

# sunday pioneer

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Published From: HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN VIJAYAWADA

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**Steps to enduring glory in RHYTHM with tradition**

Dil se

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

the pioneer

**What did Indira Gandhi do for Medak? When Revanth Reddy was in the Opposition, he said that development took place only in Gajwel and Medak district. Now he is spreading the lie that there is no development. Revanth is the KD and Jodi of BJP. If anyone institutes an Oscar for liars it will go to Revanth.**

**- Harish Rao, BRS MLA**

## DON'T MISS...

**'Vote for those who can...**

Voters should vote for candidates who will develop their constituencies, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Telangana, Vikas Raj, said. He was speaking while inaugurating a photo exhibition on voters' awareness on Saturday organised by the Central Bureau of Communication. He urged voters to join the 'festival' of democracy and make it a free and fair exercise. "We need to make elections a free and fair exercise. The responsibility for that rests on voters as they..."

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## Indian Navy conducts...

The Indian Navy on Saturday said it carried out an extensive exercise along the East Coast as part of efforts to check its preparedness to meet any maritime security challenges. The exercise 'Poorvi Leher' witnessed participation of ships, submarines, aircraft and special naval forces. The Indian Navy conducted Exercise Poorvi Lehar on East Coast under the Operational Control of the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, the Navy said. It said the exercise was aimed at validation...

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## Cash-strapped Pak makes formal...

Pakistan has made a formal request to IMF for seeking the next bailout package in the range of US\$ 6 to US\$ 8 billion with the possibility of augmentation through climate financing, a media report said on Saturday. Cash-strapped Pakistan also requested to dispatch the International Monetary Fund (IMF) review mission next month to firm up details of the next bailout package for three years under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF). However, the exact size and timeframe of the...

**-MONEY**

## 'A third of China's urban...

About a third of China's urban population is estimated to be at risk due to land subsidence, shows a new finding which researchers said is indicative of a global phenomenon. China's urban area below the sea level could triple by 2120, potentially affecting 55 to 128 million residents, it found. Using satellite data, the research team studied 82 cities, including Shanghai and Beijing, with a collective population of nearly 700 million people. The team, including researchers from the University of East Anglia, UK, found that 45 per cent of the urban land area analysed was sinking, with 16 per cent sinking at the rate of 10 millimetres a year. Hotspots included Beijing and the coastal city of Tianjin...

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## OBTUSE ANGLE



# CM Revanth vows to waive farm loans by August 15

**Says Modi and KCR didn't care for Medak**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Vowing that he will waive farm loans up to Rs 2 lakh by August 15, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that he is not S. Jaipal Reddy or Jana Reddy to lose power. He declared that he would be in power for the next 10 years.

Addressing the gathering at the nomination filing of Congress's Medak candidate Neelam Madhu Mudiraj on Saturday, Revanth said that Modi and KCR didn't care for Medak although they had been in power for the last 10 years.

He said that the BRS had fielded a person who had grabbed thousands of acres belonging to farmers in connection with the Mallanna Sagar Project. Venkatrami Reddy was the Medak Collector at that time, he added. Anyone who touches the Congress would turn into ashes, he warned.

The CM said that the Congress government launched the Indiramma housing scheme to construct 4.5 lakh houses with an outlay of Rs 22,500 crore. He said that the poor can live with dignity if they get a house and added that Modi

and KCR are conspiring to derail the Indiramma scheme.

Revanth said that the Congress government will give Rs 500 as bonus to paddy farmers from the next season. The CM said that KCR and Modi never concentrated on Medak and that the people of Medak ensured the victory of Indira Gandhi when the Congress was in trouble.

He said that Indira Gandhi brought BHFL, ICRISAT, BDL and many other public sector undertakings to Hyderabad.

Revanth said the Congress gave



CM Revanth addressing a rally ahead of the filing of nomination by Congress's Medak candidate Neelam Madhu Mudiraj on Saturday

a ticket to a member of the Mudiraj community and that it is the respon-

sibility of the people to ensure the victory of Neelam Madhu.

## 'Lok Sabha polls war between two families'

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy campaigned in Bengaluru and said that the current LS elections will impact politics in the country. "Bengaluru has been recognized as an IT city because of the Congress. Due to the efforts of the Congress, jobs were created in the IT sector. BJP candidate PC Mohan won three times, but what did he do for Bengaluru? In Parliament, he never demanded funds for Bengaluru. If

people are facing problems due to drinking water shortage they are not asking for funds from the Centre. He does not talk about solving the Cauvery dispute," he said. Has PC Mohan spoken about the problems of Karnataka in the Lok Sabha at any time, Revanth asked. He doesn't need to go to the central hall of Parliament to eat peanuts as they are available at the Bengaluru bus stand too, Revanth



said. "This is not an election but a war between two parivars."

**Continued on Page 2**

## Saffron logo of DD News sparks political row

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A change in the colour of the logo of public broadcaster Doordarshan News from red to orange sparked off a political row with the opposition terming it as "grossly illegal" and reflecting a "pro-BJP bias".

The public broadcaster unveiled the "new look" DD News last week, drawing sharp criticism from West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who dubbed it as an attempt at "saffronisation" of Doordarshan during elections.

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur took a jibe at Banerjee, saying her love for "saffron" is "publicly known" while the BJP termed the change as a "homecoming", contending that the saffron logo was tested



in 1982. "I am shocked at the sudden saffronisation and change of colour of our Doordarshan logo when the national elections are taking place across the country! It is absolutely unethical, grossly illegal, and speaks loudly of the pro-BJP bias of the national public broadcaster," Banerjee said in a post on X. BJP IT Cell chief Amit Malviya said India got colour TV in 1982 and Doordarshan became the national broadcaster the same year.

## CM body-shaming me instead of answering questions: Harish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA Harish Rao said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is body-shaming him and countered the statements the CM made at the Medak meeting.

"Speaking in Medak, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy exposed his stupidity once again. He is becoming impatient as he is not able to answer our questions. While he was in the Opposition, he said that development took place only in Gajwel and Medak district, and now he is spreading the lie that there has been no development so far," Harish said.

"If Singur waters reached Medak district it is because of KCR. There should be values in politics. I am not talking about your height and your

CM's post. But you will understand if I speak your own language. You are short, but don't you have a brain at least as big as a mustard seed," he said.

It may be mentioned here that Revanth Reddy said that Harish Rao grew tall but didn't have brains.



## 'Pay salaries to Gurukul computer teachers'

BRS MLA Harish Rao demanded that the Congress government should pay pending salaries to computer teachers in Gurukuls. He said in a tweet on X, "The Congress is all words but no action is taken. It is being publicised that government employees are being paid on the first of every month. But the

reality is just the opposite. ICT computer teachers working in Gurukuls across the state have not received salaries for three months. Due to this, they are in debt and facing many problems. These families are now on the road." He said that the Congress government should pay pending salaries immediately.

## Cong-bound BRS MLA takes U-turn

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Rajendranagar BRS MLA Prakash Goud took a U-turn on party change on Saturday. He said that he would not join the Congress and would continue in the BRS.

Prakash met Revanth Reddy on Friday. He held a meeting with party cadres on Friday evening and Saturday morning and clarified on party change. However, many leaders and activists seem to have suggest-



ed to him that if he changes party, there will be opposition from the people. Going by their opinion, he

## PHONE TAPPING HC grants 4 hours' interim bail to Radha Kishan Rao

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court has granted interim bail to former task force DCP Radhakishan Rao in the phone tapping case.

Radha Kishan Rao had sought bail due to his mother's medical problems. The court granted him interim bail from 11 am to 3 pm on Sunday. Radha Kishan Rao will be going to Karimnagar where his mother is undergoing treatment at a private hospital.

He is accused number 4 in the phone tapping case. He was arrested by the police on March 29. After the police custody was over on April 10, he was sent to Chanchalguda Jail.

## TG Police ranks second in stolen phones recovery

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Police recovered 26,833 mobile phones last year after the launch of the CEIR portal. The TG cops now rank second in the country in recovering stolen phones.

The ADGP of CID monitors progress and this led to the recovery of 26,833 lost and stolen mobile devices last year. The last 1,000 devices were recovered in 11 days averaging 73 recoveries per day. The CEIR Portal, developed by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), to combat mobile phone theft and counterfeit devices was launched nationwide on May 17, 2023, and on a pilot basis in Telangana from April 19, 2023.

**Continued on Page 2**

## Modi, Shah to campaign in TG

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah are coming to Telangana to take part in the Lok Sabha election campaign.

Prime Minister Modi will come to Telangana on April 27. He will attend a meeting of IT experts and also meet senior BJP leaders.

Modi will discuss the strategies



to be adopted in the Lok Sabha elections with the BJP's local leaders.

## VOTING FROM HOME

## Apply before 23<sup>rd</sup> using Form 12 D

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

District Election Officer (DEO) Ronald Rose has said that voters aged above 85 years and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) with 40 per cent benchmark disability can apply for voting from home. To use this facility, eligible voters should apply before 23 April using Form-12 D.

For the first time in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has provided the facility of voting from home for the elderly and Persons with Disabilities.

On Saturday, a meeting was held with representatives of Residential Welfare Associations and Non-Government Organisations at the GHMC headquarters. In that meeting, DEO Ronald Rose said that association members should create



DEO Ronald Rose addressing a meeting with representatives of Residential Welfare Associations and Non-Government Organisations at the GHMC headquarters on Saturday

awareness in their respective areas so that people exercise their franchise on May 13.

The DEO suggested to the representatives of residential association to engage 10 young voters as volunteers in their respective colonies to check the names of the voters in the voters' list and to inform the voters about the details of the polling booth.

If the voters do not receive voter

slips, they should call their Booth Level Officer (BLOs) about their slips. Ronald offered to provide the names and phone numbers of BLOs and campaign material. In case of violations of the Model Code of Conduct, complaints can be made through C-Whistle mobile app or through audio, video clips and photos.

## 'It's super Saturday'

**US Consulate processes 1,500 visa applications in a day**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Nearly 1,500 US visa applications were processed in a day at the Hyderabad US Consulate.

The US Consulate said in a tweet, "It's Super Saturday at the Consulate! Hyderabad's Consulate Team opened its doors on the weekend to help meet the demand for visitor visas. 1,500 applicants had their visa interviews today and will travel to the US for business, tourism or to see family members."

The US Consul General in Hyderabad, Jennifer Larson, also pitched in for processing the applications.

"It's Super Saturday again at the



Consulate! Happy to pitch in to help meet the demand for visitor visas. It was great meeting so many wonderful people along the way," she tweeted.

Visitors said they were happy. "The Visa Officer patiently asked everything and the staff was also very polite. They know the value of time," a visitor said.





# Revanth's viewpoints put Cong on the defensive

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, while trying to strike his own path during interviews outside Telangana or to the national media, often shares or elicits viewpoints that are putting the Congress party's state unit on the defensive. For instance, in *Aap ki Adalat*, he had asked first-time voters whom they would vote. Tad came the reply: 'Modi'. He had to grin and bear it, saying: 'Okay vote for him'. Then in Kerala, he said that the Congress does not trust EVMs. Quick on the uptake, Bharat Rashtira Samithi reminded him that he became Chief Minister because of EVMs. Revanth is taking a stand against alliance partners also. In an interview, he opposed the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam's remarks on Sanatana Dharma. DMK is Congress-led INDI Alliance partner. He criticised Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in Kerala. Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka had to do the clean-up job while sewing up alliance with the left parties in Telangana.

## KCR CHANGES TACK

Bharat Rashtira Samithi chief K Chandrasekhar Rao has of late switched to clean jokes and comparisons while putting down opponents in his public meetings. At the Sultanabad meeting recently, he called the Congress dispensation in the state as 'Lilliput government'. At the Chevella meeting, he characterized turncoat Ranjith Reddy as 'sunflower'. He asked: 'Is he (Ranjith) a sunflower that would turn wherever there is power?'

Noticeably, KCR has been doing such things at the start of the speech,

thereby setting the tone and drawing a huge response. Memes continue to keep alive his humorous twists thereafter. Previously, at a presser, he had come down heavily on certain Congress leaders, for which the Election Commission issued him notices regarding his language. So, in public meetings, he has changed tack, which is funny, but not vulgar. The party cadre believe that this clean humour from KCR is giving BRS an edge over Revanth Reddy, who continues to use language that some circles say is unbecoming of a chief minister.

## REPORTERS' DIARY

### BRS SCOUTING FOR A SONG TO BEAT MUDU RANGULA JENDA

Wherever Chief Minister Revanth Reddy goes, singer Nalgonda Gaddar's catchy number '*Mudu rangula jenda*' follows him. Revanth is so captivated by this song that even when he goes outside the state, he ensures that it is played. The evocative song has not just the masses on a roll, but is being played in colleges and during performances by DJs at functions. The BRS is yet to hit upon a comparable, hummable song that it can own. It is learnt that when Nalgonda Gaddar had offered to sing a song for BRS before the Assembly elections, KTR was reluctant to go ahead. Unlike BRS, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy went ahead with '*Pulivendula Puli*' song for YSRCP by the same singer. BRS did release '*Gulabila Jendamma*' song ahead of Bathukamma before the Assembly elections and pushed it a lot

on social media. However, a spoof by its opponents titled 'Gulabila Dongalamma' but with the same tune is far more popular. So, now BRS is back to the drawing board to come out with a catchy number. BRS feels that it might take time for '*Mudu rangula jenda*' song to fade and give space for a new number.

### IN POLITICS, BLOOD IS NOT THICKER THAN WATER!

The proverb 'Blood is thicker than water' signifies that family relationships and loyalties are the strongest and most important ones. In politics, it may not be so. So it seems when we look at politics in Andhra Pradesh, where APCC president YS Sharmila reacted surprisingly to the injury her brother and AP CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy suffered in stone pelting during his yatra. Sharmila tweeted: "We believe this incident was accidental. But if someone purposefully carried out this attack, then everyone should condemn it. There shouldn't be any scope for violence in a democracy. I pray for the speedy recovery of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy." This reaction surprised political circles and people. For, as a political rival, she has been outdoing Telugu Desam Party chief Chandrababu Naidu in criticizing Jagan's policies. And, after the stone pelting incident, several politicians, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed their shock and condemned it. It is a different matter Chandrababu Naidu reacted in his own style. People feel she reacted more as APCC president than as a sister.

(With inputs from Naveena Ghanate and SNCN ACHARYULU)

# KTR confident of BRS winning Chevella seat

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KTR said that people hate Ranjith Reddy and Mahender Reddy as they enjoyed power while they were in the BRS and later betrayed the party.

"They are asking what the party and KCR have done to them," KTR said. He said that people do not trust leaders who are not committed to a party and reject those who change parties for power.

A review meeting of the Chevella Parliamentary constituency was held at KCR's residence in Nandi Nagar.



MLAs and former MLAs of Chevella attended the meeting chaired by KTR. BRS leaders said that they were confident that the pink flag would fly again in Chevella.

## Yechury to miss INDIA bloc rally in Ranchi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

CPI (Marxist) general secretary Sitaram Yechury on Saturday wrote to former Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren's wife Kalpana Soren that he will not be able to attend the INDIA bloc's Ranchi rally on April 21 as he is busy with election campaign in Kerala.

However, he extended his support for the rally.

"Unfortunately, I am in the midst of the election campaign in Kerala, where voting is scheduled for April 26. You are surely aware of the importance of Kerala for the CPI (M)," he wrote in the letter.

