

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy lost credibility after the allegations he made regarding reservations. It is the people's karma that they have Revanth Reddy as their CM and KCR as the opposition leader. KCR is dreaming that he will play a key role at the Centre after a hung Assembly comes into being. It is ridiculous that KCR who is not in a position to protect his MLAs is now saying that he will play a key role at the Centre

- G Kishan Reddy, Union Minister **P2**



Top leaders of INDIA bloc will scramble for PM's post: Shah

'INDIA NEEDS STABLE GOVT TO ACHIEVE GOAL OF VIKSIT BHARAT'

'He went ahead with Aa Okkati ADAKKU'

DON'T MISS...

Dy CM intervenes to say no power...

Reacting to the perplexity on the issue of statement by Chief Warden in a circular, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu stated that the Chief Warden had made a false statement that there was a shortage of electricity and drinking water in Osmania University on Monday. He said that he had ordered an inquiry after some people had given notices about shortage of electricity and drinking water in Osmania University and those that had gone viral on the social media. The officials who investigated the issue immediately...

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'Dinosaurs smart reptiles, not...'

Dinosaurs were "more like smart giant crocodiles" but not as intelligent as monkeys as an earlier study had found, according to new research. In a study published in January 2023, neuroscientist and author Suzanaerculano-Houzel of Vanderbilt University, US, had said that brains of theropod dinosaurs, a species of which is T. rex, had neurons comparable to those in the brains of monkeys and baboons. Dinosaurs like T. rex, or Tyrannosaurus rex, had an exceptionally high number of neurons, "which..."

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China gives all clear nod for Tesla cars...

In a big relief for Tesla, its vehicles passed the key test of compliance with China's data security rules as its billionaire CEO Elon Musk who air dashed to Beijing on Sunday met Premier Li Qiang to press for all clear approval for his cars which faced stiff competition from local rivals. Musk's Tesla, which in recent months faced entry bans in Chinese government-affiliated buildings besides military bases due to security concerns over data leaks, "passed" the security assessment by a state-owned Chinese industrial...

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Focus on Rahul during LSG, MI...

With T20 World Cup selection round the corner, KL Rahul will have one final chance to stake claim on the second wicketkeeper's spot in the Indian team when Lucknow Super Giants host Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League here on Sunday. Rahul's strike-rate in T20 cricket has always been a bone of contention. Despite the advantage of field restrictions in the Powerplay, Rahul has often started his innings on a slow note in the IPL. However, the LSG captain has managed to change...

-SPORTS

23 Naxals surrender in Dantewada

At least 23 Naxalites, including seven women, surrendered before the security forces in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada on Monday, a senior police official said. The Naxalites, who were part of the Bhairamgarh Area Committee of the Maoists in south Bastar, laid down arms before the police and officials of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Dantewada Superintendent of Police Gaurav Rai said. They were impressed by the police's rehabilitation drive 'Lon Varratu' and disappointed with the hollow Maoist ideology, he said. Of the surrendered cadres, Sonu Madvi (40) was the vice-president of Dandakaranya Adivasi Kisan Mazdoor Sangthan (DAKMS) under the Hurrepall Panchayat,

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TPCC Legal Cell chairman Ramachandra Reddy receiving the notices from Delhi inspector Choudhary on Monday

Delhi cops issue notices to 4 TG Cong leaders

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Delhi Police issued notices to four Telangana Congress leaders in connection with Union Home Minister Amit Shah's deep fake video claiming that the BJP would scrap reservations for SCs, STs and BCs if it came to power again. The Delhi Police came to Gandhi Bhavan on Monday and issued notices to TPCC Legal Cell Chairman Ramchandra Reddy. Two officials from the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police (IFSO/Special Cell, Sector 16C, Near GGSIPU, Dwaraka, New Delhi) issued notices to Telangana Congress Social Media Convener Manne Satish, TPCC Spokesperson Asma Tasleem, TPCC Secretary Shivakumar Ambala and TPCC leader Naveen. Inspector Neeraj Choudhary of the IFSO, Special Cell of New Delhi, and another police officer issued notices to the above Congress leaders.

AMIT SHAH'S 'DOCTORED' VIDEO CASE
Modi now using Delhi Police: CM
Says that he will not be afraid about notice over probe

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Monday said he would not be afraid over the Delhi Police issuing notices to him over its probe in connection with Union Home Minister Amit Shah's 'doctored' video being circulated on social media. Addressing a Congress rally at Sedam in neighbouring Karnataka, he claimed that PM Narendra Modi has so far been using agencies like ED and CBI to win elections and is now using Delhi Police as well. He said he has received information that Delhi Police personnel reached the Telangana Congress headquarters in Hyderabad. "Some posting was made on social media, (they) reached Telangana Gandhi Bhavan (state



Addressing a Congress rally at Sedam in neighbouring Karnataka, he claimed that PM Narendra Modi has so far been using agencies like ED and CBI to win elections and is now using Delhi Police as well.

Congress headquarters) with the notice that we will arrest Telangana Congress President and Telangana chief minister. That means Narendra Modi is now using Delhi Police to win elections. ED, income tax, CBI are over," he said. "There is no one to be afraid here. There are people who give an

answer," said Revanth Reddy, who is the president of Congress in Telangana. He said that BJP would be defeated in Telangana and Karnataka in the elections. AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge and top Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also attended the meeting.

Cong trying to mislead people: Nadda

The Congress is trying to mislead people by posting Union Home Minister Amit Shah's deep fake videos on social media, BJP President JP Nadda said. He said that the BJP's policy is not to provide reservations based on religion. He said that while the Congress and other opposition parties are engaged in caste and family politics the BJP gave priority to the nation's development. He said that the Congress is the source of all scams and that corruption was rampant under BRS and Congress governments. The Congress and the BRS aim to seize the assets of the public, Nadda said. He said the BJP would develop Telangana by constructing economic corridors after coming to power and that the Centre had extended all possible help to Telangana in the last 10 years. "The share of Central taxes devolving to



Telangana has increased three times. However, corruption ruled the state during the BRS admin. KCR's daughter BRS MLC Kavitha is in jail in connection with the Delhi liquor scam. Now we are seeing inefficient Congress rule. The INDI Alliance was created to protect the heirs of all the parties in it. INDIA leaders are involved in scams. We can see scams and corruption everywhere under Congress rule.

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Will conduct caste and economic survey: Rahul



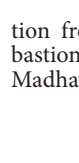
P2

DEADLINE FOR WITHDRAWAL ENDS IN TG
525 candidates left in fray

Secunderabad has highest number of candidates • Campaigning set to intensify

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Secunderabad constituency has the highest number of 45 candidates in the Lok Sabha elections. Secunderabad is followed by Medak with 44, Chevella with 43 and Peddapalle and Warangal with 42 each. Adilabad (ST) has the lowest number of 12 candidates in the fray followed by Zaheerabad and Nagarkurnool with 19 candidates each. Nominations were accepted from April 18 to 25 and scrutinised on April 26. Telangana has 17 Lok Sabha constituencies. Around 1,060 nominations filed by 625 candidates were found valid after scrutiny. 1,488 nominations were received in



Telangana. After the scrutiny last Friday 428 nominations were rejected, a communication from Chief Electoral Officer Vikas Raj said on Saturday. After the withdrawal of 100 candidates, 525 remain in the fray. Telangana BJP Chief G. Kishan Reddy, the BJP's General Secretary, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, and senior leader Eatala Rajender are among the saffron candidates while the Congress fielded BRS turncoats Danam Nagender and K. Kavya. A I M I M President Asaduddin Owaisi is seeking re-election from the party's Hyderabad bastion. The BJP has fielded K. Madhavi Latha to take him on.

Modi to address poll rally in TG today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be addressing a poll rally at Alladurg in Sangareddy district of Telangana on Tuesday, BJP sources said.



This is Modi's second meeting in the state after the poll schedule was released last month. Telangana is one of the southern states on which the BJP is pinning its hopes, to win a considerable number of seats in order to achieve its ambitious goal of getting 370 in the Lok Sabha polls. Senior BJP leader and Home Minister Amit Shah had earlier set a target of winning double digit seats out of the total 17 in Telangana. Shah will be campaigning on May 1 for the party's Hyderabad contestant Madhavi Latha, who is being fielded against the current MP from the constituency AIMIM's Asaduddin Owaisi. The BJP secured four seats in the last elections in 2019.

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Nama will be union minister in coalition govt: KCR
Asks why is the CM not denying reports that he will join BJP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Nama Nageshwar Rao will become a Union Minister in the coalition government that will come to power at the Centre if people vote for the BRS and make him win, BRS chief K. Chandrasekhar Rao said. Taking part in a BRS roadshow in Khammam on the sixth day of his Bus Yatra, KCR said, "The BJP will not get even 200 seats. We are going to win around 12 LS seats. No one

will get a majority and a coalition government will be formed. If we have more MPs Nama Nageshwar Rao will be a Union Minister. The BRS should win to protect our share of the waters in the Godavari and Krishna Rivers and our other rights." KCR said that Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka is Vatti Vikramarka (vatti means empty).



KCR at BRS roadshow in Khammam on Monday

BRS concentrating on vote share percentage

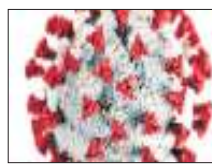
The BRS is focussing on protecting its voting percentage irrespective of the number of seats it is going to win. Highly placed party sources said they are focussing on the party's voting percentage. Through his bus yatra, KCR is informing people about the 2% vote difference because of which they lost. KTR also is speaking about it while campaigning. "We lost 14 constituencies for very small margins like Jukkal (1,152 votes) and Devarkadra (1382). Even if we had secured two more votes in each of the polling booths in these constituencies we would have won," KTR said.

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'No abnormal rise in seasonal flu cases'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

There has been no abnormal rise in cases of seasonal flu in any part of the country as of now, the Union health ministry said on Monday, underlining that it is keeping a close watch on the situation through its Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme network. Since the detection of the first case of



Influenza-A H1N1 in 2009, India every year witnesses two peaks of this seasonal influenza - one from January to March and other in the post-monsoon season, the ministry said. "As of now, there has been no abnormal alarming rise in cases of seasonal flu in any part of the country," it stated in a statement. A near real-time surveillance of cases of Influenza-like Illness (ILI)

and Severe Acute Respiratory Infections (SARI) presenting in outdoor and indoor patient departments of health facilities is undertaken by the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) and the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) through the Indian Council of Medical Research's network of laboratories across the country.

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Aged voters not interested in home voting

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Voters aged above 85 and People with Disability (PwD) have not shown interest in applying for home voting in the Lok Sabha elections in Hyderabad and Secunderabad. Only 571 voters are going to vote from their homes in Hyderabad and Secunderabad. People aged above 85 and PwD were allowed to apply for home voting till April 22. In this election, 385 voters from Secunderabad and 129 voters from Hyderabad are going to make use of the home voting facility. The electoral rolls had 33,641 voters from Hyderabad and 39,350 from Secunderabad aged above 80 as of April 25. In Secunderabad, there are 6,363 voters aged between 90 and 99, 431 aged between 100 and 109, and four voters aged between 110 and 119.



FILE PHOTO

There is a woman who is aged above 120 who is going to vote on May 13. In Hyderabad, 27,586 voters are aged between 80 and 89, 5,564 are aged between 90 and 99, 482 are aged between 100 and 109, six are aged between 110 and 119, and

three are aged above 120. In the 2023 Assembly elections, 838 voters applied for home voting, but only 733 voters voted. Among them, 653 voters were aged above 80 and 80 voters were PwD. The Election Commission of India (ECI) provided the facility of

In Hyderabad, 27,586 voters are aged between 80 and 89, 5,564 are aged between 90 and 99, 482 are aged between 100 and 109, six are aged between 110 and 119, and three are aged above 120.

home voting for the elderly and persons with disabilities for the first time in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. This facility was available in the 2023 Telangana Assembly elections too, but that was for people aged above 80.

Telecom industry seeks ban on sale of WiFi 6E routers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom industry body COAI has sought a ban on the sale of wifi 6E routers which utilise 6 GHz spectrum band for data transmission as the government is yet to decide on the use of these frequencies. The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) has alleged that such routers are being sold through various e-commerce platforms like Amazon, Flipkart and Moglix and by offline traders. The COAI, whose members include Reliance Jio, Airtel, and Vodafone Idea, in a letter to the Department of Telecom on April 15 said the sale of equipment for 6 GHz band utilization, which has not yet been assigned for this purpose or has not been declared as licence-exempt



by the government, is illegal and should be banned immediately in the country. "We would like to submit that DoT is yet to take a policy decision related to the 6 GHz band utilization. Therefore, any sale of such Wi-Fi 6E products, which utilizes the 6 GHz spectrum band in delicensed manner, is illegal and such sale would only result in unauthorized transmissions in our country," COAI Director General SP Kochhar said in the letter.



IF VOTED TO POWER Will conduct caste and economic survey: Rahul

PNS ■ GUJARAT

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday said if his party is voted to power, it will conduct a nationwide caste and economic survey on priority to enhance participation of Dalits, tribals, poor for the general category and OBCs. Gandhi, who was addressing a poll rally in Patan town of north Gujarat in support of the party's Lok Sabha candidate Chandanji Thakor, also said the BJP and RSS planned to change the Constitution after retaining power.

"Ninety per cent of the country's population comprises SCs, STs, and OBCs, but you will not find their representation in the corporate, media (sectors), private hospitals, private universities, or as bureaucrats in government. We will first do a caste and economic survey



"Ninety per cent of the country's population comprises SCs, STs, and OBCs, but you will not find their representation in the corporate, media (sectors), private hospitals, private universities, or as bureaucrats in government."

after coming to power," he said. These communities are working as farmers, labourers, small traders or are simply unemployed, he said, adding that only three of the 90 IAS officers at the helm of affairs at the Centre are from the backward classes, and they too have been given insignificant posts. Accusing the BJP of bringing about wealth inequality in the country during its 10-year rule, Gandhi said just 22 individuals possess as much wealth as 70 per cent of the population.

"Our solution is that the Congress will first conduct a caste census and economic survey after coming to power to find out the exact population of Dalits, OBCs, tribals as well as the poor from the general category. Then a survey will be held to find out their participation in media, government sectors, private colleges and universities etc and also financial status," he said.

Deep fake video national security issue: Kishan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The deep fake video on Union Home Minister Amit Shah is an issue connected to national security, Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy said.

He demanded that Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy should withdraw his comments on reservations immediately or else the BJP will drag him to court. He said that he feared law and order problems could arise due to the CM's statements. Kishan said that the morphing of Amit Shah's video is a serious issue and demanded serious action against the cul-



prit. It is an effort to create enmity between people, he added. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy posted the Union Home Minister's fake video on his official social media handle. Addressing the media at the State BJP office here on Monday, Kishan said that

Revanth is degrading the CM's office. "Revanth lost credibility due to the statement he made about reservations. It is the misfortune of the people that they are having Revanth Reddy as their CM and KCR as their opposition leader. Was it not KCR who signed the agreement accepting 299 TMCs of Krishna River waters? KCR is dreaming that he will play a key role in forming the next Central Government saying that the next parliament will be hung. It is ridiculous that KCR who is not in a position to protect his MLAs is saying that he will play a key role at the Centre," Kishan said.

Modi to address...

Continued from page 1

Barring Soyam Bapurao (Adilabad), the party fielded the rest of the members from their respective constituencies. BJP Telangana chief and Union Minister G Kishan Reddy who is the party candidate for Secunderabad, National general Secretary Bandi Sanjay Kumar, who is contesting from Karimnagar and Nizamabad MP D Arvind have already started vigorous campaigns in their respective segments.

Delhi cops issue...

Continued from page 1

The notice says, "The above-mentioned case is being investigated by the undersigned. For investigation purposes, you are hereby directed through this notice to provide the below-mentioned details/documents/electronic gadgets to the undersigned and join the investigation on May 1 at 10:30 am at Room No: 302, III floor, IFSO office, Dwarka Sector 16C, Special Cell, Delhi Police."

The Delhi Police sought information about "The video tweeted/re-tweeted by you on your X/Twitter handle https://x.com/satishmanneinc/status/1784095972521550206 and the mobile phone/laptop/tablet or any other electronic device through which you

created/uploaded/tweeted this video on your X account and also the electronic device used by you for recording this video before uploading and tweeting."

The Delhi Police issued similar notices to Asma Tasleem, Shivakumar Ambala and Naveen also.

The police mentioned in the notice, "Kindly note that failure to comply with this notice issued under Sections 91/160 of CrPC will attract penal criminal proceedings."

The Delhi Police filed a case on Sunday about the fake videos going viral in the name of Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The complaint was filed by the Union Home Ministry and the Delhi Police are inquiring about it.

It may be recalled that Amit Shah addressed a BJP public meeting in Siddipet district on April 23.

Cong will create jobs, boost growth: Sameer

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress candidate in the Hyderabad Lok Sabha constituency, Mohammed Waliullah Sameer, has vowed that if the Congress wins in Hyderabad, it will take 'decisive' steps to address unemployment and promote economic growth.

Speaking to the media on Monday, Sameer, the Hyderabad DCC President, said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is focused on transforming Hyderabad's Old City.

Revanth has often referred to this area as 'Asli Hyderabad' and has launched many initiatives to attract investment for developing its infrastructure. For example, Revanth announced large-scale projects expected to bring in nearly Rs 50,000 crore worth of investment, contributing to the area's growth.

One of the key projects is the Old City Metro Rail project, for which the CM laid the foundation stone recently.



With an estimated budget of Rs 2,000 crore, the Metro Rail is intended to cover 5.5 km from MGBS to Falaknuma. This project is expected to improve transportation and boost business. Sameer also highlighted the Musi Riverfront Project estimated to cost Rs 40,000 crore to Rs 50,000 crore. This project aims to clean the Musi River and to convert a neglected stretch into a vibrant riverfront like London's Thames. The project, part of the 'Vibrant Telangana 2050' initiative, aims to revive a 55-km stretch of the river and make it a commercial hub, he said.

Oppn bloc already vanquished in 2 phases of polls, says PM

PNS ■ SOLAPUR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the Congress, despite its "tainted background", is dreaming of snatching power in the country unaware that the INDI alliance is already vanquished in the first two phases of Lok Sabha elections.

Addressing a rally in Solapur, Modi said a 'mahayudh' is going on in the INDI bloc over leadership and they have come up with a formula of 'five PMs in five years', who will eventually loot the country.

He said the people have tested him for 10 years where as there is a leadership crisis in the INDIA bloc.



"In this election, you will choose the guarantee of development for the next 5 years. On the other side, there are people, who before 2014, gave the country corruption, terrorism, and non-governance. Despite its tainted history, Congress is once again dreaming of snatching power in the

country but they do not know that in the first two phases of polls, the INDI alliance is vanquished," said Modi.

"You have tested Modi for 10 years, you have seen his every step and measured his every word. On the other hand, a 'mahayudh' is going on in the INDI alliance over leadership, he said.

"Will you give the reins of the country in someone's hand who has not decided the name or face (of PM candidate)? Will anyone make that mistake?" he asked.

Targeting the opposition bloc, Modi said some people have been creating rifts in the country to snatch power and have come up with a formula of 'five PMs in five years'.

525 candidates left...

Continued from page 1

Former IPS officer RS Praveen Kumar and current MP Nama Nageswar Rao are in the poll fray from the former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao-led BRS.

As the deadline for the withdrawal of nominations has passed, it is expected that political parties will ramp up their campaign as the run-up to the election is crucial to make their final pitches to voters.

An increase in rallies, advertisements and other campaign activities is expected as parties vie for votes and try to win over undecided voters.

BJP President JP Nadda addressed a couple of rallies on Monday and Prime Minister Modi will be addressing elec-

tion rallies on Tuesday. Several senior BJP leaders including Rajnath Singh have addressed campaign meetings in the state.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi kickstarted his party's election campaign in the state on April 6 and is expected to return, along with other star campaigners, for more meetings in the state.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has been campaigning for Congress candidates riding on the momentum of the recent win in the Telangana Assembly elections.

Although down but not out after the poor show in Assembly polls, BRS chief K. Chandrasekhar Rao has been touring the state before the Lok Sabha elections hoping to increase support for his party.

KTR challenges Eatala to...

