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Gaming industry doesn't regulation, says PM



In her father's footsteps to great tradition alive



the pioneer The BRS needs to win all the LS seats. The people can shock the government and ensure that their job gets done only if there is a strong Opposition. If not, the Congress won't give you what was promised. You can either be in the pocket of Modi or face the ED

QUOTE OF THE DAY

- KCR, former Chief Minister

Loco pilot demonstrates...

In an incident that occurred onboard Train no. 17240 Visakhapatnam-Guntur Simhadri Express on Saturday G Rajat Kumar, Assistant Loco Pilot, demonstrated exemplary professionalism and courage in swiftly addressing an alarming chain-pulling incident. NK Mohan, Loco Pilot and G Rajat Kumar, Assistant Loco Pilot were operating the Visakhapatnam -Guntur Simhadri Express today. After the scheduled stoppage at Gollaprolu at 10. 05 hrs, the train resumed its journey..

40 years of flying

in ruthless...

The IAF on Saturday recalled its contribution in 'Operation Meghdoot' 40 years ago when its tactical and strategic airlifters and key helicopters had ferried men and material to "dizzying heights" in Siachen, the world's highest battlefield. The Indian Army marked four decades of its presence on the strategicallysignificant Siachen glacier. Operation Meghdoot was launched on April 13, 1984, when the Indian Army and Indian Air Force had advanced to the Siachen glacier to secure the heights dominating the northern Ladakh...

-PAGE: 5

Payment mechanism for...

The government on Saturday said the payment mechanism for traders importing pulses from Myanmar has been eased and simplified. The importers have been asked to utilize Runee/ Kvat Special Rupee Vostro Account (SRVA) through Punjab National Bank the consumer affairs ministry said in a statement. India depends on imports of pulses to meet the domestic shortage. The country imports tur and urad dals from Myanmar. Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare discussed with Indian...

Scientists can't agree on when...

Flowers may look delicate - but flowering plants, what scientists call angiosperms, are one of the most successful evolutionary organisms on the planet. Including more than 350,000 known species, they dominate the ecological system. hape food webs and play a vital role in oxygen production. Plus, many of them are valuable commercial crops - think of roses, grains and tomatoes. Have you ever wondered when flowers first evolved, and what has been unfolding over millions of years of evolution to cultivate these beautiful species? Recent research is bringing new insights to this longstanding debate among scientists. When you think of fossils, you probably think of

OBTUSE ANGLE

-PAGE: 10

Iran's forces seize cargo ship with 17 Indian sailors on board

Commandos from Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard rappelled down from a helicopter onto an Israeli-affiliated container ship mostly manned by Indians near the Strait of Hormuz and seized the vessel on Saturday, the latest in a series of attacks between the two countries. Seventeen Indian sailors are on board the ship which

The Middle East had braced for potential Iranian retaliation over a suspected Israeli strike earlier this month on an Iranian consular

eral who once commanded its expeditionary Quds Force there. The Israeli war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip meanwhile is now six

whole region. With Iranian-backed forces like Hezbollah in Lebanon and Yemen's Houthi rebels also involved in the fighting, any new attack in the Mideast threatens to escalate that conflict into a wider regional war.

Iran's state-run IRNA said a special forces unit of the Guard's navy attacked the vessel, the Portuguesebuilding in Syria that killed 12 peo-ple, including a senior Guard gen-flagged MSC Aries, a container ship associated with London-based the vessel into Iranian territorial



Zodiac Maritime is part of Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer's Zodiac Group. Zodiac declined to comment and referred questions to MSC. Geneva-based MSC later acknowledged the seizure and said 25 crew had been aboard the vessel. IRNA said the Guard would take

waters. Earlier, a Middle East defence official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence matters, shared a video of the attack with The Associated Press. In it, the Iranian commandos are seen rappelling down onto a stack of containers sitting on the deck of the vessel.

A crew member on the ship can be heard saying: "Don't come out." He then tells his colleagues to go to the ship's bridge as more commandos come down on the deck. One commando can be seen kneeling above the others to provide them with potential cover fire.

Continued on Page 2

India in touch with Iran

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is in touch with Iran to secure the release of 17 Indians on board an Israeli-linked cargo ship that was seized by the Iranian military near the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday amid increasing fears of an Íranian attack on Israel.

Official sources said India has taken up the matter with Iranian authorities through diplomatic channels, both in Tehran and in Delhi, to ensure

the welfare and early release of the Indian crew of the cargo ship 'MSC Aries'. The Iranian action came amid heightened fears that Tehran may launch an attack on Israel in retaliation to a strike on the Iranian consulate in Syria 12 days ago. Iran blamed Israel for the strike. "We are aware that a cargo ship 'MSC Aries' has been taken control by Iran. We have learnt that there are 17 Indian nationals onboard," an Indian government source said.

Continued on Page 2

CM hurt in stone attack 'YSRCP allotted 50% seats to marginalised sections'

Incident takes place during a roadshow in Vijayawada when assailants rained stones with catapults on Jagan's bus

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy encountered a distressing incident during his 'Memantha Siddham' bus yatra at Ajit Singh Nagar in Vijayawada when unidentified assailants attacked his bus with stones from a catapult. The Chief Minister, along with YSRCP leaders, was atop the bus, responding to supporters when miscreants hurled stones towards them. One of the stones struck the Chief Minister on his forehead, just above his left eye, causing a minor injury. MLA Vellampalli Srinivas, who accompanied the CM, also sustained a minor injury in the

Despite the unexpected attack, immediate medical aid was administered to the Chief Minister and the bus Despite the injury, Jagan continued his bus yatra after receiving first aid.

Local YSRCP leaders in Vijayawada have raised suspicions regarding the involvement of opposition factions, particularly the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), in the attack. However, no concrete evidence has been presented to an overnight stay



confirm these allegations, and the attackers' identities remain unknown.

The incident has prompted broader discussions about public figures' safety and the region's escalating political rivalries. Law enforcement authorities are actively investigating the matter to identify the culprits and prevent similar occurrences. The ttack on CM Iagan has elicite spread condemnation, with calls for maintaining peaceful conduct in politics and upholding the principles of the democratic process. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy concludes the Day 13 of the Memantha Siddham Yatra as the bus reaches Kesarapalli for ■ MLA Vellampalli Srinivas, accompanying him, also received an injury to his left eye.

Immediate medical attention was provided to both the chief minister and MLA Vellampalli inside the bus.

Despite the injuries, CM Jagan continued with his bus journey after receiving first

Local YSRCP leaders suspect opposition factions, particularly the TDP, might be behind the attack.

■ The police are investigating the matter to identify the culprits and occurrences in the future.

■ The attack on CM Jagan has drawn widespread condemnation.

PM, STALIN CONDEMN ASSAULT

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has swiftly reacted to the assault on CM Jagan Mohan Reddy, expressing his concern via Twitter. He tweeted, "I extend my heartfelt prayers for the swift recovery and well-being of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin took to Twitter, denouncing the violence and emphasising the importance of maintaining civility in political discourse. BRS leader and former minister KTR echoed similar sentiments, condemning the attack and expressing relief at Jagan's safety. YSRCP general secretary and MP V Vijayasai Reddy condemned the attack, attributing it to Chandrababu's alleged preference for underhanded tactics over developmental politics. YSRCP MLA Hafeez Khan accused the

TDP of cowardice and electoral desperation. Lakshmi Parvathi accused Chandrababu of orchestrating the attack due to his inability to stomach Jagan's growing popularity, particularly in Guntur and Krishna districts. YSRCP leaders Perni Nani and Ambati Rambabu condemned the incident and pointed fingers at opposition figures Chandrababu Naidu and Pawan Kalyan.



to marginalised sections'

PNS MANGALAGIRI

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has said that 50% of the seats, totalling 200 (175 Assembly and 25 Lok Sabha seats), have been allocated to SC/ST/BC and minority communities by the YSRCP government, marking a historic first in Andhra Pradesh.

During an interaction with members of the handloom weavers' community, CM Jagan emphasised the government's collaboration with international e-commerce platforms to market handloom products. He also underscored the distribution of three sets of uniforms to 44 lakh government school students, with a priority given to handloom weavers.