## Speaker says he is campaigning for Ranjith in Chevella

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Gaddam Prasad Kumar, the Speaker of the Telangana Legislative Assembly, announced that he is actively working for the victory of Dr G. Ranjith Reddy, the Congress candidate in Chevella. He said that he is working extensively for the victory of Ranjith Reddy in the Lok Sabha elections and that Congress workers are also actively involved in the campaign. He directed party workers to resolve issues if they had any minor differences. He also asked everyone to work for the victory of Ranjith Reddy as per the instructions of the Congress high command and Chief Minister Revanth Reddy.

# 'Big and powerful people joined hands to remove me from power'

PNS ■ CHIKKABALLAPURA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said big and powerful people in India and abroad have joined hands to remove him from power.

Addressing a mega public meeting here, he said, "Mothers and sisters have come in a large number here. Your struggle and the challenges you face to nurture your family, Modi has seen this in his house. These days big and powerful people in the country and abroad have united to remove Modi."

"But, because of Nari Shakti and Maatru Shakti's blessings and Suraksha kavach (safety armour), Modi is able to move on fighting challenges."

"Serving mothers, sisters



## Kishan hits out at Cong for not implementing poll promises

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana BJP President G Kishan Reddy on Saturday asked if Congress has the moral right to seek votes in the Lok Sabha elections when it has "not implemented the poll guarantees" it had promised to

execute in 100 days after coming to power. Congress gave full page advertisements in newspapers before the assembly elections held in November last year that the guarantees would be implemented in 100 days, Kishan Reddy, a Union Minister, said.

## AP emptied Nagarjunasagar tail pond: Jagadish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress government is careless about water resources as Andhra Pradesh is taking water from the Nagarjunasagar tail pond, MLA Jagadish Reddy said.

He said that the emptying of Nagarjunasagar tail-pond by Andhra Pradesh exposes the Congress government's carelessness regarding river waters, irrigation and drinking water needs.

Responding to the theft of Krishna tail pond waters he said that an attempt is being made to make Nalgonda district a desert. He asked what the district ministers were doing and added whether they were sleeping. The tail pond located 21 km downstream of

the Nagarjunasagar dam at Satrasala in Nalgonda has a storage capacity of six tmc ft and in the last 10 years, it used to be full even during summer and met the drinking water needs of Nalgonda district.

Jagadish said that this year it had been emptied by AP. He said the district was pushed to the brink of drought as we did not stand up for our rights in the Krishna districts in the last 60 years. He said that there is a danger that Nalgonda district will once again fall victim to the fluoride racket under the Congress government.

Jagdish demanded that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and district ministers should be held responsible for the theft of water from the tail pond.

## KCR to hold 21 road shows over 17 days

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtira Samithi president and former Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao will conduct 22 road shows over 17 days -- from 24 April to 10 May -- as part of the party's Lok Sabha campaign. He will conduct road shows in Bhongir, Mahabubnagar, Nagarkurnool, Warangal, Khammam, kothagudem, Mahabubabad, Warangal, Jammikunta, Veenkavanka, Ramagundam, Mancheriyal, Karimnagar, Nizamabad, Jagtial, Kamareddy, Medak, Narsapur and Patanchervuvu.

The road shows will start from 5:30 pm.

## 'Kejriwal stopped taking insulin months before his arrest'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had stopped taking insulin months before his arrest and is on a basic anti-diabetes oral medicine, officials said on Saturday, citing a report by the Tihar jail administration to Lt Governor VK Saxena.

The report, submitted by the Tihar director general on Friday, said that the chief minister's health was reviewed on April 10 and April 15 by a medicine specialist who advised oral anti-diabetic drugs and it is "incorrect to state that Kejriwal was denied insulin at any point of time" during his treatment.

It said that there is adequate availability of insulin in the jail dispensary and it can be administered to Kejriwal "as and when required", the officials added.

Saxena had on April 18 asked the director general of prisons to submit a factual

report on the Aam Aadmi Party's allegations that Kejriwal was not being provided insulin in Tihar jail.

AAP leader Atishi claimed that the report has "exposed" the "conspiracy to kill" Kejriwal in jail, while the BJP asked AAP to stop its "false campaign" on the issue.

In a statement, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) said that Kejriwal under "careful medical supervision" started an 'Insulin Reversal Programme' and the administration of insulin was "discontinued" and replaced by oral medication. However, the insulin reversal programme stopped after his arrest on March 21, it said. "Therefore, CM Arvind Kejriwal, who is a severe Type-II Insulin dependent diabetic, has to be restored the administration of insulin to manage his sugar levels," said AAP, claiming that Kejriwal faces the risk of a multi-organ failure if his sugar level remains consistently high.

## TG police rank...

Continued from page 1

The Hyderabad Commissionerate leads in recoveries with 4,348 phones, followed by the Cyberabad Commissionerate with 2,772 phones. In Telangana, Shikha Rao, IPS, the Addl. DGP of CID is the Nodal Officer for the CEIR Portal. The CEIR Portal operates across all 780 police units in the state. The Telangana Police in collaboration with DoT integrated the CEIR Portal

with the TS Police Citizen Portal to improve user accessibility and advised the public to report lost and missing mobile devices through this platform. Dr Lavanya NJP, the SP of Cyber Crime, CID, Hyderabad, oversees CEIR implementation in coordination with DoT officials Y. Sreenivasa Rao, the DDG of Security, Yeshendra Kuwaiti Bansod, the Director of Security, Lakshmana Kumar K, the Assistant Director (Security Audit), and Ch. Suresh Babu, the Inspector of the IT Cell, CID.

## Govt to probe...

Continued from page 1

The Forest Department filed a special leave petition in the Supreme Court challenging the High Court verdict in the matter.

Meanwhile, the District Collector reportedly filed a rejoinder affidavit in the Supreme Court without the permission of the government. Sources said that this affidavit supported the judgement given by the High Court that the land belongs to the private individual.

Objecting to two government departments submitting different affidavits, the Supreme Court sought an explanation from the Chief Secretary. Sources said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy took a special interest in the matter immedi-

ately after assuming charge. The officials have been told to file an affidavit in the Supreme Court immediately and to fight the case.

After the CM's intervention, the affidavit submitted by the District Collector was withdrawn from the Supreme Court. An affidavit was filed by the Chief Secretary on February 8 saying that the encroached land is a reserve forest.

The Supreme Court gave its judgement in the case two days ago clarifying that the land belongs to the Forest Department.

The Supreme Court directed the state government to take action against the officials who filed affidavits favouring private individuals.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Sukla Paksha

Tithi:

Trayodashi: Apr 20 10:42 PM to Apr 22 01:11 AM

Chaturdashi:

Apr 22 01:11 AM to Apr 23 03:26 AM

Nakshatram:

Uttara Phalguni: Apr 20 02:04 PM to Apr 21 05:08 PM

Hasta:

Apr 21 05:08 PM to Apr 22 07:59 PM

Rahukalam:

4:56 PM to 6:30 PM

Yamagandam:

12:14 PM to 1:48 PM

Varjyam:

02:32 AM to 04:19 AM

Gulika:

3:22 PM to 4:56 PM

Amritakalam:

09:01 AM to 10:49 AM

Abhijit Muhurtham:

11:49 AM to 12:39 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast:

Partly Cloudy

Temp:

38°

Humidity:

43%

Sunrise:

5:56 AM

Sunset:

6:34 PM

Updated:

April 20 2024 5:00 PM



# ‘Vote for those who can develop your constituency’

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Voters should vote for candidates who will develop their constituencies, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Telangana, Vikas Raj, said.

He was speaking while inaugurating a photo exhibition on voters' awareness on Saturday organised by the Central Bureau of Communication.

He urged voters to join the 'festival' of democracy and make it a free and fair exercise. "We need to make elections a free and fair exercise. The responsibility for that rests on voters as they have to make elections inducement-free," he said.

He said that the first thing for voters to do is to find their polling booth. There are many ways like the ECI portal and mobile apps which give info about polling booths.

"Go to your polling booth with your EPIC or any of the 12 identification cards recognised by ECI to exercise your



Telangana Chief Electoral Officer Vikas Raj inaugurating photo exhibition on voters' awareness at Mahatma Gandhi Bus Station in Hyderabad on Saturday

franchise," he said.

The CEO urged voters not to make summer heat an excuse to skip voting as the ECI is making arrangements to counter the heat wave in the State. The ECI has been conducting awareness campaigns about elections for seven to eight months, he said.

Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) Vice Chairman and Managing Director, VC Sajjanar, IPS, called upon first-time voters to actively take part in voting as polling day is a holiday. He asked voters not to get influenced by freebies.

Shruti Patil, Additional DG,

PIB and the Central Bureau of Communication (CBC), Hyderabad, spoke about the I&B Ministry's initiatives launched in collaboration with the CEO's office like street plays which were staged across the state.

She said that the CBC would organise similar exhibitions in all major towns of the state to counter the apathy of urban voters.

Joint CEO Sarfaraz Ahmed, TSRTC Executive Director A. Purushotham Naik, Regional Manager (Ranga Reddy) D. Raju, PIB Director Balakrishna, Deputy Director Kareena B. Thengamam, Deputy Director Manas Krishnakanth, CBC Assistant Director I. Hari Babu and others were also present.

The three-day exhibition on voters' awareness is being held at the central reservation counter of the MGBS. The exhibition features awareness videos made by CBC and will conclude on April 22.

## Man held for posing as doctor

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Commissioner's task force (South Zone) in coordination with the Kala Pathar police on Saturday arrested a man for posing as a fake doctor.

The accused was identified as Aslam Shfi Sayyed (41), a resident of Bahadurpura. Sayyed claimed to be a hair transplant expert and provided treatment for lipoma without any qualification.

Sayyed worked as a receptionist at the Edifine Hair Transplant & Plastic Surgery Centre at Gachibowli. He posed as a hair transplant expert and dermatologist.

The police seized Lipo Lab-1 Box (10 injections), Injection Packet-12, Cotton-1 Packet, Control D Alcohol-10 Packets, Saline Bottle -01, Strauss Pad -1, Syringes -2 Betadine 10 ML-1, Salicylic Peel and Other Peels, Shower Cap, Scissor -1, Cell Phones -2, from the accused.

Sayyed was booked under sections 417, 419, 420 of the Indian Penal Code.

## TSIC hosts webinar to mark World Creativity, Innovation Day

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Innovation Cell (TSIC) on Saturday hosted a webinar titled "Celebrating the Spirit of Innovation" on Saturday, as part of the T-Innovation Mahotsavam, remembering World Creativity & Innovation Day.

Over 800 attendees, including college students, entrepreneurs, representatives from NGOs, and innovators from Telangana, participated in the session. The event featured industry leaders and local innovators sharing their journeys.

This webinar provided a platform for participants to connect and exchange ideas. Innovators from diverse backgrounds had the opportunity to network and collaborate, strengthening Telangana's innovation ecosystem. Industry leaders offered practical advice on bringing up innovative ideas, empowering participants to turn their visions into reality.

Additionally, Telangana's innovators, such as A Srija,



Ganesh Yakara, and Hemesh Chadalvada, shared their stories of addressing local challenges through creativity and determination.

Ganesh Yakara's "Samskar Toy," designed to educate children about personal safety, and Hemesh Chadalvada's "Alpha Monitor," aiding individuals with Alzheimer's and educating children about the concept of good touch and bad touch, were highlighted for their innovation and social impact.

Expert talks by leaders like Ajit Rangnekar, CIO of Telangana, and Annie Vijaya, CEO of ACIC-CBIT, provided valuable points on escalating innovations and navigating

the state's innovation ecosystem.

Telangana CIO Ajit Rangnekar said, "Telangana's grassroots innovators have demonstrated talent. The TSIC's webinar provided a platform to showcase their achievements and connect potential innovators with the resources they need to thrive."

As part of the T-Innovation Mahotsavam, the webinar was conducted to aim and promote a culture of innovation across Telangana. Highlighting the achievements of local innovators and offering guidance from industry experts, TSIC hopes to inspire a new wave of innovation and entrepreneurship in the state.

## Several parts of city receive brief spell of rainfall

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Several parts of Hyderabad received a brief spell of rainfall on Saturday morning providing relief from the scorching heat.

On Saturday the maximum temperature was 38 degree Celsius while the minimum temperature was 25 degree C. Indian Meteorological Department -Hyderabad (IMD-H) had also predicted rainfall in Telangana Sunday.

On April 20, Sangareddy, Vikarabad, Rangareddy, Mahabubnagar, Narayanpet, Jogulamba Gadwal, Wanaparthy, and Nagarkurnool experienced thunderstorms and lightning.

Apart from them ,

Peddapalle, J.Bhupalpally, Mulugu, Kothagudem, and Khammam are also likely to receive rainfall on April 21, which will bring down temperatures in the range of 36-40 degrees Celsius in the state, as per IMD-H report

On April 21, districts including Kumararam Bheem, Nizamabad, Jagtial, Peddapalle, Kamareddy, Medak, Y. Bhuvana giri, Suryapet, Nalgonda, and Nagarkurnool are likely to receive rainfall.

The change in weather is expected to bring relief to the residents of Telangana as temperatures soared in the past few days.

The temperature is likely to range between 36-40 degrees Celsius.



## TSSPDCL files police complaint for complaining on X about powercut

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TSSPDCL filed a complain in Nampally for complaining about powercut on X. A lawyer and activist Vijay Gopal was in Nampally court when there was power interruption. He tweeted about it, only to be informed later that it was due to internal issue and not related to TSSPDCL. However, the authorities filed a police complaint stating that Vijay Gopal and Telugu Scribe handle promoted Fake News. Reacting to it, Vijay Gopal said, "When Bhatti Vikramarka and Revanth Reddy said power cuts should be managed, without delay, somehow

TSSPDCL seems to have understood it as no complaints & I received 3 calls today who said they were also threatened with criminal action for a genuine Power cut issues reported on

Twitter, as Tsspdcl has shitty call centre & complaint management system. Is this how you manage the issue? Brainless AEs' or some1 who seem like got jobs by purchasing question papers, don't seem to understand diff between complaint & false info".

He said, "How are you allowing this type of hooliganism by your ministry/staff? Or did you order this type of counter to handle complaints where there is actually power cut? Does @TsspdclCorporat think @CPHydCity @hydcitypolice has nothing else to do than take their useless complaints? They think we are school kids to be scared of criminal complaints or FIR? Do they or police not know the consequences of filing a false complaint or FIR with police? Is it like playing games for them? Filing police complaints?"

## TOMCOM to hold recruitment drive for nurses for placement in Germany

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Overseas Manpower Company will conduct a recruitment drive for nurses on April 23. The drive is being conducted in collaboration with the Federal Employment Agency of the Government of Germany.

As part of the recruitment programme German language training is being offered for the candidates. Candidates who hold BSc Nursing degrees from recognised institutions and are in the age group of 21-38 are eligible for the programme.

Candidates must have work experience of 1-3 years in ICU, geriatrics/orthopedics/psychiatry/cardiology/neonatal/surgical ward etc. and candidates with German language skills can also apply. Those who complete B1 course in India will be promoted as Registered nurse after clearing B2 and recognition exam in Germany. The minimum salary offered is 2300- 2800 Euros.

Training is free of cost; stipend will be paid to selected candidates upon successful completion of German language exam (euros 250 after clearing A2 exam and Euros 250 after clearing B1 exam). All Visa, Immigration process and one-way flight tickets will be facilitated free of cost by TOMCOM & German partnership under this programme.

