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Varalaxmi Sarathkumar talks of Sabari, a screenplay-driven THRILLER



QUOTE OF THE DAY the pioneer "Harish Rao...you should be ready with a resignation letter in your pocket. I am giving a word with Ramappa Shiva, Thousand-Pillar temple and Bhadrakali Ammavaru as witnesses that I will waive Rs.2 lakh loans by August 15. I will not leave Harish Rao. On that day, it is not going to be like saying: 'I can't find a lighter', after pouring petrol.

Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister

### DON'T MISS...

### 'Hyd is one of the best cities...

Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary of Industries, Commerce and Information Technology, stated that Hyderabad is one of the best cities to live in because of the retailers. He addressed the third edition of the Hyderabad Retail Summit (HRS) organised by the Retailers Association of India (RAI) at ITC Kohenur on Wednesday. Hyderabad Retail Summit is a content-led platform for industry stakeholders across categories to come together to

### Election a ritual in remote...

Bikramjoy Tripura, a 'jhumia' (shifting cultivator) residing at a remote village in Tripura's Dhalai district said politicians come to his hamlet during elections and though their promises remain unfulfilled, he casts vote every time with the hope of getting electricity at his home and mobile phone connectivity in the area. The main problem of Vidya Kumar Roaja Para village, which is located around 62 km away from Ambassa, the district headquarters of Dhalai...

### Microsoft and Amazon...

British competition regulators said Wednesday they'll scrutinise recent artificial intelligence deals by Microsoft and Amazon over concerns that the moves could thwart competition in the Al industry The Competition and Markets Authority said it's looking into Microsoft's partnership with France's Mistral Al and the company's hiring of key staff from another startup, Inflection Al. The watchdog also separately announced that it's investigating Amazon's...

-PAGE: 8

### **Rampant Sunrisers** Hyderabad...

Sunrisers Hyderabad will look to unleash their brute batting power on struggling Royal Challengers Bengaluru when the two teams face off in their return-leg fixture of the IPL here on Thursday. Having breached the 250-run mark thrice in this IPL edition itself, Sunrisers Hyderabad are pushing the boundaries of T20 batting with their no holds barred approach.While Mumbai Inians were the first victim of SRH's new-found batting strength this season, RCB bore the...

-SPORTS

# Let's debate on Kaleshwaram

'Harish, be ready with a resignation letter in your pocket'

'Warangal fit to be TG's second capital

PNS HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has challenged former Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao to come for a debate on the soundness of the Kaleshwaram project if he has guts and thinks that the project is indeed a wonder as is being claimed by the Bharat Rashtra Samithi.

The Chief Minister pointed out that KCR was an opposition leader who chose not to come to the Assembly but sat in a TV studio for four hours. He said that the Medigadda barrage pillars collapsed possibly because KCR might have designed it in an intoxicated state. Mocking KCR for claiming that Kaleshwaram was his brainchild, he stated that Medigadda and Sundilla barrages had become dysfunctional. People must compare the projects constructed under the erstwhile Congress regime with those constructed under the BRS rule, he underlined.

The CM remarked: "I am telling

**Cong slams KCR for** 

distancing from

Kaleshwaram design

PNS HYDERABAD



CM Revanth Reddy seeking people's support to Congress candidate at a

rally held in Warangal on Wednesday

KCR in a straightforward manner. will discuss the soundness of the Let us visit Kaleshwaram. There we project with experts around. KCR

Addressing the Warangal Jana Jatara on Wednesday, Revanth Reddy stated that Warangal was fit to become the second capital of the State. Revanth Reddy observed: "What could be happier than Warangal, with its historical background of the Kakatiyas, becoming the second capital?"

should come to Kaleshwaram if he has guts. BRS is not in a position to get deposits anywhere. KCR has been speaking lies despite having been the Chief Minister for 10



### Uttam agrees Venkat Reddy has eligibility to become CM

rrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy stated that the R&B Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has eligibility of becoming the chief minister in future. Uttam said, "I agree with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's comments in Bhongir that Komatireddy Venkat Reddy deserves to be Chief Minister. Venkat Reddy will get good opportunities in future. I am jealous of Venkat Reddy". While interrupting Uttam's speech, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said that he was not greedy for the post of chief minister. Revanth Reddy will continue as the Chief Minister. Uttam spoke like that with the affection he has for him, Venkat



# from coming back'

'No one can stop us

BRS chief KCR addressing a rally at Miryalaguda on Wednesday

**PNS** ■ HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) president and former chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has exuded confidence that no one can stop BRS from coming back to

power. said that under the KCR embarked on a bus yatra in Telangana on Wednesday to step up his party's campaign for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls. KCR

rhetorically asked: "Did you hear from someone that gold will be given for Kalyan moment KCR left as if it is some Lakshmi?" and commented: Let alone gold, they won't give even

Addressing a gathering at Suryapet, KCR said:"We got

Telangana for mobilizing funds, water and jobs. From then till today, Telangana has been fighting for water. Congress' District Ministers handed over Nagarjuna Sagar to KRMB, to the

> party has been our enemy for sixty vears. Minister here says he would hit farmers with sandals if they asked for Rythu Bandhu. But the Minister should know farmers

Centre. The Congress

also have sandals. How did electricity go the switch? Surplus electricity is handed over to you; the Congress government is incompetent".

# Cong names candidates for

Leaders of the Telangana Pradesh

Congress Committee have slammed former Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar to distance himself from the damage caused

Kaleshwaram, but not its design".



The Telangana Congress posted a statement (in Telugu) on its X handle, commenting: "Rupees one lakh crore corruption strategy. KCR has been rightly described as 'Mayala Marati'. In the past, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi had campaigned that there was no wonder like Kaleshwaram and that it was KCR's brainchild. BRS also campaigned saying KCR is 'Kaleshwarrao'. But one flood brought its pillars down. However, KCR is trying to hoodwink people by throwing the blame on officials now. BRS handed over the Kaleshwaram project to Megha Engineering. For, BRS had benefited from Megha Engineering in the form of electoral bonds. After his one lakh crore corruption came out, KCR has been claiming that he was 'strategist'. These words will not last

long. People have already kept KCR

away. KCR should take rest by

from

desisting

conspiracies.



As expected, the All India Congress Committee's Central Election Committee (CEC) select ed candidates on Wednesday for the remaining three Lok Sabha constituencies: Karimnagar, Khammam and Hyderabad. The party selected Velichala Rajender for Karimnagar, Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy for Khammam, and Mohammed



Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy receives B-form from Deepa das Munsh

Waliullah Sameer for Hyderabad.



# Harish to quit MLA post if farm loans are waived by Aug 15

PNS HYDERABAD

In response to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's poser as to whether the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) would be disbanded if the Congress government implements its farm loan waiver promise by August 15, senior BRS leader, former minister and Siddipet MLA Harish Rao has offered to quit as legislator if it happens. At a presser



in Sangareddy, he said:

Will Revanth Reddy resign from the post of CM if the farmers' loan waiver and promises are not fulfilled?" he countered. Harish Rao said that he would go to the Martyrs Memorial in front of the Assembly on Friday for a discussion on these matters, and suggested that CM Revanth should also come to the



# Girls outperform boys in Inter exam

### • 62% of students pass Intermediate Public Exam 2024

PNS HYDERABAD

In the Intermediate results announced by the Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education (TSBIE) on Wednesday, 62 per cent students passed the examinations.

Burra Venkatesham, Principal Secretary of Education and Shruthi Ojha, Secretary of TSBIE, declared the results stating that a total of 60.01 per cent of students in the first year and 64.19 per cent in the second year passed the exams. They include both regular and private stu-



dents and both general and stream regular students vocational courses.Burra Venkatesham said, "About appeared and 69.46 per cent cleared the exams as against 4,01,445 second year general 67.27 per cent in the last year.

But, the vocational stream recorded a three per cent drop in the pass percentage. While 42,723 second-year vocational students took the exams, 63.86 per cent passed as against 66.81 pass percent last year."The Board has conducted Intermediate Public Examinations in March 2024 from February 28 to March 19. About 9,81,003 students appeared for the Intermediate first and second year examinations at 1,512 examination cen-



n separate incidents, eight Intermediate students died, allegedly by suicide, after being upset over the results that were announced on Wednesday in Telangana. An intermediate V Vaishali first year student died, allegedly by suicide, at Mudigonda mandal headquarters in the district on Wednesday. Maidam Sathwik (18) from Achulapur village in Thandur mandal, Mancherial, was found hanging after he reportedly failed in Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry. Gattika Tejaswhini (18) was found unconscious after she allegedly attempted to hang herself after failing in two Mathematics papers at Doragaripalli village in Mancherial mandal. Another Inter student committed suicide in Rajendranagar. A girl named Harini failed in a subject in the first year of Inter and committed suicide by hanging from the fan in the room in Rajendranagar limits.

# Stage set for 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of Lok Sabha polls

hatching

The curtains came down Wednesday evening on a high-voltage campaigning for the second phase of Lok Sabha polls in 89 seats across 13 states on April 26.

Staggered over seven stages, the first phase of the elections held last Friday for 102 seats across 21 states and Union territories saw a voter turnout of around 65.5 per

Polling is scheduled in all 20 seats of Kerala, 14 of the 28 seats in Karnataka, 13 seats in Rajasthan, 8 seats each in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, 7 seats in Madhya Pradesh, 5 seats each in Assam and Bihar, 3 seats each in Chhattisgarh and West Bengal, and 1 seat each in Manipur, Tripura and Jammu and

### Electioneering ends in 89 seats across 13 states



During the campaigning, Prime Minister Narendra kicked up a row on Sunday while addressing a rally in Rajasthan's Banswara.Slamming the Congress manifesto, he alleged that the opposition party was planning to give people's hard-earned money and valuables to "infiltrators" and "those who have more children" and referred to former prime minister Manmohan Singh's speech in 2006 to contend he had said that Muslims have the "first claim" on the country's resources.

ants are Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar (Thiruvananthapu-

Among the prominent contest- (Karnataka), Hema Malini and Arun Govil (both Uttar Pradesh), Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi ram), BJP's Tejasvi Surya (Wayanad) and Shashi Tharoor

Karnataka Deputy Chief brother DK Suresh (Cong), former Karnataka chief minister HD Kumaraswamy

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# Congress will halt all schemes if it gets more seats, warns KTR

Bharat Rashtra Samithi's working president KT Rama Rao expressed concern that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy would halt all schemes if the 'Congress were to gain more seats in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, banking on the assumption that irrespective of fulfilling promises, people would vote for him. "If you want the schemes promised by Congress to be implemented, BRS should win," KTR asserted.

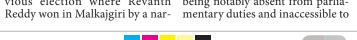
KTR took part in a roadshow during the nomination programme of Malkajgiri candidate Ragidi Lakshma Reddy. KTR commented on various issues, including the previous election where Revanth



row majority. He emphasised that the people. Malkajgiri has played a significant role in Revanth Reddy's political career, attributing his PCC and CM posts to the people of Malkajgiri. However, KTR pointed out that Revanth Reddy has failed to fulfill his promises to the constituency, being notably absent from parlia-

He accused Revanth Reddy of fielding a dummy candidate from the Congress in Malkajgiri to benefit Modi, noting that such strategies have been deployed in multiple places by the Congress to aid









# CM challenges KTR for debate on water supply

**PNS** ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy asserted on Wednesday that the Congress is going to form the next government at the Centre.

Addressing a meeting as part of the party's campaign for its candidate D. Nagender in the Secunderabad Lok Sabha constituency, he exuded confidence that the Congress would wrest the seat from the Bharatiya Janata Party. He credited the erstwhile Congress governments for developing Hyderabad. He recalled that the Metro Rail project for the twin cities was conceived by the erstwhile Congress government. Likewise, erstwhile Congress governments had brought water from the Krishna and Godavari rivers to augment supply in Hyderabad. He challenged the BRS, particularly former minister KT Rama Rao, for a debate on this.



"Secunderabad constituency's history shows that the party which wins the seat forms the government at the Centre. This time, the Congress will win this seat and form the government at the Centre," he said.

Nagender, a former minister and sitting BRS MLA from Khairatabad, joined the Congress last month and the

party fielded him from Secunderabad, where Union Minister and state BJP chief G Kishan Reddy is seeking re-

election. Revanth Reddy recalled that in 2004 when Congress candidate Anjan Kumar Yadav defeated BJP's Bandaru Dattatreya, the Congress came to power at the Centre. He predicted that this would be

The Chief Minister also stated that upon winning the Secunderabad seat, Nagender would get a key position at the Centre. He said though BJP leaders who had won from this constituency became ministers at the Centre, they did "nothing for the city". He alleged that Kishan Reddy failed to get any assistance from the Centre even when Hyderabad was hit by floods.

While praising BRS candidate Padma Rao as a gentleman, Revanth Reddy cautioned him not to trust BRS chief K. Chandrasekhar Rao. He commented that BRS had fielded Padma Rao to humiliate him.

The Chief Minister asked why BRS party chief and its working president did not come when Padma Rao filed his nomination papers. "They are not supporting him.

### Timetable for Inter-advanced **Supplementary**

PNS HYDERABAD

Telangana State Board Intermediate Education (TSBIE) released the timetable for the Intermediatea d v a n c e d Supplementary Public Exam on Wednesday.

According to the schedule, the supplementary examination will be held from May 24 to June 1. The practical exam will be conducted from May 3 to June 7 in two sessions, that is, first session will be from 9 am to 12 noon and afternoon session from 2 pm to 5 pm and English Practical Examination (for firSt year students only) will be conducted on June 6.

The Environmental Education examination will be conducted on June 11and Ethics and Human Values examination will be conducted on June 12.

# No force can stop caste census, it is my life mission'

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday said those who call themselves "deshbhakt" are scared of the 'X-ray' of caste census but it is now his life mission and no force can stop it, as he hit back at the BJP amid the row on the issue of wealth redistribution.

Addressing the 'Samajik Nyay Sammelan' here, Gandhi said the BJP and the prime minister targeted him for just talking about finding how much injustice had been done to 90 per cent of the population."I am not interested in caste but in 'nyay' (justice). I am saying that gross injustice is being done to 90 per cent of the population. I have not even said till date that we will take any action on that.

"I just said let us find out how much injustice is being done. There should be no objection to that. If you get injured and I say that get an Xray done, no one should object to that," the Congress leader



The former Congress asserted that it is his life mission to ensure justice for the 90 per cent of the population against whom injustice has been done.

"As soon as our government is formed, the first thing that would be done is a caste census," Gandhi said. From the Rs 16 lakh crore

transferred by Modi to select business people, the Congress will return a small amount to 90 per cent of the population, said."We have calculated...what we felt is justice and that help should be given, we put it down in the

manifesto," he said of the party's guarantees mentioned in the manifesto.

"Understand this that this is not politics for me and this is my life mission and I guarantee...no force can stop caste census. The more it is stopped, the more it will return with bigger force," Gandhi said.

He said there is a difference between life mission and politics as one can compromise in politics but not in life mission.

He also claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has panicked after seeing the Congress' "revolutionary manifesto" which talks about the Xray and the income inequality created by Modi.The BJP has alleged that the Congress will take people's wealth and redistribute it if it comes to power. On Wednesday, PM Modi and his party cited Congress leader Sam Pitroda's remarks on inheritance tax to claim that the Congress wants to legally rob people of their assets and lifelong savings they want to bequeath to their children.

# Cong gave religion-based quota through backdoor in K'taka: Modi

### Says that it now wants to do it everywhere

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday accused the Congress of reducing the quota for the OBCs in Karnataka by putting Muslim castes in the same category and claimed that it plans to replicate this across the country.

Speaking at an election rally in the Sagar district of Madhya Pradesh, he dubbed the opposition party as the "biggest enemy of the OBCs", and said the Bharatiya Janata Party seats in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections to save the quota granted to the Other Backward Class, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

In the past, Congress provided reservation on the basis of religion which India's



Constitution does not allow. and also promised the same in its 2009 and 2014 manifestos, Modi said.

"Once again Congress has religion through backdoor in Karnataka by putting all Muslim castes along with the OBCs. By doing so, it has snatched a big chunk of reservations from the OBC community. Congress indulged in this dangerous game that will

Reddy's loyalty seems to sway

destroy your generations. It is the biggest enemy of the OBCs," he said. In 2004, Congress had given

religion-based reservation and thus stabbed Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the architect of the Constitution, in the back, Modi said. The opposition party played

a trick in an "illegal manner" when it added Muslim castes in the OBC category, and in the process took away the rights of the OBCs, he alleged. Further, Congress wants to ormula in the

entire country, the prime minister alleged. "The Constitution clearly says that no one will be given reservation based on religion. Babasaheb Ambedkar himself

was against reservation based

# 'Andhra taking away TG water'

PNS HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtra Samithi chief Kalvakuntla Chandrasekhar asked on Wednesday: "Where is Congress leader from Nalgonda district and Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy sleeping even as Andhra Pradesh is drawing TG's share of water?"

At a road show during his

bus yatra at Suryapet, the BRS

chief said, 'When KCR was the Chief Minister, there was no irrigation minister in Nalgonda district. But today Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Ředdy is here. Can't Uttam Kumar Reddy give water? Nagarjuna Sagar, Srisailam projects, rights on Krishna river were handed ple are taking water today. The people of Andhra have taken five TMC of water from tailpond. Uttam Kumar Reddy, where are you sleeping? Did you sleep? Did you forget?





Why are you sitting there and letting the water go?"

KCR said that Andhra was taking away water needed for tion from tailpond. "We do not have irrigation water. There is no fresh water. No electricity".

KCR said, "We set up residential schools. We have established 1,100 schools. Students

in it are getting seats. Today they cannot put food

there properly. 130 students fell ill due to food contamination. KCR said, "CM is telling, he will take away my underwear.

What will he do with it?" KCR said at least give Rs 10,000 Rythu Bandhu and existing Bhima if not more.

# Girls outperform...

Continued from page 1

About 1,86,025 candidates secured more than or equal to 75 per cent of marks or fall under Grade A while 68,985 students less than 75 per cent but greater or equal to 60 per cent (fall under Grade B). About 23,968 students secured fall under Grade C (less than 60 per cent and more and equal to 50 per cent) and 8,283 students fall under Grade D (Greater or equal to 35 per cent but less than 50 per cent).

The pass percentage of girls is 68.35 per cent, which is higher than the pass percentage of boys - 51.50 per cent. This shows girls continue to outperforms boys.

In terms of groups, MPC Chemistry) had a pass percentage of 68.52 in the first year and 73.85 in the second year. In BPC (Biology, Physics and Chemistry), the pass percentage for the first year was 67.34

and the second year 67.52.With regards to the districts, Rangareddy tops with the highest pass percentage among all districts in the case of first year inter results with

# 8 Inter...

Continued from page 1

Chippa Bhargavi (17) failed to clear first year Intermediate exams and ended her life in Chilkodu mandal, Dornakal district. In Medak district, near Serlipally, a student Ramya died by suicide near the railway track after intermediate results were announced. In Goud died by suicide in Tellapur of Sangareddy district after failing in Intermediate exams. Police are investigating the cases.

# Congress will halt...

Continued from page 1

Drawing attention to political allegiances, KTR contrasted Rahul Gandhi's criticism of Modi with Revanth Reddy's familial regard for him, stating, "Rahul Gandhi says 'Chowkidar chor hai,' but Revanth Reddy calls Modi his 'Big Brother.' Revanth

between Rahul Gandhi and Modi."Highlighting the transient nature of certain politicians, KTR warned that if people vote for figures like Revanth, they will disappear after winning elections. He contrasted this with Ragidi Lakshma Reddy's availability round-the-clock to the constituents.KTR also reflected on governance, acknowledging the devel-

TODAY **ALMANAC** Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha Apr 24 05:18 AM Tithi: Pratipada: to Apr 25 06:46 AM Dwitiya: Apr 25 06:46 AM to Apr 26 07:46 AM Nakshatram Apr 25 12:41 AM Vishaka: to Apr 26 02:24 AM Apr 26 02:24 AM Anuradha: to Apr 27 03:39 AM Rahukalam: 1:48 PM to 3:22 PM 5:57 AM to 7:31 AM Varjyam: 06:36 AM to 08:17 AM Gulika: 9:05 AM to 10:39 AM Amritakalam: 04:58 PM to 06:41 PM Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:48 AM to 12:39 PM HYDERABAD WEATHER Forecast: Partly Cloudy **Temp:** 39°° Humidity: 27% Sunrise: 5:53 AM

Updated: April 24, 2024 5:00 PM

Sunset: 6:35 PM

### Cong names...

Continued from page 1

Besides, Congress party president Mallikarjuna Kharge approved the candidature of Teen Mar Mallanna for the forthcoming bye-election to the Legislative Council of Telangana from the Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda Graduates' constituency.AICC general secretary KC Venugopal issued a note in this regard on Wednesday night. In fact, the three MP candidates-Velichala Rajender Rao, Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy and Mohammed Waliullah Sameer had filed their nomination papers

# 'No one can stop...

Continued from page 1

KCR said that under the BRS government, 18 crops were grown and even the tailend areas irrigated. "Why can't they (present Congress government) give water through Mission Bhagiratha? We have provided crop investment to the farmer like no other state in the country. When I came, farmers complained that the government had not purchased rice for the past twenty days", he said.