Continued from page 1

Due to the increase in petrol and diesel prices, the prices of pulses, salt and tamarind have increased, Modi is not a beloved Prime Minister but a costly PM. Without giving Central share to states on petrol and diesel, Rs 30 lakh crore were collected," he said.

He said that NHs can be built with this money and he did not say why he is collecting the toll. "They took Rs 30 lakh crore from us but waived loans worth Rs 14 lakh crore given to Adani and Ambani," KCR said.

"They killed us for an inch of land in cantonment. If they

find a way they will take over Hyderabad. If the BJP wins the reservations for SCs, STs and minorities will be lifted. The BJP is saying this directly. They are also plotting to 'abrogate' the Constitution. Public announcements are being made," he said.

"There is a conspiracy to give water from the Godavari River for votes in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. In the name of river linking, Telangana's water is getting diverted without meeting our needs," KCR said. "They are conspiring to do injustice to South India by making the 2026 delimitation proposal population-based."

Asaduddin flays PM's campaign for JD(S) candidate Prajwal

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) President Asaduddin Owaisi on Monday questioned Prime Minister Modi after the PM campaigned for Janata Dal (Secular) candidate, Prajwal Revanna, in the Hassan district of Karnataka.

It is to be noted that Revanna, who is the grandson of HD Deve Gowda, has been accused of sexually exploiting and threatening women. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been established by the Karnataka government to probe the allegations against him. The accused has fled the country amid the scandal and investigation by the SIT.

Asaduddin took to X (former Twitter) and said, "@narendramodiam - campaigned for NDA's Hassan candidate in Mysore."

23 Naxals surrender...

Continued from page 1

Paro Madvi (38) was the vice-president of the Krantikari Mahila Adivasi Sangathan (KAMS) and Parvati Barsa (33) headed its finance team, the official said. "The cadres were tasked

with digging up roads, felling trees to block roads and putting up posters and banners during shutdowns called by the Naxalites. They will be provided facilities as per the government's surrender and rehabilitation policy," he said.

BRS concentrating...

Continued from page 1

The Congress won 64 Assembly seats in the 119-member Assembly and a 39.40% vote share, while the BRS bagged 39 seats with a 37.35% vote share.

The BRS witnessed a drop in its vote share by over 10% which declined from 47% in the 2018 Assembly elections, while the Congress gained 11%.

In the 2018 Assembly polls, the BRS won 88 seats, while the Congress won only 19 seats and 28.4% of the votes. The BJP doubled its vote share and improved its tally to eight Assembly seats.

TG Cong social media warriors won't commit offences: TPCC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC Legal Cell in-charge Ramachandra Reddy said that the warriors of the Telangana Congress social media wing will not commit offences and that they work with total commitment.

Addressing the media at the Gandhi Bhavan on Monday, Ramachandra said that Delhi Police Inspector Neeraj Choudhary came to Gandhi Bhavan and issued notices to Manne Satish, Shiva Kumar, Asma Taslim and Naveen.

He said that he had received notices from the Delhi Police Inspector.

"We sought 15 days. We will move forward after going through the FIR. The Delhi Police issued notices to mislead people and reduce the Congress vote percentage."

Nama will be union...

Continued from page 1

He said that it was unfortunate that a show cause notice was issued to a warden of the Osmania University.

"Why is the CM not denying reports that he will join the BJP? The BJP is saying that after the Parliamentary election, Revanth Reddy will join the BJP. The situation is uncertain and no one knows who will jump into what. The Chief Minister has not denied it.

They are creating instability instead of addressing public issues," KCR said.

He said that social welfare schemes were started in Telangana by NTR with his Rs 2 per kg rice and after him, only the BRS took it forward.

He said that the CM shied away from accepting Harish Rao's challenge to waive all farm loans by August 15.

KCR said that he still has a case pending against him. Lashing out at the Congress,

he said that during BRS rule there were paddy cuts but now under Congress rule, there are power cuts. "They have no focus on development. There is no social welfare. In Nagarjunasagar there is no water even though I watered crops that day in Khammam and Nalgonda district. The crops are not allowed to dry even once. Even though it is 510 feet today, I watered the crops as they could dry up."

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha

Tithi: Shashthi: Apr 29 07:57 AM to Apr 30 07:05 AM

Saptami: Apr 30 07:05 AM to May 01 05:46 AM

Ashtami: May 01 05:46 AM to May 02 04:01 AM

Nakshatram:

Uttara Ashadha: Apr 30 04:42 AM to May 01 04:09 AM

Shravana: May 01 04:09 AM to May 02 03:11 AM

Rahukalam: 3:23 PM to 4:57 PM

Yamagandam: 9:03 AM to 10:38 AM

Varjyam: 07:59 AM to 09:31 AM

Gulika: 12:13 PM to 1:48 PM

Amritakalam: 09:54 PM to 11:28 PM

Ahijit Muhurtham: 11:48 AM to 11:28 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Sunny

Temp: 41°C

Humidity: 27%

Sunrise: 5:51 AM

Sunset: 6:36 PM

Updated: April 29, 2024 5:00 PM

Modi now using Delhi...

Continued from page 1

Delhi Police has asked Revanth Reddy to join its probe on May 1 in connection with Union Home Minister Amit Shah's 'doctored' video being circulated on social media, official sources said on Monday.

According to the sources, the police have issued notices to five members of

the Telangana Congress, including its chief Reddy, who posted the video on social media platform X.

Reddy has been asked to appear with the mobile phone he allegedly used for posting the 'fake' video on X, the sources said.

The Special Cell of the Delhi Police had on Sunday registered an FIR after the Indian Cybercrime

Coordination Centre (I4C), which is under the Ministry of Home Affairs, filed a complaint about a 'doctored' video of Shah where his statements indicating a commitment to abolish quota for Muslims on religious grounds in Telangana were changed to make it seem that he was advocating scrapping of all reservations.

'No abnormal...

Continued from page 1

In view of various media reports regarding detection of avian influenza virus in cattle and milk in the US, a video conference under the chairmanship of the Director General of Health Services was also held on Sunday to review the current situation of seasonal influenza.

It was informed by experts that with use of proper hygienic practices such as boiling of milk and proper cooking of meat at adequate temperatures would help prevent the virus transmission from the product (if the virus is present) to the human beings, the statement said. Seasonal influenza is an acute respiratory infection caused by influenza viruses which circulate in all parts of the world, and the cases are seen to increase during certain months globally.

Cong trying to mislead...

Continued from page 1

Anti-social elements will flourish under Congress rule," Nadda said.

He said that the INDIA is a combination of corrupt parties and that some Chief Ministers of the parties in INDIA are in jail.

He said that the BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate is Narendra Modi but the parties constituting the INDI Alliance do not know who their PM candidate is.

Addressing a public meeting at Mahabubabad on Monday, Nadda said that they are not engaging in vote bank politics like the Congress and that the BJP's main agenda is development.

He said the Modi government has developed all social sections and sectors of the

economy in the last 10 years and that the Modi government has strengthened the Indian military and taken strong action against terror.

He said that the BJP-led Centre has been providing protection to all people from Kashmir to Kanyakumari.

Earlier, Nadda, while addressing a public meeting at Kothagudem, said that BJP is the only party that thinks about the nation's development.

He said that he was confident that the BJP would form the government again and that Modi realized the centuries-old dream of building the Ayodhya Ram Mandir. "Our government abolished Article 370. It has done a lot for the sake of STs. Already the BJP has launched many welfare

schemes for tribals, 25 crore people were lifted out of poverty during BJP rule. We are giving free rations to 80 crore people and it will continue for five more years. We constructed houses for four crore people and will construct three crore more houses. We are providing medical treatment through Ayushman Bharat even to those who have crossed the age of 70. We will provide gas to every house through pipelines in future. Modi will think about the poor, the farmers and women," Nadda said.

He attended the campaign meetings of the BJP's Khammam LS candidate Thandra Vinod Rao and the Mahabubabad BJP LS candidate Ajmeera Seetharam Naik on Monday.

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POLITICAL SLUGFEST OVER OU CIRCULAR

Dy CM intervenes to say no power, water shortage in OU

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Reacting to the perplexity on the issue of statement by Chief Warden in a circular, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu stated that the Chief Warden had made a false statement that there was a shortage of electricity and drinking water in Osmania University on Monday.

He said that he had ordered an inquiry after some people had given notices about shortage of electricity and drinking water in Osmania University and those that had gone viral on the social media. The officials who investigated the issue immediately made it clear in the preliminary report that there was no interruption in power supply.

The chief warden had made an announcement that Osmania University hostels and messes would be closed from May 1 to May 31 due to shortage of drinking water and electricity. The officials said in their report that it was clear from the meter readings that electricity was continuously supplied to the entire university through two separate 11kv feeders from the



33/11 KV sub-station in the Osmania University campus. A show cause notice has been issued by the university registrar to the chief warden for making a false statement without verifying facts.

The Deputy CM made it clear that the students studying in the university will not face any difficulties. The authorities have been ordered to restore the electricity and drinking water facilities immediately. The students of the university do not need to worry at all. They can stay in the university and study freely. There is no need for students to evacuate. The Congress government will always support the students and the unemployed, he added.

However, BRS president K Chandrashekar Rao gave a

Registrar issues notice to warden over false claims

Following the students' protests on water scarcity issue, chief warden of hostels and messes, Osmania University, said that OU has declared summer vacations for all the students from May 1 to 31 as per the academic curriculum and due to shortage of water and electricity in the hostels. Based on academic curriculum, the varsity has decided to declare summer vacation from May 1 to 31 two months ago. Following the circular issued by the chief warden, OU Registrar issued a show cause notice stating that the shortage of electricity mentioned in the circular issued by chief warden is false. He also

mentioned that the varsity has continuous power supply from two dedicated 11KV feeders from the 33/11 KV Osmania University sub-station. Further, it has been verified by the readings recorded in the meter of the sub-station transformers that there is continuous and uninterrupted power supply to the university campus. As per the TSSPDCL, "It is to bring to your kind notice that there is no shortfall of electricity, even in this heavy summer. We are supplying 24x7 round-the-clock without any interruption of supply by our company. Hence it is incorrect to give false messages to the press or the social media."

counter attack to the Deputy CM, by stating in the Twitter that Telangana CM and Deputy CM were misleading the people on power, irrigation and drinking water supply position in the State for the past four months.

Notice of Osmania University chief warden confirms that all their claims were a farce. The truth is that there is power, drinking water and irrigation water crisis in Telangana, he added.

HYDERABAD SIZZLES AT 43.1° C

Heat wave continues in TG

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Indian Meteorological Department - Hyderabad (IMD-H) on Monday predicted that the heat wave in Telangana would continue till May 4. As per the report, Nalgonda recorded the highest maximum temperature of 45.4 degrees Celsius.

On April 29, dry weather prevailed across Telangana and on April 30 heat wave is likely to prevail over districts including Nirmal, Nizamabad, Jagtial, Rajanna(Sircilla), Karimnagar, Peddipally, Jayashankar Bhupalpally, Mulugu, Bhadradi Kothagudem, Khammam, Nalgonda, Suryapet, Mahabubabad, Warangal, Jangaon, Hanamkonda, Kamareddy, Mahabubnagar, Wanaparthy, Narayanpet and Jogulamba/Gadwal. Similar conditions are expected to prevail in the State till May 4.

Hyderabad recorded maximum temperature of (43.1), among districts Nalgonda was



followed by Mulugu, Bhadradi Kothagudem (45.3), Jayashankar Bhupalpally (45.2), Wanaparthy, Khammam (45.1), Jagtial (45), Nizamabad, Mahabubabad and Karimnagar (44.9), Narayanpet (43.8) and Rajanna(Sircilla (43.7).

As per the Telangana State Planning Development Society (TSDPS), dry weather is expected to prevail in Telangana from April 29 to May 2. The maximum temperature in the State is likely to range between 41-45 degrees Celsius; the minimum temperature is expected to remain between 26-29 degrees Celsius. As per the report, dry

weather is expected to prevail in Hyderabad from April 29 to May 2. The maximum temperature is expected to remain between 41-45 degrees Celsius; while the minimum temperature is expected to remain between 27-30 degrees Celsius.

Among areas under the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), Charminar recorded the highest temperature (43.1) followed by Chandrayangutta, Santoshnagar, Yousufguda and LB Nagar (43), Kapra and Saroornagar (42.9), Jubilee Hills (42.8) Serilingampally (42.6) and Khairatabad (42.2).

Cyberabad police seized Rs 1.96 cr for violating MCC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Cyberabad Special Operation Team (SOT) and various police stations in Cyberabad have collected Rs 1,96,70,324 in eight places. Among them seven vehicles were carrying cash to banks, Rs 1,81,70,324 was caught while transporting the money without proper QR codes and other procedures by the Election Commission of India (ECI). In a private vehicle under Mokitla police station, Rs 15,00,000 cash was seized being which was being illegally transported.

SOT Medchal team has seized Rs 74,07,791 under the Pet Basheerabad police station limits; SOT Shamshabad team seized Rs 34,00,000 in the limits of Kothur police station; SOT Madhapur team seized Rs 21,74,520 in Madhapur police station limits and Rs 19,26,405 in Chandanagar.

TS EAPCET scheduled from May 7 to 11

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

On behalf of Telangana State Council for Higher Education (TSCHE), Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University Hyderabad (JNTUH) will be conducting Telangana State Engineering, Agriculture and Pharmacy Common entrance Test -2024 (TS EAPCET) examination from May 7 to 11. The examination consists of two streams, one is Agriculture and Pharmacy and the other one is Engineering. Compared to the previous year, there has been an increase of 54,000 students registration in the engineering stream.

According to the officials of TS EAPCET, "From this year the varsity has planned to introduce a facial recognition system in the entrance exam. As per the new feature, a student's photograph will be uploaded before the commencement of the entrance test



and the student will be permitted for the examination if the captured photograph matches the one in the registration form. Special software has been designed for this feature to ensure bonafide students take the test. Candidates will not be late by a minute and exams will be held in two sessions from 9 am to 12 noon and 3 pm to 6 pm.

The Agriculture and Pharmacy exam will be conducted on May 9 to 11. With regard to downloading of hall tickets by candidates for Agriculture and Pharmacy is on April 29 from 3 pm onwards

while those who applied for Engineering exam, can download hall tickets on May 1 from 3 pm onwards."

Senior officer of TSCHE said, "Around 3.54 lakh students registered for both the streams and there has been an increase of student registration in engineering stream from both the Telugu states whereas there has been a slight decrease of admission of students in Agriculture and Pharmacy stream as there has been a decrease of 15,000 candidates compared to the previous year. The total number of candidates registered for engineering is 254543 (both Telangana and AP) while for Agriculture and Pharmacy, the total number of candidates (both Telangana and AP) registered are 100260."

Prof Limbadri, Chairman, TSCHE, said, "Elaborate arrangements have been made for the entrance exam.

SSC results to be released today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Principal Secretary to Education Burra Venkateshram will release SSC Public Examinations 2024 results on Tuesday.

A total of 5,08,385 students appeared for the exams that were held in March-April in 2,676 centres. According to officials, after the declaration of results, students can view their results in the official websites <http://results.bse.telangana.gov.in> or <http://results.bsetelangana.org/>.

Drinking water problems should be solved ASAP: HMWSSB MD

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) Managing Director Sudarshan Reddy ordered the officials to resolve the drinking water problem as soon as they come into the officials' notices. On Monday, a review meeting was held on Metro Customer Care complaints with the water board officials at the Khairatabad head office.

Sudarshan Reddy said, "It is suggested that officials should make their own plans and ensure that people do not face



any difficulties. Complaints on drinking water supply and polluted water issues should be given high priority."

He ordered the officials to take preventive measures to stop the sewage overflow on the roads. If the manhole water overflowed, the silt should be removed immediately. If the manholes are destroyed any-

where, reconstruction should be taken up immediately.

Along with that the MD has also reviewed the Sewage Treatment Plants (STP) and ordered the officials that wherever the construction works of STPs are in the last stage, those should be completed quickly. He suggested the officials increase the speed of internal roads construction works, lighting, gardening, wall painting and other works.

Executive Director Dr M Satyanarayana, Project Director Sridhar Babu and other officials participated in the review meeting.

Dr Krishna Ella is IVMA president

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Indian Vaccine Manufacturers Association (IVMA) has announced that eminent scientist Dr Krishna M Ella has been appointed as its new president. Ella will serve at the helm for two years till April 2026.

Dr Ella, Co-Founder, Executive Chairman of Bharat Biotech, acknowledged as the father of Genome Valley, and known for his pioneering work in biotechnology with his visionary leadership in the biotech industry, is set to steer the association towards new horizons in vaccine development and production.

Dr Ella takes over the Presidency from Adar C Poonawala who held the post from 2019 to March 2024. For the current 2-year term, Mahima Datla, Managing Director of Biological E assumes the role of Vice-President. T Srinivas, CFO of



Bharat Biotech, will be the treasurer and Dr Harshvardhan will continue as Director General of IVMA.

Following his appointment, Ella said, "Vaccines are the vital pillar of global health and the IVMA mission is to ensure that every individual, regardless of where they live, has access to life-saving immunisation.

Innovation, sustainability, and equity are the foundations of our collective vision, and I am pleased to serve IVMA along with its distinguished members and contribute to its vision to protect and enhance public health in India and the Developing World."

Fraudsters using TG CS's DP to make fake calls

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Cyber Crime police in Telangana have registered a case against unknown persons for using the profile picture of Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari to make fake calls.

Fraudsters are allegedly demanding money in the name of the top bureaucrat. A complaint was lodged with Cyber Crime Police Station, Telangana State Cyber Security Bureau (TSCSB).

The police registered a case and took up further investigation.

According to an official statement, some miscreants, by using the DP of Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari with mobile number +977-984-4013103, are making fake calls.

HITEC City, Gachchibowli see 5% hike in rent in Q1 2024

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A report by the Anarock group revealed that HITEC City and Gachchibowli recorded 5% increase in rents during the First Quarter of 2024.

As per the report, prominent localities in metro cities including Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi NCR, Pune, Kolkata and Chennai saw an average increase of 4-9% jump in residential rents between in Q1 2024. Considering that the typical annual increase is 5-10%, this is very significant and while it certainly bodes well for landlords, it signifies a worrisome element of cost-of-living inflation for tenants.

Bengaluru led the list with the average rental values in Sarjapur Road and Whitefield rose by 8% each in Q1 2024 against the previous quarter. In Sarjapur Road, the average monthly rent in Q4 2023 stood at approx. Rs 31,600 for a standard 2 BHK flat of 1,000 sq. ft. - in Q1 2024, it went up to approx. Rs 34,000/month. Similarly, Whitefield saw aver-

age monthly rents go up from Rs 30,200 in Q4 2023 to Rs 32,500 in Q1 2024 - an 8% jump. A comparison of rental values between 2022-end and Q1 2024 shows that top localities in Bengaluru saw a staggering hike of 40% and above.

In both Chennai and Mumbai, rents rose by a more sedate 4% while in Hyderabad, prominent localities like HITEC City and Gachchibowli saw rents rise by 5% each in the quarter.

Speaking of residential yields in India, Santhosh Kumar, Vice-Chairman, ANAROCK Group said, "Residential rental yields in India had chronically stagnated before the Covid-19 pandemic, with the national average at just 3% for many years.

With post-pandemic rental demand soaring after offices resumed, rental yields are heading north too.

IT-dominated cities including Bengaluru, Gurugram, Pune and Noida, and also MMR, have seen considerable upticks in their rental values, and therefore yields."

Eateries in GVK One violate food quality

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The food safety officials have conducted inspections in GVK One mall in Banjara Hills on April 27, where they found hygiene, storage and food quality related violations in Aha Dakshin, Sizzling Joe and Khansaab food courts. The officials have issued notices to them and further action will be taken against the authorities.

According to the department's post on X (formerly Twitter) on Monday, the officials found that the KFC is not maintaining proper logs for reusing edible oil. Along with them, FSSAI Act violations were identified in Hard Rock cafe and Starbucks coffee.

The Commissioner of Food Safety of Telangana has issued the notices for improvement and to report compliance to FSSAI Act.

HYSEA elects Prashanth Nandella as new president

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Software Enterprises Association (HYSEA) elected Prashanth Nandella, chief Operating Officer, Firstsource as its new President at the 32nd Annual General Body Meeting on Monday.

