrababu for failing to fulfill at least 10% of the 650 promises made in the TDP manifesto in the 2014 elections. Chandrababu put his party manifesto on the public domain for 10 minutes only and then deleted it, with a belief that people will forget anything from the past. The minister reminded that the YSRCP government has fulfilled 98.2 percent of the promises given in the manifesto. He said that they have been able to provide all the schemes without a single penny of corruption even though they have provided 2.82 lakh crore rupees to the people through DBT and non-DBT schemes.

TS varsities ink pact with Singapore's NTU

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana universities are exploring the possibility of academic partnerships with the Nanyang Technological University (NTU). In this regard Telangana Education Minister P Sabitha Indra Reddy on Monday met Prof BVR Chowdary, Senior Executive Director & President Emeritus, Materials Research Society of Singapore (MRS-S), India Connect, a special initiative of NTU, Singapore. Shedding light on academics in Telangana, Reddy said, "Telangana has already emerged as a hub for Life Sciences / IT / Bio-Technology / Pharma and other Hi-Tech areas and is poised to be the best destination for education, innovation/incubation and entrepreneurship."

4 dead, 2 hurt as bus collides with car

Continued from Page 1

It took over one hour for the police to extricate the bodies from the car. The bus was going to Hindupur from Vijayawada. Since the bus and the car were going at a high speed, the car became an iron mangle as a result of the collision. After post-mortem, the bodies were sent to Vijayawada. Tripurantakam SI Venkata Saidulu visited the scene of the mishap, registered a case and regulated the traffic on the road. Sources said that the RTC bus should have passed through Tripurantakam town, but it went through a bypass road at a high speed.

Naidu released a '420...

Continued from Page 1

Referring to the new manifesto released by the TDP on Sunday, Nani questioned Chandrababu Naidu about the number of manifestos announced by the party and how many of them have actually been implemented. He challenged Chandrababu to engage in a public debate on the various manifestos released by the TDP in 1999, 2004, and 2014, and to clarify how many of the promised initiatives were successfully implemented. Nani mentioned the manifesto announced by

Jagan Mohan Reddy in 2019, and highlighted the successful implementation of initiatives by Dr. YSR in 2004 and 2009, including the implementation of programs such as fee reimbursement, Arogyasree, 108 and 104 services, despite not being explicitly mentioned in the manifesto. Nani emphasised that Dr. YSR went above and beyond to fulfill promises. Nani pointed out the false promises made by the TDP before the 2014 elections, particularly regarding the support for farmers and Dwcra women and the waiving off of their debts. According to

Nani, the TDP failed to honor these commitments after coming to power, leaving the poor to their own devices. Describing the TDP manifesto as a mixture of schemes from various political parties promised to the people during the Karnataka elections, Nani accused Chandrababu of using BCs (Backward Classes) as a mere vote bank, whereas the ruling YSRCP considers the BCs as the backbone. Nani contrasted Chandrababu's reliance on individuals like Ramoji Rao, Radhakrishna, and BR Naidu, who are not BCs, as his support base.

4 officials in ACB net

Continued from Page 1

The bribe was sought for appointing one P Lavanya from Pedakallepalli village as an Anganwadi Ayah. Furthermore, the accused attempted to avoid any negative comments and ensure the proper execution of duties. ACB officials in Nellore

District nabbed Chilakapati Manoj Kumar, a Panchayat Raj Junior Accountant, red-handed while accepting a bribe of Rs 27,000. The bribe was solicited in exchange for sanctioning pending bills related to the construction of the Village Secretariat, RythuBharosa Kendra, and YSR Health Clinic in Gudluru Village. In yet another case of corruption, Re-Survey Deputy Tahsildar Nellipuri Anitha and Village Revenue Assistant A Shankar demanded a bribe of Rs 10,000 from T Praveen Kumar of Cuddalore village in Tada mandal of Tirupathi district. The bribe was sought to permit the cutting down of 20 trees for the construction of Kumar's house.

Electoral rolls...

Continued from Page 1

"Accordingly, to maximise the registration of all eligible citizens, who are attaining the age of 18 years on or before October 1, 2023 and with the purpose of improving the health of the electoral roll, the Commission has decided to carry out 2nd Special Summary Revision of Photo Electoral Rolls with reference to October 1, 2023 as the qualifying date in your state," the letter read.

Till recently, January 1 was the only qualifying date for those turning 18 to register as voters, but following changes in the election law, January 1, April 1, July 1 and October 1 are the four cut-off dates now.

Earlier, those turning 18 on or after January 2 year had to wait for the entire year to register as voters.

Police open fire on thieves, but draw a blank

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

It was like a scene straight out of a thriller film, the police at Indalwai in Nizamabad district opened two rounds of fire on a gang of thieves and chased the getaway car. But the miscreants were able to give the police the slip.

According to official sources, the police at Indalwai police station set up barricades on the road on receiving a tip-off that a gang of thieves were

passing through the area. The police personnel, led by a Circle Inspector of Police, opened fire on the speeding getaway car as it rammed the barricades and escaped. The police chased the car in which the thieves were escaping for a long distance, but drew a blank. The thieves, after some distance, abandoned the car and escaped. The police formed teams to launch a combing operation to nab the thieves.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION DEPARTMENT
e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
No. 12-137/2023-24 Date: 23-05-2023
Online tenders are being invited for execution of 126 works with an estimated cost of Rs. 1821.53 lakh. The tender documents can be accessed from 11.00 am on 12-06-2023 to 3.00 pm on 05-07-2023. For details, contact www.apereprocurement.gov.in. Phone: 9100120666.
Sd/- Executive Engineer, R.O No: 9627ICLADW/2023-22 Dt: 29.05.2023 RWS & S Divisional office, Srikakulam

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

Rally marks completion of 4 years in power by YSRCP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Planning Board Vice President and Vijayawada Central MLA Malladi Vishnu has said that CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is providing good governance in the State with boundless trust of the people. On the occasion of completion of four years of YSRCP assuming power with a historic victory, a huge bike rally was organized under the auspices of the party from Gayatri Convention Center on BRTS Road to Kandrika on Monday. The rally was carried out with slogans of Jai Jagan - Jai Jai Jagan.

Garlands were placed at the statue of late CM YS Rajasekhara Reddy in Kandrika. On the occasion, Vishnu said that the real welfare and development is to improve the living standards of the poor people and said that YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is the only Chief Minister who is taking steps in that direction. He said that the YSRCP government is moving forward by introducing new policies from time to time and working hard for the all-round development of all sectors.

He said that unlike the corrupt systems like Janmahaboomi Committees of the previous TDP government, transparent



The real welfare and development is to improve the living standards of the poor people and said that YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is the only Chief Minister who is taking steps in that direction.

governance is being provided to the people with a volunteer system by the ruling YSRCP. Vishnu said that 98 per cent of promises have been imple-

mented after coming to power till date by the YSRCP, many other promises not mentioned in the manifesto have been implemented.

He said that steps are being taken for the upliftment of all sections of the people such as farmers, workers, women and youth. Niti Aayog has also praised the initiatives taken by the state government to eradicate poverty. He said that the people of the state are happy to have a CM like YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. No matter how many tricks Chandrababu and Pawan Kalyan play, Vishnu expressed confidence that the YSR Congress party will win the 2024 general elections.

Eight interstate thieves arrested

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Andhra Pradesh police arrested a gang of eight interstate thieves and seized 16 red sanders logs weighing half a tonne, valued at Rs 30 lakh, on Monday in Chittoor district, including confiscating two vehicles.

On receiving a tipoff that red sanders logs are being illegally transported from Tirupati Seshachalam forest, Bangarupalya police kept vigil on Chittoor-Palmaner road at Mahasamudram toll gate.

As police were stopping vehicles for a search, they found two cars heading in the direction of Bengaluru suspicious, a press note shared by the police on Monday said. "On searching these cars, police recovered 16 red sanders logs."

Police identified Imran from Kattigenahalli in Karnataka as the main accused in the case. He is on the run but police managed to apprehend eight persons from Karnataka and Tamil Nadu: Abdul Rahiman (26) R Mahendran (35), K Kaliyappan (42), P Mahadevan (36), G Sivan (45), R Chinna Thambi (62), M Shiva Shankar (30) and K Ravi (36).

Besides Imran, five more accused persons from Tamil Nadu are on the run, namely Venkatesh, Sundaramurthy, Wasim, Vedi and Durai.

INS Delhi arrives at port Klang, Malaysia

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Indigenously designed & built Indian Naval Ship Delhi, arrived at Port Klang, Malaysia. The port call from May 29-31 is part of the Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet deployment to ASEAN countries. The visit will see personnel from both navies engaging in professional & social interactions consolidating the strong bonds of friendship between India and Malaysia.



Sports kits given away

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a generous gesture, U Srinivasa Rao, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of NTR District Sports Authority (DSA), along with Chief Coach SA Azeez, distributed sports equipment worth Rs. 2.75 lakh for summer coaching camps at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation (IGMC) Stadium in Vijayawada on Monday.

Supported by the Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP), approximately 50 summer coaching camps are currently underway in the district.

During the event, CEO Srinivasa Rao highlighted that these coaching camps encompass 24 sports and games dis-

ciplines. The NTR DSA, under the guidance of SAAP, has undertaken the task of distributing sports equipment to the responsible individuals overseeing the summer coaching camps.

Chief Coach SA Azeez expressed his appreciation for the initiative taken to organize the camps in Vijayawada and other parts of the district. These camps commenced on May 10 and are scheduled to conclude on June 9, he added.

The event was attended by Ceezar Reddy, NTR District Secretary of the School Games Federation of India, P Isaq, the NTR DSA Boxing Coach, MV Satya Prasad, Physical Education Teacher at SKPVV Hindu High School, and several others.

27,031 BENEFICIARIES IN NTR DIST TO GET PATTAS IN R-5 ZONE

Officials took beneficiaries to CRDA layouts to show their plots

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao has said that house site pattas were being distributed to the beneficiaries in Amaravati under the Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) R-5 Zone after showing them the plots.

The District Collector flagged off the beneficiaries' buses to the CRDA layouts, along with Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Mayor Rayana Bhagyalakshmi and Vijayawada Central MLA Malladi Vishnu at BRTS Road on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Dilli Rao said that the district administration was taking steps to distribute pattas to 27,031 beneficiaries. For that, 14 layouts were developed on 737 acres.

Of the beneficiaries, 2,924 are from Vijayawada Central constituency, he said. With



the support of several school and college managements, officials took the beneficiaries to the R-5 Zone to show their plots.

MLA Malladi Vishnu said that Chief Minister YS Jagan

Mohan Reddy took a bold decision to distribute house site pattas to the poor despite many difficulties. His government aims to fulfil the dreams of people to have their own houses, he said and thanked the

Chief Minister.

Deputy Mayor Avuthu Sri Sailaja, Joint Collector Dr P Sampath Kumar, Sub Collector Aditi Singh, Tahsildar Ch Durga Prasad and others were present.

BJP didn't lose its sheen in Karnataka: Bhagwant Khuba

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers Bhagwant Khuba has expressed his belief that the BJP's popularity in Karnataka has not waned, contrary to the recent Assembly election results, which saw the Congress Party emerge victorious. He claimed that the Congress Party achieved this by allegedly distributing money and splitting the votes of regional parties. However, he acknowledged that the BJP is steadily strengthening its presence in South India, particularly in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, thanks to the development and welfare schemes implemented by the Union government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



Bhagwant Khuba, Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers addressing a press conference about nine years of BJP Government in Vijayawada on Monday. Pic by Ch Vijaya Bhaskar

Addressing a press conference here on Monday, he said that the BJP is collaborating with Jana

Sena in Andhra Pradesh and highlighted the party's commitment to transparent and

clean governance, which it has demonstrated over the past nine years. He confidently stated that

the BJP would retain power in the 2024 elections, citing increased economic development across the country.

Khuba said that the BJP government is dedicated to implementing welfare schemes for farmers and increasing the support price for agricultural produce. Additionally, he stated that the BJP will continue to work with the Shiva Sena party in Maharashtra.

However, he criticized the chief ministers of West Bengal and Telangana, Mamata Banerjee and KCR respectively, accusing them of engaging in destructive politics.

Addressing the issue of Andhra Pradesh's debt burden, Khuba asserted that the BJP would support the capi-

tal city of Amaravati in accordance with the party's policy. He criticized the Andhra Pradesh government's handling of the Polavaram project and the non-payment of bills to contractors, suggesting that they seek guidance from the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) regarding the project.

Meanwhile, BJP state president Somu Veeraj announced that the party would hold press conferences in all districts on May 30 and 31. During these conferences, they intend to provide an overview of the nine years of BJP governance in the country and highlight the satisfaction of the people under the party's rule.

CPI for second flyover at Singh Nagar in city

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada city CPI leaders have asked the District Collector to take up the construction of the second flyover at Singh Nagar to avoid inconvenience to the public. CPI city secretary G Koteswara Rao and others met Collector S Dilli Rao at the Collectorate here on Monday.

Later, they interacted with the media and said that travelling on the Singh Nagar flyover which connects the main road to Nuzvid via Singh Nagar, Payakapuram, Prakashnagar and Nunna was extremely difficult. Pedestrians and motorists were facing severe problems due to heavy traffic on this fly-

over and frequent traffic jams, he said.

Employees, businessmen, students and other people were not able to reach their destination on time, he complained. Keeping in view the increased population, they requested the Collector, who responded positively, he added.

He said that the Collector and the municipal, R&B and Railway officials will conduct a joint inspection and take appropriate action in this regard.

CPI city assistant secretary Nakka Veerabhadra Rao, secretariat members KV Bhaskara Rao, Mooli Sambasiva Rao, working group members Thunam Veeraiiah and others met the Collector.

Collector urges people to give petitions at mandal-level Spandana

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna District Collector P Raja Babu has appealed to the public to attend the Spandana programmes which are conducted at the Mandal Offices instead of those held at the District Collectorate. "People should prefer the mandal-level Spandana for early settlement of their problems," he said.

The Collector conducted the Spandana meeting at the collectorate in Machilipatnam on Monday.

Speaking to the media later, he said that a majority of the petitioners were coming to the Collectorate. However, the dis-

trict officials are re-sending those petitions to the respective mandals. So, people are advised to give their petitions at the Mandal Offices, he added.

If the problems are not resolved at the mandal-level, then come to the Collectorate. Spandana programmes are conducted at mandal and division-levels also, he said.

