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Two-day opposition meet begins with the 'United We Stand' slogan



The second meeting of opposition parties in Bengaluru is likely to see progress on the agenda of unity for the 2024 battle with the possibility that a convenor may be appointed and groups formed to decide on various issues apart from deciding on a common minimum programme. Sources said Congress is keen that the chairperson should be from the party as it is the largest party in the grouping. However, the party may not be not adamant on the matter and would be willing to go by the combined decision of opposition parties, sources said.

They said no one has any objection to the name of former Congress chief Sonia Gandhi. She is also not a contender for the post of Prime Minister and is attending the two-day opposition meeting beginning

Monday. The sources said that opposition parties are keen not to make the 2024 Lok Sabha polls a battle between "a leader vs Modi" but to keep focus on issues and make it a "Modi vs people" battle.

They said that some parties had proposed making Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar the convenor of the grouping in the meeting of opposition parties held in Patna last month and if there is a unanimity on the matter, the Congress would go along. The sources said there is a proposal to make two-three sub-groups or a coordination committee.

There is a suggestion that a group should be formed to decide on issues to be raised collectively against the Narendra Modi government. Any such group may also be entrusted with deciding the issues on which to hold agitations against the government and to

stay away from issues that could help the BJP by causing "polarization". Sources said there is a proposal to form a group to decide on seat allocation in states.

They said that since leaders of 26 opposition parties cannot hold meetings in a short period, there is a proposal to form a group for coordination. "There is also a proposal to formulate a common minimum programme," a source said.

They said all issues will be discussed in the meeting and decision taken on those on which there is an agreement. The issues on which there is no agreement will be discussed further, they said.

Here is the draft agenda of the joint opposition agenda:

- The opposition parties are planning to set up a subcommittee for drafting the

common minimum programme and communications points for the alliance for the 2024 general elections for chalking out the joint programme of parties, which includes rallies, conventions and agitation.

- They have a plan to discuss the process for deciding seat sharing on a state-to-state basis and the name for the alliance is also on the table. - The opposition parties may also discuss the issue of EVM and suggest reforms to the Election Commission.
- The opposition leaders also set up a common secretariat for the proposed alliance. Meanwhile, at 7:30 pm dinner meeting to be hosted by Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and another formal meeting on Tuesday.

Why would Lord Shiva be incarnated as a quack in Modern times?

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

There are hundreds of so-called spiritual (gurus) marketers in India who have created illusions and pretended to be Gods; Lord Shiva is most common in this trend. Sadguru Jaggi Vasudev who is surrounded by various controversies is believed to be Aadi Yogi Shiva. Absconder Nithyananda believed to be the incarnation of Param Shiva. If you remember the statement given by Nityanada when he was caught in legal clutches, he said 'I'm Param Shiva, no stupid court can touch me'. Yes no court could touch him because he was untraceable and his disciples were a huge vote bank and no government wanted to risk it by arresting him. If he is really Shiva then why would he be accused of molestation? Why does he need to issue such statements?

Shiva never boasted himself being whatever he is.

This is more of physiological play, one as you think so you become. And second as you create an illusion someone has to trust you if not all. It is basically a mind game. Why does this person called Nithyananda dress himself like Lord Shiva and call him "Parama Shiva"? Because there are some blind followers who believe in what he is projecting. Some may even claim that they have seen miracles, which can be sheer coincidence or fluke. Then there are some marketing managers who bank on these incidents and use this word of mouth publicity. A person who is convicted for obscenity, kidnapping and molesting girls is worshipped.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 02

Editoritis

Why would Lord Shiva be incarnated as a quack in Modern times?

▶▶▶ PAGE 1

Avatars are born (poornam) complete, they exhibit divinity and divine powers. Their conduct, wants, wisdom and self-control on all sorts of cravings are unimaginable.

Look at the number of people who are addicted to "Harry Potter" or "Game of Thrones". These are similar. People just want to escape their boring daily lives and want to go into fantasy for at least some time.

Some people claim that Jaggi Vasudev is the incarnation of Shiva Aadi Yogi? Do you believe in such claims? He is absolutely WRONG about his self-made perceptions of Shiva which he preaches to others.

Some Sadhus or spiritual saffron entities think, talk and behave like Shiv; they attain the nature, power and wisdom of Dhakshina murthy. They finally merge in the Shiv tatva (element). It is an internal process of self-transformation into divinity. However, if one does it for worldly fame and gain, to cheat people, it won't last. Such an attitude will push them into the depths of hell sooner or later. Most of these so called sadhus, sorry Shiva are loomed in some or other controversies that too for the lust or attraction for various women.

Avatars are born (poornam) complete, they exhibit divinity and divine powers. Their conduct, wants, wisdom and self-control on all sorts of cravings are unimaginable. Yogic power attained by men creates ego and pride, if one is not careful, he is doomed. You will find hundreds of such so-called God's who make demands in the name of donations, spiritual events, building some temples or in the name of some or the other thing, at large they do no good to the nation or society. Their attempts are narrow and efforts are for personal goals. They see gain in whatever they do; why would Shiva really need to do this?