Expressing gratitude for the support of the handloom weavers, CM lagan announced initiatives to clear debts amounting to Rs 120 crore in APCO (Andhra Pradesh State Handloom Weavers Cooperative Society) and allocate Rs 460 crore for the development of handloom

Addressing concerns regarding ginalised communities. criticised Chandrababu Naidu and his son Lokesh for denying tickets to BC community members, despite their significant population. He cited instances where seats were allocated unfairly, stressing the importance of BC representation in both Mangalagiri and Kuppam.

CM Jagan announced initiatives to clear debts amounting to Rs 120 cr in APCO (Andhra Pradesh State Handloom Weavers Cooperative Society) and allocate Rs 460 crore for the development of handloom weavers.

 Jagan makes comparison between the current government's achievements and the unfulfilled promises of the previous administration, particularly regarding support for handloom weavers.

Initiatives taken to support handloom weavers, including collaboration with international e-commerce platforms and financial assistance.

Highlighting the government's commitment to social welfare, CM Jagan disclosed that 50% of seats in the State are now allocated to mar-

casing the extensive reach of welfare schemes in Mangalagiri, including benefits received by a vast majority of households and substantial financial allocations for develop-



Amaravati stands for Telugu pride: Naidu



PNS TADIKONDA

TDP chief Nara Chandrababu Naidu rallied supporters during 'Praja Galam' meetings in Tadikonda and Prathipadu on Saturday, underscoring the Telugu Desam Party's steadfast dedication to the state's advancement.

Reflecting on the collaborative effort behind Amaravati's creation, Naidu asserted, "Amaravati symbol-

ises our Telugu pride," acknowledg ing the commitment of 29,000 farmers who collectively contributed 35,000 acres of land. He also articulated plans to elevate Visakhapatnam into a financial hub and foster Kurnool as a vibrant urban centre, underscoring a holistic approach to regional develop-



Clarify stance on VSP: Botsa to Chandrababu

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

In a move that has sparked heightened debate across Andhra Pradesh, Education Minister Botsa Satyanarayana has pressed TDP leader Chandrababu Naidu for his party's stance on the future of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP).

Addressing the media in Visakhapatnam on Saturday, Botsa underscored the urgency of Chandrababu Naidu's clarification, particularly with the leader's impending visit to Gajuwaka.



Uphill task for PK in Pithapuram: Mithun

PNS KAKINADA

YSRCP regional coordinator and MP PV Midhun Reddy has urged voters to prioritise accessibility in their choice of leader. He highlighted the challenges faced by the JSP cadre in reaching their party chief, Pawan Kalyan, implying a lack of direct engagement with the elec-

Midhun Reddy emphasised the importance of supporting local leaders like Vanga Geetha, who he asserts are more accessible and responsive to the community's

Speaking specifically about the Pithapuram constituency, Midhun Reddy praised Vanga Geetha as a formidable candidate with a strong track record of community service.

He noted her previous tenure as an MLA and her consistent presence among the people, contrasting it with Pawan Kalyan's intermittent appearances. Midhun Reddy emphasised the electorate's desire for representation that

actively addresses their concerns and stands with them through challenges. Expanding on the electoral landscape beyond Pithapuram, Midhun Reddy

underscored YSRCP's robust presence across all 175 constituencies. He suggested that Pawan Kalyan faces an uphill battle in Pithapuram and dismissed allegations of electoral bribery, asserting that voters prioritize genuine representation over financial incentives.





Avinash Reddy

PNS KADAPA

YS Vimala Reddy, Ssister of the late YS Rajasekhar Reddy, has voiced her disapproval of her nieces, Sharmila and Sunita, daughters of the YS family, for their continuous accusations against Avinash Reddy in the Vivekananda Reddy murder case, lacking substantial evi-

Expressing her dismay at the behaviour of the two sisters during a media interaction on Saturday, Vimala emphasized her opposition to the actions of Sharmila and Sunita, stating, "It is distressing to witness members of our own family tarnishing the reputation of the YS family in this manner."

Vimala questioned the sisters' intentions, asking, "Do these two sisters have any firsthand knowledge of Avinash's alleged involvement in Viveka's mur-der?" She argued against blindly trusting the accusations made against Avinash, highlighting his esteemed position as a leader in Kadapa and his contributions to the region's development.

Continued on Page 2



Heatwave stares R'seema in its face

PNS GUNTUR

Hot, humid and uncomfortable weather is likely to prevail at isolated places in the Ravalaseema region during the next five days, the Meteorological Centre said on Saturday.

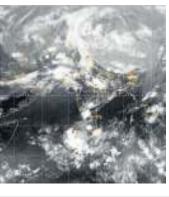
The Meteorological Department weather report here said that the same situation is likely to prevail in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and South Coastal Andhra Pradesh during the next 48 hours. Heatwave

conditions are likely to prevail in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and South Coastal Andhra

Light to moderate rain is likely to occur at one or two places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh during the next 48 hours and on April 18, and 19, in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh during the next 24 hours and on April 18, 19 and in Rayalaseema during the next 48 hours and on

Pradesh from April 15 to 17.

April 18 and 19. Dry weather is likely to pre-



vail in Rayalaseema during the next five days, in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh from April 14 to 17 and in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh on April 15, 16 Rain occurred at one or two

olaces in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and dry weather prevailed in Rayalaseema during the last 24 hours. The highest maximum temperature of 40 degree Celsius was recorded at Cuddapah in Rayalaseema on Friday, the report added.





Balmoor Venkat getting

The upper house, at least in good old days, symbolised grey eminence. Over the years, the decline in standards of public discourse among netas has started reflecting there too. The latest stormy petrel to rile others is National Students of India (NSUI) state unit president Balmoor Venkat who, as MLC, has been getting too big for his boots. Power seems to have gone to his head

befit his stature. During a meeting in Nizamabad, Venkat went all-out to slam Dharmapuri Arvind, calling him 'bald and a mad dog'. Politics apart, Arvind is a Member of Parliament from Nizamabad, who had won against former CM K Chandrasekhar Rao's daughter K Revanth Reddy had said the Legislative Council "looks like an Irani cafe" and that it needs some intellectuals. Alas! It looks like Venkat is out to make an Irani

Crediting Sunil Kanugolu is

demoralise us," said another leader.

Revanth doesn't want to be labelled Babu's disciple

It appears that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy no longer wants to be labelled as a 'disciple' of former CM and TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu. Although he has become the Chief Minister in his own right; much to his upon becoming MLC. Going by his arro- chagrin, his detractors keep pointing to

without fail. As Shobhaa De describes in her novel Sethji, "Indian politicians are smart, canny and wily. They dress to woo voters. White works. White is the ultimate sartorial statement". The problem arises when brats and henchmen of the netas, dutifully dressed in white, accompany their leaders, but are not really welcome at these functions. The host will have a tough time drawing the line among the white-clad gentry. By default,

the white-clad guests will override bandhuvulu and family friends when it comes to paying special attention. Few hosts manage to screen the

gate-crashers. So, most of the white-clad gatecrashers manage to have sumptuous food, at unavoidable, but additional costs for the poor host, who perhaps knows for sure the proverb: "Not everything that's white is milk.

Will Raghu say 'Ram Ram' to politics?

Realpolitik seems to be in full play in the politics of Andhra Pradesh. Member of Parliament Raghuram Krisham Raju, who switched to Telugu Desam Party after winning the 2019 LS polls on YSRCP ticket and later became a bitter critic of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, is in a predicament now. He seems to have become dispensable for TDP supremo and former CM N Chandrababu Naidu. For, there is talk that Raghuram could be given the ticket for the Undi Assembly seat. This has incensed sitting MLA Ramaraju, who has indicated that he would quit the party if he is disturbed from his seat. But insiders know that all this is part of CBN's drama to convince Raghuram that he had tried to spare Undi ticket but could not convince Ramaraju to give up his seat. So, people say, Raghuram has only one

(With inputs from Naveena Ghanate, K Venkateshwarlu and SNCN Acharyulu)

YSRCP confident of tribal support in upcoming polls

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

As Andhra Pradesh braces itself for the impending elections next month, the ruling Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) stands bolstered by a sense of assurance, particularly in securing the backing of the tribal population. Reflecting on the setbacks faced by the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in tribaldominated seats during the 2019 State polls, YSRCP leaders exude optimism regarding their electoral prospects.