Krishna Zilla Parishad Chief Executive Officer Jyothi Basu, DRDA PD PSR Prasad, DPO Nageswar Naik, Municipal Commissioner Chandraiah, DSO Parvati, DM & HO Dr Geethabai, MUDA VC Rajya Lakshmi and others were present.



Rs1 lakh cash donated for modernisation of school lab

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Nunna Primary Agricultural Cooperative Society former president Bhimavarapu Subba Reddy's son Bhimavarapu Gopi Krishna, who is working as a software engineer, has donated Rs.1 lakh in memory of Bhumula Venkata Reddy for the modernisation of the science lab at the ZPH School at Nunna.

He handed over the cheque to ZPH School Headmaster Vazrala Bhupal Reddy on Monday. ZPH School alumnus Marreddi Padmavathi, who has settled in Hyderabad, donated Rs.20,000. The Nunna ZPH School started the modernisation of the science laboratory with the support of old students.

Headmaster Bhupal Reddy praised the



donors for helping with the modernisation of the laboratory.

ZP High School First Assistant Surapaneni Ravi Prasad and Naredla Satyanarayana Reddy were present.

TWO BOYS DROWNED IN SARADA RIVER

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

Two teenage boys were drowned in the River Sarada at Tegada village in Kashimkota mandal near here on Monday. Police said that

the two deceased boys Pili Anil (14) and Yedida Prasad (17) entered the river for a bath and were drowned. Massive search operation has begun in the river to trace the drowned boys.



TTD team visits Ayurvedic research centre in Kerala

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A team of TTD officials visited the National fame Kottakkal ayurvedic research centre, hospital and pharmacy in Kerala.

The team comprising TTD JEO Sada Bhargavi, CAO Sessa Shailendra and SV Ayurvedic Hospital, Superintendent Dr Renu Dikshit were studying the ayurvedic practices, including Pancha karma treatment, online and offline services, free and paid services, free rooms and paid rooms etc.

At the Ayurveda research cen-



tre, they studied the formulations of Ayurvedic medicines and the medicines in demand and also, discussed over the Rs 500 crore annual turnover and marketing strategies of the Kottakkal unit. Thereafter the team called on Dr P M Warriar, managing

trustee on all aspects of manufacturing, medical services, research and marketing of products. They also requested Dr Warriar to send an experts team to TTD hospitals and advise on improvements and examine practices and innovations etc.

Kurnool woman cremates husband's body in house

PNS ■ KURNOOL

In a shocking incident, a woman cremated the body of her husband at her house in Pattikonda town on Sunday. CI Murali Mohan told the media that Potuganti Harchindra Prasad (60) died of cardiac arrest on the night of Sunday. His wife P Lalita cremated the body of her husband in the corridor of her house itself on Monday.

The neighbours noticed smoke and foul smell emanating from her house. When they went there they were shocked to see that she was performing



last rites to her husband in her house itself.

She placed the body on the corridor, dumped newspapers, books, cartons and other waste

material on the body and set it on fire. The body was burnt 90 percent. The neighbours informed the police about the bizarre incident. The police

shifted the skeleton to the GGH.

The woman Lalita is suspected to be mentally unsound, the CI said. The couple had two sons. One son is working in a private hospital here and another son is working in Canada. "Since nobody came to perform the last rites of my husband, I have cremated it in my house," Lalita told the police.

The incident is exposing the dwindling family relations. Though the son of the couple is working here he did not come, the neighbours lamented while talking to the media.

2,000 litres of jaggery wash destroyed

PNS ■ BAPATLA

The police conducted a cordon and search operation and destroyed 2000 litres of jaggery wash meant for brewing illicit liquor at Chinabetapudi village in Vedullapalli PS limits on Monday.

Police here on Monday said that 60 police personnel including SEB personnel led by DSP T Venkateswarulu conducted a cordon and search operation at Chinnabetapudi village in Vedullapalli police station limits.

The police team found 16 blue colour plastic drums containing 1600 litres of jaggery wash and another 400 jaggery wash at Pedagang area. The jaggery wash was stocked to distil country-made liquor. The police team destroyed the jaggery wash. SP Vakul Jindal warned of



stringent action against the illicit liquor brewers and sellers. He said that steps were taken to eradicate illicit liquor menace in the district. Cordon search operations are conducted often in the country-made

liquor influenced villages.

Cases under various sections are registered against the illicit liquor brewers, the SP said. He said that the PD Act would be invoked against those who resort to illicit liquor dis-

tiling and selling repeatedly, and if needed, they would be expelled from the district. The SP appealed to the people to inform them about the unlawful activities to 83338 13228, 100 or 112.



Tension as YSRC, JSP erect controversial flexi banners

PNS ■ ONGOLE

The erection of controversial flexi banners by the YSRC and the Jana Sena Party on the main thoroughfares led to tension and the banners were later removed by the municipal corporation staff in Ongole and Visakhapatnam.

The YSRCP activists erected flexi banners in Ongole, in which a giant image of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy was printed with the words 'Pedalaku Pettandaraku Yuddam'. In the banner, Chandrababu Naidu and Pawan Kalyan were carried in palanquin by the leaders. Chandrababu and Pawan Kalyan were humiliated in the flexi banners, the JSP activists alleged.

In reply to the YSRCP, the JSP activists erected flexi banners in a controversial manner depicting Jagan Mohan Reddy with 10 heads. The image of Jagan held an axe in his hand, his shirt had blood stains and the severed head of YS Vivekananda Reddy was print-

ed near his foot.

Pawan Kalyan was shown to be aiming at Jagan with a bow and an arrow. "Rakshasapalana Antam-Prajapalanaki Arambam" slogan was also printed on the flexi banner. The Jana Sena activists tore off the banners erected by the YSRCP at various places while the municipal staff removed the flexi banners erected by the Jana Sena.

The Jana Sena activists also staged a dharna in front of the Collector's office in Visakhapatnam demanding the removal of flexi banners erected against Pawan Kalyan, which led to a tense situation. In Visakhapatnam also, the activists of both the parties erected banners lampooning their leaders. Jana Sena activists staged a dharna demanding removal of the banners erected by the YSRCP humiliating Pawan Kalyan. The YSRCP activists also rushed there, which led to a tense situation. The JSP activists tore the flexi banners.

15 pilgrims injured in 2 accidents at Tirumala

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

As many as 15 pilgrims were injured in two road accidents which took place on the ghat road on Monday.

Police said that a tempo vehicle overturned at the six curve on the first ghat road in which 13 pilgrims were injured. The injured were admitted to the Ruia hospital. A group of pilgrims from Karnataka came to the hill shrine Tirumala on pilgrimage. When they were descending the hill in the vehicle, the driver lost control of it resulting in the vehicle dashed the protection wall and overturned.

The injured alleged that the officials took over two hours to shift them to the Ruia hospital

where the hospital staff insisted they bring the OP slip to provide treatment.

In another accident on the ghat road, two women, belonging to Telangana state were injured in an accident which took place on the 12 th curve of the ghat road. The car in which they were travelling rammed a road side arch in which two women suffered serious injuries and they were shifted to the SVIMS.

It may be mentioned here that six days ago, an electric bus plunged into a gorge from the ghat road at the 29 curve on the ghat road in which over 30 pilgrims were injured. The accident took place when the e-bus coming to Tirupati from Tirumala.



Officials directed to take steps to check diarrhoea in W Godavari

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

District Collector P Prashanthi has directed the officials to take steps to create awareness among people to check the outbreak of diarrhoea in the district.

The Collector held a meeting with the officials here on Monday and reviewed the precautionary measures being taken to contain the diarrhoea in the district and awareness among the people in secretariat level. The collector reviewed the 'diarrhoea control and preventive measures' with the officials. She said that a wide range of campaigns would be organised from June 5 to 17 under the medical department on diarrhoea.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that meetings should be held at the secretariat level and steps should be taken to spread the word about diarrhoea.

Collector Prashanthi said that Control measures such as



sanitation, street food and drinking water should be taken to ensure that they are not contaminated. Ice manufacturing factories, private water plants and cool drinks should be regularly checked and the relevant owners should be made aware.

In schools, students should be fully aware of hand hygiene. People should be made fully aware of how to control diarrhoea, if it outbreaks. If kids go

to the toilet more than three or four times, they should be taken to the doctor immediately.

When ORS should be given, which official should the child be taken to, where are the doctors? Such information should be provided to the people. Special attention should be paid to fishing villages, brick kilns, construction sites, areas where diarrhoea was prevalent in the past.

The population of the district is 19,16,738, out of which 128,419 children are under the age of 0-5. The education staff should visit every house where there are children and educate the mothers and give them ORS packets and inform them about the usage. The District Collector said that from June 5 to 17, the programs set up on diarrhoea control should be spread widely with full coordination by the concerned departments. DMHO Dr.D Maheswara Rao, In-charge DCHS Dr.K Pravin Kumar and other officials were present.

'Ponguleti, Jupally may not join BJP'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Rajender said that it will be difficult to make suspended BRS leaders Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and Jupally Krishna Rao join the BJP as the Congress is strong in Khammam district.

DFuring a chit-chat with journalists at the Daspalla Hotel during a press conference by BJP leaders about nine years of rule by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday, Eatala said that he had been speaking to Ponguleti and Jupally every day.

"They are counselling me. So far I have only been able to stop them from joining the Congress. They have physical difficulties in joining the BJP. Khammam is still a district with some Communist influence.

Buggana opens Kia Knowledge Excellence Centre

PNS ■ KURNOOL

Minister for Finance Buggana Rajendranath Reddy inaugurated the 'Kia Knowledge Excellence Centre' on the premises of ITI in Dhone on Monday.

The 'Kia Knowledge Excellence Centre' was established at a cost of Rs 2 crore with all modern technology and other facilities. The minister inaugurated the lab. The minister unveiled the pylon on the occasion. The minister formally launched the automobile, mechanical, welding, computer, electrical, civil, CNC, Daikin labs set up in the new building in the presence of the finance minister.

On this occasion, the government entered into agreement with Kia. APSSDC MD Vinod, Director of Employment Training Department Navya, Chief Administrative Officer of Kia Cub Dong Lee signed the agreement documents in the presence of the Minister of Finance and Skill Training.

In order to train hundreds of youths in 10 courses and 2 courses with one year duration of CVO and 8 courses with duration of two years

have been launched. So far 484 girls and boys and girls have been imparted technical training in the Kia Knowledge excellence, the minister stated.

Buggana said that internship courses would also be launched in the fields of Electrician, Wireman, Fitter, Turner, Machinist, Electronic Mechanic, DM Civil, Mechanical Motor Vehicle, Mechanic Diesel, and Welder. The minister said that a building would be constructed at a cost of Rs 5.5 crore for those who undergo training the knowledge centre.

State Meat Corporation Chairman Sriramulu, Done MPP Regati Rajasekhara Reddy, Done Municipal Chairman Rajesh, Nandyala District Collector Jilani Samoon, APSSDC MD Vinod Kumar, Employment and Training Director Navya, ITI College Principal Badrinath, MRO Vidyasagar Kia India Pvt Ltd Industry Managing Director Tae Jin Park, Chief Administrative Officer Cub Dong Lee, Head of Legal Corporate Affairs Yoongi Ma, Principal Advisor Somesekhar Reddy were present on the occasion.



Modi implementing Indira's 'Garibi Hatao': Bandi Sanjay

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Narendra Modi Government is implementing Indira Gandhi's 'Garibi Hatao', programme, BJP State President Bandi Sanjay said.

Addressing the media on Monday about nine years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, Sanjay said that programmes like the construction of toilets, houses and subsidised ration are being implemented by the Centre.

He said that Rajiv Gandhi himself admitted that there was corruption and that if a Rupee was sent the beneficiaries would get only 15 paise. That's why the Modi government is giving benefits direct to the beneficiary without any chance of corruption through DBT.

He said that during 'Maha Jan Sampark Abhiyan' they are going to the public to inform them about facts.

Modi made it clear that politics exists only till election and that after that it is development, Sanjay said. He said that the credit of implementing the good programmes of the previous regime belongs to Modi.

During Indira Gandhi's government, the slogan 'Garibi Hatao' could not be imple-



mented. Realising why the scheme could not be implemented, he said that many welfare schemes are now being implemented for the poor including construction of toilets and distribution of subsidised ration, Sanjay said.

Union Law Minister Arjunram Meghwal said that Indiramma houses were constructed during the Congress regime, but nobody knows whether they went to real beneficiaries or to bureaucrats and politicians.

He said that the Modi gov-

ernment has been handing over houses after doing geo tagging.

He said that Modi himself carried a broom during Swachh Bharat and have been modernising the Railways and Railway Stations.

Earlier, Union Minister Meghwal, Sanjay, Rajya Sabha Member Dr K. Laxman, MLA Eatala Rajender, former MLA Yendela Laxminarayana and BJP leaders NV Subhash and Pradeep Kumar released a book on development during Modi's rule.

Arrangements for CM's visit inspected

PNS ■ GUNTUR

District Collector M Venugopal Reddy here on Monday reviewed the arrangements being made for Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy's visit. The Chief Minister will participate in the distribution of agriculture equipment under the YSR Yantra Seva scheme on June 2 and the programme to be organised at Chuttugunta near here.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector directed the officials to work in a coordinated manner to organise the Chief Minister's programme. The Chief Minister is participating in the programme in which he would distribute tractors, and harvesters to the eligible farmers in the second phase Yantra Seva Pathakam.

Collector Venugopal Reddy said that 793 tractors and 38 harvesters would be distributed

to the beneficiaries of NTR, Guntur, Palnadu, Bapatla, West Godavari, Eluru, Krishna and Prakasam districts. Since the Chief Minister is participating and distributing the machinery to the farmers all arrangements should be made foolproof.

The Collector ordered the officials to make arrangements to provide drinking water, sanitation at the area and parking slots for vehicles at the venue. Joint Collector Rajakumari, Additional SP Supraja, DRO K Chandrasekhara Rao, DRDA PD Harihara Nath, District Agriculture Officer N Venkateswarlu, Marketing Department AD Raja Babu, Horticulture DD Sujatha, Social Welfare Department DD Madhu Sudhana Rao, Mirchi Yard Secretary Venkateswara Reddy and Guntur Municipal Corporation Additional Commissioner Peddi Roja were present.



KCR mulls twin towers for HoDs near Secretariat

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

One month after the new Secretariat started full-fledged operations, Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao discussed about locating the offices of all Heads of Departments (HODs) at one place.