Each godman adopts a 'uniform' for identification by his devotees. Lekhraj Kripalani, a Sindhi jeweller who founded the Brahma Kumari movement claimed that he was Brahma of our divine trinity. In the pictures displayed in Brahma Kumari Ashrams he is depicted as Brahma seated in a lotus along with Vishnu and Shiva on their respective mounts. The Dera-Sacha -Sauda chief used to dress himself in the attire of Guru Gobind Singh complete with a head gear adorned with a peacock feather. He stopped dressing himself as the Sikh Guru after being given a warning. There was a Bala Saibaba (recently deceased) who not only sported the hair style of Puttaparthi Saibaba but also his loose upper robe and mannerisms. Osho Rajneesh used to wear a robe which was differently coloured on the outside and inside. Sometimes the use of similar uniforms by different god men may cause confusion. The only cases with no scope for confusion are with sages who wear no clothes at all! If humans are God, then what are Gods for'?

Human brain secretes "serotonin" when you hear exciting things like what Nityananda or any religious leader promises. Like "delaying sun from rising", "flying" and so on, getting Rainfall, making a dead alive and blah blah it produces "dopamine", which leads to addiction to such stuff. Look at the number of people who are addicted to "Harry Potter" or "Game of Thrones". These are similar. People just want to escape their boring daily lives and want to go into fantasy for at least some time. While "Harry Potter" and "Game of Thrones" tell upfront that they are "fake" and tell you those stories for entertainment purposes, these religious leaders and pseudoscience claimers use this to cheat and extract something or the other thing.

So, why does Nityananda or so-called incarnations of Gods do all

these? Because how much you educate people about these, they'll still go for it, because it's hardwired in the human brain. These quacks in the Gods world are unsinkable rubber ducks and gullible people will always keep these guys alive. Nithyananda is a controversial figure in India who has gained a following among some people who are interested in his teachings and spiritual practices. However, he has also been accused of various legal and ethical violations, including sexual assault, kidnapping, and fraud.

People with their boring and ordinary lives seek such pleasure and tend to follow 'gurus' who can show them that (illusionary) path. A couple of thousand dollars is nothing compared to the blessings of these fake gurus. Some people claim that Jaggi Vasudev is the incarnation of Shiva Aadi Yogi? Do you believe in such claims? He is absolutely WRONG about his self-made perceptions of Shiva which he preaches to others. I don't know what garbage lore he talks about, but in no authentic scriptures Shiva is said to be 16000 years old or nothing or that which is not. He is just a neo pseudo guru, who is a very good businessman. He is an influential and convincing talker who can sway gullible English knowing people who know nothing much about Shiva. Shiva does not mean falsifiable definitions one makes.

Remember God Shiva is inside everyone and everything as he is Parmatma, which resides in everyone. Essentially, everyone is Shivamay (element of Shiva) . 'Indians' have a very bad habit of treating and thinking of humans they ardently love or devoted to as 'Gods'. We are all born from the same source of creation. You may call it Shiva, Brahma, Vishnu or any other name. We all are in a way "incarnation" of those deities because; the qualities that we appreciate in each of these deities are already present in us. It may not be quite apparent at first, but everyone is capable of being a creator — nurturer — destroyer (Brahma — Vishnu — Mahesh) in their lives. If you learn to find your God within you, you will never fall for the religious scams across and promote their illusions as bhakti and that itself is service to spiritual awakening. Those who have these Godly elements will be around you, holding you, sitting with you, guiding you and expecting nothing from you because that divine element in them will not allow them to compromise you on any level. Such Godly humans are rare and if you find them you are blessed.



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Flat No. 2, J- Wing Ground floor, Sumer Nagar Building 3, S.V. Road,
Near Gandhi Motors, Borivali - West, Mumbai - 400 092.

Editor

Dr. Vaidehi

Vaidehi has received several Awards like Icongokarmavir chakra, Bedal Powell scout and guide awards 2021- best journalist, Newspaper Association of India award- best journalist. She received lot of awards for her contribution towards journalism.

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Email- afternoonvoicedesk@gmail.com • SMS -9820199881

For any queries regarding the editorial desk, contact - 7506760610

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Voices



Letters to the Editor

Admission in schools under the RTE Act

Cases of affluent parents submitting forged documents to secure admission for their kids in much sought-after schools under the RTE (Right to Education) Act is rampant all over the country. Schools should hire detectives to find out the actual annual income of both the parents and those parents submitting forged documents, including their salary certificate to get their kids admitted in the school should be dealt with severely. This will teach parents who want to seek admission for their kids in the school by submitting forged documents a lesson. The poor kids whose parents have less income or no income at all should not be denied admission due to limited seats available.

