WILDLIFE CRIME CELLS OPEN IN ODISHA

In a bid to tackle poaching and wildlife smuggling, the Odisha government has decided to activate wildlife crime control cells. The decision was taken as part of the conflict mitigation action plan of the government, a forest official said

ED takes TN minister into custody

Action follows 13 hours of searches by the agency at his Chennai residence, other places

C SHIVAKUMAR @ Chennai

AFTER 13 hours of search at his house and other places allegedly linked to him, Enforcement Directorate officials took Tamil Nadu Higher Education Minister K Ponmudy from his home in Saidapet to their office in Shastri Bhavan in Chennai around 8.30pm.

The minister was taken in his own personal car accompanied by Central Reserve Police Force personnel. Cash, electronic devices and other materials allegedly seized during the search operation were also taken away by the ED team.

There is no confirmation yet on whether the minister has been arrested or was being taken for further interrogation by the ED to its office. Some sources said the minister has been taken to the ED office to record his statement. Only after recording the statement and if the ED feels it has a prima facie case, Ponmudy will be arrested or he will be sent back home, sources said.

Early on Monday, multiple ED teams started search operations in properties linked to the minister and his son in Chennai and Villupuram under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act in a case over alleged violations in quarrying red sand during his tenure as minister in the DMK government between 2007 and 2011.

TN Higher Education Minister Ponmudi being brough to ED custody | P RAVIKUMAR

ED RAID SHOWS BJP'S FRUSTRATION: CM

Chief Minister M K Stalin told reporters at the Chennai airport on Monday. He was replying to a question on ED search at the residence of Higher Education Minister K Ponmudy in Chennai and Villupuram. "The raid is a reflection of BJP-led Union government's frustration with the growing unity of opposition parties, particularly ahead of our second meeting scheduled in Bengaluru. The DMK is concerned the least about ED searches, considering them usual, ordinary and a diversionary tactic," Stalin said moments before boarding a flight to Bengaluru.

The case was filed by the AIADMK government led by J Jayalalithaa in 2011, and the state crime branch police have been investigating it. Ponmudy is the MLA of Tirukkoyilur assembly seat in Villupuram district and his son Sigamani is a member of parliament from Kallakurichi Lok Sabha seat.

The minister is accused of obtaining mining/ quarry licences in the name of his son and family members and is alleged to have quarried 2,64,644 loads of red sand above the permitted limit causing Rs 28 crore loss to the exchequer.

ED has been carrying out searches at Ponmudy's son and daughter's residences and places linked to him in Villupuram. The searches were being carried out with CRPF protection. A car parked inside the minister's house was also searched. Some reports also said Rs 70 lakh, including foreign currencies, were recovered from Ponmudy's home, but the ED has not officially confirmed it.

The search comes a month after the Madras High Court refused to stay proceedings in the case and dismissed a petition filed by Gowtham Sigamani.

Ponmudy is the second DMK minister to come under the ED scanner after Senthil Balaji. In 2020, the ED had seized Sigamani's ₹8.60 crore worth of properties for violating provisions of FEMA.

All eyes on Sonia's role in B'luru opposition conclave

K SHIVAKUMAR @ Bengaluru

THE opposition parties' conclave in Bengaluru is expected to come out with some landmark decisions in the presence of former AICC president Sonia Gandhi.

With Sonia Gandhi playing a significant role in the decision-making body of Congress, it would enable the Grand-Old Party to take a call on many issues, including seat-sharing with regional parties and prepare common programmes, to face the 2024 Lok Sabha elections together.

Her absence would have been a setback for All India Congress Committee president Mallikarjun Kharge and senior leader Rahul Gandhi in articulating the party's stand on various issues and taking quick decisions.

As United Progressive Alliance (UPA) chairperson for 15 years, Sonia knows the art of taking the allies together and her rich experience is expected to help opposition parties to arrive at a consensus and prepare a roadmap for 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

The Congress has to be flexible in sharing seats in states such as West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar where Trinamool Congress, Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and Janata Dal (United) have a strong presence. In Gujarat too, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which managed to get 12% vote share in the last Assembly elections, is expected to seek a few seats.