The CM decided to house their offices near the Secretariat as HODs work closely with the Secretariat. The CM asked officials about the number of full-time staff working under the HODs and other aspects.

The CM asked officials to find a spacious government site near the Secretariat and that after finalising the location twin towers will be constructed so that all HODs can be housed at one spot.

During the review, the Chief Minister expressed happiness as the Secretariat has been built in such a way that employees can do their work without hindrance in a pleasant environment.

The CM asked CS Shantikumari and other senior officials about completion of the infrastructure at the Secretariat and the availability of facilities.

The Chief Minister visited the Martyrs' Memorial and

■ Inspects martyrs memorial



checked out the work there. The CM directed R&B officials to make arrangements for the decennial celebrations by commemorating the sacrifices of TS martyrs.

The officials said that all works have been completed and the final beautification is going on. It has been suggested that a statue of Telangana Tali should be installed in the wide space in front of the Martyrs Memorial.

The CM ordered R&B Engineer Sasidhar to beautify the statue with fountains on both sides. The CM suggested that arrangements should be made for the convenience of people who come to the memorial without disturbing traffic.

After that, the CM inspected the bridges built at BRKR Bhavan. The bridges were built to ensure that traffic is not dis-

rupted during the construction of the new secretariat.

The CM reiterated that his government is committed to supporting traditional caste professions. The CM said the government will financially support professional castes and nomads like Rajaka, Nai Brahmin, Pusala and Budagajangala who survive on the caste professions of BC and MBC castes.

Sub-Committee Chairman BC Welfare Minister Gangula Kamalakara told the CM that in the context of the government's announcement that financial assistance of Rs 1 lakh will be provided in phases, procedures will be finalised in the next two days.

The Chief Minister ordered the committee to finalise procedures as soon as possible and start the scheme on Welfare Day.

INDIA CORNER

Six labourers electrocuted to death in Jharkhand

Six labourers were electrocuted to death after an electric pole they were erecting fell on a high-tension overhead wire in Jharkhand's Dhanbad district on Monday, railway officials said. Baghmara deputy superintendent of police Nisha Murmu said that the incident took place near Nichtpur railway station, around 145 km from Ranchi. All of them were working under a small contractor, who reportedly fled the spot after the incident, an official said. Dhanbad divisional railway manager Kamal Kishore Sinha rushed to the spot after the incident. Confirming the death of six workers in the incident, he said, "A probe into the incident has been initiated". Eyewitnesses claimed that eight people were working at the site without safety gear or switching off the election connection. The two who survived ran away in panic. Five dead in the incident have been identified. Train services on the grand chord line stopped at Dhanbad and Gomoh junctions after the incident.



People crowd stations to see northeast's first Vande Bharat

People in large numbers gathered at railway stations and crossings to catch a glimpse of the Guwahati-New Jalpaiguri Vande Bharat Express as the semi-high speed train hurtled through the green fields of the northeast on its inaugural run. The region's first Vande Bharat Express aims to boost tourism, connectivity, trade and by cutting down the travel time between the two cities by more than an hour. College-goers in traditional dresses danced to Bihu tunes, schoolchildren waved the tricolour and people threw flowers to welcome the train at its five stoppages -- Kamakhya, New Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar, New Alipurduar and New Coochbehar -- between Guwahati in Assam and New Jalpaiguri in West Bengal. "This is a proud moment not only for Assam but the entire northeast. One of the most premium trains of the country is now operating in our region and it is a proud feeling," Majuni Begum, a college student, said at the Kokrajhar station.



Jambu Zoo thrown open to public; J-K on the cusp of development

Jammu and Kashmir is on the cusp of development, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said on Monday as he called upon the people to cooperate in the government's endeavours to develop tourism and infrastructure in the region. Speaking at the inauguration of the first-of-its-kind full-fledged Jambu Zoo in the Shivalik foothills here, Sinha said, "This much-awaited addition to the tourist destinations of Jammu and Kashmir was taken up under a languishing project and it shall attract both residents and tourists," Sinha said. The foundation stone of the zoo was laid at Nagrota on the outskirts of the city along Jammu-Srinagar national highway in September, 2016 to make it a major attraction for animal lovers and tourists. Of the total proposed area of 162 hectares for the zoo, over 70 hectares have been readied in the first phase, which will be accessible to the public.



'Modi govt bolstered India's image globally in 9 years'

PNS ■ SHIMLA

The Modi government not only focused on "seva (service), sushan (good governance) and garib kalyan (welfare of poor)" but also bolstered the image of India at the international level in the last nine years, Union minister Prahlad Singh Patel said here on Monday.

Patel made the remarks while presenting the nine-year "report card" of the BJP-led government at the Centre, highlighting its achievements.

Releasing the report card through power point presentation here, Patel said, "We are not addressing a press conference but presenting the report card of our performance before the people and are hopeful that they would like to see the Modi government again in 2024."

Lauding the initiatives of the Modi government, Patel said free foodgrains to 80 crore people, tap water connections to 11.88 crore households, 3.5 crore houses to the poor under

We are not addressing a press conference but presenting the report card of our performance before the people and are hopeful that they would like to see the Modi government again in 2024.



PM Awas Yojana, construction of 11.72 crore toilets under Swachh Bharat Mission, loans worth Rs 39.65 crore to small entrepreneurs, and Direct Bank Transfer through Mudra Yojana are unique welfare schemes.

He said Ayushman Bharat for free medical treatment to people up to Rs 5 lakh per annum, free Covid vaccination to all and export of vaccination to 50 other countries, 9.6 crore free LPG connections under Ujjawala Yojana, four-laning road projects and major strides in

startups were the other initiatives.

Over 50,000 km of national highways, 390 universities, 700 medical colleges, 15 AIIMS, and highest railway bridge in Jammu and Kashmir have been constructed in the past nine years, the minister of state for jal shakti and food processing said. Today, India is the second largest manufacturer of mobile phones and it ranks third in the automobile sector, he said, adding 40 per cent of the world's millet is produced in the country. Automobiles, telecommunica-

tions, ease of business, environment conservation and development with mix of "puratan and nutan" (old and new) and cultural heritage and development are roadmaps for future to be achieved during the next 25 years of 'Amritkaal', he added.

The BJP-led government at the Centre completed nine years in office on May 26. Speaking on the occasion, former Himachal Pradesh chief minister and leader of the opposition Jai Ram Thakur highlighted the unflinching support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the hill state and projects like AIIMS, Medical Device Park, Bulk Drug Park, Atal Rohtang Tunnel, and said that four lane projects worth Rs 41,000 crore are under construction or in the pipeline in the state.

State BJP president Rajiv Bindal said that India has got a new identity at the international level under the leadership of PM Modi and the Indian economy which was at tenth place in 2014 has jumped to fifth place.

'Tripura benefitted most in NE from Act East policy'

PNS ■ AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Monday asserted that his state has benefitted the most in the Northeast from the Centre's Act East policy.

He said the Maitri Setu, which connects Tripura with Chittagong Port and was inaugurated two years ago, will soon be fully operationalised, and the Agartala-Akhaura rail link will be opened by year-end. "Be it connectivity boom or infrastructure building or welfare activities, Tripura benefitted the most among the northeastern states since 2014," he said at a programme marking the nine years of BJP government at the Centre.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended broad gauge railway services to the frontier state, Today, 12 express trains and four local trains run from Agartala," he said.

Stating that the survey for constructing another railway line in Tripura is underway, he said that of the target of constructing 888 km of national highway, 374.04 km have already been built.

Wrestlers will soon contemplate next move

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Released late last night from police detention, the wrestlers are still contemplating their next move even as they continued to get support from sporting fraternity after police action against top grapplers was unequivocally condemned by political and sports personalities.

Vinesh Phogat, Bajrang Punia, Sangeeta Phogat, Sakshi Malik and several others were detained by Delhi police on Sunday when they attempted to move towards the new Parliament building for women's Mahapanchayat.

Disturbing videos of police action against elite wrestlers emerged from Jantar Mantar, which will now remain out of bound for them. The wrestlers are demanding arrest of WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

"We will let you know soon what our next move will be. We are still gathering ourselves. I was released at 11pm and Bajrang was released around mid-night. We are yet to meet at a common place. We will soon discuss it," said one of the protesting wrestlers.

The police, which has filed FIRs against the trio of Bajrang, Vinesh, Sakshi and several others for violation of law and order, has made it clear that they will not allow the wrestlers to return to Jantar Mantar.

Meanwhile, India's first individual Olympic gold medalist Abhinav Bindra denounced the police action against the top wrestlers, saying the treatment meted out to grapplers left him "sleepless" and was "haunted" by the



Visuals of action against wrestlers leave Bindra distraught

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's first individual Olympic gold medalist shooter Abhinav Bindra has denounced the police action against the country's top wrestlers at Jantar Mantar, saying the "horrifying images" had left him "sleepless" and "haunted".

Unprecedented scenes of police dragging Olympic and world championships medalists, including Sakshi Malik, Vinesh Phogat, Bajrang Punia and Sangeeta Phogat, were witnessed when the wrestlers and their supporters breached the security cordon during their march towards the new Parliament building for the planned women's Mahapanchayat. The wrestlers are demand-



ing the arrest of outgoing WFI president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh for allegedly sexually harassing several women wrestlers, including a minor.

They had called for a women's Mahapanchayat at the new Parliament building at a time when it was being inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

horrifying images.

Unprecedented scenes of police dragging Olympic and world championships medal-winning players, including Sakshi, Vinesh, Punia and

Sangeeta Phogat, were witnessed when the wrestlers and their supporters breached the security cordon ahead of their march towards the new Parliament building.

Manipur: Situation calm day after spurt in clashes

PNS ■ IMPHAL

An uneasy calm prevailed in Manipur, affected by ethnic conflict, a day after a sudden spurt in clashes and firing between militants and security forces, officials said on Monday.

The death toll from clashes a day before rose to five on Monday as three more people, who were undergoing treatment in hospitals, succumbed to their injuries, they said.

Army and paramilitary per-

sonnel continued combing operations in the Imphal valley and surrounding districts, an official said. The Army operation is aimed at confiscating illegal caches of arms, he said.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Army personnel apprehended three miscreants from Imphal East district on Sunday, and later handed over to the Manipur Police, a defence spokesperson said.

The army recovered arms and ammunition from them,



he said. "Responding to specific intelligence about armed miscreants venturing openly with the intention to carry out an attack on security forces in the area of City Convention Centre of Imphal East district."

Army rounds up 25 miscreants with arms

IMPHAL: At least 25 miscreants with arms, ammunition and grenades have been rounded up by Indian Army and para-military forces across ethnic-strife riven Manipur, officials said on Monday. A spokesperson for the defence forces said a number of people were detained with weapons after fresh incidents of firing and clashes broke out in and around Imphal valley. "During operations in Sansabi, Gwalabi, Shabunkhol, Khunao in Imphal East, Army apprehended 22 miscreants with weapons and other war like stores. Five 12 bore double barrel rifles, three single barrel rifles, one country made weapon with double bore and one muzzle loaded weapon were recovered," he said in a statement.

7 college students killed in Guwahati road accident

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

Seven students of Assam Engineering College were killed on Monday after their car hit a road divider and then collided with another vehicle in Guwahati, police said.

Six others were injured in the road accident, a senior officer said.

The accident occurred in the Jalukbari area of the city when the speeding car of the students hit a road divider and then collided with a pick-up van, he said.

Ten third-year students left the college premises in the car early this morning.

"Seven students died on the spot, while three others

were admitted to the Gauhati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) in critical condition," the officer said.

The deceased have been identified as Arindam Bhallal, Rajkiran Bhuyan, Niyar Deka, Kaushik Deka, Emon Gayan, Upangshu Sarma and Kaushik Mohan.

Three occupants of the pick-up van, including the driver, were also critically injured and admitted to the hospital, the officer said.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who represents the Jalukbari constituency in the state assembly, visited the accident site.

"Taking to Twitter, Sarma said, "Extremely anguished by the loss of young and pre-

'Cong to get 150 seats in MP'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday exuded confidence that the party will bag 150 seats in the upcoming assembly polls in Madhya Pradesh.

Speaking to the media after the party's poll preparedness meeting at the AICC headquarters here, he said the party would continue its winning streak in Madhya Pradesh after emerging victorious in Karnataka.

Gandhi along with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge held a meeting of top party leaders from Madhya Pradesh where all state leaders stressed on unity within the party.

Former chief minister and Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Kamal Nath and AICC



in-charge P Aggarwal was among those resent during the meeting.

"We had a lengthy discussion. It is our internal assessment that we got 136 in Karnataka. In Madhya Pradesh we are going to get 150 seats. What we did in Karnataka we are going to repeat that (in Madhya Pradesh)," Gandhi told reporters after the meeting.

The Madhya Pradesh Assembly has 230 seats.

Gandhi parried a query on Nath being the chief ministerial face of the party.

Aggarwal said all leaders gave their inputs for the upcoming assembly elections.

"Everyone felt that all leaders should contest the elections unitedly and help the party win in the state," Aggarwal said giving details of the meeting in which Gandhi, Kharge and K C Venugopal were present.

Nath said, "We all discussed the strategy and the issues on which the party should contest these polls. We are all of the opinion that we will enter the poll fray unitedly".

Noting that over four months are left for the polls, he said it was a very important meeting in which all senior leaders were present.

DU rejigs UG admission norms for ECA, sports supernumerary seats

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi University has rejigged the norms for undergraduate admission under the extracurricular activities (ECA) and sports quota as the two categories will be given 2.5 per cent supernumerary seats each, a varsity official said on Monday.

Supernumerary seats are those that are over and above the intake approved by an authority.

The number of seats under the two categories will now be calculated programme-wise, not college-wise as it was done earlier, the official said.

Nothing new that Hindi film industry is keeping mum on important issues



PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Hindi film industry has never the one to roll up its sleeves and tackle issues head on, says veteran actor Naseeruddin Shah, asking whether anyone will make a movie on the protesting wrestlers in the national capital.

The 72-year-old actor, a vocal critic of the BJP-led central government and someone who has in the past faced backlash for his comments, said there is nothing new about the Hindi film industry's stance on staying "mum on important issues".

Shah, considered one of the most respected performers in Indian cinema, is returning as emperor Akbar in ZEE5's period drama "Taj: Reign of Revenge".

"The atmosphere of hate makes it worse, makes it stronger, and that's why this is happening. So, everyone is scared. Not that the Hindi film industry was particularly politically or socially aware at any stage. You had filmmakers

like K A Abbas, V Shantaram, very progressive movies...