## Chain snatching gang busted; jewels worth Rs 30.40 lakh seized

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Rachakonda police on Friday arrested four members of the Dakkali gang who were involved in a series of chain snatching incidents in Yadadri-Bhongir.

Gold and Silver ornaments from the accused.

The accused were identified as Potteti Maria Das (43), a mason and native of Palnadu, Andhra Pradesh. Karne Laxmi (29), a labourer and resident of Chinthala Basthi, Alair, Potteti Shanthaiah (54), a native of Andhra Pradesh a rickshaw puller and Banala Rajesh (23), a labourer and resident of

Boduppal. All the accused belong to the Dqakkali caste, Das and Shanthaiah are brothers.

The gang targeted women sleeping outside their houses or on the terraces. The accused used to snatch

mangal sutras as most victims would be wearing it. They targeted houses at isolated places and which were easy to escape from. Das

committed the theft while the others watched the surroundings. Das and Laxmi used to travel on the bike in order to escape the police. The accused were apprehended at Yadagirigutta Rural, during a vehicle check.



## Builders should accord priority for fire safety: Nagi Reddy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Fire department inspected over 3,000 buildings under construction during the last three months. There are total 6,000 buildings under construction. Of these, 86 were issued notices for lacking fire safety measures.

Director General of Fire Safety Y Nagi Reddy emphasised the importance of equipping every high-rise building with fire safety measures such as water sprinklers, smoke detectors, and water

pumps. The need to follow the directions of the Telangana State Disaster Response and Fire Services department's Fire Service Week 2024 is stressed.

Nagi Reddy stressed the necessity of maintaining fire systems in every high-rise building. Fire drills and demonstrations were conducted at Sattva Knowledge City on Saturday

The Telangana State Disaster Response and Fire Services Department conducted various fire safety awareness programmes

throughout Fire Service Week 2024. From April 14 to April 20, they organised events to educate the public about fire safety and its significance.

At the closing ceremony of Fire Service Week 2024, Director General Nagi Reddy, said, "for now approximately 29 fire stations in the city are effectively handling fire control situations where new fire engines and equipment are soon to be delivered. Plans for further expansion of fire stations, including land allotment in Warangal are underway".



Director General Fire Safety Y Nagi Reddy with Telangana State Disaster Response and Fire Services Department officers at the closing ceremony of Fire Service Week 2024.

## City CP calls for peaceful celebration of Hanuman Jayanti

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Commissioner of Police Kothakota Sreenivas Reddy on Saturday conducted a review meeting ahead of Hanuman Jayanti on April 23.

Reddy called for a peaceful festival and rally. The Commissioner stressed on beginning the procession early, avoiding use of DJ, no bursting of firecrackers, no throwing of vermilion or gular on the passers-by, no carrying of sticks/swords/firearms, no provocative slogans, speeches, songs, displaying provocative banners, use of limited number of vehicles and no disturbance to people from other communities.

Use of Drone Cameras is not permitted without prior permission of the Police Department.

"Hyderabad City takes pride in being a truly multicultural city and we have to ensure that peace and tranquility continues to be maintained without giving scope to anybody pointing out any bias towards any communi-

ty," Reddy said, urging people not to fall prey to fake news, rumours and avoiding provocative posts on social media.

"Since this is election time the organisers should not violate the conditions of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and give any scope to find fault in the conduct of the event.

No Political symbols or Political speeches will be permitted during the Hanuman Jayanti," the Commissioner stressed.

Members of Telangana State Bajrang Dal, Hyderabad Bajrang Dal, Secunderabad Bajrang Dal, Viswa Hindu Parishad and Senior Officers from GHMC, R&B, Fire Services, Electricity, EMRI, TSRTC, HMWS&SB, Transport department and Health and Medical Departments attended the meet.

A Joint Control Room will be set up at ICC, Banjarahills from 8 am on April 23 wherein officials of various departments will be available to attend to any problem.

## 10K Democracy Run organised to boost voter participation

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 10K Democracy Run was organised to boost Voter Participation in the city. This event commenced with a signature campaign launch at Mansoorabad Pedda Cheruvu at 6.30 am on Saturday. A large number of people took part in the run.

The procession passed through various residential colonies including Bhavani Nagar, Saraswati Nagar, and Aditya Nagar, the runners travelled through the streets of Mansoorabad Chowrastha, South End Park, GSI, Bandlaguda, and Anand Nagar before concluding at the Ajanta Ace gated community.

Joined by residents along the route, nearly 2000 individuals stopped to learn about the importance of voting and cheered on the participants, demonstrating support despite the summer rains.

Covering key areas such as Nagole, Sai Nagar, Rock Town Colony, and Mansoorabad village, the runners spread to



revive the democratic spirit as Telangana approaches election day. The event lead with a collective "Pledge to Vote" by both the runners and participants, symbolizing their dedication to democratic participation.

Let'sVote, a political non-profit organization dedicated to promoting voter awareness since 2008, teamed up with LB Nagar Runners, a subgroup of the Hyderabad Runners Society conducted this 10K Democracy Run aimed to enhancing civic engagement ahead of the upcoming elections in Telangana.

Founder Member of

Let'sVote, Sheela Panicker said,"The significance of initiatives like the 10K Democracy Run, signifies the collective journey of the Indian electorate towards shaping the future of our nation through the Power of Voting."

Panicker also said, "plans are made to conduct more walks, runs, and debates in residential colonies to engage with citizens in smaller groups, aiming to effectively promote the importance of voting and increase the voting percentage. Currently, a democracy walk is planned on May 4 covering Malkajgiri, and on April 27 at Guntur".

## MALFUNCTIONING OF SEWING MACHINE Consumer approaches court

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Following an unpleasant experience with a sewing machine, a consumer in Hyderabad took legal action against manufacturer Usha International Limited and sought a compensation of Rs 5 lakh.

The complainant Narasingh Rao was represented by Pasham Mohith Reddy, the counsel, stated that Rao acquired a Usha Janome Marvela sewing machine on January 6, 2024 to enhance his skills and generate additional income. Unfortunately, the machine malfunctioned during a demonstration on January 27, 2024.

Despite diligent attempts to seek redress through Usha's customer support channels, he alleges that the company failed to provide satisfactory assistance until local intervention was sought.

Subsequent examination revealed that the machine was equipped with a 40-watt motor, contrary to the advertised 60-watt motor.

In light of these circumstances, Pasham Mohith Reddy, counsel for the Petitioner, has approached the Commission, seeking compensation amounting to the cost of the machine, totaling Rs. 10,800, along with 24% interest.

## Emergency pumping begins at Nagarjuna Sagar for augmenting water supply in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

To augment supply of drinking water for the city, the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) has started 10 water pumps as part of emergency pumping from Nagarjunasagar reservoir.

Arrangements will be made to supply water through submersible pumps floating in the water. HMWSSB is also ready to do the second phase of emergency pumping. From May 15, HMWSSB is planning to

withdraw water from Sripada Yellampalli reservoir.

Managing Director Sudarshan Reddy made it clear that there is plenty of water in Himayat Sagar, Osman Sagar and Singur reservoirs. There is no threat to the drinking water supply of Hyderabad city.

"If any necessary, the water board is ready to provide drinking water through emergency pumping from the two reservoirs", Sudarshan Reddy said.

The full tank level of

Nagarjuna Sagar is 590 feet, but now the water has reached 508 feet.

As the water level reaches dead storage the board has started the emergency pumping. The last emergency pumping was done in 2017.

Water is being lifted from the Eliminati Madhava Reddy project in Sagar Reservoir to Puttagandi Approach Canal, from there to Akkampally Balancing Reservoir. After purifying the water there, water would be supplied to Hyderabad.

Water board for the drinking water needs for the city, 270 million gallons per day (MGD) of water per day from Nagarjuna Sagar Reservoir, Akkampally Balancing Reservoir through Krishna Drinking Water Supply Phase - 1, 2, 3. According to this, per month 1.38 TMC of water supplying to the city.

This year the capacity to supply the city has been increased to 2600 MLDs. Compared to last year.. this year we are supplying 175 MLDs of additional water.

## Kidnaped minor rescued; three abductors held

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Commissioner's Task Force (East Zone) in coordination with the Markook Police of Siddipet rescued a minor and arrested three persons involved in kidnapping. The accused were identified as Chandan Kumar (18) a native of Jharkhand, Anup Chowdhari (21) a native of Bihar and Meghnath Karmakar (18) a native of Assam.

On Friday, Tovid Alam a native of Bihar, was on his way to the school when two persons approached him on the pretext of buying chocolates. As the minor did not return home, Tovid's parents asked his schoolmates regarding his whereabouts and came to know

that he was abducted. Tovid's father Tabrej approached the police and filed a complaint. As the police began investigating, Tovid's parents received a call demanding a ransom Rs 15lakh. The accused threatened to harm the boy if the ransom was not arranged. The parents were asked to wait for further instructions.

Based on a tip off, the police nabbed the accused from the reservation complex of the Secunderabad railway station. The accused revealed that they were working in the small-scale industry at Karkapatla; the earnings weren't sufficient and hence they planned to kidnap the boy and sought ransom from the victim's family.



Vinod Kumar files papers for Karimnagar seat  
PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

BRS Lok Sabha candidate for Karimnagar seat B Vinod Kumar on Saturday filed nomination papers with district returning officer and Collector Pamela Satpathy. Later talking to media, he recalled that just five MPs fought and achieved the statehood for Telangana. He stressed the need to ensure the success of BRS candidates to protect the interest of the State. He criticised the BJP government at the Centre for not sanctioning even one Navodaya schools to the State. MLAs Gangula Kamalakara, Padu Kaushik Reddy and former MLA Rasamayilalkishan, BRS leader Md Zameeluddin and others were present.

# 11 KGBV students take ill after eating ‘stale food’

PNS ■ NIRMAL

Eleven girl students of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) took ill after eating stale food at their hostel in Narsapur in Nirmal district. According to officials, the students complained of stomachache and diarrhoea after dinner at 10 pm. While three students were admitted to a hospital in Nirmal, seven were sent home on the request of their parents. This is the second incident at the institution within three

weeks. On April 3, 25 students allegedly fell ill after eating breakfast. The incident led to the suspension of the special officer Sunitha, head cook Padma, and the accountant. Slamming the state government over the incident, Harish Rao said that the current incident followed the recent death of a student in the Bhuvanagiri Gurukul hostel due to food poisoning. “These incidents reflect the negligent attitude of the Congress government towards the Gurukul schools



Two girls undergoing treatment in Nirmal hospital

in Telangana, which stood as

an example for the country during the BRS rule. The government should immediately provide better treatment to the affected students. We demand that the Congress government take steps to prevent the recurrence of such incidents,” he said, in a post on X. The BRS leaders said that as many as 135 Gurukul students took ill in the past 50 days. They demanded that the government take action against those responsible for such incidents.

## ‘Muslims orphaned in TG’

Gruha jyothy scheme will be gone after MP elections

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former minister Mahmood Ali held a press meet at Telangana Bhavan. Congress gave six guarantees but did nothing in 100 days. Congress party always does injustice to Telangana and to minorities. Congress party claims to be secular but does nothing. Only regional parties practice secularism in the country. Only KCR has fully implemented secularism” He said, “Power cuts are going on in Hyderabad too, this morning our house also lost power. Gruha jyoti scheme should be completely forgotten

after the MP elections.” He said KCR has done many good programs for minorities. Education is very important for the progress of Muslims. KCR established 204 residential schools for Muslim minorities. Lakh students study in those educational institutions every year. There were not even twelve during the Congress regime. Revanth Reddy promised the minorities but did nothing. Revanth Reddy did not give a single ministerial post to the minorities. Muslims have become orphans in the state” He said that Former BRS MLA Shakeel’s family is also being harassed

“While there was a friendly police during the BRS regime, everyone is wondering why it has changed like this now, Narsingi region is developing beyond Dubai. It is meaningless for Revanth Reddy to say that 12 mosques were demolished during KCR’s regime. Only BRS spoke against CAA in Parliament. Muslim minorities should stand by BRS.” He said that BRS will never support BJP “Congress has damaged the successful Telangana model within four months Many Muslims say that they have been deceived by the words of the Congress leaders”, ali said

## People will teach lesson to Cong at hustings: Pocharam

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

Former speaker and Banswada MLA Pocharam Srinivas Reddy has observed that the people would not give credence to the Congress Party and predicted that they would teach a lesson to the Congress in the LS elections. Talking to media after BRS candidate Gali Anil Kumar filing nomination papers from Zaheerabad Lok Sabha seat on Saturday, he said that no other political leader knows the pulse of the people more than that of KCR. The Congress duped the people to garner votes and threw implementation of the six guarantees to the winds, he alleged and observed that the people’s faith in the Congress has been waning. The people are in no mood to believe what the Congress leaders have to say. On the loan waiver implementation, CM Revanth Reddy would say one thing and deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka would say another



thing, he observed. The Congress had duped people of all sections of society, he said. The people would teach a befitting lesson to the Congress in the LS elections, he said. The BJP did not do anything for the development of the Telangana State and failed to implement promises made at the time of dividing the state, he said. He predicted the victory of the BRS in Zaheerabad seat and appealed to vote for the car symbol.

## What will happen in Telangana politics after LS elections?

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

What will happen in Telangana politics after the Lok Sabha elections? BJP MP K. Laxman says that after the Lok Sabha elections the Congress government will not be there in Telangana. BRS supremo K. Chandrasekhar Rao says that the Congress government may not last a year. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy says that after the Lok Sabha elections the BRS will disappear from TG.

The leaders of all major political parties are injecting heat into politics with their statements ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. The political parties are playing mind games to attract voters. But the people are confused over what will happen after the Lok Sabha elections. There will be no chance for things to happen as claimed by BJP leader K. Laxman or BRS supremo KCR. The BJP has only eight MLAs and with this it cannot topple the Congress government as the support of at least 60 MLAs is

needed to form a government. BRS President KCR said that around 20 Congress MLAs are touch with him to topple the Revanth government and that he had asked them to wait for some more time. At the same time Congress leaders are saying that 25 BRS MLAs are in touch with them. Already three BRS MLAs have joined the Congress. Within 24 hours after KCR’s statement Rajendranagar BRS MLA Prakash Goud met Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and reportedly expressed his willingness to join the Congress.

When BRS MLAs are leaving the party one after the other why should Congress MLAs join the BRS or try to topple their government. Meanwhile, Revanth said that the BJP and the BRS are conspiring to destabilise the Congress government. There is no chance for this as the BRS and the BJP will not join hands in the present circumstances. If we assume that both will join hands they do not have the required number of MLAs to form the government as BRS MLAs are leaving the party.

## Implement loan waiver in August or step down, Aruna tells CM

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

BJP Lok Sabha candidate for Mahabubnagar seat has asked Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy whether he would step down as if the Congress government failed to implement the loan waiver by August. Reacting to the Chief Minister’s criticism against her, Aruna said that Revanth Reddy was caught red-handed in the cash-for-vote scam. She took objection to the Chief Minister’s allegation that he would expose her. She said that Revanth has no right to speak about her. She



criticised him for using unparliamentary language against a woman like her. She advised him to enquire from his mother, sister and daughter about the meaning of a woman. She said that she would not tolerate if the Chief Minister continued to shoot his mouth off.

## Cyberabad Police conducts a session over cybersecurity

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In collaboration with SCSC (Society for Cyberabad Security Council) and the DiLSeY (Digital Literacy to Secure Youth) Team has organised a session covering various aspects of cybersecurity and digital well-being. The session,

held at Kanha Heartful Learning Centre, Kanha Shanthi Vanam, Shamshabad, was specifically designed for 6 to 10 standard students. During the session the police have discussed on understanding the importance of managing one’s online presence and protecting.