A pivotal element contributing to the YSRC's resonance among tribal communities is the establishment of new districts, notably Parvatipuram-Manyam and Alluri Sitaram Raju (ASR). These initiatives have streamlined access to governmental services for tribal populations, significantly ameliorating their living standards. Furthermore, the YSRC administration's decision to annul GO Ms No 97, which greenlit bauxite mining in tribal regions of the ASR district, strikes a chord with tribal

as a bastion for the YSRCP.
Encompassing the ASR and
Manyam districts, Araku
boasts a substantial
electorate of over 14.5 lakh
voters across seven Assembly
segments. Chetti Thanuja
Rani, the daughter-in-law of
Araku Valley MLA Chetti
Phalguna, is the YSRCP's
candidate for the MP seat. candidate for the MP seat constituents. The contentious GO, sanctioned by the preceding TDP regime in 2015, had triggered vehement protests among tribal communities. Despite their opposition, the TDP government persisted, culminating in tragic incidents such as the targeted assassinations of two TDP leaders by

The Araku Lok Sabha constituency, reserved for Scheduled Tribes (ST), stands as a bastion for the YSRCP.

Maoists in September 2018. The Araku Lok Sabha constituency, reserved for Scheduled Tribes (ST), stands as a bastion for the YSRCP. Encompassing the ASR and Manyam districts, Araku boasts a substantial electorate of over 14.5 lakh voters across seven Assembly segments. Chetti Thanuja Rani, the daughter-in-law of Araku Valley MLA Chetti Phalguna, is the YSRCP's candidate for the MP seat.

Presenting a challenge to Thanuja Rani is Kothapalli Geetha, a former deputy collector, representing the TDP-BJP alliance. Nevertheless, historical trends and the palpable confidence of tribal communities in the YSRCP's developmental ini-

tiatives augur well for the incumbent party in the forthcoming 2024 elections. Thanuja Rani reaffirms this sentiment, underscoring the overwhelming support garnered by the YSRCP in the 2019 elections across all seven assembly segments and the Araku Lok Sabha seat. As the electoral arena intensifies, the YSRC stands poised to fortify its support base among tribal populations through its developmental pursuits and welfare pro-

YSRCP allotted...

Continued from Page 1

CM Jagan compared the government's performance with the unfulfilled promises of the previous administration, particularly in supporting handloom weavers.

He emphasised transparent spending of over Rs 3,706 crore for handloom weavers in the last 58 months and the significant increase in pension distribution.

with the previous regime's pension distrib-ution, CM Jagan highlighted the government's efforts to provide Rs 3,000 as a pension and ensure doorstep delivery through dedicated vol-

He reiterated his commitment to following in the footsteps of his father, Y S Rajasekhara Reddy, in prioritizing social welfare initiatives.

Good response to TDP-BJP roadshow

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

In a spirited display of political unity, Telugu Desam Party (TDP) Visakhapatnam Lok Sabha candidate M Sribharat accompanied by Alliance candidate Vishnu Kumar Raju from BJP, took to the streets of Akkayyapalem in the North Constituency for a vibrant roadshow. Addressing the gathered crowd, Sribharth lamented the lack of materialization of several central government-sanctioned projects in Visakhapatnam, attributing the delay to the state government's purported inefficiency.

over the apparent stagnation of projects sanctioned by the central government for Visakhapatnam, attributing the delays to the alleged inefficiency of the state government. He lamented the neglect of key initiatives such as the Visakhapatnam railway zone, metro rail project, IT and industrial sectors, and tourism development under the current YSRCP government. Drawing attention to past successes, he highlighted the efforts of the TDP government in halting



plant during the Vajpayee government's tenure as part of the NDA coalition.

Emphasizing the necessity state government and the BJP to drive development in Visakhapatnam, Sribharth underscored the achievements of the three-party alliance in the previous elections. In a similar vein, Vishnu Kumar Raju echoed the sentiment, urging party cadres to disseminate their agenda to every doorstep and every voter.

Known for his accessibility and track record of delivering results for his constituency, Vishnu Kumar Raju reiterated the importance of safeguarding

the interests of Visakhapatnam and Andhra Pradesh. He called upon voters to exercise their democratic right to vote out the incumbent YSRCP governtive administration. As the contest intensifies

and the significance of this electoral moment looms larger, Sribharth and Vishnu Kumar Raju emphatically conveyed a resounding message: the moment for transformation has arrived. It's a pivotal juncture where the constraints of inertia must be shed, paving the way for an era filled with boundless opportunities and realization Visakhapatnam's destiny as a beacon of progress.

Clarify stance on VSP: Botsa...

Continued from Page 1

"Chandrababu should state his stand on the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant," Minister Botsa declared, stressing the need for transparency even if not directly questioned. "Even if the people don't inquire, TDP should provide answers. Chandrababu's visit to Gajuwaka tomorrow should be contingent upon him expressing his stance on the steel plant.

Beyond this pressing issue, Minister Botsa reiterated his staunch opposition to the privatisation of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, pledging to vehemently contest any such moves within parliamentary corridors. He cautioned against lending support to political alliances such as TDP-Jana Sena-BJP, cautioning that doing so could be seen as endorsing privatisation. In a scathing critique of TDP's decision-making mechanisms, Minister Botsa questioned the party's choices, particularly regarding the allocation of the Anakapalli MP seat and its purported neglect of promoting BC (Backward Class) leaders. He accused Chandrababu Naidu of being out of touch with the populace, attributing this to age and a lack of alignment with

In stark contrast, Minister Botsa praised Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy's governance, lauding his unwavering dedication to fulfilling promises and uplifting marginalized sections of society. He highlighted Chief Minister Jagan's inclusive governance approach, exemplified by the appointment of individuals from

impassioned call for clarity from Chandrababu Naidu underscores the imperative of transparent and accountable political leadership. The divergent approaches of the ruling YSRCP visions for the future trajectory of Andhra Pradesh.

CM's aunt raps Sharmila...

Continued from Page 1

"Avinash is deeply connected to the people of Kadapa. He tirelessly works for the betterment of the region. Vivekananda Reddy himself supported Avinash's endeavours until his final moments," she remarked, underscoring Avinash's dedication despite facing unjust scrutiny. Expressing disappointment in Sharmila's leadership, Vimala questioned, "Where is Sharmila's sense of responsibility?" She criticized Sharmila for allegedly gathering adversaries against Jagan and emphasized Avinash's silence amid the accusations, contrasting it with the alleged attempts of the real perpetrator to secure bail.

Vimala further admonished Sharmila and Sunita for dragging Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy into the controversy, attributing their actions to personal biases against him. "The entire family is suffering due to the actions of Sharmila and Sunita," she lamented, urging the people of Andhra Pradesh to support Chief Minister Jagan and Avinash Reddy, whom she believes are dedicated to the welfare of Kadapa.

India in touch...

Continued from Page 1

'We are in touch with Iranian authorities through diplomatic channels, both in Tehran and in Delhi, to ensure security, welfare and early release of Indian nationals," it said.

Iranian news agency IRNA reported that the Portugueseflagged vessel is operated by the Zodiac Maritime Shipping Company, which is partly owned by Israeli businessman Eyal Ofer. It said Special Naval Forces of Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) seized MCS Aries near the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday, adding the forces carried out a heliborne operation on the ship's deck, directing it towards Iran's territorial waters.

too big for his boots?

gant behavior while touring the state in his capac-

ity as NSUI chief; people say he thinks he is deputising for Revanth Reddy. Not just in terms of accessibility but also his words do not his TDP roots. The other day, he took

Kavitha. Venkat went on to say: "We are enough to answer him". In fact, even a person within the Congress said: "It is difficult to get hold of him". At one point, cafe look far better!

hurting brainy Cong leaders

Right or wrong, political strategist Sunil Kanugolu has been bagging credits, reportedly even for things done by Congress leaders. So, there is heartburn among brainy Congress leaders when the opposition credits Sunil for proven strategies to which they had contributed. A party leader said: "It is like people are assuming we have stopped using our brains. But they take care of 'Aappanna Hastham'. Even for our everyday efforts, he takes the credit," lamented a Congress leader. "There is more to Congress than Kanugolu. It is an Opposition tactic to

serious note of media reports that suggested he met Chandrababu at the airport, and sent legal notices to the media outlets concerned. Revanth has been thinking along the lines of AP Chief Minister Jaganmohan Reddy when it comes to administration, be it reviewing Power Purchase Agreements, reorganisation of districts, replicating AP volunteer system as Indiramma committees, or clearing pending bills to media houses. It is a different matter that, should the TDP-JSP-BJP alliance win in Andhra Pradesh, he will have a lot more to brace

Not everything that's white is milk

Politicians of all hues prefer to wear white traditional garments, suggesting austerity and purity. Of late, scribes with political ambitions have also adopted this sartorial style statement to achieve their aims and some have succeeded. Now, ahead of the elections it has become a fashion for common people to invite netas to all kinds of functions - marriage, switch from half-saree to saree, thread ceremony or whatever-so that they can bask in the reflected glory. It is simply because the bigger the neta, the more the glare of the media on the function. Given their hunger for votes, invited politicians make it point to attend these functions

option: say 'Ram Ram' to politics.