Prashanth will be the President of HYSEA for the term 2024-26 by taking over this role from Manisha Saboo, Campus head Infosys Hyderabad (SEZ) and Indore, and Head of Infosys Foundation.

He has played key roles in HYSEA as an active Managing Committee and Executive Committee member including as Vice-President in the previous term. He has steered many programs for HYSEA to excellence and built national recognition for the forum.

Among his many contribu-

tions, a significant one has been driving the association's ESG strategy. In a time when organisations are placing greater emphasis on sustainability and striving for net-zero commitments, Prashanth's leadership in this domain has been crucial.

With over three decades of experience across Fortune 500 companies, Prashanth is recognised as a thought leader known for crafting innovative business solutions with a digital-first mindset. He is currently the Chief Operating Officer for Firstsource, where he leads large teams with an empathetic approach, and deep process understanding in building an agile, resilient, and tech-enabled global delivery footprint. An alumnus of IIT Madras and IIM-C, Prashanth brings a wealth of expertise and leadership to this role.

Among his many contributions, a significant one has been driving the association's ESG strategy. In a time when organisations are placing greater emphasis on sustainability and striving for net-zero commitments, Prashanth's leadership in this domain has been crucial.



TSCSB recovers Rs 1 crore

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Cyber Security Bureau (TSCSB) on April 27 recovered Rs 1,00,10,005 after a victim filed a complaint regarding unauthorised transactions.

The victim received a message stating that three transactions worth Rs 50 lakh, Rs 50 lakh and Rs 10,000 were made from his Axis bank current account. Following the incident, the victim alerted the bank and filed a complaint with the TSCSB. The authority then uploaded details of the unauthorised transaction on CFCFRMS portal, alerted AXIS Bank and HDFC Bank to which the amount was fraudulently transferred to by the suspect and ensured that the amount was put on hold.

CP REVIEWS POLL PREPAREDNESS 29 flying squads, 25 surveillance teams formed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In view of Lok Sabha Elections, members of Flying Squad and Static Surveillance teams conducted a video review meeting at Neredmet CP's office regarding the legal precautions, do's and don'ts to be taken in the registration of cases and implementation of Sections on Monday along with the Rachakonda CP Tarun Joshi.

The Commissioner examined the awareness among the staff on the legal precautions to be taken as part of the vehicle checks during the election process and the procedure for registering cases on various offences.

Tarun Joshi said that 29 flying squads and 25 static sur-

veillance teams have been formed under Rachakonda Commissionerate as part of conducting fair elections. The Flying Squad and Static Surveillance teams have been directed to be vigilant in their duties and the personnel to perform their assigned duties without laxity.

Complaints received through whistle should be sent to the Returning Officer and the time for resolution is only 100 minutes.

All kinds of violations of election code of conduct, political party rallies, public meetings or other major offences incurred by them are advised to be videographed with the help of a video surveillance team.



He also said that the video surveillance teams should also be vigilant in their duties and when they are not available, the staff can also record videos using their smartphones.

ment of arms and explosives. In case the flying squads are unable to reach the place of any crime, they are advised to inform the static surveillance teams immediately.

During inspections and other duties, it is advised to treat people politely and with restraint.

They were directed to send their day-to-day performance to the concerned higher authority every day.

It was suggested that RTC buses should also be inspected as part of vehicle inspection along with cars, bikes, private passenger buses and other vehicles and cases should be registered against those who do not comply with the rules under appropriate sections.

Task Force nabs two for selling artificially ripened mangoes

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Commissioner's Task Force (West Zone) on Monday arrested two fruit sellers in two separate cases of selling artificially ripened mangoes.

In the first case, the accused identified as Mohammed Moiz, a fruit godown manager and resident of HF Nagar, Borabanda, was arrested and the police seized 160 trays of noxious mangoes along with ripening sachets, including 70 packets of e-ripe and 40 packets of gold ripe (100 sachets in each packet).

In the second case, the accused identified as Mohammed Sadiq (47), a fruit vendor and a resident of Sanjay Nagar, Borabanda was arrested. The police seized 80 trays of noxious mangoes

along with ripening sachets; each tray consisting of 20 kgs of mangoes and 4 sachets of ripening material.

The two accused were arrested during a raid on various warehouses in Borabanda. They used to supply the fruits to different fruit shops and juice centers in the city. Due to heavy demand for fruit, they used artificial ripeners like Ethylene to circulate unripe fruits, especially mangoes into the market by breaching the FSSAI guidelines and using ripening material which was directly applied to the mangoes. The accused resorted to illegal methods of storage and ripening of mangoes which could have serious impact on public health, including respiratory and skin ailments.

How can heirs to the corrupt distribute wealth among people?

PM Narendra Modi is an expert at simplifying difficult ideological issues. On release of Cong manifesto, he explained to people the Congress ideology in simple words.

Modi said the Congress would distribute people's property, land and gold among the people.

Going by the manifesto, remarks made by Rahul Gandhi and Manmohan Singh (former PM) and Sam Pitroda (Cong advisor), Modi translated in simple language for the people. When Modi explained people imposing inheritance tax and carrying out socio-economic census to distribute wealth in simple language, the Congress leaders accused Modi of distorting facts.

Former PM Manmohan Singh, who was called a puppet in Sonia's hands, went on record stating that Muslims have the first claim to nation's resources. Is it not true?

Is it not true that Rahul, while speaking at Cong

Manifesto release function in Hyderabad, going on record that the Congress, if voted to power, will redistribute the nation's wealth equally among the people after conducting caste-based and religion-based census?

One should understand whom did Rahul Gandhi send the feelers to by opting to release the manifesto in Hyderabad.

Should Sam Pitroda quoting the example of inheritance tax levied in the USA, be regarded as casual remark? Why did he recommend the government recovering 55% of the wealth of an individual after his death? How can the example of Pitroda that government, following the death of a person who earned Rs 1 crore in dollars, getting Rs 55 lakh and his heirs getting Rs 45 lakh be treated as a casual remark?

Why did the Congress, having ruled over 60 years, and caste-based and religion-based parties get the idea of conducting caste and

Should Sam Pitroda quoting the example of inheritance tax levied in the USA, be regarded as casual remark? Why did he recommend the government recovering 55% of the wealth of an individual after his death? How can the example of Pitroda that government, following the death of a person who earned Rs 1 crore in dollars, getting Rs 55 lakh and his heirs getting Rs 45 lakh be treated as a casual remark?

religion-based census and distribute the wealth among the people?

Jawaharlal Nehru, who claims to be socialist, failed to remove economic disparities even after ruling the nation for over 15 years. What is the purpose of Mrs Gandhi giving the slogan Garibi Hathao? Why did the Congress, which is shedding crocodile tears on Dalits, insult Architect of Constitution Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar during its regime? Why did the Congress ensure his defeat whenever he con-

tested for LS? Why did the Congress force Jagjivan Ram to float a separate party? The Congress has the history of dismissing Dalit leaders like Damodaram Sanjivaiah from the CM post. Anyone going through history can observe that lynching and repression of Dalits and Adivasis had taken place only in Congress rule.

Today, Congress harps on economic and social inequalities, not knowing what to do as it got scent of Modi-led BJP is heading for landslide victory. Cong forgot that cre-



Y SATYA KUMAR
BJP National Secretary

ation of inequalities was its own handiwork.

Had the Congress been sincere it would have implemented Mandal Commission recommendations and rendered social justice.

Former PM Rajiv Gandhi lamented that out of every Rs 100 spent by government at least Rs 15 would not trickle down to the people as middlemen corner the majority of funds.

But what he did do? He resorted to large-scale corruption upon coming to

power. He was responsible for communal riots in Punjab, Assam, North Eastern states. The Cong boasts of the creation of the PSUs knowing well that several PSUs sustained losses in its regime.

The country would not have achieved economic self-reliance today, had PV Narasimha Rao, hated by Sonia, not introduced economic reforms. PM Modi has been hastening the speedier and more constructive implementation of reforms and developing infrastructure to enable India become the fifth largest economy.

The first thing Modi did on coming to power, he got the bank accounts of people seeded with mobile phone numbers and Aadhaar cards. It enabled direct transfer of money, under various social welfare schemes, into the people's bank accounts. They were accustomed to check



the receipt of funds into their accounts. Because of seeding of Aadhaar

number with bank accounts, middlemen cornering the funds was ruled out. On an average, at least Rs 90 lakh is being credited into bank accounts of the people daily.

Since Modi coming to power, Rs 6.5 lakh crore was credited into the bank accounts of people.

Which party - Cong or the BJP - took measures to remove economic inequalities? Whom does the Congress going to benefit by starting caste-based census afresh?

When Modi cornered Congress with the question, the Congress leaders fumbled as though they have committed a crime. Cong leaders, who unleashed propaganda that because of Modi the money in the people's bank accounts will disappear, were

shocked to find Modi crediting funds into the people's accounts.

In Telugu states, we have come across the phenomenon of son and daughter of CM looting the State. For example, everyone knew how Jagannathan Reddy amassed several thousands of crores even though his father did not hold the office of CM at least for six years. He acquired shares in business from every businessman forcibly. The funds he spent for undertaking pada yatras and to fund his poll campaign. The people believed his words and made him the CM. One can imagine how much more he would have earned during the past five years. We can also imagine why his younger sister took Cong reins in her hands in AP. Cong leadership promoted such persons across the nation. These individuals have been bleeding the country. How can they distribute wealth among the people? Who is cheating whom?

'KCR is on a mission to cheat people once again'

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Kadiyam Srihari, Station Ghanpur MLA, who recently joined the Congress after quitting the BRS, said that the contest in the Warangal Lok Sabha constituency is directly between the Congress and the BJP and predicted that the BRS candidate would forfeit the deposit.

Addressing the media on Monday at the Congress Party office in Hanamkonda along with MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy, he alleged that former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao is on a mission once again to cheat the people. He accused KCR of discriminating against the



Kadiyam Srihari

Warangal seat right from the beginning.

Six districts were carved out of the undivided Warangal

district to stifle the voice of the people, he said. KCR was afraid that the people in Warangal district would not hesitate to question the authority.

Who does not know the true colours of KCR, he said. He charged KCR with harbouring conspiracies deep inside his heart while maintaining a different posture outwardly.

The BRS fielded a person who is not familiar with the people in Warangal seat, he said, predicting that the state is going to witness wonders in the next three months. He predicted the total rout of the BRS in the next three months. It was KCR who duped the people of Telangana, he said, charging

KCR and his family with acquiring at least thousands of acres around Hyderabad in the last 10 years.

KCR family is now facing charges in phone tapping cases and Delhi liquor scam, he said seeking to know why bail is being denied to Kavita if she is really innocent.

There was a tacit understanding between the BJP and the BRS. As part of the secret deal, Tatikonda Rajaiiah was denied the ticket to contest from Warangal. KCR hired services of Rajaiiah only to bad mouth him, he alleged.

He appealed to the people not to spare the "land shark" family of KCR.

LOK SABHA ELECTIONS

BRS facing uphill task in undivided Khammam district

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

The BRS is facing an uphill task in undivided Khammam district. Khammam district politics always throw a challenge to BRS chief and former minister K Chandrashekar Rao. Even in the new state of Telangana, the BRS had to strain every nerve to win seats in the district.

In the 2014, 2018 and 2023 elections, the BRS faced a tough fight.

Jalagam Venkat Rao was elected from Kothagudem on car symbol in 2014. In 2018, Puvvada Ajay was elected on the party symbol. After the election, five Congress MLAs and two TDP MLAs defected

to the BRS.

In the 2023 elections, lone BRS candidate Tellam Venkat Rao was elected to the Assembly from Bhadrachalam seat. But, he joined the Congress recently. Therefore, there was no representation for the BRS in the Assembly from the undivided Khammam district.

The party has two Rajya Sabha members and one MLC representing the party.

None is joining the BRS, but many are bidding goodbye to the party. Those who have joined the BRS from Congress and BJP during the last Assembly elections are now leaving the party to join the Congress.

Meanwhile, KCR is under-



taking a two-day tour in Khammam district from April 29. The BRS leaders have been making suitable arrangements. Surprisingly, ahead of the tour, BRS youth wing president Chintanippu Krishna Chaitanya quit the BRS.

It has become a huge task for

KCR to boost the morale of the party cadre. Safeguarding those who have been in the BRS since the days of the Telangana movement and leading the party in the current Lok Sabha elections and the subsequent Panchayat elections is a huge task before KCR.



South Central Railway General Manager Arun Kumar Jain presenting 'Man of the Month' to an employee in Hyderabad on Monday

Arun Kumar Jain presents 'Man of the Month' Safety Awards to rail staff

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Arun Kumar Jain, General Manager of the South Central Railway (SCR) presented "Man of the Month" safety awards to 10 employees who showed exemplary alertness and dedication to the duty. A safety review meeting was held on Monday at Rail Nilayam, Secunderabad.

He presented the "Man of the month" safety awards to 10 employees, Secunderabad Division got two awards, Hyderabad Division one, Vijayawada Division four, Guntakal Division one, Nanded Division one and Guntur one for showing alertness and taking timely action to ensure safety. He congratulated the awardees and appreciated them for the commitment in performing duties with utmost dedication.

The General Manager also stated that these

awards would motivate other employees to work honestly with dedication towards safety, which would help the railways for safe operation of trains and to achieve good performance in all aspects. The employees belonged to various categories like Loco pilots, Station Masters, Technicians, Points man, Key/Gate Man and Track maintainers etc.

Later, he conducted a detailed review of the safety of train operations over the zone. He stated that safety should be accorded the top priority and instructed to continue the safety drives over the zone and to carry out surprise inspections to ensure alertness and avoid untoward incidents.

CPM not to ally with Congress in Bhongir seat

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president and Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has rejected the proposal of the Communist parties to allot Bhongir Lok Sabha seat to the Communist Party-Marxist (CPI-M).

The CPI-M put forward the request on Sunday at a meeting with Revanth Reddy who sought the Left parties' support the Congress in defeating the BJP at the national level. The leaders of the Communist parties, which are part of INDIA bloc, however, demanded that the Congress party support CPI-M candidate Mohammed



Jahangir in Bhongir Lok Sabha constituency.

With Revanth rejecting the proposal, the Communist parties made it clear that they would not go back on Bhongir seat.

CPI state secretariat, in a meeting held here on Sunday with T Jyoti in chair, took a crucial decision to make a fervent appeal to the people to

support Left parties' candidate in Bhongir Jahangir, according to secretary Tammineni Veerabhadram.

The meeting also reviewed the political campaign underway in the country to defeat the BJP and other communal forces.

They decided to step up the efforts to expose the misdeeds of the BJP and the injustice done to it to the state and also to the nation. To support the efforts and to give wide publicity to the Left parties' independent political policy, the meeting appealed to people to support Congress parties in LS elections except in Bhongir Lok Sabha seat.

Praveen Kumar seeks votes to defend the State's interests

PNS ■ GADWAL

BRS candidate for Nagarkurnool seat RS Praveen Kumar has intensified the campaign.

Under the aegis of Gadwal MLA Bandla Krishna Mohan Reddy, he has been undertaking a door-to-door campaign in the constituency.

On Monday, he interacted with morning walkers and appealed to them to weigh before they cast their votes.

He has been visiting different colonies and interacting with people from all walks of life.

He has been highlighting the failure on the part of the



RS Praveen Kumar

Congress government in "fulfilling" the promises made ahead of the Assembly elections. He has been seeking the

cooperation of people in strengthening the hands of BRS chief and former chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao who brought Telangana and made it strong.

He said that KCR had introduced Rythu Bandhu to help the farmers by providing investment support. He ensured that farmers secured financial support all through 10 years when the BRS was in government. He alleged that the Congress government delayed in providing financial support to farmers.

Apart from it, there is a need for a strong voice in Parliament to defend the interests of the State, he said.

NEWS FROM ANDHRA PRADESH

JAGAN SAYS IF NAIDU IS VOTED TO POWER...

Welfare Govinda Govinda

Recalls how TDP failed to fulfil its promise of farm loan waiver



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, in his addresses at election rallies held in Chodavaram, Ambajipeta, P Gannavaram, and Ponnur on Monday, emphasised the

importance of continuing the State's welfare schemes that benefit all sections of society. He expressed doubt that if Chandrababu Naidu were to return to power, these vital programmes would be jeopardised.

Reflecting on the aftermath of the

State's bifurcation, CM Jagan highlighted how Hyderabad was initially designated as the joint capital for a decade. However, due to Chandrababu Naidu's entanglement in the cash-for-vote scandal, this arrangement was disrupted, lament-

ed CM Jagan.

CM Jagan underscored the failure of Naidu's administration to secure special category status for the state, despite assurances given to the electorate. He warned against placing trust in promises that are unlikely to materialize, likening it to courting danger.

He urged the electorate to consider the repercussions of supporting an opposition that he characterized as anti-people.

Drawing attention to the unfulfilled pledges of the previous regime, CM Jagan cited examples such as the promised unemployment benefit of Rs 2000, a farm loan waiver of Rs 87,612 crores, and the retrieval of pledged gold from banks. He reminded the audience of the disillusionment that followed Naidu's victory in 2014, emphasizing the need for accountability.

CM Jagan further criticised Naidu's neglect of Visakhapatnam's potential and his proposal to relocate the capital, labelling it as a missed opportunity. He pointed out the failure of

Naidu's ambitious plans, including the proposed graphical Rajadhani, as evidence of his administration's shortcomings.

Addressing the crowd in Ambajipeta, CM Jagan termed the upcoming election as a decisive battle between the interests of the poor and the habitual deceit of Chandrababu Naidu. He contrasted Naidu's record of unfulfilled promises with his administration's accomplishments, emphasizing the stark difference between rhetoric and action.

Asserting his resolve to confront the opposition alliance led by Naidu, CM Jagan highlighted the diverse forces aligned against his party. He portrayed the opposition as consisting of disparate elements, including Naidu's adopted son Pawan Kalyan, biased regional media, and politically insignificant parties.

In Ponnur, CM Jagan continued his criticism of Naidu's governance, accusing him of failing to deliver on promises outlined in the 2014 manifesto.

INDIA CORNER

Centre asks NCERT to update textbooks on yearly basis

The Ministry of Education (MoE) has asked the NCERT to conduct a review of its textbooks and update them on a yearly basis, according to sources. So far, there has been no mandate on the frequency of updating the NCERT textbooks. "In the fast changing world of today, it is important that the textbooks are absolutely updated. The NCERT has been asked to conduct a review on yearly basis and update them ahead of the beginning of new academic session," a source said. Currently the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is in the process of developing textbooks according to the New Curriculum Framework (NCF) announced last year. "The textbooks as per the new curriculum will be ready for all classes by 2026," the source added. This year, the NCERT has introduced new textbooks for classes 3 and 6.



NEET aspirant from Haryana hangs self in Kota

A 20-year-old NEET aspirant was found hanging from the ceiling fan of his hostel room in Kunhari area here, with his parents suspecting he was murdered, police said on Monday. This is the eighth case of suspected suicide by a coaching student in Kota since January. The number of student suicides in Kota stood at 26 in 2023. Sumit Panchal, who hailed from Haryana's Rohtak, had been preparing for NEET at a coaching institute here for over a year, the police said. His parents have demanded the registration of a murder case against unidentified persons and an impartial investigation into the matter. On demand of the student's parents, a medical board was constituted to perform the autopsy, said Assistant Sub-Inspector Kaptaan, who is investigating the case. The body was handed over to the family after the post-mortem, they said.



Man kills friend for talking to his wife in Delhi

A 39-year-old man was arrested for allegedly killing his friend in north Delhi's old Lajpat Rai market over suspicion that he used to talk to his wife, police on Monday said. The accused has been identified as Gulab Jha. "On Saturday at 12.34 pm, information was received at the Kotwalli police station regarding an unknown body of a man lying on the roof of old Lajpat Rai market close to the Red Fort. A team was sent to the spot and they found that a man was lying in a pool of blood with injuries on his head, body and deep lacerated wound on neck," Deputy Commissioner of Police (north) M K Meena said. An FIR was registered and further investigation was launched into the matter, police said. "Three separate teams were constituted to crack the case. The team checked around 200 CCTV footage."