The Congress cancelled unemployment benefit. "Will

you put KCR in jail? Do you think you can threaten us? After fifteen years of struggle and achievement, we got Telangana. You think I am

scared of jail?" KCR came down on Revanth Reddy's language and wondered: "Can a CM speak like this?"

Telangana came according to Article 3 of Ambedkar's Constitution. This government has no time to remember him. If we want to protect our rights, we need elders to fight on our behalf", he said.

He said, "The strength of BRS was the strength of Telangana people. Vote for the car symbol and make Nalgonda BRS candidate Kancharla Krishna Reddy win in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. We will fight on your behalf and put Congress in its place."

# Let's debate on...

In the context, Revanth Reddy also advised former Minister T Harish Rao to be ready with a resignation letter in his pocket.

Earlier, responding to Tuesday's poser by the CM, Harish Rao stated at Siddipet on Wednesday that he was ready to resign from his MLA position if CM Revanth Reddy waives Rs.2 lakh loans of farmers by August 15.

Revanth Reddy said: "Harish Rao...you should be ready with a resignation letter in your pocket. I am giving my word Ramappa Shiva, Thousand-Pillar temple and Bhadrakali Ammavaru as witnesses that I will waive Rs.2 lakh loans by August 15. I will not leave Harish Rao. On that day, it is not going to be like saying: "I can't find a lighter,"

after sprinkling petrol". (He was alluding to Harish's selfimmolation bid during the Telangana statehood movement)

Addressing the Warangal Jana Jatara on Wednesday, Revanth Reddy stated that Warangal was fit to become the second capital of the State. Revanth Reddy observed: "What could be happier than Warangal, with its historical background of the Kakatiyas, becoming the second capital?" Revanth Reddy assured people that he would complete certain incomplete projects. The Congress government would bring Outer Ring Road for Warangal and set up an Airport in Warangal, he said. He said that he would 'cleanse' Kakatiya University, which had weakened a lot. He said that the government would appoint a Vice-Chancellor and provide quality education. The CM said that sincere

leaders willing to serve people were the need of the hour. In the context, he stated that Kadiyam Srihari did not approach the Congress for MP ticket. The Congress approached Kadiyam Srihari. The CM alleged that the BJP candidate for Warangal MP seat, Aroori Ramesh, had encroached upon lands and had changed his colours. People would teach a lesson to Aroori Ramesh. "People have to decide whether they want a land-grabber or a doctor who provides treatment to the

The Chief Minister said that he would take the responsibility for development of Warangal but people had to ensure the victory of Congress' Warangal candidate Kadiyam

# Stage set for <sup>2nd</sup> phase of...

Continued from page 1

opmental strides made

during KCR's tenure

compared to the alleged-

ly deceitful 100 days of

Revanth Reddy's rule.

The Congress was quick to react, saying that after facing "disappointment" in the first phase of Lok Sabha polls, the prime minister was resorting to "lies" and "hate speech" to divert people from the real issues. The party also urged the Election Commission to take action against Modi for his remarks, alleging they were 'divisive', 'malicious' and targeted a particular religious community.

The next day, Modi again

accused the Congress of

planning to redistribute people's property if it is voted to power, but stopped short of saying that the wealth would go to

Addressing a rally in Aligarh, a western Úttar Pradesh constituency with a sizeable Muslim population, Modi further said he wanted to "alert" people about the "intentions" of the Congress and the opposition INDIA As campaigning was

drawing to a close, remarks

by Congress leader Sam

Pitroda on inheritance tax

gave enough fodder to Modi and other BJP leaders to launch an all-out attack on the issue of "wealth redistribution".

In his poll rallies on Wednesday, Modi framed Pitroda's comments in his wider onslaught against the Congress, asserting that they have exposed its hidden agenda and that the party has become so removed from the country's social and family values that it wants to legally rob people of their assets and lifelong savings they want to bequeath to their children.

# Harish to quit MLA post if farm...

Continued from page 1

It may be mentioned here that, on Tuesday, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, responding directly to the challenges thrown by BRS leaders on farmer loan waiver, came up with a poser: 'Will you disband the BRS party if we promise to waive

the loan and keep the guarantee by August 15? I am challenging Harish Rao to talk to KCR". Picking up the gauntlet on Wednesday, Harish said: "I am accepting the CM's challenge. As the Opposition party, it is our responsibility to ensure that the promises given by the ruling party are ful-

Mentioning that he would not contest in the consequential by-election, Harish Rao observed: "Will Revanth resign from his post of CM if the loan is not waived? The welfare of the people of Telangana is more important to me than the post. In the past, it was Revanth Reddy who had broken his promise of opting for political

retirement should he lose in Kodangal. The Congress party broke its promise by saying that Six guarantees would be implemented by December 9. It is your habit to break your promise and change your party. If they are asked to fulfil the promises made in the election, they are talking about dissolving the party.

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# 'Hyd is one of the best cities to live in because of retailers'

Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary of Industries, Commerce and Information Technology, stated that Hyderabad is one of the best cities to live in because of the retailers. He addressed the third edition of the Hyderabad Retail Summit (HRS) organised by the Retailers Association of India (RAI) at ITC Kohenur on Wednesday.

Hyderabad Retail Summit is a content-led platform for industry stakeholders across categories to come together to learn, connect and engage in a common dialogue over issues relevant to retail in the region.

Kumar Rajagopalan, ČEO, Retailers Association of India (RAI), said, "The retail sector in Telangana has undergone a rapid transformation, spurred by a modernisation wave that

blends offline assurances with online convenience. At the heart of this evolution are our tech-savvy consumers, largely influenced by the region's robust IT industry. These consumers are not just looking for products; they demand seamless integration of online accessibility and the reliability of offline retail experiences. This dynamic shift is pushing the retail industry towards a model that promises the best of both worlds, setting a benchmark for retail innovation across the nation.

Jayesh Ranjan said, "Hyderabad is one of the best living cities in India. According to the latest Mercer's Quality of Living survey, Hyderabad continues to be the top city though Indian cities are followed after European and American cities. One of the reasons why Hyderabad is one of the best



cities to live in is because of the retailers. Hyderabad offers whatever a consumer requires like price points, variety there is something for everyone here with regards to retail industry, times have changed and technology rapidly advances. Recently, with regards to parliamentary elections, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy said that he

wants to reshape Hyderabad into an attractive city. The State government will soon launch a project called Musi River Revival. As everyone knows the key problem's of River Musi, such as diseases, mosquito breeding and encroachment. Through this project one can see the development initiatives thereby aiding retailers to operate com-mercial services such as house, business etc which attracts people to reside there.' The event was followed by

panel discussions on various topics such as The Modern Retail Renaissance: Innovations And Consumer-Centric Strategies, Retail Revolutionised: Technological Transformation, and Revolutionising The Indian Grocery Industry: Technology, Supply Chains, And Logistics.

# Cyber terror provisions included

**CHITHALURI REVANTH** 

The police have reportedly included Acts of Cyber Terrorism Section (66 F), along with the other Sections of the IPC, IT and Telegraph Act.

The 66 F Section of IT Act states that if a person denies access to authorised personnel to a computer resource, accesses a protected system or introduces contaminant into a system, with the intention of threatening the unity, integrity, sovereignty or security of India, then he commits cyber terrorism. If the accused is convicted, he will be awarded with life-time imprisonment under this Section.

Advocate on behalf of the government, gave the reason for including the Section in the court, where he said that the accused have copied the tapped information into their personal accounts, which sensitive information.



Praneeth Rao

The FIR mentioned that

the accused had destroyed 17

ing river after more than four



Radha Kishan Rao





damage to public property Act and 65,66,70 of Information

Technology Act. hard disks on December 4. The case was registered on March 10. After the investigation the Praneeth Rao, Bhujanga Rao and Thirupathanna have filed bail petitions before the court police have recovered the in Nampally. After hearing pieces of hard disks at the Musi river in Nagole. The counsel for the arguments from the counthe accused questioned how the police could recover the sel of three accused and the State, the First Additional hard disks after the accused Metropolitan Sessions Court had thrown them into a flowreserved the bail order for

April 26 after hearing argu-

Initially when an FIR had It was learnt that the police been filed on March 10, the have examined 14 witnesses as police have mentioned part of the modus operandi. 409,427,201,120B, r.w 34 of Accused -1 Praneeth Rao has reportedly built more than IPC, Section 3 of Prevention of

1,000 profiles for snooping. Along with that Praneeth reportedly went to Israel for the training in various tapping applications and the police got the details from one of the companies. Meanwhile, accused-4 of this case, Radha Kishan Rao had filed an interim bail in the court to write LLM exams. D

uring the hearing on the bail petition, the police informed the court that they cannot provide escort as they were busy with election duties. The court agreed with the police and denied the bail to Radha

# Traffic diversions for IPL match today

PNS HYDERABAD

Rachakonda CP Tarun Joshi announced the traffic diversions in the view of IPL match which will be held on Thursday at Uppal Stadium.

He said, "Under Section 21 clause (1) & (b) of the Hyderabad City Police Act, 1348

Fasli, I hereby notify that in order to maintain smooth flow of traffic, prevent danger and inconvenience to the public, the traffic diversions are imposed on

the movement of traffic in the limits of Uppal Traffic police station on Thursday from 4 pm to 11:50 pm in view of IPL-2024 match between Sunrisers Hyderabad VS Royal Challengers, Bengaluru, which is scheduled to be held at Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium, Uppal. Medchal-

Malkajgiri district." sion po With regards to the traffic Roads.

diversions, categories of heavy vehicles for which diversions will be made are lorry, dumper. Earth-movers, water tankers, RMC truck and all other types of trucks.

Heavy vehicles or traffic approach from Chengicherla, Boduppal, Peerzadiguda traffic towards Uppal should be

diverted to H M D A Bhaghyath layout Nagole. The diversion point is opposite to Toyota Show Room- HMDA Bhaghyath Road. Those commuting from LB Nagar to Nagole

and Uppal, should be diverted to Nagole Metro Station -HMDA Layout, Boduppal and Chengicherta Cross Road. The diversion point is under Nagole Metro Station U-turn.

The traffic coming from Tarnaka towards Uppal should be diverted towards Nacharam - IOCL Cherlapally. The diversion point is Habsiguda Cross

### LAST DAY FOR NOMINATIONS TODAY

# LS 2024: 478 candidates file nominations for elections

PNS HYDERABAD

Since the Election Commission of India (ECI) started the nominations for the Lok Sabha elections, 478 candidates have filed their nominations for 17 seats in the State. The last date of the nominations is 25 April till 3 pm.

In all, 43 candidates have filed their nominations for Nizamabad, 42 for Bhongir, 42 for Medak, 38 people filed for Peddapalli (SC) constituency,

Medak, 33 for Nalgonda, 31 persons filed for Karimnagar, 29 for Secunderabad, 28 for Warangal (SC), 23 for Hyderabad, 19 for Khammam Lok Sabha constituency, 19 for Mahabubnagar, 17 for Zaheerabad, 15 for Mahabubabad (ST) and 10 candidates have filed their nomina-

tions for Adilabad (ST) con-For the by-election of

35 for Chevella, 34 for Secunderabad Assembly con-Nagarkurnool (SC), 34 for stituency, 13 candidates have stituency, 13 candidates have filed 14 sets of nominations for

the May 13 poll. Till April 23, 478 candidates have filed 554 sets of nominations. Day by day, the number of nominations filed is also increasing. In all, 42 candidates have filed nominations on April 18, 58 candidates on April 19, 69 on April 20, 144 on April 22 and 165 candidates have filed their nominations on April 23.

### **Urgent call for public awareness on cybercrimes** tance to act speedily, sharing the statistics on

PNS HYDERABAD

Stressing the pressing need for public awareness and preventive measures in the cyber domain, the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India, Telangana State Development Council, organised a conference on Cybersecurity Challenges and Opportunities, in response to the rising cybersecurity concerns. The conference, held at the Novotel Hyderabad, aimed to raise awareness about the growing dangers in the cyber industry.

Additional Director General of Police, CID,

Telangana, Shikha Goel, higlighted the impor-

the rising cyber threats. She emphasised the urgent need for public awareness and preventive measures in the cyber domain, stating, cybercrime is predicted to cause damages totalling Rs 10.50 trillion globally in 2025, would rank as the world's third-largest economy if

measured as a country.

Addressing the audience, Director of Emerging Technologies and OSD at ITE &C Dept., Government of Telangana, Rama Devi Lanka, discussed about the modern technologies and their usefulness for implementation in cybersecurity measures.

# diseases seized over misleading claims

'Medicine' for heart

PNS HYDERABAD

Drug Control Administration (DCA) on Wednesday raided a pharmacy at the Moazzam Jahi Market and seized a unani medicine over false claims of curing heart diseases.

The medicine identified as 'Cardinol Joshanda', claimed to remove heart blockages and cure menstrual flow dis-

The medicine is manufactured by Ahmed & amp; Company, Gaganpahad. Samples of the medicine were picked up by the DCA officials for testing.

In another raid, the DCA

seized 'Colinol-Spas tablets', which is manufactured by Vivimed Labs Ltd., Uttarakhand. The medicine which claimed to cure spas-



modic dysmenorrhea and menstrual disorders was seized from a pharmacy in Madhuranagar.

In both the cases, the DCA officials said , "Advertising a medicine for the treatment of heart diseases and disorders of menstrual flow' is prohibited under the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable

Advertisements) Act, 1954." Further investigation shall be carried out and action shall be taken as per the law against all the offenders.

Soil can be revived despite

### Clinic run by quack raided, medicines seized

**PNS** ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Drug Control Administration (DCA) on April 23 raided a pharmacy operated by a quack in Jayashankar Bhupalpally and seized anti-ulcer medicine.

The pharmacy was owned by accused K Narender, who claimed to be a rural medical practitioner. During the raid, 29 varieties of medicines, including antibiotics, analgesics, anti-ulcer drugs, etc., were found stocked on the premises. DCA officials seized the stock worth Rs

Several higher generation 'antibiotic injections' were seized from Narender's premises. Officials lifted the samples for analysis. Further investigation will be carried out and action will be taken as per the law against all the offenders.

# Sri Chaitanya bags highest marks in TS Inter results

**PNS** ■ HYDERABAD

Sri Chaitanya, a leading educational institution, announced the outstanding performance of its students in the Intermediate exams, results for which were announced on

Wednesday. With a strong focus on academics, rigorous preparation and exceptional faculty, Sri Chaitanya has once again demonstrated its commitment to providing students with the best possible education and empowering them to achieve their dreams.

Junior Intermediate: State top mark in MPC Stream: 26 students scored 468 out of 470 marks; 422 students scored 467 marks and above; 1,100 students scored 466 marks and above; 3,822 students scored 460 marks and above. State highest marks in BiPC

dents with 438 out of 440 marks; 162 students scored 437 marks and above; 631 students scored 435 marks and above; 1,624 students scored 430 marks and above.

In Intermediate second year, State's highest marks in MPC stream was bagged by five students who scored 993 out of 1,000 marks; State's highest marks in BiPC stream was 994 out of 1000 marks; 83 students scored 990 marks and above; 603 students scored 985 marks and above; 1,566 students scored 980 marks and above; 16,431 students scored 900

marks and above. Sushma Sri, Academic Director of Sri Chaitanya Educational Institutions, expressed her delight that four Sri Chaitanya students from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana secured 300 out of 300 marks in the JEE Main Stream was bagged by 19 stu- 2024 key, which has already

been issued by the NTA. Furthermore, she expressed her upbeat outlook that Sri Chaitanya students will attain top ranks in the upcoming JEE Advanced and NEET exams. She attributed the academic excellence to robust programmes and dedicated facul-

"Our students have gained a strong conceptual understanding of subjects through our rigorous coaching, enabling them to excel in the Intermediate Exams," she remarked. "Last year, Sri Chaitanya

made a historic achievement by securing the number one rank in all three exams, proving our commitment to providing students with the best possible preparation for these crucial exams," she added.

Sushma Sri extended her congratulations to the highachieving students.

## **SHE Teams nab 120 for** eve-teasing in 15 days

PNS HYDERABAD

Rachakonda Women Safety Wing, under the auspices of SHE Teams, conducted counseling for eve-teasers at Rachakonda camp office on Wednesday. Rachakonda Camp office in the presence of Women Safety

Wing DCP T Usha Vishwanath said that about 142 complaints were received from April 1 to

Rachakonda CP Dr Tarun Joshi said that Rachakonda SHE Teams will not let go of the hooligans who harass girls and women. The officials are going around bus stands, railway stations, Metro stations, schools, colleges, vegetable markets and public places in mufti and carrying out decoy operations. SHE Teams arrested 120

people (majors-76, minors-44) who were harassing women and young girls in Commissionerate. Counselling was conducted for them at LB Nagar CP

counsellors and the family members of the accused. The DCP said that the investi-

gation has been completed after taking up an inquiry on the

complaints. Among the complaints received, 13 are harassment through phones, 34 are harassment through social media apps and 95 from direct harrassment. Also, 19 are criminal cases and 65 are petty cases. In all, 43 people were counselled Wednesday.

### drought within a fortnight Soil can be revived, even in drought-hit areas within 12-13 days. According to V K Jhaver, the Founder of Tropical Agrosystem India Pvt. Ltd, India's agricultural products

are capable of breaking down difficult drought-ridden land within 12 to 13 days, restoring full soil fertility to yield healthy He said, by increasing soil health, safeguarding seeds and harvests through extensive fieldwork across India and adapting techniques to country's diverse climate changes,

these products work effective-

ly, giving confidence in farm-

ers to harvest healthy crops. In an exclusive interview with The Pioneer, the founder of Tropical Agrosystem India Pvt. Ltd., VK Jhaver said, the inspiration from Heartfulness Institute founder Kamlesh Patel led them to conduct extensive groundwork in agricultural lands and engage with farmers. They produced two films aimed at encouraging



farmers and raising awareness, which contributed to their sustained growth. Moreover, they assure farmers of support and compensation for farming lands, if any loss-es incurred while following to their procedures. This approach has brought confidence among farmers, particularly as they witnessed increased yields and healthy

crops. He said, "Farmers trust in their products has been strengthened by the adoption of biological methods. If the government supports and

begins educating farmers, sustainability will accelerate, catching up pace much faster across the country".

During the interaction at the Kanha Shanti Vanam, he said, "The Heartfulness Institute's Kanha Shanti Vanam has been utilising products from Tropical Agrosystem and has been effectively maintaining the lush greenery with 20 to 25 per cent product growth surrounding the Vanam in just a few years".

There are 4,000 field agents involved in conducting land and soil testing across India." He emphasised that farmers cannot be easily fooled and that product performance is crucial for sustained growth.

Only when the product delivers results, then the farmers will be satisfied". He also said, "With zero negative feedback from the farmers, the products are being used effectively by farmers in Andhra, Telangana and many other

### **MCC** violations: Hyd DGC releases Rs 2.69 crore

PNS HYDERABAD

Hyderabad District Election Officer (DEO) Ronald Rose said that in the MCC violations of 107 cases in the district, Rs. 3,60,81,895 has been recommended to the District Grievance Committee (DGC), while the DGC has released Rs.2,69,35,895 petaining to 102 cases.

The DEO said that in connection with the two cases of seized cash exceeding Rs 10 lakh, Rs 24,97,000 has been referred to the Income Tax and Commercial Tax departments. Similarly, in 3 cases, Rs 66,49,000 has been seized the Income Tax

In the Hyderabad parliamentary constituency, Rs 2,49,93,530 was seized in 70 cases but Rs 1,73,44,530 was released in 66 cases. In the Secunderabad parliamentary constituency, Rs 1,10,88,365 was seized in 37 cases, while Rs 95,36,365 cash and gold and silver articles worth Rs 55,000 was released in 36 cases where proper evidence was submitted.

People can contact the Chairman of Grievance Committee through 9618888110 and Committee Convenor Sarath Chandra 9177872240 for enquiry related to the seizure.

# Southern Indian states rank second for disturbed sleep by mosquitoes

PNS HYDERABAD

Ahead of the World Malaria Day on April 25, a survey report was released comprising the Southern states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana which rank second highest with 57% of people reporting that their productivity is being affected by sleepless nights caused by mosqui-

More than half, which is 58% of India's productivity is being affected as people feel stressed and drained due to

disturbed sleep caused by mosquitoes. The Western region also appears to be the most impacted at 67%, followed by Northern India at 56%, and the Eastern region at 49%.