Jubel D'Cruz

Mistreatment with Dalit

A contractual employee of the electricity department has been arrested in this Uttar Pradesh district for allegedly beating up a Dalit man and forcing him to lick his slippers, police said on Sunday. Tejbali Singh Patel has been "terminated from the service. A devil is compelling a Dalit man to lick his slippers. In (BJP) rule, Dalits are not even considered human beings, how does it talk about uniform civil laws? The BJP-ruled UP has become an anarchic state and the only option here is the imposition of President's rule.

TKR Noori

Green Dream

As many as 230,000 green cards made available for family and employment have been taken over by the Biden government. The decision to distribute them to those who are waiting or who want to become American citizens, who have been dreaming of getting American citizenship for many years. Hopes of getting a green card have been boosted. 2.30 lakh green cards distributed for family and work between 1992 and 2022 are not in use. Biden's decision to revive them is on the way to fulfilling the dream of American citizenship for many American Indians. Currently, the waiting list is six years. Now that period is going to be reduced. However, there are currently 42 lakh people waiting in the race to get a green card. Although this decision will not fulfill everyone's dream immediately, it will certainly benefit the process of getting a green card and the non-resident Indians who have the "Green dream".

Dattaprasad Shirodkar

Public should be aware

At present there are a total of 4001 MLAs in our country, out of which 1,777 i.e. 44 percent of the leaders have been involved in crimes like murder, rape, kidnapping. Even in the present Lok Sabha, 43 percent of the MPs are involved in criminal cases. In 2004, this number was 22 percent, which has now doubled. Statistics show that despite lakhs of efforts to make politics crime-free, the number of MLAs and MPs against whom criminal cases are pending is increasing. If we look at criminal cases, 28 percent of the MLAs with criminal cases are such that if found guilty, they can be jailed for five years or more. Today, people need to be aware of the nefarious nexus between political parties and leaders who cry for democracy.

Jahangeer Shaikh

Searching for a Solution to Stress Management



Yoga is an ancient Indian practice and a way of life that includes regulated breathing, maintaining various postures and meditation. The focus is on the union of mind and body or the harmonic synchronization of body, breath, and mind. Health is the precocious treasure of an individual who is looking to lead a meaningful life. In the current scenario it is quite challenging to enjoy the best productivity for a person through good physical and mental health. The advancement in science and technology has increased the sedentary and semi sedentary lifestyle leading to lack of physical activity. In addition to this Stressful situations are also contributing a lot for the rise in psychosomatic diseases.

World health organizations and other policy makers on the health care system are thriving a lot to adapt holistic health care measures which can be effective in the prevention of lifestyle and psychosomatic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes mellitus and obesity etc. Yoga is an ancient Indian practice and a way of life that includes regulated breathing, maintaining various postures and meditation. Health is the precocious treasure of an individual who is looking to lead a meaningful life. In

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Yoga is an ancient solution to modern problems. It has gained a lot of popularity around the world during the last century. Yoga, as many people often subscribe to, is not merely a method to attain mental peace, but also a powerful method to get rid of ignorance which causes various kinds of suffering in human life. 'Education is the manifestation of the divinity already in man'. It emphasizes on life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. The very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collecting of facts. In ancient times, people

used to go to sages to learn wisdom and to get answers to the fundamental questions of life. This was seen in all ancient civilizations-Greece, India, and China, in particular. However, over the centuries education has retreated from that position.

We no longer claim to give wisdom, we give only information, our schools no longer give moral and spiritual values, only secular subjects are taught. The very need of the education system is that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet.' Yoga is not simply Asanas and Pranayamas. It also involves certain ethical practices. These ethical practices are known as Yamas and Niyamas. No educational system is effective unless it incorporates into itself these ethical practices. The search for stress management received a solvable solution.

- C. K. Subramaniam

Columnist

Readers are requested to mail Letters to the Editor only at

afternoonvoicedesk@gmail.com

No postal letters will be entertained
(The views expressed are authors' own.)

First day of Monsoon Session of Maharashtra Legislature adjourned; Opposition stages walkout removal of Neelam Gorhe as deputy speaker of Legislative Council



It will be the first session after former Leader of Opposition and NCP leader, Ajit Pawar, rebelled against his uncle, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar, and joined hands with the BJP-Shiv Sena government. Half an hour after the first day of the Monsoon Session of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly commenced today, the council was adjourned for the day even as the members of the Opposition parties including Shiv

Sena (UBT), Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and Congress walked out from the council demanding the removal of Neelam Gorhe from the post of Deputy Speaker. Meanwhile, only 24 MLAs of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) out of 53 attended the first day of the session. Out of the 24, nine were from the Sharad Pawar group who sat on the opposition benches. The rest, including nine Ministers, were seated on the ruling side.

