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'NAWAB KA SHEHAR, IT'S A REFELCTION OF **EASYGOING PACE OF LIFE'** 



Digangana Suryavanshi reviving silver screen with four awaited

the pioneer INC has become the 'Italian National Congress'. The country was ruled by the British for 200 years. Later the Congress party tried to make Sonia Gandhi from Italy as the British representative and the Prime Minister of the country. People of the country have not yet forgotten how the Congress made the evil conspiracy to make an Italian as the **Prime Minister** of the country

QUOTE OF THE DAY

- G Kishan Reddy, Union Minister

#### Microsoft shortlists 50 teams...

Microsoft and ByteXL, an EdTech platform inaugurated the "HackXcelerate 2024" - a nationwide hackathon at Chaitanya Bharathi Institute of Technology (CBIT) on Friday. Out of 139 teams that registered for HackXcelerate 2024, only 50 teams were shortlisted by the Microsoft. The two-day event being held on April 26, 27, is aimed at igniting creativity and enhancing problem-solving skills through Al among students in a bid to make them industry-ready It was inaugurated by Manideep Bikkina, Principal Product..

#### Board exams twice a year from...

The Ministry of Education has asked the CBSE to work out logistics for conducting board exams twice a year from the 2025-26 academic session, according to sources. The plan for introducing a semester system has been ruled out, they said. The ministry and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will hold consultations with school principals next month for conducting board exams twice a year, the sources said. The CBSE is currently in the process of working out the modalities ...

#### Bank of Maharashtra stock climbs nearly...

Shares of Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) on Friday climbed nearly 4 per cent after the company reported a 45 per cent jump in net profit for the March quarter The stock jumped 3.65 per cent the BSE. During the day, it advanced 6.37 per cent to Rs 65.24. On the NSE, it rallied 3.67 per cent to Rs 67.65 apiece. In volume terms, 41.88 lakh shares of the company were traded on the BSE and over 942.89 lakh shares on the NSE during the

-PAGE: 8

#### **Upbeat Delhi** Capitals take on...

Bolstered by Rishabh Pant's brilliant batting form and inspiring leadership, the resurrected Delhi Capitals will aim to continue their upward march in the IPL points table when they take on an inconsistent Mumbai Indians here on Saturday. The Capitals have endured a rollercoaster season so far, showing flashes of brilliance while also succumbing to embarrassing defeats. But three wins in the last four matches have helped them climb to the sixth spot and a win against MI will strengthen their..

#### **VOTES CAST USING EVMs**

## SC disallows 100% cross-check

PNS NEW DELHI

As the country voted in round two of Election 2024, the Supreme Court on Friday rejected pleas seeking complete cross-verification of votes cast using EVMs with a Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) and said "blindly distrusting" any aspect of the system can breed unwarranted scepticism.

Weighing in on the intensely debated issue that has long divided parties, a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta delivered two concurring verdicts and dismissed all the pleas in the matter, including those seeking to go back to ballot papers in elections. It also maintained that 'democracy is all about striving to build harmony and trust between all institutions".

The Supreme Court's long anticipated verdict quickly found echo in the politicalscape with Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying at a rally in Araria in Bihar that it was a "tight slap" on the Congress-led opposition which now must "apologise" for committing the "sin of creating distrust" against electronic voting machines.

The Congress on its part said in a post on X that it will continue with its political campaign on greater use of VVPATs to increase public trust in the electoral process. The apex court issued directives matter.Pronouncing his verdict, Justice Khanna directed the Election Commission to seal and store units lectronic machines can be used for counting VVPAT slips and also hether bar codes can be used fo

#### **Key directives of apex court**

After completing loading of symbols into the machine, the SLU, or symbol loading unit, should be sealed and stored for a period of at least 45 days. The SLU storage containers must be sealed and the seal is to be signed by candidates.

The burnt memory in the EVM microcontroller EVM must be checked by a team of engineers - after results are declared - if candidates make such a request. This request - which can be made by candidates placed second and third in the election - must be made within seven days of declaration of results

The verification expenses will have to be borne by the candidate. The cost will, however, be refunded if the EVM is found to have been tampered with.

used to load symbols for 45 days after the symbols have been loaded to electronic voting machines in strong

The apex court also allowed engineers of the EVM manufacturers to

verify the microcontroller of the machines after declaration of the results on the request of candidates who stood second and third.

#### Introduced to enhance transparency, **VVPATs** back in focus

he Supreme Court's decision on Friday rejecting pleas seeking complete crossverification of votes cast using EVMs with a Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) has brought the focus back on the paper trail machines. To enhance transparency and verifiability in the poll process, the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961 were amended in 2013 to introduce the use of VVPAT machines. They were first used in the by-election to the Noksen assembly seat in Nagaland. At least one ballot unit, one control unit and one VVPAT make up for an EVM. The tentative cost of an EVM comprised Rs 7,900 per ballot unit, Rs 9,800 per control unit and Rs 16,000 per VVPAT. Since 2019, VVPAT slips from five randomly selected polling stations per assembly constituency (or segment in the case of Lok Sabha seats) are matched with the EVM count for greater transparency. According to EC, so far there has hardly been a

Continued on Page 2

#### 'HUM DO, HAMARE DO'

## 'Adani-Ambani, Modi-Shah want to nix quotas'

PNS HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has alleged that industrialists Gautam Adani and Mukesh Ambani have joined hands with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Speaking at Zaheerabad Jana

that the four were behaving like 'Hum do, hamare do'. "All four are conspiring to abolish reservation, he claimed. He reiterated that the BJP was not Bharatiya Janata Party, but 'British Janata Party'. "BJP is trying to loot the country

by creating a wedge between religions and races. BJP wants 400 seats to cancel reservation. Modi is like kaala nagu (vengeful snake). He holds grudges in his heart."
He said, "The Congress party is



credited with giving SCs and STs reservations and giving them proportional opportunities. If BC Census is conducted they will get proportional reservation.

That is why we have passed a resolution in the Assembly to conduct BC census.

#### 'Defeated Bangladesh (KCR), need to defeat Pak (Modi)'

omparing elections to cricket, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy said, "We defeated Bangladesh (KCR) in semifinals and now need to defeat Pakistan (Modi) in finals." He held a meeting with social media warriors on Friday at his residence along with TPCC Media communications chairman Sama Ram Mohan Reddy and social media

convenor Naveen Pettem. He said the BJP is trying to portray Sri Rama Navami as a big issue. "Like Bathukamma Bonalu was claimed by Kavitha, now they are behaving as if Sri Rama Navami and Hanuman Jayanthi are being taught by Bandi Sanjay and D Arvind, bald and half bald". Revanth said.

#### **PHONE-TAPPING CASE**

#### We will issue redcorner notice to the accused: Hyd CP

PNS HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Commissioner of Police (CP) Kothakota Srinivasa Reddy said that the police will issue a red-corner notice to the accused in the phone-tapping case. He held a press meet at Central Crime Station (CCS), Basheerbagh on

He'said, "Wild imagination and wild speculation in the news items are not correct. We know what to do. You are only putting spokes on the investigation or alerting the

A Red notice is a request to law enforcement agencies world-wide to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition, surrender, or similar legal action.

When reporters asked about the phone-tapping case, CP Srinvasa Reddy said, "This crime is not just committed against one or two individuals. It is against the society, privacy of the individuals. Everybody is serious about it. We are unearthing it. We are definitely in the middle of the investiga-

"We are making efforts to get him (Prabhakar Rao). Accused of this snooping case are very smart, intelligent and influential. So they try their best to conceal evidence. We try our best to get them, and we are doing our best," he men-

The reduced storage levels in the

southern region are indicative of

## 'Modi inciting hatred, but Voting for Bade bhai or Chote EC turning blind eye' bhai is same: KCR

Committee (TPCC) senior vicepresident and Chairman, Election commission Committee G Niranjan on Friday said that it is ironic that the Election Commission has given notice to BJP president Nadda without giving notice to Prime Minister Narendra, though the latter has been speaking in successive election campaign meetings inciting religious hatred in violation of the Model Code of Conduct.Niranjan said, "In Siddipet, Telangana, Home Minister Amit Shah told in an election rally that Muslim reservations would be abolished if they come to the power. His utterances are against election



rules/code. Why the Election Commission, which is taking action against the erring officials for making mistakes and transferring them, is unable to initiate action against Modi for violating Model Code of



BRS chief KCR's bus trip reached Mahbubnagar on the third day. Speaking at a roadshow he said, sent Chief Minister i Chote Bhai and Narendra Modi is his Bade Bhai. Voting for Chote Bhai is the same as voting for Modi. Whomsoever you vote, they will fix meters on agricultural

He appealed to Muslims that the RS is a secular party and that if the good for us. Has the BJP done us any BRS is a secular party and that if the BJP wins there will be a lot of damage. "Both the BJP and the Congress are the same. Both of them together damaged the BRS," the BRS

He said, "Three parties are con-

"Both the BJP and the Congress are the same. Both of them together damaged the BRS." the BRS chief said.

"Three parties are contesting in parliament elections. We have to think which party will be good for us.

good in these 10 years? Didn't Modi give a hundred slogans and only one came true - Instead of Sabka Vikas it is Sabka Satyanash. Did acche din come? Did Sache din come? Did you He said, "Three parties are contesting in parliament elections. We get Rs 15 lakh in your bank account? How is Modi Vishwaguru? Despite

writing hundreds of letters, the Palamuru Lift Irrigation Scheme was not given the national tag. He brought black laws against farmers and caused the deaths of hundreds of farmers. Not a single Navodaya school was given to Telangana."



## Ponnam urges weavers not to end lives

#### ☐ 'Don't play politics on dead bodies'

PNS HYDERABAD

Minister Ponnam Prabhakar suicide.Addressing a press conference along with Jagga Reddy on Friday, Ponnam said, "We will stand by weavers. Be brave. Our Chief Minister, Government, Cabinet and Legislators will stand by you. We will

buy your products. We will take steps with the concerned authorities to give orders. Death is not the end. appealed to weavers not to commit If you see injustice, talk directly to me. I am appealing to the district collector. I want to know the cause of death and prevent it from happening in future."He said that for 10 years, the Chief Minister's son "Yuvaraj" KTR was the local leader



but within four months the system collapsed leading to suicides.

the storage levels from the same peri-

od last year (34 per cent) and the ten-

The situation is less optimistic in

other regions. The western region,

consisting of Gujarat and

Maharashtra, reports storage levels of

11.771 BCM, which is 31.7 per cent

of the total capacity of 49 monitored

This is notably lower compared to

the storage levels of the previous year

(38 per cent) and the ten-year aver-

Similarly, the northern and cen-

year average (34 per cent).

#### **ACCEPTING CHALLENGE...**

## Harish 'puts in his papers' before scribes

PNS HYDERABAD

Siddipet MLA Harish Rao said that he had accepted the challenge of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and had come to the Martyrs Memorial at Gun Park with his resignation letter.

He said that Revanth is trying to cheat people by taking oaths in the name of God. He demanded that the Chief Minister should come to Gun Park if his promises given to the people were true.

Harish arrived at the Gun Park along with former minister Talasani Šrinivas Yadav, MLAs Kaleru Venkatesh, Vivekananda and MLC Shambhipur Raju. Later, they paid tributes to the martyrs.

BRS MLA T. Harish Rao gave his resignation letter in the Speaker's format to journalists at Gun Park, taking his challenge to the next level and demanding the implementation of the crop loan waiver and six guarantees by August 15.

The MLA post is not important for me but implementation of the promises made to the people is important.



#### Siddipet's 'shani' will go away on Aug 15: CM

hief Minister Revanth Reddy said that Siddipet's Shani (BRS MLA Harish Rao) will go away on August 15, when the Congress government implements the farm loan waiver. Speaking at the social media warriors meeting he said, "Every time Harish wants to cheat, he remembers the Martyrs Memorial." Revanth said that Harish's resignation letter is not in the Speaker's format. "Harish wrote the entire lead verse of his uncle in the letter. A resignation letter is not valid if it is not in the speaker's format."Harish is not showing

## AS RESERVOIR LEVELS PLUNGE TO JUST 17% CAPACITY

## CWC flags worsening water scarcity in southern India

The southern region, encompassing states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, has significantly reduced water storage compared to historical averages at just 17 per cent of reservoir capacity, according to the recent bulletin of the Central Water Commission.

In the bulletin released by the CWC late Thursday concerning reservoir storage levels across various regions of India, it was reported that 42 reservoirs under CWC monitoring in the southern region have a total live storage capacity of 53.334 BCM (billion cubic meters).

As per the latest report, the total live storage available in these reservoirs stands at 8.865 BCM, representing only 17 per cent of their total capacity. This figure is considerably



lower compared to the storage levels tial challenges for irrigation, drinkduring the same period last year (29 ing water supply and hydroelectric per cent) and the ten-year average for power generation in these states. the corresponding period (23 per

In contrast, the eastern region, comprising states like Assam, Odisha and West Bengal, has shown a positive improvement in water storage worsening water scarcity and poten- levels compared to last year and the

indicative of worsening water scarcity and potential challenges for irrigation, drinking water supply and hydroelectric power generation in these states.

The reduced storage levels

in the southern region are

ten-year average.
The bulletin highlighted that in this region, 23 monitored reservoirs with

their total capacity.

a total live storage capacity of 20.430 BCM currently hold 7.889 BCM of water, representing 39 per cent of

tral regions also show declines in water storage levels compared to historical averages. The broader analysis provided in the bulletin categorizes reservoir storage across various river basins as "better than normal,"

Continued on Page 2

This marks an improvement over

"highly deficient".

reservoirs.

age (32.1 per cent).

'close to normal," "deficient," or



## Are caste conflicts pushing AP to the brink of civil war?

ith Andhra Pradesh getting polarised the people are debating what to do. On the other side of the fence, the rich, non-resident Indians, who can be described as Americans of Indian origin, have been adding fuel to the fire. This could be the first time that American NRIs are meddling in elections openly although they may not understand state politics fully.

The poor across Andhra Pradesh, particularly rural areas, are burning with rage after a prominent American of Indian origin, Komati Jayaram, called those not supporting the TDP "stupid fellows." He made the unsavoury statement at a secret conclave held to chalk out a strategy to influence at least 10 families opposing the TDP in each vil-

In this context, a video featured him saying, "These stupid fellows will not vote for the TDP. We must chalk out a strategy to bring them into our fold by spending Rs 2 to Rs 3 lakh. NRIs can afford to spend that much money."

The foul language used by Jayaram, who was once a son of the soil, triggered anger as he came from a decent family rooted in the Congress culture. His father Komati Bhaskar Rao was a Congress MLA from 1989 to 1994 and was a follower of Chanumolu Venkat Rao who was a minister in the cabinet of Jalagam Vengal Rao and Kotla Vijayabhaskara Reddy.

The Congress leaders of Krishna district like Pinnamaneni Koteswara Rao, Mandali Venkata Venkata Rao, never thought of crossing over to the TDP during those heydays from 1983 to 1987 when the TDP was at the height of

În fact, Pinnameneni Koteswara Rao, who had been the Zilla Parishad chairman for almost 25 years, had challenged TDP founder NT Rama Rao, contested from the Mudenepalli Assembly constituency and defeated the TDP nominee by a huge margin. NT Rama Rao, who contested from neighbouring Gudivada campaigned in Mudenepalli relentlessly but that

This small battle is important in the context of Krishna district's history. A secular democratic fabric had been in place in the district till



**SRIRAMULU K** 

1983. When Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy (former AP Chief Minister and President) contested against Prof. NG Ranga in the race for the Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee president post, Sanjeeva Reddy won with a majority of one vote. The contest which happened in the Andhra Ratna Bhavan, the Congress headquarters in Vijayawada, witnessed a prominent Kamma politician, Kakani Venkata Ratnam, helping Sanjeeva Reddy to defeat Prof. NG Ranga with his single vote. Most old Congressmen were his followers and they never rubbed shoulders with TDP leaders.

It cannot be out of context to recall that Vijayawada, better known as Bezwada, had witnessed violence after the murder of Congress MLA Vangaveeti Ranga Rao, who was hailed as a champion of the poor. His murder in December 1988 led to riots breaking out.

A day after the silent, holy night of Christmas, Vijayawada resembled a war zone. On the morning of December 26, 1988, the city woke up to the cries of murder and revenge and was convulsed by riots and 42 people were killed in

police firing.

Fortunately, the Congress under the leadership of Dr M. Channa Reddy wrested power from the TDP headed by NT Rama Rao. It was during this time Jayaram's father Komati Bhaskara Rao was elected to the Assembly from Myalavaram on a Congress ticket. The Congress helped to heal the wounds. During these tumultuous times, Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy developed a bond with Krishna district and helped to ease the tension by persuading Vangaveeti Ranga Rao's wife Ratna Kumari to with-

draw her indefinite fast. Although the wounds inflicted by the violence were healed, relations between communities remained strained till recently. Once again, caste politics played by a handful of American NRIs may create a climate of mistrust between communities in the district, partic-

ularly Vijayawada. These developments made the public to label it as a "plot against the poor and the secular fabric of society." A prominent citizen, a veteran of many struggles on behalf of farmers, commented that "the underbelly of conspiracies being hatched by a clique has been laid bare now." It is to be seen now whether society will get stretched further to the point of pushing the State to the brink of a civil war.

(The writer is a senior journalist)

## Unlike KCR, Revanth went to Sectt 60 times in 3 months: Venkat

PNS HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy went to the secretariat 60 times in three months. KCR did not go even 10% of this during his tenure as Chief Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy

Addressing a press conference on Friday, Venkat came down heavily on Harish Rao.

"Your uncle (KCR) did not come to the secretariat even for 100 days in the 10 years he was in power. Thousands of people come and go and get their work done at the Secretariat. But KCR sent Home Minister Mahamood Ali out of the gate with a Home Guard. KCR is a fraud who became the CM saying



that he will make a Dalit the CM or else he will cut his neck," Venkat said.

"We implemented five of the six guarantees we gave. The sixth guarantee will also be implemented. We do not make useless statements like your uncle. He built Índhrabhavan (Pragathi Bhavan) and lived like a king. Once he lost his power he went mad. That is why he is behaving as if he has lost his mind," Venkat said.

He said the BRS won't even get its deposits in LS polls.

#### **PHONE TAPPING CASE**

## **EC** raps Konda Surekha for comments about KTR

PNS HYDERABAD

The Election Commission of India said it "strongly censures" Minister Konda Surekha for commenting against BRS MLA KTR in the phone tapping case. The ECI warned her to be careful with her public statements when the Model Code of Conduct is

The ECI said in its notice, "The Commission, without prejudice to any Order/Notice issued or to be issued in the matter relating to MCC violations to Konda Surekha, hereby, strongly censures her for the above misconduct. The Commission also strictly warns her to remain careful in her public utterances during the currency of the Model



Code of Conduct."

It may be mentioned here that Konda Surekha said at a press meeting held at the MLA Camp Office of 106-Warangal East LAC at O-City, Warangal on 01.04.2024, "KCR, by tapping phones your son blackmailed many people like film heroines and brought some of the officers to a situation of losing their jobs and facing imprisonment."

She said, "KTR is talking about Revanth Reddy. I don't

describe this. Speaking without maintaining basic manners he worked as the Americanreturned minister... as shadow CM..... While speaking he asked if those were the words the CM should speak, but he was cursing our CM, saying 'Howle', 'Give lay' and saying crazy things.'

The ECI said in its notice to the Minister, "You are not only a star campaigner of the Indian National Congress (INC) in the election to the Lok Sabha in Telangana but also a Minister in the Government of Telangana and you bear an additional responsibility of choosing your words carefully while making any claim/allegations against any party or its leader.

#### win in Malkajgiri PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA Ch Malla Reddy on Friday said that the Malkajgiri parliamentary constituency BJP candidate Eatala Rajender will win the elections. Malla Reddy, who came to

Malla Reddy

says Eatala will

attend a ceremony in Kompally, was surprised on seeing Rajender suddenly on the premises and embraced him saying, "You (Rajender) are going to win the elections." He requested to take their photograph. "You winning," said Etala and hugged Rajender.