Even AAP is in a better position in Punjab where it has formed government with a landslide victory.

Former Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti during the opposition parties meet, in Bengaluru, Monday

Sonia is expected to help the Congress party overcome all these issues by taking all opposition parties into confidence at the conclave.

Meanwhile, AICC spokesperson Pawan Kare said the conclave of opposition parties, with Congress playing a big role in it, has become a cause for concern for the BJP and NDA. The desperation in the BJP camp is already being felt and people of the country are watching these developments, he said.

Senthil Balaji shifted to jail from hospital

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

V SENTHIL BALAJI, who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on June 14, in connection with a cash-for-jobs scam under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, was shifted from a private hospital where he was recuperating after a heart surgery, to the Puzhal prison on Monday.

Prison officials escorted Balaji in an ambulance to the Puzhal prison from Kauvery Hospital. He reached the prison around 6 pm. Prison sources said he has been admitted to a separate ward inside the prison hospital, as per the advice of doctors. Balaji has been given 'A' class facilities inside the prison, as reserved for ministers and senior bureaucrats. 'A' class prisoners will get a separate room, cot, table, chair, mosquito net, mattress, and air cooler if permitted.

It is not clear when the ED would seek his custody and whether he would be taken to the national capital. The Madras High Court had last Friday upheld the ED's right to take Balaji into custody.

REMEMBERING FOREFATHERS

Devotees offer 'Bali tarpan' to ancestors at Aluva in Kochi, on the first day of the new Malayalam month | T P SOORAJ

Pawan to attend NDA meet in Delhi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Vijayawada

Jana Sena Party (JSP) chief and Telugu filmstar Pawan Kalyan on Monday arrived in New Delhi to attend the meeting of NDA partners called by the BJP, on Tuesday.

Speaking to reporters in the national capital, the actor-politician said the leaders might hold discussions on the politics in Andhra Pradesh as well as on the alliances in the State.

JSP Political Affairs Committee (PAC) chairman Nadendla Manohar accompanied Pawan to attend the meeting.

"I have been waiting for this opportunity for a long time. In 2014, we had attended a similar meeting as allies of the BJP, but in 2019 we took a different approach," he said.

Pawan had exited the NDA alliance in 2019 and instead contested the polls with the BSP. He stated that a senior BJP leader had invited his party.

Buzz on new alliance leader a BJP strategy to divert attention: Ramesh

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

AS leaders from 26 Opposition parties are meeting in Bengaluru to deliberate on strategies to fight BJP, the leadership of the new Opposition grouping is likely to be a sticky issue.

The Congress, which is hosting the Bengaluru conclave, seems to be treading carefully and is not antagonising leaders from other parties.

"We have enough leaders who have proved their mettle in different capacities. Don't worry about the leadership. You worry about the country's situation now," AICC General Secretary (Organisation) KC Venugopal shot back during a press conference when asked who will be the leader of the Opposition grouping.

The Congress leader, who seemed irritated with the question, tried to skirt the issue and even went on to suggest that the media should question Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the situation in Manipur. "Issues are more important, brother. Every day, democracy is in danger... Why are you not talking about Manipur? Why are you not asking the PM about his silence? The country never witnessed such things. Therefore, the issue is important. The country's common agenda is to defeat these people," he elaborated.

Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said repeated questions on the leadership is an effort to divert attention. He too went on to criticise the PM on the Manipur issue and accused him of giving a clean chit to China.

Twenty-six parties have come together to protect the Constitution and democracy and fight against unemployment and price rise, he said. At the right time, opposition parties will place a constructive programme, he added.

Event ends up in banners across B'luru

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

FLEXES and banners of leaders of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) have popped up across Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) limits, in violation of a High Court direction and BBMP bylaws.

When asked whether permission was given and what he had to say about it, Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath said, "The question of BBMP giving permission does not arise, therefore, I cannot answer."