The report highlights that 62% of males and 53% of females stated that their productivity is being affected due to disturbed sleep caused by mosquitoes. This is particularly concerning given India's recent economic growth, where a healthy workforce is

According to industry reports, the economic burden

on India from mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria alone is around Rs 16,000 crore. Various estimates suggest that approximately 75% of this economic burden represents the loss of earnings by Indians, with the remainder going towards treatment expenses.

Commenting on the issue, Infectious Disease Specialist at Fortis Hospital, Mulund, Mumbai, Dr Kirti Sabnis said, "It is crucial to understand that a single mosquito has the potential to transmit lifethreatening diseases. These tiny, buzzing insects are the

silent culprits behind the spread of diseases such as dengue, malaria and a host of other conditions." She said, Those diseases can weaken the immune system, making individuals vulnerable to other illnesses.

This ongoing threat not only compromises our health but also obstructs our ability to lead healthy and productive lives. Safeguarding against mosquito-borne diseases goes beyond personal responsibility; it is a collective duty we owe to ourselves and our com-

### ACB books TSSPDCL AE

**PNS** ■ HYDERABAD

The Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) has filed a case of disproportionate assets against Assistant Engineer (Operations) of TSSPDCL Keesara section Sanku Anil Kumar on Wednesday. The accused is presently under

suspension. On Wednesday, the ACB said that the accused has acquired assets by indulging in unlawful practices and dubious means during his

Earlier, he was caught by the ACB on February 28 while he was accepting a bribe of Rs

Searches were conducted at the accused officer's house belonged to him and his rel-During the searches prop-

erty documents pertaining to six house plots, 4.5 acres of agricultural land, Rs 34,11,100 in cash and gold ornaments were found. The searches revealed that the accused has acquired

properties worth Rs ,76,06,770. The market value is expected to be much higher than the official value. Further investi-

movable and immovable

gation is in progress.

The people have requested to contact the toll free number of ACB 1064, if in case of

demand of bribe by any pub-

# KCR on bus yatra to atone for his past sins: Adi Srinivas

The Government Whip Adi Srinivas on Wednesday said the bus yatra taken up by former chief minister and Bharat Rashtra Samithi president K Chandrashekar Rao is reminiscent of "cat embarking on pil-grimage after eating 100 mice."

While addressing the media on Wednesday, Srinivas alleged that KCR embarked on bus yatra to meet people to "atone" for his past sins. He demanded that KCR tender an apology for not coming out from Pragathi Bhavan and farmhouse when he was in power. KCR should tell the people that he embarked on district tour because earlier he had not interacted with them. The former chief minister used to visit the districts only for laying foundations or inaugurations of one or other project, Srinivas said.

He suggested that KCR visit Medigadda barrage where some pillars sunk and drink polluted Mission Bhagiratha water. Tell the people about Kavitha's liquor story and son's phone tapping stories. Explain to the people about son-in-law's farmhouse issue, Santosh's



Government Whip Adi Srinivas speaking to the media in Hyderabad on

encroachment activities and BRS leaders' illegal activities, Srinivas told KCR.

Srinivas said, "KCR should be ashamed of taking up bus yatra. Whether KCR did not find a bus when he was in power? KCR has taken up bus yatra for his survival. People know very well about KCR. KCR's plan is to defeat Congress by joining hands with BJP, he alleged. He said that KCR's bus will not come out of the farmhouse gate after the MP elections.

# KCR synonymous with 'lies'

TPCC working president T Jagga Reddy said on Wednesday that the former Chief Minister tion to trust KCR anymore. The people being K Chandrasekhar Rao is synonymous with lies. Jagga Reddy alleged that

KCR is an expert in speaking lies. Jagga Reddy, "one should take training from KCR in speaking lies as there is no one like KCR who speaks lies in the world".

While speaking to the media on Wednesday, Jagga Reddy said that the people came to know KCR's real character after 9 years. KCR has been speaking lies in frustration. He has been speaking lies to prodeceived in KCR's two term rule, he

Jagga Reddy said that KCR's own party leaders do not believe in KCR. KCŔ, who in general keeps the media away, sat for 4 hours in one news channel. It clearly shows how much KCR is afraid of, he said.

He said that even some BRS MLAs are in touch with him. KCR should tell the name of Congress MLAs, who are in touch with KCR, Jagga Reddy questioned KCR.



### **CRPF** officer dies after gun fires accidentally

CRPF Assistant Commandant died on Wednesday in Bhadradri-Kothagudem district of Telangana when his AK-47 rifle went off accidentally, police said.

Seshagiri Rao (45), assistant commandant in CRPF 81 battalion in the district, slipped and fell on the ground while returning from an 'area domination' visit because of which one round from his AK-47 rifle went through his chest accidentally, they

He passed away on the way to the hospital, they added. The CRPF 81 battalion is deployed at Pusuguppa camp

in Charla police station limits in the district. Bhadradri-Kothagudem

district borders Chhattisgarh.

# 'Challenges' mark Lok Sabha poll campaign in TG!

PNS HYDERABAD

Election heat in Telangana is picking up with series of challenges by the ruling and opposition parties. BRS and Congress have been among the top leaders throwing chal-lenges slowly but swiftly BJP is joining the bandwagon.

On Wednesday Revanth Reddy challenged KCR to

debate on Kaleshwaram project. Revanth Reddy also challenged K T Rama Rao to debate on Hyderabad's drinking water supply. On Tuesday, Revanth Reddy Challenged KCR to disband BRS if he implements loan waiver. On Wednesday, Harish Rao accepted Revanth Reddy's challenge to quit from MLA post if government implements crop loan waiver by August 15.

On the other hand Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has thrown a challenge, vowing to resign from his ministerial position if BRS manages to win at least 8 MP seats.

KTR also challenged Revanth Reddy that he would take a lie detector test on phone tapping case. However, he put a condition that even CM and Kishan Reddy should take the test that they are not tapping phones. Responding to BRS working president KT Rama Rao's statement that he was ready to take a lie detector test, government whip

In February Revanth Reddy challenged KTR to win at least one seat in Lok Sabha polls. KTR reacted to this and asked Revanth Reddy to contest against him in Malkajgiri seat. However, this challenge is now invalid.

Adhi Srinivas said that they would arrange for a narco analysis test to determine the BRS leader's involvement in the phone-tapping case. However, he asked KTR to specify the time and place for undergoing

Last week, BJP leader Alleti Maheshwar Reddy threw a

challenge to Chief Minister and TPCC president A Revanth Reddy that he will quit politics if the Congress wins 14 Lok Sabha seats in Telangana. "If it doesn't, Revanth Reddy should resign as Chief Minister", he said.

A Revanth Reddy challenged BJP candidate for Medak Lok Sabha segment M Raghunandan Rao to disclose how many funds and projects he has been able to bring to Dubbak, the constituency which he represented as the MLA. MLA. In response, Raghunandan Rao released booklet on development works he took up in Dubbaka.

In February Revanth Reddy challenged KTR to win at least one seat in Lok Sabha polls. KTR reacted to this and asked Revanth Reddy to contest against him in Malkajgiri seat. However, this challenge is now invalid.

In February, Accepting the challenge thrown by Revanth Reddy for a debate in the Assembly on the handing over of irrigation projects, BRS MLA and former Minister T Harish Rao on Sunday said his party would give a befitting reply that would leave Congress leaders fumbling for

# Medak BRS nominee files papers, confident of winning

PNS MFDAK

BRS Medak LS constituency candidate P Venkatrami Reddy has vowed to serve the public all through his life.

Addressing the media after filing two sets of nomination papers with returning officer Rahul Raj here on Wednesday, he appealed to voters to think before they exercised their franchise.

The Congress came to power giving false promises to the people, he said, adding that it was the Congress that made the Bond Paper worthless. The Congress pushed the farmers into debts, he said and accused BJP rival Raghunandan Rao of duping the people of Dubbaka.



He failed to fulfil the promises made to the people.

He said that Raghunandan Rao suffered defeat in Dubbaka with a margin of over 54,000 votes. How can he win elsewhere, Venkatrami Reddy questioned?

He said that he was a civil

servant and soon going to be elected as public servant. He asked the people to give their vote to their choicest candidate after weighing qualities of three contestants

The people realised the true colours of Congress and are hence going to teach a lesson to it in LS polls. Both the BJP and Congress have caused severe injustice to Telangana. He exuded confidence that Medak sit will go the BRS way in the elections.

Former MLC Farooq Hussain spoke.

MLAs Chinta Prabhakar and Sunita Lakshma Reddy and Medak ZP chairperson Hemalata and others were pre-

### **INCLUSIVE STEP**



Principal District Judge Raghuram, Additional District Judge K Murali Mohan and Senior Civil Judge Swathi Reddy handing over appointment order to transgender Prashanti on Tuesday Prashanti has been appointed as office subordinate in DLSA office in Siddiept

# Beer worth Rs 670 crore consumed in 18 days

**PNS** ■ HYDERABAD

The sale of beers from April 1 to 18 set a record of sorts in Telangana. Beer worth Rs 670 crore was consumed in just 18 days. This is attributed to sweltering heat, marriage season and also due to the current election season.

During the last 18 days, 23,58,827 cases of beers were sold, registering 28.7 per cent growth compared to the sale of beers last year. If the consumption of beers in April, when the summer is stated to be not so harsh, one would be able to imagine the extent of summer during the hottest month of the season - the May.

Meanwhile, the revenue



Department has crossed Rs 30,000 crore. The income is all set to increase further in future. In Telangana there are 2.620 liquor shops. There are over 1,000 bars, clubs and tourism hotels where liquor is of liquor through these facilities is put at Rs 90-100 crore. The state government is able to keep ready the stocks of beer available to customers in tune with the growing

# Ranjit Reddy to file nomination papers today

PNS HYDERABAD

Congress Lok Sabha candidate from Chevella constiutency G Ranjit Reddy will file his nomination papers on Thursday.

A massive rally will be conducted from PV Narasimha Rao Expressway, Pillar Number 154. Enthusiastic supporters and party cadres will participate.

Ranjit Reddy said that with the blessings of the people, under the leadership of Congress Party, he is filing his nomination on Thursday.

He said that CM Revanth Reddy is a charismatic leader and he will provide support

Chief Minister Revanth

Reddy's strategy has helped the Congress gain upper hand in the elections. The Congress will sweep the Lok Sabha elections, he said. He expressed confidence of his

A massive rally will be taken out at PV Narasimha Rao Expressway (PVNR Expressway), Pillar Number 154. Along with CM Revanth Reddy, several senior MLAs, MPs, and local public representatives will participate. Congress activists, leaders, along with supporters, people, beneficiaries, associates, and aspirants will be urged to participate in the nomination process with a positive mindset, bless him, and contribute to growth, says Ranjith Reddy.

### PHONE-TAPPING CASE

# Will Revanth govt fix 'supreme'?

**SNCN ACHARYULU** HYDERABAD

Is it possible for Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's government to fix the 'supreme' in the phone-tapping issue? Finally, former Chief Minister and BRS president K Chandrasekhar Rao has opened his mouth in the phone-tapping issue which happened under his regime. Former CM KCR has thrown the responsibility on the police department for phone-tapping. But some logic is missing in KCR's statement on the phonetapping issue. The top accused police officials in the phonetapping issue in the investigation revealed that the phonetapping was done on the directions of the 'supreme'. Everyone can understand that the 'supreme' means that its only

former CM KCR. But KCR said that the phone-tapping issue had nothing to do with the chief minister or the ministers. It was part of the intelligence gathering system by the police officials. It means that the KCR government is well aware about the phone-tapping.

Here the question is if the police officials have done this as a part of intelligence gathering as told by KCR, why the police officials destroyed the data immediately after the BRS lost power? Here another point in KCR's statement was that "the tapping requires Union Home Ministry's permission and is done in a systematic manner without political interference."

The police department tapped the phones of suspected criminals to know their activity, as told by KCR. But phones of politicians and others those who have no criminal background. Here, the interesting point is that former governor of Telangana Tamilisai Sundararajan alleged that her phone was also tapped. There were allegations that the BJP leaders' phones were also tapped in the poaching of

BRS MLAs incident. The Central government is led by the BJP and its permission is required to tap any phone. According to investigation officials, the phones of Congress and BJP leaders were also tapped by the previous BRS regime. There was no surprise if that the Central government led by the BJP has given permission to tap the phone numbers of Congress

leaders. The surprising thing

was giving permision by the BJP-led Central government to tap phones of its own party

KCR said that the permis-

sion was taken from the Union Home Ministry by the police to tap the phones in a systematic manner. If the allegations of former governor and Telangana BJP leaders are true in tapping their phones, the Central government should have given permission to Telangana police to tap their phones. But no one believes that the BJP government would give permission to tap the phones of its own party leaders and the governor. The fact is if the Chief Minister or the ministers asks the police to tap any phone number, there are no written orders. There are only oral orders.

# **BRS** leader Vinod intensifies campaign

PNS KARIMNAGAR

BRS senior leader and Lok Sabha candidate from Karimnagar B Vinod Kumar has intensified his campaign as the elections are drawing nearer. He has been campaigning throughout

In the morning, he interacted with morning walkers in the temple town of Vemulawada and urged voters to vote for

He has been interacting with people from all walks of life and telling that the BJP has been provoking religious animosity, he alleged and termed PM Modi's unsavory remarks as atrocious.

During Indira Gandhi's regime, slogans like India is Indira and Indira is India were coined, he said, adding that authority is never permanent. The people of Karimnagar

Lok Sabha constituency voted for BJP nominee Bandi Sanjay in a rather emotional state of mind, he said. He pointed out that he failed to bring even Rs 5 for the con-

stituency. That is why, the people of the constituency have decided not to vote for Bandi Sanjay this time.

On Bandi's claims of Center releasing funds for providing work to NREGS workers for 100 days in a year, Vinod Kumar said that the Centre should give funds...

# Police identify 507 'sensitive' polling booths in Nizamabad

PNS NIZAMABAD

The police department has identified 507 polling booths in 171 areas as sensitive from the law-and-order perspective and closely monitoring them.

Moreover, it has made arrangements to bring the movements of rowdy-sheeters having links with political outfits under the scanner.

The police commissioner Kalmeshwar has been procuring details of the movements of the rowdy-sheeters on daily There are over 17,01,573

voters in Nizamabad Lok Sabha constituency listed under 1807 polling booths.

The police department personnel along with the central forces took out a flag march in sensitive areas to instill confi-



dence among the voters besides warning the troublemongers of severe repercussions if anything towards to take place.

Rowdy-sheets have been opened against 326 persons in the district. The Commissioner of Police on March 2 counselled them to have good conduct. Otherwise, he threatened them to lodge the rowdy elements behind the bars.

In an unprecedented move, over 1,900 persons were bound over. If they did not mend their ways, they would be lodged

The police have prepared a list of notorious elements who create trouble with political background. The police authorities have been obtaining information on them from police stations on daily basis whether such elements are taking part in electioneering or

The Commissioner of Police took a serious view of two rival gangsters Ajju and Amjad, belonging to gangs of two slain gangsters, publicly brandishing swords and injuring a person called Feroze Khan. The police have been taking precautions to rule out such incidents.

# Red gram fetches record price

PNS NALGONDA

Red gram commanded the record price of Rs 11,246 a quintal in Suryapet agricultural market, which the officials claim as the highest price in the year.

The farmers fetched 50 quintals of highquality red gram to the market on Tuesday. The farmers expressed happiness over the red gram fetching Rs 11,246 a quintal.

The farmers are jubilant over the commodity fetching the highest price. District marketing officer Nageswara Sarma has appealed to the farmers to bring quality produce to the market and get the MSP.

tivated in Tanduru area fetched good price during March this year. The traders procured the quality red gram then at Rs 11,007 a quintal, while sub-standard quality red gram fetched Rs

8811 per quintal. The red gram of average quality commanded Rs 10,125 a quintal. Centre The

declared only Rs 7,000 per quintal as the MSP. However, the traders have paid Rs 1,811 to Rs 4007 per quintal over and above the

However, the traders broke the record on Tuesday in Agriculture market at

# Duvvuri's book for young professionals launched

PNS HYDERABAD

Inspiring young professionals and navigating career paths, A book named, "Just A Mercenary? Notes from My Life and Career" has been launched by Kautilya School of Public Policy for Dr Duvvuri Subba Rao on Wednesday.

Dr Subba Rao, the former RBI Governor and visiting Professor at Kautilya, authored the book, upon his experience from his personal and professional journey. During his tenure, Dr Subba Rao served as Governor of the Reserve Bank of India for five years from 2008 -2013. He also held positions such as Finance Secretary to the Government of India from 2007-08 and Secretary to the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council from 2005-07.



Dr Duvvuri Subba Rao, Syed Akbert and Smita Sharma at the book launch

The book offers an engaging life of Dr Subba Rao's extraordinary career, aimed to inform and inspire young professionals navigating their own career paths. The discussion went into lessons from his journey, anecdotes from his early district-level appoint-ments, the evolution of India's bureaucratic framework and the topic of gender parity in civil ser-

vices. Shivangi Sharma, Program Manager at Kautilya, proposed the vote of thanks. Senior Independent Multimedia journalist and visiting faculty at the Kautilya School of Public Policy in Hyderabad, Smita Sharma, led the conversation with the author, along with the faculty members and students encouraging various exchange of ideas.

### Woman hacks husband to death in UP's Ballia village

woman allegedly killed her husband on Wednesday by attacking him with a machete following a dispute in a village here, police said. According to police, an argument Abroke out between Deen Dayal Prasad (55) and his wife, Hira Muni Devi (52) over some issues in a village under the Ballia Kotwali police station.

"The duo argued over some issue in the morning. The husband started hurling abuses and enraged by this, his wife attacked him with a machete on his neck," the local police outpost in charge, Gyan Prakash said. "Deen Dayal Prasad was referred to Varanasi district hospital on the doctor's advice. He succumbed to his injuries on the way. The body is being brought back and will be sent for post-mortem examination. Prakash said. Devi is currently

absconding and will be arrested

soon, he added



### Man standing atop truck dies after his head hits metro station beam

20-year-old man standing atop of a moving truck died after his head hit a metro station beam in northwest Delhi's Adarsh Nagar area on Wednesday, police said. Astation beam in nonlinest Delini S Addistribuggin and on Wood Station a fruit market Mahendra Park police station received a call regarding the incident in a fruit market in Azadpur. A team was rushed to the spot and they found that the truck driver took Mohammad Bilal to BJRM Hospital where he was declared dead, a senior police officer

said. To know the sequence of events, police checked the CCTV footage of the nearby places and found that Bilal was standing on the top of the truck facing the rear side, the officer said. In one of the footage, he was seen standing but moments later when the truck crossed Adarsh Nagar Metro Station, Bilal was lying on the floor of the truck, the officer said. According to the police, Bilal's head bumped into the beam of the metro station and he



### **West Bengal CM Mamata hits out at Rajnath Singhon CAA remark**

est Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday criticised Defence Minister Rajnath Singh for asserting that nobody in the world can stop the V implementation of the CAA. She also remarked that Singh now appeared reliant on PM Narendra Modi's favour. "You are surviving at the mercy of Modi. You are saluting Modi daily to save your chair. You or Nitin Gadkari could have been the PM today. There

would have been no problem... at least there would have been a gentleman in the chair who knows minimum courtesy," she said. Singh while addressing an election rally in Murshidabad on Sunday had said no power in the world would be able to stop the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). "We have made a law to give citizenship to those who have been persecuted in countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan for their religion



# Voting for BJP means backing Ram Rajya: Shah

PNS AMRAVATI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said if people vote for the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections, their votes will go to the patriots, who who want to establish a 'Ram Rajya' in the country and not to the anti-nationals, who want dynastic politics to thrive. He also hit out at the

Congress, saying it kept the Ram Janmabhoomi issue pending for 70 years, while Prime Minister Narendra Modi solved it soon after coming to power and built a Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Shah was addressing a public meeting at Amravati to campaign for BJP's Amravati Lok Sabha seat candidate Navneet Rana and Wardha candidate Ramdas Tadas.

Urging people to vote for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Shah said, "Your vote will go in favour of patriots and not antinationals. It will be in favour of



those who want to establish a Ram Rajya and against those who indulge in dynastic politics. Every vote in favour of Prime Minister Narendra Modi will go towards exterminating terrorism and Naxalism in the country and making India the third largest economy in the world.'