Congress media and communications Chairman Sama Ram Mohan Reddy reacted to this video which was circulating widely. He said, "Political illegal relationship of BJP-BRS is exposed in this video.

## INC is 'Italian National Congress', says Kishan

**PNS** ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress is continuing the British legacy and the INC has become the Italian National Congress. The Congress is trying to impose Sonia Gandhi on India, Telangana BJP chief Kishan Reddy said.

Reacting to Revanth Reddy's statement that "The BJP is British Janata Party," Kishan said that the Congress is acting in a degenerate manner.He was speaking at a media conference organised at the BJP state office on Friday.

The country was ruled by the British for 200 years. Later, the Congress tried to make Italian Sonia Gandhi the Prime Minister of the country. The people have not forgotten how the Congress conspired to make an Italian the Prime Minister of this country. The Congress announced Manmohan Singh as the remote-controlled Prime Minister after the BJP said that it will prevent this at any

cost," Kishan said. He said that the Indian National Congress has turned into the Italian National Congress and that such a party does not have the stature to criticise the BJP.

He said that the BJP was born for the sake of the country. "Our leaders have made it clear that they have been born

## for the country and will die for the country," he said.

#### Harish 'puts.

Continued from page 1

Revanth should send his resignation letter through his PA or staff if he doesn't want to come to the Martyrs Memorial. Sonia promised that the Congress admin would deliver its promises within 100 days in a letter to the Telangana public," he said."If the promises are implemented, I will give my resignation letter to the Speaker. If they are not implemented, Revanth Reddy should give his resignation letter to the Governor." He demanded an unconditional apology from the CM for deceiving the people.

TODAY

**ALMANAC** 

Tithi: Tritiya:

Chaturthi

Nakshatram

Rahukalam:

Varjyam:

Gulika:

Amritakalam:

**Temp:** 41<sup>∞</sup>

Humidity: 30% Sunrise: 5:52 AM

Sunset: 6:35 PM

Jyeshta:

Moola:

#### MIM and BJP using communal card to cover backwardness of Hyd: Cong

Hyderabad DCC president and Congress candidate from Hyderabad Lok Sabha seat Waliullah Sameer accused both the MIM and the BJP of using communal politics as a shield to cover up the backwardness

Addressing a press conference at the Congress party's central election office of Hyderabad Lok Sabha constituency at Chaderghat on Friday, Waliullah Sameer alleged that, as always, both MIM and BJP were trying to polarise the election campaign in Hyderabad. He said people

got frustrated with the Hindu-Muslim rhetoric of both parties, which brought no development in Hyderabad. Both parties are demonising each other to make people vote out of fear. Instead, he said both parties should explain to the people what they did for the overall development of Hyderabad in the past."MIM should explain what it has done for Hyderabad since 1984. Similarly, the BJP should tell the people what its government at the Centre has done for Hyderabad in the last 10 years," he said, adding that both parties never believed in

#### Voting for Bade.

Continued from page 1

"BJP's candidate DK Aruna gave Harathi to leaders who were taking away Telangana's water to AP. Why vote for DK Aruna" he said.

"The Congress says that if you vote for us, we will fulfil promises in minutes. Now it's five months. Did Rythu Bandhu come? Is the loan waived? Did farmers get bonus for crops," he said.

"They didn't give scooty but did loot. Did you promise to give me gold? Did they enhance pension? There is no fee reimburse-

There is fraud in every scheme," he said.

#### 'Modi inciting...

Continued from page 1

If the Election Commission does not correct its mistakes, it will appear guilty for the public."He said, "This shows that the Election Commission is hesitant to take action against Modi. This is a proof of the bias of the Election Commission. This attitude of the Election Commission has damaged the reputation and credibility of the ECI"Niranjan said, "The Election Commission has been turning a blind eye to Prime Minister Modi targeting a religion and inciting religious hatred during the campaign rallies being held from Nalbari in Assam on the 17th of this

month." He said that "we should stage nationwide protests against Modi's religious hate speech. Even though the Election Commission is receiving thousands of petitions, the inaction on the part of the Election Commission amounts to undermining democratic system in the country"

## Ponnam urges...

Continued from page 1

"The BJP at the Centre and the BRS in power in the state are responsible for the crisis in the Srisilla textile industry. Are we responsible for the government formation four months ago...?" he said.

"BRS leaders are doing politics over death. Is the Congress government that was formed four months ago the cause of the death of handloom workers? This is the sin that you have carried for the past 10 years, the sin that you have accumulated, the sin that you have owed without paying for what they have done. If you had paid for what they did, would this be the case today," he said.

"After the formation of our government, I along with local leaders took Vemulawada MLA Adi Srinivas and organized a meeting with the leaders and brought their problems to the attention of the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister. In the first phase, we paid Rs 50 crore of pending needs.

'Adani-Ambani, Modi-Shah...

continuing the Praja palana.

We are implementing Six

dues. We will pay another Rs 50 crore in a couple of days. We are planning to pay dues in full in the first week. All these are old dues. I am asking directly why the old dues have not been paid to Sircilla handloom workers," he said.

As a minister, we sympathize

with the reasons for suicide and there is a policy on how to deal with it. It reminds me of the words, "Don't commit suicide, life is important." He said the BRS must give

courage to weavers but instead uses the deaths for political

"I am appealing to Sircilla weavers and those everywhere in the state.

This government will take a positive decision regarding weaker sections, especially weavers. Through GO No: 1, we sell the clothes produced in the state through the open market and we have decided to buy clothes from you wherever we need uniforms for RTC, schools, and government

## Siddipet's.

Continued from page 1

Harish's intelligence is not in his knees. It seems to have slipped into the soles. Harish, I am still saying, we definitely accept your challenge. By August 15 we will waive farm loans of Rs 2 lakhs and get your resignation ready."

Reacting on the same issue, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said, "He is not Harish Rao but Howlesh Rao. He is doing useless things. Harish has become a joker in politics. If the Chief Minister announces that he will waive the farmer's loan by August 15, he is making resignation dramas near the Martyrs' Memorial holding a duplicate resignation letter in which he is challenging him to fulfil not just that one promise but all 13 promises or prepare to resign. He is disillusioned because

power is gone.
That is why we call him Hawlesh Rao. During the agitation he had poured petrol on that day and could not find a matchbox.

#### Defeated...

Continued from page 1

He asked the social media warriors to counter the propaganda of BJP and the oppo-

The Congress will ramp up its social media presence in the State for the Lok Sabha polls. The Chief Minister crediting assembly polls victory to social warriors, asked them to continue to act as a bridge between politicians and people. He asked them to take up an aggressive campaign against the BJP's plans

## SC disallows...

Continued from page 1

Sukla Paksha

Apr 26 07:46 AM

Apr 27 08:18 AM

Apr 27 03:39 AM

Apr 28 04:28 AM

to Apr 28 04:28 AM

to Apr 29 04:49 AM

9:04 AM to 10:39 AM

1:48 PM to 3:22 PM

5:56 AM to 7:30 AM

03:11 AM to 04:49 AM

07:22 PM to 09:01 PM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:48 AM to 12:38 PM

Updated: April 26, 2024 5:00 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Sunny

to Apr 27 08:18 AM

to Apr 28 08:22 AM

Request for the verification of the microcontroller can be made within seven days of declaration of the results after payment of fees, the court said. "If EVM is found tam-

pered during verification, fees paid by the candidates will be refunded," it An EVM comprises three units -- ballot unit, control unit and the

VVPAT. All three are embedded with microcontrollers which have a burnt memory from the manufacturer. Currently, the Election Commission conducts random matching of VVPAT slips with EVMs at five

polling booths per assem-

bly constituency.

"While maintaining a balanced perspective is crucial in evaluating systems or institutions, blindly distrusting any aspect of the system can breed unwarranted scepticism...," Justice Datta said.

The bench suggested the poll panel can examine electronic machines can be used for counting VVPAT slips and also whether bar codes can be used for parties along with their symbols.

Besides seeking to return to the ballot paper system, the three petitions before it had prayed that VVPAT slips should be given to the voter to verify and put in the ballot box for counting and there should be 100 per cent counting of VVPAT slips, the bench

#### Introduced to... Continued from page 1

As an elector votes for a candidate on the ballot unit, he or she can see a slip with the candidate's party symbol on a small window on the VVPAT unit for seven seconds. The slip then drops into

As India follows the principle of secret ballot, the voter cannot carry the VVPAT slip home.

The top court on Friday rejected pleas seeking complete cross-verification of votes cast using EVMs with A bench of Justices Sanjiv

Khanna and Dipankar Datta delivered two concurring verdicts and dismissed all the pleas in the matter, including those seeking to go back to ballot papers in elections. The court issued two direc-

Continued from page 1 He claimed: "Modi took

revenge on the farmers who had fought against the black laws. They are trying to radically change the Constitution and make farmers slaves to Adani and Ambani. They want to cancel reservation by winning 400 seats." Revanth told people: "You

guarantees, one by one. We have provided free bus travel facility for women in RTC buses. We are providing free medical care up to Rs.10 lakh to the poor through Arogyashri. We gave gas cylinders to the poor for Rs.500 and supported 40 lakh families.The governhave the honour of breaking the chains of the nobles and ment has taken the responfreeing the mother of sibility of providing free elec-Telangana. We are bringing tricity up to 200 units to the

Indiramma's Rajyam and your eyes."Revanth said, "KCR broke his promise to give double-bedroom houses. That is why when the Congress came to power, we sanctioned Rs. 22,500 crore for 4 lakh 50 thousand Indiramma houses. KCR did not give jobs to the unemployed in the state in 10 years. But within three months of the Congress coming to power, 30,000 jobs were filled".He said, "(BRS MP) B B Patil joined BJP after telling

to scrap reservations.

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**HYDERABAD RETAIL SUMMIT 2024** 

## MSMEs pitch for simplified GST for e-commerce growth

Hyderabad's retail ecosystem is evolving as Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) embrace hybrid models, integrating online and offline channels for a seamless customer experience. During the Hyderabad Retail Summit 2024, hosted by the Retailers Association of India (RAI), industry experts gathered to delve into pressing challenges and explore opportunities in the retail sector on Wednesday.

During a panel discussion titled, 'GST reforms to boost Indian retail, stakeholders shared recommendations highlighting how the introduction of digital invoicing by the government can simplify GST compliance for MSMEs, reducing paperwork and errors while

enhancing efficiency.
Retailers highlighted issues faced by MSMEs in the current GST regime. Retailers with multi-State presence emphasised the burdensome tax processes, citing instances of harassment and intimidation by State tax authorities. They also face challenges with the requirements for physical



Retailers highlighted issues faced by MSMEs in the current GST regime. Retailers with multi-State presence emphasised the burdensome tax processes, citing instances of harassment and intimidation by State tax authorities.

offices in each State, mandated by Principal Place of Business (PPoB) registration, introducing operational complexities, inefficiencies in working capital management

plicated by the lengthy waiting period for Additional Place of Business (APoB) registration.

Ankit Sarika Jain (CA), Founder, CAAJIB ECOM Addressing challenges in SERVICES said, "By leveraging co-working spaces, they emphasised the need for

this progress, challenges persist, especially in navigating the complexities of GST compliance. The necessity for multi-ple-State registrations often perplexes sellers, exacerbated by cumbersome verification processes that mandate phys-ical presence, contradicting the digital era we live in. Government's role in alleviating these challenges is pivotal. Government policies must align with the realities of the digital age, empowering MSMEs to harness the full potential of e-commerce." Kumar Rajagopalan, CEO,

Retailers Association of India, said, "The Retailers Association of India advocates for pragmatic GST reforms that align with the evolving retail landscape. Simplified registration processes, harmonised across states and digital invoicing mechanisms are paramount to fostering a conducive environment for MSMEs to thrive in the digital age.

This will also increase cer-

tainty and ease of doing business and would ensure the

#### PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS THROUGH AI FOR STUDENTS

#### Microsoft shortlists 50 teams from 139 registered for HackXcelerate

Sustainable urban planning

ing, designing, and project building, where they approach coding with a holistic vision

It presents a unique oppor-

tunity for participants to push the boundaries of their skills

and creativity while tackling pressing issues across various

AI tool, AI-powered person-

sive and engaging.

and intent.

PNS HYDERABAD

Microsoft and ByteXL, an EdTech platform inaugurated the "HackXcelerate 2024" - a nation-wide hackathon at Chaitanya Bharathi Institute of Technology (CBIT) on Friday. Out of 139 teams that registered for HackXcelerate 2024, only 50 teams were shortlisted by the Microsoft.

ed by the Microsoft.

The two-day event being held on April 26, 27, is aimed at igniting creativity and enhancing problem-solving skills through AI among students in a bid to make them industry ready. industry-ready.

It was inaugurated by Manideep Bikkina, Principal Product Manager, Microsoft; Charan Tadepalli, CSO and Co-Founder, byteXL and Professor CV Narasimhulu, Principal, CBIT. Over 2,000 BE and BTech students from various engineering colleges and universities across India have come to crack real-life problem-solving projects, benefit from the key sessions and gather industry inputs from the technology experts.

Some of the titles for the problem-solving projects are AI-driven financial fraud detection system, Eco-commerce optimisation tool, AIenhanced diagnostic and treatment planning system, Smart lifestyle companion, companion,

domains ByteXL's CSO and Co-

founder Charan Tadepalli said, "The two-day HackXcelerate is alised learning assistant, Optimising data highways Automated database enhanceall about empowering the stuments and Visualising the dents with creative thinking, Game - Making sports incluinnovation and problem-solving in the most unique ways. The hackathon is providing It has been our vision to make a platform for budding techour students capable of innonologists from all corners of vative solutions as creative the country to showcase their problem solvers. We hope they ingenuity and collaborate on will go home churning out innovative solutions to realtransformative ideas and novel world challenges. Students solutions." "Our aim is to raise have been particularly enthusiastic to immerse themselves in a 24-hour marathon of cod-

a generation of students who can bring innovation by nurturing their analytical abilities and bring novel solutions," said Manideep Bikkina -Principal Product Manager, Microsoft. Participants stand a chance to win exciting prizes totaling Rs 2,75,000, along

with participation certificates and potential networking opportunities.

#### e-commerce, sellers have achieved remarkable growth, and updating GST certificates for additional premises is comclearer guidelines tailored to their unique nature to resolve with sales increasing by up to 40 to 50 per cent. Yet, amidst government objective of 'One Nation, One Tax, One Market." TG govt signs MoU to preserve museum's historical documents

classification and taxation

issues. Collaboration between

retailers and tax authorities

was highlighted as crucial

for addressing concerns and

establishing mutually agree-

able solutions. Additionally,

cross-utilisation of central

tax was proposed to optimise

tax liabilities, improve cash

flow management and

streamline tax administra-

tion for a more seamless indi-

rect tax regime.

**PNS** ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government signed an MoU with the Noor International Micro Film Centre to preserve the historical documents at the State Museum. The signing ceremony took place at the Bhagavan Mahaveer Auditorium, State Museum, Public Gardens, on

Director of the Department of Heritage, Telangana, Bharati Hollikeri, and Director of the Noor International Micro Film Centre Dr Mehdi Khajeh Piri, signed the MoU in the presDepartment, Ramaiyer.

The Department of Heritage protects priceless manuscripts, paintings and other paper documents at the State Museum in the city. While some historical documents are displayed, others are stored in the archives. Unfortunately, these docu-

ments are at risk of rapid deterioration, making them unrecognisable. Recognising this challenge, the Noor International Micro Film Centre, known for its expertise in document preservation, offered a solution. Utilising ence of Principal Secretary to the government, Y.A.T & C an treat and preserve these



Director of the Department of Heritage Bharati Hollikeri and Director of the Noor International Micro Film Centre Dr Mehdi Khajeh Piri, exchange the MoU in the presence of Principal Secretary to the government, Y.A.T & C Department,

documents, extending their lifespan beyond 100 years.

According to the Department of Heritage, these documents hold invaluable information on History, Society, Language, Religion and Calligraphy spanning various periods, aiding in the reconstruction of the State's political, social, linguistic and religious history. The department's outdated technology is not eco-friendly in the long

Through collaboration with various national and international institutions, including the State Archives, the Noor International Micro Film

Centre, located at the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in New Delhi, has signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This MoU define the plans for the repair, conservation, digitalisation, documentation and cataloging of the manuscripts, paintings and documents housed at the State Museum.

Principal Secretary to the government, Shailaja Ramaiyer, felicitated the members of the Noor International Micro Film Centre for accepting the agreement and signing the MoU with the Department of

#### **SHE Teams achieve 7 convictions** in women harassment cases

PNS HYDERABAD

SHE Teams have achieved seven convictions in women harassment cases on Friday. In a significant outcome, the Xth Special Magistrate for (SPLMM) court has pronounced verdicts against the perpetrators.

A respondent who was passing annoying and abusive gestures towards women in a public place at Mehdipatnam busstop has been sentenced to seven days imprisonment. Furthermore, he has been convicted and sentenced to threeday imprisonment. The First

Special Magistrate Court has pronounced four additional members of the group to be convicted and handed two days imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 200 on each individual. This decisive action underscores the SHE Teams' unwavering dedication to protecting the rights and safety of women within the community. SHE Teams remain steadfast in their mission to combat harassment and ensure justice for victims. For assistance or reporting incidents, contact the SHE Teams helpline at 040-2785-2355 or via WhatsApp at

#### **FULFILLING JEE DREAMS**

## Narayana's unstoppable dominance in JEE Main 2024

Among the 14 lakh+ students who attempted the highly competitive JEE Main 2024, Narayanites demonstrated complete dominance in the All India open category by clinching the 1st, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 10th ranks.

Narayana has the highest number of rankers (six) among the top 10 ranks. Extending their dominance, Narayanites clinched 28 ranks in the top 100, and 171 ranks in the top 1000 All India open category ranks. G Nilkrishna secured the all-India 1strank, H Vidith all-India Istrank, H Vidith achieved the 5th rank, M Anoop secured the 6th rank, M Sai Teja secured the 7th rank, Chintu Sateesh Kumar secured the 8th rank and Aryan Prakash achieved the 10th rank in the All India open category.

the All India open category. With a sense of pride, Dr P Sindhura and P Sharani, directors of Narayana Educational Institutions, lauded the unwavering commitment of students, their families and the insti Narayanites claimed the 1st, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 10th ranks in the All India open category

6 out of the top 10 All India open category ranks secured by Narayanites

28 of the top 100 All Indiaopen category ranks secured by Narayanites

 171of the top 1000 All India open category ranks secured by Narayanites

administrative staff for these extraordinary achieve-

Dr Sindhura remarked, "Narayana's approach empowers students with conceptual understanding, problem-solving skills and motivates them to improve through continuous evaluation and personalised feedback. Our microschedule facilitates proactive teaching and tailored instruction, while error analysis offers insights into areas of improvement. These along with students' perseverance drove exceptional results in the JEE Main exam."

Sharani extended congratulations to all the students for their remarkable tution's academic and achievements and conveyed

appreciation to the institution's faculty. She said, "Our proprietary learning platform, nLearn, has provided the students with a competitive advantage. With real-time progress tracking, promptly teachers addressed students' queries, enhancing their preparation. Utilising the platform's rigorous test series, stu-dents assessed their progress and compared themselves with peers. Our dedicated staff and technology-driven infrastructure form the cornerstone of our

Amidst the celebration, the directors also extended their best wishes to the students for the upcoming JEE

## Security tightened for LS elections: CP Tarun Joshi

Rachakonda Commissioner of Police Tarun Joshi has organised a review meeting at Shreya Engineer College, Nagole on Friday with Rachakonda DCPs, Additional DCPs, ACPs and other officials with regard to the security arrangements and precautions to be taken at the field level in view of the conclusion of the Lok Sabha election nominations process. In this meeting, the election

Lok Sabha constituencies Rachakonda Commissionerate were reviewed. Commissioner Tarun Joshi said that all levels of Rachakonda personnel are ready to conduct the Lok Sabha elections in an armed manner. All security arrangements are being made for the smooth conduct of the election process from Malkajigiri, Hyderabad, Chevella, Bhuvanagiri and Nagar Kurnool Lok Sabha con-



stituencies and mandals.