Earlier, Shiv Sena (UBT) submitted a disqualification petition against Gorhe, MLC Manisha Kayande, and MLC Viplove Bajoria, who recently joined the Chief Minister Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena. "The Deputy Speaker has voluntarily quit membership of Shiv Sena. As per the 10th schedule, she is liable for disqualification. Hence we have moved the disqualification notice against her. Apart from disqualification we have also moved removal notice (from the post of deputy speaker). Till the time there is a decision on the disqualification notice, she should not be on the post of deputy speaker," Sena (UBT) leader Anil Parab said.

The three-week session, which commenced today and will end on August 4, is being held at the Vidhan Bhavan Complex in Nariman Point. It is the first ses-

Heavy rains lash parts of Mumbai

- Heavy rains lashed parts of Mumbai on Monday morning, but the public transport services were not affected in the metropolis, authorities said.
- The India Meteorological Department's (IMD) Mumbai centre in its 'district forecast and warnings' on Sunday afternoon issued a 'yellow' alert for the city on Monday, predicting heavy rainfall at isolated places, a civic official said.
- Heavy showers lashed Mahalakshmi, Byculla, Malabar Hill, Matunga, Sion, Bandra, Santacruz, Andheri and some other areas early in the morning, but the rain intensity reduced after 8 am.
- No major waterlogging was reported anywhere in the city, civic officials said.
- Local trains were running normally on the Central Railway and Western Railway routes, as per the authorities.
- There was no route diversion of bus services of the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) undertaking due to the rain, a civic official said.
- In its weather forecast for the day at 8 am on Monday, the IMD Mumbai predicted moderate rain with occasional intense spells in the city and suburbs. (PTI)

sion after former Leader of Opposition and NCP leader, Ajit Pawar, rebelled against his uncle, NCP chief Sharad Pawar, and joined

hands with the BJP-Shiv Sena government along with some NCP MLAs. There are a total of 24 proposed bills in the session.

117-year-old first double-decker Flying Rane Express becomes history



The country's first double-decker train named Flying Rane Express running between Mumbai Central and Surat has become history.

The 117-year-old train, which was converted into a double-decker with extra coaches 44 years ago in 1979, has now been converted into the new Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) rake by the Western Railway.

This means that the new rake will no longer run as a double-decker. It will be the same as other Express trains that are running including Rajdhani, Tejas etc.

On Sunday, Union Minister of State for Railways & Textile Darshana Jardosh along with MP from Kandivali Gopal Shetty flagged off the newly converted train from Mumbai Central station.

List of waterlogging-prone areas distributed among traffic divisions: Mumbai traffic police chief

First few spells of heavy rain this monsoon caused waterlogging at many places in the city leading to traffic jams, especially during the peak hours. Potholes on the roads add to the woes of the motorists.

Pravin Padwal, Joint Commissioner of Police, Traffic, speaks to Vijay Kumar Yadav on various factors behind the city's traffic related issues, their solutions, and challenges before the city's traffic police department.

Mumbai-Pune expressway's 'missing link' to bridge the two cities closer

Even as the monsoon is playing hindrance, engineers at Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) are hopeful of completing the challenging 'missing link' project on the Mumbai-Pune expressway by December 2023 or early 2024.

Having completed 34 per cent work on the 640-metre-long cable-stayed bridge — the most challenging part of the project — the engineers, working at a height of 100 metres above the Tiger Valley in Lonavala-Khandala region, say the 13-km-long



project is set to achieve a major milestone this month when another key part — the viaduct — will undergo its first load testing on the Pune-bound corridor.

The monsoon has posed the biggest challenge to engineers

working on the cable-stayed bridge with heavy rain, which occurs almost daily, hampering work. This portion falls in the ghat section, which sees 50- to 65-mm rain daily, even more, during the monsoon.

Maharashtra progressing on various indices of education: Fadnavis

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has said the state is progressing on various indices of education, even as NCP president Sharad Pawar has expressed concern over the state's performance as per a central grading index.

Congress MLAs raise slogans against Maharashtra govt ahead of monsoon session

Ahead of the monsoon session of the Maharashtra Legislature, legislators of the Opposition Congress on Monday shouted slogans against the state government, accusing it of indulging in corruption. The legislators, led by former minister Yashomati Thakur and Mumbai Congress chief Varsha Gaikwad, as-

sembled on the steps of the Vidhan Bhavan and raised slogans against the government.

From the Shiv Sena (UBT), only Ambadas Danve, who is the leader of opposition in the state Legislative Council, was present during the protest. No legislator from the Sharad Pawar-led NCP camp was present during the protest. (PTI)

Nation

Selected candidates in MP Patwari exam stage protest against ban on appointment in Bhopal



A huge crowd of candidates selected in Madhya Pradesh patwari recruitment exams on Monday staged a protest against the ban on appointment at a park in the state capital Bhopal. The selected candidates across the state gathered here to mark their protest. They were demanding their appointment and staging demonstrations with placards which read "What is our fault? Give appointment till August 15. Give freedom from mental pain...give appointment."

