

## FPI Opposes "Bharat Ratna" to Jayalalithaa as she was not Worthy Enough to have it

**Bhubaneswar 23:** Late J Jayalalithaa, Tamil Nadu CM and General Secretary of the AIADMK Party



did create an image of 'Amma' during her regime as CM of Tamil Nadu through pro-poor "populist" schemes like "Amma Canteens", "Amma Centres" for Sale of Vegetables at cheaper rate to the poor. But in reality she was not a specimen of an ideal ethical political leader who should be conferred with "Bharat Ratna", the highest civilian Award of the India Republic.

That she was not an incorruptible leader has been now amply proved by the latest facts that have come to the public domain because of the raids conducted by the sleuths of the

Department of Income Tax (IT). The raids, as a matter of fact, were a fallout of the incriminating documents seized by the IT team that searched the residences and the business premises of mining baron J. Sekhar Reddy and his associates K. Srinivasulu and Mr Prem Kumar who were arrested by the CBI on charges of amassing assets disproportionate to their known sources of Income. The IT raids on J. Sekhar Reddy's houses had led to seizure of Rs. 134.5 crore in old and new currency notes and 177 kg gold bars worth of Rs. 50.5 crore.

On Wednesday, the IT raided Chief Secretary P. Rama Mohana Rao's residences in Cheenai, Bengaluru & Chittoor in AP and seized Rs. 30 Lakh in New Currency Notes and 5 Kg of Gold. Besides, they unearthed undisclosed income of Rs. 5 crore from his son, P. Vivek's residence. The Chief

Secretary Rao, (now removed), is extremely cunning. His son P. Vivek is the son-in-law of Mr D.K. Badri Narayan who happens to be the brother of the liquor baron D.K. Adikesavulu Naidu. Thus the Chief Secretary Mr Rao is

**PM Modi should outrightly reject AIADMK's demand to confer Bharat Ratna on J Jayalalithaa**

having deep links with corrupt business people. With such links, this IAS officer of 1985 batch could prevail upon the AIADMK supremo and Tamil Nadu CM Jayalalithaa and could become the Chief Secretary replacing and shunting the then Chief Secretary K. Gyanadesikan as the CMD of the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation and superceding as many as 20 senior IAS Officers. "Heavy money" must have played its role to cripple honesty and integrity in

administration and this way Mr Rao got "seated" in the office of the Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu.

Little intelligence is needed to know the vicious links that pervaded among the corrupt politicians, the corrupt

bureaucrats and the dubious businessmen. To confer Bharat Ratna on J. Jayalalithaa would amount to conferring the highest Civilian Award of our country to the "Unethical Nexus" that existed among the corrupt elements in the vital sectors of Tamil Nadu's socio-political life. Hence, the Freethought Party of India strongly urges upon the Prime Minister Modi to outrightly reject the AIADMK's demand for conferring the honour of Bharat Ratna on the late Leader J Jayalalithaa.

## Libyan plane hijacking in Malta ends; two men surrender

**VALETTA(KCN):** After hours of tense negotiations, two Libyans who hi-

Malta state television TVM said the two hijackers had hand grenades and

The hijackers, after negotiations, allowed the plane's doors to open at 1:44

plane. Ali Milad, the pilot, told Libya Channel TV network that



jacke a plane from Libya to Malta and threatened to blow it up surrendered peacefully on Friday, allowing 118 passengers and crew to leave the plane before walking out themselves with the last of the crew.

The hijacked Airbus A320 flight, operated by Afriqiyah Airways, was travelling from the Libyan oasis city of Sabha to Tripoli when it was diverted to Malta midmorning on Friday.

had threatened to explode them. All flights to Malta International Airport were immediately diverted and emergency teams including negotiators were sent to the airport tarmac.

Malta's prime minister, Joseph Muscat, announced that the hijacking of the Libyan plane was over in a tweet at 3:44 p.m. local time.

They have "surrendered," been "searched and taken in custody," he tweeted.

p.m. and a staircase was moved over to let freed passengers begin disembarking in groups.

In a series of tweets, Muscat said 65 people were allowed to leave, then another 44, including some crew, then the hijackers and the final crew members. All were seen leaving the aircraft without hand luggage.