'Congress kept the Ram temple issue pending for 70 years. But within five years (of coming to power), PM Modi solved the issue and performed the temple consecration ceremony in Ayodhya," he said. Shah attacked Shiv Sena Uddhav (UBT) chief Thackeray, NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for

"insulting" Lord Ram by skip-

ping the Ayodhya Ram temple

consecration ceremony despite

being invited. 'Uddhav Thackeray was invited for the Ram temple consecration, but the fake Shiv Sena chief did not attend it fearing Congress leader Sonia

### 'INDIA bloc leaders are in jail or on bail, says Nadda

BHAGALPUR/KHAGARIA

Calling the opposition INDIA bloc a group of "Ghamandia" (arrogant) parties, BJP president J P Nadda on Wednesday claimed that majority of the leaders of those "corrupt" parties are either in jail or out in bail. Addressing public meetings in Bihar's Bhagalpur and Khagaria seeking votes for party candidates, Nadda also said that constituents of that anti-BJP coalition are dynastic

### Gadkari faints while speaking at a rally

PNS ■ YAVATMA (MAHA)

Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Wednesday fainted while speaking at an election rally in eastern Maharashtra's Yavatmal district.

The BJP leader was campaigning at Pusad which comes under the Yavatmal-Washim Lok Sabha constituency.

As he suffered a fainting fit, the security personnel accompanying him carried him off-stage. The minister, however, recovered after a few minutes and completed his speech.

"Felt uneasy due to heat at a rally at Pusad, Maharashtra. But now I am completely alright and on my way to Warud to take part in the next rally," the 66-year-old leader said in a post on X.



### KHARGE'S SHARP ATTACK ON BJP-LED GOVT

# Modi & Shah are sellers and Ambani-Adani are buyers'

(KARNATAKA)

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday charged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah with selling state-owned factories established decades ago to industrialists Ambani and Adani.

He also challenged Modi to recover the looted money from the Gandhi family instead of blaming them though none of its members has been Prime Minister, Chief Minister or any Minister since 1989. "Modi says the Gandhi family looted the country. You are the Prime Minister, recover the looted

"Modi says he has done big things. What have you done? You are selling and eating the big factories former PM Jawaharlal Nehru had established," Kharge said addressing a public meeting at Afzalpur in his home district of Kalaburagi.



The Congress has fielded Kharge's son-in-law Radhakrishna Doddamani from Kalaburagi, which will go for polls on May 7. He alleged: "What's hap-

pening in this country is that there are two sellers and two buyers. The sellers are Modi and Shah and buyers are Ambani and Adani? Kharge alleged that Modi

and Shah are "living for Ambani and Adani and not for the people of the country."

They (Modi and Shah) want power for them (Ambani and Adani) and not for you,"

Kharge slammed the Prime Minister over his statement that the Congress plans to give people's hard-earned money and valuables to 'infiltrators' and 'those who have more children", and would steal the 'gold of mothers and

sisters' if voted to power. "Modi says if Congress comes to power they will snatch your Mangalsutra. What kind of PM he is? He should be ashamed. We ruled this country for 55 years. Whom did we snatch from and give to others?" the Congress chief said.

The Congress president attacked Modi for calling the Congress manifesto an imprint of the pre-independence Muslim league.

He sought to know whether it was the Muslim league when Congress promised to offer 30 lakh jobs to youths, minimum support price to farmers, scholarships and filling backlogs to

# 'Chandrayaan-3 beyond mere call to embrace space studies'

PNS KOLKATA

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chairman S. Somanath has said the essence of Chandrayaan-3 embrace space studies; it urges participation in the broader realms of engineering and science, fostering a dynamic scientific community.

Somanath highlighted the importance of cultivating a scientific pool that not only fuels space exploration but also explores diverse industrial

He underscored that Chandrayaan-3's significance lies in catalysing interest not only in space research but also in science and technology domains, attracting the younger generation by presenting the challenges and



advancements in these fields. The success of the moon mission has not only energised space-related disciplines, but also opened avenues in engineering, mathematics, and cutting-edge technologies like electronics, he added.

"We have to attract the young generation and tell them about the challenges in science

and engineering and improvement in the working environment. The success and enthusiasm in the moon mission brought that excitement," he said

sector and continue to be one of the leading employers, but now we have started electronics. If you are looking into electronics industries, we are not looking at the top. We are supplier of systems. But not the creator of hardware systems. Slowly that is coming in," he

Somanath envisioned the moon mission's ripple effects, foreseeing increased interest in AI, robotics, IoT applications in agriculture, remote sensing for crop insurance, telecom equipment manufacturing, and medical technical instrument production, among others.

# Destruction of forests is destruction of humanity: Murmu

PNS DEHRADUN

President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday emphasised reevaluating the standards of development and said the destruction of forests is, in a way, the destruction of human-

"Unsustainable exploitation humanity to a point where the standards of development have to be re-evaluated," Murmu said while addressing trainee officers of the Indian Forest Service (2022 batch) during their convocation ceremony at the Indira Gandhi National

Forest Academy here. She mentioned

Anthropocene Age, which is the period of human-centric development, and said "We are not owners but trustees of the earth's resources" and hence our priorities should be human-centric as well as nature-centric.

"Our prioriti ecocentric along with anthropocentric. Only by being ecocentric, we will be able to be truly anthropocentric," she

The president expressed concern over the rapid loss of forest resources in many parts



of the world saying, "Destruction of forests is - in a way - the destruction of humanity. It is a well-known fact that conservation of earth's biodiversity and natural beau-

which we have to do very quickly."

The president said that human life can be saved from crisis through conservation and promotion of forests and wildlife. "We can repair the damage at a faster pace with the help of science and technolomethod is being adopted at many places. Artificial intelligence (AI) can help in identifying suitable areas for afforestation and area-specific tree species," President Murmu

She said that there is a need

to assess various such options and develop solutions suitable to India's geographical condi-

Referring to the mass hunting of wild animals during the British period, the president said that when she visits museums where animal skins or severed heads adorn the walls, she feels that those exhibits ar telling the story of the decline of human civilisation.

She said that IFS officers not only have to conserve and augment India's natural resources but also use traditional knowledge in the interest of humanity.

### **WORLD MALARIA DAY**

# WHO calls for equitable health access

PNS NEW DELHI

On World Malaria Day, the World Health Organisation (WHO) emphasised on the need for heightened focus on addressing the obstacles to health equity, gender equality and human rights in malaria responses.

Saima Wazed, WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia, stressed on redoubling efforts

to overcome challenges posed by malaria and ensure all individuals, irrespective of their socio-economic status or geographical location, have access to prevention, diagnosis and treatment services for the disease. "Moreover, by leveraging

digital technology, we can better understand the diverse health needs of populations, collect and analyse data and monitor progress in real-time, enabling us to identify and

address health inequities through both proven interventions and innovation in service delivery," Wazed said.
"On World Malaria Day 2024, we unite under the theme 'Accelerating the fight against malar-

ia for a more equitable world," she said. This theme, which is in sync with this year's World Health Day theme -- "My Health, My Right" -- underscores the urgent need to address the stark inequities that persist in access to malaria prevention, detection and treatment

Wazed said in recent years, global efforts to reduce malaria have stagnated, posing a significant threat to public health and exacerbating inequalities within communities.

Everyone has the right to quality, timely and affordable malaria services, yet this remains elusive for many, perpetuating a cycle of inequity that disproportionately affects the most vulnerable among us, she stated.

Infants and young children, especially those under five, are particularly affected, with disparities in access to education and financial resources compounding their risk, Wazed said, adding that pregnant women also face heightened risks as pregnancy reduces immunity to malaria, making them more susceptible to infection and

severe disease. She added that refugees, migrants, internally displaced people and indigenous people are also at heightened risk of malaria. "Malaria remains a significant public health challenge in our region, affecting nine out of eleven countries and accounting for a third of the global burden outside Africa," the WHO regional director for South-East Asia said. "Despite the formidable obstacles we face, I am heartened by the progress we have made in recent years. In recent years, our region witnessed a substantial decline in malaria cases and deaths, marking the most significant reduction among all WHO regions," she added.

# BJP, PM diverting people's attention from real: Priyanka

PNS WAYANAD (KERALA)

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra alleged on Wednesday that prices of essential commodities are rising under BJP's rule but Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the saffron party are diverting attention from real issues even during the election campaign.

Launching a scathing attack on the BJP and the Prime Minister at three corner meetings in Wayanad Lok Sabha

constituency where her brother Rahul Gandhi is seeking reelection, she said the BJP government led by Modi failed to address issues like

price rise and unemployment. She accused Modi of manipulating people's votes for the BJP on the basis of religion and stated that the Lok Sabha election is an opportunity to "protect democracy" and the Constitution of India.

Vadra alleged the prices of modities.

tial commodities have risen "exponentially" in the last 10 years of the BJP's rule. Similarly, she stated that the unemployment rate has

increased. She lamented the absence of any debate in the country during the general elections regarding unemployment and what the Modi-led government has done to alleviate the rising prices of essential com-

### **18 Naxalites surrender in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada**

PNS DANTEWADA

As many as 18 Naxalites, including a militia platoon section commander and three women, surrendered on Wednesday in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada, a senior police officer said. Hidma Oyam (34) was working as the Hurrepal Panchayat Militia Platoon (HPMP) section commander, said Dantewada Superintendent of Police Gaurav Rai. The three women are identified as Sambati Oyam (23) who was working as a deputy commander of HPMP, Gangi Madkam (28), the vice president

of Kakadi Panchayat Krantikari Mahila Adivasi Sangthan (KAMS) of the banned CPI (Maoist), and Hungi Oyam (20), a member of Hurrepal

Panchayat. "The 18 Naxals laid down arms in front of police and CRPF officials. They were part of Bhairamgarh, and Malanger area committees of the Maoists in south Bastar," Rai said.

He said the Naxals surrendered themselves as they were impressed by the police's rehabilitation drive 'Lon Varratu' and disappointed with the hollow Maoist ideology.

### NO ELECTRICITY, MOBILE CONNECTIVITY

# Election a ritual in remote Tripura village! Shambu Lal Chakma for many

To charge a mobile we have to

PNS ■ CHAWMANU (TRIPURA)

Bikramjoy Tripura, a 'jhumia' (shifting cultivator) residing at a remote village in Tripura's Dhalai district said politicians come to his hamlet during elections and though their promises remain unfulfilled, he casts vote every time with the hope of getting electricity at his home and mobile phone con-

nectivity in the area. The main problem of Vidva Kumar Roaja Para village, which is located around 62 km away from Ambassa, the district headquarters of Dhalai is connectivity as the village does not have a motorable road from Chawmanu, the block headquarters, he told the PTI reporter who visited this remote village.

There is no electricity, mobile connectivity or healthcare facility in our village, he

The Lok Sabha election is coming and we all will vote on April 26 but it remains a fiveyear ritual for us because it will bring no solution to our problems", the 41-year-old said.

"During monsoon, the village which houses 763 jhumia families, all involved in shifting cultivation, remains cut off from the rest of the state. The road from Chawmanu to Vidya Kumar Roaja Para (Thalcherra) turned into a death trap because of the lack of repair for the past several years. Jhumia families living in 11 villages need to travel 10 to 20 km on



foot to collect ration as there is travel 10-12 km which is close no road from Vidya Kumar to Chawmanu block headquarters," he said. Roaja para to their villages said Bikramjit, a local BJP

Chardene Tripura, an elderly woman, echoed the same "We have smartphones but problems of her native village cannot use them because there Vidya Kumar Roaja Para is no electricity in the village.

(Thalcherra). "We have not seen our MLA

the election comes. Hope he will visit our village soon to seek votes", said the 54-year-old The village falls under East Tripura Lok Sabha constituency which goes to voting on April 26. "We have a ration

months. He does visit us when

shop at our doorstep but it opens once a week. The jhumias who come from interior hamlets face trouble if they don't get ration stuff on the scheduled day. Several people are living in remote habitations after Vidva Kumar Roaja Para, who have to travel several kilometres on foot to get rice, salt, kerosene and sugar", said Bishaynna Tripura, husband of Chardene Tripura.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

# **Turncoats**

Former Veep Venkaiah Naidu flags party-hopping, calls for strengthening anti-defection law

he pervasive trend of politicians of all hues switching parties, for better career prospects or in pursuit of election tickets especially ahead of Assembly or Lok Sabha polls, is nothing new. This phenomenon, commonly known as party-hopping, has now been flagged by former Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu as particularly damaging to our democracy. It also raises questions about the efficiency of the antidefection law in curbing such practices. The law, enshrined in the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, was introduced to deter elected representatives from switching allegiance to other political parties after being elected. The law aims to maintain stability and integrity within the political system by penalising defections and preserving the sanctity of electoral mandates. However, despite its existence, party-hopping remains a disturbing trend in Indian politics. Politicians often defect from their original party to join another for a ticket, ministerial position or personal ambitions. Additionally, the anti-



defection law is limited in its scope and does not address the broader issues of political morality and ethics. Politicians often exploit legal loopholes and engage in prolonged legal battles to circumvent disqualification, thereby escaping accountability for their actions. This not only undermines the democratic process but also erodes public trust in the political system. However, the toothlessness of the anti-defection law and the failure to effectively address this issue reflect deeper systemic challenges within the politi-So, why is the anti-defection law still toothless in

addressing this issue? One of the primary reasons is the loophole in the law that allows for defection without disqualification under certain circumstances. The law permits defection if one-third or more of the members of a legislative party together decide to join another party, effectively legitimising mass defections. This provision has been exploited by political parties to engineer defections and destabilise rival Governments. Moreover, the anti-defection law lacks stringent enforcement mechanisms and timely interventions. While the law penalises individual defections, it does little to address the systemic factors that incentivise party-hopping, such as the allure of power, patronage politics and lack of internal democracy within parties. Furthermore, the anti-defection law is subject to political manipulation and selective application by ruling parties. To strengthen the anti-defection law and address the scourge of party-hopping, comprehensive reforms are necessary. This includes closing loopholes, imposing stricter penalties for defections, enhancing oversight mechanisms and promoting internal democracy within parties. There needs to be a concerted effort to foster a political culture based on principles of integrity, accountability and ethical conduct. Urgent reforms are needed to strengthen the law, uphold democratic

principles and restore public trust in the integrity of the political process.



Devotees carrying holy water from Ganga river wait in queues to perform 'puja' at Vindhyachal Dham, in Mirzapur

# Graft dominates election discourse



### Mounting concerns over corruption and economic uncertainties are shaping the contours of the political contest

nnocuous developments are unfolding amidst the growing fervour of the impending elections. Despite concerns of the RBI regarding inflation, escalating toll rates, and transportation costs, the nation finds itself amidst a politically charged atmosphere. Nonetheless, certain court rulings are adding intrigue to the evolv-

In addition to the impact of electoral bonds, which have added colour to the political landscape and influenced prices, three other judgments are exerting significant influence. These include the Supreme Court's hearings on the Voters Verifiable Print Audit Trail (VVPAT), commonly known as the voting slip; a judgment regarding the denial of payment to Reliance Infra for the Delhi Airport Metro EPL; and the severe criticism of Patanjali's owners, who are contemnors of court orders regarding their advertising. These developments are intensifying the dynamics of the electoral contest.

Not less interesting is the ED mounting fresh money laundering probe into the Chhattisgarh liquor scam and the ED linking Kerala CPM leaders to bank fraud. Could there be more arrests even after Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal and Kavita of BRS?

Will prices take a backseat to politics and court rulings, or will they remain pressing concerns alongside these factors? Voters, though reticent, are far from oblivious. Whether attending rallies of prominent leaders or not, they are keenly aware of every development that influences their lifestyle. Conversations range from questioning why individuals with questionable backgrounds align themselves with the BJP to analysing defections from BJP to Congress factions. Both voters and party members evaluate the potential implications of each unfolding event, particularly returning officers of Chandigarh municipal polls and Himachal defections.

Corruption is not a non-issue. Arrests of select opposition State leaders on corruption charges by central investigative agencies such as CBI, ED, and income-tax department are unlikely to change



It leads them to think that possibly price surges of many medicines and commodities or galloping rises in tolls have electoral bond connections. Former Vice President Venkaiah Naidu's recent remark on corruption involving all parties has given it a new dimension for the voters to rethink the extent of the impact of corruption. Amidst the dropping of corruption charges against former Union Civil Aviation Minister Praful Patel, allegedly implicated in an Rs 25,000-crore aircraft purchase scandal, questions arise as to why Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal faces arrest for his alleged involvement in a Rs 100 crore State liquor policy issue. People ponder whether the Air India sell-off was conducted transparently or mired in controversy. The action against Keiriwal has spurred opposition unity, evident from the overflowing rally at Delhi's Ramlila Ground.

The recent Supreme Court decision concerning Reliance Infra's Delhi Airport Metro's EPL has prompted questions



THE COURT'S REJECTION OF PATANJALI'S APOLOGY IN A CONTEMPT CASE STEMMING FROM MISLEADING **ADVERTISEMENTS** CONTRAVENING ITS ORDER SERVES AS A STARK EXAMPLE OF HOW THE RULE OF LAW CAN RECTIFY CORRUPT PRACTICES

about corporate exploitation of public sector Delhi Metro. The Court overturned its own 2021 order directing Delhi Metro to pay Reliance Infra Rs 2782 crore, which had ballooned to Rs 7686 crore with accrued interest. Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, along with Justices R Gavai and Surya Kant, justified this drastic action, citing a 'miscarriage of justice' resulting in an 'unde-served windfall' for Reliance Infra. This ruling, following closely after the electoral bond controversy, has heightened voter scepticism. Had Delhi Metro been forced to pay, it could have burdened commuters with significantly high-

Likewise, the court's rejection of Patanjali's apology in a contempt case, stemming from misleading advertisements contravening its order, serves as a stark example of how the rule of law can rectify corrupt practices, unveil false brand mages, and maintain price stability. The court's warning to be prepared for consequences, along with its criticism of the Uttarakhand Government, underscores the power of legal intervention.

Erratic power bills and trary demands in UP and many States are also potential issues. Each of these cases, people realise, are instances of political linkages affecting price rises and profiteering. The glaring lapses on the part

of the executive and administration add to the woes of the people and the breakdown of the law-and-order machinery. The judiciary is uncovering corrupt practices that impact economic and administrative systems, consequent-

ly rising cost of living. Dainik Bhaskar has done a study on prices in Rajasthan. It finds that compared to 2019, prices of petrol, diesel and cooking gas increased by 42 per cent; food items cost 34 per cent more; medicine prices for diabetes and heart diseases rose by 54 per cent and people's dining outside has been reduced by 40 per cent. Pulses have become costlier by 20 per cent, vegetables by 233 per cent; taxi fares by 67 per cent, edible oil 100 per cent, and FMCG rose by 60 per cent. Salaries during the period for different classes have risen by 11 per cent to 26 per cent.

Price concerns persist, with numerous unnecessary infra, road airport and metro projects shocking even political workers. However, this doesn't diminish the significance of religious fervour surrounding the Ram temple and Modi's assurances, which remain potent issues in certain regions albeit overshadowed by economic factors and caste considerations. Amethi and Raebareli, however, remain in focus, more than Varanasi.

(The author is a senior journalist; views are personal)

# Nurture workplace safety and inclusivity



**KAPOOR** 

Effective workplace safety and inclusivity initiatives demand a holistic approach, addressing fundamental needs while nurturing higher aspirations

n the ever-changing landscape of workplace safety and inclusivity, this journey is quite often likened to Maslow's theory where foundational components set the stage for higher aspirations. Like Maslow's hierarchy that progresses from physiological needs to self-actualisation, our modern-day approach must deal with basic requirements before going up to more ambitious aspirations. The demand of today goes further than what organisations aspire for but rather addresses what is most urgent at the particular moment. Statistics indicate a diverse workforce composition inclusive of X-Gens, Millennials, Gen Zs and soon Generation Alpha. As this demographic shift occurs, are we ready? What kind of policies and practices should be considered for this new era?

Pay Parity: To relate job descriptions with actual roles or potential appointments calls for careful attention to detail. This audit goes beyond mere policy making; it requires discussions around salary negotiations and retention strategies in different



Workplaces: Organisations are increasingly investing in creating both physically and psychologically safe environments. Initiatives encompass Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) policies, which not only ensure workplace safety but also serve as a magnet for high-performing employees. ESG's emphasis on societal contributions resonates with individuals seeking purpose beyond

monetary benefits. Respectful Workplaces: Establishing psychologically safe environments mandates clear policies, including Codes of Business Conduct, Grievance Redressal protocols and Workplace Harassment guidelines (including Prevention of Sexual ments. This culture of appre-Harassment). Additionally, ciation propels individuals

dedicated committees should toward self-actualisation, the address issues promptly while proactively working on prevention initiatives.