Armed checks are already being conducted at the check posts set up on district borders and other major highways. Barricades, tents, chairs, lighting system, communication tools and CC cameras have been installed at all the check

Additionally, he said that along with the Rachakonda police personnel, Central Armed Forces will also be on

the check posts. Commissioner suggested that more check posts should be set up at necessary places to catch the money being smuggled. Officers are regularly inspecting the security arrangements at the check posts and the staff, zone-wise and division-wise superiors are also conducting surprise checks and making the staff aware of the procedures and legal regulations to be fol-

#### 550 kgs of artifically ripened mangoes seized

PNS HYDERABAD

Over 550 kgs of improperly ripened mangoes stock was seized and disposed of, during inspections in the Kothapet Fruit Market area. The FSSAI Task Force team identified vendors using prohibited methods of artificial fruit ripening, such as directly placing Ethylene cellulose wrappers on fruits, which violates FSSAI guidelines.

According to the Food Safety Commissioner Hari Chandana Dasari, fruit vendors and distributors are urged to strictly follow

FSSAI guidelines for fruit ripening. According to the guidelines, the correct procedure involves using sachets containing 2-Chloroethylphosphonic acid (Ethephon) in powder form, packed in 40-60 micron cellulose membrane paper. It's crucial to ensure that Ethephon sachets only generate ethylene gas, without any traces of calcium carbide or acetylene gas. Additionally, as per FSSAI, the composition include

Chloroethylphosphonic acid (Ethephon) and a combination

#### 107<sup>™</sup> FOUNDATION DAY CELEBRATIONS

## OU's contribution to edn landscape of TG lauded

Osmania University celebrated its 107th Foundation Day on friday on Friday. The event was presided over by Prof. D Ravinder, Vice-Chancellor of Osmania University and the chief guest of the event was Dr Vijay Kumar Saraswat, Member of the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI)

Aayog, Government of India. Prof. Ravinder emphasised the university's rich heritage and ongoing commitment to academic excellence and societal impact while Prof. P Laxminaryana highlighted the pivotal role of Osmania University in shaping Telangana's intellectual and cultural landscape. Prof. B Reddiya Naik underscored the importance of fostering innovation and research to drive sustainable development.

Burra Venkatesham, Principal Secretary to Government, Education Department (FAC) BC Welfare Department, and Commissioner, Collegiate Education, commended Osmania University's contributions to the educational landscape of Telangana, acknowledging its role in empowering com-



Prof D Ravinder, along with Burra Venkatesham, felicitate Dr Vijay Kumar Saraswai

munities and driving social change through quality education and research. He also shared valuable insights into education, technology and social empowerment, emphasising collaborative efforts for creating a knowledge-driven society. To propel Telangana to the top, he emphasised on nurturing talent through proper training, following traditions diligently by using

technology. Veena Gundavelli, Founder, CEO Emagia Corporation, USA, urged the students to discover their passion and purpose; pur-

sue boundless thinking.

Dr Vijay Kumar Saraswat Osmania commended University's legacy of academic excellence and encouraging further innovation and inter-disci-

of change' The celebrations not only honoured Osmania University's rich legacy but also showcased its commitment to excellence in education, research and innovation. It fostered an environment of learning and collaboration among the distinguished guests,

plinary collaboration for nation-

al development. He emphasised

that 'Science is a principal driver

administrators, faculty and students representing various departments across the university.
The distinguished gathering included Prof. P Laxminaryana, Registrar of OU; Prof. B Reddiya

Naik, OSD to VC, OU and Prof. G Mallesham, Dean of Development & UGC Affairs,

#### BRAINSTORMING SESSION ON GEOTHERMAL ENERGY

## 'Comprehensive mapping key to unlock India's potential'

**PNS** ■ HYDERABAD

CSIR-National Geophysical Research Institute (CSIR-NGRI), a constituent research laboratory of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), organised a brainstorming session on Geothermal energy at its premises on Friday. Dr M Ravichandran, Secretary to the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India, presided

over the session. Dr Ravichandran emphasised the importance of comprehen-

sively mapping the nation's geothermal resources, stressing the need to evaluate both their technical feasibility and economic viability. Moreover, he highlighted the importance of forging robust collaborations among various entities, including national research institutes, State organizations, industries and other relevant stakeholders. He argued that this collaborative framework would facilitate synergistic efforts towards unlocking India's geothermal energy potential. He also highlighted three press-

ing tasks during the discussion: firstly, the necessity of developing a resource potential map for geothermal energy; secondly, the urgency to enhance survey activ-

ity for geothermal exploration; and thirdly, initiating a pilot project to showcase the effectiveness of geothermal potential. Dr Ranjith Rath, Chairman and

different organisations, advocating for the repurposing of existing deep borewells originally drilled for hydrocarbon exploration to harness geothermal energy. Additionally, he proposed establishing a 'steering committee' under the Ministry of Earth Sciences to expedite geothermal energy-related initiatives.

Managing Director of Oil India

Limited (OIL), offered enthusias-

tic support for NGRI's initiatives

in the geothermal domain. He

underscored the significance of

coordinated endeavours among



## Modi exposes 'Robbing Hood' plans of the Congress

Rahul Gandhi's remarks in recent public meetings and former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's statements during an address to the erstwhile National Development Council (NDC) meeting way back in 2006, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had warned people that the Congress, if voted to power, would take away their wealth, and distribute it among those who have more children, infiltrators and Muslims. Driven by 'Urban naxal' ideology, the Congress would not spare even the mangalsutras of women, he added.

Modi's statements visibly convulsed the Congress. Pawan Khera, the Congress spokesperson, accused Modi of lying and exploiting religion to drive a wedge among Indians, polarise the voters on communal lines, and benefit politically in the ongoing elections. Let us put in perspective the PM's illuminating statement.

Rahul Gandhi, while

speaking at a public meeting in Hyderabad recently, vowed to survey and redistribute Indians' wealth. Rahul declared that the Congress, if elected to power, would first conduct a caste census to determine the exact population and status of Backward Castes, SCs, STs, minorities, and others; which would be followed by a financial and institutional survey.
Subsequently, the Congress would take up the revolutionary assignment to distribute India's wealth, he promised.
Rahul Gandhi's vow to

redistribute India's wealth, juxtaposed with Dr Manmohan Singh's statement, "We will have to devise innovative plans to ensure that minorities, particularly the Muslim minority, are empowered to share equitably in the fruits of development. They must have the first claim on resources," leaves no doubt as to the intentions of the Congress. Logically, the two statements imply that the predominant

Modi's statements visibly convulsed the Congress. Pawan Khera, the Congress spokesperson, accused Modi of lying and exploiting religion to drive a wedge among Indians, polarise the voters on communal lines, and benefit politically in the ongoing elections. Let us put in perspective the PM's illuminating statement.

beneficiaries of any redistribution of wealth done by the Congress would be the

Over the past year, Rahul Gandhi has repeatedly pro-claimed 'Jitna abadi, utna haq' - meaning rights should be proportional to popula-tion. Prime Minister Modi just translated this slogan to a family level and explained that those with more children (numbers or abadi) would get more in any wealth redistribution exercise by the Congress.

Neither can one find fault

with the Prime Minister's assertion that illegal immigrants or infiltrators would be the beneficiaries of the Congress' wealth redistribution effort. The Congress publicly and vehemently opposes the implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), which identifies who is a citizen of India and who is not. When noncitizens, especially those who have infiltrated the country for economic reasons, are not recognised, does it not follow that in a redistribution of Indians' wealth, they, too,



**KISHORE POREDDY** 

will get a share proportional

to their numbers?
Additionally, the Congress opposes the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which gives accelerated citizenship to religious minorities: Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists and Christians from our neighbourhood who are persecuted based on their religion. The only logical conclusion from the Congress' opposition to NRC and CAA, taken together, is that it does not want the benefits of its wealth redistribution to go to victims of our nation's partition but exclusively to those who infiltrated our country for economic reasons.

Regarding PM Modi's mangalsutra remark, it is well-known that Indians hold their wealth mostly in land and gold (and silver). Unlike the rest of the world, Indians, especially Hindus, who constitute the majority of Indians, acquire gold and silver as ornaments for cultural and religious reasons, not as commodities (bars, coins). For example, Hindus consider purchasing gold and silver auspicious during festivals like Dantheras, as they believe it brings prosperity and good luck. Mangalsutra is the first gold ornament any Hindu married woman acquires. So, when Modi had to explain what taking away one's wealth would entail, he used the example that most women (and men) in India

would understand.

The Congress immediately latched onto the PM's mangalsutra example. 'Does he not know that snatching a woman's mangalsutra symbolises making her a widow? Isn't it outrageous that he is using religious sentiments to score political points?' asked an outraged Congress. But, if the Congress valued Hindus' religious sentiments, especially about the *mangalsutra*, Indians

never got a chance to know.
Only last year, authorities in Telangana forced Hindu women to remove their mangalsutra, bangles and even mettelu (toe rings) before entering exam halls to appear in competitive exams for government jobs. Can this happen if the administration had regard for the religious sentiments of Hindu women? No. Did the Congress outrage over the incident? No. Not only that, when the scion of one of its allies, the Dravida Khazhagam (DMK), called for the elimination of Sanatana Dharma,

comparing it to diseases like dengue and malaria, Congress never felt the need to condemn his remarks. Some Congress leaders even supported the comments.
The Congress has the gall

to accuse the Prime Minister and the Bharatiya Janata Party of being communal, even though it is primarily the BJP and its allies in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) that are calling for a Uniform Civil Code. It is the Congress which sees India through a communal prism and resorts to an insidious campaign of appeasement, particularly of Muslims, which is unfair to Muslims too. The Prime Minister has rightly called out the communal and appeasement agenda of the Congress. This election is a fight between Congress' agenda of appeasement and redistribution versus the BJP's and NDA's agenda of Sabka Saath and development.

The author is BJP TS spokesperson.)

## **BJP** playing on people's sentiments for political gain: Vinod Kumar

PNS KARIMNAGAR

Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) candidate for Karimnagar Lok Sabha constituency B Vinod Kumar on Friday blamed the BJP for playing on the sentiments of people.

Addressing the BRS party workers meeting as part of the campaign, Vinod Kumar pointed out that the BJP leaders had nothing to tell the peo-ple about the "development" that took place during the last 10 years. There was no development at all in the BJP government. That was why, the BJP has been seeking votes in the name of god. Prime



BRS candidate for Karimnagar Lok Sabha constituency B Vinod Kumar speaking at a meeting in Karimnagar

Minister Narendra Modi has

been making wild allegations

against the opposition parties.

Modi promised to deposit Rs 15 lakh into each Jan Dhan bank account by bringing back black money from Swiss

banks. But, he failed to deliv-

er on his promise.

He also promised to create 2 crore government jobs every year. Instead of increasing income, the BJP government imposed a huge burden on common people by increasing the prices of petrol, diesel and essential commodities,

Vinod Kumar during the morning walk interacted with people at Ambedkar stadium He explained to the people that the BJP had not sanctioned even one Navodya School to Telangana, let alone a medical college. The BRS government established several medical colleges in the State. The BJP-led Central gov-

ernment failed to establish IT in Karimnagar. It was shifted to some other State because of the apathy of the local MP, he said. He recalled that during his tenure as MP between 2014 and 2019, he was able to secure Rs 1,000 crore in funds for Karimnagar under the Smart City programme and Kothapalle-Manoharabad rail-

#### Pharma unit in Nandigama **PNS** ■ HYDERABAD

Fire mishap at

A major fire broke out in A major fire broke out in Allen Homeo and Herbal Products Limited at Nandigama in Shadnagar, Telangana on Friday. The fire department officers have rescued employees who were in the company when the accident occurred.

The company is located

The company is located around 50 kilometers away from the city. Officials from the fire department said that following a distress call at 5.00 pm, three fire engines and police reached the spot and rescued some workers and they were brought out of the window using a ladder. Due to the intensity of the fire, three more fire engines from Gowliguda, Langer Houz and Madhapur were rushed to the spot.

The workers were suspecting that there was a welding work going on beside the industry, which might have caused the fire. However, the exact cause is

In that fire mishap, an intermediate student named Sai Chand had rescued those trapped in the building, with the help of a rope.

## R & D are spinal strength of both economy and nation'

THE FUTURE BELONGS TO BHARAT: DHANKAR

PNS HYDERABAD

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday underscored the pivotal role of research and development (R&D) as the spinal strength of both economy and the nation. Emphasising the significance of innovation in medicine development, he asserted that R&D efforts transcend mere execution, embodying the highest form of contribution to humanity. "Our pursuit to serve humanity by science and research should not be hampered by temporary failures," he added.

He further highlighted India's contribution to international vaccine efforts, including the donation of Covaxin through the vacine Matri initiative, reflecting India's longstanding contribution to the principle of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.'

Dhankhar further emphasised the need for corporate tions to promote research and development to foster innovation, with focus on disruptive technologies.

the Bharat Biotech facility in Hyderabad, Dhankhar lauded the heightened credibility of Padma awards in recent times. The Vice-President asserted that Padma awards are now very authentic, being given to the deserving persons. "They are no longer driven by patronage or reputations build by event management," he added.

Addressing the economic concerns at Bharat Biotech, Dhankhar highlighted the significant drain of foreign exchange due to unnecessary imports. Criticising this practice as contradictory to the ucts and societal commitment, he warned people of three serious consequences: the avoidable depletion of foreign Addressing the gathering at exchange reserves, the hin-

drance to domestic manufacturing by importing goods available locally and the suppression of entrepreneurial opportunities. Underlining that many of

the world's top institutions draw their strength from their large alumni base, Dhankhar urged the alumni to come forward and form a strong alumni network through think tanks, contributing to the growth and development of the

Advocating for channelisation of disruptive technologies, the Vice-President underscored their transformative potential, cautioning against their unregulated proliferation.

He further stated that India's unwavering dedication to biotechnology and pharmaceutical research has led to build its reputation as the pharmacy of the world. The Vice-President declared Bharat's ascent as a superpower, citing the nation's rapid momentum. With confidence in Bharat's future, he emphasised the transformative shift from a sleeping giant to a fast-moving force.

#### Official caught while accepting a bribe of Rs 4 L

PNS HYDERABAD

The officials of Anti caught North Tanks Division Deputy Executive Engineer Yatha Pavan Kumar when he demanded Rs 5 lakh and accepted Rs 4 lakh from the complainant and builder Gopagani Ramanamurthy for showing official favour. It was to process and forward the No Objection Certificate (NOC) permission file for the construction of a commercial building situated at Uppal, Medchal-Malkajgiri district.

The bribe amount was recovered from the possession of the accused officer at his instance. Right hand fingers of the AO and contact portion, which is the right side first drawer of AO's office table, yielded positive results in the chemical test.

## North Zone Police bust racket selling IPL tickets in black

PNS HYDERABAD

The sleuths of Commissioner's Gopalapuram Police,

on Friday arrested two persons and seized 100 IPL tickets meant for Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) vs Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) match and selling them at exorbitant prices in the market on

The accused are Chittoor Ramana (27) of Bengaluru and Nyalakanti Samuel Susheel (29) of Hyderabad.

Chittoor Ramana, is a software employee residing in Bengaluru, while Nyalakanti Samuel Susheel works as a digital marketer residing in Hyderabad. Both of them are



around cricket matches, leading to a close bond between

them. Previously, at the time of One Day International (ODI) World cup matches, Chittoor Ramana was caught by Chennai Police for selling cricket match tickets in black

ECI has registered

cricket enthusiasts who initially connected through a Due to the huge demand of IPL tickets, both hatched a Task Force, North Zone team, versations mainly revolved illegal manner and sell them

in the black market for high profits. There are several cricket-related Whatsapp groups. There are about 1,000 members in each group. Ramana devised a plan to procure tickets through the common groups and pass them on to his accomplice, Samuel Susheel,

different mail IDs. Susheel would then redeem the QR codes at redemption centers in Hyderabad. Subsequently, they would sell the IPL tickets in the black market to their regular customers and advertise them on platforms like Facebook and Înstagram.

#### **South Zone cops bust smartphone smuggling racket**

**PNS** ■ HYDERABAD

The sleuths of Commissioner's Task Force, South Zone Team, along with Bandlaguda Police, busted a racket involving international smartphone smuggling and snatching gang and arrested 17 persons, including five Sudanese nationals, on Friday. The officials seized 703 smartphones worth Rs 1.75 crore from their possession.

alias Mujju (19) of Tadban, Hyderabad, Syed Abrar of Hyderabad, Syed Saleem (21) of Santosh Nagar, Hyderabad, Pathan Rabbani Khan alias Jaffar Khan, (34) of Hyderabad; Mohd Athar (32) of Hyderabad and

According to the officials, the accused Mohd Muzammil alias Mujju, lorry mechanic is from Hyderabad.

The accused are Mohd Muzammil The duo is friends. They resorted to snatching mobile phones to fund their lavish life style. They also stole a motorcycle and used the vehicle to commit crime under the limits of Bandlaguda, Falaknuma, Bahadurpura, Mangalhat Police Stations of Hyderabad Police Commissionerate and Hayath Nagar police station in Rachakonda Police Commissionerate.



#### Maoist militia commander surrenders to police

**PNS** ■ KOTHAGUDEM

A Communist Party of India-Maoist militia commander surrendered to the Bhadrachalm police here on Friday. He is identified as Podium Idumaiah alias Harish.

The Bhadrachalam Assistant Superintendent of Police told the media that the Idumaiah voluntarily surrendered to the police.

The police said that he had joined the Maoist Party

in 2011 and became the commander. The efforts by the police

to wean away the villagers from the Maoist influence are believed to have led to the surrender of several Maoists now. Several Maoist leaders surrendered to the Bhadrachalam police in the aftermath of deadly encounters in Kanker dis trict of Chhattisgarh. Several Maoists were killed in encounter and some of those killed hailed from Telangana districts.

#### 320 FIRs in Hyd since March 16 PNS HYDERABAD

Hyderabad District Election Officer (DEO) Ronald Rose said that since the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) was released by the Election Commission of India (ECI) on March 16, the ECI registered 320 FIRs in the Hyderabad district. From Thursday 6 am to Friday 6 am the police filed six FIRs.

In the 24 hours, the enforcement teams have seized Rs 48.22 lakh and 54.50 liters of liquor and other goods worth Rs 18.13 lakh were seized. In all, 24 armed licences were deposit-

ed in the police stations. A total of Rs 16.67 crore in cash, Rs 7.34 crore worth of goods and 21,338 liters of liquor have been seized by various enforcement teams in the district since the MCC was announced. The DEO claimed that 237 cases were registered and 235 people were arrested for holding 61 liters of illegal liquor.

#### YSRCP manifesto gets final touches PNS VIJAYAWADA As the anticipation builds ahead of the upcoming general elections in

the State, YSRCP president and Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy is poised to release the party's election manifesto. The manifesto is scheduled for unveiling either on Saturday (April 27) or Sunday (April 28). CM Jagan Mohan Reddy, focusing on securing a second term, is learnt to have been working on garnering support from farmers, women, and

Sources within the YSRCP have indicated that CM Jagan Mohan Reddy is gearing up to announce significant policy measures targeting these crucial voter segments. Among the anticipated announcements are a loan waiver scheme for farmers and DWACRA women, as well as initiatives aimed at generating employment opportunities

for the youth.

The electoral significance of these demographics cannot be understated, as evidenced by past elections where similar assurances played a pivotal role in securing victory for the YSRCP. By drawing

#### JAGAN MAY UNVEIL IT TODAY OR TOMORROW

CM Jagan Mohan Reddy, focusing on securing a second term, is learnt to have been working on garnering support from farmers, women, and youth.



■ The YSRCP plans to unveil schemes tailored to the aspirations of the youth, with CM Jagan Mohan Reddy expected to encourage youth participation in job creation initiatives.