## World’s first high cervical spinal cord stimulator implantation conducted in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The neurosurgical team of AIG Hospitals successfully achieved a groundbreaking feat in the field of neurosurgery and pain management with Asia’s first high cervical spinal cord stimulator implantation (Neurostimulator) for the treatment of chronic headaches. It was performed on a female patient (23) from Mauritius who suffered from medically refractory, debilitating chronic migraines with autonomic symptoms. “All existing medical therapy options had been exhausted and she continued to be in excruciating pain before the surgery. This pioneering procedure marks a significant

milestone in the medical landscape, offering hope and relief to countless individuals suffering from chronic headaches,” AIG Hospitals said, in a press release. Commenting on this remarkable feat, Dr. D Nageshwar Reddy, chairman, of AIG Hospitals, expressed his pride in the hospital’s relentless pursuit of excellence. He stated, “At AIG Hospitals, we are committed to pushing the boundaries of medical innovation to improve the lives of our patients. Chronic pain is often not given much importance, but it impairs a patient’s life sometimes throughout their lifetime. It is great news for all such patients suffering from any type of chronic pain not

just headache or backache, where this kind of implant can offer complete relief. The successful completion of Asia’s first neurostimulator implant for chronic headache underscores our dedication to delivering world-class healthcare solutions.” This operation was led by Dr. Siddharth Chavali, senior consultant – Chronic Pain & Neuromodulation at AIG Hospitals, alongside Dr. Subodh Raju, director of neurosurgery. The procedure represents a significant advancement in the field of neuro-modulation, which is increasingly recognized for its ability to alleviate various chronic pain conditions by modulating nerve activity through targeted electrical stimulation.

The neurostimulator implant procedure involves the placement of a device that delivers mild electrical impulses to targeted nerves, effectively interrupting pain signals and providing relief to patients suffering from chronic headaches. The device delivers minor electrical signals through a lead positioned in the epidural space. These signals intercept pain messages before they reach the brain, resulting in a sensation of pain relief for patients rather than experiencing the pain itself. This innovative approach represents a significant advancement in the management of chronic pain conditions, offering new possibilities for patients to reclaim their lives, said the hospital

## Sitakka pays tributes to Indravelli martyrs

PNS ■ ADILABAD

Minister for Panchayat Raj Sitakka on Saturday paid tributes to all those who were killed in Indravelli firing incident in connection with the 43rd anniversary of the police firing incident leading to death of scores who had attended the meeting. She described the firing incident as unfortunate and maintained that the state government would strive to achieve the objectives of the Indravelli

heroes. Several Adivasi associations conducted special pujas at the martyrs’ memorial in Indravelli and observed silence in memory of those who sacrificed their lives on that fateful day. The sloans of “Johar to the martyrs” rented in the air in the forest area. Adilabad MP SoyamBapu Rao, who paid tributes to the martyrs, expressed concern over the tribals still fighting for the rights on the land even over four decades of the police fir-

ing incident. Rulers come and go but the tribals’ problem of Podu cultivation still remain, he said appealing to the Adivasis to join hands and launch united struggles. It may be recalled that several Adivasis conducted a mammoth public meeting at Indravelli in Adilabad district on April 20, 1981 with the slogan of “Jal, Jangal and Jameen”. However, the officials, citing no permission as the reason, asked the organisers to cancel the

meeting and imposed prohibitory orders. The Adivasis violated the police orders leading to the then RDO open firing on the participants. According to government accounts, 13 persons were killed in the exchange of fire. However, according to the unofficial accounts and the Adivasis put the toll at 113. The very next year, Adivasis built a martyrs’ memorial at the site. Annually, on the very day of the police firing Adivasis gather there and pay tributes.

## Telangana Police Recovered 26,833 Mobiles in one year

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Police have recovered over 26,833 mobile devices in the past year since the launch of the CEIR portal, ranking 2nd in the country. ADGP, CID monitors the progress which led to the recovery of 26,833 lost and stolen mobile devices in 365 days, with the last 1,000

devices brecovered in 11 days, averaging 73 recoveries per day. The CEIR Portal, developed by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to combat mobile theft and counterfeit devices, was officially launched nationwide on May 17 2023, following a pilot basis in Telangana State from April 19 2023. Hyderabad Commissionerate stands as a lead in

recoveries with 4,348 devices, followed by Cyberabad Commissionerate with 2,772 and Rachakonda Commissionerate with 2,767. In Telangana, Shikha Goel, IPS, Addl. DGP, CID, serves as the Nodal Officer for the CEIR portal, also acting as the Super User. The CEIR portal operates across all 780 Police Units in the state. To improve user accessibility.

PNS ■ BHUPALAPALLY

Former minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao has alleged that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy promised to implement crop loan waiver by August only to garner votes in Lok Sabha elections. He asked the Chief Minister whether he would dissolve the Assembly if he failed to implement the crop loan waiver by August.

He was addressing the Warangal Lok Sabha election preparatory meeting held here on Saturday with District BRS president Gandra Jyoti in the chair. Dayakar Rao accused Revanth Reddy of going back on his promises. He accused the Chief Minister of taking the farmers for a ride. He accused that the Congress leaders that it was not

new for them to give it in writing on bond papers. What happened to the bond papers executed by the Congress about implementing six guarantees just before the last Assembly polls, he queried. What happened to the payment of Rs 500 bonus per quintal to the paddy, he questioned. Dayakar Rao alleged that Revanth has been transporting

suitcase loads of money to Delhi given to him by real estate traders and other businessmen. In the aftermath of Congress coming to power in Telangana, the real estate sector collapsed, he said, alleging that the people are feeling sorry for having defeated KCR at the hustings. He said that the BRS would continue to fight on behalf of the farmers.

## ‘Naidu worried about defeat’ ■ Jagan likens Naidu to desperate villains calling heroes ‘bachas’

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLE

In a fiery speech during the ‘Memantha Siddham Yatra’ in Anakapalle, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy didn’t hold back as he criticised TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu for his alleged failures in propelling the State forward during his 14-year tenure. Chief Minister Jagan emphasised Naidu’s resistance to English medium education for underprivileged children, a move aimed at enhancing their prospects and breaking the cycle of poverty. “We’ve introduced several progressive initiatives like English medium instruction, Gorunudda, Vidya Kanuka, bilingual textbooks, and TOEFL classes from grade three onwards, all geared towards providing quality education and uplifting



families from poverty. Yet, Chandrababu seems averse to the idea of empowering our disadvantaged youth,” remarked the Chief Minister.

Aiming Naidu’s recent remarks branding him a “bacha” (kid), Jagan questioned the TDP leader’s motives, asking, “Why fear a ‘bacha’? After all, Chandrababu had a substantial

stint as chief minister, yet he now seeks alliances to stay relevant.” Drawing from historical analogies, Jagan likened Naidu’s characterisation to the desperation of villains facing imminent defeat, who perceive all challengers as juveniles. “Whether it’s Kamsa and Krishna, Marichudu and Rama, or Ravana and Hanuman, villains often resort to belittling their adversaries when their reign is in jeopardy,” explained the Chief Minister. Jagan continued his tirade against Naidu’s governance track record, highlighting the lack of substantial achievements during his tenure. “During the last 58 months, our administration has ushered in a wave of transformative reforms, from establishing village secretariats and Rythu Bharosa Kendras to delivering quality education and healthcare services at the grassroots level,”

## TDP CHIEF’S BIRTHDAY PROMISE Free RTC bus travel for women

PNS ■ GUDUR

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief N Chandrababu Naidu has promised free travel for women on RTC buses in the State. Addressing a gathering of women on his birthday on Saturday, Naidu emphasised TDP’s commitment to women’s welfare, asserting that the party stands as a sanctuary for all women in the region. Reflecting on the legacy of TDP’s founder, the late NT Rama Rao, Naidu recalled Rao’s advocacy for women’s education, underscoring the importance of empowering women. He highlighted the appointment of a woman as the Finance Minister in the Union Cabinet, symbolizing the financial stewardship of every household by women.



Naidu urged women to support Vara Prasad’s candidature for the Lok Sabha from Tirupati and Sunil’s bid for the Assembly from Gudur. Emphasizing his dedication to uplifting the disadvantaged and the Telugu community, Naidu envisioned a future where educated women occupy

prominent positions globally. Expressing concern over local leaders exploiting natural resources for personal gain, Naidu outlined his vision for industrial development in the region to provide opportunities for youth. Criticizing the current government for alleged corruption and mismanagement,



# Congress spreading lies on reservation issue, says Shah

PNS ■ JAIPUR/KOTA

Accusing Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of spreading lies on the issue of reservation, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said even if the opposition party wants to do away with quota given to SC, ST and OBCs, the BJP will not allow it to happen.

Addressing rallies in Rajasthan, Shah also claimed that the Congress wanted to remove the ban on the Islamic extremist outfit Popular Front of India (PFI).

He hit back at the opposition's claim that the BJP's slogan of winning 400 seats was aimed at changing the Constitution.

"When Congress got a majority, they used it to impose Emergency... we got the majority in 2014 and 2019, we did not use it to remove reservation but to remove Article 370, to



build Ram temple... bring CAA... give reservation to women ... we used our majority to remove poverty, to secure the country," Shah said.

"Rahul baba, you should not lie. Even if the Congress party wants to remove SC, ST and OBC reservation... we will not allow it to remove reservation. This is Modi's guarantee. These (Congress) people are spreading lies," he said.

He claimed the Congress has harmed the interest of Other Backward Classes (OBC) the most.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi belongs to the OBC community, Shah said, adding that it was Modi who implemented schemes for various communities among the backward classes.

Shah said Modi worked to give constitutional recognition

to the National Commission for Backward Classes. "We worked to give 27 per cent reservation to OBCs in all central institutions in the country. Modi, under whom respect for the country increased globally, also comes from the OBC community," he said.

Shah said that before the Modi government, there was no scheme in the country for communities such as blacksmiths, tailors, carpenters and boat-makers, but Prime Minister Modi "spent Rs 13,000 crore and connected them with skill development and self-employment schemes".

"The Congress government did not implement the Mandal Commission report. During a discussion in Parliament on the reservation, Rahul baba's father Rajiv Gandhi spoke against it for two-and-a-half hours," he claimed.

Shah said that if people had

voted for Congress in the previous Lok Sabha elections, Kota would have become a stronghold of PFI.

"People voted for Modi, he has finished PFI and put them (PFI people) behind bars. Now these people say they will remove the ban on PFI".

"Do you think PFI should be banned or not?" the home minister said.

Urging people to vote for the BJP candidate, Shah said, "Press the button of the lotus symbol on the EVM so hard that electric shocks are felt in Italy."

Shah was addressing an election rally in support of Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, the BJP's candidate and sitting MP from the Kota Lok Sabha seat.

He said that on one side is Modi who became a world leader due to his hard work and patriotism, while on the other side is "Rahul Baba" who came from dynasty politics.

# BJP-ruled Centre a fascist, racist, oppressive govt: Priyanka

PNS ■ THRISSUR/PATHANAMTHITTA (KERALA)

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday attacked the BJP-ruled Centre, accusing it of being a "racist, fascist, and oppressive" government that was "haughtily" speaking of changing the Indian Constitution that was "written with the blood of freedom fighters".

The Congress leader also charged the BJP-led administration with working for the benefit of the Prime Minister's "monopolist friends", "protecting" rapists and oppressors of women, "extorting" businesses through the electoral bonds, "silencing" dissenting voices by using government agencies, and "bullying" the judiciary.

Gandhi also attacked Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, alleging that he was "compromised" as he only



"attacks and criticises" the Congress and Rahul Gandhi and not the BJP.

The Congress leader participated in poll rallies in the Chalakudy, Pathanamthitta and Thiruvananthapuram Lok Sabha constituencies to campaign for the party candidates contesting from those seats.

She also held a massive road show in Thiruvananthapuram along with Congress leader Shashi Tharoor.

Earlier in the day, speaking

at a location in the Chalakudy LS seat, Gandhi attacked the BJP-ruled Centre and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on various issues.

She alleged that elected governments were being bought and sold at the will of the PM and people were being fed "false figures" about the economy when the common citizen was struggling to support his family amidst the rising prices of basic commodities.

"Standing here, ten years into the rule of a racist, fascist, and oppressive government, I have no hesitation in saying to you that we are, at this moment in our nation's history, standing in the eye of such a storm. A storm that is wreaking havoc on the soul of India," she said.

She said it was time for the people to awaken, as in the Bhagavad Gita where Lord Krishna "taught us to set aside fear, greed, and ego and embrace the ways of love, compassion, and humility."

# BJP's show flopped on opening day, claims Akhilesh

PNS ■ MEERUT

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday said that the first phase of polling has changed the atmosphere in the state and BJP's film has flopped on the opening day.

"The wind has changed. It's not only that their film has flopped, but also no one wants to listen to their repeated story. No one wants to give them their vote," Yadav said, addressing an election rally seeking support for the SP and INDIA bloc candidate Sunita Verma.

He called Meerut "a land of revolutionaries" and urged the people to help the country get "freedom from the BJP".

The first phase of polling was held in eight Lok Sabha constituencies in the western region of the state on Friday.

Taking a dig at Modi's guarantees, the SP president termed them a new fraud against the public.

"The new guarantees are fraud, and everyone should be wary of them. It is not a guarantee but 'ghanti'. We believe in the big guarantee of the Constitution given by

Ambedkar. We want that guarantee which gives us honour, jobs, reservation," he said.

Yadav said the "guarantees" made by the BJP in its manifesto, including its promise of doubling farmers' income and two crore jobs, were nothing but empty rhetoric.

He said that this election is for saving the Constitution and democracy.

Yadav accused the BJP of being the epicentre of corruption and said that the party doesn't want to talk about electoral bonds, through which, he alleged, it extorted money leveraging the powers of the ED, CBI and Income Tax office.

"We think of the future but BJP does negative politics. I appeal to all to keep a strict eye on the booths and finish its game.

"The people from the BJP have come here after ten years. Must we not hold it to account for all these years? The farmers are dejected. They were forced to go through a lot of problems. They agitated in Delhi. And subsequently the three black laws had to be withdrawn," he said.



# Modi's speeches project him as PM of BJP: Sharad Pawar

PNS ■ CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

The prime minister belongs to the country and has the responsibility to lead the nation but Narendra Modi's speeches suggest he is "BJP's PM" and not India, claimed NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Saturday.

PM Modi should tell the people what he and his party will do for the country instead of attacking the oppo-

sition, said the 83-year-old NCP founder at a campaign rally in Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar.

Pawar was here to canvass for opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) candidates Chandrakant Khaire, who is contesting from the Aurangabad Lok Sabha constituency on a Sena (UBT) ticket, and Congress' Kalyan Kale from Jalna.

The central Maharashtra con-

stituencies, located in the state's Marathwada region, will go to polls in the fourth phase on May 13.

Pawar said, "I was listening to Narendra Modi's speech before I came here (Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar). The prime minister belongs to the entire country. If we listen to Modi's speeches, it seems he is the prime minister of BJP and not the country."

The NCP (SP) chief said PM Modi

and BJP should tell the people what they will do for the country. "But sometimes they criticise Nehru (country's first PM Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru), sometimes Rahul Gandhi and also me at times," he said.