One of the selected candidates in MP Patwari, Anjali Thakur told ANI, "I am from Indore and I got number 1 in Dhar Merit list in Madhya Pradesh Patwari recruitment exam. I have received this selection after a lot of hard work from July 2018 to July 2023. I have worked quite hard for five years and during this I have faced many hurdles." After the hard work of five years, she has reached here and got final selection. But after a tweet from Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on July 13 night, our

happiness suddenly turned into sorrow. Those who were happy for us, were bringing packets of sweets for us, they immediately turned against us, no one was left with us, our happiness turned into sorrow, Thakur said.

She also said, "We are not begging from anyone, we are asking for our justice. We want our appointment because we got it after the struggle of five years. We are not elected, we are selected and we have reached here with our hard work." "We are upset because some anti-social elements are demanding cancellation of the exam. There was no recruitment in the state for the last five years. Today when the recruitment was being done, we got selected in it, so now why demand to cancel it? We do not know what is happening, we just know that we have struggled for years and locked ourselves in one place for study. So we only want our appointment, and we want our rights," Thakur added. ANI

Smriti Irani hit out at Rahul Gandhi, calling him a frustrated dynast



Rahul Gandhi's tweet on the European Parliament discussing the ethnic violence in Manipur has triggered a political slugfest between the BJP and the Congress, with the saffron party calling him a "frustrated dynast".

Rahul took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleging that the Rafale deal got him a "ticket to the Bastille Day Parade" while he kept mum on the violence in Manipur despite the EU Parliament taking up discussions on it. "Manipur burns. The EU Parliament discusses India's internal matter. PM hasn't said a word on either! Meanwhile, Rafale gets him a ticket to the Bastille Day Parade," Rahul tweeted.

This came after the European Parliament on Wednesday adopted a motion on the Manipur violence and said that it "denounces in the strongest terms nationalistic rhetoric deployed by leading members of the BJP party", to which the Indian government responded that the issue is entirely an internal matter.

The BJP was quick to hit back with Union Minister Smriti Irani saying: "A man who seeks international intervention in India's internal matters, a frustrated dynast who sullies the 'Make in India' ambition mocks India when our PM receives a National honour. Rejected by people, he seethes as defence contracts no longer land at the doorstep of the dynasty."

Flood-like situation continues to be grim in Assam's Biswanth



The flood-like situation in Assam's Biswanth Sub-Division continued to be grim as over 8,000 more people have been affected due to the flooded water of the Brahmaputra River. Some more areas have been inundated and the number of flood-affected people has crossed more than 40,000 in the Biswanth Sub-Division. As per the information by ASDMA, 22,417 people have been affected in the Gohpur revenue circle areas and nearly 10,000 people affected in the Halem revenue circle areas.

As many as 47 villages under Biswanath Sub-Division were submerged while 858 hectares of crop area have been inundated. A local in the Gohpur area said

the water level has risen to 3 feet inside his house. "We are now facing a lot of problems. Now we can't live in our house. The water level is still increasing. We are hoping that the government will help us," he said.

The ASDMA flood report stated that 1.08 lakh people of 385 villages under 31 revenue circles in 15 districts and two Sub-Divisions were affected by the floods in the state. The flood waters inundated 4168.40 hectares of crop area, it said. The administration has set up 22 relief camps and 71 relief distribution centres in the flood-hit districts where 4,275 people are now taking shelter, as per officials. ANI

ATS clearance matter: SC issues notice to BJP leaders Nishikant Dubey, Manoj Tiwari

The Supreme Court on Monday issued notice to Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MPs Nishikant Dubey and Manoj Tiwari in the Air Traffic Service (ATS) clearance matter to file their response on Jharkhand Government plea challenging High Court order quashing FIR against them. The bench comprising Justices Abhay S Oka and Sanjay Karol asked respondents including Nishikant Dubey and Manoj Tiwari to file their responses on Jharkhand Government's plea.

Jharkhand Government, in the plea filed through advocate Jayant Mohan, has challenged



Jharkhand High Court order which quashed FIR against BJP MPs Nishikant Dubey, Manoj Tiwari in ATS clearance matter at Deoghar airport. *The state government said that Jharkhand High Court order was completely untenable and has scuttled the investigation.* The state government also said that the High

Court ought to have considered the relevant factors, namely the Respondent being Members of Parliament from the ruling party at the central government has illegally threatened and exerted undue pressure on the ATC to permit takeoff of the private aircraft from the Airport in violation of Security Regulations. ANI

Fire in battery box of Bhopal-Delhi Vande Bharat Express, all passengers safe

A fire broke out in a coach of Bhopal-Delhi Vande Bharat Express in Madhya Pradesh's Kurwai Kethora station on Monday, informed the Railway officials, adding that all passengers are safe and the fire has been extinguished. According to the Indian Railways, a fire was reported in the battery box



of one of the coaches, when the train departed from Rani Kamalapati station, earlier known as Habibganj, towards Nizamuddin

in New Delhi.