Continued from Page 1

He dismissed concerns about Pawan Kalyan's tactics and alleged financial dealings, labelling his rhetoric on money matters Looking ahead, Midhun

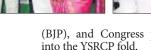
Uphill task...

Reddy announced an upcoming political event, the Memanta Siddam Bus Yatra in Kakinada Rural on April 19, which will feature Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

He framed the event as a potential game-changer in local politics, urging party members to mobilize and ensure its success.



Many Oppn leaders join YSRCP



Prominent figures from several opposition parties joined FROM JSP the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) at a ceremonial event held in Guntur. West Constituency) The event, presided over by

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, marked the formal integration of key leaders from the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Jana Šena Party (JSP), Bharatiya Janata Party

PNS GUNTUR

(BJP), and Congress party into the YSRCP fold.

Veerashetty Subbarao (Jana Sena State Convener, Guntur

Sheikh Ziaur Rehman K. Nagaraju Kandula Raja

Amaravati...

Continued from Page 1

Moreover, Naidu outlined an array of welfare initiatives to be pursued under the NDA's stewardship. "The NDA alliance pledges to generate 20 lakh jobs over five years. We will extend a Rs 3000 unemployment allowance until employment is secured, introduce an annual job calendar, and prioritize government employment for the youth. Additionally, we have granted a 43% PRC for government employees. While Jagan Reddy vowed to abolish the CPS, various crucial allowances like DA and PF remain pending under his administration," articulated the TDP chief.

Chandrababu Naidu reiterated his unwavering commitment to Andhra Pradesh's advancement, stressing the importance of inclusive development and accountable governance. He highlighted the TDP's implementation of numerous schemes for minority communities and pledged to safeguard their rights. Drawing attention to initiatives such as the establishment of Haj houses and the promotion of Urdu as a secondary language across 13 districts, he cautioned minorities against placing undue trust in CM Jagan Mohan Reddy's assurances.

Iran's forces... Continued from Page 1

FROM CONGRESS PARTY

FROM BJP

FROM TDP

Chandu Sambasivarao

Dr. TV Rao

Naga Goud

Byra Ajay Babu

Sheikh Shahjit

Sheikh Usman

S Raghupathi Rao

T Surendra Kumar

Pendyala Venkataramana

Yarlagadda Venkataramana

The video corresponded with known details of the MSC Aries. The helicopter used also appeared to be a Soviet-era Mil Mi-17 helicopter, which both the Guard and the Iranian-backed Houthis of Yemen have used in the past to conduct commando raids on ships.

The British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations described the vessel as being "seized by regional authorities" in the Gulf of Oman off the Emirati port city of Fujairah, without

elaborating.
The MSC Aries had been last located off Dubai heading toward the Strait of Hormuz on Friday.

diverse religious backgrounds as MLAs and ministers. As the discourse surrounding the fate of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant continues to escalate, Minister Botsa Satyanarayana's

and the opposition TDP paint a vivid picture of competing Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any

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32 women honoured with **Ugadi Nandi Awards**

PNS RAJAHMUNDRY

AP Women's Commission Chairperson, Venkatalakshmi Gajjala Reddy, expressed the significance of the Ugadi festival in illuminat-

the Ugadi festival in illuminating the lives of Telugu people during a programme in Rajahmundry on Saturday.
Reddy bestowed the prestigious Ugadi Nandi Awards upon 32 outstanding women hailing from various fields in both Telugu states and Orissa both Telugu states and Orissa. The event, organized by the Philanthropic Society of India, served as a platform to recognize and celebrate their remarkable achievements.

One of the notable recipients was Kanthi Rekha, the Founder & Director of Lookuptrendz, who was honoured with the Nandi Award for Women's Empowerment. Originating from Rajahmundry, Rekha established Lookuptrendz in 2019, dedicating herself to empowering women through a myriad of initiatives. Her ment. unwavering dedication has



the employment landscape, especially for married women aspiring for career advance-

Moreover, Rekha's influence resulted in the training of over transcends her professional women worldwide. Through

accomplishments. Her acclaimed work, "Modern Women's Guide Book," quickly rose to become a bestseller on Amazon, positioning her as a source of inspiration for

this groundbreaking publication, she imparts invaluable insights and guidance for personal and professional development, cementing her status as a guiding light for women

Balayya hits fan while taking selfie

PNS ■ HINDUPUR

Actor turned politician and TDP Hindupur MLA N Balakrishna (Balayya) hit the roads for the upcoming election campaign on Saturday is in the news for the wrong reasons. The actor, who has a reputation for losing his cool quite often in public and resorting to physical aggression, was involved in another unsavoury incident.

During a recent visit to the Sathva Sai district on Saturday morning, Balakrishna, the TDP's assembly candidate, slapped a fan, who approached him to take a selfie. The TDP leader had arrived in Kadiri by helicopter to kick start his election bus tour (Swarnandhra Sankara Yatra). As he landed, enthusiastic fans crowded around him jostling to get a glimpse of the actor-politician.

One over-enthusiastic fan pushed through to get close enough for a selfie. Balakrishna lost his cool when he was mobbed by the admirers. Visibly agitated, the TDP candidate slapped the selfie-seeking fan. Subsequently, the party leaders shoved the fan away from the actor-politician.

Randomised allocation of EVMs completed: Colletor

PNS VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector, Dr S Dilli Rao, has announced the successful completion of the first phase of Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) allocation for Parliament and Assembly constituencies. The randomisation process, crucial for ensuring fair elections, concluded flawlessly without any errors. Continuing on the second day,

Continuing on the second day, Saturday, the randomisation process took place at the EVM storage facility located in Gollapudi near Vijayawada.

Dr Dilli Rao, alongside Joint Collector Dr. P. Samapath Kumar and Vijayawada Municipal Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar, personally oversaw the allocation sonally oversaw the allocation of EVMs to the Vijayawada Parliament and seven other assembly constituencies on Saturday. The meticulous coordination among Returning Officers (ROs), Assistant Returning Officers (AROs), and staff ensured a seamless process devoid of errors.

Addressing the gathering, Dr Dilli Rao explained that the randomisation process involved assigning special

numbers to EVMs and interlinking them with the respective assembly segments. He emphasized the careful execution of steps including scanning, boxing, and transfer to temporary strong rooms at every stage.

Moreover, Dr Dilli Rao highlighted the provision of Control Units and Ballot Units, ensuring a 20% reserve for a total of 1,781 polling stations. Additionally, efforts are underway to ensure the availability of up to 30% of Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail

(VVPAT) units. Key officials including NTR District Revenue Officer (DRO) V. Srinivasa Rao, Vijayawada Divisional Officer (RDO), and Vijayawada East Returning Officer (RO) Bh. Bhavani Sankar, KRC Special Deputy Collector and Vijayawada West RO Kiranmayi, Nandigama RDO A. Ravindra Rao, Tiruvuru RDO K. Madhavi, Jaggaiahpet Venkateswarlu, EVM Nodal Officer G. Maheswara Rao, Election Superintendent M. Durga Prasad were also present during the proceedings.