Nehru spent over ten years of his life in jail fighting against the British. He encouraged science, said Pawar.

Incidentally, PM Modi on Saturday held rallies in Nanded and Parbhani constituencies in the state and

attacked the opposition, particularly the Congress.

According to a recent report by the International Labour Organisation, 87 of 100 students coming out of college are unemployed in India, claimed Pawar. Speaking about the Marathwada, Pawar said, "There is a severe drought in the region as well as in other parts of the state. But the Centre and state government have no time to address this situation."

## Mumbai woman files suit claiming Gorakhpur BJP MP Ravi Kishan is her father

PNS ■ MUMBAI

A 25-year-old woman on Saturday filed a civil suit in a Mumbai court against BJP's Gorakhpur MP Ravi Kishan claiming he is her biological father and sought a DNA test.

Shinova, in the suit, urged the court to declare she is the biological daughter of actor-politician Kishan born out of his relationship with Aparna Soni.

The woman has sought permanent injunction restraining Kishan from, in any manner, refusing to accept her as his biological daughter.

She has also moved a writ petition before Bombay High Court for quashing of an FIR registered against Soni and others in Uttar Pradesh after she made it public that Kishan was her biological father.

The case was registered in UP capital Lucknow under IPC sections 120B (criminal conspiracy), 195 (giving or fabricating false evidence )



386 (extortion), 504 (intentional insult) on the complaint of Kishan's wife Priti Shukla three days ago.

Shinova's writ petition filed through advocates Ashok Sarogi and Jay Yadav stated that the FIR has been registered in Lucknow despite nothing happening there and despite the petitioner as well as Shukla and Kishan being residents of Mumbai.

Her civil suit in Dindoshi court in Malad said Soni came across various people belonging to the film fraternity, including Ravi Kishan, in her capacity as a journalist.

As per the plea, Soni and Kishan entered into a relationship and got married in 1991 though they could not reside together for long due to some personal problems.

She was born on October 19, 1998, but by then it came to light that Kishan was already married, the plea claimed.

In view of these facts, it seems Kishan and Soni decided among themselves that their child would call the actor "uncle", the plea said.

At all relevant points of time, the duo took necessary care of her, the woman said in her plea.

# Sibal slams Sitharaman's remarks on electoral bonds

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Saturday said the BJP is claiming that the electoral bonds scheme was brought for transparency but the Supreme Court had stated the opposite while declaring it "unconstitutional".

Sibal's remarks came after Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told a newspaper that the BJP intended to bring back electoral bonds in some form after consultations with all stakeholders if it is elected back to power after the 2024 general elections.

"Nirmala Sitharaman has said in an interview that we will bring back electoral bonds and it was also said in the interview that when electoral bonds were



introduced, they were introduced for the sake of transparency. This is exactly the opposite of what the Supreme Court stated," Sibal said in a press conference here.

The Supreme Court has said that these are not "transparent" and were brought in a "non-

transparent manner," he said. "Now the problem they (BJP) are facing is that they have money for this election but they know that they will need the money when they lose. However, Nirmala ji is saying (they) will win and bring it (electoral bonds

scheme) back," Sibal said.

He also attacked RSS chief Mohan Bhagat over the electoral bonds issue and asked why he is "silent" on the matter.

Sibal also hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for defending the electoral bonds, saying it was "wrong" to talk in this manner during polls when the Supreme Court had given its decision.

He also attacked the government for its handling of the economy and alleged that it was importing pulses so that prices do not go up and hamper its poll prospects.

"We are importing so that the prices fall. They are importing pulses so that they do not face loss in the elections," Sibal said.

# Indian Navy conducts mega exercise

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy on Saturday said it carried out an extensive exercise along the East Coast as part of efforts to check its preparedness to meet any maritime security challenges.

The exercise 'Poorvi Leher' witnessed participation of ships, submarines, aircraft and special naval forces.

"The Indian Navy conducted Exercise Poorvi Lehar on East Coast under the Operational Control of the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval

Command," the Navy said.

It said the exercise was aimed at validation of procedures towards assessment of the Indian Navy's preparedness to meet maritime security challenges in the region.

The exercise was conducted in multiple phases, including combat training in a realistic scenario during the tactical phase and successful conduct of various firings during the weapon phase, towards reaffirming the Indian Navy's capability to deliver ordnance on target, it said.

"With operation of aircraft



from diverse locations, a near continuous maritime domain awareness was maintained throughout the Area of operations," the Navy said in a state-

ment.

In addition to the participation of assets from Eastern Naval Command, the exercise also witnessed participation of assets from IAF, Andaman and Nicobar Command and Coast Guard indicating a very high degree of interoperability amongst the Services," it said. The exercise offered valuable lessons to participating forces operating under realistic conditions, thereby enhancing their readiness to respond effectively to maritime challenges in the region, the Navy added.

# EC chalked out seven-phase polls to assist BJP: Mamata

PNS ■ MALDA (WB)

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday alleged that the Election Commission of India chalked out seven-phase polls to enable Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his cabinet colleagues to carry out extensive campaigning using the nation's resources.

Addressing a public meeting at Gajol in Malda district in support of Maldaha Uttar TMC candidate Prasun Banerjee, a former IPS officer, Mamata Banerjee, the party supremo, said polls have been scheduled from April 19 to June 1 so that Modi and his cabinet colleagues can travel on special planes across the country before every phase to "overwhelm the Opposition".

"On earlier occasions, elections used to be over by May but this year, it has been extended till June 1 to enable Modi to visit various places on military planes, while we are made to arrange for our own transport, including helicopters, which are also being booked by BJP leaders so that we get little space," she alleged.

"People are greatly inconvenienced by the scorching heat but Modi is unperturbed as they (BJP leaders) are campaigning in VVIP comfort

with all facilities at hand," she added.

Banerjee alleged that though the Union council of ministers led by Narendra Modi is a caretaker cabinet after the announcement of elections and the EC is in charge of running the administrative machinery, the poll body is "toeing the line dictated by Modi and his party colleagues".

Attacking the BJP and Congress MPs from West Bengal, Banerjee alleged that despite being elected from the state in 2019, none of them took up the state's cause regarding the release of MGNREGA funds by the Centre or building houses for the poor under PM Awas Yojana.

"On the other hand, our (TMC) MPs were manhandled and arrested when they went to Delhi in November last year to demand the release of MGNREGA funds," she said. "But what have the Congress and BJP MPs done for the poor? What has (Maldaha Uttar) BJP MP Khagen Murmu done for job card holders of the state?" she questioned.

Banerjee accused the CPI (M) and Congress of bolstering the BJP in the state and urged people not to cast votes for any non-TMC candidate.

## INDIA CORNER

### About 180 prisoners pass Class 10, 12 board exam



About 180 prisoners lodged in various jails in 30 districts of Uttar Pradesh, including Ghaziabad, Agra and Lucknow, passed the Class 10 and Class 12 board exams, results of which were announced on Saturday. The Uttar Pradesh State Board of High School and

Intermediate Education today announced the board exam results, with the pass percentage for Class 10 at 89.55 and that for Class 12 at 82.60. According to the results, 89 of the 91 prisoners, who appeared for the Class 10 board exams, passed while 87 of the 105 inmates, who gave the Class 12 papers, cleared the exams. Twenty-one prisoners from Ghaziabad appeared in the Class 12 board exams, out of which 17 passed, according to an official release. Similarly, 11 inmates from Bulandshahr jail appeared for the examination and 10 passed. All four prisoners who appeared from Hardoi jail cleared the board exams, it said.

### Woman, son booked for assaulting doctor



A woman and her son were booked on Saturday for allegedly assaulting a doctor and staff of a hospital in Dombivli in Thane district, a police official said. As per the complaint of the 38-year-old doctor, accused Sashikala Singh and her son Raj Suryaprakash Singh bit him and his colleagues, hit him and

used foul language on Friday night, the official said. "The woman had come complaining of abdomen pain and was given an injection and asked to go home. However, the pain recurred, by which time her son came to the hospital and started yelling at the staff," he said. "Alleging she was not being taken care of, the man picked up a fight, and the mother-son duo assaulted them. They were booked under IPC and the Maharashtra Medicare Service Persons and Medicare Service Institutions (Prevention of Violence and Damage or Loss to Property) Act," he said.

### Siblings found dead in house, father 'missing'



A nine-year-old girl and her teenage brother were found dead on Saturday and their mother was found injured in their house in East Delhi while their father is "missing", police said. According to police, they received a call at 2 pm about Shyam (42), a resident of Shashi Garden in Pandav Nagar, who is missing and whose house

had been locked since Friday. A police team immediately reached the spot and found the house locked from the outside. Upon entering, they found the siblings, a 15-year-old boy and a nine-year-old girl, dead and their mother was lying unconscious in a room, a police officer said. The victims were rushed to a hospital where the doctors declared the children dead on arrival. While the woman is undergoing treatment, he said. It is suspected that Shyam killed his children, attacked his wife and fled from the spot, another police official said. Police teams have been made to nab Shyam, the officer said.



FOR MANUFACTURING, SERVICES SECTORS

# Will make India attractive destination: Sitharaman

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said the Centre has tailored policies to make India an attractive destination for manufacturing and services, and the aim was to produce not just for the domestic market but for exports as well.

She was responding to a query on American tech billionaire Elon Musk postponing his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Policies have been made to attract investments. We want manufacturers and investors to come and produce not just for India but also for exports. We will try to attract manufacturers and investors through policies," she told reporters.

Tesla CEO Musk on Saturday said his visit to India has been delayed due to the company's heavy obligations.

"When big companies show



**"Policies have been made to attract investments. We want manufacturers and investors to come and produce not just for India but also for exports. We will try to attract manufacturers and investors through policies," she told reporters.**

interest to come to India, we will do everything to make it attractive for them to come and invest. In that process, if there is anything to discuss, we will certainly discuss. But whatever we have done, we have done

it through policy," Sitharaman added.

Asserting the Union government's approach has helped especially after China plus one started being a concern for many industry experts, she

said policies have been tailored in such a way so as to make India an attractive destination for manufacturing and for services.

Speaking about inflation, she said it never crossed the tolerance band, except for one month, under the Narendra Modi government, whereas before that (pre-2014) the economy was in a bad shape and inflation was in double digits.

"At that time (pre 2014) nobody had any expectations from the country. After much hard work, we have emerged as the world's fifth largest economy and are confidently saying we will be third in the next two to two-and-half years," the Union minister said.

On employment, Sitharaman said there was lack of complete data from both the formal and informal sectors, but asserted initiatives of the Centre have ensured jobs to lakhs.

## EPFO adds 15.48 lakh net members

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Retirement fund body EPFO on Saturday said it added 15.48 lakh members on a net basis in February 2024.

Around 7.78 lakh members enrolled for the first time with the EPFO in February 2024, a labour ministry statement said.

According to the statement, a noticeable aspect of Employees' Provident Fund Organization's payroll data is the dominance of the 18-25 age group, constituting a significant 56.36 per cent of the total new members added in February 2024. The data indicates the majority of individuals joining the organized workforce are youth, primarily first-time job seekers, the labour ministry stated.

The payroll data highlights that approximately 11.78 lakh members exited and subsequently rejoined EPFO.

These members switched their jobs and re-joined the

establishments covered under the ambit of EPFO and opted to transfer their accumulations instead of applying for final settlement thus, safeguarding long-term financial well-being and extending their social security protection.

Gender-wise analysis of payroll data unveils that out of 7.78 lakh new members, around 2.05 lakh are new female members.

Also, the net female member addition during the month stood at around 3.08 lakh. The female member addition is indicative of a broader shift towards a more inclusive and diverse workforce.

Month-on-month comparison of industry-wise data displays growth in the members working in establishments engaged in manufacturing, marketing servicing & usage of computers, companies/societies/assc/clubs /troupes for performances, road motor transport, automobile servicing, textiles etc.



## 'Gems, jeweller exports dip to Rs 2.65 lakh cr'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gems and jewellery exports declined by 12.17 per cent to Rs 2,65,187.95 crore (USD 32,022.08 million) during 2023-24, compared to the previous financial year due to high interest rates in the US and slow recovery in China, Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) data showed.

Gems and jewellery exports in FY23 stood at Rs 3,01,925.97 crore (US\$ 37,646.17 million), according to GJEPC data.

"The last financial year was very challenging for all product categories. This was mainly due to slowdown in the US,

India's biggest export market in the segment, due to high interest rates. Also, slow recovery in China post Covid-19," GJEPC chairman Vipul Shah said.

Meanwhile, the overall exports of Cut and Polished diamonds declined by 25.23 per cent during FY24 to Rs 1,32,128.29 crores (US\$ 15,966.47 million) compared to Rs 1,76,716.06 crores (US\$ 22,046.9 million) for the same period of previous year.

Provisional gross export of Polished Lab Grown Diamonds dipped by 13.79 per cent Rs 11,611.25 crores (US\$ 1,402.3 million) in FY24 compared to Rs 13,468.32 crore (US\$ 1,680.22 million) of FY23.



## India visit delayed due to Tesla obligations: Musk Says looking forward to coming later this yr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

American tech billionaire Elon Musk on Saturday said his proposed visit to India has been postponed due to "very heavy Tesla obligations".

The electric carmaker Tesla CEO -- who was expected to be in India on April 21 and 22 and scheduled to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi -- wrote on X that he is looking forward to coming to India later this year.

"Unfortunately, very heavy Tesla obligations require that the visit to India be delayed, but I do very much look forward to visiting later this year," Musk wrote on X in response to a post, which stated that his India visit planned for April 21-22 has been postponed as the reason could be that he



needs to attend Tesla's earnings call on April 23.

Earlier this month, he had confirmed his visit to India with a post on X saying, "Looking forward to meeting with Prime Minister @NarendraModi in India".

In June last year, Musk met with Modi during the latter's US visit and stated that he

**"Unfortunately, very heavy Tesla obligations require that the visit to India be delayed, but I do very much look forward to visiting later this year," Musk wrote on X in response to a post, which stated that his India visit planned for April 21-22 has been postponed as the reason could be that he needs to attend Tesla's earnings call on April 23.**

planned to visit India in 2024 while expressing confidence that Tesla would enter the

Indian market soon.

His proposed visit had raised expectations that he would announce plans for electric car maker Tesla to set up shop in the country, along with his satcom venture Starlink.

It was also expected that Musk would announce plans for Tesla to set up its manufacturing unit in India and investments for the same that could be to the tune of billions of dollars and the way forward for selling Tesla electric cars in India at the earliest.

Not just electric cars, he is also eyeing the Indian market for his satellite internet business Starlink, for which regulatory approvals are awaited.

Musk had in the past called for import duty reduction in India for it to be able to sell Tesla cars in the country.

## India growing when world is in stress: CII president-designate

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Sanjiv Puri, president-designate of leading industry body CII, said that India is growing when the world is going through a phase of stress.

Speaking at an event here on Friday night, Puri, also the chairman and managing director of ITC Limited, said that the present juncture is an interesting moment.

"CII has a rich legacy built over decades. We will certainly be looking forward to contributing to the growth of the economy and industry", Puri said.



He said "This is also an interesting moment because this is India's moment. There has been numerous policy interventions made internally, and the global factors which give us the tailwinds. The country is growing at a time when the world is at stress."

Puri said that there are lots of opportunities in India which has a huge talent pool. "The world is looking at us so far as supply chain and digital transformation are concerned. India also has the advantage of the demographic dividend", he added. He said big opportunities lay both in services and manufacturing. "The country needs to harness these opportunities. Reforms agenda to accelerate and enterprises need to play competitiveness", Puri said.