The fire has been extinguished and all passengers are safe. After the full examination, the train will be dispatched soon, an official of the Indian Railways said. "Fire brigade reached site on time and fire extinguished at 07:58 hrs," the railway official informed. ANI

World

Drought gives rise to dust storms in Afghanistan, analysts blame Taliban



Severe drought has given rise to massive dust storms in Afghanistan and analysts believed that it is the de-facto authorities of the country that are to be blamed as they are unable to take serious actions to prevent any of it, TOLONews reported. "1.5 per cent of the country is forest, we

cannot reduce the air pollution. Also, the government has also been unable to take serious actions to prevent air pollution," said Sayed Mohammad Sulaimankhail, an environmental issue analyst.

"...There were 32 projects in Afghanistan with practical implementation but they were

suspended by the Global Environment Facility due to political issues," the analyst added. According to the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), recent dust storms in the nation are a result of global warming and droughts in Afghanistan. NEPA claimed that in order to combat the effects of such natural events in Afghanistan, it needs assistance from international organisations, as the country is under a severe humanitarian. "The dust and foggy weather is due to external issues such as back-to-back droughts," said Rohullah Ameen, head of the climate change section of the NEPA, according to TOLONews. ANI

Taiwan tracks Chinese military aircraft, naval ships



Taiwan on Monday tracked 11 Chinese military aircraft and six naval vessels around the country, Taiwan News reported citing the Ministry of National Defense (MND). The Chinese aircraft and naval vessels were tracked between 6 a.m. on Sunday (July 16) and 6 a.m. on Monday (July 17).

According to the MND, Taiwan responded by sending aircraft, naval ships, and land-based missile systems to monitor People's Liberation Army (PLA) activity. However, during that time, no PLA aircraft entered Taiwan's air defence identification zone (ADIZ) or crossed the Taiwan Strait medi-

an line during that time, Taiwan News reported.

in the latest instance, Taiwan detected the highest number of navy vessels around the country in a single day "in recent times," yesterday (July 16) reported Taiwan News. According to the Ministry of National Defence (MND), sixteen navy vessels and fifteen Chinese military aircraft were detected in the vicinity of Taiwan.

Taiwan News quoted Duan Dang, a freelance writer working in Vietnam, as saying that 16 People's Liberation Army Navy shifts were spotted around Taiwan in a single day "in recent times." There were 14 vessels when US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi came to Taiwan in 2022. ANI

Bangladesh: Muslim scholars demand end to Chinese persecution of Uyghurs



A group of Alems, i.e., Islamic scholars, in Bangladesh have demanded an end to the persecution of Uyghur Muslims in China's Xinjiang province, The Asian Age reported. Terming the repression of Uyghur Muslims as a "grave human rights violation", the Alems, under the banner of 'Alem Muktijoddha Projonmo Sangsad' at a protest and discussion meeting in Cox's Bazar on July 14 vehemently protested the atrocities on Muslims in Xinjiang.

"The Chinese government has been carrying out repression on 22 lakh Muslims keeping them confined in different detention camps for years. China had also

assisted the Pakistani occupation forces during the 1971 Liberation War," The Asian Age quoted the speakers as saying. Denying the entry of human rights defenders, journalists, and UN officials into Xinjiang province, the Chinese government has been perpetrating evil acts there, the speakers further said.

"China is engaged in capturing the global business corridor. If such a trend continues, different countries throughout the country may face a Sri Lanka-like situation," they added. They urged the United Nations, European Union, and global leaders to impose tougher sanctions on China. ANI

At least 40 killed nationwide as South Korea batters heavy rains



At least 40 people have been killed nationwide as South Korea continues to batter heavy downpours, Yonhap news agency reported citing officials on Monday. According to the Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasure Headquarters, 19 people were killed in the southeastern province of North Gyeongsang alone and several are missing as of now.

Fire authorities discovered 16 waterlogged vehicles in the underpass during a search operation, one more than they had initially claimed.

On Saturday, a nearby river overflowed after an embankment

collapsed due to rising water levels brought on by the heavy rain, flooding the Osong underground roadway in Cheongju's central city in South Korea, Yonhap news agency reported. As rescuers work to drain and search the flooded subway, the number of casualties could increase. According to the authorities, 10,570 people nationwide had to leave their homes because of rain damage. In addition, 628 public buildings and 317 other private properties were damaged by downpours, including 146 roads that collapsed or were washed away and 139 flooded homes, reported Yonhap. ANI

Germany: Indian community holds peaceful protest demanding repatriation of baby Ariha

The Indian community in Germany staged a protest for the repatriation of two-year-old Ariha Shah, who has been living in foster care in Berlin back to India. Around 150 to 200 Indians gathered in Frankfurt city of Germany to stage a peaceful protest demanding the repatriation of Ariha who has been in foster care in Ger-

many since September 23, 2021.