"But when has the Hindi film industry ever rolled up its sleeves and tackled a subject which is crying out to be tackled? Will anyone make a film on these girl wrestlers, who brought us medals...? Will anyone dare make a film? Because they are scared of the repercussions. It is nothing new that the Hindi film industry is keeping mum on important issues, they always have," the actor told PTI in an interview.

Shah was referring to the continuing protests by wrestlers who have accused Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief and BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh of sexual harassment.

Stating that films are the strongest medium as they get across to most people, Shah said, "Right now, it is Muslim hate, which is very, very popular."

Elaborating on his claims that the film industry stays "mum" on important issues, the actor said, "...I think they all are scared of the amount they have to lose and the personal harassment. I think the imprisonment of young Aryan Khan was a message that if we can do this (to) Shah Rukh (Khan) we can do it to anybody, so watch out. That was the message."

Shah was referring to Aryan Khan's arrest in the drugs on cruise case by the Narcotics Control Bureau in 2021.

Climate change, population growth threat to water security

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The combination of climate change and population growth poses a serious threat to India's water security, and without adequate measures to address these challenges, water scarcity will worsen with social, economic and environmental impacts, experts have warned.

According to the United Nations (UN), India might have already become the most populous country in the world with over 142 crore people. However, the government is yet to conduct a census to give an official figure.

Experts highlighted the urgent need for better water management, policy reforms, and protection of natural ecosystems to address the combined challenge

of climate change and population growth on water security.

Climate change further exacerbates the challenges, they said, with rising temperatures, altered precipitation patterns, and sea-level rise intensifying the water scarcity problem.

According to Aditi Mukherjee, an Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) author, poor water management due to distorted policies and incentives has long plagued India's water situation.

"Climate change aggravates these problems by increasing rainfall variability and extreme weather events," she told.

Mukherjee highlighted the historical impact of water-intensive crops introduced during the



green revolution and faulty urban design as contributing factors to India's water woes. Proper policies, institutions, incentives, and governance are necessary to

mitigate the water crisis.

The challenges faced by India are not limited to water scarcity.

Rising sea levels and storm

surges caused by intensifying tropical cyclones result in saline intrusion in coastal areas, further diminishing freshwater resources, she said.

Preserving mangrove forests and adopting appropriate land-use practices become critical to protect coastal regions as traditional hard infrastructure like sea walls offer only temporary solutions, Mukherjee said.

With 18 per cent of the world's population but only 4 per cent of its water resources, India is among the most water-stressed in the world.

The per capita availability of water will dip from 1,486 cubic metres to 1,367 cubic metres by 2031, according to the government data.

The situation of water scarci-

ty worsens during summer in the country.

Anjal Prakash, an expert and research director at Bharti Institute of Public Policy, Indian School of Business, also stressed that both climate change and population growth pose significant challenges to water resources in India.

"Rising temperatures accelerate evaporation rates, depleting surface water and groundwater reserves. Altered precipitation patterns lead to unpredictable monsoons, causing floods in some areas and droughts in others. These extreme events reduce water availability, adversely affecting agricultural productivity, water supply, and overall economic stability," he said.

www.dailypioneer.com
facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/
PAPER WITH PASSION

Inconsistent

Shielding WFI chief is inconsistent with claims about the new Parliament

It must have upset many Government and Bharatiya Janata Party supporters that the pomp and pageantry of the inauguration of the new Parliament building was accompanied with the news that the wrestlers at Jantar Mantar in Delhi were manhandled by Delhi Police. They have been protesting against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh who also happens to be a BJP leader and parliamentarian. The Delhi Police has justified their action. "The dharna and demonstration of the wrestling wrestlers were going on smoothly at the notified place of Jantar Mantar. Yesterday, the protesters flouted the law in a frenzy despite all requests and requests. Hence, the ongoing dharna has been called off," a Deputy Commissioner of Police tweeted in Hindi. That may be true, but the unsavory incident did take some of the shine off the grand event which was presided over by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. At the heart of the issue is the ruling dispensation's reluctance to act against Singh.



It is a well-known fact that he is a political force to reckon with in not only the constituency in Uttar Pradesh he presents in the Lok Sabha but also adjoining districts. So, there are political compulsions in keeping him in good humour. But should these compulsions override every other consideration? What about the aspirations of sportspersons, their expectation to have a dignified life without the rapacity of unscrupulous sports officials? Most officials honestly ensure that their youngsters under their charge perform well, but there should be prompt action against those who are accused of wrongdoing. That didn't happen. Wrestlers, including medal winners, had to protest in the heart of the national capital to get a police report filed against Singh.

Besides, as we mentioned earlier, Singh is not exactly the kind of leader Modi's New India would project as an ideal leader. His image is that of a bahubali; years ago, he was charged with the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act or TADA for allegedly sheltering Dawood Ibrahim's aide Subhash Thakur. He has faced several other cases too, though he has never been convicted even in one of them. That, however, is not surprising, because many bahubalis don't get convicted for long periods. The protection that Singh enjoys is inconsistent with UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's claim of being tough on crime. More importantly, it is also at odds with the inspiring words spoken by the Prime Minister at the inauguration of the new Parliament. He said, "Today, a New India is setting new goals and forging new paths. There is a new enthusiasm and a new zeal. There is a new journey and a new perspective. The direction is new and the vision is new. The resolve is new, the confidence is new." Where does Singh fit into the new scheme of things?



INS Delhi arrives at Port Klang as part of the Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet deployment to ASEAN countries, in Malaysia PTI

The unpredictable world of politics

Politics is a field paved with landmines and traps. It is a dangerous world and only the fittest will survive the arduous journey

Many times one is forced to believe that George Santayana's words "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" were made after studying the political species in India. Recent history in India is proof of how narrow-minded and reluctant our leaders were in learning from the mistakes and blunders committed by their predecessors and contemporaries.

The year 1980 marked the return of Indira Gandhi to power after she was demolished in the 1977 general election by the combined might of the Opposition parties. The slogan "Indira is India and India is Indira" was torn to pieces by the United Opposition. Nanaji Deshmukh, a political leader-turned-social activist remarked that Indira was not even Rae Bareilly after the then Prime Minister was trounced in the election by Raj Narayan. (It is a sad fact that how many among us remember this political comedian with the green scarf on his head!). With the Janata Party constituents fighting unitedly against each other and com-



ing crashing down within two years, the electorate was fed up and brought Indira Gandhi back to power. Sadly enough neither Indira Gandhi nor the Opposition had learnt anything from their failures. Indira's third tenure as Prime Minister began in style with her promise to the nation that hers would be a government that works and in the next five years she would provide drinking water and power to all villages in the country. The first scam of her third tenure broke out within weeks. The first budget presented by the then union finance minister saw some innocuous-looking alterations in the finance act, a surreptitious manner of helping persons who stood by her during the days when she was out of power. The amendments in the finance act helped Swraj Paul, the UK-based entrepreneur to make heavy investments in DCM and Escorts,

two blue-chip corporate entities in India. Paul was on the verge of taking over the two Desi companies but the intervention by Arun Bharat Ram and Rajan Nanda, scions of the groups who were the Doon schoolmates of Rajiv Gandhi saved the day for DCM and Escorts. The period 1980 saw the introduction of colour TV in the country, India hosting the Asian Games 1982, the Non-Aligned Movement summit, Commonwealth Heads of Government Meet etc and Indira Gandhi was projected as a global leader by the Congress. But her handling of the Khalistani extremism led to her downfall. The truth is that by the end of 1983, Indira Gandhi's image had taken a severe beating while the Opposition started lining up behind S Chandrasekhar, the then-president of the Janata Party. Had Indira been not assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards in the aftermath of Operation Bluestar (the Army action on Golden Temple) she would have bitten the dust in the 1985 general election. There were many scams also which

dampened the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

After seeing the TV images of President Joe Biden hugging Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Hiroshima, the doubt that comes to one's mind is what would be the US President's attitude when Modi pays a State visit to the USA. The US Government is waiting to take up with him the human rights violations in Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Manipur. What is of concern to the US is the burning down of churches and attacks on priests and evangelists across India. All we can do is wish the Prime Minister a Bon Voyage and a safe return.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

dampered the image of the Prime Minister as well as the Congress party. The sympathy factor and the communal polarization helped Rajiv Gandhi to pulverize the Opposition in the election held in 1985. Rajiv too failed to learn from the mistakes of his mother and goofed up in the Sri Lankan Tamil issue resulting in him paying with his own life.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

FIRST COLUMN

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY
IN EDUCATION SECTOR

Quality education can be imparted with digital ecosystem and better resource allocation



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

The role of digital technology in education is increasingly becoming crucial globally, as it provides new and innovative forms of support to students, teachers, parents, and the learning process more broadly. The Covid pandemic has made this process much faster, relevant and robust. By deploying remote learning technologies through a combination of TV, radio, online and mobile platforms, a large number of institutions were able to cater to the educational needs of their students. The G20 Education Working Group Meeting on 'The Role of Digital Technologies in Education' comes as a key development in this regard, highlighting a slew of present and prospective technological measures. Identification of core areas and themes to promote possible research and academic collaboration among educational institutions in G20 member countries, is a huge development, as the group comprises some of the most developed countries of the world, who use world-class research, innovation and cutting-edge technologies in this domain.

The selection of priority areas for deliberations such as 'Foundational Literacy and Numeracy', 'Tech-enabled learning', 'Future of work' and 'Research and innovation collaboration', - broad-based discussions with enriching inputs from sectoral experts. There is little doubt that during the past few years, G20 countries have made significant progress in expanding the use of digital technologies for improving access to quality education, however, the sharing of more tangible and effective educational practices and experiences did help recognize where participating countries are and what they need to improve upon. Here, we can



collaborate to leverage technology further to achieve some common educational goals, as we still confront a lot of challenges in the process, especially when it comes to ensuring quality learning opportunities for all along with improving learning outcomes.

What the world including some of the G20 countries, need is accessible, inclusive and equitable school education, higher education and skill development. It is digital technologies that can bring parity in the quality and accessibility of education at all levels. For example, India has around 1.48 million schools, 265 million school students and nearly 9.5 million teachers, with more than 20 regional languages as medium of instruction alongside 62 educational boards of instruction across the country. Moreover, lakhs of students received their higher education in different languages. In such a case, only digital technology can be expected to provide equitable and inclusive education, as a lot of content and expert teachers are still not available in regional languages.

Hence, the union budget 2023 emphasises much on digitisation of education. The Digital India programme has received Rs 4,795.24 crore, and to boost digital infrastructure, the government has proposed initiatives like Digital Libraries and Digital Universities. States have also been urged to set up physical libraries at panchayat levels to provide infrastructure for accessing the National Digital Library resources. Digital initiatives with a focus on artificial intelligence terming it a step towards the 'digital revolution', have been hailed by all. Three centres of excellence for AI and 100 laboratories in engineering institutions for developing applications using 5G services, will only add to this process of digital revolution. Digital Universities aim to reach out to the remotest regions of the country with quality, skill-based and job-oriented courses and training. With the focus of the budget being on expanding reach, improving quality education, building capacity and strengthening the digital education ecosystem, we can now expect to have a world-class school and higher education system, which would be accessible to all.

(The writer is a senior journalist)

Nine years of inclusive progress

Prime Minister Modi has laid the ground for the 'Amrit Kaal' and his era would be remembered for putting the country in the fast lane



SUMET BHASKIN



The ninth anniversary of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government is an occasion to celebrate the successes of statecraft passionately demonstrated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in action with visible and verifiable impacts on the ground. PM Modi has also shown that decisive mandates deliver decisive governments. Political pundits must examine the achievements of the Modi government by dropping their coloured lenses to codify the messages for all the political parties in the larger interests of the country.

Memory will certainly not fail to recall the days of 2012-14 when a maverick activist held a kangaroo court at Jantar Mantar to accuse and abuse each and everyone in politics. The Arvind Kejriwal tribe attacked the very institution of democracy by raising doubts in the minds of the people about the political class. He poured a truckload of muck on the participants of Indian democracy.

The first task of PM Modi was to restore the trust of the people in the Indian democracy. This was done in record time, as the Jantar Mantar tribe shut their shops and also joined politics. The record turnout of the voters in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections demonstrates that PM Modi has restored the trust of the people in the Indian democracy fully. Now, no one abuses Indian democracy. Taking inspiration from PM Modi, youngsters are quitting even high-paying jobs to join politics.

The greatest tribute to the nine years of PM Modi's achievements as head of the government will be on the count of financial inclusion of over 48 crore people in the banking system of the country. The over one-third population of the country was not seen as worthy to be part of the formal economy by the Congress-led UPA government.

These 48 crore people were pushed into the informal economy and also at the risk of losing their hard-earned money to chit funds and other financial fraudsters while also being vulnerable to the moneylenders. For the economists of the Congress pedi-



IF THE SOCIAL SECTOR GAINS FROM THE CARING TOUCH OF THE MODI MODEL OF GOVERNANCE, THE ECONOMY HAS TO LIE ON FIRM LEGS TO RUN THE GROUND FULL STEAM TO ATTAIN THE \$5 TRILLION TAG IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS AND ALSO CLAIM THE STATUS OF THE FOURTH LARGEST ECONOMY

(The author is a policy analyst)

gree, these 48 crore people were not deserving of being part of the economy.

When they joined the Indian financial system on the call of PM Modi for their inclusion, they brought a whopping Rs1.90 lakh crores in deposits to the banking system. The Modi model of the economy must be studied by all, as the gains of financial inclusions were not limited to the beneficiaries of the Jan Dhan Scheme but even the banks, which have been reporting record profits while also meeting all norms of healthy banking norms.

PM Modi brought empathy for the poor, women and the people at large in his caring statecraft. He brought the policy attention to areas that were never paid attention to. His first term addressed the dignity of women in the country, who had for ages been going in the darkness for toilet needs. According to the topmost priority to making India a defecation-free country, more than 11 crore toilets have been built in the country.

By sanctioning over four crores of houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, the Modi government has brought unprecedented changes for the better in the life of the people. Shelter and sanitation have been the hallmark of the Modi model of statecraft with empathy for the vulnerable sections of society. It should be examined why the Congress-led governments never thought of addressing the basic issues that concerned the well-being of the rural and the poor people.