Puri stressed the need for an inclusive and sustainable growth which is important to create livelihoods.

TRAVEL BETWEEN SOUTHEAST ASIA & MIDDLE EAST

## 'India becoming a convenient hub'

PNS ■ CHENNAI

India is slowly becoming a convenient hub for travel between Southeast Asia and the Middle East as airlines prefer to transfer people by connecting through Indian cities, a top industry official said.

There is huge growth in India and many domestic routes are used by airlines for connectivity. V Sumantran, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of InterGlobe Aviation Ltd (IndiGo Airlines) said here on Saturday.

Delivering his address at the 65th Institute Day of the Indian Institute of Technology,



Madras, he said that IndiGo Airlines started off as a low-cost airline in 2006 and has made the largest single order in the aviation industry by ordering 500 aircrafts in France.

"India needed an airline that will provide affordable

travel for many of us and the net result we can see. Even now we see India really moving forward with a lot more speed on infrastructure development. We have about 140 operating airports now and that would become 220 by 2030. We are seeing a huge increase in regional travel", Sumantran, an IIT-Madras alumni, said.

IndiGo is a very young airline by global airline standards. But the entire platform of IndiGo has been affordable fares, courteous service, on-time performance, and a "very well networked" route system which India needed, he said.

### MONEY MATTERS

## Premier Energies files IPO papers with Sebi



Solar cell company Premier Energies Ltd has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise funds through an initial public offering (IPO). The Hyderabad-based company's IPO is a combination of a fresh

issue of equity shares worth Rs 1,500 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of up to 2.82 crore shares by a promoter and investors, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) made public on Saturday. Under the OFS component, South Asia Growth Fund II Holdings LLC will divest 2.38 crore equity shares, South Asia EBT Trust will divest 1.53 lakh equity shares, and promoter Chiranjeev Singh Saluja will sell 42 lakh equity shares. The company may consider a pre-IPO placement aggregating up to Rs 300 crore. If such placement is undertaken, the fresh issue size will be reduced. Proceeds from the fresh issue of Rs 1,168 crore will be used for investing in subsidiary Premier Energies Global Environment Private Ltd, to partially finance the establishment of a 4GW solar PV TOPCon (tunnel oxide passivated contact) cell and 4GW solar PV TOPCon module manufacturing facility in Hyderabad, and the remainder will be allocated towards general corporate purposes.

## BFW launches new manufacturing facility in TN



Manufacturer of machine tools and special machines Bharat Fritz Werner (BFW) Ltd has inaugurated its state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Tamil Nadu set up at an outlay of Rs 200 crore, the company said on Saturday.

Bharat Fritz Werner Ltd, a flagship company of Kothari Group, would be able to produce 10,000 units of CNC machines annually at the factory located at Devaganapalli, Hosur. "We aim to establish a facility of global standards for scale and efficiency. I am confident that this facility will aid us in furthering our aspiration of participating in the growth of manufacturing," BFW Chairman Arun Kothari said in a company statement. The facility has two assembly halls spanning 20,000 square meters each at the facility. The overall footprint of 54 acres of the land allows for setting up the Vendor ecosystem in the future. Several environmentally friendly measures have been taken up at the unit to reduce carbon footprint, it said. BFW Managing Director Ravi Raghavan said, "Challenges, disruptions, and innovation have marked BFW's journey over the past 63 years. To fulfill its purpose of enabling progress of manufacturing, BFW has embraced the LEAP initiative -- Leadership through Ethical Practices, Agile Processes, and Partnerships."

## Zomato gets Rs 11.82 cr tax demand notice



Online food delivery platform Zomato has received a tax demand and penalty order of Rs 11.82 crore related to GST on export services provided to its subsidiaries located outside India from July 2017 to March 2021. The order was passed by the Additional Commissioner, Central

Goods and Services Tax, Gurugram, raising the GST demand of Rs 5,90,94,889, with applicable interest (not quantified) and penalty of Rs 5,90,94,889. "We believe that we have a strong case on merits, and the company will be filing an appeal against the order before the appropriate authority," Zomato stated in a regulatory filing late evening on Friday. It informed that the demand order has been received, "confirming demand of GST on export services provided by the company to its subsidiaries located outside India during the period July 2017 to March 2021 by upholding that such services do not fulfil the conditions for the supply to qualify as export of service under GST". The company, in its response to the show cause notice, had clarified on the allegations, along with supporting documents and judicial precedents, which appears not to have been appreciated by the authorities while passing the order," it added.

ANOTHER BAILOUT BID

## Cash-strapped Pak makes formal request to IMF

PNS ■ WASHINGTON/ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has made a formal request to IMF for seeking the next bailout package in the range of US\$ 6 to US\$ 8 billion with the possibility of augmentation through climate financing, a media report said on Saturday.

Cash-strapped Pakistan also requested to dispatch the International Monetary Fund (IMF) review mission next month to firm up details of the next bailout package for three years under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF).

However, the exact size and timeframe of the new package will only be determined after evolving consensus on the major contours of the next programme in May 2024, Geo News reported from Washington.

A high-level Pakistani delegation led by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb is currently visiting Washington to attend the annual spring meetings of the IMF/World Bank. Although Pakistani authorities are pitching a rosy picture



of the economy, the IMF in its latest Regional Economic Outlook (REO) released by Middle East and Central Asia (ME and CA) said the cash-strapped country's external buffers deteriorated, mostly reflecting

ongoing debt service, including Eurobond repayments.

"Where inflationary pressures persist, monetary policy should remain tight and follow a data-dependent approach (Egypt, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Tunisia, Uzbekistan), while closely monitoring risks of a reversal of inflation developments," it added.

After contracting in 2023, growth in Pakistan is projected to rebound to 2 per cent in 2024, supported by continuing positive base effects in the agriculture and textile sectors.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister Aurangzeb told the World Bank in Washington that with the reform agenda fully implemented in key areas, Pakistan's economy has the potential to grow to US\$ 3 trillion by 2047.

## LIC's total premium grows most among listed peers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) reported a 26.41 per cent increase in the total premium collected in March 2024 to Rs 36,300.62 crore compared to Rs 28,716.23 crore in the same month a year ago.

LIC was followed by SBI Life Insurance Company in premium collection growth at 24.76 per cent. ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Company reported a 12.58 per cent growth.

Another major insurer HDFC Life Insurance Company, however, reported a decline in premium collection at 20.05 per cent.

As of March 2024, LIC commands a market share of 58.87 per cent based on premium collections, the state-owned insurer said quoting figures released by Life Insurance Council.



Private insurers also experienced a surge in premium collection in March due to a last-minute rush by customers to avail of tax exemptions before the April 1 deadline for non-linked policies, it said.

In March 2024, LIC's Group Yearly Renewable Premium surged by 200.62 per cent, and Group Premium by 47.17 per cent.

For 2023-24, Group Yearly Renewable Premium grew by 140.51 per cent to Rs 2,029.88 crore from Rs 843.99

crore.

According to a report published in February by AUM Capital, LIC still retains the prime choice amongst the general population in new policy generation.

With a range of new Non-Par policies in its pipeline, it seems confident of increasing its market share in the times to come.

## HDFC Bank posts Rs 17,257 cr profit

Sets aside Rs 10,900 cr floating provisions

PNS ■ MUMBAI

HDFC Bank on Saturday reported a Rs 17,257.87 crore net profit for January-March on a consolidated basis, over 2 per cent higher than that in the preceding quarter.

Its consolidated net profit for FY24 came at 64,060 crore. On a standalone basis, the country's largest private sector lender reported a net profit of Rs 16,511.85 crore in the January-March quarter against Rs 16,372.54 crore in the October-December quarter.

In July 2023, the bank merged its home loan-focused parent HDFC into itself.

The three-headquartered bank set aside over Rs 10,900 crore in floating provisions towards any setbacks in the future, courtesy Rs 7,340 crore gain on the sale of education loans focused Credila to private equity majors.

HDFC Bank chief financial officer Srinivasan Vaidyanathan told reporters that floating provisions are created during benign times



like the current phase, and stressed that it is not done in anticipation of any event.

The bank, which is among the first lenders to announce the numbers for the quarter, reported that the core net interest income grew to Rs 29,080 crore for the reporting quarter, while the other income grew to Rs 18,170 crore.

On the net interest margin (NIM), wherein it had to face investors' concerns earlier, it reported a 0.04 per cent improvement to 3.44 per cent for the reporting quarter.

Vaidyanathan declined to share any outlook on it but said that the number is influenced

by the composition of the loan book and the cost it pays for the deposits, and it used to be 4-4.4 per cent in the past for the bank.

The bank, which reported an 18.4 per cent deposit growth on a normalized basis for FY24, will not depend on rates as an incentive to draw liabilities, Vaidyanathan said, adding that attracting retail money is the priority for it.

It reported a loan growth of over 17 per cent during the fiscal year gone by on a normalised basis, accounting for the loans which came in after the merger with HDFC Ltd, Vaidyanathan said, declining to give any outlook.



"Sunshine is delicious,  
rain is refreshing, wind  
braces us up, snow is  
exhilarating; there is really  
no such thing as bad  
weather, only different  
kinds of good weather"  
— John Ruskin



Abrupt shifts in weather, as exemplified last week in Delhi swaying from moderate cold conditions one day followed by record-breaking warmth the next, underscore the unpredictability and volatility of regional climates, says ARCHANA JYOTI

# INDIA BATTLES VOLATILE AND UNPREDICTABLE WEATHER



The recent forecast by the Indian Meteorological Department predicting above-normal monsoon rainfall brings a glimmer of hope,

particularly for agriculture and water resources. However, beneath this layer of optimism lies a stark reality: erratic weather patterns are wreaking havoc across the nation, presenting formidable challenges.

India's climate has become akin to a rollercoaster ride, with unpredictable twists and turns affecting lives from Uttar Pradesh to Gujarat and Kerala to West Bengal. The abrupt shifts in weather, as exemplified by last week's Delhi's experience of moderate cold conditions one day followed by record-breaking warmth the next, underscore the unpredictability and volatility of regional climates.

Reflecting on her eight decades of life, 80-year-old Rambha Devi confronts a bitter truth: humanity's reckless treatment of Mother Nature is returning to haunt us. "For too long," she laments, "we've exploited the Earth without considering the consequences of our actions. We've depleted natural resources, polluted the air and waterways, and recklessly disrupted delicate ecosystems around the globe."

Now, as Devi observes, nature is fighting back. The once predictable and reliable weather now seems to operate on capricious whims. Extreme heat waves scorch the land one day, only to be followed by torrential rains and floods the next.

Unpredictable storms lash coastlines, leaving devastation in their wake. The rhythm of seasons blurs, leaving farmers like Devi's family uncertain about sowing and reaping times.

Throughout her lifetime, Devi has witnessed the consequences of humanity's disregard for the natural world. Once-vibrant forests were reduced to barren wastelands, rivers choked with pollution, and species pushed to the brink of extinction. Now, as the impacts of climate change intensify, she fears for future generations.

As she gazes upon the world she's known for eight decades, Devi knows the road ahead will be arduous.

These fluctuations not only threaten agricultural patterns but also have profound implications for public health and well-being.

Ramesh Tiwari, a farmer from Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad, shares how sudden rain and hail storms destroyed his crops, leaving him struggling to support his family. "I've toiled day and night," he says, "only to see it all washed away in minutes." The state saw as many as 7,020 farmers from 50 districts seeking compensation for the damage till March 2. Similar tales emerge from across the nation.

In Maharashtra, Priya, a resident of a drought-prone Vidarbha village, recounts how scorching heatwaves and heavy rainfall disrupt water access and damage local crops, exacerbating food insecurity.

Similarly, Raju Vashaya, a farmer in Rajasthan, describes the challenges of coping with unpredictable weather, making it difficult to predict crop yields and threatening his family's livelihood.

Further, whether it is Assam in the Northeast or down South Kerala, locals face displacement from floods triggered by heavy rainfall and landslides.

Their stories reflect the widespread devastation and loss in these regions. Meanwhile, along Gujarat's coastline, Sanjay Joshi, a fisherman, expresses concern about the increasing frequency of cyclones and floods, threatening his livelihood and community safety.

Dr Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, director general of the IMD, explains about the visible trends in extreme weather events.

"Globally, temperatures have risen by about 1.2 degrees Celsius compared to 100 years ago. Over India, the rise has been about 0.6 degrees Celsius. The rise has been more in the northern, central, and eastern parts, and less over peninsular India.

"This temperature rise has an impact on extreme weather events. It's getting hotter not just on the surface, but also in the troposphere, increasing its water-holding capacity. Studies show that with a rise of 1 degree Celsius, moisture-holding capacity increases by about 7 per cent. If the atmosphere can hold more moisture, it will have the capacity to cause more rainfall."



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So, the probability of the occurrence of heavy rainfall has increased. Studies also show an increase in the frequency of heavy rainfall events. These are events when 24-hour cumulative rainfall on a particular day is more than 15 cm. Such events are increasing over the tropical belt as a whole, including in India. This trend is more evident in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Odisha, and West Bengal, he says.

The rise in the average global temperature has hit various countries of the world too. Like the United States of America, all European countries, including China, Japan, Indonesia, Canada, and others are reporting now and then extreme heat waves, droughts, wildfires, record rains, and floods. A recent example has been Dubai in UAE which was caught off guard, as heavy rainfall deluged it.

The sixth IPCC report released in August 2021, revealed in detail that in the coming decades, winters will get shorter and summers will get longer. Some places will

experience an increase in the incidents of drought as a result of heat waves and some places will face floods due to heavy rains. India has already felt the impact, with rising temperatures affecting 75% of its districts, with heat wave records breaking every year. "We were expecting these changes possibly after 2025, leading on to 2030. But they are happening now, and are likely to get intense and possibly more frequent in coming years," warns Dr K J Ramesh, former Director General of Meteorology at IMD.

In agricultural regions, these see-sawing weather patterns have started impacting crop cycles, leading to reduced yields, crop failures, and economic losses for farmers. Erratic weather, including unseasonal frosts or heat waves, can disrupt planting and harvesting schedules, affecting food production and livelihoods, says who was at the IMD helm when the country reported several extreme weather events, including Cyclone Fani, the most intense storm over the Bay of Bengal to make landfall on India's east coast since 1999.

To address erratic and extreme weather challenges, proactive measures are needed at both the local and national levels. This includes investing in climate-resilient agriculture practices, improving weather forecasting and early warning systems, enhancing infrastructure resilience, and implementing measures to mitigate the impacts of extreme weather events on public health, he suggests. Marginalized communities too are all set to face health and income strains amid climate challenges. Vaibhav Chaturvedi, a fellow at Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), summarises the looming challenges ahead, stating, "Globally, India is the fifth-most vulnerable country. While the frequency and intensity of extreme events are increasing, we are left with less than a decade to adhere to the Sendai Framework; course correction needs to have a razor-sharp focus on curtailment of the compounded impacts of climate extremes. There is no denying that the climate is changing and it is changing fast."