Top leaders of INDIA bloc will scramble for PM's post: Shah

PNS ■ JHANJIHARPUR (BIHAR)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday warned that a victory of the opposition INDIA bloc, "even by mistake", will lead to a scramble among top leaders of the alliance for the prime minister's post. Shah claimed that leaders like M K Stalin, Sharad Pawar, Lalu Prasad and Mamata Banerjee may agree to a year each of premiership, by turns, and "Rahul baba (Rahul Gandhi) will have to settle for whatever is left of the tenure".



BJP to EC: Take action against Cong over circulation of Shah's morphed video

NEW DELHI: The BJP on Monday lodged a complaint with the Election Commission against the Congress, alleging that it circulated a "deep fake and morphed" video of Home Minister Amit Shah to derail the poll process, and demanded strict action against the party. A BJP delegation comprising Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and the party's national media department in-charge Anil Baluni also complained against the Trinamool Congress (TMC), alleging that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee-led party has been using violence as a weapon, and demanded that the poll panel ensure a free and fair election in the state. "The Congress wants to derail the entire election process through a deep fake and morphed video (of Amit Shah). We raised a

complaint before the Election Commission today against it. The Congress has tried to create confusion among people by posting a deep fake video from its official handle," Vaishnaw told reporters after meeting the poll panel officials. "We requested the Election Commission to take strict action," he added. The Special Cell of the Delhi Police had on Sunday registered an FIR after the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (14C), which is under the Ministry of Home Affairs, filed a complaint about the doctored video of Shah where his statements indicating a commitment to abolish quota for Muslims on religious ground in Telangana were changed to make it seem that he was advocating scrapping of all reservations.

government will implement a Uniform Civil Code across the country," Shah asserted.

Claiming that Modi's victory and a third term in office were certain, he also cautioned against "political instability" that may follow if the INDIA coalition manages to form a government "even by mistake". "We need a leadership that is strong and not helpless. If the INDIA alliance comes to power... M K Stalin, Sharad Pawar, Mamata Banerjee, Lalu Prasad, all of them may become PM for a year each. Rahul baba will settle for whatever is left of the tenure," Shah said.

The home minister, who is often credited with abrogation of Article 370, also accused the Congress and its allies with having protected special status to Jammu and Kashmir like an "auras Putra" (one's own offspring). "Rahul Gandhi had tried to scare us by claiming that scrapping Article 370 will cause rivers of blood to flow. But, when the Modi government made the move, nobody even dared to throw a pebble," said Shah.

Slamming Gandhi for his "new-found concern for OBCs", the home minister said "the Congress party has always been against the Other Backward Classes. It had opposed the Mandal Commission. Modi has emerged from among the OBCs and the community has been empowered during his tenure as never before."

Ramdev crossed red line with false claims of curing Covid: IMA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Baba Ramdev crossed a red line when he claimed he could cure COVID-19 and at the same time maligned modern medicine by calling it a "stupid and bankrupt science", Indian Medical Association president Dr R V Asokan said on Monday.



This is IMA's first comment since the Supreme Court's tongue lashing to Ramdev and his multibillion-dollar consumer goods empire Patanjali Ayurved last month over misleading ads. It comes a day before the top court is scheduled to hear the matter next.

The apex court is hearing IMA's 2022 plea alleging a smear campaign against the Covid vaccination drive and modern systems of medicine. The court had asked Ramdev, his aide Acharya Balakrishnan and Patanjali Ayurved Ltd last month to issue a public apology for not following its orders

according to ethics and principles. It does not behave the Supreme Court to take a broadside against the medical profession of the country which after all sacrificed so many lives for the Covid war," he added. Asokan was replying to a query about the Supreme Court's observations in its hearing on April 23 that when it was pointing one finger at Patanjali, the remaining four fingers were pointed towards IMA.

During the same hearing, the top court questioned Patanjali's public apology and asked whether it was the same size as that of the advertisements published by the company for its products. The matter related to the apology published by Ramdev and his associate Acharya Balakrishna will be considered on April 30. Asokan said Ramdev went against the medical profession by saying "modern medicine is a stupid and bankrupt science".

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Asokan said Ramdev went against the medical profession by saying "modern medicine is a stupid and bankrupt science".

Veteran politician S M Krishna hospitalised

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Veteran politician and former Karnataka Chief Minister S M Krishna is undergoing treatment for a "minor ailment", the private hospital where he has been admitted said on Monday. The 91-year-old is "medically stable" and is recovering well, it said.

Manipal Hospital said the former union minister is being treated under Dr Satyanarayana Mysore and a team of medical experts. "Krishna is medically stable. He is recovering well and there is no need for worry," the hospital said in a statement.

The veteran politician was reportedly admitted to another super-specialty hospital in the city earlier this month, as he suffered an acute respiratory infection, and was discharged after treatment.

'Manifold surge in forest fires in Uttarakhand'

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Fire incidents, including forest fires, in Uttarakhand recorded a manifold surge during March-April compared to the same period in 2023, with some districts such as Nainital registering an over seven-fold increase.



An analysis of fire point images captured by NASA's Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite conducted by the Climate Trends think-tank shows that fire incidents in all

districts of Uttarakhand, except Haridwar, increased many times in March-April this year, Palak Balyan, the study's lead

researcher, told PTI on Monday. Citing an example, she said the number of fire incidents in Nainital in March-April 2023

was 207. This jumped to 1,524 -- a seven-fold increase -- during the same period this year.

Similarly, the number of fire incidents in Champawat rose to 1,025 in March-April compared to 120 during the year-ago period, she said.

The ambit of fire incidents includes forest fires, stubble and garbage burning. In the context of Uttarakhand, it is more about forest fires as the satellite images show most of the blazes occurred in dense forest areas of the hills, she said.

Will PM still remain silent? Priyanka slams BJP over K'taka 'sex scandal'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday attacked the BJP over the alleged sex scandal involving the grandson of JD(S) supremo H D Deve Gowda, with party leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra asking whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi will remain silent on the matter.



daughter and have "vulgar conversations" with her.

In a post in Hindi on X, Priyanka Gandhi said, "The leader with whom the PM gets photographed by placing his hand on his shoulder. The leader for whom the PM himself campaigned 10 days ago. Praised him on stage. Today, that leader of Karnataka is absconding from the country."

"Just hearing about his heinous crimes committed is heart-wrenching. This ruined the lives of hundreds of women. Modi ji, will you still remain silent?" "The Congress general secretary said. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said that in December 2023 itself, a BJP leader had informed the party leadership about the atrocities of Prajwal Revanna.

A case of sexual harassment and stalking was registered on Sunday against former prime minister Deve Gowda's son H D Revanna and grandson and Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna respectively.

The case was registered on a complaint by their cook, who alleged that four months after she started working for them, H D Revanna used to sexually harass her and Prajwal Revanna used to make video calls to her

TEACHER RECRUITMENT SCAM SC stays CBI probe into WB govt officials' role

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday stayed a Calcutta High Court order directing the CBI to probe the role of West Bengal government officials in a teacher recruitment scam. It, however, refused to stay for now the cancellation of the appointment of over 25,000 teachers and non-teaching staff.



The top court was hearing a plea by the West Bengal government against a high court order invalidating the appointment of 25,753 teachers and non-teaching staff made by the School Service Commission (SSC) in state-run and state-aided schools. A bench of Chief Justice DY

Chandrachud, Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice Manoj Misra, however, refused to stay the high court order cancelling the appointments and said it will hear the matter on May 6.

Observing that taking away the jobs of about 25,000 persons is a serious matter, the top court asked if it is possible to segregate the valid and invalid appointments on the basis of the material available and who the beneficiaries of the fraud are.

"We will stay the direction which says the CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) will undertake further investigation against officials in the state government," the bench said.

Hindus in no way will benefit from UCC: Mamata

PNS ■ JANGIPUR/ BHAGWANGOLA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday criticised the BJP for using the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) as a political ploy in the elections, asserting that Hindus will not benefit from it.

Addressing back-to-back rallies in minority-dominated Murshidabad and Jangipur constituencies in Murshidabad district, Banerjee accused the BJP of resorting to divisive tactics fearing defeat in the initial phases of polling.

"Whenever there are elections, they use one issue or the other to flare up communal tensions. This time they are talking about the UCC and propagating that it is against a particular community. But this UCC is nothing but political rhetoric, and Hindus in no way will benefit from it," she said.

Lok Sabha polls are churning of Constitution: Akhilesh Yadav

PNS ■ ETAH (UP)



Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav Monday termed the ongoing Lok Sabha elections as "samvidhan manthan" (churning of the Constitution) between the protectors and destroyers of democracy and said the Constitution and democracy will be saved only if INDIA bloc wins.

Yadav alleged that the BJP will not only take away reservation by abolishing the Constitution but will also take away the right to vote from the people if it comes to power for the third time. Everyone knows that every promise of the BJP has turned out to be false, he said while addressing an election rally in Etah.

"These are the same people who had once said they will double the income of the farmers, give the right price to the farmers for their produce, and make them happy. But none of

these things were done," he said. About a thousand farmers were martyred in the farmers' movement against the three "black laws", he said.

Without taking names, Yadav referred to the RSS as "the most dangerous family in the world" and alleged that the family that intended to end reservation is now talking against it for getting votes in elections. The SP president alleged that the BJP wanted to end reservation as part of a major conspiracy by putting everything in the private hands but, he said, the "samajwadis" (socialists) would not let them succeed.

ICG apprehends Indian fishing boat with 173 kg of narcotics

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD/ NEW DELHI

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has seized 173 kg of narcotics from an Indian fishing boat and detained two crew members on board the vessel off the Gujarat coast, an official said on Monday.

The ICG and Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) apprehended the fishing boat in a joint operation in the high seas on Sunday afternoon, the coast guard said in a release in Ahmedabad.

The seizure comes a day after the ICG, ATS and

Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), in a joint operation, recovered heroin worth Rs 600 crore from a Pakistani boat with 14 crew members. According to official sources, a total of 173 kgs of Hashish (extracted from cannabis) along with two Indians have been caught as part of a joint operation.

"Based on specific and credible intelligence inputs from the ATS, the ICG strategically deployed its ships and aircraft, ensuring that the boat does not evade the sea-air coordinated surveillance," the release said.

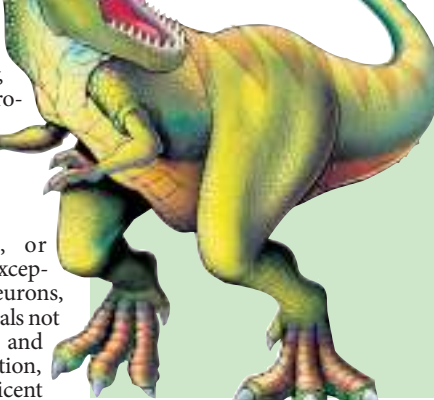
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Dinosaurs were "more like smart giant crocodiles" but not as intelligent as monkeys as an earlier study had found, according to new research.

In a study published in January 2023, neuroscientist and author Suzanaerculano-Houzel of Vanderbilt University, US, had said that brains of theropod dinosaurs, a species of which is T. rex, had neurons comparable to those in the brains of monkeys and baboons.

Dinosaurs like T. rex, or Tyrannosaurus rex, had an exceptionally high number of neurons, "which would make these animals not only giant but also long-lived and endowed with flexible cognition, and thus even more magnificent

'Dinosaurs smart reptiles, not as intelligent as monkeys'



predators than previously thought," the author wrote in the study published in the Journal of Comparative Neurology. In the latest research, an international team of palaeontologists, behavioural scientists and neurologists re-examined the brains of dinosaurs, including T. rex, and found them to behave more like reptiles.

They were more like "smart giant crocodiles," according to study author Darren Naish from the School of Biological Sciences, University of Southampton, UK.

The team found that the size of the dinosaur brains had been overestimated,

along with neuron counts, and showed that gauging the intelligence of a species based on neuron count estimates is not reliable. The findings are published in The Anatomical Record journal.

"Neuron counts are not good predictors of cognitive performance, and using them to predict intelligence in long-extinct species can lead to highly misleading interpretations," said study author Ornella Bertrand from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain.

The research follows along the lines of decades of analysis in which

palaeontologists and biologists have examined dinosaur brain size and anatomy, and used these data to infer behaviour and lifestyle, the authors said. Information on dinosaur brains comes from mineral fillings of the brain cavity, termed endocasts, as well as the shapes of the cavities themselves, they said.

"We argue that it's not good practice to predict intelligence in extinct species when neuron counts reconstructed from endocasts are all we have to go on," said lead researcher Kai Caspar from Heinrich Heine University, Germany.

They said that to reliably reconstruct the biology of long-extinct species, researchers should look at multiple lines of evidence, including skeletal anatomy, bone histology (study of the microscopic structure of tissues) and the behaviour of living relatives and trace fossils.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

North by Northeast

Internal strife, insurgency and a sense of alienation plague the Seven Sisters, much like the Kashmir of yore

India's Northeastern region has for long experienced insurgency, internal conflict and unrest and the challenges have often been exacerbated by its complex history, geographical isolation and perceived neglect by the Central Government. One of the most prominent facets of the restive Northeast is the internecine wars within its borders, fuelled by a variety of factors ranging from ethnic tensions to resource disputes, leading to cycles of violence and displacement. The region's strategic importance, owing to its proximity to China and Southeast Asia, has made it a battleground for competing geopolitical interests, thus complicating the situation. Traditionally, the conflict in the Northeast has been fuelled by a lack of identity with the Indian mainland, the role of external powers like China, Myanmar and Bangladesh, tribal/communal differences among its inhabitants and fault lines in the subdivision of Assam which led to the creation of other Northeastern states. Indeed, the region's woes stem from several factors, which are reflected in its turmoil. Economic underdevelopment and lack of infrastructure exacerbate feelings of marginalisation and deprivation, providing fertile ground for insurgent movements to recruit disaffected youth. Moreover, the region's porous borders, particularly with Myanmar and Bangladesh, help insurgent groups set up base and launch attacks on our security personnel. Cross-border infiltration and support to insurgent groups by external actors have been persistent challenges for India's security establishment.



The Army's long presence in the region Delhi's apathy has been a recurring theme in the Northeast. The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), enacted in 1958 amidst the Naga Hills 'uprising', is a constant irritant that the locals feel reflects New Delhi's deliberate attempt to strip them of their rights and dignity. It is one of the most despised Acts in the region and stands between the Centre's goodwill and the Northeastern people. Currently, the AFSPA is enforced fully in 31 districts across four Northeastern states and partially in 12 districts. The alienation has manifested in various forms, including widespread boycott of elections, as communities express their disillusionment with the political process. The latest manifestation has been in Manipur, bordering Myanmar, where violence began on May 3 last year when hill tribal groups clashed with the ethnic majority Meitei over economic benefits and job and education quotas. Regrettably, since Independence, this area has not been fully integrated into the mainstream. Not only have many insurgent groups representing various communities been waging war against the Indian Union, internal strife and communal differences have also not been reconciled. The lack of inclusive approach to addressing the root causes of the unrest, coupled with sporadic attempts at peace talks and development initiatives, has led to instability that shows little sign of abating. Only through sustained efforts and genuine political will can the region hope to achieve peace and stability.

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PICTALK



Members of a dance group perform on a road on International Dance Day, in Nadia

PTI

Why are the young not joining politics?

A large number of voters belongs to the younger generation; their apathy towards the electoral process is a cause of concern



PRAFULL GORADIA

The country belongs more and more to its younger citizens. It is, therefore, all the more disturbing that the youth who have lately crossed the age of 18 and have registered themselves as voters in fewer numbers. The country belongs more to the younger ones who're 18, on an average, the country for say, sixty years more, or probably twelve general elections. To a fifty-year-old, in terms of time, he might get to see five, possibly six more general elections.

In Uttar Pradesh, our largest state only 25 per cent of the eligible youth have registered themselves as voters. What could be the reasons for this lack of desire to have a say in the running of their country? Do most young people expect Government representatives to approach them in the old maibaap fashion? Or do they feel that there isn't likely to be much competition among the political parties for their votes? Could it also be that the younger generation has come to nurse an indifference towards the entire political process and the institution of democracy itself? Over the years, a large body of the youth of the country has come to believe that whoever comes to power, won't make any difference to their lives, as the country's politicians are perceived to be a class that acts only in its interest. However, in this cynicism, the youth forget that by their indifference, they abdicate their right to have a say in the running of their nation.

At the other of the age spectrum, the necessary interest in entering the political arena and playing a meaningful role in the life of the country has not been there to the extent required. Public life of a political nature had existed for some fifty years before independence. It began with the founding of the Congress by a retired British bureaucrat, Allan Octavian Hume, in 1885. The Muslim League was founded in the year 1906, the Hindu Mahasabha in 1916 and the Communist Party in 1925. Indians, therefore had the opportunity to have a feel of political



public life. The motivation wasn't power, but an idealism-driven desire for the country's freedom. Soon thereafter, there might have been disillusion; the earlier idealism began declining rapidly. With the decline was seen a fall in ethical and social values in the country. Could the disillusionment have been due to disappointment with the quality of politicians? Not all parties indeed have members hailing from the most educated or knowledgeable sections of society. Although the current central Government is not a rough and tumble of the hitherto political dispensations that have ruled the country, it has still not been able to overcome the cynicism about politicians and politics in general, which continues to hold sway in the minds of a large section of the people. This is not to say that good people are disinterested in politics.

We have in recent years, seen many academically and professionally qualified people enter politics; some of them have even become ministers. But clearly, there is a long way to go in this regard.



ANOTHER REASON WHY WEALTHY CANDIDATES ARE ATTRACTED TO POLITICS IS THE TRADITIONAL BELIEF THAT ONCE ELECTED, THE CANDIDATE WOULD BE ABLE TO EARN BACK THE MONEY SPENT ON ELECTIONEERING AND THEREAFTER GENERATE MUCH MONEY

One great discouragement is the number of people in a constituency, as well as the high cost of electioneering. Hopefully, some answer to this problem should emerge from the delimitation of electoral constituencies, which would be set to increase, by (approximately) 50 per cent. No ordinary entrant can afford to spend astronomical sums of money to cultivate nearly two million voters per seat. Delimitation and increased seats alone will not solve the problem of election expenses. Another reason why wealthy candidates are attracted to politics is the traditional belief that once elected, the candidate would be able to earn back the money spent on electioneering and thereafter generate much money. Compulsory voting is a way of not only upgrading the system but also reducing the cost of electioneering. It would also eliminate the perpetuation of

vote-bank politics. For example, there was a time when the total voting used to be 50 per cent or less. Therefore, if the candidate had a secure vote bank, it wasn't difficult for him to win. With the rise in the percentage of voting, the power and effect of a committed vote-bank is reduced. For instance, in an electorate of a lakh people, a committed vote-bank of a particular candidate is say, 25 per cent, i.e., 25,000 voters out of a population of one lakh. If the normal voting is no more than 50 to 55 per cent for that seat, this captive vote bank is assured victory for that candidate. However, if the voting percentage is 100 per cent, such a vote-bank will be of no decisive advantage. The role of freebies has to be curbed for any meaningful participation in the political process. Freebies reduce the exercise of elections in a democracy to nothing more than bribing voters. It is then futile to talk of democracy, or why the young don't participate in it in greater numbers. (The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PAKISTAN'S AFGHAN DEBACLE

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Pakistan paying for its misplaced priorities," published on April 29, this is my response. Ambassador Asif Durrani's acknowledgement of Pakistan's failures in Afghanistan reveals a stark reality: the cost of tensions along the Durand Line surpasses all wars with India combined. The fixation on India as the primary adversary stems from historical wounds and institutional agendas. However, the Afghan debacle exposes the fallacy of such fixations and challenges the two-nation theory. The resurgence of Taliban attacks and Afghan nationals participating in strikes against Pakistan signal a seismic shift in regional dynamics. Pakistan's strategic ambitions in Afghanistan have backfired, eroding trust and isolating it on the global stage. Despite efforts to rewrite the narrative, Pakistan remains entangled in its past missteps, with Afghanistan looming as a permanent fixture in its regional calculus.

As the world watches with scepticism, Pakistan's plight underscores a fundamental truth: religion alone cannot sustain a nation. Bangladesh and Afghanistan stand as testaments to the folly of such notions. It's a sobering lesson for Pakistan to reassess its identity and recalibrate its foreign policy away from religious rhetoric towards pragmatic diplomacy.