In December last year, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had raised the issue with his German counterpart Annalena Baerbock. On July 15, protestors gathered in Frankfurt to stage a protest highlighting the violation of Ariha's cultural rights and rejection of the Indian government's appeal.

Ariha is a child of Indian heritage and is at the centre of an ongoing custody battle. Protestors emphasized the urgent need to respect and protect Ariha's cultural identity stating that the community believes in preserving cultural rights regardless of borders and aims to amplify their voices through the gathering. ANI

Expression

Positive signs of poverty alleviation & economic progress



Lalit Garg

Writer, Journalist, Columnist

In the bright effect of 'Azadika Amrit Mahotsav', auspicious signs have started to shape the resolution of a poor-free India while creating a strong India. In the plans and targets set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government for the centenary celebrations of independence in the year 2047, comprehensive plans have also been made for eradication of poverty. Before this, the schemes made by the Modi government have brought miraculous results for poverty alleviation.

In a recently released study report by the United Nations Development Program and Oxford University, it was told that in the last fifteen years, India has managed to lift 415 million people above the poverty line. Undoubtedly, this news paints a happy picture of the Indian economy. Another good economic signal has come that according to the famous financial agency Goldman Sachs, the Indian economy will become the second largest economic force in the world by the year 2075.

In the last nine years, the Modi government has established many dimensions of development and empowerment, the government has implemented such schemes for the welfare of the poor, due to which meaningful efforts have been made to wash away the stigma of the shame of poverty on the face of India. Those living below the line have been elevated. From the year 2005 to 2020, about 41 crore people in the country have come above the poverty line, yet India is the only country in the world where poverty is highest. On the basis of the success and possibilities of India and its economy, political stability, Modi government's far-

reaching and poverty alleviation plans have a big role.

The figures of UNDP's Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) also confirm the same fact. In the year 2005-06, about 645 million people in the country were living below the multidimensional poverty line. At present, this number has reduced considerably, according to the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index, there are a total of 23 crore poor people in India.

Despite this, it is a clear indication that in spite of all the welfare schemes, the country is in dire need of economic self-reliance & self-employment for the poor with discussion on new ideas and welfare schemes to achieve the goal of poverty alleviation. A balanced social structure can be made only by overcoming the selfish political mentality of distributing free hawkers to the poor and collecting their votes. The Modi government has been politically stable and poverty alleviation has been one of its priorities.

The government of the great economist Manmohan Singh was also stable and he too took concrete initiatives to eradicate poverty. This effort has been going on continuously since the time of his government. The unique thing is that both these governments have stood on two opposite political polls, but their economic philosophy has been the same. But the policy makers of the Indian economy need to take a serious look at some of its anomalies. As much as it is necessary to end poverty in the country, tackling economic disparities is no less important than that.

A recent Oxfam report had revealed that 60 per cent of the country's wealth is held by just five percent of Indians, while the bottom 50 per cent own just three per cent of the national wealth. We should be happy that we have lifted so many crores of people above the poverty line in a decade and a half, but we cannot ignore the fact that more than 80

crore people are being provided free ration. A significant number of our millionaires and billionaires are also settling down in other countries. Shouldn't there be some effective penal system for billionaires who give up Indian citizenship? Indian ruling establishments have to find logical ways to control these anomalies. We cannot forget that even above the level at which our poverty line is fixed, life is very difficult. That's why efforts should be made to make these happy economic pictures pleasant for crores of marginalized Indians.

The two agencies which have presented a happy and prosperous economic picture of India, in that picture one is related to present India, the other is related to future India. Both the pictures are highlighting the point of becoming the biggest economic power of New India, Strong India, Developed India and others. More caution and vigilance is expected in these happy moments. These are more challenging times, as India's growing gap between rich and poor is a cause for concern, which should have been a major political issue, but unfortunately never became a political issue. Perhaps the shops of political parties are run on the strength of these rich and persistence of poverty is the biggest weapon to bring them to power. It is unfortunate that the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. What better issue can there be before the opposition?

For the reduction in poverty figures, mention of two developments is being heard these days. First, massive cash payments through various programs like the Rural Employment Guarantee and second, subsidized fuel and free food grains under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana and Ujjwala Yojana. There is a basis for measuring the impact of these programs on the level of poverty. For example, these programs have provided employment to people and they get income from wages, this is an effective way to remove poverty.

Cheap gas in the form of welfare schemes means savings on a major household expense. On the other hand, free food means savings in expenditure on food means increased income.

The need to make a new India - a strong India is not that a lot of capital should be accumulated in the hands of a few people, the distribution of capital should be such that it is easily available to millions of villages and crores of people of the vast country. But what is the reason that the leadership of the erstwhile power-worshipping Mahatma Gandhi has been shrewdly setting aside the principle of his trusteeship? This is the reason why on one hand there are high skyscrapers of the rich and on the other hand there is poverty crawling on the footpaths. On the one hand, splendour gave luxury to a person and luxury awakened cruelty within a person, on the other hand, the tragedy of poverty and deprivation kindled the fire of rebellion within him.