**RUPALI DEAN** absorbs an enticing feast at Burma Burma on the occasion of a festival that cultivates the spirit of togetherness and connection

## CELEBRATE BURMA'S THINGYAN FESTIVAL OF HARVEST

At the core of the Thingyan Festival celebrations at Burma Burma resides the "Village Set", a harmonious dining experience for two that unites individuals through a delightful assortment of authentic Burmese delicacies presented artfully on a flat, woven tray, cultivating a spirit of togetherness and connection amongst guests. For aficionados of Burmese cuisine, an enticing dining celebration awaits from April 11 to May 19, with a curated menu celebrating Thingyan — the harvest festival; a cultural jubilation steeped in tradition, epitomizing renewal and transformation through symbolic water splashing. Extending well beyond Burma's realms, this festivity harmonizes with New Year and harvest revelries across Asia. The native Burmese *Padauk* flower, blossoming during this auspicious occasion, adorns the landscape, mirroring



the festival's infectious spirit. Experience a culinary voyage in Yangon this season, where diners are enveloped in a celebration of flavours through a specially-crafted menu that highlights the diverse and rich tapestry of Burmese cuisine. Groups of loved ones come together to enjoy an array of small plates bursting with authentic tastes, complemented by sweet indulgences that leave a lingering desire for another visit. Immerse yourself in an array of traditional Burmese home-style dishes and invigorating beverages exclusive to this limited-time offering at Burma Burma, available not only in Delhi NCR but also in Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Hyderabad, and Ahmedabad. My dining experience was truly remarkable. Each sip of Twilight, a vibrant blend of mango puree, coconut, Yakult, and fizz, was a delightful prelude to the Plum Sour, a refreshing mix of plum puree, lime, ginger ale, and black grass jelly that tingled my taste buds. El Dragon, with its exotic mix of dragon fruit, coconut water, litchi water, and elderflower syrup, was a light and refreshing choice. Exploring Yangon's culinary scene, the Sweet Lime & Shallot Salad intrigued with its tangy mix. Each bite evoked market flavours, setting the tone for the



### FAST FACTS

Enjoy festive menus across multiple locations in Delhi NCR (DLF Cyber Hub-Gurgaon, DLF Mall of India Noida and Select City Walk, from April 11 to May 19 2024).

(The author, an acclaimed lifestyle and travel writer, has been awarded the Best Food Writer in the country by the Indian Culinary Forum, WACS and the Ministry of Tourism)



showcasing the rich flavours of Burmese produce. The Roselle & Mushroom Stir Fry, a Chin tribe specialty, featured sour roselle leaves and mushrooms stir-fried with garlic, bird's eye chili, and turmeric, offering a tangy twist typical of Burmese cuisine. Wrapping up my meal was the Banana Sanwin Makin, a traditional semolina cake with banana, strawberry, coconut cream, and poppy seeds — a sweet conclusion. To top it off, the Lemon Poppy Seed Ice Cream, with zesty lemon and black poppy seeds, and the complimentary *Mont Lone Yay Paw*, a festive treat of glutinous rice flour dumplings filled with palm jaggery and coconut, added a perfect finishing touch to my culinary journey. And Musk, a fragrant blend of muskmelon, honey, lavender white tea cold brew, and poppy seeds, was a perfect finale to my meal. The culinary journey beautifully intertwined Burmese traditions with the diversity of Asian flavours, making the Thingyan celebration a memorable experience filled with joy, camaraderie, and delectable dishes.

## PF CHANG'S NOW IN GURUGRAM

You may have indulged in chicken lettuce wraps at various Asian eateries, yet the pioneering credit belongs to P.F. Chang's. Established by Paul Flemming and Philip Chiang, the inaugural establishment debuted in 1993 in Scottsdale, Arizona, and has since grown exponentially - boasting over 300 locations worldwide. Now, the Asian dining spot taps the Delhi NCR market with Chang's first outlet opening at DLF Cyberhub in Gurugram

BY **RUPALI DEAN**

What can guests look forward to? 'A joyful experience centered on life, family, and delicious food,' as described by Ramit Mittal, Executive Chairman & Director of Gourmet Investments Pvt Ltd, who brought this renowned Asian dining destination to the country first in Mumbai this year, complete with all its distinctive features, be it in the ambience or the cuisine. As you enter P.F. Chang's, you're greeted by the iconic statue of a horse, symbolizing strength and loyalty. Once inside, you'll be surrounded by the classic red and gold décor, featuring a dragon, katana, and a cherry blossom tree. The open kitchen allows you to witness the chefs skillfully working at the woks, while the lively bar area offers an array of colourful and inviting beverages to explore. Indulge in the culinary delights with their iconic OG Chang's Lettuce Wraps and a tantalizing array of signature dishes like Dynamite Prawns, Chang's Spicy Chicken and Kung Pao Chicken, all paying homage to Cecelia Chiang's culinary legacy. Setting a new standard for Indian diners, P.F. Chang's in India stands out by offering a range of vegetarian and Jain options besides an entire new range of sushi delights, steamed dumplings and entrees. I was particularly impressed by the exquisite flavours of the Asparagus and Peas Dumplings, the boldness of the Singaporean street-style noodles, and the unique twist of the Samba Roll. Noteworthy is the brand's dedication to healthy dining by abstaining from MSG in their dishes. Complete your gastronomic journey with



demonstrated through signature dishes such as the Spicy Kimchi Fried Rice, and Mongolian Tenderloin.

Describing the process akin to a graceful dance rather than mere cooking, the precision and skill involved make it a culinary poetry in motion. Teetotallers should go for the interesting carafes like the Zen Garden Passion Fruit Mojito. However, for those seeking a lift in spirits, the restaurant will be offering an enticing cocktail menu. Featuring a range of classics like Margaritas, and innovative mixes of gin and whiskey, there's a libation to delight every taste bud and complement the Asian cuisine perfectly. Standout options include the likes of Midnight in Shanghai and Japanese Old Fashioned. Mittal highlights that the experience transcends typical Asian dining; it's a hub for memorable celebrations. Whether it's a milestone like a 50th birthday or a simple gathering to honour a friend's career move, the restaurant elevates every occasion with a touch of elegance. Expect golden table mats, specialized chopsticks, and unique candle holders that add a luxurious flair to your dining

### FACT BOX

P.F. Chang's, Gurgaon Where? P.F. Chang's, Unit No. 6, Ground Floor, DLF Cyber City, DLF Phase 2, Sector 24, Gurugram  
Timings: 12 pm to 1 am  
Reservations: +918655894667 or +918655894668



## Capo Pizza Opens Cloud Kitchens in Delhi and Gurugram



Capo Pizza, renowned for its commitment to crafting authentic gourmet pizzas with a modern twist, is proud to announce the launch of its cloud kitchens in Delhi and Gurgaon. As the demand for high-quality and convenient dining experiences continues to grow, Capo Pizza is poised to deliver the true taste of Italy directly to the doorsteps of pizza enthusiasts across the region. The new cloud kitchens in Delhi and Gurgaon mark an exciting milestone for Capo Pizza, further expanding its reach and accessibility to urban professionals, families, and food enthusiasts who appreciate the finest in Italian cuisine. With a focus on premium ingredients, expert craftsmanship, and exceptional customer service, Capo Pizza aims to redefine the pizza delivery experience in the region.

eco-friendly packaging and practices to minimize its environmental footprint and contribute to a healthier planet. "At Capo Pizza, we are passionate about sharing the authentic flavors of Italy with our customers," said [Spokesperson's Name], [Position] at Capo Pizza. "With the launch of our cloud kitchens in Delhi and Gurgaon, we are excited to bring our handcrafted pizzas, made with the freshest ingredients and traditional techniques, to even more pizza lovers in the area." Capo Pizza's menu features a diverse selection of pizzas, ranging from classic Margherita to gourmet options like Pesto margherita pizza. Each pizza is carefully crafted by skilled chefs who are dedicated to delivering a gastronomic experience that delights the senses and leaves a lasting impression. In addition to its commitment to quality and authenticity, Capo Pizza is also focused on sustainability, employing

**ABOUT CAPO PIZZA** Capo Pizza is all about crafting authentic gourmet pizzas with a modern twist. Their cloud kitchens are situated in Delhi and Gurgaon, bringing the true taste of Italy directly to pizza enthusiasts' doorsteps. Their menu features a diverse selection of pizzas, from classic Margherita to gourmet options like Pesto Margherita, all carefully crafted by skilled chefs. With a commitment to quality, authenticity, and sustainability, Capo Pizza aims to redefine the pizza delivery experience in Delhi and Gurgaon. **Location-** Delhi, Gurgaon



## Deep, Delicious Dive into Old Delhi Delights

By **PAWAN SONI**



Old Delhi is a foodie paradise, especially in areas like Chandni Chowk and Jama Masjid, where hidden gems await. I have been exploring food walks in the area long before it became popular. During Navratras, my friend Rajesh Tara led us to some vegetarian places, and I blindly followed. When you frequent a place, you tend to stick to your favourites. Each bylane in Old Delhi offers something new; you just need to be open-minded.



Here are some places we tried: **Omi Kachodi Waala:** An old shop claiming almost 70 years of history. Open only on Sundays, the crispy kachodi with delicious *aloo sabji* is a must-try. Priced at ₹15 per kachodi, they offer Aloo and Dal varieties as well.

**Lotan ke Choley Kulche:** Long queues for its spicy choley served with soft kulcha. Adjust spice levels wisely, as it can be intense. They offer *choley ka paani* at an additional cost of ₹10 per glass, or with butter at ₹20, which adds the required flavour.

**Standard Sweets:** A proper restaurant serving small *bhatura-sized pooris* with *aloo-choley sabji* mix. Unique for adding a kofta in the sabji, priced at ₹130, it is a delicious treat, albeit a bit expensive compared to the others.

**Ram Swaroop Halwai:** Known for *bedmi poori* and *nagori-halwa*, this shop may be popular for pricing but less for taste. Priced at ₹20 for 2 *pooris* or ₹15 for 2 pieces of *nagori-halwa*, the *pooris* might taste a bit off with the burnt oil and the quality is not as good as Shyam Sweets.

**Jain Sandwich:** Closed on Sundays, this shop serves fruit sandwiches, perfect for the summer with sliced bread loaded with butter, mango chunks, and dry fruits. There are many more shops like *Kuremal ki Kulfi*, *Ashok ki Chaat*, and *Bade Miyan ki Kheer*, among others. These are just the vegetarian options. Email me your favorite places, and I'll include them in the next article, along with some non-vegetarian outlets in the area.

(Author is a food critic and founder of the Big F Awards. He can be reached at Pawan.Soni@indianfoodfreak.com)



# AN ITALIAN HOLIDAY

Brescia offers a perfect blend of history, natural beauty, and culinary delights, its ancient ruins, the relaxing Lake Garda, or the vineyards of Ca'del Bosco, this little known part of Italy is sure to enchant you, says

**PAWAN SONI**

We have long known Milan as the fashion capital of the world. The city's Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, a luxury shopping complex, is home to many big designer brands. However, Northern Italy offers much more than just Milan's Duomo. Boasting a history dating back to 753 BC and inhabited for over 850,000 years, Italy is a destination known for its museums, cathedrals, churches, and more. On this trip, I ventured to the Brescia province near Milan, an ancestral town less touristy than Milan. In fact, most Italians I spoke with had yet to explore Brescia, which is also part of the Lombardy region. To reach Brescia, I boarded a local train from Milan Centrale railway station. This station is a sight to behold, with its beautiful and elegant architecture rivaling many tourist attractions worldwide. The 70-minute train ride cost just €7.5 and offered a glimpse into local life. Amidst reading, chatting, and enjoying the ride, I hardly noticed any tourists. The view outside was breathtaking, overlooking farms, factories, canals, and the elegant Alps mountains. Nestled in Lombardy, Brescia is the region's second-largest city, often overshadowed by its more famous neighbours. However, this hidden gem has much to offer, including a rich history and picturesque surroundings. It has been a major industrial hub since pre-Roman times. History enthusiasts will be thrilled by Brescia's well-preserved Roman ruins, such as the Capitolium and the Teatro Romano. The Capitolium, a temple dedicated to the Capitoline Triad of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, stands as a testament to the city's ancient past. The Teatro Romano, an ancient Roman theatre, provides a glimpse into Brescia's theatrical traditions. Capriano del Colle, a small commune known for its wineries, houses the municipal department in Palazzo Bocca, a



building with rich heritage dating back to the late 17th century. I had the pleasure of enjoying a meal, courtesy of the Italian Trade Agency, in this beautiful landmark building. A highlight of visiting Brescia is a trip to Lake Garda, a short drive away. Italy's largest lake, Lake Garda, is renowned for its crystal-clear waters and picturesque towns. Sirmione, with its medieval castle and natural hot springs, is a popular destination for those seeking relaxation. For wine lovers, a visit to Ca'del Bosco is a must. This renowned winery produces Franciacorta sparkling wines using the traditional Champagne method. Visitors can tour the vineyards and cellars and enjoy a tasting of the winery's exquisite wines. The vineyard's beauty rivals that of any tourist destination, with the bottling plant and cellar areas artistically designed. This destination deserves at least half a day of your time and is one of the most beautiful vineyards I have visited. No visit to Brescia is complete without exploring



the iconic Vittoria Alata, or Winged Victory, a stunning marble statue dating back to the Roman era. This masterpiece, depicting the goddess Nike, is a symbol of Brescia's rich history and is housed in the city's Santa Giulia Museum, located in a former monastery with roots tracing back to the 8th century. Just a short distance from Brescia lies the serene beauty of the Iseo Lake area, surrounded by picturesque towns like Iseo and Sarnico. This area offers a peaceful retreat from city life, with leisurely walks along the lake, exploration of charming villages, and savouring of delicious local cuisine. Monte Isola, Italy's largest lake island, is a must-visit, offering stunning views and a tranquil atmosphere. Brescia offers a perfect blend of history, natural beauty, and culinary delights. Whether exploring ancient ruins, relaxing by Lake Garda, or sipping fine wine at Ca'del Bosco, Brescia is sure to enchant you.

(Author is a food critic and founder of the Big F Awards. He can be reached at Pawan.Soni@indianfoodfreak.com)

## JOYFUL GOAN NOSTALGIA IN A BOUTIQUE SETTING

Once a humble 125-room budget haven, now transformed into a sophisticated 135-room Joie de Vivre by Hyatt, Ronil Goa marks a significant milestone as the first of its kind in India and Southwest Asia, says **RUPALI DEAN**

During a weekend journey to Goa, there is lots to revel in, like vibrant takeovers at popular bars while navigating traffic warnings amidst local insights. Grateful for tranquillity amid burgeoning tourism, the allure of undiscovered venues fuels a persistent fear of missing out. Today's Goa contrasts starkly with the nostalgic reminiscences of the 1990s and early 2000s, as stories of a quieter, untouched era blend with the vibrant, bustling present. Ronil Goa, a Joie de Vivre by Hyatt in Calangute, intriguingly connects these divergent facets of Goa's evolving narrative. At Ronil a cherished gem with a legacy spanning over 35 years, I discovered a captivating fusion of past and present. Tucked away along the Calangute-Baga Road, the resort's unassuming facade belies the vibrant haven that unfolds beyond its doors — two distinct blocks flanking serene pools and an inviting on-site restaurant. My journey began with a warm welcome in true Goan style — a delightful coffee-rum shot that set the stage for the energetic vibe of the resort. Straying from convention, the check-in process eschewed the traditional reception in favour of the lively ambience at Patrão's, the round-the-



clock lobby bar where tantalizing cocktails and local bites awaited. The unique touch came as DJ Maria greeted me with an iPad in hand, ready to customize the property's musical offerings based on my preferences, ensuring a personalized soundtrack for my entire stay.