BY ensuring sanitary napkins for Rs 1, the Modi statecraft showed that the well-being of the people is at the core of the governance. This was again seen when once in a century pandemic struck the country. PM Modi first ensured that none in

the country slept hungrily. His intervention to protect the people from hunger saw the launch of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojna for 80 crore people free of cost, and 1121 lakh metric tonnes of foodgrains were made available to the population so that they could meet the hardships caused by Covid-19 outbreak. Access to potable water is needed to safeguard the health of the people and save them from water-borne diseases. It will be a task for the economists to measure the savings for the people on their out-of-pocket expenses due to the expanding coverage of tap water in homes.

Har Ghar Jal (Jal Jeevan Mission) is another example of the Modi government thinking of the well-being of the people, as more than eight crore rural households with more than 40 crore people have benefitted under the programme.

Har Ghar Bijli (Saubhagya Yojana) also saw close to three crore households getting electrified under the scheme, covering over 99.9 per cent of the total households in the country. By March 2023, over nine crores of LPG connections were sanctioned under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, fulfilling the promise of a 'Har Ghar Gas Cylinder'. This again bears the Modi model of economy's concerns that the policies should think of the wellbeing of the people, as it served to protect the women from kitchen smoke. Once more the women in the country because of the policy intervention of the Modi government were protected from ailments due to exposure to kitchen smoke.

Under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), close to 41 crore loans have been sanctioned since the launch of the scheme. Also, there has been a growth of more than 200 per cent in digital payment

volume during the last four years since 2018-19. UPI transactions alone have grown eight times in the last three years, which is 50 times in the last four years.

With over 41 crore people in India exiting poverty between 2005-06 and 2019-20 due to the committed efforts of the Modi government, we are today on track to eliminate extreme poverty by 2024.

If the social sector gains from the caring touch of the Modi model of governance, the economy has to lie on firm legs to run the ground full steam to attain the \$5 trillion tag in the next few years and also claim the status of the fourth largest economy. The economy is making good use of the extraordinary expansion of infrastructure, spanning roads, ports, waterways and airports, which hastened the making of a well-knit Indian economy with faster movements of goods.

On the security front, the Modi government has an unparalleled track record of almost terrorism-free track record. Also, India has made its border infrastructure robust with accelerated developments in states with long border regions. North-eastern states are well-connected with all parts of India. Now, there is no reason in the country, which is without being connected with major cities in the country. This has been shown to the delegates who are taking part in several meetings of the G20 all across the country.

By committing Rs 2.50 lakh crore for the railway infrastructure, the Modi government has brought much-needed energy and capacity to the national transporter, which carries the size of the population of Australia daily. It must be underlined that the Modi Era has laid the grounds for the 'Amrit Kaal' for India.

NITI Aayog must be revived for better Centre-State relations

PM Modi is facing united opposition from the non-BJP-ruled states. They have been ganging up against him despite their political differences

One of the first things Prime Minister Narendra Modi did soon after assuming office nine years ago was dismantling the Planning Commission with a legacy of 65 years and setting up the Niti Aayog in January 2015. Even as the chief minister of Gujarat earlier, Modi had some ideas for a stronger Centre-State relationship and reforms. He hoped that Niti Aayog would strengthen this relationship.

However, Modi still faces Opposition from the non-BJP-ruled states. They have been ganging up against him due to their political differences. The new chief minister's club is growing by the day as they work in tandem.

Unsurprisingly, acting as a pressure group, some non-



KALYANI SHANKAR

(The writer is a senior journalist)

BJP chief ministers had boycotted Saturday's Niti Aayog meeting addressed by Modi. The conference's theme was "Viksit Bharat @2047: Role of Team India." These chief ministers could have participated and discussed 100 issues identified for the session. Instead, they stayed away.

Nineteen Opposition parties also boycotted the inauguration of the new Parliament building on May 28. They held that President Draupadi Murmu and not Modi should have that honour. Those who boycotted included Mamata Banerjee (West Bengal), Arvind Kejriwal (Delhi), Ashok Gehlot (Rajasthan), K. Chandrabab Naidu (Telangana), Bhagwant Mann (Punjab), Nitish Kumar (Bihar), M.K.

Stalin (Tamil Nadu), Pinaray Vijayan (Kerala), and Naveen Patnaik (Odisha).

The last name was a surprise addition as Patnaik had been keeping equidistance from both Congress and BJP. He is said to have been upset that President Draupadi Murmu, hailing from Odisha, had not been invited to the inauguration of the new Parliament. K.C. Rao skipped the Niti Aayog meeting even last year. Having a running battle with the Centre, he claimed, "Chief Ministers do not get enough time to speak, and after a few minutes, a bell rings saying you should stop now."

Mamata Banerjee wanted a revival of the Planning Commission instead of Niti Aayog, which she called a "paper tiger". Other chief ministers

gave some excuses for their absence, like prior engagements. It was clear that they worked in tandem.

It is not the first time such boycotts have taken place. Even during the Indira Gandhi era, late Andhra Pradesh chief minister N.T. Rama Rao walked out of the National Development Council protesting against the Centre. Doyens like the late Jyoti Basu, Ramakrishna Hegde and others, too, had walked out of the NDC meetings. As for Saturday's Aayog meeting, should the chief ministers have shown their anger by boycotting it, or should they have participated and explained their misgivings? They could have attended the meeting and presented their grievances or worn black flags.

After all, it was a forum for interaction with other chief ministers and the Centre.

The BJP sees the boycotts of the Aayog meeting and the inauguration of the new Parliament building as part of the Opposition's "Modi hatred".

There have been several questions about the relevance of the Niti Aayog and its predecessor Planning Commission. While the Commission was seen as a White elephant, the Niti Aayog is seen as a toothless institution. The Planning Commission had two primary duties-implementation of the five-year plan and providing Finances to the states. NITI Aayog has no constitutional or statutory sanction. Its stated aim is to construct a dynamic and robust nation. Unlike the Planning

Commission, it has no financial role. It is mainly the country's premier think tank. The Aayog has two hubs: "Team India Hub" and "Knowledge and Innovation Hub".

In addition to developing long-term, strategic plans for the Government of India, the Aayog supports a federal cooperative structure. Critics say that it should focus on the implementation rather than only concentrating on the recommendations of the policies.

India has emerged as a major global economy. The Aayog will be unable to transform an unequal society into a modern economy. It cannot influence public or private investment or policymaking. It needs to answer specific questions like why 90% of the workers are in the unorganized

sector. Aayog should evolve into a much stronger organization. It lacks the states' confidence, particularly from the non-BJP chief ministers. petition among the states worked well during the Covid period.

The Prime Minister held Zoom conferences and involved the chief ministers in pandemic relief. However, politics entered on Covid relief later with the non-BJP chief ministers complaining of step-motherly treatment from the Centre.

Overall, the NITI Aayog needs to evolve into a much stronger organization. If it wants to be more effective, it requires the trust of the non-BJP chief ministers and their active participation. Only then a strong centre and strong states will emerge.

MONEY MATTERS

Warburg acquires 90 pc stake in Vistara Finance for USD 250 mln

Private equity major Warburg Pincus on Monday announced that it has acquired a 90 per cent stake in non-bank lender Vistara Finance for USD 250 million. The stake in the 13-year-old company has been acquired through a combination of primary and secondary investments, the PE major said in an official statement. The acquisition has been done in partnership with banker Avijit Saha, who joins the company as the chief executive, it said. This is one of the biggest financial sector bets taken by Warburg in the country, adding that Vistara presently operates in 12 Indian states and has a customer base of 40,000 and over 2,500 employees. The stake has been acquired by Warburg from existing investors and the founders. The company had over Rs 3,150 crore of assets under management as of end-March, and its networth has increased to Rs 1,210 crore after the transactions with the overall capital buffers at 37 per cent, it said. Warburg Pincus' managing director Narendra Ostwal said Vistara has emerged as a leading lender to small businesses in semi-urban and rural pockets that are underserved by formal sources of credit.



HeidelbergCement India Q4 net profit falls 62.6 pc to Rs 35 cr

HeidelbergCement India Ltd on Monday reported a 62.64 per cent decline in its net profit to Rs 34.97 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2023, on account of an increase in input costs and lower sales volume. The company had reported a net profit of Rs 93.61 crore in the January-March quarter of the preceding, HeidelbergCement India, a subsidiary of Germany-based HeidelbergCement AG, said in a BSE filing. Its total revenue from operation slipped 2.9 per cent to Rs 602.04 crore during the quarter under review against Rs 620.03 crore in the corresponding quarter previous fiscal "Revenue decreased by 3 per cent Y-O-Y, driven by lower volume," the company said in its earning statement. Besides, total operating costs, including freight, increased by 11 per cent, mainly "due to higher input, transportation and other costs". HeidelbergCement India's total expenses increased 6.03 per cent to Rs 566.85 crore in FY23 against Rs 534.60 crore a year ago.



CAG Murmu reelected as external auditor of WHO

Comptroller and Auditor General of India Girish Chandra Murmu has been reelected as the external auditor of the World Health Organization (WHO) for a four-year term from 2024 to 2027. CAG is already holding this position in WHO for a four-year term from 2019 to 2023. "The present election was held on May 29, 2023 in the 76th World Health Assembly in Geneva, where the CAG of India was reelected with an overwhelming majority (114 out of 156 votes) in the first round of voting itself," the CAG said in a statement. CAG's appointment is a recognition of its standing among the international community as well as its professionalism, high standards, global audit experience and strong national credentials, it added. "This resounding victory was made possible by the sustained support and tireless efforts of the Permanent Representative of India to The United Nations at Geneva, his officers and a special team of handpicked officers from CAG," it said.



RBI found gaps in corporate governance at banks despite guidelines: Das

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank has found gaps in banks' corporate governance despite issuing guidelines on the matter, Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Monday. Addressing directors of bank boards, Das said such gaps, which have been mitigated, could have caused "some degree of volatility".

He also hit out strongly against "smart accounting" to conceal stress and bloat financial performance. "It is...a matter of concern that despite these guidelines on corporate governance, we have come across gaps in governance of certain banks, with the potential to cause some degree of volatility in the banking sector," Das said at the meeting specially con-



"It is...a matter of concern that despite these guidelines on corporate governance, we have come across gaps in governance of certain banks, with the potential to cause some degree of volatility in the banking sector"

vened by the Reserve Bank. Bank boards and management should not allow such gaps to creep in, he said,

adding that the RBI has taken up such matters with the banks at an individual level in the past. It is the joint respon-

Bank boards and management should not allow such gaps to creep in, he said, adding that the RBI has taken up such matters with the banks at an individual level in the past.

sibility of the chairman of the board and the directors, both whole-time and non-executive or part-time directors, to ensure robust governance in banks, the governor noted.

The RBI has also found banks adopting "smart accounting methods" to "artificially boost financial performance", Das said, revealing more about the modus operandi. Banks try to con-

ceal the real status of stressed loans by getting two lenders together to evergreen each other's loans by sale and buy-back of loans or debt instruments, persuading good borrowers to enter into structured deals with a stressed borrower to conceal the stress, adjust borrower's repayment obligations by using internal or office accounts, he said.

"We have also come across a few examples where one method of evergreening, after being pointed out by the regulator, was replaced by another method. Such practices beg the question as to whose interest such smart methods serve. I have mentioned these instances to sensitise all of you to keep a watch on such practices," he said.

CBI books Rolls Royce for alleged corruption in AJT deal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has filed a corruption case against British aerospace and defence company Rolls Royce PLC, top executives of its Indian unit and arms dealers for alleged "kickbacks" in the procurement of Hawk 115 Advanced Jet Trainer aircraft for the Indian Air Force and Navy, officials said.

The CBI has registered a case against Tim Jones, Director Rolls Royce India, alleged arms dealers Sudhir Choudhrie and his son Bhanu Choudhrie, Rolls Royce Plc and British Aerospace Systems under IPC section 120-B (criminal conspiracy), 420 (cheating) and provisions of Prevention of Corruption Act after completing a six-year-old preliminary enquiry registered



in December 2016. Email sent to Rolls Royce seeking comments remained unanswered.

A British court order in 2017 also mentioned the alleged involvement of intermediaries and payment of commission by the company for swinging the deal, they said.

It is alleged that during 2003-12, these accused entered into a conspiracy with uniden-

tified public servants who "abused their official positions" in lieu of "huge bribes, commissions and kickbacks" paid by Rolls Royce to approve the aircraft purchase.

The company paid intermediaries, even though the agreements, integrity pacts and associated documents of the deal "prohibited such payments", the CBI FIR has alleged.

FM slams Chidambaram's comments on note withdrawal

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday criticised Congress leader P Chidambaram over his comments on the withdrawal of Rs 2,000 currency note and said to cast aspersions on matters of this nature "does not augur well with the former finance minister". She was speaking to reporters here as a part of press conferences being held by Union ministers in different parts of the country on the completion of nine years of the Narendra Modi government.

Chidambaram on Monday said the introduction of Rs 2,000 note and its subsequent withdrawal have cast doubt on the integrity and stability of the Indian currency.

He also said the key economic indicators are pointing downward and there is low confidence that the economy will reach the high growth path. The Reserve Bank of India recently announced withdrawal of Rs 2000 notes from circulation and asked people to deposit it in banks or get it exchanged by

September 30. Asked about Chidambaram's comments, Sitharaman said, "To cast aspersions on the matters of this nature, currency, decision of the central bank does not augur well with the former finance minister who has been with the ministry."



"The (UPA) government lasted for 10 years, in which for a large part he was finance minister. There were several questions we had raised in Parliament and we never had a substantial answer for them," she said.

HC dismisses plea challenging note exchange

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday dismissed a petition challenging the notifications enabling the exchange of Rs 2,000 denomination currency notes without any requisition slip and ID proof, saying it has been done to avoid inconvenience to citizens, and the court cannot sit as an appellate authority on a policy decision.

The high court maintained it cannot be said that the government's decision is perverse or arbitrary or it encourages black money, money laundering, profiteering or

abets corruption.

A bench of Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Subramonium Prasad said this is purely a policy decision of the government and courts should not sit as an appellate authority over the decision taken by the government. The high court said the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) is devoid of merits and dismissed the petition filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay who challenged the notifications by the RBI and SBI enabling exchange of Rs 2,000 banknotes without requisition slip and identity proof.

Pradhan, Lawrence discuss deepening cooperation in skill development

PNS ■ SINGAPORE

Union Minister for Education and Skill Development Dharmendra Pradhan on Monday met Singapore Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong and held fruitful discussions on the existing cooperation between the two nations, including deepening engagements in the sectors of technical and vocational education, the Indian Embassy here said.