■ The manifesto launch is strategically aligned with the announcement schedule of the opposition TDP

> All eyes are on the camp office in Tadepalli, where the party is set to unveil its roadmap for the future of Andhra Pradesh amid a charged political atmosphere.

inspiration from previous suction in job creation initiatives. cessful strategies, the party aims to replicate its previous electoral tri-

In addition to addressing the concerns of farmers and women, the YSRCP intends to unveil schemes tailored to the aspirations of the youth. CM Jagan Mohan Reddy is expected to deliver a message encouraging youth participa-

The manifesto launch is strategically aligned with the announcement schedule of the opposition TDP, indicating a keen awareness of the political landscape. Furthermore, the YSRCP plans to leverage its track record of fulfilling past promises, particularly through the Navaratnalu schemes, to instil confidence in voters

regarding future commitments. However, challenges loom regarding the state's financial position and resource availability, posing obstacles to the implementation of proposed schemes. Nevertheless, the party remains resolute in its determination to persuade voters and is committed to announcing the manifesto despite these hurdles.

Meanwhile, CM Jagan Mohan Reddy's unwavering focus on the manifesto underscores the party's dedication to addressing the diverse concerns of the electorate. Positioned as a blueprint for inclusive progress and development, the manifesto aims to encapsulate the YSRCP's vision for governance and societal advance-

As the electorate eagerly awaits the manifesto's release, all eyes are on the camp office in Tadepalli, where the party is set to unveil its roadmap for the future of Andhra Pradesh. Amidst a charged political atmosphere, CM Jagan Mohan Reddy's steadfast commitment to the manifesto reflects the party's pledge to prioritise the welfare of its citizens.

#### **ATS arrests six with country-made** weapons in Gujarat

he Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) has arrested an arms supplier from Madhya Pradesh and five others with 25 country-made pistols and 90 cartridges, an official said on Friday. The action has come weeks ahead of the Lok Sabha election in the state scheduled to take place on May 7. A preliminary probe has revealed the key accused, Shivam aka Shiva Damor (26), a native of Madhya

Pradesh's Jhabua district, allegedly procured illegal firearms and sold them to his contacts in Gujarat on commission, the ATS stated in a release. The ATS recently received a tipoff that Damor would come to Narol bridge in Ahmedabad city on April 25 to deliver firearms and ammunition to one Manoj Chauhan, a resident of Chotila town in Surendranagar district, it said. ATS teams laid a trap, apprehended the duo, and recovered five pistols and 20 cartridges from Damor, the release said.



#### **Couple arrested with nearly 800 grams** of heroin in Delhi's Tilak Nagar

couple was arrested with nearly 800 grams of heroin, for allegedly selling it here, police said on Friday. The accused were identified as Rajesh Rana (44) and his wife Neelam Asaid on Friday. The accused were identified as najestimated in a searching for Neelam, a Rana (43), residents of Tilak Nagar, they said. The police was searching for Neelam, a proclaimed offender, an official said. "On Wednesday, tip-off was received about the presence of Neelam in the Tilak Nagar area. A raid was conducted and Neelam and her husband were

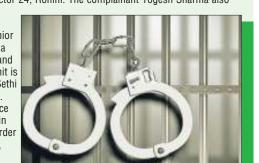
nabbed," Deputy Commissioner of Police (west) Vichitra Veer said. "Rana has been found previously involved in 23 criminal cases while his wife had involvement in eight cases," the DCP said. The police recovered 798.30 grams of heroin worth over Rs 20 lakh from the possession of the accused, he said. A case under relevant sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act was registered at Tilak Nagar police station, the DCP added.



#### Naresh Sethi gang's sharpshooter arrested in Delhi's Rohini

he Delhi police has arrested a 24-year-old sharpshooter of the Naresh Sethi gang, officials said on Friday. According to police, the accused, identified as Mohit was wanted in connection with a firing incident at a property dealer's office in Rohini for extortion. "On February 27, an incident of firing occurred in a property dealer's office at Sector-24, Rohini. The complainant Yogesh Sharma also

received a message from Gangster Naresh Sethi demanding Rs 2 crore," a senior police officer said. Acting on a tip-off, the police laid a trap and arrested Mohit, he said. Mohit is a close associate of Naresh Sethi and Akshay gang, police said. During the investigation, police found that Mohit is involved in several cases of robbery, murder and the Arms Act in Haryana,



## Shah on why Rahul, Digvijay did not attend Ram temple event

PNS ■ RAJGARH (MP)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday slammed senior Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Digvijaya Singh for declining invitation to attend the consecration of Ram Lalla's idol in Ayodhya, saying their move was guided purely by vote-bank politics.

The BJP leader emphasised

the Congress neglected the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya for nearly 70 years and it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi who made it a reality and paved the way for consecration of Ram Lalla's idol on January 22.

"Do you know that why shehjada Rahul Gandhi and Diggi Raja (Digvijaya Singh) did not attend the consecration of Ram Lalla's idol at Ayodhya? Because they are afraid of their vote-bank and therefore, they should never be pardoned," he



Shah was addressing a campaign rally in Khilchipur town under the Rajgarh Lok Sabha seat where sitting BJP MP Rodmal Nagar is pitted against former chief minister Digvijaya Singh of the Congress.

He asked voters never to pardon those who declined the invitation to attend the idol consecration ceremony in

Shah lashed out at the Congress for continuing with

and being the head of the dis-

for providing food and shelter

to the affected families,

Choudhary, who was accom-

by

Development Council (DDC)

chairperson Shamshad Shan,

He said the authorities have

summoned geology experts

to know the cause behind the

sinking of the land, while a

team of district officials has

been deployed round-the-

clock to supervise the rehabil-

itation of the affected popula-

tion and restoration of essen-

our effort is to restore essential

services like the road and elec-

tricity as our first priority. We

will provide tents and other

items and also organise med-

ical camps for the victims," the

deputy commissioner said.

The land is still sinking and

told reporters at the scene.

district

panied

tial services.

the Article 370, that granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir, for a long time because of which, he said, terrorism flourished in the erstwhile state and people were

unable to even hoist the

national tricolour. The home minister pointed out that the Modi government not only abrogated the contentious constitutional provision on August 5, 2019, but also ensured the tricolour flew

high on the country's head (J&K).

Shah maintained the Modi government ended terrorism and Naxalism by entering into their den ('ghar me ghuskar') and conducting a surgical strike inside Pakistan post-Pulwama terror attack.

Rahul Gandhi, on advice of Singh, included in the Congress manifesto a promise that if a party-led government came to power at the Centre, it will "introduce personal law in the country," the BJP's star campaigner claimed. Shah asked people whether

controversial practices like instant triple talaq, banned by the Modi government in 2019, should be reintroduced, and criticised Singh for linking "bhagwa" (saffron) colour with

Rajgarh along with eight other Lok Sabha seats will vote on May 7 in the third phase of Lok Sabha elections.

#### CM's son slams Aaditya for remarks against father

PNS MUMBAI

Shiv Sena MP Shrikant Shinde has hit out at rival Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray for disparaging remarks against his father and Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, saying it reflects the ex-minister's

upbringing.

Aaditya is a bitter critic of CM Shinde, whose revolt in 2022 had led to the toppling of the Maha Vikas Aghadi government in the state and split the original Shiv Sena, then headed by his father Uddhav Thackeray.
Referring to CM Shinde,

Aaditya recently called him a "shameless and despicable" person."He (Aaditya) has been brought up with these values - one who only curses, and badmouths (opponents). We have been taught to talk good. People will teach those who have been taught to talk ill," Shrikant Shinde told reporters in Kalyan on Thursday.

# well-being of Indian students

PNS NEW DELHI

United States is a safe country and it "cares deeply" for the well-being of Indian students, its Ambassador Eric Garcetti said here on Friday and assured their parents that "their children are our children" when they are in the US.

His comments during an interview at the American Center comes in the backdrop of reports of nearly half a dozen deaths of Indian and Indian-origin students in the US since January.

While the US remains a preferred destination for higher studies among Indian students, the string of such cases has raised concern among the Indo-American community as

well as the Indian population. "We care so deeply for the well-being of Indian students in the US. We want parents to know that their children are our children when they are in United States. And, there is a wealth of resources that can help students prepare...in the US, whether it is mental health... and resources for that

**CHURCHES TO PEOPLE** 

Envoy: US safe, cares deeply for

being far away for home, parents and families," he told

While lamenting these tragic deaths in the past few months, the American ambassador to India asserted that "US is a safe country"

Garcetti underlined that students studying abroad should familiarise themselves, have a network, trusted friends, and should know what to do if there is a dangerous situation, or if there is a mental health

He said in a new country it could just be an issue of common sense public safety, and students might not know which neighbourhood to go to and not to go to and at what time of night, as also what

The US envoy underlined that students going to study in the US should know that there are campus securities, local law enforcements, and that "all these things sometimes students just don't know, since it is a new country".

In the interview, Garcetti, a former mayor of Los Angeles, shared his own experience of personal safety when he was a student.

"When I was a student, I went to NYC in the 1980s, which was a pretty dangerous city then. But I sat down and listened to campus security, 'don't walk down here at night, don't go there. Here is a way to stay safe' and this is before cellphones. Now, in 2024, we have so many more resources, than when I was a student," he

The envoy said American universities are "extraordinary places" to come to and offer overwhelming experience to students, including Indian students, and he wanted all students to have that rich experi-

## Land sinks in J-K's Ramban; 50 houses, power infra damaged

PNS BANIHAL/JAMMU

More than 50 houses, four electricity towers, a receiving station, and a main road were damaged in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district dur to sinking of a road, officials said on Friday.

Ramban Deputy Commissioner Baseer-ul-Haq Choudhary visited the Pernote village, five kms from the district headquarters, on Friday morning and assured assistance to the affected families and restoration of essential services, including electricity.

Houses started developing cracks and the road connectivity between Gool and Ramban snapped Thursday evening following the sudden 'sinking of land in Pernote village, prompting several families to move to safer places

"This is a natural disaster



#### LS POLLS

#### **Ex-CM** Baghel says his photos on **EVMs** unclear

PNS RAJNANDGAON

Former Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel, who is Congress' candidate in Rajnandgaon Lok Sabha seat in the state, on Friday said he has received complaints that his photos on the Electronic Voting Machines are smaller and unclear as compared to those of his rivals.

Polling in Rajnandgaon is underway along with two other parliamentary seats -Kanker and Mahasamund on Friday in the second phase of general elections. Baghel is pitted against BJP's sitting MP Santosh Pandey.

In a post on his 'X' handle, Baghel said, "Voters have been calling and complaining that the photos of other candidates on the EVM are bigger in size and clear but my photo is small and relatively unclear. The photo was given as requested by the Election Commission." "This expos-es @ECISVEEP's claims of impartiality.

Has this been done under a conspiracy? But this is not going to change the result,"

#### 'Vote for those backing secularism, Constitution' THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/KOCHI

Various church factions in those supporting secularism new government for the betal elections in the southern

Voting commenced in all 20 Lok Sabha seats of the state at 7 am today.

Archbishop Raphael Thattil of the influential Syro-Malabar Church, after casting his vote, said the church wants every-

one to live peacefully in the country.

Malankara Orthodox Svrian church head Baselios Kerala on Friday urged the Marthoma Mathews III said people to go and vote for the elections will help elect a

Thrissur Archbishop and CBCI president Archbishop Andrews Thazhath said he was devastated after witnessing the situation in Manipur and said people will vote for those who support secularism and democracy.

"We are hurt when we see



others get hurt. I saw the situation in Manipur. I saw the situation faced by the people there. I have personally asked

the government and the union home minister to intervene in the matter," Thazhath told the He urged the people to vote for those who support secular-

ism and democracy in the The influential Latin church said people were excited to

exercise their right to vote in Kerala. "Let every citizen exercise

their right to vote and a good government come to power," atin Archdiocese Vicar General Fr. Eugene Perera told the media. All the political parties in the state were trying to cosy up to the church, which has a

torate in the state "The specialty of our counv is that peopl religions live together in a peaceful manner.

pretty much influential elec-

We want everyone here to continue living peacefully, have equal rights and feel safe and secure," Thattil said.

The voting will conclude at 6 pm and the results will be out on June 4.

#### **Bullock carts, wheelchairs and more.** people reach booths to vote in LS polls

PNS NEW DELHI

Three generations of a family and groom and brides lining up at polling stations and people reaching in bullock carts and centenarians in wheelchairs to vote. These were some of the snapshots of the Lok Sabha polls' second phase in 88 constituencies in 13 states and Union Territories.

\*\* In Bengaluru, long queues were seen outside many restaurants after they offered dosas, laddus, coffee and other food items free of cost or at discounted rates to customers who cast their vote.



A polling booth at Sivni village in Čhhattisgarh's Kanker parliamentary constituency was decorated like a 'mandap' and displayed traditional marriage rituals. Decked-up in traditional attires, many brides and grooms reached polling sta-

tions in Kanker, Rajnandgaon and Mahasamund Lok Sabha constituencies to cast their

\*\* Women voters reached a polling station in Uttar Pradesh's Bulandshahr on a bullock cart and playing the 'dholak'.

\* In Rajasthan's Kota-Bundi parliamentary con-stituency, 108-year-old Bhuri Bai, who was brought to the Gunjara polling booth in a wheelchair by her family members, cast her vote, while 102year-old Haji Karamdin voted in Reasi in Jammu and

The plea referred to the

apex court judgement and the

report of the Law Commission

Buttressing the plea for re-

election if NOTA wins and bar-

ring the candidates from poll

process if they poll less than NOTA, the PIL said, "since

2013, the implementation of

NOTA has not fulfilled the very

purpose that it was supposed

on the issue in its support.

#### **Board exams twice a year** from 2025: MoE asks CBSE to work out logistics

PNS NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Education has asked the CBSE to work out logistics for conducting board exams twice a year from the 2025-26 academic session, according to sources.

The plan for introducing a semester system has been ruled out, they said.

The ministry and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will hold consultations

with school principals next month for conducting board exams twice a year, the

sources said. The CBSE is currently in the process of work-

ing out the modalities of how will the academic calendar be structured to accommodate another set of board exams without impacting the undergraduate admission schedule, they said.

"The ministry has asked the CBSE to work on the logistics of how will board exams be conducted twice a year. The board is working out the modalities and a consultation will be organised next month with school principals," a source

"The idea being explored is to conduct two editions of the board exams at the end of the year from the 2025-26 academic session but the modalities still need to be worked out. However, there is no plan to implement the semester system," the source added.

The ministry's initial plan was to introduce biannual board exams from the 2024-25 academic session, however, it has been pushed back by a year.

The new national curriculum framework (NCF), prepared by the Union governmentappointed national steering company which was led by former ISRO chairman K

Kasturirangan in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, proposed a semester system for students of classes 11 and 12.

The framework, which was released by the ministry in August last year, also proposed that the students be given the option to write their board exams twice

"The CBSE right now is brainstorming on the schedule so students can get maximum benefit and the goal of making board exams stress-free can be achieved. However, logistics is a challenge which needs to be addressed, conducting exams is

tiresome so the plan has to be

flawless." the source said. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan had last October said in an interview that appearing for board exams twice a year won't be mandatory for students.

#### IF NOTA GETS MAJORITY

## SC seeks EC reply on PIL for fresh poll in constituency

PNS NEW DELHI

In a significant development amid the ongoing general elections, the Supreme Court on Friday asked for a response from the poll panel on a PIL seeking framing of rules to nullify an election and order fresh one if NOTA (none of the above) option gets majority over other candidates.

The top court issued notice to the Election Commission on the PIL filed by author, activist and motivational speaker Shiv

The NOTA option is provided to the voters in the elections in pursuance of the 2013 apex court verdict.

The top court, in its 2013 judgement, had held that "a provision of negative voting would be in the interest of promoting democracy as it would send clear signals to political parties and their candidates as to what the electorate thinks about them" and directed the Election Commission to provide the option of NOTA in all

EVMs. A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and ustices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra took note of the

submissions of senior advocate



Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for Khera, and sued the notice.

Initially, the bench was reluctant to consider the PIL, saying it was for the "executive to

"We will issue a notice. This is about the electoral process also. Let us see what the Election Commission has to say...," the CJI said.

The senior advocate said that present plea was important keeping in mind the development at Surat in Gujarat where a BIP nominee was declared winner before polling as some nomination papers were rejected and few withdrew from the

"It is most respectfully prayed that this Court may be pleased to issue a writ... directing the Election Commission to frame rules to the effect that if NOTA gets a majority, the election held in the particular constituency shall be declared null and void and a fresh election shall be conducted to the

constituency," it said.
The PIL also sought a direction to the poll panel to frame rules stating that the candidates who poll fewer votes than NOTA shall stand debarred from contesting all elections for a period of five years.

It also sought a direction to ensure "proper and efficient reporting/publicity of NOTA as a 'fictional candidate'".

On the contrary, it has not led to increased voter participation, the PIL said, adding it has also not compelled political parties to field good candi-

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PAPER WITH PASSION

## All is well

India shows the mirror to the US, rejects its report on rights violations in Manipur as 'deeply biased'

oon after the US pointed the finger at India for alleged incidents of human rights violations, particularly in Manipur, India has vehemently criticised the State Department report. The Indian Government has denounced the report as "deeply biased" and asserted that it reflects a "significant misunderstanding of the ground realities". Seeking to show the mirror to the US instead, it questioned the US administration's response to the recent killing of Indian students on its soil. The MEA emphasised the "deeply biased" nature of the report, saying the report misrepresents the situation in Manipur and demonstrates a "lack of comprehension" regarding India's efforts to address human rights issues within its borders. The report, which is not limited only to Manipur, talks about other issues too that have apparently undermined Indian democracy in the recent past. One of the key points raised in the State Department's report pertains to the raids conducted by the Indian Income Tax authorities on the offices



of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), alleging that the raids extended to journalists not involved in the organisation's financial affairs. Furthermore, the US report claims that the Indian Government used emergency powers to ban the screening of a BBCproduced documentary. The report highlights the concerns of local human rights organisations, minority political parties and affected communities regarding the Government's alleged "delayed response" to violence and its failure to provide adequate humanitarian assistance in Manipur.

It also cites instances of disinformation tactics being employed against civil society organisations, religious

minorities such as Sikhs and Muslims, and political opposition groups. The Indian reaction to the US report is laudable as it defends and protects the boundaries of Indian sovereignty and sends across the message that no country has any business to meddle in India's domestic affairs. The Government must also ensure that foreign powers do not get a chance to sermonise India on human rights. It is an established maxim that human rights issues transcend political boundaries. Besides, the Government should be mindful of criticism by the Indian civil society, which has been airing similar sentiments. They should not be summarily rejected and branded as anti-national and harassed, a routine thing in autocratic systems. Indeed, India's reaction to the State Department's report underscores its commitment to safeguarding its sovereignty and ensuring that international assessments accurately reflect the country's efforts to uphold human rights. India has consistently maintained that it is committed to addressing any legitimate concerns regarding human rights violations through its robust legal framework and democratic processes. In light of these developments, it is imperative for the international stakeholders to engage with India in a constructive dialogue based on mutual respect and understanding.



A man bathes an elephant at the Veermata Jijabai Bhosale Botanical Udyan and Zoo, in Mumbai

## Role of AI in Lok Sabha elections



From personalised voter outreach to the menacing potential of deepfake videos, Artificial Intelligence's influence is palpable, promising both innovation and ethical dilemmas

rtificial Intelligence, a game-changer in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, has revolutionised traditional campaign strategies. The era of candidates personally visiting voters' homes and engaging in conversations over tea, even after a five-year hiatus, has given way to a more technologically advanced approach. Social media played a pivotal role in the 2014 election. However, the advent of AI and the potential use of deepfake videos in India's 2024 elections could be game-changers. These videos, capable of blurring the lines between truth and falsehood, have the potential to significantly impact the trust and integrity of the electoral

Political parties and candidates have understood the power of AI in the run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. They use AI to analyse voter data, enabling them to develop effective campaign strategies. Additionally, AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants have been deployed to engage with voters on social media, providing real-time responses to their queries and concerns.

The use of AI technology can help with election processes in several ways:

AI can predict election outcomes. AI chatbots and virtual assistants can communicate with virtual

AI can prevent election fraud and regulate political advertising campaign finance violations.

Political parties can now customise their calls to individual voters, potentially harming their opponents' reputations. In India. more than 50% of the population uses the internet, which may increase to 900 million by 2025. The upcoming election in India is expected to generate a market worth Rs 500 crore.