TECKZITE-24 of RGUKT-Nuzvid ends

The inaugural day of TECKZITE-24, a prestigious national-level techno-management event organised by the SDCAC, a student body of the RGUKT-Nuzvid campus, concluded on Saturday amidst much enthusi-

Throughout the day, students showcased a diverse array of prototypes, with a total of 15 exhibits on display. Additionally, there were around 30 captivating game stalls set up by the students. The event saw active participation from 200 students representing

Professor M. Chandrasekhar, the Director of RGUKT-Nuzvid, graced the occasion along with other esteemed faculty members,



touring the stalls to observe the projects. Among the notable exhibits were innovations such as MatruSparsh, Smart Helmet, Radar System, Voice Control Bot, Smart Agriculture, IoT-Based Health Tracking System, Firefighting Robot, Bicycle Ambulance, Automatic Robotic Arm, and Voice-Based Medicine Reminder

An intriguing highlight was ZOYA, a project aimed at revolutionizing human-robot interaction. ZOYA integrates advanced technologies, including OpenAi's generative models such as GPT-3.5 and GPT-4, enabling it to engage in seamless and intelligent conversations while also incorporating physical gestures.

In the evening, students were treated to captivating cultural performances, notably a mesmerizing band performance by Shyam Charan that left the audience spellbound.

The event witnessed the presence and participation of distinguished figures including RGUKT-AP Registrar Prof Gopala Raju, Central Dean D Sravani, Finance Officer B Sreenath, Academic Dean T Ratnakar, Co-Convener P Shyam, among others.

DPS donates 20 tons of veggies to TT



Delhi Public School, situated in Nidamanuru near Vijayawada, demonstrated its commitment to community welfare by donating a substantial amount of vegetables to support the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) Nityannadanam initiative. Vice Chairman Parimi Surendra Babu of Delhi Public School led the initiative by overseeing the dispatch of a lorry carrying around 20 tons of vegetables from the school premises on Saturday. Parimi Surendra Babu

highlighted the signifi-cance of the TTD's Nityannadanam scheme, which provides free meals to millions of devotees visiting Tirumala to seek the blessings of Lord Sri Venkateswara Swamy. He emphasised the deep-seated belief among devotees that partaking in this meal is akin to receiving the benevolence of the deity

Lokesh voices concern over possible poll disruptions

Nara Lokesh has voiced his observations on the sentiments of the people, indicating a readiness to shift their support towards the TDP-allied NDA in significant numbers, driven by their dissatisfaction with the tumultuous governance of the past five years.

Lokesh asserted that despite numerous schemes and efforts by Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy, the momentum favouring the NDA in the upcoming elections remains unwavering. During an engagement with residents in Tadepalle, Lokesh emphasized the critical importance of these elections for the State's future, while also expressing suspicions regarding potential disruptions instigat-

ed by the ruling YSRCP.
Expressing dismay over the alleged transformation of ganja cultivation into a thriving underground enterprise under the current administration, Lokesh highlighted complaints individuals in youth. Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, who claimed to be receiving the lined the NDA's proposed illicit substance from Andhra



fiscal policies of the ruling party, decrying what he perceives as an excessive tax burden placed on recipients of government benefits. He contrasted this with the TDP's track record of attracting globally renowned industries during their tenure, citing examples such as Kia, TCL, and HCL, which bolstered employment opportunities for the

Looking ahead, Lokesh outstrategy for economic revitalradesh. isation, emphasising plans to ly augmenting the State's rev-Lokesh further criticised the establish diverse industries tai-enue.

Lokesh asserted that despite numerous schemes and efforts by Chie Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy, the momentum favouring the NDA in the upcoming elections remains unwavering.

lored to regional strengths. These include the development of IT hubs in Visakhapatnam, pharmaceutical companies in Srikakulam, aquaculture in the Godavari districts, electronics manufacturing in Chittoor, and automobile production in Anantapur, alongside initiatives to bolster defence industries statewide. Lokesh projected these endeavours to generate an estimated 20 lakh job opportunities over the next five years, thereby significant-

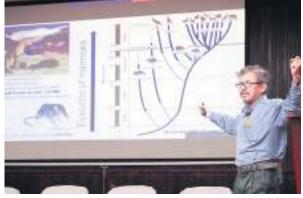
Intrinsic motivation in teaching profession stressed

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

In a thought-provoking address at GITAM Deemed to be University, Professor Nibir Mandar, a distinguished scholan SS Bhatnagar Awardee, underscored the significance of intrinsic motivation in the teaching profession.

Delivering a lecture titled "Paving the Way to the World of New Knowledge: The Teacher as Architect," Prof. Mandar shed light on the profound responsibility educators bear in shaping future generations. He emphasized that a teacher's own intrinsic motivation, which he termed "spiritual inspiration," is not merely desirable but a prerequisite for effective teaching, as it allows them to inspire a love of

learning in their students. Extending his perspective beyond the classroom, Prof. Mandar urged educators to recognize their pivotal role in national development. He stressed the importance of continuous knowledge acquisition through research, while simultaneously upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and ethical con-



duct. Prof. Mandar advocated for a holistic approach to teaching, one that transcends the mere dissemination of

He encouraged educators to adopt a pedagogical approach that fosters qualities like humility, tolerance, and benevolence in their interactions with students, venturing beyond the limitations of text-

In a nuanced reflection on the role of technology in education, Prof. Mandar cautioned against conflating information access with knowledge acquisition. While acknowledging the power of tools like Google in information retrieval, he emphasized the critical need to cultivate critical thinking and innovation skills in students.

The event, hosted by the GITAM School of Science and graced by Dean Prof. K.S. Krishna served as a platform for meaningful discourse on the evolving landscape of education and the profound impact teachers have on shaping the future genera-

Mandar's impassioned call for educators to inspire students with true knowledge resonated deeply, highlighting the transformative potential of enlightened teaching practices.

Angolan team visits **Andhra University**

A delegation from the Republic of Angola visited Andhra University (AU) here on Saturday to explore avenues er academic ties between the two nations. The delegation, led by the Embassy of the Republic of Angola Visa Consular J A Francisco and Embassy Counselor Afonso Jose, met with AU Vice-Chancellor Prof. PVGD Prasada Reddy. The discussions focused on solidifying relations and fostering educa-

tional exchange programs. The Angolan officials also interacted with Angolan students enrolled at AU, gaining valuable insights into the university's academic environment, teaching standards, and student facilities. Visa Consular

faction with the quality of education offered at AU and commended the institution's dedication to academic excellence. AU's Dean of International

Dhanunjaya Rao, Registrar Prof. M. James Stephen, and other dignitaries warmly welcomed the delegation. Their presence underscored the university's commitment to international collaboration and fostering a diverse student body. The Angolan delegation's visit not only reaffirms Andhra University's position as a leading destination for international students but also highlights its proactive approach to strengthening its global presence and promoting international cooperation in higher education.



AMBEDKAR BIRTH ANNIV TODAY

Access to main statue restricted due to MCC: DC

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Ahead of the 133rd birth anniversary of Dr B. R. Ambedkar, the district administration has taken extensive measures to honour his memory at the 125-foot statue located in the Swarajya Mydan premises in Vijayawada, stated NTR District Collector Dr S. Dilli Rao. He emphasised that access to the main statue via the lift is strictly prohibit-

In a press release issued on Saturday, Collector Dilli Rao announced that the district administration has arranged a temporary statue to facilitate paying homage to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. On the occasion of his 133rd birth anniversary, a multitude of visitors, sociologists, and others are expected to gather at the Swarajya Mydan on Sunday, he noted.

He said that due to the enforcement of the Election Model Code of Conduct (MCC), attendees paying homage to Ambedkar must adhere to the rules and regulations of the MCC.

Access to the 'Social Justice Mahashilpam' has been restricted thus far, and the same protocol will be maintained on April 14, Sunday, he affirmed.

He urged all visitors to be mindful of the regulations in light of the upcoming elec-



Collector Dilli Rao announced that the district administration has arranged a temporary statue to facilitate paying homage to Dr. B. R. Ámbedkar. On the occasion of his 133rd birth anniversary, a multitude of visitors, sociologists, and others are expected to gather at the Swarajya Mydan on

Braving child marriage threats, she excels in Jr Inter exams

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

In a narrative that embodies the indomitable spirit of perseverance, S Nirmala, a young student from Pedda Harivanam in Kurnool district, Andhra Pradesh, has etched her name in the annals of triumph by clinching the title of the highest scorer in the first-year intermediate examinations. Undeterred by adversities and the looming spectre of child marriage, Nirmala has emerged victorious with an awe-inspiring

Hailing from a family entrenched in poverty, Nirmala's path was strewn with challenges from the outset. With three elder sisters already married off, the weight of tradition dictated that Nirmala follow

score of 95.7%.

ows of societal norms, she stood resolute, her eyes fixed on the beacon of education.