Diversity and Inclusion: To remain relevant, organisaemployment policies, refine communication practices, foster employee resource Equity and Inclusion (DEÍ) councils. Failure to prioritise these initiatives could deter potential candidates and partners, underscoring their importance in today's land-

Flexibility: Sensitivity toward employees' diverse needs is paramount. Accommodations for special circumstances, accessibility for differently-abled individuals, gender-neutral facilities and amenities such as nursing spaces are essential. Appreciation: Cultivating a culture of appreciation is pivotal for fostering a sense of belonging among employees. Initiatives such as team bonding activities and addressing unconscious biases contribute significantly to creating supportive environ- needs and preferences. ments. This culture of appre-

pinnacle of Maslow's theory, counteracting toxicity and promoting inclusivity. Training and Development:

Prioritising continuous traintions must adopt equal ing and development programs is essential to cultivate a culture of growth and inclusivity within organisations. By groups and establish Diversity, equipping employees with the necessary tools and resources to excel, companies demonstrate their unwavering commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive workplace environment.

Accessibility Accommodation: Guaranteeing accessibility for all employees, irrespective of their physical capabilities, is imperative to foster inclusivity. This involves implementing measures such as installing wheelchair ramps, providing ergonomic workstations and offering assistive technologies to facilitate equal participation in the workplace. Additionally, organisations need to establish policies that address accommodation requests promptly and with utmost respect for employees

(The writer is founder Kelp; views are personal)

### **EMBRACING NANO INFLUENCE**

Madam — Apropos the news article, 'The rising power of nano influencers', published on April 24, this is my response. The rise of nano influencers marks a shift towards authenticity in social media marketing. These individuals, with modest followings of 1,000 to 10,000, offer brands a refreshing avenue to connect with consumers. Unlike macro and celebrity influencers, nano influencers embody relatability and communitydriven engagement. Their appeal lies in their resemblance to ordinary individuals-friends, family and colleagueseschewing the polished facades of traditional influencer marketing. This authenticity fosters genuine rapport and trust, essential commodities in an era inundated with impersonal ads.

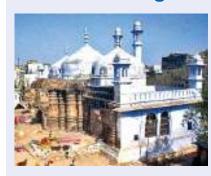
Brands increasingly gravitate towards nano influencers for their cost-effectiveness and heightened engagement rates. Moreover, their endorsements carry the weight of peer recommendations, bolstering consumer confidence and purchase decisions. Yet, challenges persist. Identifying influencers aligned with brand values and managing logistics pose hurdles. Nonetheless, the allure of genuine connections propels brands towards embracing nano influence, fostering deeper, more meaningful consumer relationships amidst the din of commercialism.

Meera Iyer | Bhopal

### **PHULE'S PROGRESSIVE LEGACY**

Madam — Apropos the news article, "A timeless inspiration for India's reform agenda", published on April 24, this is my response. Jyotirao Phule's legacy as a pioneering social reformer resonates strongly in modern India. His relentless efforts to uplift marginalised communities, particularly women and Dalits, laid the groundwork for a more inclusive society. Phule's advocacy for education, gender equality and social justice remains as relevant today as it was in the 19th century. His establishment of the Satyashodhak

### **Unveiling historical wounds**



propos the news article, "Historic legal battle unfolds over Gyanvapi", published on April 24, this is my response. The ongoing legal battles concerning worship rights at Gyan Vapi, from Varanasi courts to the Supreme Court, resonate with ethical implications. Both sides' legal prowess seems evenly matched, yet the essence of the dispute is far from symmetric. One side defends worship rights, while the other asserts property ownership, blurring the lines of justice. The roots of this conflict delve deep into history, where Aurangzeb's divisive legacy still casts its shad-

Reverend Sherring's accounts vividly depict the systematic desecration of Hindu temples under Mughal rule, highlighting a painful chapter often overlooked. The struggle over Gyan Vapi transcends legalities; it's a battle to reclaim dignity and heritage. As the judiciary delves into this sensitive matter, it must recognise the injustice endured, ensuring that this trial isn't merely legalistic but a reaffirmation of justice for a wounded community. History's scars must not dictate the present; it's time for healing and restoration

Divya Menon | Chennai

Samaj provided a platform for empowerment and caste equality, echoing the need for grassroots movements in contemporary times.

Moreover, Phule's forward-thinking educational reforms, such as vocational training and multilingual education, mirror present-day policies like the New Education Policy, of 2020. Embracing Phule's vision means prioritising the inclusion of marginalised groups in all spheres of society, from politics to education. As we commemorate Phule's legacy, it's imperative to mainstream the periphery, ensuring every citizen's voice is heard and valued. By doing so, we honour Phule's spirit and move closer to realising his dream of a truly egalitarian soci-

Kavita Mehra | Jaipur

### **ETERNAL QUEST FOR LIBERATION**

Madam — Apropos the news article, The Mysteries of Afterlife", published on April 24, this is my response. The Upanishads, with their timeless wisdom, unravel the intricacies of existence

and the journey of the soul beyond mortal realms. Central to their discourse is the juxtaposition of the transient with the eternal, delineating the essence of the self (Atman) from the cycles of birth and death.

Karma, the architect of destiny, weaves the fabric of our lives, transcending the boundaries of time and space and shaping our journey through successive rebirths. Yet, amidst the karmic tapestry, lies the ultimate pursuit - moksha, liberation from the shackles of samsara, a merging with the divine essence. Through contemplation of these profound concepts, the Upanishads beckon us to introspect, to seek beyond the veneer of mortality, towards the realisation of our true nature and the attainment of eternal bliss. In embracing their teachings, we embark on a voyage of self-discovery, navigating the depths of consciousness towards the shores of enlightenment.

Naina Kapoor | Chandigarh

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# **FIRST COLUMN NAVIGATING WORKPLACE ANXIETY**

The pressure to consistently perform and deliver causes stress and anxiety



SAKSHI **SETHI** 

n today's fast-paced and competitive work environments, it is not uncommon for employees to experience feelings of stress, worry and anxiety. While it is commonly associated with professional settings, at the same time it is important to recognise that similar dynamics even occur in educational environments, particularly at the school level. One of the primary contributors to workplace anxiety is the pressure to perform at a high level consistently. Employees often face demanding deadlines, complex projects and performance expectations that can create a sense of overwhelm and inadequacy.

Workplace anxiety can manifest in various forms, ranging from mild nervousness before a presentation to debilitating panic attacks triggered by overwhelming workloads or toxic office dynamics. Left unaddressed, it can have detrimental effects on both individual well-being as well as organisational productivity. Various studies and researchers have found a negative correlation between workplace anxiety and job performance that indicates that higher levels of anxiety are associated with lower performance ratings across various job tasks and responsibilities which brings in a dire need for employers to understand the root causes of workplace anxiety and implement strategies to mitigate its impact. By understanding the root causes of anxiety and implementing strategies to address them, not only the schools but also the organisations can create supportive environments where all members of the community can thrive. The recent concept of 'Unhappy leaves' which isn't even a standard term in employment or HR terminology, could soon refer to situations where employees take leave from work due to dissatisfaction, stress or burnout caused by their job or work environment. Employees might take such leave to address their mental health, seek new opportunities or simply take a break from the stresses of their current job.



Addressing workplace anxiety requires a multi-faceted approach that involves both the individual experiencing the anxiety and the organisation. Today, an increasing number of employers are becoming aware of the adverse effects that stress can have on an employee's performance and are offering different programs to help employees manage stress in their lives. This approach is an initiative that will prove to increase workplace performance as well as employee loyalty and retention in the long

Employers must work to improve employee satisfaction through measures such as providing support for mental health, fostering a positive work environment, offering opportunities for professional development and addressing any concerns or grievances that their employees may

On an individual level, employees can take proactive steps to manage workplace anxiety and safeguard their well-being which may include practicing self-care activities such as regular exercise, mindfulness meditation and relaxation techniques to reduce stress levels. Setting boundaries, prioritising tasks and seeking social support from colleagues or professional networks can help alleviate feelings of anxiety and promote resilience in the face of workplace challenges. Organisations and schools can implement policies and practices that promote work-life balance, stress management and mental health awareness. Providing access to resources such as counselling services, Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) and wellness initiatives can equip employees with tools and strategies to cope with workplace anxiety proactively and foster positive working relationships for creating a psychologically healthy workplace.

Remember that overcoming workplace anxiety is a journey and it may take time to find what works best for you.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

# The democratic status of India under scanner



The latest report from the V-Dem Institute categorises India as one of the 'worst autocracies' globally, significantly undermining its democratic reputation

he Gothenburg-based V-Dem Institute's report on Democracy Report 2024 claims that India has been reduced to the status of an "electoral autocracy" in 2018 and has further downgraded to "one of the worst autocracies". The report categorically found that almost all elements of democracy have worsened in more countries than improved and the report also singled out freedom of expression, fair elections and freedom of association/civil society as the three most affected elements of autocracy. There is ostensibly a clarion call for India to take on this global index based on arbitrary methods. The time has come to decolonise the democracy index and frame a domestic democracy index in the global

Suffice it to say, that this report based on faulty methods has shaken India's sentiment. The dichotomy is quite apparent that India has been measured in a biased manner in the scale. The flawed methodology and nonchalant attitude of people who helm the global index have put India on a declin-ing global index. The global criticism has allegedly hurt India's sovereign ratings. The Indian Government publicly rejected this global democracy index, arguing that Delhi did not need the sermons. India has accused the rank and file of hypocrisy, calling them self-appointed guardians of the world who find it very difficult to stomach the fact that no one in India seeks their

Democracy Index of the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) gives an overview of the State of democracy in 165 independent countries and two territories. This includes almost the entire world population and most of the world's States (micro States are not counted). Rated on a scale of 0-10, the democracy index is based on five categories: electoral process and pluralism, Government activity, political participation, political culture and civil liberties. Based on the results of various indicators in these categories, each country is classified into one of four regime types- "full democracy", "flawed democracy", "hybrid regime" or "authoritarian regime". Note that since 2015, the EIU has observed a decline in democratic standards in India. While democracy can be subjective, the EIU Democracy Index is based on five key indicators - the electoral process and pluralism, the functioning of Government, political participation, political culture and civil liberties. It is criticised that this democracy index sent out faulty information to the entire world.

According to the EIU Democracy Index, India's civil liberties score was lower than in 2014. Civil liberties are assessed by freedom of expression, freedom of speech, restrictions on the Internet, the independence of the judiciary of the State and the ability of citizens to address their complaints to citizens. The perceptions of human rights, perceptions of religious discrimination and whether the Government uses new risks and threats as an excuse to limit civil liberties. Since 2017, civil liberties scores have been in free fall. It was 7.35 in 2017 and 2018, then dropped to 6.76 in 2019 and bottomed out in 2020 at 5.59.

In 2021 and 2022, India's civil liberties score was 6.18 and by 2023 it had fallen again to 5.88, the score of Ghana, Thailand, Ecuador and Guatemala, all of which have lower Democracy index scores than India. While the civil liberties scores of developed countries have not improved over this peri-

od, India's deterioration has meant that India no longer ranks above them in this parameter. Precisely, according to the report declining civil liberties have affected India's democracy scores. As a result, the Indian Government decided to create its framework for democracy ratings after it was downgraded by international groups and indices. İt contacted the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), one of India's largest think tanks, which has partnered with the Government on several projects and initiatives.

According to the EIU Democracy Index, national elections will be held in 2024 in eight of the world's ten most populous countries - Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Moiste Phistone President and the second countries - Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Moiste Phistone President and the second countries - Brazil and the second countries Mexico, Pakistan, Russia and the United States. There are no choices in half of them for free and there is no lack of justice and many other prerequisites of democracy, such as freedom of speech and association. Not surprisingly, elections in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Russia where opposition forces are subject to State repression — do not lead to regime change or democracy. Elections in the United States, Brazil, India and Indonesia - all classified as "flawed democracies" - at least offer the possibility of change, although they are also likely to see incumbents or anointed followers win. The EIU Democracy Index's position on India's elections is problematic in terms of the methodology used in the study.

The World Happiness Report is a publication that contains articles based on respondents' ratings of their own lives and national happiness ratings, which the report also correlates with various life (quality of) factors. In March 2024, Finland was declared the happiest country in the world seven times in a row. However, India is currently ranked

demic. However, one can understand the situation in China. Then China can be ahead of India in terms of the happiness index. In the report, experts from fields

such as economics, psychology, survey analysis and national statistics discuss how well-being measures can effectively measure national progress and address other related topics. Each report is structured into chapters that address the issue, delving deeper into topics related to happiness such as mental health, the tangible benefits of happiness, the role of ethics, political implications and links to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) approach to measuring subjective well-being and other international and national initia-

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) publishes a World Press Freedom İndex every year. RSF is an international non-Governmental organisation whose mission is to protect and promote media freedom. It is headquartered in Paris and has consultative status with the United Nations. This annual World Press Freedom Index aims to "compare the level of press freedom for journalists and the media in 180 countries and territories" with the previous calendar year. The latest Reporters Without Borders (RSF) report says India's ranking in the 2023 World Press Freedom Index has fallen to 161 out of 180 countries. In comparison, Pakistan fared better in terms of media freedom, ranking 150th, an improvement from 157th last year. In 2022, India was ranked 150th on the scale. However, the press freedom index of India seems manufactured or could be based on flawed methodology. The history of Pakistani journalism has been turbulent, with

domestic and in exile, about the hostile environment they face.

The Committee to Protect Journalists' attempt is to provide support and assistance to journalists in exile. Since 2021, Afghan journalists have become one of the largest groups of journalists in exile receiving annual grants from CPJ, contributing to a 227 per cent jump in the CPJ grants to journalists in exile over the three years 2020-2022. It received increasing reports of Afghan journalists in exile who were targeted in immigrationrelated incidents. Afghan journalists seeking asylum in Pakistan told us they have been arrested and blackmailed for overstaying their visas and many are living in hiding and in fear. Then how India can be put below Pakistan and Afghanistan's press freedom index on the scale of press freedom?

The importance of methodology in any study remains vital. Research methodology is a way of explaining how the researcher intends to conduct his research. It is a logical, systematic plan for solving a research problem.

It provides researchers with a road map to ensure that their research is systematic, rigorous and objective. Without a well-defined research methodology, it is difficult to obtain accurate and reliable results, draw meaningful conclusions and contribute to the data set. Research methodology lends legitimacy to the research and provides scientifically sound results. It also includes a detailed plan to help keep researchers on track, making the process smooth, efficient and manageable. The methodology of the researcher allows the reader to understand the approach and methods of concluding. However, the methodology used in the democracy index has invited numerous issues.At this juncture, when the entire world is conspiring against India in terms of the democracy index, India must decolonise the

(The writer is an associate professor at the School of Management, Presidency University Bengaluru; views are personal)



REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS (RSF) REPORT SAYS INDIA'S RANKING IN THE 2023 WORLD PRESS FRFFDOM INDEX HAS FALLEN TO 161 OUT OF 180 COUNTRIES. IN COMPARISON, PAKISTAN FARED BETTER IN TERMS

OF MEDIA FREEDOM, RANKING 150TH. AN IMPROVEMENT FROM 157TH

### LAST YEAR 126 out of 146 countries with a happeriods of relative openness interspersed with severe restrictions on piness score of 4,054. India is lower in the happiness index than its press freedom, especially during the neighbouring countries like Nepal, military dictatorship. Similarly, press freedom in Bangladesh and China. The decline Afghanistan has been dismal for in happiness levels is closely linked to India's deepening mental health crisis, exacerbated by the chalyears. Even two years after the fall of Kabul, we hear almost every day lenges posed by the Covid-19 panfrom Afghan journalists, both

# Determining the limits of corruption, the Indian way

The recent raids on public functionaries and private individuals speak volumes about the deep roots of corruption still existing in Indian society

Thether it is the issue of electoral bonds the liquor policy of Delhi or many others involving politicians, bureaucrats and even private individuals, perhaps after some hiatus, the ghost of corruption is back haunting the national discourse at present. People may have different perceptions and views on the prevalence of corruption in India depending upon their experiences, knowledge or even interests. Some may think that corruption is highly prevalent within the Government functionaries and in the political class, whereas others may opine that corruption of some form or the other exists in



SIDDHARTH MISHRA

be some others who may justify corruption and yet others who vehemently criticize it. Does it mean that it is how one looks at the scenario that shapes the societal perspectives in this regard and if it is treated as true, does it require looking at the whole issue from different perspectives? Speaking honestly, corrupevery sphere including in the tion seems to be prevalent in private sector, even in small businesses. While there may all walks of life irrespective of whether it is the public or pri-

other form of corruption visible everywhere in this country. However, the form of corruption that usually becomes the talk of the town is the Governmental or the political class corruption. By that account, for that matter, should even a rickshaw puller or a vegetable or fruit vendor asking for more than the genuine price or overcharging not amount to corruption? Should not the boss, in a private enterprise, dominating, harassing or seeking undue favours from subordinates as a condition of promotion, be seen as corrupt? Ironically, the law does not seem to be treating such attitudes as, falling in the purview of, and, requiring to be prohibited by corruption law, though perhaps, the law serve the common people seem to deter people from become a way of life in this ranked IT officer, who was

vate sector. There is some might be providing some and refrain from breaching other type of remedy in such

cases. It is not just that the corruption is not confined to the Government sector, rather monetary is also not the only type of corruption that exists. Other forms of corruption do exist in this country that usually go unnoticed or unchecked.

Arrogance in people in power, delaying even genuine work and harassing, or humiliating ordinary people unnecessarily should amount to corruption. Public functionaries take oaths before assuming office and vow to remain honest in their duties, they hold public offices as the trustees for people, who have faith in them and it is their primary duty to

people's faith. Scores of people throughout the country face tremendous challenges, harassment and humiliation in getting work done in the Government departments at every level but public memory is short-lived and people easily forget such issues as time passes.

There is no doubt that corruption is not in the interest of the society or the State. Therefore, to curb the menace of corruption, the subsequent Governments have adopted numerous legal measures including the enactment of laws and the establishment of enforcement machinery. However, as is evident from the recent incidents of corruption, all such measures do not

involving in acts of corruption. Does it mean that the laws have failed to curb corruption or is it that the laws per se cannot provide a solution to this problem? Does one need to look beyond the legal measures to get rid of this menace that is eating into the vitals of this country?

Can this country do away with the menace of corruption through law and its enforcement? If that was true, then this country would have become corruption-free long back. Does it mean that corruption inherently exists in ourselves and has acquired the status of an accepted norm and it is not possible to get rid of corruption in this country? The question that arises is whether corruption has

country and whether should people now stop criticising corruption or people involved in it. Moreover, another disturbing aspect is whether involvement in corruption attaches any stigma or invites social backlash to the accused any longer. Doubts do exist about whether considerations of a person's involvement in corrupt practices weigh on people's psyche while making choices, especially political ones. Does this all not call for revisiting the whole gamut of social, educational and cultural moorings. The recent raids upon public functionaries and private individuals speak volumes of the deep roots of corruption still existing in Indian society.

The author recalls a high-

once involved in the anticorruption raids, telling him that one of the former bureaucrats who was raided for unaccounted assets, had illegally acquired numerous properties, most of which were not even ever seen or visited by him. That officer sadly quipped, 'how much corruption would or should one do and that there has to be a limit to corruption. This Statement unfortunately and ironically seems to resonate with the general sentiment of the masses who seem to have painfully accepted administrative or political corruption as fait accompli, but wish that at least 'they must do it in limits'.