Pradhan, who is on a three-day



visit to Singapore, also deliberated on ways to strengthen bilateral engagements in the field of skill

development with Wong, who also holds the finance portfolio. "Fruitful discussions on strengthening the existing cooperation between India and Singapore and deepening engagements in skill development as well as technical and vocational education," said the High Commission of India in Singapore in a post on LinkedIn.

During the visit, Pradhan will be meeting various key ministers of the Singaporean government, including Senior Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam,

Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Trade and Industry Gan Kim Yong and Education Minister Chan Chun Sing.

Pradhan will also be visiting various educational institutions, including Singapore Spectra Secondary School, Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Institute of Technical Education and Educational Services (ITEES), and Singapore University of Technology & Design (SUTD).

ONGC to invest Rs 1 lakh cr in energy transition, targets net-zero

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's top oil and gas producer ONGC will invest Rs 1 lakh crore by 2030 on energy transition projects as it targets net zero carbon emissions by 2038, its chairman Arun Kumar Singh said on Monday.

The firm joins fellow state-owned oil and gas firms Indian Oil (IOC), Hindustan Petroleum (HPCL), GAIL and Bharat Petroleum (BPCL)

in preparing roadmaps for net zero emissions as part of the nation's commitment to deal with the climate challenge.

Net-zero for a company means achieving a balance between the quantum of greenhouse gases it places into atmosphere and the amount it takes out.

"We have done our internal workings and are now confident that we can achieve net-zero for Scope-1 and Scope-2 emissions by 2038," Singh

told reporters here.

The company is planning to scale up electricity generation from renewable sources from 189 MW to 1 GW by 2030. It already has 5 GW of project planned in Rajasthan and is scouting for a similar capacity, he said adding ONGC would also look at offshore wind farms.

It is also looking at setting up a 1 million tonne per annum green ammonia plant at Mangalore.

Solar capacity installations fall 48 pc to 1.9 GW

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The solar capacity addition in India fell by 48 per cent year-on-year to 1.9 GW in January-March period of 2023, according to Mercom India Research.

The country had added 3.6 gigawatt (GW) of solar capacity during the same period in 2022, the research firm said in its latest report.

"India added 1.9 GW of solar capacity in the first quarter of calendar year 2023, a 48 per cent decrease year-over-year (YoY) compared to the 3.6 GW added in Q1 2022," the report titled 'Q1 2023 India Solar Market Update' said. On a quarter-on-quarter (q-o-q) basis, the installations were 30 per cent lower compared to the 2.7 GW solar capacity installed in October-December period or fourth quarter in 2022.

Out of 1.9 GW, large-scale solar projects accounted for 74 per cent of installations, with rooftop solar making up an additional 26 per cent.

India's cumulative installed solar capacity currently stands at 64.5 GW. As of March 2023, the country's utility-scale project development pipeline stood at 58 GW, with an additional 58 GW of projects tendered awaiting auction. India's solar industry passed an important milestone in 2022, setting a new record with 13 GW of capacity added.

SBI raises USD 750 mn via bonds on India INX

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

SBI, the country's largest public sector lender, on Monday raised USD 750 million under its USD 10 billion Global Medium Note programme to fund its overseas business growth. The fund was raised at INX's Global Securities Market (GSM), GIFT International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) at Gandhinagar from global investors. The bonds were issued through SBI's London Branch to fund offshore business growth and were priced competitively. This demonstrates strong investor confidence in the country's largest bank and paves the way for a strong pipeline of foreign currency bond issuances this year, it said.

Air India growing substantially; hiring crew every month

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bullish on growth prospects with a "healthy start" to Air India's five-year transformation plan, its chief Campbell Wilson on Monday said the airline is hiring 550 cabin crew members and 50 pilots every month and also expects to have six wide-body A350 planes in its fleet by the end of this year.

After taking over the reins from the government in January last year, Tata Group has put in place various measures to turn around the fortunes of the loss-making carrier, including placing the largest order for 470 planes and expanding international operations. Talking about the airline's hiring plans, Wilson, who is the Managing Director and CEO, said there is no target per se, but about 550 cabin crew members and 50 pilots are

coming in and trained afresh every month.

"In the case of cabin crew members, it is about ten times and in the case of pilots, it is about five times on an annual rate of the pre-privatised airline," he told PTI in an interview in the national capital.

According to him, this pace of hiring will continue for most of this year, taper off by the end of this year and accelerate again towards the end of 2024. "It (hiring pace) will match the induction of aircraft". Against the backdrop of the process of merging Air India Express and AirAsia India (now known as AIX Connect), and Vistara with Air India, Wilson said they are also sensitive to the consolidation that is subject to regulatory approvals.

"There are people, and (they) can fill in the roles. We are cal-



ibrating on who we are bringing in from outside in accordance with who exists with the four airlines... we are consolidating the airlines and growing substantially," he said.

On what could be the staff strength putting all the four airlines together, Wilson said it would be around 20,000,

The first wide-body aircraft (A350) will come around October," Wilson said about the induction plans from the historic order placed for 470 planes earlier this year.

excluding those being hired as part of the growth strategy.

Earlier this month, Wilson told employees that Air India and Air India Express have hired more than 3,900 people, including over 500 pilots and 2,400 cabin crew members, since the start of this year.

"The first narrow-body air-

craft will come around July or August. The first wide-body aircraft (A350) will come around October," Wilson said about the induction plans from the historic order placed for 470 planes earlier this year.

Currently, Air India has 122 planes and is expanding its fleet. The airline expects to have six A350 and eight B777 aircraft by the end of this year. So far, the carrier has taken 9 B777 planes on lease.

In February, Air India announced that it would buy 250 aircraft, including 40 wide-body A350 planes, from European aviation major Airbus and 220 planes from US aircraft maker Boeing under separate deals.

The order comprises 40 Airbus A350s, 20 Boeing 787s and 10 Boeing 777-9s wide-body aircraft as well as 210 Airbus A320/321 Neos and

190 Boeing 737 MAX single-aisle aircraft.

According to the Air India chief, the true transformation will happen from next year onwards as it will get all the leased aircraft, start retrofitting old aircraft and deliveries from order for 470 planes.

On the challenges ahead, Wilson said it will be the sheer scale and pace of change as the airline was under-invested for quite some years.

"So, the transformation that the main airline needs is significant. It is also merging the airlines... building training capacity and supporting the unprecedented growth path from a standing start," he added.

About the domestic industry, he said, "We all want a healthy, growing and stable ecosystem that is good for the consumers, economy, travellers, airlines, staff..."

Film based on first professional Indian female WWE wrestler Kavita Devi announced

Kavita Devi is known to be the first professional Indian female wrestler who took part in WWE and made India proud and with her grit and determination proved that if given an opportunity, Indian women can achieve anything and everything with their fighting spirit.

Now an ambitious biopic on the very talented and awe-inspiring Kavita Devi has been announced. The rights to make a biopic on her life and times has been acquired by producer Pretty Aggarwal who plans to make the film on a very grand scale.

It is interesting to know that The Great Khali and Kavita Devi share a special bond. Kavita Devi was trained for WWE under Khali. Before joining WWE, Kavita previously wrestled on the independent circuit under the name of Kavita and Hard KD.

Kavita Devi belongs to a very humble family who was born in a small village of Haryana called Malvi in Jind district. To make this ambitious film now producer Pretty Aggarwal has decided to produce this film along with prolific producer Zeeshan Ahmad. Now both of them will together produce this biopic in a very authentic manner.

Talking about the decision to produce a film based on Kavita Devi, Pretty Aggarwal says, "Her whole life has been very inspiring. In every stage of her life she showed a lot of courage to fight all the odds and proved her ability to win. WWE has always been considered as a male bastion. Later many women from around the world started taking interest in it and professionally started participating in it. But still there was no female representation from India. But Kavita Devi proved her mettle and showed that Indian women are no less. She jumped into the WWE ring with all her might. Notably, after marriage she wanted to quit playing, but with her husband's support she continued playing post her marriage and brought many laurels for India."

The film will also showcase how Kavita Devi's big brother Sanjay Dalal has been pillar of support since her childhood and how he helped shape her career and made her into a tough woman who took the world with a storm.

Producer Zeeshan Ahmad is known for the recently released Irrfan Khan starrer *The Song Of The Scorpions* and is working on his next *Main Atal Hoon* which is based on the illustrious life of our former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Bajpayee. He is very excited to produce Kavita Devi's biopic and can't wait for the shooting to begin.

Zeeshan Ahmad informs that the writing of the film is in full swing and once the script of the film is complete, we will decide upon the beginning of the shoot and take a call on the cast and crew of the film.

When asked as an actor who would be suitable to play Kavita Devi and does he has anyone who could portray her role, he said, "For now, the film is in the writing stage and once we are done with the writing we will take a call on that. Any decision pertaining to this would be too early. But one thing is sure that we will choose a very talented actor for her role in the film."

Making a film on a women wrestler who inspired many, is a proud moment for Zeeshan Ahmad. He says that after watching the film, not only Indian women but women world over will get a new perspective about life. He says, "After achieving so much in life, it's a shame that not many Indians are aware of her achievements. The biopic on Kavita Devi will not only make people aware of her life and times, but it would be inspirational for everyone and that's the reason we are making this film."



Lana Del Rey stops show in Brazil to find her missing vape

Singer Lana Del Rey had an unlikely concern onstage as she made her first live performance in more than three years. Taking the stage at the MITA Festival 2023 in Rio De Janeiro on Saturday, May 27, the six-time Grammy nominee may have left her fans scratching their heads as she stopped the show because she lost her vape, reports aceshowbiz.com.

In a video of her viral interaction with the audience, the 37-year-old quickly paused her show to ask for her fans' help to find her missing vape.

"And also if you see my vape onstage... Can you find my vape onstage," she asked in between songs.

As fans rushed to point it out for her, Lana excitedly asked, "You did? Where, though?" Learning that it was impossible for her to reach for the vape from where she was standing, she decided to forgo it. "Oh, all the way in the pit? F**k it," she exclaimed, before continuing her performance.

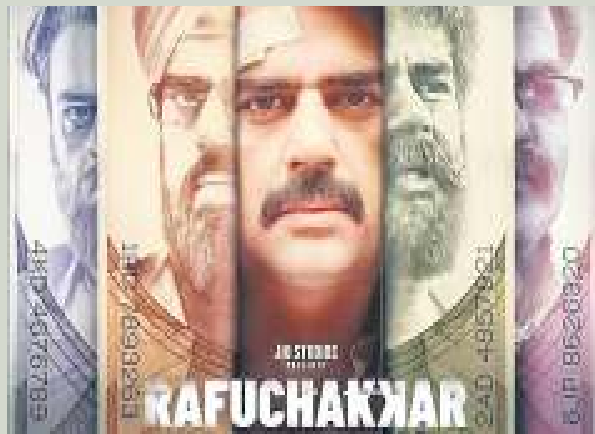
After the clip made its way out online, some people were baffled as to why Lana needed vape onstage. "THC or Nicotine?" one Twitter user wondered.

Another labeled the "Summertime Sadness" songstress a "nic addict."

A third person asked, "This not weird to y'all?" while a confused user chimed in, "TmA I supposed to laugh? Hahahaha? Cringed."



Maniesh Paul unfolds his five never-seen-before avatars in his digital debut in Rafuchakkar



Maniesh Paul hits it out of the park in his digital debut *Rafuchakkar* releasing on Jio Cinema, the teaser proves his worth as a versatile actor generating excitement amongst the audience.

After an impactful and impressive performance in *Jugjugg Jeeyo* last year which led to a streak of awards for the actor, Maniesh Paul has pushed his boundaries to unveil different facets of his versatility in his OTT debut - *Rafuchakkar*. Known for his innate wit and spontaneity, Maniesh Paul has earlier

impressed the audience with his comic timing on screen, however, *Rafuchakkar* delves deep into the acting prowess of the actor, exploring the intense and versatile performer within him. Donning five different looks, Maniesh plays a con artist in the show.

Talking about the show, Maniesh Paul shares says, "After *Jugjugg Jeeyo*, *Rafuchakkar* feels the right step as an actor. I love the challenge to push my boundaries and mould myself into different characters. And I have been fortunate enough to experiment with five characters in one for *Rafuchakkar* especially as it marks my digital debut as well. Special shout-out to Jio Studios for instilling their faith in me to play a role so drastically different from my personality. It has been a wonderful experience, from going through a series of combinations and experiments for every look to the interesting process of actually slipping into them, I felt like I lived ages and lives in just one show!"

From a distinctive moustache, sporting a turban, to a suave and sassy man with grey hair and beard, Maniesh Paul is seen slipping into different avatars for the character. The teaser for the Jio Studios' *Rafuchakkar* was recently unveiled offering a sneak peek into the world of deceit, presented by Maniesh, piquing the interest of the audience for the fun-filled and thrilling show.

Directed by Ritam Shrivastava, *Rafuchakkar* stars Maniesh Paul in the leading role alongwith Priya Bapat and others.

Tarantino 'splashed \$10,000 to lick stripper's feet until they wrinkled like prunes'



Director Quentin Tarantino is facing a claim from a strip club manager called NorCal Lowlife he once splashed out \$10,000 to lick.

Lowlife - also known as Page Rad - was apparently a senior worker at Hollywood hotspot Crazy Girls, and told the tale about the *Pulp Fiction* director, who is said to have a foot fetish as he often lingers on his leading ladies' toes in his flicks, on a podcast called *Get in the Car*, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

He said when Quentin apparently visited the club, without specifying when, the filmmaker requested a VIP room and the company of the dancer with the "biggest f***" and "biggest ass" there.

Lowlife said he went to a security room and watched the action on CCTV, adding: "He's sitting down, she's about to do her little... take her top off. And he gets up, throws her on the f***** seat, takes her boots off one by one, both shoes, just starts licking the bottoms of her feet, sucking toes."

Lowlife claims the licking lasted about half-an-hour, and added by the end of it the stripper's "feet looked likea you know when you take a bubble bath? Like prunes".




He added about the price Quentin, who has two children with wife Daniella Pick, 39, allegedly paid: "I think he gave her 10 G\$."

In 2010 Uma Thurman, 53, whose feet were lingered over by Quentin in his *Kill Bill* epic, toasted the director at a Friar's Club roast by serving him champagne in her black velvet Louboutins.





At the same event, Eli Roth, 51, who starred in Quentin's "Inglourious B*****" made the bad-taste Holocaust joke that the director had a "bigger shoe collection than Dachau."