Even when confronted with the harsh reality of financial constraints and the absence of a nearby junior college, Nirmala refused to yield. Instead, she mustered the courage to seek assistance, reaching out to local MLA Y Saiprasad Reddy during a community outreach program. Touched by her unwavering determination, the MLA intervened, orchestrating her emancipation from the clutches of forced marriage and facilitating her enrollment in Kasturba Gandhi Balikala

Vidyalayam at Alpari. Amid the unfamiliar terrain of a new school and the echoes of her past struggles, Nirmala



blossomed. Armed with tenacity and an unyielding resolve, she seized every opportunity to excel academically. Today, her triumph stands as a testament to her resilience and unshakeable commitment to her educational journey.

But Nirmala's aspirations extend far beyond personal accolades. With a fervent desire

to shatter the chains of child marriage and pave the way for a future where every girl can chase her dreams unhindered, she sets her sights on a loftier goal: to become an IPS officer. Her ambition is not merely to succeed but to catalyze change, to champion the cause of empowerment, and to embolden others to defy the odds.

In the tapestry of human endeavour, Nirmala's story is a radiant thread, illuminating the path for countless others ensnared in similar trials. Through her courage, her tenacity, and her unwavering belief in the power of education, she emerges not just as a symbol of hope but as a beacon of inspiration, lighting the way towards a brighter, more equitable future for generations to come.





Would Ambedkar have agreed with CAA?

⊣he father of the Constitution Dr. BR Ambedkar would not have agreed with the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA). For, it goes against the spirit of The Citizenship Act of 1955, which, inter alia, explains how someone can become a citizen and how citizenship can be taken away, ensuring that the process is fair and not based on religion. While certain previous laws and the Constitution studiously kept citizenship separate from religion, the CAA goes against this by bringing religious discrimination into the process of acquiring citizenship.

There are seven important Articles which deal with the 'institution of citizenship'. Ambedkar totally supported this constitutional foundation of Indian citizenship, as outlined in Articles 5 to 11 of the Constitution of India, providing various paths for individuals to acquire citizenship, such as by birth, descent, naturalization, registration, or territorial incorporation. Noticeably, religion is not a criterion in any of these methods. The Citizenship Act of 1955 further elaborates on the acquisition and termination of citizenship, ensuring that the process remains secular and non-discriminatory.

Migration from Pakistan

was the basic issue of citizen-

ship with India and other

neighbors. Article 6 gave rights of citizenship to persons who had migrated to India from Pakistan at the com-mencement of the Constitution if he or either of his parents or any of his grand-parents was born in India as defined in the Government of India Act, 1935 and in case where such person had so migrated before 19th July 1948 and had since been ordinarily resident in India, or where he had migrated after that date, and was granted citizenship on his application before the commencement of the Constitution. Such a person should have been a resident of India for at least six months immediately preceding the date of application.

There are seven important Articles which deal with the 'institution of citizenship'. Ambedkar totally supported this constitutional foundation of Indian citizenship, as outlined in Articles 5 to 11 of the Constitution of India, providing various paths for individuals to acquire citizenship, such as by birth, descent, naturalization, registration, or territorial incorporation. Noticeably, religion is not a criterion in any of these methods.

Why has there been a debate on CAA for the last four years, and heartburn over the problematic Rules for CAA in 2024, though the law was changed in 2019? There are several doubts and myths underpinning these. There have been many 'clarifications' from bureaucrats and official spokespersons, apart from the Prime Minister and the Union

Home Minister. Still, doubts are persisting. We need to clear the mist. To begin with, let us deal with three great claims out of the many.

There are at least 10 distinct

claims that can easily be proved baseless. However, by the time the reader verifies the claim, the untruth would travel long and IT or social media managers, print and electronic



SRIDHAR ACHARYULU Dean, Mahindra University, Hyderabad

media agents and PR teams would make it viral. Some claims made by constitutional office holders and the verified truths that prove the statements as lies are enlisted below.

1. The first claim and doubt: Claim: "The CAA has nothing to do with the National Register of Citizens (NRC). This is totally separate and

The truth: They are closely connected. In April 2019 Home Minister, Amit Shah said: "First the CAB will come. All refugees will get citizenship. Then NRC will come. This is why refugees should not worry, bút infiltrators should. *Understand the chronology –* CAB will come and then NRC. NRC is not just for Bengal, it's for the entire country.

In December 9, 2019, Amit Shah said in Parliament that a nationwide NRC would follow the passing of the CAA. During the debate on CAA in Lok Sabha, he said, "We will bring the NRC across the country. Not a single infiltrator will be spared." On December 19, 2019, JP Nadda, BJP national president, stated that the CAA would be implemented and, going forward, NRC also will be brought in".

He continued, "India is marching ahead under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and will continue to do so. The

Citizenship (Amendment) Act will be implemented; so will the NRC in future.

The second claim: "I want to let the 130 crore citizens of India know that since my government has come to power, since 2014 there has been no discussion on NRC anywhere" - PM said on December 22.

The truth: On June 20, 2019, the President, while addressing joint session of Parliament said: "Illegal infiltrators pose a major threat to our internal security. This is leading to social imbalance and putting a huge pressure on limited livelihood opportunities. My government has decided to implement the process of the National Register of Citizens on a priority basis in areas affected by infiltrators... While on the one hand the government is working to identify the infiltrators, on the other, it is also fully committed to protecting the victims of persecution

due to their faith. On November 21, 2019 Home Minister, Amit Shah said the same thing in the

The third claim: In December 2019, the Minister of State for Home Affairs said: "A countrywide NRC had not been notified so far and no one should fear.'

The truth: The NRC was made part of law in 2003 by amendment to Citizenship Act. It added Clause 14 a (2), Act. It daded Clause 14 a (2), saying: The Central government may maintain a National Register of Indian Citizens and for that purpose establish a National Registration Authority. (3)

The Registrar General of .The Registrar General of India shall act as the National Registration Authority and he shall function as the Registrar General of Citizen Registration." The process to establish NRC was mentioned in the Rules which were adopted in 2003.

Let us deal with some more myths and truths in the next

part of the article. (to be continued)

Sharmila flays aunt Vimala for supporting Avinash Reddy

The ongoing political feud between APCC president YS Sharmila and her brother, Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, has escalated with Sharmila's paternal aunt, Vimala Reddy, expressing strong disapproval of the remarks made by Sharmila and Sunita.

YS Vimala Reddy, the younger sister of late YS Rajasekhar Reddy and paternal aunt to both Sharmila and Jagan Reddy, voiced her objections to the criticism levelled by Sharmila and Sunita against Jagan Mohan Reddy, accusing them of tarnishing the reputation of the YSR family.

'Sharmila and Sunita have dragged the YSR family's name through the mud. Their continuous accusations against YS Avinash Reddy are painful and damaging to our family's legacy," Vimala Reddy expressed to e media on Satur

Expressing her distress over the allegations made by Sharmila and Sunita against Jagan Mohan Reddy and Avinash Reddy, Vimala Reddy stated, "As a woman of the YSR family, I strongly condemn their actions. Sharmila lacks leadership qualities and seems



fixated on criticizing Avinash Reddy. I vehemently oppose

Sunita had any evidence implicating Avinash Reddy in the Vivekananda Reddy case, cautioning against dragging Jagan Mohan Reddy into the

Reddy, for the past year, expressing sorrow over the family's internal disputes. Jagan Mohan Reddy stem from personal animosity," she criti-



their actions.' Vimala Reddy also ques-

tioned whether Sharmila and

She lamented the incarceration of her cousin, YS Bhaskar "Sharmila's allegations against



Vimala Reddy highlighted Avinash Reddy's role in continuing the work initiated by Vivekananda Reddy in the Kadapa constituency, emphasizing that despite numerous accusations, Avinash Reddy

refrained from retaliating against Sharmila and Sunita. "I fail to understand

Sharmila's motives. When I tried to reason with her and Sunita to protect the YSR family's honour, they cut off communication with me. Their vindictive behaviour is detrimental to the family," she expressed.

She urged the people of Kadapa not to heed the accusations made by Sharmila and Sunita and to instead support Jagan Mohan Reddy and Avinash Reddy.