Rohit Kapoor | Kolkata

ENVIRONMENTAL MANIFESTO

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Political parties must prioritise environmental preservation," published on April 29, this is my response. As an avid reader of daily news, it's disheartening to witness India's political landscape during election time fail to address pressing environmental concerns. Despite lip service in manifestos, concrete actions are conspicuously absent. The proliferation of plastic waste during political campaigns exacerbates the crisis. Plastic pollution poses a grave threat to ecosystems and human health, with marine life suffering the brunt.

Bihar on progress path



Apropos the news article, "Chronicle of Bihar, Beyond Elections," published on April 28, this is my response. Deepak Kumar Jha's narrative in The Pioneer paints a vivid picture of Bihar's rural landscape, where traditional thatched homes have given way to brick dwellings amidst agricultural abundance. Yet, glaring issues persist: healthcare and education

lag, despite decades of political promises. The narrative exposes the complexity of Bihar's socio-political fabric. While leaders tout progress, caste-driven politics remain entrenched. Migration continues, disillusioning locals with governance. Jha's storytelling captures the essence of Bihar's electoral fervour, where political discourse blends with everyday life. Amidst discussions over leaders, the grassroots yearns for tangible change. The article's depth extends beyond politics, delving into healthcare woes. The anecdote of the patient's struggle highlights systemic failures, contrasting with Bihar's rich cultural tapestry. Ultimately, Jha's piece is a poignant portrayal of Bihar's struggles and resilience. It underscores the urgent need for holistic development and the preservation of its cultural heritage amidst the political clamour.

Vishal Kumar | Delhi

Political parties wield considerable influence and should champion sustainable practices to combat plastic pollution. Yet the lack of urgency is alarming. With the planet reaching critical thresholds, we can't afford complacency. The need for immediate action to safeguard our only home, Earth, is paramount. It's high time political will transcended rhetoric to enact meaningful change. We must remember that there's no Plan B for our planet.

Aditya Mehta | Mumbai

CULINARY ESCAPADES

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Feast of hot summer menus," published on April 27, this is my response. Reading through these descriptions feels like leafing through a gourmet guidebook. Each venue promises not just a meal but an experience, a journey through flavours and cultures. Olly offers a tranquil haven from urban chaos, serving up classics with a twist amidst a serene ambience. The China Kitchen tantalizes with its immersive dining experience, bringing Chinese culinary traditions to life. Viet: nom adds

a modern flair to Vietnamese classics, while L'Opera delights with French finesse, especially with its seasonal mango collection. Café Delhi Heights, ever-evolving, captures the essence of Delhi's vibrancy through its diverse offerings. The must-try dishes read like poetry, each a symphony of flavours designed to tantalize taste buds. From crispy sweet potato skins to succulent Peking duck, from vibrant summer rolls to creamy Alfredo pasta, there's something to suit every palate. Akanksha Dean's culinary journey adds a personal touch, showcasing a deep passion for food and an impressive resume. Her influence undoubtedly enhances the richness of each dining experience. As a regular newspaper reader, these culinary adventures beckon, promising not just a meal but a story to savour, making the dining experience more than just a necessity but a delightful escape.

Sneha Patel | Ahmedabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Reflections on rituals from around the world

From the tranquil Nyepi Day in Bali to the vibrant street celebrations in Japan, rituals surrounding life's milestones offer glimpses into cultures

We had lunch in the resort restaurant during a vacation to Thailand a few months back. There was a slight drizzle as we walked along a narrow walkway hemmed in by walls and tastefully planted beds of flowers, vines and shrubs.

I remember a late evening in our beach resort in Bali a few years back. The day after our arrival was Nyepi Day, a public holiday. It is a day of silence, fasting and meditation. No lights are lit in the evening. It is believed that spirits roam in the evening on this day. Any loud sound or bright light may attract them to come down to explore and some of them may cause harm.

We had walked to the resort restaurant along walkways at the back, which were lit up with muted lamps placed along the path to guide the guests. Even the lighting in the restaurant was subdued. We were also caught up in the spirit of the local folklore and walked silently along the dimly lit narrow path, surrounded by flowers, vines and shrubs,



apprehensive of catching the fancy of an evil spirit. A few decades back, I was in Japan for a study tour. There was a public holiday, which was celebrated as the day of the ancestors. Groups of people were out dancing on the streets, moving from one house to the other. Each household had set up a table in the front, loaded with beer and other alcohol and savouries to be partaken by the dancing people. I also joined the celebrations. We have a fortnight-long annual ritual, called Pitru Paksha, to honour our

ancestors. Prayers are offered, followed by meals specially prepared. What surprises me, though, is the fact that these 15 days, in honour of our ancestors are considered inauspicious for any new purchases, or any other auspicious work, even though we are because they were. A very close Parsi friend passed away a few years back. The family invited us for a celebration of her life a few days later. There was laughter all around as we all recounted the happy times that we had spent with the lady over drinks and food.

The gracious hostess, her daughter, had prepared a special Parsi-style chicken dish, which had been both a speciality and a favourite of the departed soul. We also have the thirteenth-day ceremony in our Hindu religion which is formally the close of the mourning period. Guests are intimated to join prayers and then partake of our special food prepared for the occasion. Though sometimes teary-eyed, everyone remembers the time spent with the person who has joined the supreme being. Why mourn death, which is only the passing away to another life? When my time comes, I hope my near and dear ones remember me, not for my beliefs, but for the happiness that I gave them.

A life led to spreading happiness all around is to be celebrated. Thomas Campbell rightly said, "To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die!" (The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)



SANJAY CHANDRA



FIRST COLUMN

THE POWER OF THE HUMAN MIND

Settle your mind and clear accumulated dust, only then it gets purged



RAVI VALLURI

Aeons ago lived, Suddhodana, chieftain of the Sakyan republics. He was captivated with the thought of perpetuating the dynasty. However, his battle fatigued son Siddhartha, was not ensnared by the Mara of trappings of power, carnal pleasures and a family life. Siddhartha eschewed violence, cast away royal clothing and adorned ochre robes in search of the quintessential truth and was to become Buddha after intense tapas. Upon attaining enlightenment, the Compassionate One dissected the bewildering characteristics of the human mind. He was soon to quantify in a plain sailing manner, "We are what we think and our thoughts shape our lives."

The human mind is not resplendent with ennobling thoughts if the prana levels are low. The prana level increases (through yoga, pranayama, meditation and Sudarshan Kriya) and at that moment an individual realises the magnetic potential of the human mind.

Once there was a Good Samaritan, Sudhakar. He happened to read the maiden effort of a civil servant called the Magic of the Mind. This gentleman, with trepidation, became a 'Facebook friend' of the mandarin and persuaded him to be interviewed by a few T.V. channels. However, the thought process of the public functionary- who was a recovered alcoholic- doubted the sincerity of the Facebook friend. In disgust, he 'blocked' and then 'unblocked' the gentleman, perhaps more to quell the pangs of his own conscience. Finally in sheer vexation he gave in to the entreaties of the 'Facebook friend'. Soon an amazing pattern emerged and the administrator was invited by several media houses and estimable institutions to deliver lectures as to how he combated and conquered the battle against the bottle. Only much later did he realise that Sudhakar had lost some close relatives to the perils of alcoholism.



The autarchic mind of the bureaucrat was ossified and looking at life through the prism of tunnel vision. One day, after a series of interviews, the functionary received a distress call from a lady, who had happened to listen to one of his interviews and was also reading the book penned by the bureaucrat, which captured his triumph over alcoholism. On receiving the call, he could empathise with the woman's husband who was fighting a grim battle against alcoholism. There was a sudden transmutation in the mind of the public servant and went on to guide the husband on how to attain sobriety.

Realisation and awareness are two iconic qualities that shine the light on the amazing power of the human mind. Several centuries ago, Gautama Buddha was travelling with a group of disciples. The Compassionate One felt thirsty and desired some water to quench his thirst. He asked a disciple to fetch some water from a nearby lake. The enthusiastic disciple rushed to the lake but was horrified to find the water turbid as a farmer had just crossed the lake on his bullock cart.

He returned back remorsefully as he could not fulfil the wish of the holy Master. Buddha sent the disciple a couple of times to fetch water to quench his thirst. But to the dismay of the tutee on each occasion the water remained dirty and turbid. While the devotees were fidgety and distraught, Buddha remained patient. Eventually, the devotee animatedly brought fresh water from the lake and offered it.

Buddha smiled and drank the water. He was to say, "You did nothing. The mud settled down and the water was purged of the impurities. Let your mind settle all the dust accumulated over a period of time." This is the amazing power of the human mind. Just let it settle down.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

Challenges loom ahead of July Union Budget



SHIVAJI SARKAR

The incoming Government would face the uphill task of navigating through a myriad of fiscal hurdles to foster sustainable growth



Despite it being too early to discuss the union budget to be presented in July, it is certain whichever combination comes back to power it would have to majorly review the February interim budget given the debates generated during elections. The election is veering around more on economic issues than the religion or Ram temple, though in certain regions these remain a potent issue and so the brands Narendra Modi and Yogi Adityanath. A larger section is concerned with the core economy, unemployment, farmers' issues, irrationally high prices, medical and health care costs, school and university fees, shooting costs of houses, high toll-jacked inflation and similar other issues.

Even showcasing of Indian economy as the fifth largest economy is not being accepted by a large section as reality. The farmers and citizens wonder while cars and tractors are allowed to run for 40 years like aircraft across the world, why a pro-people Government should be in a hurry to send these to junkyards in India, particularly when household debts are skyrocketing. The rural wisdom calls it weird and tries to locate the linkages of Government functionaries with the car makers.

Questions are also raised on the Rs 16.87 lakh crore debt repayment in the 2024-25 budget. This effectively cuts the actual budget of Rs 47.65 lakh crore to about Rs 31 lakh crore. The repayment burden in 2025 is slated to be higher. The opposition's sharp angling on core economic issues is being rebutted by the ruling combine by charging that if the opposition gets to power it would sell 'mangalsutras' and delve into divisive politics. The Election Commission has issued warnings to the ruling party for its wry comments.

Low voting in 190 constituencies in major States like UP, Bihar and Maharashtra raises concern among all parties. The voter is apathetic despite



THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO TAKE DRASTIC STEPS TO BRING DOWN THE PRICES OF EDIBLE OIL, FOOD GRAINS, VEGETABLES, POTATOES AND ONIONS, AS WELL AS SCHOOL FEES AND EXPENSIVE HEALTH CARE, MILK AND OTHER COMMODITIES

many moves by the Election Commission. Is that a reflection on governance? This has not put the issues on the back burner. According to RBI, inflation rises at 5.5 per cent a year and has shot beyond 55 per cent in compounded terms causing a huge rise in prices. Nobody has got such a raise in their salaries, not even Government employees.

The new Government would have to take drastic steps to bring down the prices of edible oil, food grains, vegetables, potatoes and onions as well as school fees and expensive health care, milk and other commodities. People are unwilling to buy the argument that inflation is built into the system. They rather equate it with corporate electoral bond doles to parties. The Government accepts the petrol prices are high, cut it by Rs 2 just before the polls. It has no impact on the voters' psyche.

The voter is not happy with the so-called demonstrative developments like demolition and construction of large office buildings, rail stations and rampant construction of roads or metro. Constructions devastate the hills of Himachal, Kashmir, Uttarakhand and the North East. Kisans who became millionaires overnight with the acquisition of their land for roads are not happy about losing their livelihood. Most villagers rue the roads that divide their habitats and relationships for a road they can't use without paying a toll. It is a serious issue because the Kisan also pays Rs 30 per litre petrol cess toll introduced with the promise of ending the toll. All these benefit bulk profiteers and the least of jobs.

A new Government has to initiate drastic changes and reorient policies. The major reason for joblessness is attributed to ad hoc decisions. Such constructions erode Government finance and build little assets. Southeast Asia tried it in the late 1990s and got into trouble in 1997. It would be wise on the part of the new Government to revive PSUs and ask the private sector to compete with them. It would create jobs, add to the national economy and create a fair playground.

People question the rationale of parting a part of Indian Oil to a private giant or giving out ports to private players. At least one such port has become notorious for being a smugglers' den. The universities, IITs and Government institutions have been given a mandate to raise tuition fees every year. The private ones hike far more. Schools and universities need financing from the Government and education costs must be cut down. Congress promises apprenticeship to every graduate. Looks good but it is not practical. The scheme has failed several times. India's overall exports fell by 8.1 per cent and exports to its free trade partners shrank by 18 per cent in the first half of 2023. The country's trade deficit ballooned to \$78.2 billion in the last financial year. India's export values across all commodities declined to \$351 billion during April-January from \$366 billion a year ago, underlining the impact of the global economic slowdown and tightening of interest rates in Western countries. These numbers have emerged amid India's push to sign free trade deals with the UK and the European Union. The International Monetary Fund

says that the global slowdown is on. However India projects its march to a \$5 trillion economy and it is not easy. The West has become more protectionist and keen on imposing a carbon tax. The West needs to protect its bread.

Lower productivity can result in reduced job creation within the manufacturing sector, leading to unemployment or underemployment. The International Labour Organisation finds low pay and wages as serious challenges. When productivity declines, the incentives for firms to invest in research and development or adopt new technologies diminish, leading to a slower pace in the manufacturing sector. However, the challenge of rising household debt and falling savings could weigh on long-term growth sustainability.

The FDI flow is low at \$17.96 billion. Despite a supposed buzzing market, it has not risen much. The new Government also has the challenge to cut personal income-tax rates from 39 per cent to 22 per cent in tune with the corporate tax. High taxation hits the purchasing capacity and concomitant market problems.

In short, the new Government has to stress issues regarding taxes, education, health, livelihood, low tolls and better deal with farmers. Both manifestos of the BJP and Congress speak of too many doles and caste-related benefits. If the Government can address the basic issues and make it one of the most affordable economies, India's journey will be smooth. It is a dream, if comes true it will be the most liveable country.

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

Celebrating the universal language of dance

From traditional Indian classical dance forms to contemporary global dance phenomena, dance continues to inspire, heal and unite communities

On April 14 last year, history was made in Assam, India, as a Guinness World Record was set for the largest gathering of Bihu dancers. Over 11,000 dancers from different communities and backgrounds came together to perform the traditional dance of Assam, watched live by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It was a spectacular display of cultural diversity and unity. This event was a shining example of how cultural diversity can bring people together and foster a sense of emotional bonding and appreciation of one another's culture and traditions.

More recently as part of the 'Raag Seva' in a breathtaking display of timeless grace and unwavering passion, the 90-year-old actor-dancer and



RAJDEEP PATHAK

Padma Vibhushan awardee Vyjayanthimala Bali, enchanted spectators with her ethereal Bharatanatyam performance in Ayodhya. In this rich mosaic of human expression, dance emerges as a timeless gem, casting its spell across generations and captivating hearts through the ages. Beyond mere movement, it embodies a symphony of creativity, infusing the soul with unbridled joy. A graceful interplay of rhythm

and emotion, it offers solace from the burdens of modern life, intertwining threads of happiness into the fabric of existence.

Welcome to the rhythm of life, as we celebrate the 'International Dance Day' on April 29th every year, since 1982. Dance helps to change lives. The 'Navras', which is used to express joy, sadness, love, anger and many other emotions, is a way of celebrating life and creating a sense of community.

This Day serves as a platform aimed at fostering awareness regarding the intrinsic value of dance and facilitating the widespread promotion of the dance community's endeavours. Central to its mission is the aspiration that Governments and influential figures will

recognize the significance of dance and extend support towards its cultivation. We are all aware of Yo-Yo Ma's 'Silk Road Ensemble', a musical group founded by the cellist Yo-Yo Ma, where musicians from China, Iran, India and Spain come together and use their music to create a bridge between cultures and promote understanding between people from different backgrounds. Through cultural collaboration, this is a forum for the exchange of ideas, tradition and innovation across borders.

Also, the 'OneBeat' initiative, which brings together musicians from around the world to collaborate and create new music - was funded by the U.S. Department of State - aims to promote cultural exchange

and create a global community of musicians. 'OneBeat' has brought together musicians from countries such as Syria, Russia and Cuba, to name a few, not only providing a platform for musicians to share their music but also creating new collaborations that transcend cultural and linguistic barriers.

Dance also helps in promoting intercultural dialogue. Dance companies worldwide come together to create new works that reflect their cultural traditions and explore common themes. One such example is the 'Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater', which has been promoting diversity and inclusion through dance for over 60 years. The company's performances celebrate the African-American cultural

experience and explore universal themes such as love, loss and identity.

Not only this, the 'National Ballet of Cuba' is a dance company that promotes intercultural dialogue through its performances. Founded in 1948 by Alicia Alonso, one of the most famous ballerinas of the 20th century, it is known for its unique style that combines elements of classical ballet with Afro-Cuban and Spanish dance traditions.

Back in India, 'The Kalakshetra Foundation', - of the many foundations and institutions that exist to popularize Indian classical dance forms - Chennai-based dance school, founded by Rukmini Devi Arundale in 1936, sought to revive and promote Indian classical dance forms and is

today a leading institution that trains students in various forms of Indian classical dance, including Bharatanatyam, Kathakali and Kuchipudi. Similarly, the 'Nrityagram Dance Village', near Bangalore, which was founded in 1990 by Protima Gauri, a renowned Indian classical dancer, is a unique institution that offers a holistic approach to dance training, focusing not only on dance techniques, but also on aspects such as yoga, meditation and Indian mythology. The institute has gained global recognition and has collaborated with many international dance companies to create new works that blend Indian classical dance with contemporary dance forms. We cannot miss Bollywood dance, which has become a

global phenomenon and has created a platform for people from different backgrounds to come together and celebrate India's vibrant culture. Using different dance styles from Indian classical forms to ballet; to cabaret; to hip-hop, break dance and so on - each step encompasses a unique rhythm and style involving different generations tap to the beats.

As we celebrate the universal language of dance and its ability to unite people, it is also important to acknowledge the Guru-Shishya Parampara and celebrate the beauty of dance and its ability to create a better world for all.

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

Birlasoft posts 60.5 pc rise in profit to Rs 180 cr

Company Birlasoft on Monday reported a 60.55 per cent increase in consolidated net profit to Rs 180.08 crore during the March quarter. The company had recorded a net profit of Rs 112.16 crore in the year-ago period. The Pune-based company's revenue from operations stood at Rs 1,362.5 crore in the fourth quarter of FY24, up 11.10 per cent from Rs 1,226.3 crore a year earlier. According to a company statement, growth during the March quarter was driven by ERP and infrastructure among service lines and banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI), E&U (Energy and Utilities) and manufacturing among verticals. The revenue was led by manufacturing (Rs 571.02 crore), followed by Life Sciences and Services (Rs 301.49 crore), BFSI (Rs 288.36 crore), and E&U (Rs 201.66 crore). "We are pleased to report a robust operating performance for both the quarter and the full year, delivering revenue growth as well as margin expansion in the face of continued macro uncertainty," Birlasoft CEO and MD Angan Guha said.



Gold drops Rs 130; silver remains flat

Gold prices dropped Rs 130 to Rs 72,750 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday in line with weak trends in the overseas markets, according to HDFC Securities. The precious metal had closed at Rs 72,880 per 10 grams in the previous session. However, silver prices remained flat at Rs 84,500 per kg. "Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 72,750 per 10 grams, down by Rs 130 against the previous close," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In the international markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at US\$ 2,333 per ounce, down by US\$ 5 from the previous close. "Gold traded steady... as expectations of interest rate cuts by the US Federal Reserve faded and as geo-political tensions eased. The delay in the interest rate cut has supported the US dollar index and US Treasury yields which weighed down on the yellow metal prices," Navneet Damani, Senior VP of Commodity Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services, said.