FUN




ARCHIE






CALVIN AND HOBBS






GARFIELD




NANCY




GINGER MEGGS



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD

	1		2		3		4		5
6									
7									
8			9			10		11	
					12				
13									
14			15		16		17		18
19									

ACROSS

6 A warning tower for ships

8 Wide awake and watchful

10 Robbery

13 Your mother's mother

14 Stories

17 The number of legs on a tripod

19 A nice place to go out to for a meal

11 A house for a pet rabbit

12 A big Australian flightless bird

15 Opposite of first

16 An adult male deer

17 Grow weary

18 A place for ice skating

DOWN

1 Donate

2 Talk with in a friendly way

3 Injured by a bullet

4 Make well again

5 Periods of 100 years

7 Female children

9 Wash the soap out of

SOLUTION

Z	I	G	I	A	G	S	W	A	P	
E	A	I	N	S	A	I	L	O	R	
O	D	E	S	E	R	T				
S	R	T			O	R	E			
U	B	R	O	T	H	E				
M	E	I	S	C	B					
M	E	X	I	C	D	I	C	E		
E	I	H		P	G					
R	A	T	S		C	A	M	E	L	S

SUDOKU

		4				2	6		
6									5
	9			8	7				
		6		9	1	4			
7			8	7	2		1		8
				4	1			2	
7		1	2				6		4

Yesterday's solution

8	7	3	1	4	9	5	6	2	
4	1	2	5	7	6	9	8	3	
6	9	5	3	2	8	7	4	1	
3	4	6	9	8	7	2	1	5	
5	8	7	2	1	4	6	3	9	
1	2	9	6	5	3	8	7	4	
7	3	1	8	9	2	4	5	6	
2	5	4	7	6	1	3	9	8	
9	6	8	4	3	5	1	2	7	

Rules

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

‘I never want to be plush and sheltered in this industry’

Not busy trying to make a good impression on others or having any unusual tastes, the evolving actress of this industry, Radhika Madan, who had her humble beginnings on the small screen, is presently only looking for admiration from her fans and nothing else. After having a success on the same small screen with *Saas Bahu Aur Flamingo*, it turns out the madness that she took over in the series, which was so palpable to see in every frame of hers.

Besides this, her upcoming film *Sanaa* is making its own international rounds! Isn't this a sign that the actress's vision is finally coming to fruition? We would like to believe so.

When we received the opportunity to interview this Delhiite from the heart, the only thing that was going on in our minds was to know how Radhika Madan is getting on so well nowadays, especially with a hit remake in her hands. That's *Soorai Potru*!

Radhika, who is still not obsessed with her status symbol, sparks the conversation then and there: "It's been so long; I was waiting for my movies to receive that critical acclaim that I have been yearning for. It's under way! For me, exhibiting the shades that I have inside of me was way too important, and these days it's coming alive. My team and I were after his (producer of a big banner) life for an authentic audition! He agreed, and there I was, ousting the star kid in the movie and helming it on my own."

So by now you must have understood how the actress' tastes vary wildly in the kind of cinema she chooses. She further shares, "While we as artists are delineating any character, the line between the good and the bad blurs for us. I am not allowed to bring my personal ideologies into the frame. For example, when I was filming *Saas Bahu Aur*

Flamingo, shooting or stabbing felt like an everyday activity to me because my character was pretty used to it already. What I used to do was wake up, immediately leave for the director's office, and only return when the office shuts down because I was adamant about knowing every detail about who my character is. No matter how violent she may seem on-screen, I had no per-

Actress Radhika Madan, who had her humble beginnings on the small screen, has turned out to be an admiration for many of the audience. Well, that's what even she's looking for! In an exclusive chat with The Pioneer, the actress, who recently made a remarkable performance starring alongside veteran actress Dimple Kapadia in *Saas Bahu Aur Flamingo*, discusses her choice of films, solidifying every movie that's coming her way, and more.

sonal judgements."

Well, there was dejection too in her life, as she recalls the moment her previous film, *Mard Ko Dard Nahin Hota*, got shelved for a year and a half. She was doing nothing in between, and surprisingly, she left her television career at its peak! She describes it very clearly: she left the commercials and started chasing her dreams.

Meanwhile, what she was hearing around her was that she was never going to make it. Well, here is Radhika Madan solidifying every movie that's coming her way. We continued our run on with her: "I never want to be plush and sheltered in this industry — make me as uncomfortable as you can while lending me roles. Give me strange, foreign roles. This is going to be my daily reminder to not let myself feel comfy here."

She was told she's not pretty enough for a certain role; this was coming from a really gigantic production house in B-town, and what Radhika understood was, "The casting director told me she'll fix this issue. I was wondering — how on earth can you fix my appearance? She was immovable in

styling me for my looks wherever I was spotted! I am not from Bombay, and I recognised that she was trying to make me feel insecure so that she could keep me in control. I stepped up and told her a big no. I cannot go under the needle; I cannot step out of my house like a diva. I don't need paparazzi in my face. That's just not me."

We were glad to know that the actress has a few interaction moments with Dimple Kapadia to share with us, like, "She's a student of life; she never stops learning. She's up to the present moment nervous on sets! That was appalling for us as young actors before her; are we not prepped enough to continue to go through my mind? But at the same time, we were experiencing her power too. We bonded over breakfasts and dinners! I somehow seemed very pencil-thin to her (Radhika laughs); she sent smoothies for me. I was delighted! She was really the matriarch, even in real life."

She confirms she was the super confused girl who was being manoeuvred by others. She, in fact, didn't know what to do with her life, so she started to copy her brother. She didn't have a dream of her own; it was later on that she discovered dancing and acting. So after doing seven back-to-back films and making so much progress, she is now not dicey about whether the character is headstrong or confused.

She continued, "The diaspora has changed so much too. Earlier, when I used to have conversations with my friends, only 7 to 8 films were being made, and not everybody was employed. Today, when we speak, each and every friend of mine has a movie in their bag. Even the filmmakers have started to take chances! I don't think *Saas Bahu Aur Flamingo* would have been made for bigger screens if not for OTT. Nobody has an excuse for being unemployed in this industry now."

The hearsay in the industry is that Radhika Madan has given the movie *Sanaa* a global stage, and talking about the same, she clarified, "I was intimidated; I was horrified to take my film on an international stage at first. The selection came as a shock to me! I kept on wondering, 'How the hell on earth did they connect to it? I wouldn't lie; I was panicky-stricken on the red carpet. After all of this, I realised that our hearts translated to the international audiences because they couldn't understand the inside jokes. With every screening in a new international city, it was becoming so special for me because people aged 60 and older were also coming and holding my hand to support me. They don't know me, but they connected with me because of the art. "In spite of being a woman-centric film, even men could connect to it!"

Something about *Soorai Potru* "I came down to Hyderabad to shoot for the remake. The Hyderabad food was the highlight for me on the sets! I saw a female gaze in my character that made me say yes to this remake. The director's heroine was not meek; she was ready to take on the world, and that was appealing to me. My role is more powerful than the male character in the director's own way. She made me feel empowered! She was always in control; there were no hassles on the sets of *Soorai Potru*."

Beat the heat but don't miss prepping for its illness

Increasing global warming is resulting in extreme heat waves across India. According to research by the Lancet, India saw a 55% increase in deaths due to extreme heat between 2000-2004 and 2017-2021. The IMD report predicted a heat wave across most parts of India between April to June 2023.

Over the recent weeks, temperatures in most parts of Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana have breached 40° Celsius resulting in State Governments issuing advisories to manage the ongoing heatwave. Recently, the Telangana government issued an orange alert in 28 out of 33 districts.

A heat-related illness is a clinical spectrum of disorders that results from exposure to extreme environmental heat and the body's inability to efficiently regulate heat. It can develop very rapidly and is not always obvious before it becomes life-threatening.

Four main medical disorders resulting from excessive exposure to heat waves are as follows:

Heat Rash: Skin redness and pain with possible swelling, blisters

Heat Cramps: Painful spasms of leg and abdominal muscles associated with profuse sweating.

HEAT EXHAUSTION: Fatigue, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting, muscle cramps and sweating

Heat Stroke: profound weakness; disorientation, convulsion or altered mental status

General guidance for management of Heat related illnesses:

- Mild heat related illnesses like Heat rash, heat cramps can be managed with passive cooling and rehydration
- In case a person is suffering moderate heat related illnesses like heat exhaustion, the patient should be taken to cool place, loosen their clothes apply wet cloth and give sips of water
- For severe cases with a person witnessing a heat stroke, the patient should be immediately shifted to the nearest health center. Until then, shift the victim to a cool place, sprinkle cold water, fan the individual and cold water sponging⁴ should be done.
- Heat edema involves mild swelling of feet, ankle and hands while prickly heat is associated with pruritic, maculopapular, erythematous rash typically over covered areas of body

Key measures to minimise impact of heat wave and associated heat related illness: Some individual groups like senior citizens, children and pregnant women are more vulnerable to heat related illness and should be extra cautious during these months. It is important for susceptible individuals and their carers to have a basic knowledge of heat related illnesses and their prevention as well as first aid assistance may help mitigate the impending impact of heat waves.

The role of hydration is very important, and people should maintain adequate hydration. Only water is not sufficient, the body also needs electrolytes like Sodium, Potassium etc. Electrolytes are important for vital functions like maintaining water balance. They are also important for functioning of important organs like heart, brain, muscles, and nerves. Recovery from heat-related illness can be supported by



adequate fluids containing electrolytes. A drink with adequate fluid, electrolytes and energy replenishes the body with minerals that are commonly lost through sweat and help keep the body hydrated.

A recent Indian study reported that fluid, electrolytes and energy deficit can have high impact on recovery from heat related illnesses and majority of participating physicians across specialties agree that oral fluid, electrolytes and energy management with ready-to-drink formulations can improve recovery speed in acute non-diarrheal illnesses. It is recommended to replenish fluids/electrolytes for mild to moderate heat related illnesses. Formulations containing electrolytes like sodium help to maintain the right balance of fluids and absorb nutrients while potassium and calcium are associated with muscle functions and magnesium can be vital in heat acclimatization. However, if symptoms persist or condition worsens then it is advisable to consult a healthcare professional.

Other measures to prevent heat related illnesses:

- Avoid going and working out in the sun in the afternoon.
- Use a hat and damp cloth on your head, neck, face, limbs if you work in the peak hours.
- Use the night air to cool down your home. Open all windows and shutters during the night and the early morning when the outside temperature is lower. Close windows and shutters especially those facing the sun during the day
- Wear lightweight, light-coloured, loose and porous cotton clothes
- Use light bed linen and sheets to avoid heat accumulation
- Use protective goggles, umbrella/hat, shoes or chappals while going out in sun.
- Avoid alcohol, tea, coffee and carbonated soft drinks as they dehydrate the body
- Eat small meals frequently. Avoid high-protein and stale food.
- Use oral rehydration solutions which helps to re-hydrate the body
- Take bath with cold water frequently
- Seek medical help if you feel dizzy, weak, anxious or have intense thirst and headache.
- Move to a cool place as soon as possible

Maintaining a healthy digestive system for overall well-being

Have you ever noticed that sometimes you get facial acne and puffiness when you are constipated, or you feel irritated because you are bloated? Probably, yes, without knowing it's related to your digestive health! Face acne can lead to a lack of confidence, which may impact your presentation at work or even dim your mood before a party. It shows that bad digestive health affects daily life in more ways than once. Often overlooked, our digestive system plays a vital role in overall well-being.

Everyone knows the digestive system is responsible for breaking down food, extracting nutrients, and eliminating waste. When our digestive system functions optimally, our bodies receive the necessary energy and nutrients. However, if our digestive system is not in good shape, it may struggle to break down and absorb these nutrients effectively, leading to potential health problems.

According to a recent research, a staggering 69%+ Indians consume less fibre than their recommended daily allowance (as per RDA 2020 for men & women in the sedentary category of work). Dietary fibre is an essential component as it aids in maintenance of normal digestion, keeps you fuller for longer and facilitates regular bowel movements.

Maintaining a healthy gut contributes to a robust immune system. A significant portion of our immune cells reside in the stomach. A balanced and diverse gut microbiome — the collection of microorganisms in our digestive tract — helps support immune function and protect against harmful pathogens. Taking care of digestive health is crucial for bolstering the body's defence mechanisms.

Beyond physical health, the gut is often called the "second brain" due to the intricate connection

between our digestive system and mental well-being. Imbalances in the gut microbiota can impact mood, cognition, and even the risk of mental health disorders. By nurturing our digestive health, we can promote not only a happy gut but also a happy mind.

Fibre-rich foods such as wheat-based products, multigrains, cereals, fruits, leafy vegetables, etc. aid digestion, offering a wide range of nutrients, vitamins, and minerals contributing to the overall digestive well-being. Surprisingly, as per the responses to Digestive Quotient test, only 26% of individuals consume multigrain daily, while 19% do not consume it at all.

But how can one maintain a healthy digestive system? Dolly Kumar, Founder and Director of Gaia, Cosmic Nutracos shares several simple yet effective steps you can take for your digestive health:

The food we consume directly affects our digestive health. A balanced diet rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and lean proteins provides the fiber and essential nutrients necessary for a healthy digestive system. Fiber promotes regular bowel movements and helps prevent constipation. It also supports the growth of gut bacteria, which benefits the body.

Regular Exercise

Physical activity is not only beneficial for cardiovascular health and weight management but also plays a role in maintaining a healthy digestive system. Exercise helps to stimulate the muscles in the digestive tract, promoting efficient digestion and preventing issues such as constipation. You must get at least 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week.

Managing Stress

Stress has a significant impact on the digestive system. Chronic stress can disrupt the natural balance of the gut, leading to digestive issues such as indigestion, bloating, and even irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). Practicing stress management techniques, such as deep breathing and meditation, or engaging in hobbies can support a healthy digestive system.

Getting a Good Night's Sleep

Quality sleep is essential for overall health and maintaining a healthy digestive system. Lack of sleep can result in imbalances in gut bacteria and contribute to digestive problems. One needs at least 7-9 hours of restful sleep each night to support optimal digestive health.

Avoiding Smoking and Excessive Alcohol Consumption

Smoking and excessive alcohol consumption can harm your digestive system. Smoking increases the risk of acid reflux, stomach ulcers, and digestive cancers. Excessive alcohol consumption irritates the digestive tract and disrupts the balance of gut bacteria. It's best to quit smoking altogether and consume alcohol in moderation, if at all, to support a healthy digestive system.