UPA's chief partner Congress is said to be behind the two-day event, titled 'United We Stand', being held at Taj West End. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin, Bihar Chief Minister and JDU leader Nitish Kumar, former J&K CM and PDP leader Mehbooba Mufti, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, former Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray, Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and others are in Bengaluru, and their banners have been put up from Old Airport Road entrance to Taj West End Hotel.

Andhra man offers 51 kg tomatoes to temple deity in daughter's name

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Visakhapatnam/Vijayapura

EVEN as tomatoes are becoming dearer with each passing day, a couple in Anakapalle offered 51 kg of the precious commodity to the presiding deity of Nukalamma temple. The price of one kg tomatoes has crossed ₹120 in the market.

On the last Sunday of the Ashadam month, the deity of Goddess Nukalamma at the temple blessed the devotees in 'Sakhambari' avatar.

To mark the occasion, local trader Malla Jagga Appa Rao and wife Mohini approached the temple authorities and told them that they would offer tomatoes as part of their daughter Bhavishya's 'Tulabharam' (a practice where a devotee is weighed against a commodity of value, which is later offered to the temple deity) ritual.

Several other devotees flocked at the temple to witness the ritual.

The couple also offered equal quantity of jaggery and sugarcane, besides cashew and raisins to the deity. Appa Rao said the ritual was performed for his daughter's well-being.

Temple executive officer Bandaru Prasad said the offerings will be used in the preparation of daily prasadam.

Amid spiralling prices of tomatoes, a person performed 'tulabharam' for his daughter at the famous Nukambika temple in Anakapalle. | EXPRESS

This farmer hit the jackpot with tomatoes

Tomato growers seem to be very happy with the prices of the produce skyrocketing with each passing day. When people are crying foul over the increasing prices of tomatoes, the growers are laughing all the way to the bank.

Bhimu Lamani, a farmer from the district, made a profit of Rs 50 lakh in a month by selling tomatoes grown on his four-acre farm. A resident of Aliabad village in Vijayapura taluk, Lamani never imagined tomatoes would fetch him a fortune, that too in a month. He has been making money ever since he started harvesting tomatoes this season. Interestingly, Lamani, who was cultivating sugarcane, switched to vegetables this year. "I am now growing brinjal, chilli, capsicum, ridge gourd and tomato on my 18-acre farm. But, I hit the jackpot with tomatoes," he said.

He said on June 18, he sold a 25kg crate for Rs 1,800. The prices kept rising since then. "Presently, I am selling a crate for Rs 2,700. I am selling 100 to 150 crates daily and earning Rs 2.5 lakh," he added.

To protect his crop, the farmer has also installed CCTV cameras and hired four security personnel.

Kerala earns distinction of lowest poverty rate in India, says NITI report

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ T'Puram

Kerala has the lowest poverty rate in the country and has made significant progress in reducing the percentage of the multidimensionally poor population, according to the "National Multidimensional Poverty Index - A Progress Review 2023" released by NITI Aayog on Monday.

The report, which used the latest household microdata from the all-India National Family Health Survey (NFHS), revealed that the percentage of poor in Kerala decreased from 0.70% of the total population in 2015-16 to 0.55% in 2019-21. During this period, 53,239 people were lifted out of multidimensional poverty.

The study used the United Nations Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), based on 12 indicators such as malnutrition, education, and sanitation. If people are deprived in three or more areas, they are identified as "MPI poor."

Kerala's improved ranking can be attributed to its better performance across various parameters used to calculate the MPI score. For instance, the percentage contribution of nutrition increased from 34.12% in 2015-16 to 36.61% in 2019-21.

Among the districts in Kerala, Wayanad had the highest percentage of poor population at 2.82%, while Ernakulam had the lowest at 0.00%. Kasaragod followed with a 1.70% poor population, followed by Palakkad with 1.34%, and Idukki with 1.11%. Other districts in the state had a multidimensional poverty rate below 1%.