Inflation is increasing rapidly these days. Tomatoes have turned red, should they never become a big political weapon like onions? Certainly, the solution of inflation is a burning issue, in addition to the efforts of the Central Reserve Bank on the monetary front, more efforts are expected from the Central and State Governments, such as reduction in excise duty, VAT etc. taxes, adequate supply of essential commodities, prohibition of black marketing, simplification by reduction in customs duty on imports, promotion of trade and enterprise at grassroots rather than large industrial and trading houses, etc. With this, the deposit-capital and income of the poor will be safe and the way will be prepared for them to come out of the poverty line. Like countries like Japan and China, every citizen of India has to be linked to the product and enterprise.

Entertainment

Did Ileana D'Cruz reveal face of her mysterious partner? Find out



Actor Ileana D'Cruz is currently enjoying her third-trimester and has been tight-lipped about her personal life from the very beginning, but on Monday morning, 'the Barfi' actor dropped pictures from the date night with the man in her life. Mom-to-be took to Instagram stories and treated her fans with glimpse of her dinner date.

Ileana is seen dressed in a beautiful strappy red dress, while her mysterious man opted for a black shirt and trouser for the date night and sports a beard and moustache look.

From leaning on his shoulder, posing for a selfie and cutely looking at him, these pictures highlight the glow and happiness on Ileana's face. Sharing the collage, she wrote, "Date night," with red heart emoji. The man in the image resembles the man in the blurry photo Ileana posted last month. Ileana shared monochromatic fuzzy photo of herself with her mysterious man along with a sweet note on pregnancy bliss. Sharing the photo, she penned down an appreciation note. She wrote, "Being pregnant is such a beautiful beautiful blessing... I didn't think I'd be fortunate enough to ever experience this so I consider myself so incredibly lucky to be on this journey. I can't even begin to describe how lovely it is to feel a life growing inside of you. Most days I'm just overwhelmed staring down at my bump going wow - I get to meet you soon and then there are some days that are so inexplicably hard. So trying." ANI

Shah Rukh unveils Nayanthara's 'Jawan' character poster, calls her 'thunder that comes before storm'



Superstar Shah Rukh Khan on Monday released the poster of his "Jawan" co-actor Nayanthara and described her character in the much-anticipated film as the "thunder that comes before the storm". Star of Tamil movies such as "Kolamavu Kokila", "Ghajini" and "Netrikann", Nayanthara plays a cop in "Jawan", an upcoming pan-India movie directed by Atlee. Shah Rukh took to his official Twitter account to share his co-star's first look from the film, which also stars Vijay Sethupathi in the lead. PTI



From Sonam Kapoor to Sidharth Malhotra, celebs congratulate Wimbledon 2023 winner Carlos Alcaraz

Bollywood actors took to their social media handles to congratulate the Wimbledon 2023 winner Carlos Alcaraz, who defeated Novak Djokovic in the Men's singles final. Sonam Kapoor posted a picture with her husband Anand Ahuja and friends. She wrote in the caption, "What an incredible historical match to watch, with such brilliant company! Congratulations to the insanely talented @carlitosalcarazz and the amazing @djokernole! @wimbledon #everydayphenomenal"

She also shared glimpses of the matches, their passes, and the food. Actor Kareena Kapoor also congratulated Carlos for the victory and mentioned on her Instagram stories, "A superstar is born (rainbow, red heart and dizzy emojis). What a play (star emoji) @carlitosalcarazz." "Uffffff. Dream big @carlitosalcarazz," she added while sharing the picture of the match.

Karisma Kapoor also wrote on her Instagram stories, "What a match, still my favourite @djokernole. Congrats to the new kid on the block @carlitosalcarazz." Anusha Dandekar shared a video of the match and said, "This is crazzzzzy!!!" ANI

Chantu Bantu are back: Sharman Joshi, Sahil Khan to reunite for new film after 20 years

After two decades, actors Sharman Joshi and Sahil Khan are all set to share screen space once again in Sam Khan's next project. Taking to Instagram, Sharman shared the exciting reunion with his 'Style' co-star.

Sharing the picture featuring Sahil Khan, he wrote, "With the film all ready to roll, I am absolutely excited. The films that Sahil and I did earlier brought about a lot of appreciation for the chemistry we shared on screen. It was our first commercial hit that was seen by Raju Hirani sir too, who then signed me for 3 Idiots." As soon as the news was announced, the actor's fans and industry members flooded the comment section. One of the users wrote, "We need chantu Bantu back." Writer Milap Zaveri wrote, "Time to rock again bro." Another comment read, "Chantu-Bantu are back #finally." ANI