Poonawalla Fincorp profit jumps to Rs 332 cr

Poonawalla Fincorp on Monday reported a 67 per cent jump in consolidated net profit to Rs 332 crore in the March quarter. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 199 crore during the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year. Its total income during quarter also rose to Rs 922 crore, against Rs 581 crore in the year-ago period, Poonawalla Fincorp said in a regulatory filing. The non-deposit-taking non-banking financial company (NBFC) also registered growth in interest income to Rs 844 crore from Rs 552 crore in the year-ago quarter. Assets under management (AUM) grew 25 per cent to Rs 25,003 crore at the end of March 2024, Poonawalla Fincorp said in a statement. Pune-based Poonawalla Fincorp (formerly Magma Fincorp), which is owned by Cyrus Poonawalla group, which focuses on consumer and small business financing, reported a net interest margin of 11.06 per cent while capital adequacy ratio stood at 33.8 per cent for the year ended March 2024.



'India needs stable govt to achieve goal of Viksit Bharat'

PNS ■ VIZAG

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday underscored the need for a stable government to achieve the goal of becoming Viksit Bharat by 2047.

"Our Prime Minister has set a target that by 2047, we need to reach the destination of a developed India," she said while addressing students of GITAM University here.

"We have to make efforts, so the GDP grows, and the benefits reach to all. GDP growth doesn't happen automatically; efforts are required at micro and macro levels and on the ground," she said.

The image of the country is also important, along with the ranking of your GDP, she said, adding that all these factors matter, along with per capita income calculations.

"Unless the GDP is widened, we are not going to be able to meet the demands of the economy. We need investment, services to grow, educational institutions, and money for people to buy houses, start businesses," she added.

She also criticised former

said, adding that poor, village women now prefer digital payments, disproving doubts about common people's capabilities raised by the former Finance Minister.

Sitharaman said the India economy, during the UPA regime, suffered a lot and languished as supposed to the NDA rule where it reached the top 5 and now is on the way to become the world's 3rd largest economy in the coming years.



Finance Minister P Chidambaram for questioning the developmental pace of Indian economy under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and for saying that it was arithmetic inevitability that India will become the third largest economy.

From cities to rural villages, UPI is transforming lives, she

Sitharaman said the India economy, during the UPA regime, suffered a lot and languished as supposed to the NDA rule where it reached the top 5 and now is on the way to become the world's 3rd largest economy in the coming years. So, to say that India will automatically become the third largest economy was nothing

but undermining the efforts made by the Modi government for the nation, she said.

The Government of India has allocated nearly 100,000 lakh crore for Anusandhan Corpus and this investment aims to bolster India's research budget across various sectors, fostering inclusive growth in the nation, she added.

Travel, tourism sector expected to add 5.82 cr jobs

PNS ■ MUMBAI

With a continued growth momentum, the travel and tourism sector is all set to add 5.82 crore jobs across the country by 2033, a top executive of global technology and digital talent solutions provider NLS Services said on Monday.

"The growing synergy of the sector has led to steadfast employment generation across the country both in tier I and II locations. In the pandemic year 2020, the tourism sector accounted for 39 million jobs. Post the pandemic recovery tenure, this was one of the sectors that saw the quickest recovery," NLS Services CEO Sachin Alug said.

'Follow fair practices, refund excess charges to customers'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Concerned over some banks and lenders resorting to unfair practices in charging of interest, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday directed them to take corrective action and refund excess charges to customers.

The guidelines on Fair Practices Code issued to various regulated entities (REs) since 2003, inter-alia, advocate fairness and transparency in charging of interest by the lenders, while providing adequate freedom to them as regards loan pricing policy.

"During the course of the onsite examination of REs for



the period ended March 31, 2023, the Reserve Bank came across instances of lenders resorting to certain unfair practices in charging of interest," the RBI said in a circular. The central bank has also highlighted certain unfair practices being followed by certain lenders.

"...in the interest of fairness and transparency, all REs are directed to review their prac-

tices regarding mode of disbursement of loans, application of interest and other charges and take corrective action, including system level changes, as may be necessary, to address," the issues concerning charging of interest, the circular said.

During onsite examinations of REs, the RBI said it observed charging of interest from the date of sanction of loan or date of execution of loan agreement and not from the date of actual disbursement of funds to the customer.

It also came across instances where interest was charged from the date of the cheque whereas it was handed over to the customer several days later.

Sebi gives nod to ICRA's arm to provide ESG ratings

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi has given approval to ICRA's subsidiary Pragati Development Consulting Services Ltd (PDCSL) to provide environ-

mental, social, and governance (ESG) ratings.

This development positions the ICRA Group among the few Indian entities offering holistic risk-monitoring solutions, including ESG ratings

and scores.

"Sebi has granted its approval for registration of PDCSL, a wholly-owned subsidiary of ICRA, as a Category-I ESG Rating Provider (ERP) under the Sebi's Credit Rating



Agencies Regulations," ICRA said in a statement on Monday. PDCSL applied for the ERP registration in September 2023.

Sensex rebounds by 941 pts, Nifty closes above 22,600

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark BSE Sensex rebounded sharply by 941 points while NSE Nifty closed above the 22,600 level on Monday on the back of buying in banking and infra shares and a rally in global markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 941.12 points or 1.28 per cent to settle at 74,671.28. As many as 26 Sensex shares closed in the green while four declined. During the day, Sensex zoomed 990.99 points or 1.34 per cent to a high of 74,721.15.

The NSE Nifty soared by 223.45 points or 1 per cent to



close at 22,643.40 with 32 of its constituents advancing and 18 settling lower.

From the Sensex basket, ICICI Bank climbed nearly 5 per cent after the bank reported an 18.5 per cent growth in net profit for the March quarter to Rs 11,672 crore, helped by lower provisions.

UltraTech Cement rose by 2.7 per cent after the cement maker reported around 36 per cent jump in profit after tax for the last quarter of 2023-24.

IndusInd Bank, State Bank of India, Axis Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, Bajaj Finance, and HDFC Bank were the other major gainers.

HCL Technologies tanked nearly 6 per cent after the company reported a flat year-on-year growth in net profit in the March quarter at Rs 3,986 crore. ITC, Wipro, and Bajaj Finserv were the other laggards.

'Construction sector entities' revenues to see 12-15% growth'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's construction sector entities' revenues are likely to grow by 12-15 per cent in the current financial year, while margins will expand by 25-50 bps, rating agency ICRA said on Monday.

It further said that the government's infrastructure push will result in double-digit revenue growth for the construction industry in FY2025.

The rating agency said it maintains a stable outlook on

the sector with steady growth in operating income, moderate leverage, and healthy coverage metrics.

"The aggregate order book-to-sales ratio of ICRA's sample set of companies stood at around 3.9x as of December 2023 (compared to 3.4 times during March-2023), thereby indicating a healthy revenue growth prospect over the medium term," ICRA vice president and co-group head - corporate ratings Ashish Modani said.

Sebi comes out with directive on regulatory fee for BSE

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leading stock exchange BSE is expected to shell out more regulatory fee after the markets watchdog Sebi asked the bourse to pay the fee based on the "notional value" of its options contracts rather than on the premium value.

Also, the exchange has been asked to remit the differential payment for past years with interest. Initial data provided by BSE suggest an outgo of Rs 165 crore plus GST by the exchange.

Reacting to the development, shares of BSE have slumped as much as 18.64 per



cent to an intra-day low of Rs 2,612.0 on the NSE on Monday. Finally, the stock settled 13.31 per cent lower at Rs 2,783 on the NSE.

There could be an increase in the BSE's regulatory fee payments to Sebi due to the significant variance between the notional and premium values. This discrepancy arises from the calculation method, which involves mul-

tiplying the contract size by the underlying price.

Notional turnover represents the overall strike price of all contracts traded in derivatives, whereas premium turnover is the sum of premiums paid on all contracts traded. As the notional value exceeds the premium turnover, opting for notional turnover as the basis entails a higher fee outlay.

"BSE is hereby advised to pay the regulatory fee based on annual turnover to Sebi considering the notional value in case of options contract," the exchange said in a filing to the National Stock Exchange (NSE) on Friday.

Ola Mobility CEO Hemant Bakshi quits

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ride-hailing company Ola Mobility CEO Hemant Bakshi has resigned from the company within four months of joining it, according to sources privy to the development.

Sources also said that the company is planning to lay off 10-15 per cent employees.

"Hemant Bakshi has resigned from the company with immediate effect. Ola Cabs division might lay off 10-15 per cent employees," a

Firm to lay off 10-15 pc staff



source said.

Bakshi had joined the company in January, 2024.

Another source said the company had around 900 people in the Ola Cabs division in January and the lay-off might impact 90-140 people.

When contacted, Ola declined to offer any comment on the information.

Ola Mobility, the ride-hailing division, had reported a narrowing of loss to Rs

1,082.56 crore in financial year 2023. It had a loss of Rs 3,082.42 crore in fiscal year 2021-22.

The total accumulated loss of ANI Technologies, Ola Mobility's parent firm, at the group level increased to Rs 20,223.45 crore, and on a standalone basis, it stood at Rs 19,649.27 crore as of March 31, 2023.

The company has received a total funding of about Rs 31,441 crore as of January 2024

Mcap of BSE-listed companies soar to all-time high of Rs 406.52 lakh cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies soared to an all-time high of Rs 406.52 lakh crore on Monday thanks to a rally in equities where the BSE Sensex climbed over 1 per cent.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rallied 941.12 points or 1.28 per cent to finish at 74,671.28. During the day, it zoomed 990.99 points or 1.34 per cent to 74,721.15. The market capitalisation (mcap) of BSE-listed companies reached a record peak of Rs 4,06,52,419.94

crore (USD 4.90 trillion). Investors' wealth climbed by Rs 2,48,043.51 crore on Monday.

"Markets witnessed phenomenal buying support as Sensex quickly moved towards the crucial 75K mark after investors cheered strong corporate earnings from select frontline banking and cement companies, indicating their smooth sailing despite the global vagaries."

"Optimism prevailed from the start of the trading session as cooling of US bond yields and letdown in the Middle East conflict coupled with a drop in crude oil prices

generated a lot of enthusiasm amongst the investors," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research) at Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

The two-day Fed's monetary policy meeting starting Tuesday will be closely watched by global investors, although markets don't expect any change in the policy outcome, he added. From the Sensex basket, ICICI Bank climbed nearly 5 per cent after the company on Saturday said its March quarter consolidated net profit grew 18.5 per cent to Rs 11,672 crore, helped by lower provisions.

China gives all clear nod for Tesla cars

PNS ■ BEIJING

In a big relief for Tesla, its vehicles passed the key test of compliance with China's data security rules as its billionaire CEO Elon Musk who air dashed to Beijing on Sunday met Premier Li Qiang to press for all clear approval for his cars which faced stiff competition from local rivals.

Musk's Tesla, which in recent months faced entry bans in Chinese government-affiliated buildings besides military bases due to security concerns over data leaks, "passed" the security assessment by a state-owned Chinese industrial association on Monday.

The China Association of

Automobile Manufacturers and the National Computer Network Emergency Response Technical Team/Coordination Centre of China on Monday published a list of 76 models of intelligent connected vehicles that meet the country's auto data security requirements, including those from Tesla.

The list was released after security tests jointly conducted by the two organisations clearing models of local Chinese electric vehicles, including Li Auto, Lotus, Hozon New Energy Automobile, and NIO besides BYD and Tesla, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

In tests starting in November 2023, cars were assessed to see



if they met four compliance requirements — the anonymisation of facial and other information from outside the car, the default non-collection of in-car data, the in-car data processing, and the conspicuous

notification of personal information processing.

The tests were carried out according to related laws and standards, and the carmakers submitted their models voluntarily, according to the associ-

ation. The association said the test aims to help regulate auto data processing, protect the rights of car users, and build a sound environment for auto data security and the industry.

Significantly, Tesla was included in the list that was released as Musk air dashed to Beijing on a surprise visit and met Chinese Premier Li Qiang and other officials.

This is Musk's second visit to China which is Tesla's second-biggest market. Built and put into operation in 2019, the Shanghai factory, Tesla's first gigafactory outside the US, delivered 947,000 vehicles last year, which was 33 per cent more than in 2022.

Increasing global uncertainties may impact demand, exports: FIEO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The escalating geopolitical tension may have implications for the country's exports in the first quarter of 2024-25 as it is likely to impact global demand, apex exporters body FIEO said.

The global uncertainties caused by the continuing war between Russia and Ukraine have impacted India's out-bound shipments in 2023-24, which recorded a decline of 3.11 per cent to USD 437 billion. Imports too dipped by over 8 per cent to USD 677.24 billion.

"If the global situation continues to be like this, it will impact global demand. In the first quarter numbers, the demand slowdown may be visible," FIEO Director General Ajay Sahai said.

He added that despite all the challenges, freight rates are softening and it is giving an indication that demand may be impacted in the times to come.

He cautioned that further escalation of the current situation could have serious implications on world trade.

"Besides geopolitical uncertainties, high inflation and high interest rates are also

crucial reasons for demand slowdown," he said, adding certain advanced economies like Europe may witness more slowdown.

He also said that India's domestic currency depreciated only about 1.3 per cent during 2023-24 as against Chinese Yuan's 4.8 per cent; Thai Baht 6.3 per cent and Malaysian Ringgit's 7 per cent.

When asked about the impact of the Israel-Iran war, he said certain exporters from the engineering sector have stated that the demand for goods that are going to the UAE and then to Iran has come down.

Rhythmic escape with veteran maestros in Hyd

SUBODHINI PUROHIT

Recently, the Jadavpur University Alumni Association Hyderabad Chapter (JUAAH) arranged a captivating musical event to highlight the nation's rich cultural diversity in our city.

Ravindra Bharati auditorium served as the setting for the rhythmic mastery of tabla player Bickram Ghosh and his critically acclaimed group, Rhythmscape.

This occasion was merely one part of the yearly custom maintained by JUAAH, in which charity and music were well matched. They organise a music event with renowned classical virtuosos every year with the goal of raising money for charitable organisations! Renowned artists like Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, Vidushi Kaushiki Chakraborty, flutist Rakesh Chaurasia, and Santoor player Rahul Sharma collaborated with great success on this esteemed event, entrancing audiences with their spiritual performances throughout the twin cities.

Abhishek Mallick on sitar, S Pranav Dath on drums, Pulack Sarkar on keyboard, Nirmalya Roy on vocals, V Suresh demonstrating his skill on the ghatam, and Bickram Ghosh himself on tabla comprised the ensemble Rhythmscape. They created a tapestry of sound together that captivated the crowd and gave the music life!

There was a sense of awe and expectancy in the air as the evening's cultural spectacular came to an end. The distinguished chief guest, Jayesh Ranjan, chief secretary of the Telangana Government's Department of Industries and Commerce and

Department of Information Technology, Electronics, and Communications (ITE&C), was positioned in the front. He was accompanied by Aniruddha Sengupta, President of JUAAH, who both carried the honour and humility befitting their distinguished positions.

The master of the tabla, Bickram Ghosh, took some time before each performance to explain the complex web of ragas, taking the listeners on a voyage of musical discovery. The evening's symphony opened with a mesmerising performance of the "Shiv Dance" (*Tandav*), a devotional and dynamic work. This performance, which had its roots in the *Jog Raga*'s deepest regions, was more than just a musical arrangement; it was a spiritual voyage that evoked Lord Shiva's cosmic dance.

Bickram Ghosh provided an insight into the creation of the second piece, "Zinc," by narrating a story about how the busy streets of New York City served as inspiration. He tells us confidentially, "There's this iconic Zinc Bar in New York. I had the amazing good fortune to hear some of the greatest jazz musicians of all time there. I called our performance "Zinc" in honour of it because of this. We included a little jazz because we wanted to convey the spirit of those special jazz evenings."

The musicians in this musical composition expertly captured the sounds of nature with their instruments, creating a lovely ode to rain. They gave the impression that they were in the middle of a stormy symphony by mimicking the pattern of rainfall and the roar of thunder. Later in the show, the group's next piece, "Little Krishna," took them into the world of classical music. This composition, which made its premiere in 1999, was a masterpiece embellished with the imposing *Charukeshi Raga*, a melody that arouses strong feel-



ings. The musicians integrated the complex rhythms of the *Matt Taal* into its elaborate structure, giving the musical story more nuance and complexity.

Suresh on the ghatam and Ghosh on the tabla performed an amazing duet. Speaking more with Jadavpur University alumnus and tabla player Bickram Ghosh about the worlds of classical and fusion music, he says, "I find myself navigating through contrasting landscapes like a blind man when I delve into the realms of classical and fusion music. Indian classical music has its *ragas, talas*, and rules to follow, just like a clearly defined road. It's similar to walking forward, albeit symbolically blind, with a feeling of direction. However, fusion is akin to navigating new waters without a guidebook. I let my sense of aesthetics guide me through this huge expanse. Our goal with Rhythmscape is to remain faithful to rhythm. We don't perform the protracted *alaaps* that are a defining feature of the classical tradition, but we do embrace the heartfelt and enjoyable elements of Indian classical music. Rather, we concentrate on the subtle rhythmic elements that propel our work along. I've always had a tendency to try new things, even if it meant receiving criticism in the beginning. I've taken chances that weren't always well appreciated, like tossing my tabla into the air and using other practices that seemed out of the ordinary. But as time has gone on, I've seen a change in perspective. Irony and introspection creep into my path when I realised that what was formerly criticised is now hailed as iconic."

Ghosh also discusses his background in music, who started out as a tabla player, sharing the stage with legends like Ravi Shankar Ji and Shiv Kumar Sharma Ji. "Engrossed in the opulent customs of Indian classical music, I worked closely with Carnatic musicians, refining my

EVENT COVERAGE

technique and broadening my repertoire. After studying under and performing with these legends for years, I finally dabbled in fusion in my mid-30s. As I thought back on my experiences, I realised that a deep comprehension of the musical elements being blended is necessary for true fusion. Many artists jump into fusion too quickly, failing to understand the core of both traditions. This strategy looked foolish to me. Rather, I decided to start my fusion efforts with a solid classical music background. I conducted a thorough investigation and searched to find a middle ground where various musical genres could co-exist. This method was made clear by works like "Zinc," which skillfully combined aspects from several traditions to produce something wholly original."

He is now working on three film projects. The first is a Hindi movie called *Band Of Maharajas*, which is helmed by Girish Malik. "This is my first acting role in almost 20 years. I play an Afghan in the movie, which is different from any of my prior roles. The film's main subject matter is music and *fatwas*. I'm also writing the soundtrack for the movie. Among other things, I'm working on *Devi Chowdhurani*, a Bengali movie. In addition to movies, I celebrated a wonderful milestone by releasing *Hanuman Chalisa* on Hanuman Jayanti to a warm reception. In addition, I founded my own music label, a large-scale endeavour with backers, putting out 200 tracks a year on average across Bollywood, religious, classical, and collaborative genres," he exclusively shares with *The Pioneer*.



RAISING AWARENESS OF SOCIAL PROGRESSIVISM IN SOCIETY

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Mahashatavadhani Puja Ganivarya Shri Ajitchandra Sagar ji Maharaj, the renowned disciple of Acharyashri Nayachandrasagar Suriji Maharaj, has attracted attention worldwide by showcasing his extraordinary skills in *Shatavdhan* (memorising 100 things), *Mahashatavadhan* (memorising 200 questions), and 500 *Avadhan* (memorising 500 things) in front of thousands of spectators. He is now ready to begin the incredible and historic *Sahasravadhan-1000 Avadhan* project!

We learned a lot of fascinating information in an exclusive interview we had with this saint in order to learn more about him! For instance, when he said, "I want to achieve such remarkable feats, my memory power has improved through consistent study of *Agams* (Jain holy scriptures), moments of silence, *Saraswati Sadhana*, and ongoing penance, which helped me reach such significant milestones."

Sahasravadhan's next historical program will feature a variety of questions, including difficult mathematics problems, quotations, and poetry, all of which Munishree will thoroughly address. "While the normal person occasionally finds it difficult to focus and concentrate, people who have achieved mental stability find that this kind of concentration comes naturally to them. All questions must be focused on in order to be permanently retained in memory. The upcoming obstacles presented by these 1000 questions require both memory and concentration to overcome," the Jain saint discusses an interesting concept of combined attention.

This event's joint attention feature, in which 15 processes happen all at once all around him, is fascinating. These procedures include *Dhant* games, puzzle presentations, visual displays, letter transfers between bowls, and math question presentations. Furthermore, he educates us by stating, "The conscious and subconscious minds are the two components of the human mind. Therefore, people who have more control over their subconscious minds are able to process up to fifteen things at once. Nowadays, those who want to maintain their cognitive ability, memory, and mental sharpness can practice *Saraswati Sadhana* in order to improve their whole mental and spiritual health."