The company said on its Facebook page that 118 people, including 7 crew members, were on board the hijacked

initially the hijackers had asked him to head to Rome. He identified the two hijackers as Moussa Shaha and Ahmed Ali, Libyans who other officials said were in their twenties.

The pilot said the men were seeking political asylum in Europe and wanted to set up a political party called "the New Fateh." Fateh is a reference to former Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi, who led Fateh revolution after his coup in 1969. After many of the hostages left the plane Friday afternoon, someone, apparently a hijacker, waved the old green Libyan flag from the plane's doorway.

Libya, a sprawling oil-rich North African country, has been split between rival parliaments and governments, each backed by a loose array of militias and tribes, Gadhafi was ousted and killed in 2011.

Western nations view the newly-formed U.N.-brokered government as the best hope for uniting the country, but Libya's parliament, which meets in the country's far east, has refused to accept it. Amid chaos, the Islamic State and al-Qaida affiliates have gained a foothold over the past years.

Earlier this month, militias answering to the UN-brokered government seized the Islamic State group's last stronghold in the Libyan city of Sirte.

## Embracing technology, Seekarajapuram set to become first digital village in Vellore

**Tamil Nadu(KCN):** When customers across the country were awaiting their turn in serpentine queues to lay hands on their own money, people of Seekarajapuram, a remote village near Thiruvallur in Wallajah Taluk in the district, were queuing up for a different reason. This hamlet is all set become the first digital village in the district, and the driving force behind the achievement is the zeal of the people to embrace technology. They, for sure, are moving with the times.

In the aftermath of the financial decision of the Centre, the residents began lining up in front of the special office of the SBI to open accounts and enjoy the benefits of all bells and whistles attached to it (read online banking). Change is in the air and the enthusiasm to

welcome it is palpable. And when you talk about inclusion, a majority of the new customers was

First, to get a feel of modern banking ways. Secondly, and most importantly, to keep track of their better

two college-going children already have migrated to the digital world. They use laptops and

the basics of internet and mobile banking, which in turn would aid my monitoring activities." Its not the

hungry customers. He has applied for a Point Of Sale machine, and hopes to make his customers

However, there are doubting Thomases as well. The highest concern is about the security of transactions and sanctity of accounts. Beyond the realm of this reasonable doubt lies the euphoria of becoming the first digital village in the district. As most of the residents sport smartphones, officials hope that the transition would be hassle-free.

While it is easy to hail the Centre's decision for the achievement, the groundwork for the transition was laid a couple of years ago, when enrolment for Aadhaar Cards became mandatory for a section of the villagers benefiting under the NREGS and wanting to retain gas subsidy. The village panchayat turned proactive to organise special camps for the Aadhaar, resulting in all the 1,200-odd households getting Aadhaar cover.



women. Most of the women in this verdant village are educated housewives, ready to become tech-savvy with two-fold aim.

halves' expenses. Women queuing up before an ATM in Seekarajapuram Jayanthi (47), a housewife, says, "My

smartphones equipped with high-speed internet. It is my duty to keep a watch on them. Digital banking would help me to learn

housewives alone who are buoyant. 45-year-old Venkatesan (45), a grocer, hopes that digital banking would help in contain credit-

swipe away their age-old debts. "With the new technology, I will get more control over my purchase and sales," he adds.

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**Sofia Vergara's son Manolo Gonzalez makes modelling debut**

**WASHINGTON(KCN):** Manolo Gonzalez Vergara, the only child of Sofia Vergara, recently made his plunge into modelling industry following in his mother's footsteps.

The 24-year-old son made his modelling debut in a photo spread for Paper magazine's latest issue, inspired by the films of Spanish director Pedro Almodovar, reports E! Online.

In one photo, Gonzalez Vergara wears a black suit and poses along model Stevie DeFelice who is sporting a red top, skirt and blazer as the duo hold a Bloody Mary each and sit on the floor that has a



shattered mirror reflecting them.

The young model also took to his Instagram handle to thank the magazine.

"And for allowing me to sit next to Stevie DeFelice. I hope she wasn't too traumatized," he added.