Political parties are using AI to reach voters via social media. Congress and BJP used AI in last false videos and parodies were used in political campaigning. Parties like BJP, Congress, AAP, DMK and AIADMK use AI technology to engage with their sup-porters. For example, the BJP uses AI to translate PM Modi's speech-

es into eight regional languages. However, some campaigners misuse AI-generated videos, including deepfakes, to spread misinformation. These videos are targeted at the 18-25 age group and are being shared on platforms like WhatsApp.
Parties in India use various

tools to influence voters. They share fake images and videos on social media platforms. For example, the Congress party shared a phoney photo of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. At the same time, the BJP posted a false video of Rahul Gandhi on Instagram. In Tamil Nadu, the DMK and AIADMK parties used recordings of their deceased leaders for voter support in this election. The Communist parties have also employed AI technology in their campaigns. One video shows Asaduddin Owaisi, the leader of the AIMIM party, singing Hindu devotional songs. Regional leaders like Akhilesh Yaday, Naveen Patnaik and Mamata Banerjee also applied similar tools to influence voters.

The use of AI for malicious purposes is a significant concern. With advanced AI, it has become possible to impersonate anyone, including voters or candidates, which can lead to identity theft and manipulation of the electoral process. This underscores the



POLITICAL PARTIES ARE USING AI TO REACH VOTERS VIA SOCIAL MEDIA. THE CONGRESS AND THE BJP USED AI IN LAST YEAR'S STATE ELECTIONS

ensure a fair and transparent electoral process, making the audience more aware of the potential risks and the importance of addressing them, fostering a sense of vigilance. The use of AI in political

campaigns raises valid concerns about privacy and the potential for unfair competition and misinformation. Therefore, it's imperative that clear regulations are implemented to ensure a transparent electoral process. Governments must take the lead in regulating AI use to promote fairness.

The IT Minister has already issued warnings to social media companies, instilling confidence in the audience about the security and integrity of the electoral process. The Élection Commission must issue clear guidelines to regulate AI-generated information for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. These guidelines should address ethical AI use in campaigns and voter data analysis. Strict rules are necessary to maintain the integrity of the electoral process, proct voters' rights and ensure fairness and transparency. Without these regulations, there could be doubts about the legitimacy of the election results.

While there are valid concerns about AI, it's crucial to recog-

need for clear regulations to nise its potential for positive change. Certain AI-generated technologies have the power to revolutionise how we conduct free and fair elections. As these technologies gain wider acceptance, they could pave the way for e-elections, a future where elections are conducted online, ensuring a more transparent and accountable electoral process. This potential for positive change should inspire optimism and hope, reassuring the audience about the future of

elections. During the Bihar elections, the Election Commission used an AI-powered system to ensure transparency and prevent manipulation. The system detected and flagged misinformation and hate speech cases, expediting the counting process and curbing hate speech during the election. This demonstrates how AI can be used effectively and instils confidence in the electorate.

Presidents, prime ministers, or legislators could win or lose based mainly on the success or failure of their AI campaign. Gullible voters can be easily. Technological advancements can bring about significant changes and AI is no exception.

> (The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)

## Robotics: Predictable and optimal surgical success



Today, India is leading globally with advancements in robotic surgery and making a difference in critical surgical procedures

Robotic surgery, also known as robot-assist-ed surgery, has revolu-tionised the field of surgical procedures by offering increased precision, flexibility and control compared to conventional techniques. Typically associated with minimally invasive surgery, robotic surgery utilises a system consisting of a camera arm and mechanical arms with surgical instruments attached, all controlled by the surgeon seated at a computer console. This setup provides high-definition, magnified, 3D views of the surgical site, enhancing the surgeon's ability to perform delicate and complex procedures. Minimally invasive surgery is

now the standard of care across various surgical specialities. Introduced four decades ago, Laparoscopy changed our approach and outcome in surgical patients. Robotic surgery introduced two decades ago, was the next step in the evolution of minimally invasive surgery. Now, the time has come when a surgeon avoids leaving anything on chance. Advanced, stable and predictable robotic surgery can ensure success



in each case. The primary motivation for opting for robotic surgery is the enhanced precision, flexibility and control it offers to surgeons during operations. The precision and minimally invasive nature of robotic procedures contribute to a lower risk of infection and other complications.

In India, the Da Vinci system is commonly used for robotic surgery across various specialities, including urology, gynaecology, cardiothoracic and general surgery. In urology, robotic surgery has emerged as a significant advancement, offering several advantages over open or laparoscopic procedures. These advantages include reduced blood loss, decreased patient discomfort, minimised use of painkillers, shorter hospital stays and faster healing times. Urological surgeries com- would translate into a large

robotic technology include robotic proStatectomy, robotic cystectomy, robotic partial nephrectomy, robotic pyelo-plasty and other procedures such as nephroureterectomy, adrenalectomy, ureteric reimplantation and kidney transplantation.

Even in the case of frequently performed non-cancerous gastrointestinal surgery like cholecystectomy gall bladder removal or hernia, innumerable challenges can be countered including some very serious injuries, which may result in longer hospital stays or life-threatening situations. Robotic surgery filters out the struggle happening at the surgeon's end while ensuring smooth outcomes with ultimate safety for the patients. Our understanding of robotic surgery benefits originated from cancer patients in urosurgery and onco-surgery. Today non-cancerous surgeries deserve and demand equal precision and safety. Prevention of complications and quick recovery are the new points. Due to the sheer number, improvement of outcomes in benign surgeries

monly performed using number of healthier and happier patients. While technology remains premium, the health insurance companies do understand and approve of such advanced technology. For instance, Narayana Health offers robotic-assisted procedures for various gastrointestinal conditions. The robotic surgery program has an experienced team specialising in using the da Vinci surgical system for minimally invasive general surgeries. With the surgeon controlling robotic arms from a console while watching the operative field through a video camera, patients experience shorter recovery times, with most returning to normal activities within two to three weeks instead of the six to eight weeks typically associated with standard open surgery. Indeed, constant innovation and development in the field of robotic surgery will result in lowering the cost with wider applications. (The writer is a consultant-

general, Robotic and Renal Transplant Surgery at Narayana Hospital - RN Tagore Hospital. Mukundapur, Kolkata; views are personal)

#### **REVIVAL OF EDUCATION IN BIHAR**

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Bihar's educational reforms cock a snook at private players", published on April 26, this is my response. The narrative underscores Bihar's struggle with governance failures, notably in areas like liquor laws and rural migration. However, amidst this backdrop of challenges, the Government's focus on education emerges as a beacon of hope. In a landscape where education is increasingly commodified, Bihar's commitment to public education stands out as a bold counterforce to market forces.

By prioritising education, the Government aims to address deep-rooted social and economic inequalities. The recruitment of teachers and infrastructural improvements demonstrate tangible progress. Yet, sustaining these reforms remains a concern, particularly regarding the absence of a robust mechanism. Additionally, while efforts to combat corruption and enhance accountability are commendable, ensuring the continuity of initiatives like the Mid-Day Meal program is crucial. Ultimately, Bihar's journey towards educational reform signifies a vital step towards empowering marginalised communities and challenging the dominance of private institutions driven by profit motives.

Rajiv Mishra | Lucknow

PERSPECTIVES ON CONSCIOUSNESS Madam — Apropos the news article, "The Essence of Consciousness", published on April 26, this is my response. The journey of understanding consciousness is a profound one, intricately woven with the fabric of human existence. In the hustle of modern life, terms like consciousness often float around without genuine comprehension. Yet, beneath this veneer lies a profound truth: consciousness is the essence of our being, the awareness that shapes our reality. In a world bombarded with information, it's easy to overlook the depth of our existence. From the wisdom of Buddha to the revelations of quantum physics, consciousness permeates every aspect of our lives. Like Arjuna on the bat-

#### **Ensure representation of the disabled**



propos the news article, "The marginalisation of disabled in politics", published on April 26, this is my response. The stark absence of political representation for persons with disabilities in India's democratic landscape is a glaring issue. Despite a substantial population, their needs are sidelined, reflecting a systemic failure. Political parties overlook their demands, perpet-

uating exclusion and reinforcing stereotypes. tlefield or King Janaka in his kingdom, we grapple with doubts and fears until a

moment of awakening shifts our percep-

True consciousness is not merely being awake but being truly alive, attuned to both internal thoughts and external surroundings. It's the clarity that arises when we shed the layers of ignorance and embrace the purity of our being. In this journey towards enlightenment, let us not merely skim the surface but dive deep into the ocean of consciousness, where every wave carries the promise of a profound revela-

Vikram Singh | Delhi

#### THE INDIAN PARADOX

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Why do Indians excel abroad and fail back home?", published on April 26, this is my response. India's global footprint shines brightly across diverse fields, yet a puzzling paradox persists: why do Indians thrive abroad while facing challenges at home? This conundrum demands urgent attention and a deep dive into the complexities

Physical barriers at polling stations compound their challenges, stripping away dignity and agency. Anitha's experience exemplifies this nealect. Moreover, those with lesser-known disabilities face additional hurdles, such as a lack of sign language interpreters during campaigns. The dearth of accurate data further complicates policy formulation and budget allocations.

However, amidst these challenges lies an opportunity for transformation. A shift towards a rightsbased approach is imperative, with persons with disabilities actively involved in policy development. Integration across governance facets is essential for true inclusivity. Respecting their fundamental rights and ensuring their participation in civil and political systems is crucial as India celebrates 75 years of independence. Only then can the nation progress towards its economic aspirations while truly embracing diversity in a democracy.

Aarav Patel | Mumbai

at play. The link between India's international success and domestic hurdles lies largely in the shortcomings of the public education system. Insightful analyses pinpoint the dire State of education as the root cause, a truth echoed by credible sources. Education stands as the linchpin connecting governance, socio-economic stability and prosperity. The nation's future hinges on the quality of primary and secondary education, a reality starkly revealed by sur-

Moreover, the disconnect between higher education and employability exacerbates the brain drain dilemma. To reverse this trend, India must foster an environment that retains talent and promotes innovation. Embracing change is paramount. Reimagining education to nurture creativity and entrepreneurship can steer India towards global competitiveness. It's time to forge a path towards a brighter, more inclu-

Nandini Rao | Bengaluru

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### **FIRST COLUMN**

#### **WORK WITH ALLIES** FOR SEMICONDUCTORS

It is time to let go of the regulatory bottlenecks to make a mark



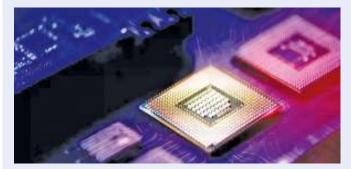
KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

ne of the most common reasons cited by foreign investors, against investing in India is too complex regulatory processes and multiplicity of overlapping compliances. The latest to join the bandwagon is Taiwanese Foreign Minister Joseph Wu. The minister was responding to questions from a journalist on the reason for Taiwanese companies not warming up to India's constant welcome mat for attracting investments in the new age technology, building block and semiconductors space.

To be sure Taiwan is home to the largest chip manufacturing facilities in the world, a key component of the digital economy, ranging from mobile phones to satellites. Wu during his interaction with the journalist quoted "India is cumbersome in its administrative structure and it would require for Indian Government to look at that too, to streamline all kinds of laws and regulations to help semiconductor investors coming to the country". He has further in the same interview talked about the lack of skilled engineers to work in the chip-making factories, even though India doesn't fall short of chip-designing talent.

What Mr Wu highlighted, isn't something new, as, it is a similar caution from many other potential investors interested in India. This author spoke with several high-ranking officials in several new and emerging technology manufacturing companies, who complained about complex timeconsuming administrative processes in India and echoed that, when compared to competing economies such as Singapore, Vietnam etc.

A new department called Invest India (a public-private joint venture) was created, early on in the current Government's regime, to assist potential investors through the difficult, regulatory regime. Even for semiconductors, where, India is the preferred potential partner, a dedicated business division has been created in the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, in the form of India Semiconductor Mission (ISM).



The recent trade policy agenda 2024 released by the Biden administration highlighted "Since announcing the negotiating mandate in August 2022, the two sides have pursued an ambitious schedule of meetings to make progress as quickly as possible. In June 2023, AIT and TECRO signed the first agreement under the initiative. This agreement includes high-standard commitments and economically meaningful outcomes in a number of trade areas, including customs administration and trade facilitation, good regulatory practices, services domestic regulation, anticorruption and small and medium-sized enterprises", underscoring the importance of the partnership between the two countries.

The US supports India's ambitions to develop into a significant player in semiconductor design and manufacturing space, as an alternative to China. India US trade relationship, which has been in limbo has been energised in the last two years after a formal Trade policy forum came into existence, which has had regular meetings on several bilateral issues. In the 2024 trade policy agenda document, US mentions, "We committed to pursue enhanced engagement leading to mutually beneficial outcomes in several areas, with a view to deepening the trade relationship for the benefit of working people. We identified certain areas, including critical minerals, customs and trade facilitation, supply chains and trade in high technology products, in which our Governments intend to develop an ambitious and forward-looking roadmap for enhanced coopera-

Given the convergence of interests and the willingness of like-minded partners and allies to invest and support India in the race of semiconductors, the next Government could do well to include removing regulatory bottlenecks in its 100-day agenda. It would be a good start towards a Stated Vikist Bharat target.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

## Sri Lanka's Easter attack revisited



**ILANGAMUWA** 

As the island nation grapples with the aftermath of the attack, the intricate web of extremism and intelligence failures continues to haunt it even five years later

hen conspiracy theories gain traction and perme-ate the public consciousness, they inevitably taint the discourse surrounding the event in question. This phenomenon is especially pronounced in politically charged contexts. Five years ago, amidst the Easter attack on tourist hotels, two Catholic churches and a Zion church in Western and Eastern provinces, a plethora of conspiracy theories surfaced. Initially, speculation swirled suggesting the involvement of a powerful Western nation, followed by theories positing the attack as a ploy to consolidate political power. More recently, local politicians and various social groups have propagated the notion that India orchestrated the attack. Yet, none of these claims have been substantiated with credible evidence. Meanwhile, the culpability of the investigating officers' negligence, which played a role in the tragedy, has been overshadowed by these baseless allegations. Instead of being held accountable, those partially responsible have reshaped the narrative to deflect blame onto others.

However, in the aftermath of the attack, public media reports surfaced alleging that prominent politicians and Government officials were aware of the impending threat. Some even openly discussed this matter. Additionally, a leaked classified document from the police indicated forewarning of an imminent attack. What followed was not just the proliferation of various interpretations but also the dissemination of misconceptions. For instance, blame was swiftly pinned on the State Intelligence Service, the country's premier intelligence agency, extending to judicial indictments. However, a more rational examination, grounded in verifiable data, reveals a different societal reality. It uncovers a systemic failure across institutions tasked with national security and a disregard for prior warnings. Furthermore, it exposes concerted efforts to downplay this negligence for political gain. In a nation scarred by nearly four decades of internal conflict and widespread devastation, such institutional negligence sadly becomes almost unsurprising. It's crucial to highlight overlooked facts concerning the attack in question.

Leading up to the incident in question, there was a noticeable proliferation of extremist factions advocating violence across Sri Lanka. This surge wasn't limited to Muslim extremist groups but encompassed various ideological factions, each pursuing distinct ATTACK, YET NONE political agendas. The emergence of the Islamic State in West Asia particularly bolstered the prospects of extremists across different nations, with Sri Lanka serving as a pivotal transit hub.

Investigations have revealed a significant influx of extremists from regions like Kerala, as well as countries such as the Maldives, into Sri Lanka. It's evident that intelligence agencies within the region, including those of Sri Lanka and Western nations, amassed substantial intelligence on these activities and collaborated in information sharing. Testimony from the wife of Zahran Hashim, a ringleader of the carlogistical support throughout the country. This revelation sheds light on the proliferation of extremism in Sri Lanka, culminat-



Zahran's family last resided. Zahran and his cohorts have exhibited affiliations with extremist ideologies and have been inspired by the Islamic State. Moreover, Sri Lankan nationals who joined the organisation's ranks in Syria have been observed exerting influence on local activities. Between 2014 and 2018, a staggering 41,490 individuals from 91 nations travelled to Syria to support the Islamic State, including 32 Sri Lankans.

Exploiting this influx, organisations espousing extremist ideologies, and apprint a print of the state of the s

under various guises, began proliferating throughout Sri Lanka. Additionally, individuals of Sri Lankan origin who attempted to travel to Syria via Turkey but were unsuccessful have returned home and aligned themselves with figures like Zahran. Simultaneously, the ideological backing of Mohamed Naufar, known as the "second emir" and a close relative-specifically, the husband of Zahran's maternal auntplayed a pivotal role. Naufar, idenified by the FBI as the mastermind behind the attack, exerted significant influence on the events.

SINCE

MARCH 2017.

THERE HAVE BEEN

11 SIGNIFICANT

LEADING UP TO

THE EASTER

THOROUGH

INCIDENTS

Since March 2017, there have been eleven significant incidents leading up to the Easter attack, yet none HAS UNDERGONE have undergone thorough investigation. This failure on the part of investigative agencies, which were INVESTIGATION supposed to act on precious intelligence passed on to them, has been perceived as a deliberate effort to conceal the underlying truth of the entire episode from society, thereby impeding the crucial lessons to be gleaned from this tragedy.

The series of events began with a clash at Kattankudy Aliyar junction on March 10, 2017. Following this conflict, police attempted to arrest Governance (NFGG) Mohammad Farzan's house on February 06, 2018 and another bomb thrown at

the shooting of Palani Bawa in Kattankudy on June 08, 2018 and the detonation of a bomb by Zahran's brother Rilwan in Arayampathy on August 26, 2018, resulting in injuries and fatalities at Wavnathiv police post on November 30, 2018. The incidents continued with the vandalism of religious statues in Mawanella on December 23, 2018 and further vandalism on January 16, 2019, related to providing information about the destruction of statues and concealment of explosive materials in Vanathavilluwa of Puttalam District. The situation intensified with the discovery of material and the shooting of informant Raziq Mohammad Taslim on March 08, 2019, resulting in permanent disability. Finally, a motorcycle explosion in Thalankudah on April 16, 2019, just five days before the Easter attack, marked the culmination of these incidents. Numerous intelligence reports concerning these events have been received by the commissions tasked with investigating them, shedding light on the negligence of the officers responsible for the criminal investigation.

One of the most significant incidents out of these eleven took place in August 2018, involving Rilwan, who mishandled explosives, resulting in an accident. After the explosions in the Arayampathy area, Rilwan was taken to Colombo National Hospital and admitted under the name Zaheed on 26 August 2018. Investigations have confirmed that Zahran, conducting a training camp in the Hambantota area at the time, visited his brother in Colombo. The following day, 27 August 2018, Rilwan was admitted camps nor the incident itself were reported to any police or intelligence

Remarkably, the individual managed to conceal his identity from the National Hospital and Eye Hospital for several days. The doctor suspected of aiding in this matter has later fled the country.

Later, there was another incident identified as a dry run, which the State Intelligence Service formally reported to the Inspector General of Police as well as the head of CID, stating that the incident on 2019.04.18 was an explosive test. However, due to the lack of proper investigation into the incident until the Easter Sunday attack, a key opportunity to apprehend the perpetrators was missed.

Upon examination of the intelligence reports submitted to the investigative commissions regarding the attack, it becomes evident that not only did the local intelligence agency provide information, but also the Indian Intelligence Bureau (IB), India's internal security and counter-intelligence agency under the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs, accurately foresaw the impending attacks. This information was disseminated not only to the then Inspector General of Po and the Secretary of the Ministry of Defense but also to the officers responsible for crime and investiga-

Their acknowledgement of receiving this crucial information is documented. Despite being forewarned, no preventive measures were taken to thwart the attack. This apparent failure to act raises serious questions about accountability and highlights a disturbing trend of negligence. That was a collective failure.

The balance sheet of five years since this tragedy is that there has been a concerted effort to obscure the truth by proliferating conspiracy theories, thereby masking this dereliction of duty. This deliberate attempt to deflect attention from institutional failures through the propagation of unfounded narratives not only undermines public trust but also obstructs the implementation of preventive mechanisms to ensure non-recurrence.