(The author is a Sr Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Law, the University of Delhi; views are personal)

### **CPCL Q4 profit falls 39 per cent** to Rs 628 crore

hennai Petroleum Corporation Ltd, a subsidiary of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), on Wednesday reported 39 per cent drop in March quarter net profit on lower prices and foreign exchange loss. Consolidated net profit of Rs 627.89 crore in January-March FY24 was lower than Rs 1,012.81 crore earning in the same period last year, according to a stock exchange filing of the company. The profit was up 71 per cent when compared with Rs 365.3 crore earning in the December quarter. Revenue from operations was lower at Rs 20,822.95 crore as against Rs 21,350.05 crore in January-March FY23. The company

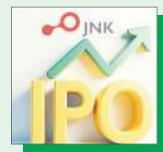
earned US\$ 8.64 on turning every barrel of crude oil into fuel in the year to March 31, 2024, as opposed to a gross refining margin of US\$ 11.91 per barrel in the previous year. Gross refining margin (GRM) for the quarter stood at US\$ 7.71 per barrel, compared to (-) US\$ 16.6 per barrel a year ago. Also, the company booked a foreign exchange loss of Rs 15.84 crore during January-March as compared to a gain of Rs 27.56 crore a year ago. \



### **JNK India IPO fully subscribed** on Day 2 of offer

he initial public offer of heating equipment maker JNK India was fully subscribed on the second day of subscription on Wednesday. The Rs 650 crore initial share sale received bids for 1,14,14,556 shares against 1,10,83,278 shares on offer, translating into 1.03 times subscription, as per NSE data. The portion for non-institutional investors got subscribed 1.25 times, while the category for Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) received 1.13 times subscription. The quota for Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) got subscribed

68 per cent. The Initial Public Offer (IPO) of JNK India received 49 per cent subscription on the first day of bidding on Tuesday. The IPO has a fresh issue of up to Rs 300 crore and an offer for sale of up to 84,21,052 equity shares. Those offloading shares in the OFS are promoters Goutam Rampelli Dipak Kacharulal Bharuka, JNK Heaters Co Ltd, and Mascot Capital and Marketing Pvt Ltd, and a shareholder Milind Joshi. The IPO is in a price range of Rs 395-415 a share. On Monday, JNK India Ltd said it has garnered Rs 195 crore from



### **Grew Energy bags order to** supply 200 MW solar equipment

modules. The company has secured the project united an author process conducted by Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), it said in a statement. "Grew Energy secures 200 MW of SECI's 400 MW solar PV module auction. Grew

package, forward, supply and transport the solar PV module," the company said in the statement. The delivery of solar modules and its spare parts have to be completed spanning over a nine-month duration. "We are equipped with the technology and have the bandwidth to contribute to multiple solar products across the country," Vinay Thadani, CEO and Director of Grew Energy, said in the statement. The evaluated bid price is finalised at Rs 22.66 per Watt peak (Wp) for all three bidders creating a standardised rate for the supply of modules and also establishing preference for the upcoming subsequent auctions



# **Report unauthorised forex** trading to ED: RBI tells banks

The RBI on Wednesday asked banks to exercise greater vigilance to prevent unauthorized forex transactions through banking channels and immediately report such instances to the enforcement directorate.

In a circular, the Reserve Bank said it has come across instances of unauthorized entities offering foreign exchange (forex) trading facilities to Indian residents with promises of disproportionate/exorbitant returns.

'On investigation, it has been observed that to facilitate unauthorized forex trading, these entities have taken recourse to engage local agents who open accounts at different



these accounts are opened in the name of individuals, proprietary concerns, and trading firms, and the transactions in such accounts are not found to be commensurate with the stated purpose for opening the account in several cases.

It is also observed that these

entities are providing options

to residents to remit/deposit

funds in rupees for undertak-

ing unauthorised forex trans-

"On investigation, it has been observed that to facilitate unauthorized forex trading, these entities have taken recourse to engage local agents who open accounts at different bank branches for collecting money towards the margin, investment, charges, etc," the RBI said.

bank branches for collecting money towards the margin, investment, charges, etc," the RBI said.

The apex bank further said

actions using domestic payment systems like online transfers, and payment gateways, the central bank said.

There is a need for greater vigilance to prevent the misuse of banking channels in facilitating unauthorized forex trading, said the circular addressed to Authorised Dealer Category

– I Banks (AD Cat-I banks). ...banks are, therefore, advised to be more vigilant and exercise greater caution in this regard. As and when AD Cat-I banks come across an account being used to facilitate unauthorized forex trading, they shall report the same to the Directorate of Enforcement, Government of India, for further action, as deemed fit," the

# Sugar mills allowed to use molasses for ethanol production

PNS NEW DELHI

The government has allowed sugar mills to use 6.7 lakh tonnes of B-heavy molasses as feedstock for making ethanol in the current year, a senior Food Ministry official said on Wednesday.

Sugar mills were holding excess stock of B-heavy molasses -- a byproduct of the sweetener -- produced before the ban on its use on December 7 last year.

However, a week later, the government reversed the ban and allowed the use of cane juice and B-heavy molasses, but within the overall cap of a diversion of 17 lakh tonnes of sugar for ethanol production for the



cial said.

2023-24 supply (November-October). This will be over and above "We have permitted sugar the capped diversion of 17 mills to use B-heavy molasses lakh tonne of sugar for lying with sugar mills for ethanol production for 2023ethanol. The same has been 24, he added. communicated to the

Currently, sugar mills have a B-heavy molasses stock of

6.7 lakh tonnes as per the state cane commissioners.

"We have permitted sugar

molasses lying with sugar

mills for ethanol. The same

has been communicated to

the Petroleum Ministry,"

the official said.

mills to use B-heavy

The move comes following the industry's representations to the food ministry to allow B-heavy molasses for ethanol production and improve the finances of the sugar mills.

Delhi markets are trading at Rs

72,610 per 10 grams, up by Rs

410 against the previous close,'

Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst

of Commodities at HDFC

In the international mar-

kets, spot gold at Comex was

# Markets maintain momentum for 4<sup>th</sup> day

### Sensex nears 74k

PNS MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ticked higher for the fourth straight session on Wednesday, helped by

and commodity stocks amid a positive trend in global equities. However,

buying in metal

pressure on telecom, IT and tech counters few index heavyweights results capped the upside, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex

climbed 114.49 points or 0.16 per cent to settle at 73,852.94. During the day, it jumped 383.16 points or 0.51 per cent

The NSE Nifty advanced

34.40 points or 0.15 per cent to 22,402.40. The indices witnessed some selling pressure towards the fag-end of the session that erased some initial

> "Indian markets lagged the Asian peers as O4 earnings remained largely subdued with

from IT and a also disappointed.

"However, buoyed by strong manufacturing and service sectors, the Indian composite PMI hit a multi-year high, reflecting domestic resilience and bringing some buoyancy in the broad market.

# M&A deal value surged 60 pc to US\$ 19.6 bn: PwC India

PNS NEW DELHI

Merger and acquisition (M&A) deal value soared by 60 per cent to US\$ 19.6 billion in January-March 2024, while that of private equity (PE) experienced a slight dip, according to a PwC India report.
With 455 deals amounting

to US\$ 25.6 billion disclosed value, the first quarter of 2024 showcases a 24 per cent rise in deal volume compared dar year 2023 - marking a notable resurgence, as per PwC India report 'Deals at a

"This signals a shift from the declining trend observed throughout 2023," it added.

As per the report, there were 143 domestic M&A deals, with the largest one touching



of 2024 stands at US\$ 25.6 billion, a significant increase from the previous quarter and the corresponding period last

Sector-wise, traditional sectors took the lead, drawing significant investments in the changing deal-making scenario. The media and enter-

US\$ 4.5 billion. The overall tainment sector topped the the retail and consumer sectors continue to lead in terms of deal volume.

Dinesh Arora, Partner & Leader - Deals, PwC India, said that amid a landscape ripe with opportunities, the Indian economy emerges as a beacon of resilience.

"The first quarter of 2024

showcases the best figures in the last six quarters, owing to the momentum of the market and large-ticket deals, hinting at a bold appetite for strategic expansion and market domi-

Petroleum Ministry," the offi-

"The quarter also heralds a promising horizon for capital markets and embodies an unyielding optimism. As dealmakers, businesses, and investors look towards the future, the energy is palpable,' Arora said.

the first quarter of 2024, the market activity in terms of volume shows a significant uptick compared to the last two quar-

In the first quarter of 2024, the market activity in terms of volume shows a significant rise compared to the last two

# Gold, silver prices rebound after falling for two sessions

PNS NEW DELHI

Gold and silver prices rebounded on Wednesday after falling in the past two sessions, with the yellow metal rising Rs 410 to Rs 72,610 per 10 grams in the local market due to strong trends in the global markets.

Silver prices also jumped Rs 250 to Rs 83,750 per kg. According to

H D F Securities, gold prices bounced

grams in Delhi. The precious metal had closed at Rs 72,200 per 10 grams on Tuesday. Silver prices also rose Rs 250 to Rs 83,750 per kg. In the pre-

vious close, it had settled at Rs 83,500 per kg.
"Spot gold prices in the

trading at US\$ 2,322 per ounce, up ÛS\$ 12 from the

Securities, said.

previous close. Following the release of the US macroeconomic data,

Rs 410 to Rs 72,610 per 10 Treasury yields declined, which further helped the bullion prices bounce back from a recent low, Gandhi said.

Silver was also trading higher at US\$ 27.10 per ounce. It had ended at US\$ 26.80 per ounce in the previ-

# 'Not in talks to buy Vodafone Group's stake in Indus Towers'

PNS NEW DELHI

Telecom operator Bharti Airtel on Wednesday said it is not in discussions to acquire British telecom giant Vodafone Group's about 21 per cent stake in Indus Towers.

In a BSE filing, Airtel asserted that it has no desire to raise its stake beyond what is required for financial consolidation of Indus in the company "which shall be done as and when appropriate with compliance of applicable disclosure requirements". Bharti Airtel holds 47.95



per cent stake in Indus Towers. "...we wish to clarify that the

Bharti Airtel is not in any discussion with Vodafone Group to acquire such stake in Indus Towers Limited," Airtel said, refuting reports that the Sunil Mittal-led telco was eyeing Vodafone's 21.05 per cent stake

in Indus. Indus is a provider of critical infrastructure services to the telecom industry and Airtel relies heavily on it.

"Airtel will therefore always

ensure that Indus remains in robust health and financially stable," it said.

# RBI Deputy Governor Rabi Sankar gets 1-yr extension

PNS NEW DELHI

The government has extended the term of RBI Deputy Governor T Rabi Sankar for a period of one year, the central bank said in a statement.

"The Central Government has re-appointed Shri T Rabi Sankar as Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of India, for a period of one year with effect from May 03, 2024, or until further orders, whichever is earlier," it said.

Sankar was appointed as the RBI Deputy Governor in May 2021 for a period of three

He joined the RBI in 1990 and worked in various positions at the central bank.

He was Executive Director of the Reserve Bank before being elevated to the post of

deputy governor. As an executive director, he was looking after the Department of Payment and Settlement Systems, the Department of Information Technology, Fintech and the Risk Monitoring Department of the RBI.

### IF PAN LINKED WITH AADHAAR BY MAY 31

# No action for short deduction of TDS

PNS NEW DELHI

The income tax department has said that no action will be taken for short deduction of TDS in case the assessee links his/her PAN with Aadhaar by May 31.

As per income tax rules, if a Permanent Account Number (PAN) is not linked with biometric Aadhaar, TDS is required to be deducted at double the applicable rate.

In a circular, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said several grievances have been received from taxpayers



that they are in receipt of notices intimating that they have committed default of 'short-deduction/collection' of TDS/TCS while carrying out the transactions where the PANs of the deductees/collectees were inoperative.

In such cases, as the deduc-

made at a higher rate, demands have been raised by the department against the deductors/collectors while processing of TDS/TCS statements.

To redress the grievances faced by such deductors/collectors, the CBDT specified that for "the transactions entered into up to March 31, 2024 and in cases where the PAN becomes operative (as a result of linkage with Aadhaar) on or before May 31, 2024, there shall be no liability on the deductor/collector to deduct/collect the tax (at higher rate)".

# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE DEALS

# Microsoft and Amazon face scrutiny

PNS LONDON

British competition regulators said Wednesday they'll scrutinise recent artificial intelligence deals by Microsoft and Amazon over concerns that the moves could thwart competition in the AI industry.

The Competition and Markets Authority said it's looking into Microsoft's partnership with France's Mistral AI and the company's hiring of key staff from another startup, Inflection AI. The watchdog also separately announced that it's investigating Amazon's \$4 billion investment in San





from antitrust authorities.

The UK watchdog said it was seeking comments from "interested third parties," before deciding whether to carry out an indepth antitrust investigation. We will assess, objectively

and impartially, whether each of these three deals fall within UK merger rules and, if they do, whether they have any impact on competition in the UK," the watchdog's executive director of mergers, Joel Bamford, said in a statement.

Microsoft said it will provide the watchdog with the infor-mation it needs to carry out its inquiries. "We remain confident that

common business practices such as the hiring of talent or making a fractional investment in an AI start-up promote competition and are not the same as a merger," the company said.

# HUL Q4 profit dips, net sales flat at Rs 15,013 cr

PNS NEW DELHI

FMCG major Hindustan Unilever on Wednesday reported a 1.53 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 2,561 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2024 due to factors such as deflation and softening of commodity

prices. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 2,601 crore in the year-ago period, according to a regulatory filing from HUL.

Net sales of Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) were almost flat to Rs 15,013 crore in the March quarter. While HUL's total expenses were up 1.15% to Rs 12,100 crore in the March quarter from Rs 11,962 crore a year ago.

The total income of HUL during the fourth quarter of the previous fiscal was flat at Rs 15,441 crore as against Rs 15,375 crore a

year ago.
"HUL delivered a resilient performance in Q4 with underlying sales growth of 1 per cent, underlying volume growth (UVG) of 2 per cent and EBITDA margin at 23.4 per cent," HUL said in

its earning statement. In the March quarter, HUL's gross margin tional (A&P) investments brands.

and its advertising and promo- ued to step up investments on its

## E' PROCUREMENT NOTICE

NIT No. 02 /EE-30 /SDZ /GHMC / 2024-25 [Election Work for HOP 2024] The details can be seen by logging @ https://lender.eprocurement.gov.in. The date o events is detailed below: Name of the Work: (1) Arrangements for Election Counting fo HOP 2024 08-Secunderabad Loksabha Constituency of Sanathnegar Assembly Constituency Segment situated at University College of Commerce and Business Management, O.U. Hyd. - 1 Work, (2) Providing of Basic Minimum Facilities like Tables, Table cloths, Chairs, Green mats and other items to (9) Polling Stations in Monda Market Ward 150 in view of HOP Elections 2024 08- Secunderabad Loksabha Constituency, Sanathnagar Assembly Segment, Sec-bad Zone, GHMC - 1 Works. Estimated Assembly Secunderabad Loksabha Constituency. Amount: Rs. 4.21 Likhs. Bid Document Download Start Date & Time / Bid Submission Closing Date & Time: 25-04-2024 12.00 PM / 29-04-2024 12.00 PM., Name & Address officer Cell No: E.E., Circle-30, GHMC, Sec'bad, Cell No. 7905009099 / 9849906750 Address of the officer concerned Sri. Sudershan, Executive Engineer, Circle-30 Segumpet, Sec-bad Zone, GHMC. Further details can be seen at e-Procurement @ https://tender.telangana.gov.in R.O.No: 11997-PPICL/ADVT/12004-25, Dt. 24.04.2024 Sd/- Executive Enginee

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Thursday

April 25, 2024



# 

# Rediscovering legacy of Tawaifs and **Baijis** with The Courtesan Project

SHIKHA DUGGAL

id you know that the highly trained courtesans of Awadh in the 18th and 19th centuries were known as 'Tawaifs', the trendsetters of their era? They combined Persian and Indian elements to create the classic Kathak dance and the ethereal dadra and thumri music, raising the bar for style and sophistication. They were not only exceptional artists but also highly regarded conversationalists and etiquette instructors.

Manjari is the creator of *The Courtesan* Project, an idea that has grown to become one of the most popular dance revival movements in existence today—giving women a voice and acknowledging their centuries-long creative contributions to theater, film, and other performing arts. *The Courtesan Project* is well-known, adored, and valued all over the world for its distinctive storytelling that brings to light the underappreciated stories of dance and music!

"Let's say 1999, when I met a 'Tawaif' by the name of Zareena Begum," the founder recounts in an exclusive conversation with us for the special weekly column. "I was a rookie in this field of dancing. The 'Tawaif" among the K community was unfamiliar to me. I recall her putting her hands out in front of me and questioning how I was meant to dance to a song sung by a 'tawaif' because I came from a wealthy household. I didn't understand! I became even more motivat-

ed to test this notion we're dis-

cussing after observing the stigma." This initiative serves as a platform to educate the public about former courtesans and the detrimental effects that discriminatory practices had on their lives. Through cultural action, they are promoting the much-needed space for them as "artists" in society. The creator goes on, "I also manage a founda-tion where I provide medical and financial support to our community's elderly musicians. I began my investigation into the music connected to 'Tawaifs' without considering any stigmas at this point. I discovered that they had to sing from the doorway and were never permitted into the affluent homes. Why was this, I wondered? This social order is terrible."

Thus, the founder felt it was imperative that she share Tawaif's inspiring tales with the world and showcase their artwork. This relates to gender in the arts and

how the performer's gender influences the work going forward! The enigmatic dancers known as Tawaif and Nachnewali are not included in the history of performing arts documentation, while their male counterparts are named "Ustads" and the amazing women are simply called Nautch Girls".

Additionally, she recalled asking the tawaifs' sponsors, "I was told straight out that Sufi has a strong brand, so why would you want to work with the tawaifs? It provided me with yet another perspective on the project I was working on. We were not sponsored! However, I have a strong sense of stubbornness, so I went ahead and paid for the concert myself. However, I first gave a two-hour session to get people talking about Tawaif culture. "Tawaif" isn't a terrible word, in my opinion! In their faces, the cultural minister consented to attend." These women were the first to perform as women in the major Hindi film industry after moving from Kotha to become a part of the Parsi theatre. The accounts of women who sang for India's independence have been lost to history: we can only trace these accounts, and their artistic contributions

"They were never dis-

are mainly still unacknowledged! Their art is highlighted by this endeavour now. Bravo!

'I must admit that, despite what I was told, the media solely seeks financial benefit. This was disproven when 32 prominent newspapers covered the 'tawaif' without the support of sponsors! I was unable to even send out formal invitations as we do now, so I invited everyoneincluding the ministers—by writing simple letters. The 'tawaif' asked, 'Log humse abhi bhi mohabbat karte hai?' (People still love us?) as she broke down in tears.

moving forward," continues Maniari Chaturvedi. The founder has taken her passion for classical dance and transformed it into something more than just a means of expression. Under her direction, it is a kind of narrative form, as well as a cultural rebirth. The Courtesan Project, aims at documenting the historically extraordinary role of the 'Tawaif' in artistic life—as muse to poets and painters, writers and kings, musicians and leaders—and is the most evocative example of this. By doing this, she aims to restore the respect that these denigrated women deserve for their education and performance art, their wit and intelligence, their creativity, and their unadulterated sexual might.

There, my project won! I obstinately became more involved in this project

Her personal experiences provided more insightful commentary. "I could sense how only sniggering conversations were held about the 'tawaifs' in the drawing rooms," she said

cussed in a serious manner! The level of academic interest does increase when you do seminars. Even the word "Tawaif" was forbidden to be used in the lectures! I was astonished to hear that some institute staff members referred to the dancing performances as "Muiras"! Observe the irony: the same institute was the scene of Mughal-e-Azam." So, she offered the younger generation a different perspective on the talented female artists who, up until now, have only been the subject of disparaging remarks that may have been heavily influenced by Bollywood.

"I was addressing prejudices.

Bollywood is to blame for the incorrect portrayal of 'tawaifs' in society. I began talking about dance and how it's associated with 'tawaifs'. Students began learning more about this culture as a result of the courtesan project. They even wrote a departmental book on them locally! The interest that authors and PhD candidates began to show in them for books or research papers was another way that the project had an impact. I won't name them, but a huge filmmaker is filming a picture about them; his writers sat down while I was in seminar. A movie on 'tawaifs' would never have attracted anyone's attention ten years ago. What unexpectedly occurred? It's my project's impact!

Even the one that was produced was a complete failure! My concert served as inspiration for Bombay Begums as well. However, since these movies would stop at nothing to get money, I'm not concerned about them."

There have been hundreds of concerts, including Manjari Chaturvedi's performance art of the 'tawaifs', four significant seminars, three Tedx speeches, and several other talks and lectures under the umbrella of The Courtesan Project series. Many historical walks have been inspired by the 'tawaifs' and the majority of singers and dancers currently use the 'tawaifs' art form in their performances. The 'tawaifs' are in style, and there are countless Instagram reels of them. This is the direct outcome of the last 14 years' worth of work that has led to a cultural rebirth. The contemporary classical dancer who aspires to be recognised among the singers and dancers of the past is challenging society's expectations of individuals and how the past has viewed

female stage artists. She is making a bold statement by titling her event *Main* Tawaif, and that is admirable, and only a strong performer like her can transcend the existing narrative and craft a new one from the perspective of women. This is necessary to finally recognise the tawaif's performance art, to go past the jeers and drawing room giggles that come with the word 'tawaif', and to finally recognise their place in the annals of performance art history! Manjari herself had to wait for ten long years to use the name 'tawaif' in a classical concert without facing backlash. A contemporary classical dancer who is at last hoping to provide the performers and vocalists of the past some recognition. She is challenging stereotypes!