Vergara's 44-year-old mom had modelled for years before she moved from her native Colombia to the United States to concentrate on an acting career. Her son, who she raised as a single, working mother, has also dabbled in acting and appeared with her in a Head & Shoulders commercial in 2014.

**Sunny Leone is the perfect seductress in 'Laila main Laila'**

**NEW DELHI (KCN):**Sunny Leone's much-awaited song from 'Raees' is out and it has all the ingredients to make it to the top of every chartbuster!

From Sunny's sexy dance moves to Shah Rukh Khan's killer looks, the remixed version of Zeenat Aman's 'Laila O Laila' is sure to make you groove.

Set in a dance bar, it seems the song is an important part of the development of SRK's character of a liquor baron in Gujarat.

The 70's classic rendition has been recreated by Ram Sampath and sung by Pawan Kalyan.

Directed by Rahul Dholakia, 'Raees' is all set to release on January 25 next year.



**Kajol, Priyanka hail Pakistan's move to remove ban on Indian films**

**Bombay (KCN):** 'Mental Manadhil' from OK Kanmani, 'Mei Nigara' from 24, and now, 'The Breakup Song' from Ae Dil Hai Mushkil... Jonita Gandhi is on the crest of a wave. Over

telephone from Mumbai, the 27-year-old says with a laugh, "My phone has been buzzing with messages ever since the ('Breakup') song released. Many were quite surprised when they came to know that I had sung it. I am not sure why." As for Jonita, it was one of the most fun projects that she had done. "We were partying and recording... it was dramatic," she says.

Jonita has a lot on her plate, from recording for movies to performing live gigs. But she also talks about a dream that she has been holding on to for sometime now. "Writing music... I want to sing something that I have written from scratch. How cool would that be," she

says, a little lost in thought. "I have written in the past, but I am just very picky. So I am not sure whether many of those will see the light of day," she adds after a pause.

Meanwhile, she is consciously making sure that her YouTube channel (Jonita Music has over half a lakh followers) thrives – given that's where she began her journey as a musician. "I used to record my song videos, all covers, on my phone and post them," she recalls. Later, as her channel continued to gain visitors, she started making professional videos, self-produced videos and collaborating with different artistes. "This was way back in 2011, and that's how far I could reach Bollywood from Toronto. But it helped me get a foot in the door, as several music composers recognised me, and next thing I know, I was doing a tour with Sonu Nigam in North America,"

she says. Following the tour, Jonita debuted in Bollywood with Chennai Express.

"Till then, I had only performed in live shows. I hadn't recorded a Bollywood song from scratch. Understanding and learning a composition on the spot was new to me. So I was extremely nervous," she recalls. The first song she recorded was the title song of Chennai Express for Vishal-Shekhar. "The song was already done, and the male voice was by SPB sir. There was a small part in the song that features Deepika Padukone in the visuals and they wanted a female voice. I just happened to be around then, so they told me to try it out, and it all came out well," she says.

She was then spotted by A.R. Rahman, with whom she worked on the album Raunaq and Tamil film OK Kanmani, among others. "I was

in Chennai once, so he asked me to come to

completely on who ever was directing the



his studio and record in Tamil. Thankfully, I had people around me who really supported me. I had no idea how well I was singing the words. I had to rely

videos to visually set everything right," she says with a laugh. "On my first trip to Chennai, while working with Rahman sir, I had no idea who we

were recording for. But I was just happy to be working with him. He is an amazing person and makes people super comfortable, and while most think that he is quiet, in reality, he is a very funny person," says Jonita, who is trained in Western Classical music.

Looking back, while her academic degrees (she has two undergraduate degrees in Health Sciences and Business) did little to contribute to her career as a singer, she says, "Music was always there on the side. I used to come home from school during weekends and perform at events. It was already my part-time job. Even at home, there were always old Hindi songs — those of Rafi, R.D. Burman, Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle — and 90s Bollywood music by Shreya Ghoshal and Sonu Nigam — playing. I grew up listening to them."

## Wadia files defamation suit against Tata Sons, Ratan Tata

**MUMBAI(KCN):** Industrialist Nusli N Wadia has filed a criminal defamation case against Tata Sons, its interim

annia Industries said in the suit.