(The writer is a Sri Lankan journalist. Views are personal)

ing the BJP. What Antony

should have done is to give

#### to the National Eye Hospital. nage, attests to the financial backing he Zahran, but their efforts proved Subsequently, he visited the clinics tion in order to achieve economically meaningful outcomes." received from a Singaporean national to unsuccessful. Subsequently, on May of the National Hospital on establish his initial mosque. She further 17, 2017, a member of National 27.09.2018, 04.10.2018, 11.18.26 Thowheeth Jama'ath was shot. This detailed Zahran's extensive involvement in and 15.03.2019. This incident extremist endeavours, including recruiting was followed by a bomb thrown at occurred eight months prior to the adherents and garnering financial and the National Front for Good attack, yet neither the training

## The U-turns and contradictions in Antony's political journey

From advocating communal harmony to his stance on Hindu-Muslim relations, Antony's journey reflects his love for courting controversies

he year was 1993. The Kerala Press Academy (since renamed as Kerala Media Academy) under the ownership of the Kerala Government was having the Mathai Manjooran Memorial Day. Mathai Manjooran was a socialist party leader and was a member of the EMS Namboodiripad-led coalition Government during the 1967-69. He was also a trade union leader who never hesitated to speak his mind. It is unfortunate that he passed away in 1970 at the age of 58.

A K Antony, the quintessential Congress leader was the speakwho delivered the Manjooran Memorial speech and as a journalist, I was there to cover the event. The coun- But Antony chose a different try was yet to come out of the approach in his 45 minutes. He impact of the demolition of the warned the minority com- ister of Kerala for the third



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

disputed structure at Ayodhya and the entire secularist forces were up in arms against the Hindus for the "barbaric" act. Not a single day passed in Kerala without communal harmony meetings and all speakers were vying with one another in blaming the Sanatanis for the heinous act and praising Islam as the religion of peace.

munities (read Christians and time in 2001 but he quit in Muslims) from attacking the Hindus and reminded the two communities that they should be grateful to the Sanatanis for their magnanimity in offering the minorities more than what the Hindus themselves enjoyed. "The minorities have been given more rights and privileges to run their own educational institutions and hospitals while the Hindus were denied the same. We should always bear in mind the truth that the minorities in India enjoy unique rights and privileges that the Hindus do not have and we should be grateful to them for their broad-mindedness," said Antony, which made the next day's headlines.

Antony became the chief min-

2004 for reasons best known to him, the then Congress president Sonia Gandhi and the then Muslim League boss Mohammed Shihab Ali Thangal. Eight Hindu fishermen were butchered by members of a Muslim extremist organisation at Maradu in Kozhikode district in May 2003 and there was a demand for a CBI probe into the massacre. A prominent Muslim League leader, who later on became a Union Minister in the Manmohan Singh Government played a significant role in offering shelter in a mosque to the assassins. When the issue of the CBI probe came for consideration in the liaison committee meeting of the UDF, the Muslim

League leaders warned Antony



who was the then Chief Minister against an investigation by the Central agency. The UDF had won 99 out of the 140 seats at stake and was in a comfortable position. The Muslim League ultimatum against the CBI probe angered Antony and he announced in a public meeting the next day

that political parties, especially the caste and communitybased outfits, should not make the Government dance to their tunes with organised bargaining power. That turned out to be the nemesis for Antony as the Gods in Malappuram asked Sonia Gandhi to remove him from the post of chief minister. Despite Antony tendering an apology, the chieftains of the Muslim League, controlling Kerala politics from the Kudappanakkal castle in Panakkad, were not humoured and they insisted on the former's ouster. That was how Antony resigned as the Chief Minister and shifted camp to Delhi. The Sulthans of Malappuram had the last laugh.

Antony knows very well that his shirt and dhoti should be

more secular than that of the CPI(M) and other outfits to stay in the reckoning. That is why the person who wanted the minority communities to be grateful to the Hindus wants the Sanatan Dharma to be demolished. There is nothing surprising in Antony's stance as he was always against the Hindus even as the president of Kerala Students Union, the feeder organisation of the Congress. The group in the Congress party in Kerala has its roots in Antony's grievances over the status enjoyed by Hindu leaders like K Karunakaran and their clout in the High Command. The group in Congress has nothing to do with ideology and Antony's hatred towards Hindus is reflected in his cursing his son Anil Antony join-

freedom to 38-year-old Anil to select the party of his choice and wish him all success. Instead of that what Antony has done is to demand the Nehru-Gandhi clan to field candidates for the Lok Saba election from Amethi and Rae Bareli. He also declared that the Congress party cannot exist without the Nehru-Gandhi family. Isn't this another way of telling that India is Indira and Indira is India? Remember, this is the same Antony who ridiculed Indira Gandhi cast his lot with the CPI(M) in 1980 and formed a

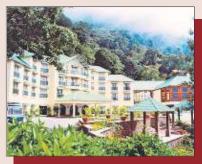
during 1980-1982. (The writer is special correspondent with The Pioneer; views are personal)

Government with the Marxists

#### **Mahindra Holidays & Resorts Q4** PAT jumps 47.7 pc to Rs 83.2 cr

consolidated profit after tax of Rs 83.2 crore for the March 2024 quarter against Rs 56.3 crore a year ago. For the entire 2023-24, the company reported a consolidated profit after tax of Rs 116.05 crore against Rs 113.82 crore in the preceding fiscal, according to a regulatory filing. During the January-March quarter

Mahindra Holidays & Resorts India Ltd reported a total income of Rs 830.34 crore compared to Rs 735.26 crore a year ago. Its total expenses during the quarter under review rose to Rs 720.86 crore from Rs 658.23 crore in the January-March period of the previous year. The company said it has recorded robust member additions at 20,019 during 2023-24, up 15 per cent year-onvear. The company's shares closed at 434.10 apiece, up 1.99 per cent from their previous close on the BSE.



#### 'IndiGo's wide-body aircraft order augurs well for Indian aviation'

Budget carrier IndiGo's decision to acquire wide-body planes augurs well for the Indian aviation industry as international long-haul routes are comparatively more profitable and will also help in creating an aviation hub in the country, according to rating agency CRISIL. Till January last year, IndiGo operated single-aisle Airbus aircraft fleet and in February 2023, it started operating wide-body Boeing 777 wet-leased from its codeshare partner Turkish Airlines. Currently, the airline has two wet-leased B777 operating flights to Istanbul from Delhi and Mumbai. On Thursday, the country's largest

airline announced placing a firm order for 30 wide-body Airbus A350-900 planes, to be powered by Rolls-Royce's Trent XWB engines, and also has the option to purchase 70 more such aircraft. "The development (IndiGo's A350 aircraft order) augurs well for the industry as these (international long haul) routes are more profitable



#### **Wendt India records Q4** consolidated PAT at Rs 13.38 cr

registered a consolidated profit after tax for the January-March 2024 quarter at Rs 13.38 crore. The Murugappa Group company registered a consolidated profit at Rs 12.79 crore during the corresponding quarter of last year. For the year ending March 31, 2024, the consolidated profit after tax stood at Rs 54.21 crore, as against Rs 53.02 crore registered a year ago, Wendt (India) Ltd said in a statement on Friday. The total income on a consolidated basis grew to Rs 71.89 crore from Rs 60.66 crore registered in

the same period of last year. For the year ending March 31, 2024, the consolidated total income went up to Rs 233.95 crore from Rs 215.23 crore registered last financial year. The Board of Directors has recommended a final dividend of Rs 20 per share (200 per cent on the face value of equity shares of Rs 10 each) out of the current year's profits, subject to the approval of shareholders.





#### Airtel honoured for offering best voice experience

PNS CHENNAI

Telecom major Bharti-Airtel on Friday said it has been awarded for providing the best voice experience on the 5G network in Tamil Nadu circle, as per a report by OpenSignal.

OpenSignal is a global standard for analyzing mobile experience and a guide in understanding customer experience.

According to the report, Bharti-Airtel also leads in providing seamless connectivity to its telecom users and in using the over the top (OTT) services, a company statement said.

The telecom major also remains the best in offering the best 5G upload speed by winning a score of 25.1 Mbps.

## RBI proposes new norms for LSPs to promote transparency

PNS MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday proposed that lending service providers (LSPs), acting as agents of banks, should give information on all the loan offers available with them to borrowers so that they can make an informed decision.

Many of the LSPs offer aggregation services for loan products.

LSP is an agent of a regulated entity (RE) who carries out one or more of lender's functions or part thereof in customer acquisition, underwriting support, pricing support, servicing, monitoring, recovery of specific loan or loan portfolio on behalf of REs in conformity with extant outsourcing guidelines.

In December last year, the RBI announced to issue draft framework saying connected lending or lending to persons who are in a position to control or influence the decision of



"In such cases, particularly where an LSP has arrangements with multiple lenders, identity of the potential lender to the borrower may not be known upfront to the borrower," said the Reserve Bank's draft circular on 'Digital Lending -- Transparency in Aggregation of Loan Products from Multiple Lenders'.

a lender can be of concern, if the lender does not maintain an arm's length relationship with such borrowers.

Such lending can involve moral hazard issues, leading to a compromise in pricing and credit management, it had said.

"In such cases, particularly where an LSP has arrangements with multiple lenders, identity of the potential lender to the borrower may not be known upfront to the borrower," said the Reserve Bank's

draft circular on 'Digital

Aggregation of Loan Products from Multiple Lenders'.

The draft proposed that the LSP should provide a digital view of all the loan offers available to the borrower, as per his/her requirements, from all willing lenders with whom

the LSP has arrangements with.
"While the LSP may adopt any mechanism to ascertain the willingness of the lenders to offer a loan, it shall follow a consistent approach in this regard, which shall be disclosed suitably on their website," said the draft on which the RBI has sought comments from stakeholders by May 31.

The digital view should include the name(s) of the RE(s) extending the loan offer, amount and tenor of loan, the annual percentage rate (APR) and other key terms and conditions in a way which enables the borrower to make a fair comparison between various offers, the draft said.

#### FRONT-RUNNING CASE

## Sebi bans eight entities from securities market

#### Impounds 'unlawful gain' of Rs 1.3 crore

PNS NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Friday barred eight entities from the securities markets and impounded "unlawful gains" of Rs 1.3 crore earned by them from front-running activities.

The eight entities are Ashok Maheshwari, Darshan Bakul Shah, Khusboo Darshan Shah, Darshan Bakul Shah (HUF), Benzer Department Stores Pvt Ltd, CHL Stock Concepts Pvt Ltd, Chirag Mahendra Shah, and Mihir Dhirajalal Savla.

Front-running refers to an illegal practice in the stock market where an entity trades based on advance information from a broker or analyst before the information has been made available to its clients.

Ashok Maheshwari was one of the dealers of stock broker ABC Securities Ltd, and was

responsible for placing trading orders for the Big Client, which was engaged in the business of portfolio management services.



In its 77-page order, Sebi found that Ashok Maheshwari was instrumental in supplying the information about the impending trades of the Big Client to Darshan Bakul Shah and such information was utilised to execute front running trades.

Apart from trading in his own account, Darshan Bakul Shah used the accounts of his

family members -- Khusboo Darshan Shah, Darshan Bakul Shah (HUF), Benzer Department Stores Pvt Ltd, CHL Stock Concepts Pvt Ltd and Chirag Mahendra Shah.

Mihir Dhirajalal Savla was the director of Benzer Department Stores.

When the Big Client, unaware of the conduct of the Noticee no. 1 (Ashok Maheshwari) was instructing him to execute trades on its behalf and such instructions were prima facie encashed by the Noticee no. 1 by sharing the same to the Noticee no. 2 (Darshan Bakul Shah).

"When the information reached the Noticee no. 2, he acted in asystematic manner and trades were executed in different accounts which cumulatively generated unlawful profits (Rs 1.30 crore approx)," Sebi said.

## Markets snap five-day rally; Sensex tumbles

Market benchmarks Sensex and Nifty wilted under selling pressure on Friday after a five-day rally as investors pared exposure to banking, financial and consumer durable stocks amid mixed rends in global mark

Rising global crude prices, a depreciating rupee and persistent foreign fund outflows further weighed on sentiment, traders said.

Profit-taking also came into play as the 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 609.28 points or 0.82 per cent to settle at 73,730.16. During the day, it lost 722.79 points or 0.97 per cent to 73,616.65. The NSE Nifty declined 150.40 points or 0.67 per cent to 22,419.95.

Bajaj Finance was the biggest drag on the Sensex



chart, skidding nearly 8% after the company's March quarter earnings failed to cheer investors. Bajaj Finserv also declined over 3 %.

IndusInd Bank, Nestle, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the other laggards.

Meanwhile, Tech Mahindra jumped over 7 per cent after the IT services company's CEO outlined an ambitious three-year roadmap to accelerate revenue growth and lift

## Macrotech Developers aims 21% growth in pre-sales in FY25

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Realty firm Macrotech Developers has set a target to sell properties worth Rs 17,500 crore during the current fiscal, a 21 per cent growth from the previous year, as the company expects housing demand to CEO Abhishek Lodha said.

Macrotech Developers, which sells its properties under the Lodha brand, registered a 20 per cent growth in its sale bookings (also called pre-sales) to a record Rs 14,520 crore last fiscal from Rs 12,060 crore in the 2022-23 financial year.

'We met our guidance of delivering consistent and predictable 20 per cent growth in the sale bookings during the last fiscal year. The guidance for the current fiscal has been kept at Rs 17,500 crore, again



20 per cent growth from the 2023-24 fiscal," Lodha said. He expects the housing demand to remain strong amid positive consumer sentiments

and high economic growth. "Our best ever quarterly and annual performance showcases the buoyancy in demand for high quality homes in India from branded

developers," Lodha said. To encash this consumer demand, Macrotech Developers would launch multiple housing projects across its

three focus markets -- Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), Pune and Bengaluru. Lodha said the company would continue to add land

parcels, through outright acquisitions and also partnerships with landowners, for future development.

Developers reported an 11 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit to Rs 665.5 crore in the March quarter from Rs 744.4 crore in the year-ago period. The company's total income

grew to Rs 4,083.9 crore in the quarter under review from Rs 3,271.7 crore in the year-ago

During the 2023-24 fiscal, Macrotech Developers registered a three-fold jump in profit to Rs 1,549.1 crore from Rs 486.7 crore in the 2022-23

Rupee falls 7 paise

The rupee declined 7 paise to close at 83.35 (provisional) against the US dollar on

Friday as a strengthening

American currency overseas

to settle at 83.35

against US\$

PNS MUMBAI

#### Maruti Suzuki Q4 net profit rises 47.8% to

Rs 3,877.8 cr PNS NEW DELHI

The country's largest car maker Maruti Suzuki India on Friday reported a 47.8 per cent rise in net profit for the March quarter of FY24 to Rs 3,877.8 crore, on account of higher sales volume and favourable commodity prices.

The auto major had reported a net profit of Rs 2,623.6 crore in the year-ago period, Maruti Suzuki India said in a

regulatory filing.

"For the first time, the company surpassed annual total sales milestone of 2 million units in FY24. The company continued to be the top exporter for the third consecutive year, now contributing 41.8 per cent of total passenger vehicle exports from India," the company stated.

Maruti Suzuki shares were trading at Rs 12,687.05 apiece close on the BSE.



Economist and chairperson of the 16th Finance Commission Arvind Panagariya has colto the present day in his new book to provide an overview of the Indian economy from when liberalisation started in 1991 to where it has

reached. Published by HarperCollins, "India's Trade Policy: The 1990s and Beyond" offers a window into the history of trade-policy changes in India, the

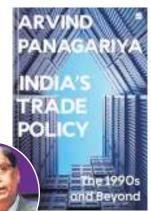
factors driving them and their implications for the country's development and well-being. "This book

brings to you more than two decades of advocacy for liberal trade policies in India by me. It provides the history of trade policy over the last two decades as it unfolded. The ups and downs of India's trade policy illustrate the challenges liberal trade policies face at the country level and globally," Panagariya said in a statement.

Panagariya, who has advocated for liberalisation and free trade, has explained the ben-

efits of an open economy especially with respect to international trade.

He presents a strong case against protectionism and



import substitution and recommends faster liberalisation. The book also looks at India-US and India-China trade relations, multilateral negotiations, free trade area agreements, and non-trade issues in trade agreement.

"India's Trade Policy is a unique overview of the evolution of the Indian economy since liberalization was announced, by renowned economist Dr Arvind

#### FPI investment limit in g-sec unchanged at 6% of outstanding stocks ment securities (SGSs) and corfor SDLs (in absolute terms)

PNS MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank on Friday said the limits for FPI investment in government securities, state development loans and corporate bonds will remain unchanged at 6 per cent, 2 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively, of outstanding stocks of securities for the current fiscal. As of now, all investments by eligible investors in the 'speci-



fied securities' will be reckoned under the fully accessible route (FAR), the RBI said in a notification. "The limits for FPI investment in government securities (g-secs), state govern-

porate bonds shall remain unchanged at 6 per cent, 2 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively, of the outstanding stocks of securities for 2024-25," it said. The allocation of incremen-

tal changes in the g-sec limit (in absolute terms) over the two sub-categories - 'General' and 'Long-term' – will be retained at 50:50 for 2024-25, it added. The entire increase in limits has been added to the general sub-category of state development loans, it noted. The notification further said

5% of the outstanding stock of corporate bonds. Accordingly, an additional limit of Rs 2,54,500 cr is set out for 24-25.

the aggregate limit of the notional amount of Credit Default Swaps (CDS) sold by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) will be

and a selloff in domestic equities weighed on the local unit. Besides, rising crude prices in the international market and risk-averse sentiment Bank of Maharashtra stock climbs dragged the local unit down, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, nearly 4% after Q4 earnings the local unit opened strong at 83.30 and moved in the range of 83.30-83.36 during the session. The local currency finally settled at 83.35 (provision-

> 83.28 against the US dollar. to trade slightly weak on renewed geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and weak-

ness in domestic equities.
"Rising crude oil prices and FII outflows may further put pressure on the rupee. However, any intervention by the RBI may support the

#### at the day's close, down 1.7 per cent from its previous

## Mphasis posts 3% decline in net profit to Rs 393 crore in Q4

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IT company Mphasis posted a 2.98 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 393.2 crore in the March quarter of FY24.

The company posted a net profit of Rs 405.3 crore in the same period a year ago.

The consolidated revenue from operations of Mphasis Group, however, increased marginally to Rs 3,142 crore during the fourth quarter of the previous fiscal from Rs 3,361.2 crore a year ago, the company said in a regulatory filing.

During the reporting quarter, Mphasis registered new TCV (total contract value)



wins of US\$ 177 million (about Rs 1,475 crore).

"We are experiencing strong growth momentum in Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered deal archetypes, as we look to capture the enterprise demand for AI adoption.

"Our ability to orchestrate the ecosystem by bringing technology and people together to solve for customer needs strongly positions us for

continue to work around the uncertainties in the overall economic environment," Mphasis, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director Nitin Rakesh said. For the year ended March

31, 2024, Mphasis recorded a

5 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 1,558.8 crore from Rs 1,637.9 crore in 2022-23. The annual revenue from operations dropped about 4 per cent to Rs 13,278.5 crore

during FY24 from Rs 13,798.4 crore in FY23. Mphasis reported new TCV wins worth US\$ 1.38 billion in

#### PNS NEW DELHI Shares of Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) on Friday climbed nearly 4 per cent after the company reported a 45 per cent jump in net profit for the March quarter. The stock jumped 3.65 per cent to settle at Rs 67.62 per

piece on the BSE. During the day, it advanced 6.37 per cent to Rs 65.24.

On the NSE, it rallied 3.67 per cent to Rs 67.65 apiece. In volume terms, 41.88 lakh shares of the company were traded on the BSE and over

942.89 lakh shares on the NSE

during the day.