In response to Vimala Reddy's remarks, Sharmila countered by alleging that Vimala Reddy's son had benefited from government favours. "We have presented evidence from the CBI regarding Avinash Reddy's involve-ment in the Vivekananda Reddy murder case. We are not making baseless accusations but speaking the truth supportv ev asserted.

She further alleged that Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy had financially benefited Vimala Reddy's son, leading to her opposition. "She should remember that the deceased was her own brother," Sharmila reminded.

2 Inter students commit suicide

PNS NARASARAOPET



Two students committed suicide in Palnadu and Anantapur district on Saturday.
Police said that

Eerla Mahender (17) failed the intermediate examination. The results of the Intermediate examination were declared on Friday. Disgruntled over the failure in

the intermediate examination, he ended his life by hanging himself to the ceiling fan in his house at Kambhampadu village in Macherla mandal in Palandu district when his parents went to the agriculture field. The police registered a case and shifted the body to the GGH in Macherla for postmortem.

Another student committed suicide by hanging himself to the ceiling fan at YSR colony in Dharmavaram town in Anantapur district on Saturday. Police said that the deceased Naga Chaitanya (11) private school.

His father rebuked him for not going to school. Upset over this, the boy ended his life by hanging to the ceiling fan with a sari in his house. The police registered a case and sent the body to the GGH in Dharmavaram.

Loco pilot demonstrates daring feat to resolve technical snag

PNS RAJAHMUNDRY

In an incident that occurred onboard Train no. 17240 Visakhapatnam-Guntur Simhadri Express on Saturday G Rajat Kumar, Assistant Loco Pilot, demonstrated exemplary professionalism and courage in swiftly addressing an alarming chain-pulling inci-

NK Mohan, Loco Pilot and G Rajat Kumar, Assistant Loco Pilot were operating the Visakhapatnam - Guntur Simhadri Express today. After the scheduled stoppage at Gollaprolu at 10. 05 hrs, the train resumed its journey on the Gollaprolu-Pithapuram section. At 10.10.

An unauthorized individual pulled the alarm chain in the 5th General Coach from the train Engine, bringing the train to an abrupt halt at km 645/5. After recognizing the pressure drop and receiving particulars of the Alarm Chain Pulling from the Guard through Walkie Talkie, the ilot & Asst Loco Pilot decided to reset the Alarm Chain Pulling Device present underneath the coach.

As they got down, they recognised that the 5th Bogie from the train Engine abruptly stopped on a long bridge in the Pithapuram-Gollaprolu section. There was no other



Despite the potential danger and disruption caused by such actions, G. Rajat Kumar, ALP, crawled underneath the train bogie to reset the Alarm Chain Pulling Device. He identified the device and rectified the issue successfully, allowing the train to resume its journey without significant delay.

way to approach the Alarm Chain Pulling Device except going underneath the Railway

Despite the potential danger and disruption caused by such actions, G. Rajat Kumar, ALP, crawled underneath the train bogie to reset the Alarm Chain Pulling Device. He identified the device and rectified the issue successfully, allowing the train to resume its journey without significant delay. Speaking on the issue, Narendra A Patil, DRM stated that the incident highlights the critical role of local pilots in ensuring the safety and efficiency of railway operations. DRM highly commended Rajat Kumar and Mohan, crew of Simhadri Express for their quick response, exemplary conduct and commitment

Celestial wedding begins at Vontimitta temple

PNS KADAPA

The grand gala of celestial marriage festivities of Sri Sita Rama at Vontimitta temple commenced with the traditional "Haridhra Ghatanam" on Saturday.

Women devotees brought about three kilos of turmeric roots on the occasion chanting Jai Sri Ram. Earlier, the turmeric roots and the rolling stone were rendered special Pujas inside Garbhalayam.

Archaka Shravana Swamy

informed the significance of the event to devotees stating that the Haridhra Ghatanam marks the beginning of the celestial marriage festivities. The turmeric will be utilised for Snapanam and the preparation of Talambralu.

Pradhana Archaka Raghavacharyulu, Vontimitta Special Officer Prasanthi, Superintendent Hanumantu, temple inspector Naveen, a large number of women devotees, archakas Manoj, Pavan were also present.

MOs should play vital role in conducting polls peacefully: DC

District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh said that Micro observers should play a vital role in conducting elections in a peaceful atmosphere.

A training programme was conducted for the Micro Observers in the CR Reddy auditorium on Saturday. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that the micro observers should play a crucial role with commitment in the conducting of the election

He said that the Central government and Central government sector employees should closely monitor the polling process in the 416 sensitive polling centres, identified in the vulnerability mapping to monitor the proper implementation



of the issues specified by the

Election Commission. The Collector asserted that MOs should scrutinize all the aspects related to the election process in the respective polling centres and submit their reports to the election observer in the prescribed formats. Collector Prasanna Venkatesh said that Micro Observers need a comprehensive understanding of all the rules and regulations related to the polling process, and for this, two rounds of training programs would be organized for them.

Micro observers should reach

the respective dispatch centres on time before the polling day and reach their respective polling centres along with the polling parties, the Collector

The MOs should reach their centres at least an hour before the polling day and inspect the polling management arrangements, ballot boxes, polling compartments, voting secrecy, identity of voters, presence of polling agents, queue lines and voter facilities, he directed them. The General Observer should inform them immediately through the directly available information system if any violation of rules is observed in the conduct of polling.

KCR warns of massive protest for Dalit Bandhu

BRS supremo KCR said that he would stage a protest at the Ambedkar Statue if Dalit Bandhu funds are not released to beneficiaries.

"The Congress said it will give Rs 12 lakhs to Dalits. Now it is not giving even Rs 10 lakhs. We sanctioned Dalit Bandhu funds to 1.30 lakh Dalits. But the Congress is not giving it, froze accounts, stopped proceedings and took back the money. I am warning the government that I will take up a Deeksha with 1.30 lakh Dalits at the 125 feet Ambedkar Statue," he said.

KCR said that the BRS needs to win all seats. "It is simple logic. When there is a strong opposition and if you give a shock to the government your work will get done. If not they



promised. If you make them win, they will say despite not implementing promises we won and so we won't do it," he said. KCR said that the BRS will always be there for Telangana and its people.

Speaking about the BJP he said, "The BJP is in power in this country for 10 years. Apart from flaring up emotions and raising religious frenzy what good has it done? What is the price of petrol? What is the price

of diesel? Will you join our party

or go to jail? It is either the ED

"Development does not mean

or Modi. That is the BJP's politics. Is this the way to take the country forward? Is this the way to run a democracy?" "If you vote for the BIP

culture pumps. He threatened me to install meters, but I didn't," he said. He said, "I warn the state government to buy every grain. We

meters will be installed on agri-

will not let you go." He said that there are only looties and no scooties for girls. "Why has real estate crashed? Who are the brokers and jokers behind this?" he said.

Speaking at the Chevella meeting, KCR said, "Is Ranjith Reddy a sunflower to turn to wherever there is power? We have given him opportunities but still he left the party. Give a strong answer to people who change parties."

Gold & silver ornaments worth Rs 1.40 cr seized

1.40 crore were being trans-

ported in an SUV. The Income

Tax and GST officials rushed

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

The police and election officials seized gold jewellery and silver ornaments worth Rs 1.40 crore at Pottilanka checkpost on the night of Friday.

Rajahmundry South Zone DSP M Ambika Prasad said that the police and election officials led by CI B Tulasidhar conducted checking of vehicles at the Pottilanka check-post on National Highway 216 as part of enforcing the election code





were shifted to the district

grievances committee to take

further action

Finance Minister Buggana Raiendranath Reddy has claimed that the leaders of the TDP-BJP-JSP alliance in fear of defeat and highlighted the development works which have been carried out in his Dhone constituency

PNS NANDYALA

The Finance Minister participated in the election campaign in the Dhone constituency on Saturday and exuded confi-

dence in a hat-trick victory. He held a meeting with the Christian religious heads. As many as 25 families joined the YSRCP in his presence. Speaking on the occasion, he said that cases were registered against Dhone TDP candidate Kotla Surya Prakash Reddy for distributing date fruits and buttermilk in a meeting defying the model

code of conduct. He denied the

TDP's allegations that cases were

registered on behest of him.