S Irudaya Rajan, Chair of the International Institute for Migration and Development, acknowledged that Kerala has successfully reduced the population of the poor despite facing challenges such as floods and the Covid-19 pandemic. "Part of the credit for Kerala's declining poverty level goes to the continuous increase in migration and remittances. Several other states will also have a similar experience. Bihar is one of the states that showed a significant decline in the population of the poor. It may be attributed to the high number of people of Bihar who migrated to other states like Kerala for better earning,"he added.

STUDY USES UN DATA

The Progress Review 2023" released by NITI Aayog used the United Nations Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), based on 12 indicators such as malnutrition, education, and sanitation

EXPRESS READ

BJD skips B'luru opposition meet

BHUBANESWAR: Even as the BJD maintained a distance from the Opposition meeting at Bengaluru to firm up a front against the NDA on Monday, the party has decided to take on the Centre over persistent neglect of the state.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice: Loss of ID card

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that Four ID Cards of Mr PANKAJ PANKAJ , BHARAT RATAN SINGH , ANUP KUMAR & MOHIT MAHAJAN issued by ICICI Bank ltd. having ID cards no. 2304560 , 2304587, 2304573 & 2304582 has been found missing and/or lost on 15.07.2023. Anyone, who finds the said ID card, is requested to return the said ID card to the Manager Debt Services & Management Group, ICICI Bank Limited, S.D. Tower, Sector 8, Rohini, Delhi 110085.

Therefore, all the customers of ICICI Bank Limited are hereby notified not to make any payment to any unauthorised person holding the said ID cards no 2304560 , 2304587, 2304573 & 2304582

Please take further notice that anybody making payment to any person holding the said ID cards shall do so at his/her own costs, risk and peril and ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any payment.

For ICICI Bank Limited
Date:15.07.2023
Place: S.D. Tower, Sector 8, Rohini, Delhi 110085

M/S ABHINAV STEELS AND POWER LIMITED (IN LIQUIDATION)

AMENDMENT TO SALE NOTICE

Originally Published on 22nd June, 2023

Subject: Amendment in Sale Notice originally published on 22nd June, 2023

In view of the heavy rainfall and unprecedented flood situation in Delhi and across North India, it has been decided to extend the deadlines of Auction date to Saturday, 22nd July 2023 (Earlier it was 17th July 2023). Consequently, the timelines for other associated activities, such as the submission of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD), signing of the Letter of Intent (LoI), and the return of EMD, have also been adjusted accordingly. Summarized table of rescheduled timelines is as follows:

Sl. No.	Event	Timeline
1.	Last date for EMD submission	20-07-2023
2.	E-Auction	22-07-2023 (Timings of auction shall remain same as mentioned in original Sale Notice published on 22nd June, 2023)
3.	Announcement of Successful Bidder	22-07-2023
4.	Signing the Letter of Intent (LoI)	29-07-2023 (10% of the Bid price shall be payable at the time of issuance of LoI)
5.	Return of EMD for unsuccessful bidders	06-08-2023
6.	Payment of balance consideration by the successful bidder	Balance 90% of the Bid price shall be paid within 30 days.

These adjustments will facilitate all the qualified bidders to participate effectively in the auction process.

EMD shall be deposited on or before 20th July 2023 through Demand Draft/ NEFT/RTGS/ Cheque in the below mentioned Bank Account: **Bank Account No**: 023663300005239, **Beneficiary Name**: ABHINAV STEELS AND POWER LIMITED (IN LIQUIDATION) **IFSC Code**: YESB0000470, **Bank Name**: Yes Bank, **Branch**: VAISHALI BRANCH

Please note that all other terms and conditions stated in the original Sale Notice, published on 22nd June 2023, will remain unchanged.

For contact details, refer to publication dated 22nd June, 2023.

Sd/-
Debashis Nanda
Liquidator, Abhinav Steels and Power Limited
IBBI Registration No.: IBBI/IPA-003/IP-N00040/2017-18/10316
Address: CS-14, C Floor, Ansal Plaza, Vaishali, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh
Email ID: liquidator.abhinavsteel@gmail.com, dnanda.cma@gmail.com

Date : 18/07/2023
Place: New Delhi