State-owned BoM on Friday reported a 45 per cent jump in its net profit to Rs 1,218 crore for the March quarter, helped by a decline in bad loans and a rise in interest income. The Pune-based lender had

earned a net profit of Rs 840 crore in the year-ago period. During the quarter, the bank's total income increased to Rs 6,488 crore as against Rs 5,317 crore a year ago, BoM said in a regulatory filing.

5,467 crore during the period under review, from Rs 4,495 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago. On the asset quality side, the bank's Gross Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) were reduced to 1.88 per cent of gross advances as of March 31, 2024, from 2.47 per cent by the end of March 2023. Net NPAs also came down to 0.20 per cent of the advances

from 0.25 per cent at the end of 2024. The fall in bad loans ratio helped cut the provisions towards NPAs for Q4FY24 to Rs 457 crore as compared with Rs 545 crore a year ago.

session, the rupee closed at "Indian Rupee declined slightly on weak domestic markets and a surge in crude oil prices. We expect the rupee

al) against the dollar, register-

ing a fall of 7 paise from its pre-

vious close. In the previous

rupee at lower levels.

# Hyderabade Elabade

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Saturday April 27, 2024



environment. They may not be as good as places like Bombay, Delhi, or Bangalore, but they are unquestionably superior to many other locations!

Her ability to have a casual conversation in Hindi is one factor that helps her in this situation. Here in the twin cities, there is a balanced approach to language, unlike in other southern cities where Hindi may not be as extensively spoken! The

greatest benefit of residing here is that.

On the other hand, it has been difficult to acclimate to Hyderabad's year-round hot weather and restricted options for dining, entertainment, and education after living in other Indian cities where she was exposed to a variety of vibrant cultures.

"The climate here is one thing that continues to bother me," she says. "As someone who grew up experiencing all four seasons, I find it difficult to get used to Hyderabad's never-ending heat. Additionally, there don't seem to be many notable eateries in the area, with the only options for cuisine being Biryani and Khubani-ka-Meetha." Then, after completing her undergradutional deals and the statement of the same and the same a ate studies in Bangalore and moving to Hyderabad for her post-graduation education, she had studied all throughout India. At first, she noticed that

evervone

chosen hometown. Shopping in Hyderabad offers a unique variety not found elsewhere. Laad Bazar stands out for its ethnic dresses and wedding shopping, though grooming schools Kanha Shanti Vanam, a meditation hall, has recently emerged as a significant spiritual destination for her. "The serene ambience of Taramati Baradari and the captivating sound and light show at Golconda Fort are personal favourites.

fluid, given the frequent relocations. My roots trace back to

Bangalore through my mother and Gudivada in Andhra Pradesh through my father, but Hyderabad holds a special place in my heart. After years of living here, it's become my

While there are temples aplenty, options for family outings are somewhat limited, with Yadagirigutta Temple being a primary choice." She continues to shares, "Every place has its pros and cons, and what I appreciate about Hyderabad is its tranquil atmosphere. Unlike the frenetic pace of some cities, it embraces a sense of calmness. Engaging in simple activities like gardening feels fulfilling when there's no pressure to constantly be on the go. In essence, Hyderabad offers a haven for

the nervous system, allowing one to embrace a more peaceful way of life."

She shares about her career here: "After completing my psychology education at the University of Arts and Social Sciences in Hyderabad, initially, therapy wasn't widely embraced, with many being hesitant and shy, even covering their faces when seeking help. However, the pandemic brought a significant shift, with a surge in people seeking therapy, even for minor issues. I've witnessed a transformation in attitudes towards therapy, with pre-marital counselling becoming less taboo. Hyderabad has emerged as a conducive environment for practising psychology, especially with the increasing acceptance and demand for counselling services."

The significance of Hyderabad in her life, she shares, "When I first began my practice in Hyderabad, I grappled with the challenge of not being proficient in Telugu, having been raised in northern cities where English and Hindi were my primary languages. However, two years ago, opportunities arose with media organisations, prompting me to participate in series and shows on

examination stress, albeit in a mix of Telugu and English. Despite my initial hesitations due to my limited Telugu vocabulary, I soon realised that the essence of content creation and the desire to assist others transcended language barriers. As collaborations expanded, I discovered a sense of belonging within the city's warm embrace. Though not originally from Hyderabad, the community welcomed me wholeheartedly, providing me with opportunities to flourish as a therapist. Over time, I've come to embrace my Telugu Brahmin identity, finding fulfillment in serving the evolving needs of Hyderabad's diverse populace."

This week for our special weekly column of Hyderabond, The Pioneer connects with Kavita Panyam, a counselling psychologist progressing in Hyderabad, sharing her association, and insights from her life in

Hyderabad.

shares, "Rajpal and Gia have played their parts

SUBODHINI PUROHIT

eet Hyderabad-based Kavita Panyam, a seasoned counselling psychologist who is making progress. She has found her professional purpose and a strong sense of belonging in Hyderabad's lively community, despite the difficulties she faced upon moving from her military background to Hyderabad.

In the lively backdrop of Hyderabad, she discusses her path of career achievement and personal growth through her perceptive insights! "Because of my father's military profession, I was born and reared in the vibrant North; I didn't start to settle into Hyderabad's calm atmosphere until after he retired in 1994. I always thought that people in the North were more gregarious, lively, open, and less reserved when I was a child. I also happen to be that kind of person. But since

coming here, I've observed that Hyderabadis are generally laid back. But I've noticed a shift since the pandemic. People now appear more motivated to succeed in life. As they say, "Nawab ka Shehar," it's a reflection of the easygoing pace of life."

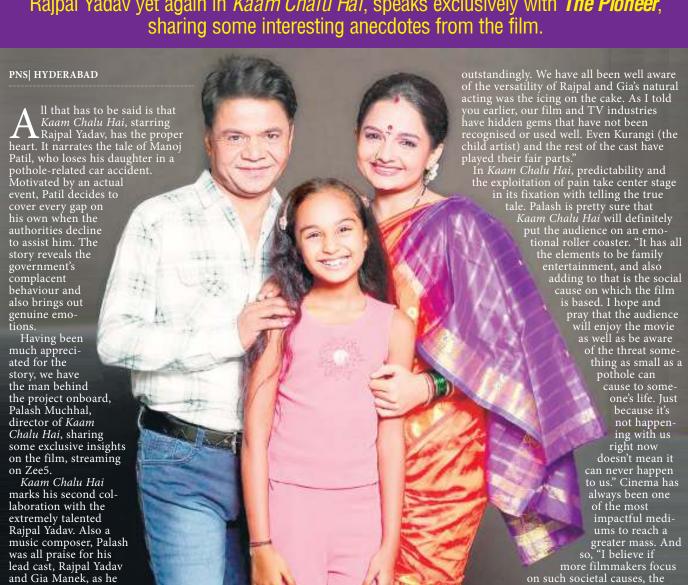
With regard to Secunderabad in particular, "it's even more laid-back." However, the twin cities are very different when taken into account. They are similar to big cities in that they

around here didn't have the same enthusiasm that she was used to. Therapists and healers seldom visit for workshops, and beyond engineering and medical fields! The college culture here also leaves much to be desired. "My younger son attends Loyola Academy, but I haven't seen the kind of college life I experienced in the 90s. It feels more like an extension of school than a place for holistic learning."

Despite its unique charm, the city's recreational landscape could benefit from further diversification to cater to varied interests. "In the military, the concept of a hometown can be

## "Gia Manek was that hidden gem of TV industry that had not been recognised yet?

Music composer-filmmaker Palash Muchhal, who had recently collaborated with Rajpal Yadav yet again in Kaam Chalu Hai, speaks exclusively with The Pioneer,





## Managing blood pressure fluctuations to reduce ischemic stroke risk!

Blood pressure variability (BPV) refers to short-term or long-term fluctuations in blood pressure levels over time. These fluctuations can happen with in short breaks (minute-to-minute variability), within 24 hours (daily variability), or over longer intervals (longterm variability). Various factors like autonomic nervous function, abnormal breathing, body position, behavior and body temperature can lead to short-term fluctuations. However, some degree of BPV is considered as normal but excessive variability has been linked with several cardiovascular conditions, including ischemic stroke. Moreover, repeated rise in blood pressure may cause hemorrhagic transformation whereas repeated fall in blood pressure may worsen ischemia.

#### **LINKAGE BETWEEN BLOOD PRESSURE VARIABILITY AND ISCHEMIC STROKE**

An Ischemic stroke occurs when there is some kind of blockage that prevents blood from reaching all areas of your brain leading to reduced blood flow and oxygen deprivation. If not given proper medical attention, it can cause permanent brain damage or even death. Excessive fluctuations in blood pressure can damage the inner lining of blood vessels leading to the formation of plaques within the arteries which further increases the risk of ischemic stroke by blocking the blood vessels. Additionally, blood pressure variability can also affect small blood vessels in the brain, resulting in microvascular damage which increases the susceptibility of brain tissue to ischemia.

#### SYMPTOMS OF ISCHEMIC STROKE

audience will be more aware of such

trivial yet important issues.

The symptoms of an ischemic stroke can vary

depending on the location and extent of the blockage. Few common symptoms include:

- One-sided weakness: A person suffering from ischemic stroke may face weakness or numbness on one side of the body, generally affecting the face, arm, or leg. This mostly occurs on the same side of the body as the affected part of the brain.
- Aphasia: It refers to the difficulty in speaking and understanding the speech. People with ischemic stroke sometimes find it difficult to find the right words to express themselves.
- Vision problems: Sudden vision changes, like: blurred or double vision, loss of vision in one or both eyes are quite common symptoms in ischemic
- Headache: Severe and unbearable headaches can occur if the person is suffering from subarachnoid
- Loss of balance: Few people face dizziness and postural instability during a stroke which can make it dif-ficult for them to walk or even balance the body.

Through lifestyle modifications, few medications and targeted interventions like endovascular mechanical thrombectomy (a surgical procedure to remove blood clots from brain), we can manage ischemic stroke and its symptoms.

> (Dr. Apurva Sharma, is a Consultant -Neurology, at Manipal Hospital.)

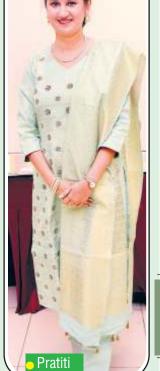
## what's brewing?





ShilpAbha, an initiative by Pratikrut and Popbaani, launched the Indian Heritage Art Tour, with an event held at the State Art Gallery in Madhapur. Aimed at preserving, promoting, and educating people about Indian heritage folk art paintings, the tour is expected to bring renewed focus to India's rich artistic traditions.

















its commitment towards customer centricity and service excellence. It will conduct the AC check-up camps between 15th April to 15th June 2024 at all authorised service workshops across India where all customers are eligible for a wide range of services and discounts.

Informa Markets successfully kicked off the 8th edition of RenewX at the HITEX Exhibition Centre, Hyderabad. The dedicated expo showcasing South India's renewable energy innovations with a focus on sustainability and green energy witnessed a significant turnout, with around 5000 visitors exploring the innovations presented by over 150 domestic and international exhibitors. The event brought together manufacturers, distributors, suppliers, and experts, including energy consultants, independent power producers, and regulatory bodies, providing valuable insights and new opportunities in the energy sector.





CARE Hospitals, Banjara Hills, announced the successful reversal of diabetes in three patients from Orissa with high BMI and co-morbidities following transformative bariatric surgery at the esteemed facility. After enduring years of obesity and poorly managed diabetes, the trio underwent bariatric surgery, guided by the expertise of Dr. Venugopal Pareek and his dedicated multidisciplinary team.

The International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad (IIIT-H) and I-Hub Data, along with India's top autonomous driving technology start-up, Minus Zero, inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in a major step towards the advancement of autonomous driving technology in the country. Through this agreement, a collaborative environment for AI and autonomous driving research will be established, and world-class autonomous driving datasets tailored to Indian scenarios will be curated



#### ARCHIE







## CALVIN AND HOBBES HEY! HEY KID, WHAT ARE

I LOVE HENRY! HE IS MY EMOTIONAL SUPPORT HOO-MAN!



SPEED BUMP

WHERE I PARKED OUR WHEEL





#### **GARFIELD**









## NANCY

SETTLED INTO HIS NEW HOME --- BUT HE WAS LONELY-

MY NEW PAL SLUGGO









#### **SUDOKU**



6	2	9	3	7	8	1	4	5
7	1	8	6	5	4	3	2	9
3	4	5	9	2	1	6	7	8
9	8	3	7	4	6	2	5	1
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#### 491532867 Rules

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

#### **CROSSWORD**



#### ACROSS

- 6 Something chewed but usually not swallowed (7,3)
- 8 With lots of sunshine
- 10 A stand for an artist's

19 Daily publications

painting 13 Straight away

DOWN

2 Absent

- 14 Tossed

#### 17 Rub with a cloth 18 Yours and mine 17 Put words on paper



7 Helper

11 Change 12 Baby goat

16 Cried

15 Uses oars

9 A female relation

#### Part of your face 3 One time 4 Hens lay these 5 People who work for a

#### **GINGER MEGGS**



Hyderabad | Saturday April 27, 2024

From captivating performances to meticulous style choices, Digangana Suryavanshi has left an indelible mark in Tollywood. Join us as we explore her diverse roles, upcoming releases, and creative pursuits in this exclusive interview.

## tollywood

## Digangana Suryavanshi reviving silver screen with

FOUR AWAITED

K. RAMYA SREE

ctress, singer and author Digangana Suryavanshi has carved a niche for her-Self in the Telugu film industry with her captivating performances in movies like *Hippi*, Valayam, Seetimar and Crazy Fellow. Now, the talented artist is all set to enthrall audiences once again with her upcoming projects.

In an exclusive revelation, it was disclosed that Digangana will reunite with her Crazy Fellow costar Aadi Sai Kumar for the much-anticipated film Krishna from Brindavanam.

During the recent launch puja of Krishna from Brindavanam, the film's director, Veerabhadram Chowdary, emphasised the pivotal role of hercharacter in the movie. Intrigued by this revelation, we reached out to Digangana, who has been absent from the limelight for the past two years, to delve deeper into her upcoming projects and her journey in Tollywood and to our surprise, we learned that she has been shooting four films in Telugu and Tamil over the past two years, which are all ready for release now. It looks like 2024 is going to be 'her' year, with a handful of projects lined up to grace theatres.

Speaking of Krishna from *Brindavanam* and how she onboarded the movie, the actress, who is multitasking now as she is finishing her MBA in finance apart from acting full-time, shared, "I worked with Aadi before for *Crazy Fellow* and both of us had in the back of our minds to do a film with a love story. I always wanted to do a very hard-core love story. Luckily, while I was shooting for my other film with Ashwin Babu,

our manager sent this idea to me. I love being part of films where, as a female lead, there is so much story around you and so much your character says. I think that is when the audience women of my age—can resonate. If there is no emotion, you cannot resonate with the film. I heard the whole narrative and I knew it was a meaty role and I knew I could give my best, whether it was the language or emotion. This film is bound between two people: Aadi and I, and I felt this was going to be very good."

In this movie, Digangana gets to play a modern village role. She is a college-going girl, but she assures the audience that her role in the film is more rooted and authentic, where nativity plays a strong role. "Even in real life, we are a blend of where we come from, so for me, the backstory of the person is very important and this is a film that has it all."

If one has watched the work Digangana has done so far in Tollywood, her style game is always on point. Known for her impeccable style, she discussed her approach to selecting outfits and makeup for her roles. Emphasising the significance of aligning her appearance with her character's persona, she shared, "I do give a lot of attention to my outfits. I really think dressing isn't really about looking good; it is also about representing that person. You cannot see a certain person wearing a certain kind of outfit because it doesn't suit their personality. I have been very lucky with directors, cinematographers and stylists because it is a group vision when it comes to movies. People have been very considerate so

As mentioned, the actor was busy the past two

years with four films and gave some details about them. She mentioned, "I have shot four films and I think everything is now coming together. I shot a film with People Media Factory, and I am awaiting its release. We haven't, however, announced it yet. I am shooting a film with Ashwin Babu, which has Arbaaz sir as the villain. I have about a week of work left. Krishna from Brindavanam is my third. I also shot for a Tamil film, and that hasn't been released either. These two years have been much about filming and less about releases (she laughs). I am glad to be missed because you get to see more of me now (hahaha)."

When it comes to selecting story selections, she said, "Most of the decisions are my soul decisions; at least 90 percent are my own calls. When I look at the script, I see, "If I am done with the film, do I want to go back and watch it?" I could have a 10-minute part or a full-fledged part; I need to like the film in totality. If I don't like the film in totality, I am not going to watch it, and how am I going to ask other people to watch it?

So for me, it plays an important role."

All the roles she has played have been very close to each other, which were girl-next-door; however, the young actress believes she needs to put in extra effort to differentiate between the roles and keep in mind that she is repeating her characters and doing the same work.

Overall, in this conversation with Digangana, one thing we have learned and are sure about is that she is a dedicated actress in whatever she does and is one of those actors who would give her best in any role she picks. Despite coming from an affluent family, the actress likes to be grounded. "I am not ambitious at the stake of my

grace and dignity," tells the actress on how she maintains her values.

She is not a party person or a socialite and is more like a home bee when she is not working; however, now she is trying to be out there at premieres, as she was not somebody who used to do it previously. She shared, "I was not someone who attended premieres, although I know so many people. I was always like, Okay, I'll see you at the office, or I'll watch it at home. But a couple of things have changed in the past few years. There is a shift

now as a person, and I am enjoying that shift too." Furthermore, on the work

front, Digangana has also shot for a series in Hindi, which is in its dubbing phase; however, an official announcement is awaited. She is also very excited about another Hindi project that is under wraps. Beyond her acting endeavours, Digangana is also engaged in various creative pursuits, including

Her multifaceted talents and unwavering dedication underscore her status as a rising star to watch out for in the entertainment industry.



## ANUPAMA SETS TONE FOR WOMEN-ORIENTED INTRIGUING DRAMA

cally acclaimed debut film, Cinema Bandi, director Praveen Kandregula is all set to mesmerise audiences once again with his upcoming project, *Paradha*. Produced by Ananda Media, the film marks the production house's grand entry into the Telugu film industry, promising to deliver an

enthralling cinematic experience.

Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu and filmmakers Raj & DK unveiled the first look and concept video of Paradha, setting the stage for what promises to be an intriguing drama centered around female protagonists. The title itself, Paradha, meaning curtain, hints at the layered narrative awaiting audiences. The first look poster showcases Anupama Parmeswaran in a de-glam avatar, draped in traditional attire, standing alongside other women whose faces are covered with Voni. Anupama's stern gaze captivates, setting the tone

for a compelling storyline. Accompanying the first look is a sulates the essence of the film. Set in a village backdrop, the video resonates with the shloka from Manusmruthi, emphasising the importance of honoring women and the divine significance attached to their reverence.

Joining Anupama Parmeswaran in the cast are the versatile Darshana Rajendran, making her Telugu cine-ma debut, and veteran actress Sangitha, adding depth and richness to the ensemble.

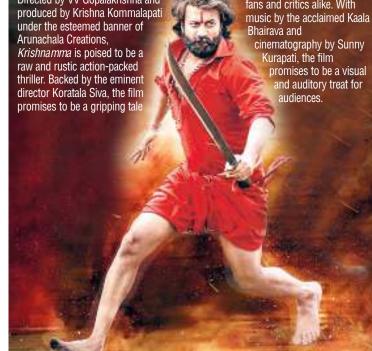
Paradha has been a labor of love, with shooting schedules taking the crew across picturesque locations in Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, and various

As the final leg of shooting approaches in Hyderabad, anticipation continues to build for the film's release. With music scored by Gopi Sundar and cinematography by Mridul Sujit Sen, Paradha promises to captivate audiences with its engaging storyline, talented cast, and soul-stirring music.