This, he claimed, also "affected his status as an independent director in various

case has met and why this case before the additional chief metropolitan magistrate was filed. Wadia in the new case wanted

Ranendra Sen. Tata Sons Company Secretary and Chief Operating Officer F N Subedar has also been named as an ac-



chairman Ratan Tata and some directors for alleged "defamatory and offending" contents in a special resolution moved to seek his removal from three Tata Group firms.

Wadia, who has been accused of siding with ousted Tata Group chairman Cyrus P Mistry, filed the defamation suit in the court of additional chief metropolitan magistrate here. Tata Sons' special resolution to shareholders seeking Wadia's removal as independent director on board of Tata Chemicals, Tata Motors and Tata Steel has "caused severe prejudice to the reputation and goodwill", the chairman of Brit-

other companies and will continue to have a cascading effect" on his reputation and goodwill in business circles within India and abroad. He named Anil Naik, Chairman of Larsen & Toubro and Tanya Godrej Dubash, Executive Director of Godrej Group, as witnesses. Others named as witness include Subhodh Bhargava, independent director of Tata Motors and Tata Steel and Vinesh Jairath, independent director at Tata Motors.

Wadia is said to have previously filed a defamation case in Bombay High Court seeking Rs 3,000 crore damages. It is not immediately known what fate that

the court to take cognisance of the offence under Section 500 of IPC (Defamation) and Section 500 read with Section 109 of IPC (abetment) and Section 500 read with Section 34 of IPC (criminal act with common intention) against Tata Sons and 11 other persons.

Besides Ratan Tata, who was brought back as Chairman of Tata Sons after Mistry was abruptly removed on October 24, the others named in the suit include the holding company's directors Ajay G Piramal, Amit Ranbir Chandra, Ishaat Hussain, Nitin Nohria, Vijay Singh, Venu Srinivasan, Ralf Speth, N Chandrasekaran and

used.

After removing Mistry as head of Tata Sons -- the holding company of the USD 103 billion salt-to-software Tata Group -- the promoters have sought to remove him from boards of operating companies. Wadia, who has openly sided with Mistry, too is being sought to be removed from boards of Tata Motors, Tata Steel and Tata Chemicals, where he is an independent director. Shareholders of Tata Steel and Tata Motors have voted out Wadia at extraordinary general meetings in last two days, while the same of Tata Chemicals is happening today.

## Sensex breaks seven day fall, but logs weekly loss

**Mumbai (KCN):** Breaking a seven-day losing pattern, the Sensex today reclaimed the key 26,000-mark by recovering 61 points, helped by gains in pharma, auto and capital goods, but both indices registered a weekly drop. For the week, the Sensex lost 448.86 points, or 1.69 per cent, while the broader NSE Nifty dropped 153.70 points, or 1.88 per cent.

This is their biggest weekly in five, which is since the week ended November 18. Domestic investors backed up and covering-up of short positions gave equities a push too. But a weak trend in Asia and a muted opening in Europe cast its shadow.

The rupee appreciated 21 paise intra-day against the dollar, to 67.78, which had a positive influence too, brokers said. After a subdued opening, the Sensex dropped as foreign funds liquidated bets ahead of Christmas, but emergence of value-buying later meant it wiped off early losses before settling higher by 61.10 points, or 0.24 per cent, at 26,040.70.

The 50-share NSE Nifty ended up 6.65 points, or 0.08 per cent, at 7,985.75 points. Intra-day, it shuttled between 7,942.05 and 8,022.60. For the major part of the session, both Sensex and the Nifty moved in a tight range in tandem with emerging markets, which remained sub-

dued on sustained foreign fund outflows.

The 30-scrip gauge had lost 718.22 points in the previous seven sessions on sustained foreign fund outflows and fears of a likely hit to corporate earnings due to currency crunch and lack of any major trigger. Cipla surged 4.03 per cent, logging the best gains among 30 Sensex constituents. It was followed by Sun Pharma with a rise of 2.40 per cent.