At the age of twelve, in Unjha and Kumud Bhai, he took up the life of renunciation. After being initiated, he also attained the rank of *Maharaj*. Under the tutelage of *Gurumaharaj*, he set off on a voyage of profound experience, starting his ascetic journey with *Diksha* at the age of 12. He had remembered 350 *gathas* and fortnightly *sutras* in one day in the early phases. And for us, what else was in store? As it happens, "*Saraswati Sadhana* provides practical

answers to the various problems that kids encounter; these include raising IQ, improving memory, and improving focus. Under the direction of renowned neurologists, physicians, and scientists from ISRO, this research has been carried out. Given the growth of dentist clinics over the past ten years, it is likely that growth in psychiatrist clinics will stagnate as well. Therefore, if humans are to fully utilise the potential of the brain, we must embrace meditation, which is the only route to inner peace."

Following his mastery of *sutras* that promote self-control, he quickly became proficient at memorising more than 27,000 verses from 23 of the 45 *Agamas* in the style of Prabhuvir's speech. Munishree was silent for eight years straight! "I am a monk first, and I only attained these *Siddhis* through the path of *Sadhana* after my monastic journey began," he continued. "From now on, my continued spiritual activities will also contribute to any future successes I achieve. It would therefore be pointless for me to ignore and forget the lessons and *Sadhana* that I have acquired throughout my monastic life. Religion and science have always been compared to railroad tracks—they never converge, they go parallel. Though it was frequently observed that religion always leaned toward science, this is changing, with science increasingly leaning toward religion. As soon as feasible, I want to provide *Saraswati Sadhana* to 500,000 youngsters. I want to raise awareness of social progressivism and take society to new heights through my personal *sadhana*."



Mahashatavadhani Puja Ganivarya Shri Ajitchandra Sagar ji Maharaj, who is now ready to begin the incredible and historic *Sahasravadhan-1000 Avadhan* project, speaks exclusively with *The Pioneer* about reaching significant milestones in his life, practicing *Saraswati Sadhana*, and more.

Is sleep deprivation sabotaging your health?

It could be the late-night work, assignment submission, your new bundle of joy, a fun night out, just the heat wave or even those pesky mosquitoes keeping you up at ungodly hours of the night. The next day is a punishment. Your concentration wavers, head gets heavy, eye strains to keep up, fatigue sets in, and productivity dips to an all time low. Sleep deprivation is a common issue, and while an occasional sleepless night might not cause lasting harm, chronic sleep loss can significantly impact your physical and mental health.

One of the first consequences of sleep deprivation is impaired cognitive function. When you're sleep-deprived, your attention span suffers, making it difficult to concentrate, reason, and solve problems effectively. This can have a negative impact on daily activities, from driving, working, and studying, leading to decreased productivity and increased risk of accidents. Lack of sleep can also affect mood and emotional regulation. Persistent lack of sleep is linked with heightened irritability, mood fluctuations, anxiety, and depression. These emotional disturbances can strain relationships and decrease overall quality of life.

One of the first consequences of sleep deprivation is impaired cognitive function. When you're sleep-deprived, your attention span suffers, making it difficult to concentrate, reason, and solve problems effectively. This can severely hinder everyday tasks such as driving, working, and studying, heightening the risk of accidents, and diminishing productivity. These emotional disruptions strain relationships and detract from overall life satisfaction.

Sleep is important in maintaining physical health. Repeatedly being sleep deprived is linked to an increased risk of various health problems, including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and weakened immune function. Over time, these conditions can significantly impact longevity and overall well-being.

Here's how sleep deprivation disrupts your body's delicate hormonal balance: It throws off the production of key hormones like cortisol (stress hormone), insulin (blood sugar regulation), and growth hormone (important for tissue repair and muscle growth). These hormonal imbalances can contribute to weight gain, difficulty managing blood sugar levels, and impaired immune function. Additionally, research suggests a link between chronic sleep deprivation and an increased risk of developing chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, and certain types of cancer. Poor sleep can also worsen existing health conditions, making them more challenging to manage.

Adequate sleep is essential for a healthy immune system. Chronic sleep deprivation can weaken the immune response, making individuals more susceptible to infections and delaying recovery from illness. Long-term sleep deprivation has been linked to a shortened lifespan. Individuals who consistently get less sleep than recommended have a higher mortality risk compared to those who get sufficient sleep.

WHAT IS THE REQUIRED AMOUNT OF SLEEP, THEN?

At least six to seven hours of sleep are required for the body to support various vital functions and to promote optimal physical and mental performance. During sleep, the body engages in crucial restorative processes such as tissue repair and muscle growth. Additionally, adequate sleep is essential for maintaining hormonal balance, supporting immune function, and regulating metabolism.

Even a single day of sleep deprivation, though seemingly harmless in the long term, can give rise to a host of short-term challenges. These include difficulties with concentration, heightened irritability, drowsiness, and decreased productivity. The resulting fatigue can compromise coordination and reaction time, elevating the risk of accidents and injuries. Furthermore, diminished performance at work or school can exacerbate the adverse effects of sleep deprivation.

TIPS FOR GETTING THROUGH A SLEEP-DEPRIVED DAY:

If you find yourself facing a day after a restless night, here are some tips to help you cope:

- **Staying hydrated:** Drinking plenty of water can help improve alertness and combat fatigue.
- **Avoiding strenuous activity:** Opt for light exercise or stretching instead of pushing yourself physically. Also avoid activities like driving or lifting heavy weights or operating machinery.
- **Take breaks:** Give your mind and body short breaks throughout the day to help you stay focused.
- **Skip caffeine in the afternoon:** While a morning cup of coffee might be helpful, avoid caffeine later in the day as it can disrupt nighttime sleep.
- **Power nap (if possible):** If you have the opportunity, a short 20-minute nap can significantly improve alertness and cognitive function.
- **Avoid making important decisions:** When sleep-deprived, your judgment might be clouded. Wait to make important decisions until you've had a chance to rest and recharge.



The recommended amount of sleep varies by age group. For adults aged 18 years and older, it's generally advised to aim for 7-9 hours of sleep per night, although individual needs may vary. Infants need the most sleep, with 14-17 hours recommended for those aged 0-3 months, gradually decreasing as they grow older. For children and teenagers, the recommended sleep duration ranges from 12-15 hours for babies aged 4-11 months to 8-10 hours for teenagers aged 13-18 years. Following this will ensure you have a productive day, and your body and mind are well-rested.

(The author, Dr. Suchismitha Rajamanya, is a Lead Consultant & HOD - Internal Medicine, at Aster Whitefield Hospital.)

what's brewing?

Abdul Muid, Anan Mirza and Nazim Shaikh

Visalaksha Singh

Rajini

Jasmine

Chhaya

Alakya Reddy

Ayesha

Furhung

The host of the annual Global Bloggers Community Event was a great success and honoured exceptional accomplishments in the [Influencer, Entrepreneurs, Youtubers, New Start Ups categories]. Stakeholders, honoured visitors, and valued guests gathered for an evening of celebration and acknowledgment at T-HUB Knowledge City. Their main guest for the evening was Anan Mirza, a well-known young, vibrant entrepreneur on YouTube. Abdul Muid, the MD of Global Bloggers Community, along with the curator Nazim Shaikh of Wizetron, had also attended the event.

Hyderabad's inaugural design show, "Design Vanguard 2024," was held at T-Works in Hyderabad by Woxsen University's School of Arts & Design. The event celebrated a new era of design excellence and provided a much-needed platform for up-and-coming talents in the area to present their work. "Design For Everyone" was Design Vanguard's slogan, emphasising the diversity and inclusivity that are intrinsic to design.

PHOTOGRAPHY PARTY

Photos by- SV Chary

The campus of Vidhya Jyoti Institute of Technology (VJIT) was transformed into a center of creativity, excitement, and entertainment when it held its annual celebration, MESMERIA-2024. A multitude of engaging acts and a star-studded lineup made it an unforgettable experience for all who were present.

FUN

ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBS

GARFIELD

REALITY CHECK

SPEED BUMP

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	
5				6
7			8	
9			10	
			11	
12	13		14	15
17			18	
			16	
19				

NANCY

SUDOKU

6							1	9
3		2	4		9			
	8		5					7
		3	1	5				
1								8
				8	3	2		
7					6			4
		9		5	7			6
2	9							3

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

SUDOKU

Yesterday's solution

6	5	4	3	2	7	6	9	1
9	1	2	8	6	4	3	5	7
7	6	3	9	1	5	2	4	8
1	3	7	5	4	9	8	6	2
5	2	8	7	3	6	9	1	4
6	4	9	2	8	1	7	3	5
2	9	1	6	5	8	4	7	3
3	7	5	4	9	2	1	8	6
4	8	6	1	7	3	5	2	9

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.

ACROSS

- Fish tank
- Fewest
- Narrow shelf
- Ottawa is the capital of this country
- Journey
- Slightly hot
- Thief
- Sweeten a drink with this
- A feeling of rage
- Obstinate

DOWN

- Once more
- Messy, disorganised
- Tumble over and over
- Beneath
- A watch's hands move in this direction
- Not permanent
- A red fruit used in salads
- Correct
- Start
- A creature with nippers

SOLUTION

P	L	E	A	S	A	N	T	I
U	N	G	O	E				
N	O	T	S	T	R	T	I	E
S	E	S	U	R				
A	H	H	D	H				
S	H	O	R	S	C	O	C	O
F	A	A	R					
D	O	C	T	O	R	L	O	N
U	N	E	W	E				
T	E	X	A	M	I	N	E	D

TWO OUT OF FOUR OF NARESH'S FILMS PUSHED BACK!

'HE WENT AHEAD WITH AA OKKATI ADAKKU'

PNS| HYDERABAD

A *Aa Okkati Adakku* is a new film that is creating a lot of excitement and buzz lately. With a strong creative team led by actors Allari Naresh and Faria Abdullah, this upcoming comedy project is expected to be a welcome change of pace for the genre with its premiere on May 3.

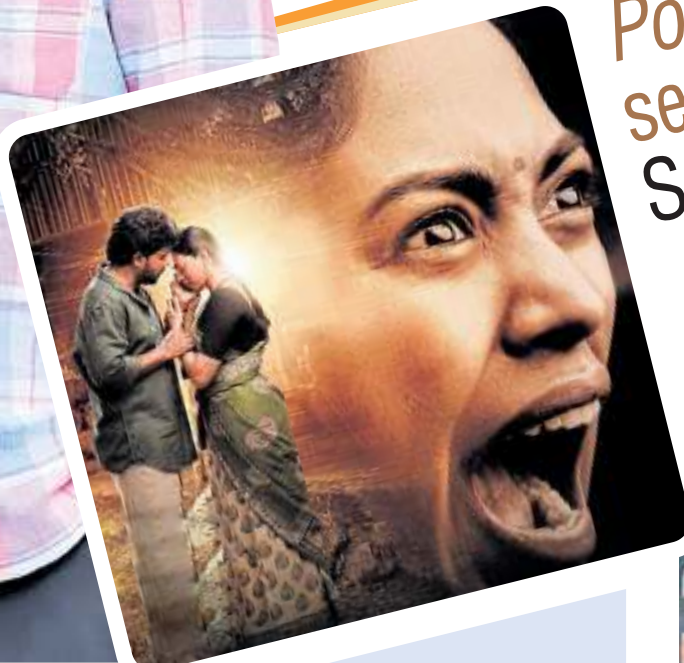
With the production skills of Rajiv Chilaka and the innovative directing of Malli Ankam, the film is being presented by Chilaka Productions and promises a look into the intricacies of contemporary relationships in addition to humour. As the film is nearing its release, director Malli Ankam speaks to the media here, sharing interesting tidbits about the film.

"The title of this story is rather fitting, *Aa Okkati Adakku*," says the director on a brighter note. "It was Naresh's idea to give this title as well. We have only taken the title; this story has no relation to that movie. What feelings are associated with the wedding? How are those feelings felt by some? We have made a strong emotional connection by presenting these subjects in a fun manner. Everyone may relate to this concept. It is a fun family entertainer that will keep everyone entertained." The film, he says, is inspired by social events in the community. "A few of my friends are single. If they inquire as to why they don't go on stage at events, they all inquire about marriage. They claimed they were unsure of how to respond. That started me a lot. I experienced their suffering. Moreover, some of the news in the media and occurrences pertaining to marriage are unexpected. All of this is combined with fiction to create this story."

The lead actor, Allari Naresh, has already got four films in his kitty. However, there was something about *Aa Okkati Adakku* that made him get on board. What is it? Let's hear from the filmmaker. As he says, "Naresh has four flicks on his plate. I wasn't initially all that excited about the story because it was a comedy. I commenced narrating the tale. 'Let's do this tale,' he urged, shaking hands after hearing the first part. Two of the four films were pushed back, while this one was moved forward. He was very fond of this story. It's humorous and has a nice emotional depth. Naresh's portrayal and acting will provide the audience with endless entertainment."

He also adds, "Naresh was ecstatic to view the first draft. Their father holds this title. More accountability, without a doubt. He believed that he had maintained his faith after seeing the film. The crew as a whole is thrilled and optimistic about the results. The movie has been edited. The censors were pleased with themselves since they had a valid point. I appreciate that a lot of people are expressing ignorance."

With the buzz all around *Aa Okkati Adakku*, director Malli Ankam speaks to the Hyderabad media here, sharing some interesting insights about the upcoming film, all set to hit theaters on May 3.



Biggest digi-deal for Naga Chaitanya's *Thandel*

Naga Chaitanya and Chandoo Mondeti joined forces for the third time for the beautiful rural backdrop love story *Thandel* which is progressing with its shoot. Sai Pallavi is the female lead opposite Naga Chaitanya in the movie produced ambitiously by Bunny Vasu, with Allu Aravind presenting it under the Geetha Arts banner.

The movie has been carrying a strong buzz ever since it was announced. The first look, teaser, and other promos were also well-received. Meanwhile, the film's business started on a massive note. The leading OTT platform Netflix obtained the digital rights of *Thandel* for all South Indian and Hindi languages for a staggering price of Rs 40 Cr. This is the biggest digital deal for Naga Chaitanya.

While Naga Chaitanya is one of the most bankable stars, Chandoo Mondeti delivered the biggest hit of his career to date with *Karthikeya 2*, and Geetha Arts is one of the biggest production houses in India. All these factors impacted *Thandel* to get such a fancy offer.

Apart from a beautiful love story, *Thandel* will also have patriotic elements, as shown in the teaser, which has set high expectations for the movie. Shamdat cranks the camera, while rockstar Devi Sri Prasad provides the music. Srinagendra Tangala is the art director.



Polimera 2 is the official selection at 14th Dada Saheb Phalke Film Festival

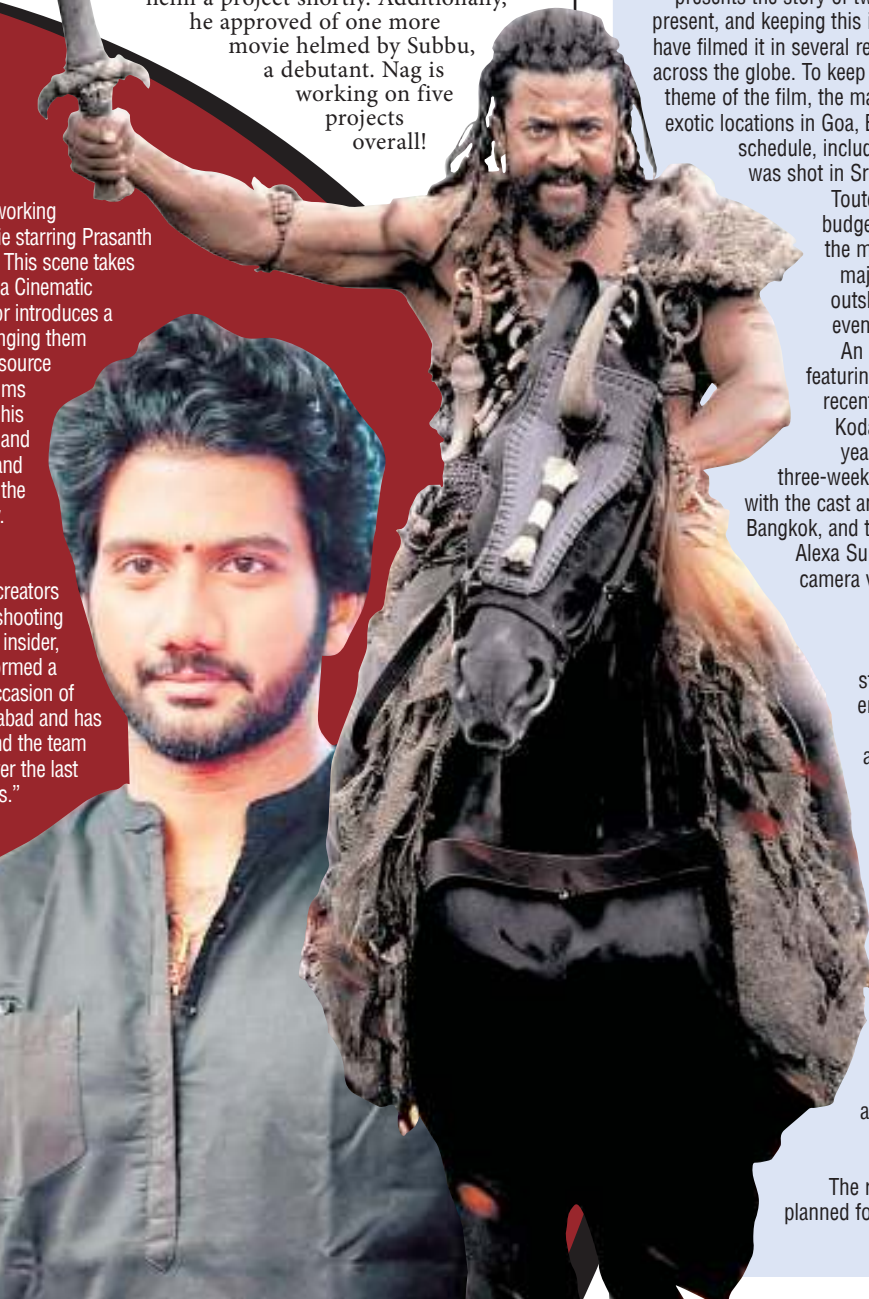
Maa Oori Polimera 2, the sequel to the hugely popular *Maa Polimera* on OTT, debuted in theaters in November of last year to a rousing reception. The film, which stars Satyam Rajesh, Deviyani Sharma, and Getup Srinu in the key parts, is receiving attention once more.

The film has been officially selected for the esteemed 14th Dada Saheb Phalke Film Festival - 2024, which takes place on April 30, 2024, in New Delhi, India. The entire team is pleased about this distinction. Shree Krishna Creations is the proud home of Gowr Krishna's spine-tingling horror film, directed by Anil Vishwanath. The director of music is Gyaani. Kamakshi Bhaskarla, Baladitya, Chitram Seenu, Ravi Varma, Rakendu Mouli, and Sahiti Dasari are among the ensemble cast members.



Nagarjuna on the hop with multi-starrers

As an actor, King Nagarjuna has a demanding schedule. Setting Bigg Boss aside, he has a number of other ventures in the works. He is now filming Kubera, which stars Dhanush in the title role. Soon, Sekhar Kammula's film will go on floors. Additionally, Nagarjuna is in talks to star in Rajinikanth's upcoming Lokesh Kanagaraj film in a major capacity. Nag's part will be revealed, and the filming will soon get underway. Additionally, Nagarjuna has approved one more multi-star film. Naveen, a newbie, is directing this big-budget movie starring Nagarjuna and Akshay Kumar together. This massively expensive movie, which will be produced by Studio Green, will be released throughout India the following year. The majority of the filming will be done in London. Nag is in negotiations for two more movies, both of which will feature him as the sole lead, in addition to these three multi-starrers. Film director Vijay Binni, of Naa Saami Ranga fame, is in advanced talks to helm a project shortly. Additionally, he approved of one more movie helmed by Subbu, a debutant. Nag is working on five projects overall!