Taking Probiotics

Probiotics, beneficial bacteria, support a healthy gut microbiome. They help maintain a balance of good bacteria in the digestive system, promote proper digestion, and support immune function. Consider incorporating probiotic-rich foods such as yogurt or a probiotic supplement to enhance your

digestive health.

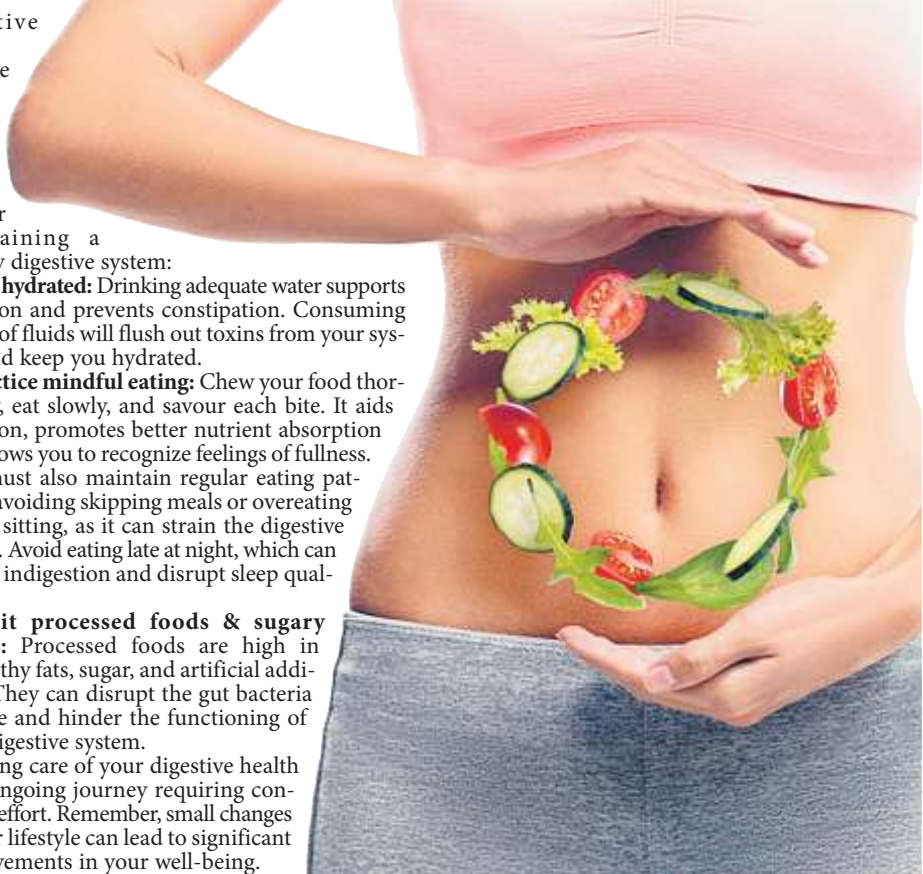
Here are some additional tips for maintaining a healthy digestive system:

Stay hydrated: Drinking adequate water supports digestion and prevents constipation. Consuming plenty of fluids will flush out toxins from your system and keep you hydrated.

Practice mindful eating: Chew your food thoroughly, eat slowly, and savour each bite. It aids digestion, promotes better nutrient absorption and allows you to recognize feelings of fullness. One must also maintain regular eating patterns, avoiding skipping meals or overeating in one sitting, as it can strain the digestive system. Avoid eating late at night, which can lead to indigestion and disrupt sleep quality.

Limit processed foods & sugary drinks: Processed foods are high in unhealthy fats, sugar, and artificial additives. They can disrupt the gut bacteria balance and hinder the functioning of your digestive system.

Taking care of your digestive health is an ongoing journey requiring consistent effort. Remember, small changes in your lifestyle can lead to significant improvements in your well-being.



PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

The two drops indeed proved costly as GT reached 62 for no loss after the powerplay.



GT skipper Hardik Pandya scored an unbeaten 12-ball 21.



PTI ■ ARUNDEL

"After consultation with the badminton community, BWF Council believed it best to forbid the 'spin serve' for another 15 months so as to not impact the Olympic and Paralympic qualifying periods and the Games themselves," the BWF said in a statement.



R.P. Patnaik's intent is to 'create timeless classics'

Ahead of the release of *Ahimsa*, which is nearing its release, Music Director R.P. Patnaik speaks to the Hyderabad media about working with director Teja, mastering the craft of music, and more.



AMARTYA SMARAN

Music Director R. P. Patnaik is all set to make a comeback with his melodic tunes and soulful background score with director Teja's *Ahimsa* starring debutants Abhiram Daggubati and Geethika. The duo-R. P. Patnaik, and Teja had earlier collaborated on films like *Chitram*, *Family Circus*, *Nuvvu Nenu*, *Jayam*, *Nijam*, and *Avunanna Kadanna*.

After nearly two decades, the duo joined hands together for *Ahimsa*. Speaking of which, the *Chitram* composer expressed his joy in a press meeting ahead of the film's release, June 2.

"Teja trusts me, and I respect him a lot," began R.P. Patnaik, and denied all instances of being approached by Teja for any of the films he helmed prior to *Ahimsa*. "We were not even in touch. Teja was busy with his work, and I was busy with mine. However, our rapport when it comes to work hasn't changed. It's a new story set in a forest backdrop. And I'm sure we'll manage to create our magic yet again."

When he first started his career, he wasn't someone who commanded mastery over the craft of music. He didn't assist any music director, nor did he play any instrument. A trait that's unusual for a music director to have. To date, he doesn't pretend like he understands the depth of the craft inside out. The composer believes that his ability to grasp the soul of a song gives him an added advantage over other composers.

"Personally, I feel I'm a very good composer," asserted R.P. Patnaik. "Composing is different from having knowledge. It's the soul that composes the tune. A big director once told me, 'You don't know music. Then, how can you understand which raga you're composing the song in?' To which I replied, 'People who have great knowledge about music will know around 100-150 ragas at the most. The permutations and combinations of 12 musical notes is around 44,000.' My point is, even the one who thinks he understands music doesn't actually have any idea of all the ragas in the ocean of music."

of music."

Speaking further, he jokingly said, "People who know music, compose based on 100-150 ragas. Whereas, I compose tunes based on 44,000 ragas."

The music composer himself is a director and an actor. Therefore, we asked him whether there were instances where he had given some acting tips to debutant Abhiram Daggubati.

"Teja himself is a Maverick director. He's a master in bringing out the best performances from newcomers. When someone like him is there on the sets, there's no need to give any advice to any actor. Besides, he introduced so many new faces to the industry. I think nobody else has introduced as many people as he did," commented the *Ahimsa* Composer.

For an artist, it's very important to have a judgement of his/ her work. There have been numerous cases where Maverick directors, music, composers, actors, and other technicians have lost track due to over indulgence. RGV is one classic example of an ace director losing himself in his own creation. And we hear stories of many artists falling in the trap of not being able to judge the quality of their work. No matter how hard they try, artists don't usually have the luxury to always be right with their judgement. S. S. Rajamouli is one of the few directors who's been able to comfortably look at his work from a third person's perspective. Perhaps, that's the reason why he hasn't delivered a single flop. Likewise, the Nijam composer has unequivocal faith in his judgment.

"My judgement is completely different from others. At least, that's what I'd like to believe. My only goal is to make timeless music. I don't like my songs to just come along with the film and be forgotten completely after its release. People still hum some of my compositions which I created 20 years ago. That's what I strive for. While composing, I always imagine whether an artist has the capability to keep the audience hooked to the screens while they are performing. If I feel they do not have the capacity to hold the attention of the audience, no matter how great my tune is, I simply put it aside. I think that's the power of my judgement and I always take refuge in that," wrapped R. P. Patnaik.

Ram Sita Ram will take you through the mesmerising world of love & devotion



Step into a world where love and devotion transcend time and space, *Adipurush*, the highly anticipated film, beckons us with its enchanting tale of Raghav and Janaki, portrayed by the mesmerizing duo Prabhas and Kriti Sanon. Amidst the anticipation surrounding this cinematic masterpiece, the team *Adipurush* has now released the full version of the captivating track *Ram Sita Ram*, a melodic journey that beautifully captures the essence of their profound love and yearning.

With the slow, melodious notes composed by Sachet Parampara and the heartfelt lyrics penned by Rama Jogaiah Sastry, *Ram Sita Ram* paints a vivid

picture of the deep connection shared between Prabhu Shri Ram and Sita Maa. As the song unfolds, it showcases the significance of their bond in each other's lives, reminding us of the enduring power of true love and the timeless depth of human emotions.

Beyond the enchanting music and soulful vocals, the melodious track invites us into its mesmerizing world of *Adipurush* depicting the qualities and virtues of Prabhu Shri Ram and Sita Maa, highlighting their righteousness, compassion, and divine grace.

Adipurush, directed by Om Raut, is produced by T-Series, Bhushan Kumar and Krishan Kumar, Om Raut, Prasad Sutar, and Rajesh Nair from Retrophiles and Vamsi Pramod of UV Creations will be released globally on June 16, 2023.

Neeta Lulla bags Best Costume Design for *Shaakuntalam* at Cannes Film Festival

Renowned award-winning costume designer Neeta Lulla, who had recently designed costumes for director Gunasekhar's mythological film *Shaakuntalam*, has added another feather to her cap by winning the 'Best Costume Design' for the Samantha-starrer *Shaakuntalam*.

She is famed for designing costumes in *Jagadeka Veerudu Athiloka Sundari*, *Khuda Gawah*, and *Devdas*. A notable creation from later in Neeta's career was a dress she designed for Aishwarya Rai's wedding to Abhishek Bachchan. She crafted Rai's pearl-encrusted lehenga for her mehendi ceremony and an additional dress for her South Indian wedding ceremony. The designer has claimed her favorite actress for whom she has created pieces was Divya Bharti. Neeta Lulla has designed for Shilpa Shetty, Aishwarya Rai, Sridevi, Sapna, Salma Azad, Isha Koppikar and Juhi Chawla. Courtesy of reality TV show *Tahul*, Lulla also designer for Dimpfy Ganguly, Rahul Mahajan's young bride.

Now, Neeta is currently working on designing the costumes for the Pawan Kalyan and Sai Dharam Tej starrer *Bro*.



Nandamuri Balakrishna launched the trailer of *IQ*

The upcoming film *IQ*, starring Sai Charan and Pallavi, is directed by GLB Srinivas, and produced by Kayagurala Lakshminipathy under the banner of KLP Movies.

On Monday, the Man of Masses Nandamuri Balakrishna unveiled the trailer of the film, and also poured in his best wishes to the team, for bringing up a good message through the film. Former Minister Pallo Raghunad

Reddy, Royal Murali Mohan, Writer Ghatikachalam, Dandu Srinivasulu, Sridhar Lakshmi Narasimha Venkatappa, Ambika Lakshminarayana Vadde Gokul Lokanath along with the film team graced the event.

The film is going to showcase what a student power is. More details about the film's release will be announced soon.



Pawan Kalyan-Sai Dharam bring in a 'fire combo' in new poster of *Bro*

People Media Factory, in collaboration with ZEE Studios, is coming with their next film starring Pawan Kalyan-Sai Dharam Tej's *Bro*, written and directed by Samuthirakani. Trivikram pens the screenplay, dialogues.

Every promotional material from *Bro*, including the title motion poster to the first look posters of Sai Dharam Tej and Pawan Kalyan were a hit with fans.

Much to the delight of fans, after the individual first looks, a combo poster featuring the both the stars of *Bro* was out today.

Sporting a grey tee and an off-white pant with black shades tied to them, Pawan Kalyan places his right leg on a bike as Sai Dharam Tej watches on, gracefully smiling and donning an off-white over-coat with a brick-red shirt. Both stars look dapper and stylish in their new avatars in *Bro*.

While Pawan Kalyan was introduced as the titular character (*Bro*), Sai Dharam is cast as Mark a.k.a Markandeyulu. S Thaman scores the music. The powerful Sanskrit hymn 'Kaala triguna samshlesham...' penned by lyricist Kalyan Chakravarthy was one of the major highlights in the recent promos that created new records.

"I thank the fans of Pawan Kalyan, Sai Dharam Tej for appreciating the promos immensely. I'm thrilled how audiences are making an effort to understand the deeper meaning of the sloka. The hymn, on the lines of the 'kalah pachati bhutani' from Mahabharatam, was customised as per the film. Time is the hero of the story and with Thaman's suggestion, I tried to blend the title in the lyrics. I am indebted to everyone in the team for the opportunity," lyricist



Kalyan Chakravarthy expressed his happiness.

Ketika Sharma, Priya Prakash Varrier, Samuthirakani, Rohini, Rajeswari Nair, Raja, Tanikella Bharani, Vennela Kishore, Subbaraju, Prudhvi Raj, Narra Srinu, Yuva Lakshmi, Devika, Ali Reza and Surya Srinivas play other important roles in *Bro*. Sujith Vasudev cranks

the camera for the film.

The film is a family drama with an element of fantasy, spirituality and the promos have set the bar high already. Currently in its last leg of shoot, the film's post-production formalities are being wrapped up simultaneously. The drama is set to release in theatres on July 28 this year.

Sonu Sood to setup Sonu Sood International School for underprivileged children in Bihar

The actor and philanthropist recently met Katihar engineer who quit his job and started school for orphaned children and named it after Sonu Sood. Sood will be providing a new building and higher education to underprivileged children.

In February this year, Sonu Sood was surprised to read about 27-year-old Bihar engineer Birendra Kumar Mahato quitting his full-time job to open a school

for orphaned children, and even named it after the actor. Moved by Mahato's endeavour to provide free education and food to 110 children, the actor met Mahato and the children at the school which also functions as a shelter home.

The actor spent time with Mahato to understand the needs of the school, from ration to quality education, building awareness to bridging the education gap

between rich and poor. By the end of the day, Sonu Sood has started work on new building for the school so that it can house more underprivileged children, and ensure there is food for every child in the school.

"Increasing access to education is one of the best ways to combat poverty. We aim to educate children from the marginalised sections of the society so that they have a better chance at job oppor-

tunities. Higher education is something we are working on. The other important aspect is nutrition and overall well-being as this school is also a night shelter," said the actor, who is going to give the students a scholarship under his mother Saroj Sood's name to help the kids for a better education.

Right now Sood has been providing education close to ten thousand students across the country.