Other gainers which supported the BSE Sensex include Maruti Suzuki, Bajaj Auto, GAIL, L&T, HDFC Bank, Hero MotoCorp, Bharti Airtel, Asian Paints, NTPC, HDFC Ltd, NTPC, Infosys and RIL. On the other hand, stocks led by

Axis Bank, ONGC, ITC Ltd, Tata Motors, M&M, ICICI Bank, Tata Steel, TCS, Adani Ports, Wipro, SBI and Dr Reddy's finished in the negative terrain. A weak trend at other Asian markets and a mixed opening in European markets also influenced sentiment here.

While Japanese financial markets were closed today for a public holiday, Hong Kong's Hang Seng fell 0.28 per cent and Shanghai Composite Index shed 0.94 per cent. Among European markets, Frankfurt was up 0.12 per cent, while Paris rose 0.02 per cent in their morning trade but London's FTSE shed 0.03 per cent.

## Jaitley faces hurdles for biggest tax reform launch

**NEW DELHI(KCN):** The prospects of introducing a goods and services tax (GST) in India next April, its biggest tax reform, faded on Friday after central and state finance officials postponed talks on how to administer the tax after a two-day meeting.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who aims to push the tax reform to replace various central and state

Many states including West Bengal and Kerala have said Modi's decision to scrap 86 percent of the cash in circulation had hit their revenue collections, as they collect value-added tax on goods and other duties.

The finance ministry and state finance officials have broadly agreed on a national sales tax and are making "reasonable headway" on a few conten-

told reporters, but did not clarify whether a self-imposed deadline of April 1 for the launch of the tax could be met.

"I am trying my best," he said when asked about the April introduction of the tax.

"I am not going to bind myself to anything. Our effort is to do it as quickly as possible and I think we are making a reasonable headway," Jaitley said. He assured the

The long-awaited GST is one of the most significant reforms since India opened its economy 25 years ago, and the most significant revamping of the tax system since independence in 1947.

"There is no way we can meet the April 1 GST deadline," K Pandiarajan, a minister of Tamil Nadu, told a TV channel after the meeting.

Officials said the



levies with one tax, is facing resistance from states after his surprise decision last month to scrap high-value currency notes.

tious issues, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said on Friday.

They will meet again for two days from Jan. 3, Jaitley

states that they would be compensated 100 percent for losses directly attributable to the GST implementation for five years.

new tax law would need to come into effect by mid-September when the old system of indirect taxation is due to lapse.



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# Bhupathi to be India's next non-playing Davis Cup Captain

**NEW DELHI(K-CN):** Indian tennis legend Mahesh Bhupathi was today named the new non-playing captain of the

Bhupathi was the hot favourite the moment AITA decided to replace Amritraj.

"Everybody should get a chance to

Chatterjee tersely replied: "No one wants to go. But everyone deserves a chance to be the captain."

Asked if players

would prove to be end of the road for the former, Chatterjee said: "We will cross that bridge when it comes."

players," he asserted. Chatterjee also said that there was no communication with either Somdev Devvarman or



Davis Cup team and will take charge after the Asia/Oceania zone group I home tie against New Zealand in Pune from February 3 to 5.

The tie against New Zealand will be Anand Amritraj's last tie as non-playing captain as AITA wants to give him a "farewell".

Multiple Grand Slam winner

be captain. No post stays with one person forever. I personally spoke to Mahesh and asked if he is available, he said 'Yes'. That was it. Also we wanted Anand to be given a farewell tie," AITA Secretary General Hiranmoy Chatterjee told mediapersons.

Asked if Amritraj is happy with the decision,

were taken into confidence since they had rallied around Amritraj, Chatterjee replied: "It's not their prerogative. We don't need to consult the players. Even Leander Paes was not consulted."

Asked about the history of strained relationship between Leander and Mahesh and whether the latter's elevation

On whether Amritraj giving leeway to players as far as discipline is concerned was an issue alongwith his views in media, the AITA top official did not deny.

"When a committee meets, we discuss a lot of things. But let me tell you that we did not receive any letter of support from the

Ramesh Krishnan regarding coach and non-playing captain's role.

Chatterjee also said that Bhupathi has not demanded any special favours.

"He has not demanded anything and simply said yes to the job. As far as remuneration is concerned he will be paid as per our Davis Cup payment slab," he said.