### JOIE DE VIVRE

JdV, short for Joie de vivre, epitomizes the essence of simple joy in living. At this property, 'the hub' reigns as the focal point, boasting a vibrant pool, complete with a swim-up bar, cosy cabanas, sunken beds perfect for unwinding with cocktails, and a wood-fired oven for delectable pizzas and poolside barbecues. Ideal for those seeking a dynamic holiday experience, the rooms in this block exude a high-energy ambience. With the pool remaining open until 2 am, spontaneous midnight swims are just a PJ change away, accompanied by a soundtrack that shifts gears



post-10 pm. For a more serene retreat, opt for accommodations in the second block to escape into tranquillity and silence. Here, a peaceful pool awaits, providing a relaxing atmosphere for a leisurely dip until 10 pm. Whether craving lively vibes

or seeking calm repose, JdV offers a tailored experience to suit your holiday preferences. In my Deluxe room, overlooking the tranquility pool, thoughtful design elevates the stay experience to a new level of sophistication. Unveiling smart design touches that exude practical

luxury, a sliding mirror serves as an elegant door to the wardrobe, while textures adorn the walls in lieu of conventional artwork typically found in hotel rooms. A generously sized bathroom mirror accented with a border LED light offer both functionality and style.

### FACT BOX

#### WHERE?

Calangute - Baga Rd, Saunta Vaddo, Goa, Baga, Goa: 403516  
TEL: 08326941234

(The author, an acclaimed lifestyle and travel writer, has been awarded the Best Food Writer in the country by the Indian Culinary Forum, WACS and the Ministry of Tourism)



For tea enthusiasts, a selection of Tea Trunk blends awaits, sourced from the locally renowned Goa-based brand that boasts a tea room in Fontainhas. Additionally, a French Press stands ready, showcasing the exclusive Ronil special sunrise and sunset coffee blends. Opening the balcony doors during the day allowed the melodies from outside to mingle with my sanctuary — though as night fell, the desire for tranquillity surfaced, and the music lingering until 1 am required a gradual adjustment.

#### CHILL ZONE

Indulging in a culinary adventure at the Ronil Bistro led by head chef Karan Kohli quickly became a delightful ritual during my stay. For lunch, the fish curry, rice, kismoor, and tindi pickle effortlessly stole the show, showcasing Chef Kohli's culinary prowess. Come dinnertime, the poolside ambience paired perfectly

with the fresh, pillowy sourdough pizzas and the BBQ a true highlight of the evening. While the house made churros come highly recommended by the team for dessert, I found the ice cream equally captivating. Sourced from Goa's renowned Cream Choc, the pistachio gelato stood out as a refreshing conclusion to lunch and a comforting midnight snack in the quiet of my room. Night owls are in for a treat with the complimentary lager tucked away in the minibar, a perfect companion for those late-night moments of relaxation. The property's bespoke experiences, from bonfires to barbecues, floating breakfasts, and poolside picnics, are meticulously curated to foster unforgettable moments to relish. While the property gleams with modernity, it intertwines a subtle thread of yesteryears, evoking tales of Goa's bygone charm that now linger in whispers. Amidst the staff's offerings for lively bar crawls and exploratory visits to Chapora Fort lies a unique opportunity to embrace the cocoon of nostalgia within Ronil Goa's embrace — a place where cherished memories are reincarnated, fostering an ambience that transcends mere tourist trappings.





PNS ■ WASHINGTON

Israel demonstrated its military dominance over adversary Iran in its apparent precision strikes that hit near military and nuclear targets deep in the heart of the country, meeting little significant challenge from Iran's defences and pro-

viding the world with new insights into both militaries' capabilities. The international community, Israel and Iran all signalled hopes that Friday's airstrikes would end what has been a dangerous 19-day run of strikes and counterstrikes, a highly public test between two deep rivals that had previously stopped short of most direct confronta-

equation," said Charles Lister, a senior fellow and longtime regional researcher at the Washington-based Middle East Institute. Aside from those Iranian proxy forces, "the Israelis have every single advantage on every single military level," Lister said. In Friday's attack, Iranian state television said the country's air defence batteries fired in several provinces following reports of drones. Iranian army commander Gen. Abdolrahim Mousavi said crews targeted several flying objects. Lister said it appeared to have been a single mission by a small number of Israeli aircraft. After crossing Syrian airspace, it appears they fired only two or three Blue Sparrow air-to-surface missiles into Iran, most likely from a stand-off position in the airspace of Iran's neighbour Iraq, he said. Iran said its air defences fired at a major air base near Isfahan. Isfahan also is home to sites associated with Iran's nuclear program, including its underground Natanz enrichment site, which has been repeatedly targeted by suspected Israeli sabotage attacks. Israel has not taken responsibility for either the April 1 or Friday strikes.

## Restoring coastal habitat boosts wildlife numbers



rally support from powerful regional and international countries, both Arab and Western, to defend against Iran. The US led in helping Israel knock down Iran's missile and drone attack on April 13. Jordan and Gulf countries are believed to have lent varying degrees of assistance, including in sharing information



Animals can respond well to restoration We collated over 5,000 data points from 160 studies of coastal restoration projects around the world. Excitingly, animal populations and communities were remarkably similar to those in comparable undisturbed natural sites.



curlew sandpipers, which are in sharp decline.

Healthy coastal habitats are the gift that keeps on giving. We need them back, so there's a lot of enthusiasm for restoring these habitats. For example, we can plant mangroves, build new shellfish reefs and reduce pollution to help seagrass grow back. But we want to recover more than just the habitats. We want the animals they support too. We need to know if restoration is helping animals.

We analysed restoration projects around the world to assess how animals are benefitting. Compared to degraded sites, restored habitats have much larger and more diverse animal populations. Overall, animal numbers and the types of animals in restored habitats are similar to those in natural habitats.

So restoration works. But outcomes for animals vary from project

to project. Not all projects deliver the goods. As a result, resources are wasted and humanity misses out on the huge benefits of healthy coastal habitats.

Animals can respond well to restoration We collated over 5,000 data points from 160 studies of coastal restoration projects around the world.

Excitingly, animal populations and communities were remarkably similar to those in comparable undisturbed natural sites. For example, restoring seagrass off Adelaide's coast brought back invertebrates, which are food for many fish species. Australian snappers, invertebrates here were comparable to nearby natural seagrass meadows.

Overall, our review found animal populations in restored coastal habitats were 61% larger and 35% more diverse than in unrestored, degraded sites. So restoration produces serious benefits.

## Israel and Iran's apparent strikes and counterstrikes give new insights into both militaries

Iran said its air defences fired at a major air base near Isfahan. Isfahan also is home to sites associated with Iran's nuclear program, including its underground Natanz enrichment site, which has been repeatedly targeted by suspected Israeli sabotage attacks. Israel has not taken responsibility for either the April 1 or Friday strikes.

tion. The move into open fighting began April 1 with the suspected Israeli killing of Iranian generals at an Iranian diplomatic compound in Syria. That prompted Iran's retaliatory barrage last weekend of more than 300 missiles and drones that the US, Israel and regional and international partners helped bat down without significant damage in Israel. And then came Friday's apparent Israeli strike.

As all sides took stock, regional security experts predicted that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right government and the country's allies would emerge encouraged by the Israeli military's superior performance. In response to international appeals, however, both Israel and Iran had appeared to be holding back their full military force throughout the more than two weeks of hostilities, aiming to send messages rather than escalate to a full-scale war. Crucially, experts also cautioned that Iran had not brought into the main battle its greatest military advantage over Israel — Hezbollah and other Iran-allied armed groups in the region. Hezbollah in particular is capable of straining Israel's ability to defend itself, especially in any multifront conflict.

Overall, "the big-picture lesson to take away is that unless Iran does absolutely everything at its disposal all at once, it is just the David, and not the Goliath, in this

The Jewish Institute for National Security of America, a Washington-based centre that promotes Israeli-US security ties, quickly pointed out that Friday's small strike underscored that Israel could do much more damage "should it decide to launch a larger strike against Iran's nuclear facilities."

Iran's barrage last weekend, by contrast, appears to have used up most of its 150 long-range ballistic missiles capable of reaching Israel, more than 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometres) away, said retired Gen. Frank McKenzie, former commander of the US military's Central Command.

Especially given the distance involved and how easy it is for the US and others to track missile deployments by overhead space sensors and regional radar, "it is hard for Iran to generate a bolt from the blue against Israel," McKenzie said. Israelis, for their part, have "shown that Israel can now hit Iran from its soil with missiles, maybe even drones," said Alex Vatanka, director of the Iran program at the Middle East Institute.

Iran's performance Friday, meanwhile, may have raised doubts about its ability to defend against such an attack, Vatanka said. Iran is about 80 times the size of Israel and thus has much more territory to defend, he noted. Plus, Israel demonstrated that it can

about incoming strikes.

The two weeks of hostilities also provided the biggest showcase yet of the growing ability of Israel to work with Arab nations, its previous enemies, under the framework of US Central Command, which oversees US forces in the Middle East.

The US under the Trump administration moved responsibility for its military coordination with Israel into Central Command, which already hosted US military coordination with Arab countries. The Biden administration has worked to deepen the relationship. But while the exchange of Israeli-Iran strikes revealed more about Iran's military abilities, Lebanon-based Hezbollah and other Iranian-allied armed groups in Iraq and Syria largely appeared to stay on the sidelines.

destroyed swaths of mangrove forests, saltmarshes, seagrass meadows, macroalgae (seaweed) forests and coral and shellfish reefs. We've lost a staggering 85 per cent of shellfish reefs around the world and coral is bleaching globally.

When healthy, these coastal habitats help feed the world by supporting fisheries. They are home to more than 100 species of charismatic marine megafauna, ranging from sharks to dugongs. They sequester carbon, thus helping to slow climate change. The list goes on.

Restored wetlands provide vital habitat for waders like red-necked stilts and

PTI ■ SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND

Humans love the coast. But we love it to death, so much so we've destroyed valuable coastal habitat — in the case of some types of habitat, most of it has gone. Pollution, coastal development, climate change and many other human impacts have degraded or



## Thousands evacuated as volcano spews clouds of ash

PNS ■ MANADO (INDONESIA)

More than 2,100 people living near an erupting volcano on Indonesia's Sulawesi Island were evacuated Friday due to the dangers of spreading ash, falling rocks, hot volcanic clouds and the possibility of a tsunami. Indonesia's Center for Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation recorded at least three eruptions since Friday afternoon, with the maximum height of the eruption column reaching 1,200 meters (3,900 feet).

An international airport in Manado city, less than 100 kilometers (60 miles) from the erupting Mount Ruang, is still temporarily closed as volcanic ash was spewed into the air.

An international airport in Manado city, less than 100 kilometers (60 miles) from the erupting Mount Ruang, is still temporarily closed as volcanic ash was spewed into the air. Satellite imagery from the Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency shows the ash has spread to the west, northwest, northeast and southeast, covering Manado and North Minahasa, according to a statement from Indonesia's Transportation Ministry. "We are still monitoring

developments in the eruption of Mount Ruang and coordinating with relevant stakeholders ... to anticipate the necessary actions to ensure flight safety, security and comfort," said Ambar Suryoko, head of the regional airport authority. More than 11,000 people were told to leave their homes that were located in the affected area. A joint team from the local authorities combed the villages surrounding the volcano and evacuated residents to safer areas by boat. Officials worry that part of the volcano could collapse into the sea and cause a tsunami, as happened in an eruption there in 1871. Houses, roads and other buildings were covered by gray volcanic ash, and many roofs were broken by debris spewed from the eruption. Mount Ruang saw at least five large eruptions Wednesday, causing the Center for Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation to issue its highest level of alert. People were ordered to stay at least 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) from the 725-meter (2,378-foot) mountain. The observation from the agency on Friday said white smoke was rising from the main crater with medium to thick intensity. East of the volcano, Tagulandang Island could be at risk if a collapse occurred. Its residents were among those being told to evacuate. Indonesia's National Disaster Mitigation Agency said residents would be relocated to Manado, a journey of 6 hours by boat. Indonesia, an archipelago of 270 million people, has 120 active volcanoes. It is prone to volcanic activity because it sits along the "Ring of Fire," a horseshoe-shaped series of seismic fault lines around the Pacific Ocean.

## 'Fossils of largest snake to have ever lived found'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Fossils recovered from Kutch in Gujarat may have belonged to the spine of one of the largest snakes to have ever lived, according to new research from the Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee.

From the Panandhro Lignite Mine, researchers discovered 27 "mostly well-preserved" bones forming the snake's spinal column, or vertebrae, with some connections still intact. They said the vertebrae appeared to be from a fully-grown animal.

The snake is estimated to be between roughly 11 and 15 metres long, comparable in size only to the extinct Titanoboa, known to be the longest snake to have ever lived, the researchers said. Owing to its size, it may have been a "slow-moving ambush predator," similar to an anaconda, they said. The findings are published in the journal Scientific Reports.

The researchers have named this newly discovered snake species 'Vasuki Indicus' (V. Indicus) after

the mythical snake round the neck of the Hindu deity Shiva and in reference to its country of discovery, India. V. Indicus is part of the now extinct madsoiidae family, known to have lived across a broad geography, including Africa, Europe and India, they added.

The authors said the snake represented a "distinct lineage" originating in India which then spread via southern Europe to Africa during the Eocene, about 56 to 34 million years ago. The first ancestors and close relatives of the modern mammal species are said to have appeared in the Eocene period.

The authors dated the fossils to the Middle Eocene period, roughly 47 million years ago.

The vertebrae, measuring between 38 and 62 millimetres in length, and between 62 and 111 millimetres in width, suggested V. Indicus to possibly have had a broad, cylindrical body, the researchers said.

They extrapolated the measurements of V. Indicus to be between 10.9 and 15.2 metres in



length. Despite uncertainties in estimates, the researchers said the snake was comparable in size to Titanoboa, the fossils of which were first discovered in the 2000s from present day Colombia.

DUE TO LAND SINKING

## 'A third of China's urban population at risk'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

About a third of China's urban population is estimated to be at risk due to land subsidence, shows a new finding which researchers said is indicative of a global phenomenon.

China's urban area below the sea level could triple by 2120, potentially affecting 55 to 128 million residents, it found.

Using satellite data, the research team studied 82 cities, including Shanghai and Beijing, with a collective population of nearly 700 million people.

The team, including researchers from the University of East Anglia, UK, found that 45 per cent of the urban land area analysed was sinking, with 16 per cent sink-



ing at the rate of 10 millimetres a year. Hotspots included Beijing and the coastal city of Tianjin, they said.

The study estimated that 270 million urban residents could be affected, with nearly 70 million experiencing rapid subsidence of 10 millimetres a

year or more. The findings are published in the journal 'Science'.

Caused mainly by human activities in cities, land sinking can also reinforce climate change and sea-level rise, thereby specially affecting coastal cities including Tianjin, the findings showed.

Subsidence is considered to be primarily driven by groundwater withdrawal, which lowers the water table, along with geology and weight of buildings.

Upon combining subsidence with sea-level rise in their analysis, the researchers found that China's urban area below the sea level could triple by 2120, potentially affecting 55 to 128 million residents. This could be catastrophic without a strong societal response, they said.

Shanghai, China's biggest city, was found to have subsided up to 3 metres over the past century.

The researchers said that while consistently measuring the sinking of land is important, models predicting subsidence should consider all factors,

including including human activities and climate change.

Using satellite data, the research team studied 82 cities, including Shanghai and Beijing, with a collective population of nearly 700 million people.

Not accounting for land sinking in adaptation and resilience plans now could potentially risk destruction of lives and infrastructure in the coming decades, they pointed out.