## Satyadev's Krishnamma release pushed to May 10

that will keep audiences on the edge of atyadev stands out not only as a talented actor but also as a In this cinematic journey, Satyadev is symbol of resilience and joined by the talented Athira Raj, who determination. From his humble shares the screen as his leading lady. beginnings to becoming a sought-after The ensemble cast also includes name in the industry, Satyadev has Laxman Meesala, Krishna, Archana, carved a niche for himself with his Raghukunche, and Nandagopal, each versatile performances. Now, he is bringing their own unique essence to gearing up for the release of his latest venture, *Krishnamma*. The film's release The buzz surrounding *Krishnamma* has was initially scheduled for May 3; been steadily building, fueled by the however, it was announced on Friday release of its teaser, title song, and lyrical tracks, all of which have that the film will now hit theatres on May 10 by the makers. Directed by VV Gopalakrishna and

garnered rave reviews from fans and critics alike. With music by the acclaimed Kaala cinematography by Sunny Kurapati, the film romises to be a visual and auditory treat for



# Tamannaah Bhatia's Odela 2 second schedule kicks off

he much-anticipated multi-lingual extravaganza Odela 2 has embarked on its second schedule, marking another milestone in its journey towards cinematic greatness. Helmed by the dynamic duo of blockbuster filmmaker Sampath Nandi and director Ashok Teja, and produced by Madhu Creations and Sampath Nandi Teamworks, this high-budget venture promises to redefine the

Tamannaah Bhatia donned the role of 'Bhairavi', a mystical Naga Saadhu. Odela 2 is now weaving its magic in and around the vibrant city of Hyderadad. Over the course of 20–25 days, the team is capturing pivotal sequences that promise to leave audiences spellbound.

Tamannaah's transformation into the enigmatic character of Bhairavi, showcased in a working video, offers goosebumps-inducing moments, accompanied by a riveting score from Ajaneesh Loknath of Kantara fame. Joining the superstar in this cinematic spectacle are acclaimed actors Hebbah Patel, Vasishta N Simha, Murali Sharma, Srikanth Iyengar, and more.

Cinematographer Soundarrajan returns to the franchise, capturing the essence of Odela once again, while Rajeev Nair lends his artistic vision as the art director.

## Varun Tej joins forces with Pawan Kalyan in the AP elections

Actor Varun Tej is gearing up to rally support for his uncle, Jana Sena Party Chief Pawan Kalyan, in the upcoming elections in Andhra Pradesh. The talented actor will embark on a campaign tour of Pithapuram today, aiming to bolster Pawan Kalyan's efforts and connect with voters across the region. As the political landscape in Andhra Pradesh heats up, Varun Tej's decision to throw his weight behind his *babai* (uncle) Pawan Kalyan underscores the family's commitment to



serving the people. With his star power and influential presence, Varun Tej is poised to make a significant impact on the campaign trail, rallying support for the Jana Sena

Party and its vision for the state. As Varun Tei sets to hit the road, advocating for change and lending his voice to the political discourse in Andhra Pradesh, people are said to attend the rally in large numbers to get a glimpse of their favourite star.

# diences can expect a gripping portrayal of empowerment defining the traditional expectations and limitations posed on women. *Yevam* invites viewers to join the urney of self-discovery and courage, as it celebrates the domitable spirit of womanhood.



The promotional buzz surrounding Allari Naresh's upcoming family entertainer, Aa Okkati Adakku, is reaching a crescendo with each unveiling. Directed by debutant Malli Ankam and produced by Rajiv Chilaka under the banner of Chilaka Productions, the film promises to be a delight-

ful treat for audiences of all ages.

Adding to the excitement, the team released the second single from the movie, titled *Hammammo*. This blissful melody, infused with classical beats and electronic vibes, captures the essence of romance in a refreshing blend of musical styles. Bhaskarabhatla's poignant lyrics beautifully convey Allari Naresh's emotions, while Yasaswi Kondepudi's enchanting vocals add a special charm to the track. Allari Naresh and Faria Abdullah's on-screen chemistry is further enhanced through grace-

ful choreography, adding to the song's appeal.

With a stellar cast including Vennela Kishore, Jamie Lever, Viva Harsha, and Ariyana Glory, Aa Okkati Adakku promises an unforgattable cinemetric experience. Abburi Paville compelling corporalles gettable cinematic experience. Abburi Ravi's compelling screenplay, coupled with Suryaa's captivating cinematography and Gopi Sundar's melodious score, ensures a visual and auditory treat

for audiences. As anticipation continues to build, fans can mark their calendars for May 3, when Aa Okkati Adakku is set to hit theaters nationwide.

#### Mega mother Konidela Anjana Devi unveils teaser of RK Sagar's comeback film

fter a hiatus from the silver screen, RK Sagar, renowned for his faces inquiries from the Human Rights Commission for his Aportrayal in the iconic series *Mogali Rekulu*, returns with a

bang in the upcoming emotional action thriller, THE 100. Penned and directed by Raghav Omkar Sasidhar, the film is jointly produced by Ramesh Karutoori, Venki Pushadapu, and J Tharak Ram under the banners of KRIA Film Corp. and Dhamma Productions. Amidst much anticipation, the teaser of the film was launched on Friday by none other than

Mega Mother Konidela Anjana Devi. The teaser offers a glimpse into the intense narrative, revolving around IPS Officer Vikranth, portrayed by RK Sagar. As Vikranth unconventional methods in combating crime, the teaser paints a

picture of a fearless officer unvielding in his pursuit of justice. Despite facing scrutiny from various quarters, Vikranth remains undeterred, challenging conventions and pushing boundaries in his fight against crime.

Joining RK Sagar in the cast is Misha Narang, who plays a pivotal role opposite the protagonist, along with Dhanya Balakrishna. With Shyam K. Naidu behind the camera and

Harshavardhan Rameshwar composing the music, *THE 100* boasts a talented crew set to deliver a captivating film.

## Upbeat Delhi Capitals take on struggling MI as playoff race intensifies

Bolstered by Rishabh Pant's brilliant batting form and inspiring leadership, the resurrected Delhi Capitals will aim to continue their upward march in the IPL points table when they take on an inconsistent Mumbai Indians here on Saturday.

The Capitals have endured a rollercoaster season so far, showing flashes of brilliance while also succumbing to embarrassing defeats.

But three wins in the last four matches have helped them climb to the sixth spot and a win against MI will strengthen their claim to a play off spot.
On the other hand, after a familiar poor start, MI bounced back with three wins in their next four matches but a

comprehensive nine-wicket thrashing by Rajasthan Royals put an end to their resurgence. They are tottering on the eighth place on the points table and can ill-afford to lose.

DC's biggest positive has undoubtedly been skipper Rishabh Pant's form, which appears to be improving with

match-winning unbeaten knock against Gujarat Titans on Wednesday.

It would be fair to say that the southpaw is in prime position to make India's squad for the T20 World Cup despite stiff opposition from the likes of Sanju Samson, Dinesh Karthik and Ishan Kishan.

In Jack Fraser-McGurk, DC have found an able top-order batter who can exploit the powerplay but more is expected of opener Prithvi Shaw, given that his only responsibility is to bat as he is used as an Impact Substitute. David Warner missed out the

previous game, making way for Shai Hope, who couldn't capitalise on the opportunity, and the veteran Australian might be brought back in the playing XI.

Tristan Stubbs has time and again proved he can be brutal with the bat while Axar Patel also showcased his batting prowess when he was elevated up the order in the four-run win against GT.

While the spin duo of Kuldeep Yadav and Axar have bowled economically, DC's



bowling unit needs to step up. Pace spearhead Anrich Nortje is having a forgettable season and has leaked runs at 13.36 which has been a major problem for Delhi.

The likes of Khaleel Ahmed, Mukesh Kumar and Ishant Sharma have been plagued by injuries leading to inconsistent

They were taken to the cleaners by MI batters, who piled on 234/5 earlier in the season. And DC would be wary of a similar performance.

MI's resurgence this season began with a win against DC and the five-time champions would hope for an encore in the crucial clash.

For Mumbai, Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav and Tilak Varma have got runs but all of them have found form in

patches. It's time for the likes of Tim David, Ishan Kishan and skipper Hardik Pandya to contribute a big way and take some pressure off the top trio. While the batting department has occasionally looked good, the bowling remains a massive cause of concern.

Jasprit Bumrah has expectedly been MI's standout bowler. He has led the attack with 13 wickets at an economy rate of

However, new addition Gerald Coetzee has been inconsistent in his maiden IPL. Though he has an economy of 10.10, the South African pacer has accounted for 12 wickets in eight games.

But barring the two seamers, Mumbai's bowling disappointed.

#### **PTI** ■ HYDERABAD

Sunrisers Hyderabad head coach Daniel Vettori feels that after mastering the art of setting totals, it's time his team brushes up on its chasing abilities as the business end of the Indian Premier League approaches. SRH are currently third in the leaderboard with five wins from eight games. Of the five victories, four have come

batting first. batting first.

"We have been successful setting totals and now we have to look at how well we are in chasing," Vettori said after the 35-run loss against Royal Challengers Bengaluru here on Thursday night.

RCB posted a challenging 206 for 7 after opting to bat and then restricted SRH to 171 for 8

For a team that has breached the 250-run mark thrice this season, the target was easily

prospects in the upcoming T20 World Cup owing to their ability to "change the complexion of a game" in a

Yuvraj, who was pivotal to

India's title triumph in the

inaugural edition of the tournament back in 2007, said

Suryakumar will need to have

a good outing for the team to

win the cup for the second time while also suggesting

that Bumrah needs to be at his

"Suryakumar Yadav (is India's key player)," Yuvraj was

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

each game.

He has looked sharp behind the stumps and seems to be batting with freedom. He was at his belligerent best during a

## Now time to polish chasing abilities: SRH coach Vettori | RR look to maintain winning run

gettable but a rare failure of the top and middle-order cost the hosts dearly.

"Obviously, disappointing one where we have come from in the last four games; we played some really good cricket and even though we lost, you could see if we had some wickets at the back end, we could have still chased it down," Vettori said at the post-match press conference. 'Those early wickets broke everything. We were confident for the scores we were being able to put up. We though that 206 was a good score, we probably let a few runs in the field. But there was confidence in the group because of past performances. "We also knew it was being set up by the openers and how good they have played, and



today they had an off day and that's cricket," he said. The former New Zealand cricketer said there are no

easy games in IPL. "Unfortunately, we didn't get the support through the middle stages. It's a tough loss but we understand every team

in the IPL can beat every team. There are no easy games at all," Vettori said. The coach was of the view that the role of an anchor has no significance in high-scoring

"I think the wicket was still pretty good. The guys who

came off said that it is a surface where you can score on. Anchor role when you are chasing 207 it is hard to come, you obviously need to be aggressive. For some to sit along and play anchor role is a little bit tricky."

little bit tricky."
RCB all-rounder Swapnil
Singh, meanwhile, was
relieved after his side snapped
its six-match losing streak.
"Experience was good but we
won the game that was more
important. When you win a game, the tempo in the team changes. It feels good. Last two games we missed by small difference but still long way to go," he said.

Swapnil said they felt the target was enough on this wicket despite SRH boasting of a super-aggressive batting

LSG, meanwhile, too have played some good cricket and are placed fourth with five wins from eight games. But going into Saturday's match, RR would certainly be the favourites as they have registered a hat-trick of victories after a rare blip

LSG.

**PTI** ■ LUCKNOW

High-flying Rajasthan Royals will look to continue their winning

momentum and consolidate

their position at the top when they take on a resurgent Lucknow Super Giants, who

would be gunning for revenge at home in an IPL match here

on Saturday. Former champions RR have

looked in ominous form this

season with seven wins from

eight games, and they could

be a tough nut to crack for

winning

Assam batter Riyan Parag has been the flavour of the season for RR in the batting department. The youngster reinvented himself and has been the team's highest scorer with 318 runs from eight games.

The return to form of Yashasvi

against Gujarat Titans.

Jaiswal, who was struggling a bit this season, has further strengthened RR's batting. While chasing a 180-run targe in the last game against Mumbai Indians, Jaiswal smashed an unbeaten 104 off 60 balls to power his side to a comfortable nine-wicket win. Jaiswal's return to form is something RR's opponents should really be worried about given the devastation the youngster and Jos Buttler



RR's batting typically revolves around skipper Sanju Samson, who has scored 314 runs so far, and with West Indian Shimron Hetymer capable of hitting top gear, the 2008 IPL champions have a potent

lineup.
The likes of Rovman Powell and Dhruv Jurel, though, need to contribute more.

RR also boast of a potent bowling attack comprising the experienced Trent Boult, Avesh Khan and Sandeep Sharma, whose 5 for 18 against Mumbai Indians has really fired up the side.

experienced duo of Yuzvendra Chahal and R. Ashwin, although the latter has

struggled this season. Chahal, however, is RR's best bowler with 13 wickets from eight games.

LSG, on the other hand, would be seeking revenge after having lost the first tie to RR by 20 runs this season.

Besides revenge, LSG would look to register a hat-trick of victories aand scale up in the leaderboard. KL Rahul's side is also on a high after two successive win, but the India knows player shortcomings in the top order. When Rahul and his opening

on fire, LSG's batting looks ominous. The problem arises when the opening duo has an off day. That area was, however, covered by Marcus Stoinis in their last game against

partner Quinton de Kock are

Chennai Super Kings, where the Australian scored an unbeaten century. The team's spin department is Despite losing Rahul and de also in the safe hands of the Kock early in the chase of 210/4. Stoinis played one of

the best knocks in this IPL, remaining unbeaten on 124 off 63 balls to hand LSG a sixwicket win.

Stoinis' return to form augurs well for LSG middle-order, where the likes of Devdutt Padikkal, Nicholas Pooran and Deepak Hooda need to take up more responsibility.

#### Yuvraj identifies Surya, Bumrah as key Former India star Yuvraj Singh has identified the swashbuckling Suryakumar Yadav and pace ace Jasprit to India's prospects in T20 World Cup Bumrah as key to the team's



quoted as saying by ICC. He added, "Because the way he plays, he can change the complexion of a game in 15 balls. And he is definitely a

balls. And he is definitely a surety... for India to win this T20 World Cup, Surya is going to be the key.
"I think Jasprit Bumrah is also the key with the bowling and I would like to see a leg-spinner in the squad as well, like Yuzvendra Chahal as he has been bowling really well."

been bowling really well. "But being a batter, I would say Suryakumar Yadav (is the key player).'

While dissecting the options of who should be India's first-choice wicket-keeper, Yuvraj expressed satisfaction with veteran Dinesh Karthik's form in the IPL but said if he is not part of the playing XI, there is no point picking the 38-yearold in the squad as the younger Rishabh Pant and Sanju Samson have been playing extremely well. "DK (Karthik) has been

batting well, but the thing with DK is that the last time (2022) they picked him and the T20 WC was on he didn't get to play," Yuvraj noted.
"If DK is not in your XI I don't

World Cup: Deepika ousts Korean rival to

think there is any point in picking him. There is Rishabh Pant, Sanju Samson and both guys are in great form and obviously they are younger.

#### **OTHER SPORTS**

#### Man City beats Brighton 4-0 to stay on course for another Premier League title. Phil Foden scores 2



**AP** ■ BRIGHTON (ENGLAND)

Manchester City chalked up another big win in its pursuit of an unprecedented fourth straight Premier League title, with Phil Foden continuing his career-best scoring season with two goals in a 4-0 thrashing

Foden's first-half double came between goals by Kevin De Bruyne and Julian Alvarez as City extended its unbeaten run in the league to 18 games and trimmed the gap to leader Arsenal to one point. Liverpool is two points further back in third after its title

City has five games remaining - one more than Arsenal and Liverpool - and, on current form, is showing no sign of slipping up in the final stretch that still contains trips to Nottingham Forest, Fulham and Tottenham as well as home matches against Wolverhampton and

won four successive top-flight titles in

the history of English soccer.
"I trust my team," De Bruyne said. "All

respect to Arsenal and Liverpool, they

are amazing ... But we need to do our

"We just need to keep going, not get ahead of ourselves, be humble and

Since a 0-0 draw with Arsenal at home

on March 31, City has won four straight

league games and scored 17 goals in the

Pep Guardiola's team kept up that hot streak without the injured Erling

Haaland — the league's joint-top scorer with 20 goals — and that allowed

Foden to potentially join the race for the Golden Boot. It's 16 goals for the

campaign and 24 in 48 games in all club competitions this season for Foden,

who delivered another clinical display

in front of England coach Gareth

Southgate at Amex Stadium - seven

weeks out from the start of the

European Championship.

work hard."



of Brighton on Thursday.

chances were damaged by a 2-0 loss at Everton on Wednesday.

Win all five of those games and City is

## make semis; archers confirm four medals

Continuing her spirited progress post motherhood, former world number one Deepika Kumari eliminated Korean Jeon Hunyoung to storm into the semifinal, while compound archers continued to shine to assure India a fourth medal in the World Cup Stage 1 here on Friday. Deepika, the three-time

Olympian, who has slipped to world No. 142 and qualified as 30th seed in the rankings round, overcame a 1-3 deficit to defeat Jeon 6-4 (27-28, 27-27, 29-28, 29-27, 28-28) in the women's recurve individual quarterfinal.

Having started off with an eight, Deepika lost the first set 27-28, but the 29-year-old continued to improve and levelled the second at 27-all, before taking the third (29-28) by dropping just one point.

From three-all, there was no stopping Deepika who went on to drill in four 10s including two X (closer to centre) from six arrows to make the semis. Deepika, who embraced motherhood in December 2022

and returned to win the Asia Cup gold in Baghdad in February this year, may have to overcome two more Korean rivals in her bid to win a first World Cup individual gold medal since the Paris Stage 3 in June 2021. Korean teenager Nam Suhyeon, who qualified as



Deepika's way in the semifinal. The other half will feature top seed and 20-year-old world No. 2 Korean Lim Sihyeon taking on Li Jiaman of China.

JYOTHI, VERMA CONFIRM FOURTH MEDAL: The day began with Jyothi Surekha Vennam and Abhishek Verma advancing into the compound mixed team final.

The world No. 2 Indians dropped just five points to prevail over their Mexican opponents Andrea Becerra and Lot Maximo Mendez Ortiz 155-

They will face lower-ranked Estonia in the gold-medal clash on Saturday. Jyothi is also a member of the women's compound team, which had entered the final on Wednesday. With Jyothi also securing a

semi-final spot in the individual section on Thursday, the World No. 3 and Asian Games gold medallist is in the hunt for a hat-trick of top podium finishes. Overall, Indian archers have qualified in four finals, all in the team events, and are in the hunt for two medals in compound individual events where Jyothi and Priyansh have made the semifinals.

The four events where Indian teams have made the goldmedal round are compound women's, mixed men's, categories and men's recurve. Having got an opening round bye, the second-seeded Indian pair of Jyothi and Verma started off by producing a flawless 160 out of 160 to knock out the lower-ranked Australian pair of

Geogina Graham and Brandon

Hawes by eight points.

Next up, 10th ranked Luxembourg's Mariya Shkolna and Gilles Seywert were also no match for the Indian pair, whch dropped just five points from 16 arrows to storm into the semi-finals with a 155-151

In the semi-final, the Indians started on a back-foot after Andrea and Mendez Ortiz capped three 10s and one nine to take the opening end 39-38. But the Mexicans slipped in the next set of arrows as Jyothi and Verma snatched the lead by dropping one point.
The Indians then extended

their lead by three points in the penultimate round after another slip-up by the Mexicans.

Jyothi and Verma sealed the issue with a perfect 40 in the fourth end.



#### Senthilkumar, Akanksha enter quarters of PSA events

Top-seeded Indian Velavan Senthilkumar eased past Frenchman Matteo Carrouget in straight games to move into the quarterfinals of the Batch Open squash, a USD 12,000 PSA Challenger Tour event in

National champion Senthilkumar, ranked 58th in the world, beat Carrouget 11-4 11-6 11-7 in 29 minutes in the second round on Thursday night after receiving a bye in the

opening round. He will meet fifth seed Jakub Solnicky of the

Czech Republic in the quarterfinals. Elsewhere, National Games women's champion Akanksha Salunkhe advanced to the quarterfinals of the Expression St James Open, a USD 20,000 PSA Challenger Tour

event in Springfield, US. Fourth seed Salunkhe, ranked 70th in the world, beat Winifer Bonilla of Guatemala 11-8 11-2 11-9 in 25 minutes in the second round

following a bye in the first. She will play fifth seed Alina Bushma of Ukraine next.