**Current situation is not in the best interest of cricketers, says Anurag Thakur**

BCCI President Anurag Thakur on Friday conceded that the current crisis facing the Board is not in the best interest of cricketers but the body will have to keep everything on hold till Supreme Court gives its verdict on January 3.

"We know the current situation is not in the best interest of cricketers but the matter is sub-judice. We are in problem and we need to wait till January 3," Thakur told mediapersons on the sidelines of a promotional event for the upcoming Pro Wrestling League.

He was referring to the Supreme Court-appointed Lodha committee's recommendations on administrative reform in the BCCI, which the the Board has not been able to implement as yet.

# Desolate Olympics leads to new federation, boxers hope again

**NEW DELHI(K-CN):** Four years of administrative bedlam culminated into a medal-less Olympic campaign before Indian boxing took its first steps towards a possible revival of fortunes in a tempestuous 2016 during which the globally money-spinning professional circuit gained foothold in the country.

To count the biggest positive, a new national federation was finally in place after four years of continued tug of war between administrators, who ought to shoulder the maximum blame for the barren run in Rio.

Also not to be missed, was the rapidly-growing circuit of professional boxing in India, the highlight being superstar Vijender Singh winning and successfully defending the WBO Asia Pacific Super Middleweight title in front of delirious fans in Delhi.

But it is still some time before professional boxing catches up on the popularity charts in a country obsessed either with cricket or Olympic medals. And on the Olympic medal front, it was a disappointing year for India's boxers.

Just three men -- Shiva Thapa, Manoj Kumar and Vikas Krishan -- could make the cut for the quadrennial sporting spectacle, a sharp decline from the seven men and one woman who represented India in the 2012 London Games.

Unlucky with their draws and severely short of international competitive experience, courtesy India's suspension which ended only after the Games, the three could not add to the two bronze medals -- Vijender Singh (2008) and MC Mary Kom (2012) -- that India had secured in the past two Olympics.

The performance in Rio was perhaps the loudest wake-up call that the administrators got given that their wranglings had mostly been covered

up by the boxers' resolute performances in the past four years.

At each of the limited tournaments they competed in before Rio, Indian boxers did the country proud by fetching medals but at the biggest stage of them all, they needed more than sheer grit to deliver results.

The Rio debacle in August proved to be the proverbial last straw and after several delays, elections were finally held in September to put together a new federation -- the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) -- almost unanimously.

The body has been doing its bit to make up for the lost time and conducted the National Championships for both men and women within a month of assuming office.

Away from the boardroom sparring and going solely by the performance inside the ring, the boxers have a lot to be proud of barring the blip in Rio.

The year started with the Olympic qualifying tournament for the Asian region in China from where Shiva became the first boxer to qualify for the Rio Games with a silver medal-winning per-



formance.

The ones who came close to a Rio ticket included L Devendro Singh (52kg) and Mary Kom (51kg), both of whom won bronze medals but were unlucky to miss Olympic berths.

In fact, Devendro and Mary Kom can be considered the most unlucky in Indian boxing this year as both failed to make the Olympics despite consistently producing admirable performances.

But what can be considered some consolation for at least Mary Kom, she ended the year by winning the International Boxing Association's (AIBA) Legends' Award for her five world titles among several other accolades.

She also decided to drop a rung to 48kg at the end of the year amid speculation that her favourite weight category could soon be included in the roster for 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

The women boxers had one more reason to celebrate in Sonia Lather. The featherweight (57kg) boxer, who took to the sport for anger management, was the lone Indian to win a medal at the World Championships this year, claiming a silver.

Among the men, Shiva, Manoj and Vikas were without doubt India's top performers with Vikas also trying his hand at the AIBA Pro Boxing (APB). The former Asian Games gold-medallist, who lost in the quarterfinals in Rio, capped the year by winning the AIBA APB Best Boxer award, a historic first for an Indian boxer.

Shiva and Manoj, on the other hand, decided to go

higher after the Olympics and shifted to lightweight (60kg) and welterweight (69kg) divisions respectively. Both of them put behind the heartbreak in Rio by crowning themselves national champions earlier this month.

Even as the boxers in amateur circuit tried to regain lost ground, professional boxing, which took off in a big way after Vijender's entry into the circuit last year, continued to gain momentum.

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