Kanguva filmed in seven different nations at actual locations

Since the much-sought teaser for *Kanguva*, a magnum opus, was released by Studio Green and Suriya Sivakumar, it has caused pandemonium everywhere. This outstanding teaser has everything that puts it at the level of a Hollywood production: the expertise, the creative thinking, the originality of the content, the exciting background score, and the execution. Everyone is intrigued by the teaser and eager to witness the epic battle between Bobby Deol, who plays the opponent, and Suriya, who portrays a Mighty Warrior. Apart from this, you might not be aware that the movie was shot at several actual locations by the makers!

Kanguva is undoubtedly one of the most ambitious films coming this year, and to bring a cinematic marvel to audiences, the makers have given everything required to make it a film to be remembered. As it is known, the film presents the story of two eras, historic and present, and keeping this in mind, the makers have filmed it in several real-life locations and across the globe. To keep the uniqueness and theme of the film, the makers have shot it in exotic locations in Goa, Europe, and a major schedule, including war sequences, was shot in Sri Lanka for 60 days.

Touted as the film of the budget worth 350 crores, the makers canned some major sequences in the outskirts of Chennai and even in the Pondicherry. An important sequence featuring Suriya was filmed recently in Kerala and the Kodaikanal forests. Last year, around October, a three-week marathon schedule with the cast and crew was shot in Bangkok, and the makers used the Alexa Super 35 and Alexa LF camera versions for a better output of the action sequences.

The film shows the story of two different eras—the prehistoric and present eras—and covers the story of 1000 years, and the makers have ensured the scale and execution in these two timelines come as a visual delight for the audiences. Director Siva and Studio Green jointly gave the project a global feel and elevated it to the level of Hollywood. Studio.

The release of the film is planned for the second half of 2024.

Telugu trailer of Tamannaah Bhatia and Raashi Khanna's BAAK UNVEILED

Aranmanai 4, starring Sundar C, Tamannaah Bhatia, and Raashi Khanna from the highly successful horror comedy series *Aranmanai*, is all set for theatrical release on May 3rd. This film, coming in Telugu with the title *Baak*, is directed by Sundar C. Kushboo Sundar and ACS Arun Kumar. Produced under the Avni Cinemax P Ltd. banner. The makers launched the theatrical trailer at a grand pre-release event.

The trailer begins with a family of four living happily together and unfortunately, one person loses his life under suspicious circumstances. The husband, who had a fight with his wife and went to the forest and died, will face charges in the trial. As a lawyer, Sundar C takes action against the police. The trailer also showed other characters, including Raashi, living in the haunted house. Heroine Raashi Khanna, speaking at the grand pre-release event,

shared, "Director Sundar C. Garu is the backbone of this movie. He makes films with a very clear vision. I like horror movies very much! But it is very difficult to get them. This time, the glamour of *Baak* has increased. Tamanna is going to be seen in a new role, which she has not played till now. Already, the songs are going viral. The beautiful women characters are beautifully crafted. It is a pleasure to be a part of this film. This is the perfect summer treat! Thanks to Suresh Productions for releasing it in Telugu."

Meanwhile, the other leading lady, Tamannaah Bhatia, says, "*Baak* is a film that gives a very new experience. The trailer is an example to show that Sundar is such a good director. He celebrates women's power. It is a great pleasure to have Kushboo present on his behalf at this celebration. I would like to see more simple women in Telugu movies."

STANDALONE

As everyone celebrated International Dance Day, Regina Cassandra remembered and paid tribute to Mrinalini Sarabhai.



Ranveer Singh and Prasanth Varma's next titled Rakshas

According to recent reports, Ranveer Singh and *Hanuman* director Prasanth Varma are in negotiations for a hugely expensive period picture that will be set against the backdrop of Indian mythology. The producers also stated that they were in talks with other studios to include them in the project and that a formal announcement will be made after the finances were established. With confidence, we can now say that Prasanth Varma, Ranveer Singh, and Mythri have joined forces as producers and are prepared to begin production on the film. People with knowledge of the development

claim that *Rakshas* is the working title for the upcoming movie starring Prasanth Varma and Ranveer Singh. This scene takes place in the Prasanth Varma Cinematic Universe, where the director introduces a lot of characters before bringing them all together in the finale. A source close to the production claims that Ranveer is amazed by his director's long-term vision and hopes for the aspirations, and he is excited to embark on the journey of *Rakshas* shortly. After completing the pre-visualisation stage of the screenplay and script, the creators are currently planning the shooting schedule. According to the insider, "Ranveer has already performed a pooja for the film on the occasion of Hanuman Jayanti in Hyderabad and has met Prasanth Varma and the team multiple times over the last few weeks."





FOCUS ON RAHUL DURING LSG, MI CLASH

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

With T20 World Cup selection round the corner, KL Rahul will have one final chance to stake claim on the second wicketkeeper's spot in the Indian team when Lucknow Super Giants host Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League here on Tuesday.



In the 2024 edition, he has scored 378 runs at a strike rate of 144.27 but it is still less than that of Rishabh Pant (160.60) and Sanju Samson (161.08). While comeback man Pant has all but sealed the first wicketkeeper's spot in the marquee event in the Caribbean islands and the USA in June by displaying some sharp work behind the stumps and sensational knocks with the bat, Samson has also made a strong case for himself by playing match-winning knocks for Rajasthan Royals at a brisk pace.

field restrictions not only to strengthen his Indian team selection prospects but also to help his side score in in excess of 200 runs, which has become a norm in this edition. LSG were handed a seven-wicket loss by Rajasthan Royals, who chased the 197-run target with six balls to spare. The onus will also be on the team's big hitting trio of Quinton de Kock, Marcus Stoinis and Nicholas Pooran to hit those towering maximums and get

match-winning totals as the race for the playoff heats. They will fancy their chances against a struggling Mumbai bowling unit which was carted all over the park by the Delhi Capitals batters the other day. MI bowlers struggled to find answers against young Jake Fraser-McGurk, who wreaked havoc in the Powerplay. Even the world class Jasprit Bumrah conceded a 19-run over before returning to his frugal self while the likes of Luke Wood and

skipper Hardik Pandya were pummeled into submission. They would look to do better. Mumbai Indians find themselves in a precarious position sitting ninth on the points table. They need to win all their matches to stay alive in the competition. The five-time champions need to fire as a unit and the likes of Indian skipper Rohit Sharma, premier T20 batter Suryakumar Yadav would be like to get into the rhythm and churn out some

consistent performances ahead of the World Cup. All-rounder Pandya has flopped with the bat and ball this season. He did get his highest score this season the other day but more would be needed to make it to the World Cup squad.

SQUADS:
Mumbai Indians: Hardik Pandya (c), Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Dewald Brevis, Jasprit Bumrah, Piyush Chawla, Gerald Coetzee, Tim David, Shreyas Gopal, Ishan Kishan (wk), Anshul Kamboj, Kumar Kartikeya, Akash Madhwal, Kwena Maphaka, Mohammad Nabi, Shams Mulani, Naman Dhir, Shivalik Sharma, Romario Shepherd, Arjun Tendulkar, Nuwan Thushara, Tilak Varma, Harvik Desai, Nehal Wadhwa, Luke Wood.
Lucknow Super Giants: Quinton de Kock, KL Rahul (c & wk), Deepak Hooda, Ayush Badoni, Marcus Stoinis, Nicholas Pooran, Krunal Pandya, Ravi Bishnoi, Mohsin Khan, Shamar Joseph, Yash Thakur, Manimaran Siddharth, Prerak Mankad, Arshad Khan, Krishnappa Gowtham, Amit Mishra, Kyle Mayers, Ashton Turner, Matt Henry, Naveen-ul-Haq, Devdutt Padikkal, Yudhvir Singh Charak, Mayank Yadav and Arshin Kulkarni.



Gaikwad is one step ahead of bowlers more often than not: Hussey

PTI ■ CHENNAI

The ability to remain one step ahead of the bowlers has allowed Rituraj Gaikwad to flourish in this Indian Premier League, reckons CSK batting coach Michael Hussey. After an unbeaten 108 in the previous game, CSK skipper Gaikwad was on the cusp of another century on Sunday but fell two runs short of the milestone against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

batting averages in the T20 format but at CSK, that aspect of the game is not discussed much. "We don't talk about it (S/R) much at all. We talk about each player since they need to assess the conditions out in the middle as quickly as they can. The batter needs to take up the responsibility and the ownership in the middle," he continued. "Sometimes, as coaches, we put too much into the players' heads. I am trying to take as much out of their heads as possible, let them be as clear as they possibly can, see the ball and react accordingly.

"He is a brilliant timer of the cricket ball. I've been asking him what his secret is in terms of his placement since he always finds the gaps," said Hussey after the win over Sunrisers. "He is a smart batsman as well. He knows when to attack and when to soak up pressure. He plays spin and seam well. He can score all around the ground. He's almost one step ahead of the bowlers a lot of times. He is wonderful to watch. Very thankful that he is in our team." The 27-year-old was announced as the new skipper of the defending champions a day before the IPL opener, replacing the legendary MS Dhoni. Talking about how Gaikwad has adjusted to the leadership responsibility, Hussey admitted that it has been challenging to succeed the "GOAT". "It has been challenging for him as well. He has taken over as captain to which you have to take your hat off to him. He is succeeding the greatest of all time in this country," he said. Strike rate is more important than

"The strike rate keeps changing, depending on the way you play and the conditions." Hussey was delighted with Daryll Mitchell finally delivering for the Yellow Brigade at number three. He scored a 32-ball 52 against SRH, which also happened to be his maiden IPL half-century. "It's not easy. He's a new player who comes to the team, even Rachin Ravindra, for that matter, and we expect them to come in and fit in right away and go out and perform. But in reality, it's not that easy," he explained. "This is the IPL, the best T20 competition in the world. So sometimes, it takes time. We feel like he's been playing well. Although not getting the big score, he has been contributing down the lines well. He has been moving up and down the batting order, which can be destabilizing for him, but he has found a nice role in number three, and he can feel comfortable at it. Hopefully, it is the start of some consistent form moving forward."

PTI ■ CHENNAI

T20 format has always favoured the batters and that has gone to a 'whole new level' in this Indian Premier League, feels Sunrisers Hyderabad skipper Pat Cummins. The Australian gave his thoughts following SRH's 78-run loss to defending champions Chennai Super Kings here on Sunday. IPL 2024 has witnessed six 250 plus totals already with 200 no more a safe total. Prior this edition, 250 was only breached twice in the history of IPL. "T20 is always on the batting side, and it has gone to a whole new level this season. The way we set up, we had the best chance if we got some really aggressive batters, and that's the way to win the tournament," Cummins said at the post-match press conference. "Frankly, we don't have much (bowling) options. It's not Test cricket, with the ball swinging

T20 has always been a batters game and that has gone to a new level this IPL: Cummins

around. There's not much sideways movement, and there's not much on the wicket either. "So, a lot of times, the best way to get a wicket is to try and defend. Batters are getting better at hitting the ball out and even getting confident. It challenges you as a bowler. But, if you have a big total like 270-280 and if you can go at 9.00 as a bowler and make an impact, it could be match-winning," said the Australian. Analysing the reason for the loss to CSK, he admitted that the side has some work to do while chasing. "Hard to put a finger on it. Nothing really went (according to) to plan tonight. We're pretty well-suited to chasing, but it



hasn't really come off yet. So yeah, it is something (we need) to work on," Cummins reckoned. "There was definitely dead there; haven't seen so much at any other venue across the country. But, we failed to make the most of it, and they bowled well as well. So, it (dew) didn't really factor in this match as much as we would have liked." Of their four losses, three of them have come chasing. Cummins said while their openers have been commendable, middle-order needs to step up. "Whenever the openers have gone off (to score), it's been match-winning and crazy. In a few chases, we felt that we set up really well," he analysed.

"Different batters have stepped up throughout the tournament, and you need two or three guys to make an impact. But tonight, we never really got going, unfortunately. "I am really happy about how the boys have been going about it. Even tonight, there were not too many reckless shots." As for the struggles for the bowlers this season, Cummins felt that it could be possibly due to the wickets being drier. "Haven't really seen too much of a difference with the (new) white ball. It doesn't have as much swing as before, maybe because the wickets are drier. It's a tricky format, and I don't think there's a lot with the new ball," he said.

OTHER SPORTS

Video reviews have changed face of European soccer

One country is holding out

AP ■ STOCKHOLM

As the Swedish league got underway this spring, yellow-and-black-clad supporters of Stockholm club AIK held up an enormous banner containing a long, vivid story about the dark forces of modern soccer conquering the world. "The whole world? No!" read the words on the giant display. "There was, in fact, a small area that successfully resisted the intruders, surrounded by modern football's smoldering ruins." The intruder in this case is VAR — the high-tech video review system formally written into the laws of soccer in 2018 to help referees make the right calls in the biggest moments. While most leagues around the world are now using this technology, Sweden is an outlier in holding out and, in its view, retaining the game in its purest form. The Swedish league is the only one of Europe's top-30 ranked leagues yet to have rolled out the system. It won't be happening anytime soon, either. "VAR is a symbol of modern, commercialized-to-the-point-of-destruction football," says Ola Thews, vice-chairman of AIK's largest supporter organization, ASK. Thews is more than just a die-hard AIK fan. He played a part in mobilising anti-VAR sentiment among Sweden's top clubs and helped push through a motion at AIK opposing the introduction of the technology, before the Swedish soccer federation had the chance to bring it in. That's possible because Swedish clubs are majority-

controlled by members — essentially, supporters — under a regulation that states members should control at least 50% of their club's shares, plus one. Although the federation initially appeared to want VAR in operation — the technology is, after all, used at European and international level — it will not go against the wishes of its member-run clubs. As a result, the federation has held off on further discussions about adopting VAR and said last week it doesn't envisage any in the foreseeable future. That's a big win for Swedish match-going fans who are proud of their rebel status in European soccer. No VAR. No out-of-touch American owners or oil money from the Middle East. A culture where fans matter. Soccer as it should be, in their view. VAR "ruins the euphoria" that soccer can bring, Thews says. "The absolute happiness and passion, or grief and sadness, that comes from a goal being conceded or a goal being scored if you're not sure what has happened until it has been reviewed and decided in a VAR room." Compared to other sports, soccer is a latecomer to video replays. In the United States, the NFL introduced instant replays in the mid-1980s but scrapped the system in 1991 after widespread discontent. They returned in 1999 and have spread to other major North American leagues and international sports, such as cricket and rugby. In soccer, pausing for video reviews can appear more disruptive. Not least because the VAR system has its

imperfections. In the English Premier League, a communications mix-up between the official running the video review and the on-field referee cost Liverpool a valid goal in a loss at Tottenham in October. Weeks later, a Tottenham-Chelsea match had a total of 21 minutes of stoppage time added on largely because of a raft of video reviews. Earlier this month, Nottingham Forest put out an inflammatory statement, questioning the integrity of a match official, after being denied what it perceived to be three clear penalty shouts overlooked by the video referee. In Spain, Barcelona threatened legal action to force a replay after a VAR-related controversy in the recent "clasico" against Real Madrid. Meanwhile, across the Swedish border in Norway, fans already unhappy at VAR being adopted by the country's federation last year before its member-run clubs could establish a unified position have become increasingly disillusioned with the technology after just one season. In one match, it took seven minutes for VAR to decide on an offside call — FIFA's original vision was that it should take no more than six seconds. "Throughout the season, after seeing VAR in full effect, opposition has grown a lot and there's been a lot of disgruntled supporters, football staff and coaches, and players as well," Anders Kjelleevold, chairman of the Norwegian supporters' alliance, told The Associated Press.

Silva to leave Chelsea at end of season

AP ■ LONDON

Brazil defender Thiago Silva will leave Chelsea at the end of the season after four years at the club. The 39-year-old Silva made the announcement on Monday, saying he is leaving the door open for a return to Chelsea "in another role." "Goodbyes are for those that leave and don't come back," he said in a message to Chelsea's fans. "I intend on coming back one day." Silva joined Chelsea in 2020 after his contract at Paris Saint-Germain expired. He said he only planned to stay at the English club for one season. He continued playing for the team after winning the Champions League at the end of his first season there. Now his sons are playing in Chelsea's youth teams. "It's a source of great pride to be a part of the Chelsea family - literally because my sons are here," Silva said. "I hope they can continue their careers here at this victorious club that many players wish to be part of."

Chelsea has five league games left this season but is languishing in ninth place after an inconsistent campaign under first-year coach Mauricio Pochettino. Rory McIlroy and Shane Lowry rally to win Zurich Classic team event in a playoff New Orleans, Apr 29 (AP) Rory McIlroy and Shane Lowry received a standing ovation at historic, creole French Quarter restaurant Arnaud's on the eve of their final round at the Zurich Classic of New Orleans team event. They also had the largest, loudest galleries at the TPC Louisiana, where the charismatic, 34-year-old McIlroy, had not previously played. "He's getting old, but he still moves the needle a little bit," Lowry joked as McIlroy chuckled. "Rory brings a crowd and people love him and we've gotten a lot of love in New Orleans. We've had just the best week." McIlroy and Lowry won Sunday, beating Chad Ramey and Martin Trainer with a nifty par on the first hole of a playoff. Trainer pushed a 6-foot par putt to the



think about where we met and where we've come from, to be on this stage and do this together - really, really cool journey that we've been a part of." McIlroy, of Northern Ireland, won his 25th PGA Tour title and first of the season. Lowry, of Ireland, claimed his third PGA Tour victory. Each walked away with about \$1.29 million and 400 FedEx Cup points apiece. "People have come out in the thousands to support us. It's not lost on me how cool that is," McIlroy said. "Every time I get to play in front of thousands of people, the little boy in me just thinks it's so cool and so exciting." The Irish tandem closed with a 4-under 68 in the alternate-shot final round in windy conditions to match Ramey and Trainer at 25-under 263. Ramey and Trainer began the day tied for 27th at 16 under and shot to the top of the leaderboard with nine birdies between the seventh and 18th holes. They tied the alternate-shot tournament record of 63, but then had to wait nearly three hours to see if their lead would stand up.

Bayer Leverkusen late escapes are keeping Xabi Alonso team unbeaten this season

AP ■ BERLIN

Just call him Xabi Houdini. Bayer Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso has seen his team pull off several scarcely believable escapes from defeat this season as it remains unbeaten across all competitions. Leverkusen, which has already secured the Bundesliga title, is on a 46-game run without a loss - a record across Europe's "big five" leagues. It has been achieved in extraordinary fashion. Robert Andrich scored with the last kick of the game for a 2-2 draw with high-flying Stuttgart on Saturday. The goal came in the sixth minute of stoppage time when there was only supposed to be five. Stuttgart had won seven of its nine games since losing to Leverkusen in the German Cup and led 2-0 against Leverkusen, but even that wasn't enough of a cushion to prevent Alonso's team from coming back and extending its

unbeaten record. The previous weekend, Josip Stanišić scored in the seventh minute of stoppage time for a 1-1 draw at Borussia Dortmund. And in Leverkusen's previous game, Amine Adli scored in the 90th minute for a 1-1 draw at West Ham in the Europa League. In all, Leverkusen has eight draws this season to go with 38 wins. "We've scored so many goals in stoppage time this year," Adli said after the latest drama on Saturday. "But we should score earlier. It would be better for us." Andrich's equaliser against Stuttgart was the 16th goal that Leverkusen has scored in the 90th minute or later across all competitions this season, and the 21st that was scored from

the 86th. "It's not easy to explain what we did again after last week - again in the last minute," Alonso said. "There's no explanation why it happens so often, but it's good for us." Those late goals helped Leverkusen clinch the Bundesliga title ahead of 11-time defending champion Bayern Munich with five rounds to spare.

"We've already reached our main target - to be champions - but we want to keep going, we don't want to stop. There are still three games (in the Bundesliga). We want to stay unbeaten for the rest of the season," Alonso said. Leverkusen's next game is against Roma in the first leg of their Europa League semifinal on Thursday. The teams met at the same stage last season, when José Mourinho's team eliminated Alonso's thanks to a 1-0 win in Rome. They drew the second leg 0-0 in Leverkusen. "From the first Europa League game against (Swedish team) Häcken, we spoke about our experience in Rome and now we're back in the same situation, semifinal vs Roma," Alonso said.

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