# 'No longer confined to handful of favourites'

**ACTOR AAMIR** 

ALI, WHO WAS

RECENTLY SEEN

LOOTERE, GETS

CANDID WITH

MEHTA'S

TOWARDS OTT,

AND MORE.

opularly known for his ability to play various roles on television, Aamir Ali mesmerised the audiences yet again with his captivating performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performance in Vitanian performanc formance in Lootere, streaming on Disney+ Hotstar. For those unaware, he had previ-ously collaborated with the ace filmmaker Hansal Mehta once

again post-Faraaz.
Getting candid with The Pioneer, Aamir, who plays the character of Ghulam Waris, reveals, "Initially, working with directors like Hansal sir, Shailesh sir, and Jai was a dream come true. *Lootere* intrigued me; its storyline was unlike anything I had ever encountered. In television, characters are often limited to hero and heroine archetypes, but in OTT, the diversity and complexity of roles are fascinating. *Lootere* delves into the gripping tale of a cruise ship crew comprising Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis, held captive by Somali pirates with no hope of escape or rescue for the enslaved."

As we went on further in this chat, the actor couldn't praise the show enough. The reason, you wondered, is that he shares, "It's truly groundbreaking for Indian OTT. The production, featuring both Indian and African actors, is unparalleled. Its bilingual format, a bold move, sets it apart from the rest. I'm grateful to Hotstar for believing in

Hansal Sir and Jai's vision." Filming *Lootere* was an immense challenge for everyone involved, from actors to makers and technicians. Shooting in Cape Town, Africa, presented formidable obstacles with its harsh temperatures and unpredictable weather conditions. The decision to film solely at live locations added another layer of complexity to the production process. Despite having security measures in place, he reveals, "The cast and crew found themselves navigating unfamiliar terrain, immersed in the vibrant yet challenging environment of African slums reminiscent of Mumbai's

Dharavi." Portraying a character who shuns violence yet possesses a knack for getting things done was a fascinating challenge for him. And so, he drew inspiration from reallife individuals whom he knew and admired, crafting a character that resonated deeply with him "This character became a source of inspiration, embodying traits I found truly admirable. In one pivotal scene, as my character engages in conversation with another individual, tension mounts as a gun is suddenly pointed in his direction. However, as the scene unfolds, it becomes evident that my character maintains complete control of the situation. Through his sharp intellect and quick thinking, he skillfully navigates the encounter, effortlessly turning the tables in his favour. This moment serves as a

testament

to his astuteness and cunning nature. Watching the show will reveal why this character holds such significance for me as their journey unfolds on screen, showcasing the depth and complexity of their beliefs and actions."

The excellence of Lootere, he says, lies in its ensemble cast, comprised of incredibly talented actors who seamlessly embody their characters. Each actor was carefully selected not for their name recognition but for their ability to authentically portray their roles. He further shares, "The casting process was meticulous, ensuring that every actor perfectly fit their character, enhancing the authenticity and depth of the narrative. What truly sets this show apart is the remarkable chemistry between the cast members, evident in the nuanced reactions they elicit from one another. It's through these genuine interactions that the true essence of acting shines, demonstrating the importance of strong reac-

tions in creating compelling performances.
Watching shows on international OTT platforms ignited a deep passion within him, sparking a desire to be part of such ground-breaking projects. "It was a dream I held close to my heart to explore the realm of OTT content in India and make a mark in the industry. As I embarked on this journey, I found myself living the dream I once envisioned. Being part of *Lootere* was the realisation of that dream—a moment of profound fulfillment and joy. I had longed to delve into the world of OTT shows, and now, having accomplished it, I feel a sense of gratifica-tion beyond measure."

> zons in ways he had never imagined. "While I once admired iconic characters like Amitabh Bachchan's portrayal in Agneepath or Aamir Khan's roles, the diverse range of characters now available on OTT platforms has expanded my appreciation. No longer confined to just a handful of favourites, I find myself drawn to a multitude of characters from various shows and films. This newfound perspective has inspired me to seel out diverse roles and stories that challenge me as an actor." Next in line after Lootere is a project titled Doctors, helmed by Siddharth P. Malhotra. "I'm eager to dive into this new ven-

Exploring the vast land-scape of OTT platforms

and world cinema, he says, has broadened his hori-

ture, exploring the intricacies of the medical world and delving into complex characters under Malhotra's direction. As I continue to embrace the everevolving landscape of OTT content, I look forward to pushing boundaries and venturing into uncharted territory with each new opportunity that comes my way," signs off Aamir on a happy note.

# Deep brain stimulation's impact on advanced parkinson's management

parkinson's disease (PD), a degenerative condition of the nervous system, is a movement disorder characterised by slowness of movement, resting tremor (shaking of limbs), rigidity (stiffness), and postural instability (imbal-

### **ADVANCED PARKINSON'S DISEASE MANAGEMENT:**

Medical management remains the first line of treatment in patients with PD. Patients respond well to medications that temporarily replenish dopamine (L-dopa) or mimic the action of dopamine. However, as the disease duration increases, the requirement of L-dopa increases and the medical management of advanced Parkinson's disease can be quite challeng-

The most troublesome effects of L-dopa as the disease advances, usually after several years of treatment, are an end-of-dose reduction in efficacy, the more precipitous "on-off" phenomenon, and the induction of involuntary "dyskinetic" movements. This is when patients are evaluated for

Deep Brain Stimulation - a surgical procedure that helps people with advanced PD improve their quality of life.

### **DEEP BRAIN STIMULATION:**

Deep Brain Stimulation involves applying high-frequency electrical stimulation to specific structures in the deep areas of the brain. Deep brain stimulation (DBS) surgery was first approved in 1998 to treat Parkinson's disease (PD) tremor, then in 2002 for the treatment of advanced Parkinson's symptoms. It is now widely accepted as an effective, safe, and standard treatment worldwide.

The procedure involves placing a thin metal electrode into one of several possible brain targets and attaching it to a computerised pulse generator, which is implanted under the skin in the chest below the clavicle.

In DBS surgery, electrodes are inserted into a specific area of the brain (generally the subthalamic nucleus STN or the Globus pallidus GPi), using MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) and recordings of brain cell activity during the procedure. This is the part of the procedure where the patient is awake. A second procedure is performed under General Anaesthesia (GA) to implant an IPS, impulse generator battery (like a pacemaker). The IPG is placed under the collarbone. The IPS provides an electrical impulse to a part of the brain involved

in motor function.

### **ROLE OF DEEP BRAIN STIMULATION IN PARKINSON'S DISEASE:**

DBS is highly effective for patients who suffer from disabling tremors, wearing-off spells, and dyskinesias induced by medication. Although DBS significantly improves the quality of life in PD patients, it is not a cure and it does not slow PD progression. It gives a good quality of life for 10-15 years depending on the age and stage of PD when DBS was performed. Most people after undergoing DBS, experience a considerable reduction of their PD symptoms, and their medications can be greatly reduced. However, it does not improve speech or swallowing issues, thinking problems, or gait freezing.

Like all brain surgeries, DBS carries a

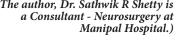
small risk (<5%) of complications. It can be procedure-related (haemorrhage that may be silent or symptomatic, transient confusion, infection), device-related (breakage of leads), or stimulation related (usually eliminated by adjusting stimulation settings). This is often avoided with stringent patient selection criteria, meticulous planning, and strict asepsis during DBS surgery. A controller is given to patients who undergo DBS surgery to turn the device on or off.

DBS surgery does not cause any damage to healthy brain tissues or nerve cells. It only interrupts abnormal electrical signals from targeted areas in the brain. It is a reversible procedure unlike other proce-

dures used in the treatment of PD like lesioning which involves irreversibly destroying tissues in a specific area of the brain.

### **IDEAL PD CANDIDATE FOR DBS:**

- The patient has had PD symptoms for at least five years.
- S/he continues to have a good response to PD medications, especially carbidopa/levodopa, although the duration of response may be insufficient (Levodopa responsive).
- Age group of 40-70 years.
- The patient has "on/off" fluctuations despite regular medication dosing. S/he is unable to tolerate PD medica-
- tions due to side effects. Tremors that are not well controlled
- with medication.
- Severe dyskinesias. The patient should be cognitively
- (The author, Dr. Sathwik R Shetty is



# what's brewing?





Retailers Association of India (RAI) hosted the third edition of Hyderabad Retail Summit (HRS), held at the Hotel ITC Kohenur in Hyderabad. The highlights

of the summit were the in-depth panel discussion on topics such as The Modern Retail Renaissance: Innovations and Consumer-Centric Strategies, Retail Revolutionised: The Technological Transformation, and Revolutionising the Indian Grocery Industry: Technology, Supply Chains, And Logistics.





Vision IAS conducted a seminar on UPSC preparations on Wednesday in Hyderabad. The seminar focused on the UPSC preparations. The toppers of the institute; AIR - 36, Ayushi Pradhan, and AIR-50, K N Chandana Jahnavi, gracing the event and sharing some effective strategies for the examination.

Himalayan Pine Com, presented the Global Sustainability Discussion and Awards 2024. This inspiring event, held at The Historic Red Fort (Lal Qila), brought together distinguished guests, environmental advocates, and cultural luminaries to commemorate World Earth Day and champion sustainability efforts worldwide. Amidst the iconic setting of Lal Qila, esteemed attendees engaged in insightful discussions on pressing environmental challenges and innovative solutions. The event served as a platform for knowledge exchange, fostering collaborations aimed at driving positive change on a global scale.





Atal Incubation Centre -Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology and Thermo Fisher Scientific, partner to enable research initiatives in the country.





Reliance Jewels, continues its tradition of celebrating festivals with unique and exquisite collections, by introducing the Vindhya collection on Akshaya Tritiya this year. Ninth in its iconic 'Jewels of India' collection series, collection is inspired by the rich artistic traditions of Madhya Pradesh, Fashion icon and Bollywood diva Disha Patani unveiled the exclusive festive collection at a special event at the Reliance Jewels' store in Varanasi.

### **Amazon miniTV forays into** Tamil, Telugu language

mazon miniTV - Amazon's free video streaming service known for its diverse and rich selection of original and dubbed content is gearing Aup to unveil exciting news for a much wider audience with its latest announcement. Expanding its reach, the streaming service has launched an extensive bouquet of over 200 shows and movies dubbed in Tamil and Telugu language. The exciting line-up of dubbed titles includes marquee and fan-favourite Hindi originals of miniTV such as Hunter- Tootega Nahi Todega, Physics Wallah, action-packed patriotic series Rakshak- India's Braves, a young romance series Highway Love, amongst others. In addition to this, viewers will also get to enjoy a repertoire of Hollywood blockbuster movies dubbed in Tamil and Telugu, including timeless classics such as Twilight, Now You See Me, Hunger Games series, the Step Up franchise, Red, and more. In pursuit of a more holistic content offering, the service will also bring to its customers Korean, Turkish and Mandarin shows dubbed in Tamil and Telugu languages

### **MAX RETHINKS 'SIZE LABELS'**

ax Fashion announces the launch of Max Urban. Designed exclusively for the country's burgeoning youth market, the brand aims to redefine style, self-expression, and the shopping experience for a youth market, Urban's bold, progressive aesthetic product line is a reflection of today's youth-confident, unapologetic and fearless! The "Love Labels" brand campaign from Max Urban takes a bold and empowering approach to size and fit. Rather than perpetuating traditional size labels, the campaign dispenses with the concept entirely redefining them as affirmations of self-love and body positivity. The campaign film follows a narrative that celebrates the diverse and ever-changing shapes and sizes of people. The brand aims to help customers find clothes that fit them perfectly, creating a unique shopping experience that uplifts and empowers The traditional size abbreviations of "XS," "S," "M," "L," "XL," and "2XL" have been reimagined as inspiring labels like "Xtra Special," "Stunning," "Magical," "Lit," "Xtra Lit," and "Xtra Xtra Lit.

### **NUEGO LAUNCHES INDIA'S** FIRST LONG-HAUL ELECTRIC AC **SEATER + SLEEPER BUS**

the long-distance travel journey with the launch of India's first intercity electric bus service. This is a significant step towards decarbonisation and creating a more sustainable public transportation ecosystem in India. NueGo deployed multiple seater + sleeper buses on its major routes across India such as Bengaluru - Chennai, Bengaluru - Coimbatore, Vijaywada - Vizag, Delhi - Jaipur, Delhi - Amritsar. NueGo is planning to expand its operations by launching new routes and building charging infrastructure to ensure smooth on-road operations. NueGo is also actively hiring across genders to increase inclusivity in its workforce and is the only bus brand to

### Seminar on blue-collar recruitment in Hyd

ahan Technologies organised a seminar on blue-collar recruitment in Hyderabad on Saturday. Vahan focuses on blue-collar and gig recruitment, the fastest-growing segment in recruitment driven by growing demand from industries such as food delivery, quick service, e-commerce and manufacturing. As per Niti Aavog, there will be 2.35 crore gig workers by 2030. growing 200% between 2020 and 2030. Addressing the seminar, Siddharth Chauhan, Head – Supply Acquisition of Vahan Technologies, shared details about the growth of the recruitment industry, especially the blue-collar segment, owing to the rising popularity of gig working in the country. Facilitated by the world's cheapest data and growth in the smartphone market, the blue-collar space and gig working segment is growing rapidly and is expected to become a significant part of the workforce

### THE SEEFAH TAKEOVER

his April, Zega - the award-winning pan-Asian restaurant at Sheraton Hyderabad Hotel, is set to host a culinary spectacle featuring the renowned expat Thai Chef Seefah Ketchaiyo. Celebrated for her innovative takes on Asian street food, she along with co-founder Chef Karan Bane is ready to whisk Zega away on a flavorful odyssey, mirroring the lively streets of Bangkok for a dining encounter like no other. Some of the signature specials one could look orward to include E San Grilled Pork, Southern Thai, Crab Curry, Steam Seabass with spicy lemon broth. When: Today and tomorrow, Venue: Zega, Sheraton Hyderabad Hotel, Lunch Hours: 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM, Dinner Hours: 2:00 PM - 2:00 AM. For Reservations Call: 91001 19443

### **Bangur Cement launches an** innovative multimedia campaign inspiring citizens to Vote

andur Cement unveiled a new multimedia campaign inspiring the citizens of the nation to exercise their right to vote. The campaign, O'Vote Solid, Desh Solid', highlights the importance of each individual's vote in making the nation more solid. The campaign is innovative because it is a sequel to the previous brand launch campaign featuring popular Bollywood star Sunny Deol. The key message of the campaign is 'Vote Solid, Desh Solid.' Just as Bangur Cement helps you build a solid home, you can help build a solid nation by exercising your right to vote.

### NatureFit and Raheja's Mindspace partner to offer **Comprehensive Corporate Wellness Solutions**

atureFit has partnered with Raheja's Mindspace Business IT Park to serve as its dedicated Wellness partner for Preventive Wellness and Indian System of Medicine. This strategic collaboration aims to deliver integrated healthcare solutions to employees across Mindspace's Pune and Mumbai locations. Through this partnership. NatureFit has provided its wellness solutions to over 1.5 Lakh employees at Mindspace Business IT Park. By conducting 35+ health camps and organizing various

workshops, NatureFit has garnered praise from employees of ICICI, IDFC, KPMG, and RBI, solidifying its reputation as a leader in holistic well-being. To support these proactive wellness initiatives, NatureFit has also conducted a comprehensive wellness center survey within Mindspace premises, garnering invaluable insights into employee preferences. Activities such as Zumba, yoga group sessions, strength training, diet consultations, and mental counselling have emerged as key demands, further underscoring NatureFit's commitment to holistic well-being

### The Brunch Palette Experience The Brunch Palette at Food Exchange, Novotel

Hyderabad Convention Centre, a culinary and artistic adventure like no other. Delight in a symphony of flavors, featuring global and regional delights, each dish crafted to perfection. Enjoy the serene outdoor ambiance, savor diverse brunch offerings, and take a refreshing plunge in our pool amidst scenic beauty. Join us with your loved ones for an extraordinary Sunday brunch, where you can indulge in this sensory journey, letting creativity

flow while painting your unique creation. Embark on an adventure that tantalizes taste buds and ignites the imagination.

Where: Food Exchange Novotel Hyderabad Convention

Centre, Hyderabad, Telangana.

When: 28th April 2024 Time: 12.00 PM onwards

RAISER

### **ARCHIE**











# IT'S GREAT TO SEE YOU, MAX! IT SEEMS LIKE AGES SINCE

REALITY CHECK

IF YOU TYPE YOUR

LIES IN ALL CAPS

THAT MAKES THEM TRUE!



SPEED BUMP

THIS WAY SEEMS A

LOT MORE INCONVENIENT.





### **GARFIELD**







### SLUGGO NEVER NANCY-THAT HE'S A NICE BOY, ALINT



WAS MUCH ON









### **SUDOKU**

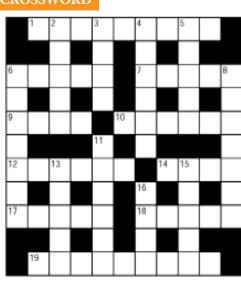
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8								4
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### Rules Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9)

. The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

### **CROSSWORD**



### ACROSS

This accompanies thunder

6 Leaving

7 Correct

9 Find these in a nest. 10 A large old fortified building

12 Use this with a sewing needle 14 A heavy metal

17 A restaurant customer

18 Enraged

19 Yummy brown stuff DOWN

4 Norwegians live here

2 A sweet cake topping 3 Embraces

5 Time of darkness 6 Welcomed

8 A weekday

13 A large farm in

15 One fifth of forty

16 Travel by yacht

SOLUTION

America

11 Cloth

### GINGER MEGGS







Hyderabad | Thursday April 25, 2024

Snippets by K. Ramya Sree

Varalaxmi Sarathkumar talks of Sabari, a screenplay-driven thriller

PNS | HYDERABAD

In anticipation of the upcoming release of Sabari, a gripping action-thriller directed by Anil Katz and produced by Mahendra Nath Kondla, talented actress Varalaxmi Sarathkumar recently engaged in a candid conversation with the media. The film, presented by Maharshi Kondla under the Maha Movies banner, is set to hit theaters on May 3, promising audiences an exhilarating cinematic experience.

Reflecting on her journey with Sabari, Varalaxmi revealed, "I first heard the story of Sabari even before I signed Krack. I was captivated by the plot from the outset and immediately agreed to be part of the project. It presented a unique challenge and allowed me to explore different facets of my acting beyond the negative roles I've often portrayed.

Regarding her role in *Sabari*, Varalaxmi shared insights into her character as a single mother grappling with personal challenges. "My character in this film is quite different from my previous roles," she explained, adding, "It's a relatable portrayal of a woman dealing with family issues, and the mother-daughter dynam-

ic plays a pivotal role in the narrative." Addressing the decision to work with a first-

time director and producer, Varalaxmi emphasised the importance of taking calculated risks in the film industry. "Life is all about taking risks," she remarked. "You can't judge success or failure until film is made. The director and producer placed their trust in me, and I reciprocated by delivering my best performance."

Discussing her collaboration with producer Mahendra Nath, Varalaxmi praised his professionalism and dedication to the craft. "Mahendra Nath is a genuine person who deeply respects the art of filmmaking," she stated. "He ensures that all aspects of production are taken care of, demonstrating his commitment to quality."

On a lighter note, when asked about her fiancé Nikolai's views on her films, Varalaxmi humorously responded, "Nikolai is a straightforward critic. He doesn't hold back his opinions about my work, whether positive or negative. Fortunately, he appreciates most of my films." The actress also

revealed her plans for marriage later this year.

Looking ahead, Varalaxmi hinted at her upcoming projects, including *Kurma Nayaki*, a Tamil film with Dhanush, and Max, alongside Kannada star Sudeep. "I have several films in the pipeline. Details will be announced soon as discussions progress," she disclosed.

As Sabari gears up for its theatrical release, er an unforgettable cinemat-Varalaxmi's enthusiasm and dedication to her craft

With the much-anticipated film Sabari, nearing its release, actress Varalakshmi Sarathkumar interacts with the media here, sharing more insights about the upcoming film.

MANJUMMEL BOYS

ACTOR ENTERS

IE WEDLOCK

eepak Parambol, riding high on the success of his recent Malayalam film *Manjummel Boys*, embarked

on a new journey as he tied the knot with his co-star

Aparna Das from the film Manoharam. The couple

exchanged vows in a traditional ceremony held at the renowned Guruvayur temple in Thrissur district, Kerala, on

Wednesday, surrounded by their close friends and family.
Pictures from Deepak and Aparna's wedding quickly

spread across social media, capturing the couple adorned in elegant white and gold attire. Aparna looked resplen-

dent in a Kasavu saree, while Deepak exuded charm in a

Their love story blossomed on the sets of Manoharam

back in 2019, where Aparna starred in a leading role while Deepak showcased his talent in a supporting capacity.

Since then, their bond has grown stronger, culminating in a beautiful union celebrated with traditional rituals and

As their wedding photos continue to captivate audi-

ences online, fans and well-wishers eagerly anticipate the next chapter in Deepak and Aparna's lives. The couple's

union not only symbolises a personal milestone but also reflects the enduring magic of cinema, where relation-

ships flourish beyond the screen.

classic Mundu.

heartfelt moments.

promise enthralling performance that audiences won't want to miss. The film's screenplay-driven narrative, coupled with Varalaxmi's versatile acting, is poised to cap tivate viewers and deliv-

ic experience.

PUSHPA 2 MUSICAL **JOURNEY BEGINS** 

teaser serves as a tantalising

In the realm of music, mae-

stro Devi Sri Prasad reigns supreme, showcasing his musical genius with the *Pushpa Pushpa Pushpa Raj* track. The

glimpse of the cinematic marvel

the stage ablaze and elevate the

audience experience to unprecedented heights.

tollywood

n a blaze of excitement, Mythri Movie Makers and Sukumar Writings have set the stage on fire with the release of the promotional teaser for Pushpa 2: The Rule. The teaser claimed the coveted song, a pulsating anthem echoing the movie's tagline, "Pushpa Mass Jaathara," promises to set #1 spot for an unprecedented 138 hours, with over 110 million views. On Wednesday, the journey of Pushpa 2 reached another milestone as the first single, *Pushpa Pushpa Pushpa Raj*, from the

prestigious T-Series hit the airwaves. Clocking in at 20 seconds. this title track offers a tantalising preview of the musical extravaganza awaiting audiences. The full song, promising to be a mass anthem, is set to debut on the auspicious occasion of May Day, May 1, at 11.07 a.m. Renowned director

Sukumar, celebrated for his visionary storytelling prowess, once again showcases his brilliance with the Pushpa Pushpa Song teaser. This promotional snippet captures the essence of the film, leaving viewers clamouring for more. At the helm of this cinematic spectacle is the incomparable Allu Arjun, whose electrifying presence and unwavering commitment breathe life into every frame. His performance in the

indelible mark on cinematic his-

Bharadwaj will play other important roles in this film.



Pushpa 2: The Rule, starring Rashmika Mandanna as the female lead, gears up for a grand worldwide release on August 15, Prepare to embark on an exhilarating journey that will redefine the action genre and leave an

Mark your calendars as

Fahadh Faasil and Anasuya

# Abhishek Agarwal

# Arts to begin The Delhi Files this year

dollywood's popular Production House Abhishek Agarwal Arts which foraved into Bollywood with the successful movie The Kashmir Files will be teaming up with director Vivek Ranjan Agnihotri for another intriguing project *The Delhi Files*.
While many thought the movie may not happen any time soon, the director and producer came up with an update. Vivek Agnihotri affirmed that *The Delhi Files* will go on floors this year, while it will hit the screens next year. "In the meantime, #TheDelhiFiles is going on floors

this year, as scheduled. Release next year. No big stars. Only big content," reads Vivek Agnihotri's official statement. Abhishek Agarwal also confirmed it by tagging the film's title, in response to the director's statement. Tej Narayan Agarwal presents the movie, while Abhishek Agarwal

Arts and I am Buddha Production will produce it. It's a Vivek Ranjan Agnihotri Film produced by Abhishek Agarwal, Archana Agarwal, Vivek Ranjan Agnihotri and Pallavi Joshi. More details of the project will be unveiled soon.



# **KUBERA MOVES** O MUMBAI

The much-anticipated film *Kubera*, starring actor Dhanush and Rashmika Mandanna, has commenced shooting in Mumbai, according to sources. The bustling streets and iconic landmarks of the city set the backdrop for pivotal scenes featuring the dvnamic duo.

Dhanush, known for his versatile performances, brings his trademark charisma to Kubera. Rashmika Mandanna, hailed for her captivating screen presence, joins Dhanush in what promises to be a captivating onscreen pairing.

According to sources, the shooting schedule in Mumbai spans 10 days, offering ample time to capture the essence of the narrative against the vibrant urban landscape. Directed by a talented crew led by Karthik Subbaraj, *Kubera* 

holds great promise with its unique storyline and stellar cast. Fans of Dhanush and Rashmika Mandanna eagerly anticipate glimpses from the film's sets as the duo embarks on this cinematic journey in the heart of Mumbai. With each passing day of shooting, excitement mounts as audiences await the unveiling of *Kubera*, poised to be a captivating addition to Dhanush's impressive repertoire.



Ashish and the gorgeous Vaishnavi Chaitanya. Directed by debutant Arun Bhimavarapu, this unique blend of romance and horror has completed filming and is set to captivate audiences worldwide. Blockbuster *Balagam* makers Harshith Reddy and Hanshitha Reddy will produce the film under the prestigious DilRaju Productions banner, with Naga Mallidi serving as the film's producer and Shirish presenting it. Amidst the buzz generated by its teaser and chart-topping album, the film's makers have announced its official release date. Love Me- If You Dare will hit theaters globally on May 25th, strategically timed for a summer blockbuster. Dilraju and the team are gearing up for creative promotional campaigns to reach a wider audience, confident that this spine-chilling ghost love story will be a resounding success. Accompanying the release date announcement is a striking poster that sets the tone for the film's eerie atmosphere. Featuring Ashish with a shovel in hand and a determined expression, alongside Vaishnavi Chaitanya, the poster

Second single from *Harom* promises a gripping cinematic experience. The film boasts a stellar lineup of technicians, with music composed by the legendary MM Keeravani, an Academy Hara unfolds a love tale Award winner. Renowned cinematographer PC Sreeram will handle the visuals, ensuring a visually captivating narrative, Sudheer Babu's highly anticipated film *Harom Hara*, directed by Gnanasagar Dwaraka of *Sehari* fame, kicked off its musical promotions with the release of its title song recently. Produced by Sumanth G. Naidu under Sree Subrahmanyeshwara Cinemas, the action thriller while Avinash Kolla will oversee the art direction, promising an immersive and unforgettable cinematic journey

unveiled its second single on Wednesday. The soulful melody titled Kanulenduko, composed by Chaitan Bharadwaj, has vocals by Nikhita Srivalli with additional vocals by the composer himself. The song, embellished with acoustic guitar, bass, electric mandolin, and keyboard notes, amplifies its impact, complemented

by catchy lyrics penned by Vengi. *Kanulenduko* captures Malvika hinting to Sudheer Babu about a rendezvous, unfolding their love journey as they explore different places together. The duo's adorable chemistry in the song is visually captivating, making it an instant hit for its composition

and appeal. The film recently wrapped up its shoot, with post-production progressing swiftly. The official release date for *Harom Hara* will be announced shortly.

Set in 1989 in Kuppam, Chittoor district, Harom Hara showcases Sudheer Babu delivering dialogues in authentic Kuppam slang. With the tagline "The Revolt," this high-budget film

features Sunil in a pivotal role, with cinematography handled by Aravind Vishwanathan.



Jointly produced by Durgam Rajesh, Ravula Ramesh, and TS Raju, the film boasts an experienced team of technicians. John Bhushan will compose the music with lyrics penned by Suresh Gangula. Venkat and Nishant will handle cinematography, while Nishant also takes on the role of editor.

The puja ceremony was attended by renowned producer Tammareddy Bharadwaja, who offered his best wishes to the team by clapping for

the heroes and heroines.

During the ceremony, senior actress Amani revealed her involvement in the film, expressing excitement about her important role. Describing the film as an emotional comedy with elements of love and sentiment, Amani highlighted its rural backdrop and shared scenes opposite Ajay Ghosh.

Heroines Ambika and Rupali expressed joy at debuting in Telugu cinema with this project. They praised the director and producers for their encouragement and for providing them with this opportunity. Ambika, drawing from her experience in Hindi and Marathi films, underscored the film's emphasis on love, romance,

sentiment, and comedy. Lead actor Prithvi extended gratitude to director Palik for entrusting him with the role and thanked the producers for supporting a family-oriented project. He assured fans that the film's shooting will wrap up soon, promising an engaging cinematic experience for



# Rampant Sunrisers Hyderabad eye another run fest against bottom placed RCB

Sunrisers Hyderabad will look to unleash their brute batting power on struggling Royal Challengers Bengaluru when the two teams face off in their return-leg fixture of the IPL here on Thursday.

Having breached the 250-run mark thrice in this IPL edition itself, Sunrisers Hyderabad are pushing the boundaries of T20 batting with their no holds

barred approach.
While Mumbai Indians were
the first victim of SRH's newfound batting strength this season, RCB bore the maximum brunt when the Travis Head-led batting lineup powered the 2016 winners to IPL's highest-ever total of

287/3 in Bengaluru. If this was not enough, SRH's carnage against Delhi Capitals - which included a record 125/0 being scored in the powerplay - brought forth the possibility of the 300-run mark being breached for the first

SRH manage to do the unthinkable and that too against a bowling attack as frail as RCB's, whose struggles with in the bowling department could be gauged with the fact that their best bowler, Yash Dayal, is at 24th spot in the overall list with seven wickets. Placed at the bottom of the pool, RCB have conceded at least 180 in their last five matches. In the last two games, the opponents have raked up totals in excess of 200.

RCB batters have worked hard to make up for their severe shortcomings in bowling, but for such a lopsided squad in terms of balance, the task to produce an all-round performance looks nearly impossible.

To their credit, RCB fought incredibly hard with the bat but were unfortunate to have lost to Kolkata Knight Riders by a mere one run after conceding 222/6. Moreover, a collective batting effort must have pleased the RCB have management to a large extent. time ever in the IPL. He was a victim of a And it won't be surprising if contentious call but Virat Kohli



the tournament so far, having scored 379 runs to keep the Orange Cap in possession. But hot on his heels are a few others including SRH's Head, who is making most of his purple patch.

Head's game is designed not only on aggressiveness and ability to cash in on every opportunity, his ability to find gaps at will makes him a compulsory watch. Sharma has Abhishek '

flourished in Head's company and Heinrich Klaasen too has made merry with the bat this season. Overall, SRH's compelling shows with the bat have made the job of their bowlers and skipper Pat Cummins easier

SRH are placed comfortably at the third position in the table with 10 points from seven matches. While the journey so far has been fuelled by the batters' fire, SRH would know their bowling would be tested along the way and Cummins' men could do well to watch out against a hurting RCB

Royal Challengers Bengaluru: Faf du Plessis (c) Glenn Maxwell, Virat Kohli, Rajat Patidar, Anuj Rawat (wk), Dinesh Karthik (wk), Suyash Prabhudessai, Will Jacks, Mahipal Lomror, Karn Sharma, Manoj Bhandage, Mayank Dagar, Vijaykumar Vyshak, Akash Deep, Mohammed Siraj, Reece Topley, Himanshu Sharma, Rajan Kumar, Cameron Green, Alzarri Joseph, Yash Dayal, Tom Curran, Lockie Ferguson, Swapnil, Saurav Chauhan.

Sunrisers Hyderabad: Pat Cummins (c), Abdul Samad, Abhishek Sharma, Aiden Markram, Marco Jansen, Rahul Tripathi, Washington Sundar, Glenn Phillips, Sanvir Singh, Heinrich Klaasen (wk), Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mayank Agarwal, T. Natarajan, Anmolpreet Singh, Mayank Markande, Upendra Singh Yadav (wk), Umran Malik, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Shahbaz Ahmed, Travis Head, Jaydev Unadkat, Akash Singh, Jhathavedh Subramanyan.

# Stoinis eager to play for **Australia despite missing CA central contract**



PTI CHENNAI

Despite missing out on Cricket Australia's central contract for the 2024-25 season, all-rounder Marcus hundred against Chennai Super Kings as a leverage to extend his white ball career beyond the upcoming T20 World Cup. Stoinis, who was not included

in the 23-player central contract list, made an unbeaten 124 off 63 balls for Lucknow Super Giants here on Tuesday.

However, Stoinis didn't read much into him missing the CA which contract announced on March 28.

"I've got a great relationship with the (Australia) coach (Andrew McDonald). Me not getting a contract, I knew that

a while ago.
"I think it is great to give younger kids a crack and let contract list," Stoinis said after guiding LSG to a six-wicket

win over CSK.

But the 34-year-old was firm in thoughts about his career with the national team. "But on the playing front,

obviously, I want to make sure that I'm there and that's also why it's so lucky for us and for me particularly to have this competition (IPL), that's why I love it so much," he said.

The Perth-born player was omitted from Australia's ODIs against the West Indies in January, but he is set to be part of the country's T20I World Cup campaign in the West Indies and the USA in June. Stoinis is most likely to be slotted into No. 5 in the Australian line-up during the

marquee event. Stoinis is eligible for Australian selection for the tournament because his current contract for the 2023-24 season will run its course only on June 30. However, Stoinis was clear that he wanted to play for Australia them take my spot. I'm in the white ball series against absolutely fine with that on the England (away) in September and against Pakistan at home

in November.

# Impact player rule: Entertaining cricket but takes all rounders out of game, says Voges

Joining the raging debate around Impact Players in the IPL, Lucknow Super Giants consultant Adam Voges said he prefers something like the Power Surge' rule in the Australian Big Bash League where the batting team gets to decide a two-over phase of fielding restrictions.

The Impact Player substitution rule, introduced last season, has been a heavy topic of debate this season with lot of players, including India captain Rohit Sharma calling it detrimental to the growth of all-rounders.

Voges agreed and said while the rule makes for entertaining cricket, it hurts all-rounders.

"The scores have been going up, and the teams have got genuine batters coming in at number seven or eight, while the batters have gone hard right from the start," the Australian said after the six-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings here on Tuesday night. "Certainly makes for entertaining cricket, but it takes the all-rounders

their effectiveness. The all-rounder always balances the side and perhaps it is not as important with the Impact

Sub," he explained. Asked if the rule is comparable to Power Surge in Australia's Big Bash League, Voges said the latter adds to the contest, and he is a fan of it. Unlike the IPL, which has a six-over power play at the start of the innings, the BBL features a four-over power

Power Surge is then a two-over phase of only two fielders outside the circle, sought by the batting team at any point following the 11th over of its

"I like the Power Surge back at home. It just adds another element to the

"While chasing, you never feel like you are out of the game. But we have also seen multiple wickets fall during that period," he said.

STOINIS GRABBED CHANCE WITH BOTH HANDS: Marcus Stoinis' unbeaten 124 ensured that Lucknow Super Giants pulled off a out of the game for a little bit and double over defending champion the Big Bash League.



Chennai Super Kings in the ongoing edition. Stonis, who has been promising with the bat, was promoted to number three in this clash.

Voges said the decision was easy given his successful outing as a toporder batter for Melbourne Stars in

AngelOne "In the first half of the tournament, the number three batting position is

order in Big Bash," he told reporters

something that did not work for us.

We gave Marcus the opportunity since he has performed well in the top

He has been hitting the ball well the whole tournament and has always been threatening."

LSG's victory was heavily aided by the dew settling in at Chepauk on Tuesday, and Voges felt it was a good toss to win.

"At the halfway stage, we could feel the dew on the outfield, and it played a part in the back end of the game. In the end, it was a good toss to win," he Voges lauded the hosts for keeping his

team under pressure until the final over.

"It was a tremendous game of cricket. The batting from both sides was outstanding," he continued.

"CSK did put us under pressure with the ball, but it was our best night execution-wise. We needed someone to stand up, and Stoinis played an outstanding innings," he said.
The CSK batters did a great job by

setting a challenging total of 210 for four, thanks to skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad's unbeaten 108, which was also aided by a 27-ball 66 from the in-"He has certainly made the most of it. form Shivam Dube.

### OTHER SPORTS

# Nadal says he is not 100 per cent fit ahead of Madrid debut

Rafael Nadal will play in the Madrid Open despite not being fully fit and didn't seem too optimistic about his chances of being ready for the French Open later this month.

Nadal said Wednesday he would not play in Paris if he arrives there feeling the same way that he is feeling ahead of his debut in Madrid this week.

The ing today. It it was Paris, I wouldn't be playing."

The 37-year-old Nadal has said this is likely his farewell year on tour, and is hoping to be competitive one last time at the ingression of the competitive one last time at the ingression of the competitive one last time at the ingression of the competitive one last time at the ingression of the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time at the competitive one last time

"The sensations haven't been perfect this week. If it wasn't Madrid, maybe I wouldn't play. But

know what's going to happen in the following three weeks. I'll keep fighting and doing the things that I think I need to do to play in Paris. And if it's possible, then it's possible. If not, then not. I'm not going to play in Paris the way I'm feeling today. It it was Paris, I

Roland Garros, where he is a 14time champion.

The 22-time Grand Slam winner is there are a lot of emotions a record five-time champion in involved," Nadal said. "I don't Madrid, with his last title in the a record five-time champion in



Spanish capital coming in 2017. He is scheduled to debut on Thursday against 16-year-old American Darwin Blanch.

"Hopefully I can play without many limitations," Nadal said. Then we'll see what happens. If I play without limitations, even if I lose, than it will be positive."

Nadal, who had hip surgery last summer, lost to Alex de Minaur in the second round in Barcelona in what was his first tournament in more than three months.

"The goal is be on court. Enjoy as long as possible," he said. "I mean, that's the thing. Try to finish the tournament alive in terms of body

issues, and enjoy the fact that I will be able to compete one more time in the professional tour and here at home in Madrid, a place that give me everything, no, in terms of support."

He said he is giving himself "a chance" and hopes to "find better feelings" in his body going forward.

"I don't lose hope. I just accept the situation that I have today," he said. "I mean, I am not playing bad. It's about more body limitations."

He said the "body feelings are not enough good to feel myself playing with free enough in terms of body

### PTI ■ CHENNAI

Chennai Super Kings are not clooking for a "quick fix" to their issues in the batting department and head coach Stephen Fleming is ready to give the likes of Daryl Mitchell time to get settled in top-three after their fourth loss in eight

games.
CSK have been juggling batters in the top three through the season. On Tuesday against Lucknow Super Giants, Ajinkya Rahane and Ruturaj Gaikwad came to open while Mitchell was promoted to number three from five.

In the previous game, Gaikwad pushed himself down to number three to accommodate Rahane and Rachin Ravindra. Following their dramatic loss to LSG at home, Fleming said they need to get their batting

combinations right. "It's a mixture of trying to find that (combination) and also form. We're a little bit uncomfortable with some areas, so we're trying to find not a quick fix, but the right combination where players are going to contribute for the back end of this tournament," said Fleming after first loss of the season at home.

# Trying to find batting combination that does at back end of IPL: Fleming

Mitchell, who was bought for Rs 14 crore at the auction, has totalled 146 runs in seven innings.

Fleming insisted that number three is the ideal spot for the fellow New Zealander.

'There's a lot of pressure, obviously. Getting up the order is more comfortable for him. Me putting him down the order in the hitting role wasn't

his best position. "So, we've looked to rectify that and get him up the order where he has had his best performances internationally. That might take a little time, but the top three need to contribute the majority of runs. "Ruturaj did that today, so hopefully, he can continue his form, and the others can pick that up... We're not firing on all cylinders by any means, but we're in each game asking teams to play well to beat us. We just got to get a little bit better," he said referring to skipper's unbeaten hundred in a losing cause.



did not yield the desired result, LSG sending Marcus Stoinis to

While Mitchell's promotion number three proved to be a memorable win for his team worked alongside the Aussie game changer as he with an unbeaten 124 off 63 all-rounder in the Big Bash singlehandedly pulled off a balls . Fleming, who has League for Melbourne Stars,

recalled how impactful he had been at the top, especially as an opener.

"He's got power, but he's also got good batsmanship. For Stars, we got him to open the batting, and he was quite prolific," he remembered.

Today, we saw the quality of his work. His 50 came up in about mid-20 balls (26), and then he just controlled the

innings. "What more could you ask from your top three? They needed someone to answer for what Ruturaj did, and Stoinis did that beautifully."

LUCKY **EXPERIENCE** DHONI MANIA FOR PAST 16-17 YEARS: Though it has been close to four years since the great M S Dhoni retired from international cricket, the unconditional love he gets from his legion of fans remain undiminished.

The World Cup winning captain is batting like the Dhoni of old this season, finding sixes and fours at will. Fleming considers himself among the lucky ones to witness fans' unparalleled admiration for Dhoni across venues. "It's an experience you like to

have in the stadium every time he plays. It's been lucky for me to have this magical experience for 16-17 years.
"The love for him throughout

the world is a testimony to the way he has played the game. People talk about MS as a person, but he is also a great player, and he has done some great things for India and Chennai (Super Kings).
"People take time to appreciate

it, and we do that every day. We are lucky to have him in our side for so long. So, it's not lost on us, and we enjoy every moment."

The CSK-LSG clash witnessed a huge amount of dew coming and Fleming and his team had anticipated it. "(Apart from Gaikwad) We

saw another great hundred from Marcus Stoinis, and they (GT) answered pretty well. It was a good game of cricket, and we felt we played well given the conditions in the backend, but we did some little things wrong under pressure."