"With the fear of defeat, the TDP changed candidates in Dhone constituency twice. When there is no surety to the TDP candidates, what surety Naidu will give to the people, the finance minister ridiculed.

changing candidates. I have shown the real development in Dhone constituency," he stated.

He questioned Kotla Surya Prakash Reddy what were his achievements as a Union Railway Minister. Buggana also dared the Opposition parties to know the development in the Dhone constituency and then speak. He also questioned Kotla Surya Prakash Reddy where he resides and what he could do to Dhone if

elected. Buggana wooed votes to vote for the YSRCP after keeping in view the welfare schemes, implemented for them.

Meanwhile, 15 families of the SC colony joined the YSRCP in the presence of Buggana Rajendranath Reddy. The representatives of Traita Siddhanta Bhagavad Gita called on Finance Minister Buggana Rejendranath Reddy in his camp office in Dhone on Saturday' The Finance minister released the Telugu calendar on the

AUTOCRACY DETRI MENTAL TO COUNTRY

Uddhav bats for coalition govt at Centre

PNS MUMBAI

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday said autocracy was detrimental to the country and called for having a coalition government at the Centre, saying that such dispensations have "worked well" in the past.

There is a need for a strong leader, but he should take everybody along, he

Speaking at his residence 'Matoshree' in Mumbai, where office-bearers of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS) and Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) from Jalgaon district joined his party, he said that for the first time in the last 10 years, discontent was visible at such a large scale in the country.

'Adopt Ambedkar's ideals for country's development'

President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday greeted citizens on the eve of the birth anniversary of Dr B R Ambedkar, the architect of India's Constitution, and asked all to adopt his ideals to work collectively for the inclusive development of the country.

Babasaheb Ambedkar, a pioneer of social change and a versatile personality, made exceptional contributions to our country and society as a jurist, educationist, economist, social reformer and political leader, she said.

in the constitutional system is the foundation of our democracy and good governance, the president said.

She said, Dr Ambedkar devoted his entire life to the establishment of an egalitarian society and struggled for



a Dalit family in Maharashtra,

Ambedkar rose from a hum-

ble background to become a

leading voice of the margin-

alised people during the free-

dom struggle and is credited

with introducing several social

Even today, his strong belief the upliftment of the downtrodden.

"On this occasion, let us adopt the ideals of Dr Ambedkar and work collectively for the inclusive development of our country," Murmu said.

Born on April 14, 1891, in In a message, the president his strong belief in the constitutional system is the foundation of our democracy and good governance, the president said

Even today,

said, "On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, the architect of our Constitution and one of the most eminent nation builders, I extend my warm greetings and best wishes to all fellow

Cong accuses BJP of consistently hampering anti-corruption efforts

PNS NEW DELHI

Countering Prime Minister Narendra Modi's attack on the opposition on the issue of corruption, the Congress on Saturday alleged that the BJP has consistently hampered anti-corruption efforts across the country.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh alleged that the BJP government has "legalised" corruption through electoral bonds, politicised anti-cor-ruption efforts by unleashing probe agencies against politi-cal opponents and slowed down the legal process against politicians who join the BJP. "It takes a special kind of

hypocrisy for PM Modi to parade himself around the screaming 'Bhrashtachar Hatao'. No one has done more to legalise and normalise corruption than Prime Minister Modi," he

In his election speeches,



Modi has made a strong pitch on the issue of corruption, claiming that while he wants to finish the menace, the Congress and other opposition parties were targeting him for it and have come together to protect the corrupt.

Ramesh claimed that in July 2018, the Modi government amended the Prevention of Corruption Act, rendering anti-graft bodies ineffective.

of anti-corruption probes in Maharashtra are still pending approval.

How the BJP rendered anticorruption bodies ineffective: In July 2018, the Modi Sarkar introduced Section 17(A) to the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA) to supposedly protect government servants from frivolous complaints. The legal process is an inquiry to FIR to the chargesheet.

"Before this new 'safeguard' was added, Section 19(A) of the PCA required anti-corruption bodies to seek approval from the government/department before filing a charge sheet, the last step in the legal process," the Congress leader claimed.

He said the Modi government' amendment requires anti-corruption bodies, including the CBI, to seek approval even before launching an investigation, the first step in



'PM Modi is biggest supporter of reservation'

PNS JAIPUR

The BJP will neither end reservations nor allow anyone to do it, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday and accused the Congress of spreading a misconception that the ruling party wants to abolish quota for the Dalits, tribals and backwards.

"(Prime Minister Narendra) Modi himself is the biggest supporter of reservation," Shah said at an election rally in Harsoli in Rajasthan's Alwar district. He alleged that the Congress was "anti-OBC" and had put in cold storage key reports on the issue of reser-

"I want to make one thing clear. Congress party is spreadamong Dalit and tribal brothers, that the BJP is going to abolish reservation.

"Listen to me carefully. Be it reservation for Dalits, tribals or backward classes, the BJP supports it. We will neither end the reservation nor allow anyone to do it," he said at the rally in support of Alwar Lok Sabha

PNS JALPAIGURI (WB)

Alleging that Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's guarantees

are "false", West Bengal Chief

Minister Mamata Banerjee on

Saturday claimed that the BJP

will not even win 200 seats in

the upcoming Lok Sabha elec-

Speaking at an election rally

for party candidate Nirmal

Chandra Roy, the Trinamool

Congress supremo also accused the BJP of destroying

the country's Constitution

"The BJP will not even win

200 seats. What have they

done for north Bengal? Do not

fall prey to PM Narendra

Modi's guarantees. These are

nothing but electoral jumla

(false). Modi's guarantee is

drafted by B R Ambedkar.

candidate Bhupender Yadav. Shah's assertion came in the backdrop of the Congress' election manifesto promise of bringing a constitutional amendment to raise the 50 per cent cap on reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs. The Congress has also said a caste census will be undertaken if it

is voted to power.
The BJP leader alleged that the Congress did injustice to the backward classes for years.

"It kept the Kaka Kalelkar report suppressed, kept the Mandal Commission report suppressed. Modi came and worked to give constitutional recognition to the OBC Commission.

"Modi has done the work of giving 27 per cent reservation recruitments at the Centre, Shah said.

The former BJP chief said the prime minister and 27 Union ministers were from the OBC community. He sought the people's votes saying Modi accomplished many "seemingly impossible" tasks in 10 years of his government.

Will keep alive Article 370 issue: Omar Abdullah

PNS SRINAGAR

National Conference leader Omar Abdullah on Saturday said the Supreme Court upholding the abrogation of Article 370 does not close the issue and his party will keep it alive till a dispensation comes at the Centre that is willing to discuss the restoration of special status to Jammu and

"This government will not remain

forever. There is no power on earth that can keep Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi in office in perpetuity, there is no power on earth that can keep the BJP in office forever. Every government has a finite term, some are longer, some are shorter. Why would you assume that no government will come in future that will be unwilling to talk to us on Article 370," Abdullah told PTI in an inter-

Abdullah, who is contesting the Lok Sabha polls from north Kashmir Baramulla constituency, said the Supreme Court verdict on petitions challenging abrogation of the Article 370 was unfortunate.

"I would like to believe that there will be a government in the future that will be happy to engage with us on our core issues of the special status of J-K and until that comes, we will keep our struggle alive," he said.

"We will continue to fight for it and struggle for it. A stamp of the SC does not close the issue, because if a stamp closes the issue, then we had a stamp on Article 370 much before this one and the SC found in favour of Article 370. So, yes, the recent judgement is unfortunate, but that won't stop our political fight," the former J-K chief minister said. He claimed that several opposition parties were also on the same page. "Even now we have friends

who talk in favour of the restoration of 370, whether it is in Tamil Nadu or West Bengal or the Left. We have friends outside of J-K who see eye to eye with us on the issue of 370," he added. The former chief minister said just like the BJP did not stop talking about the abrogation of Article 370 even when it had two Lok Sabha members in the 1984 elections, his party will continue to talk about the restoration of the special status.

'Spot inquiry points to 'violation' of human rights'

In a spot inquiry into the Sandeshkhali case in West Bengal, the NHRC has flagged "several instances of atrocities", saying it indicates that there was a "violation of human rights" due to "negligence" in the prevention of such inci-

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), in its report, also observed that the pervasive fear of reprisal, coupled with the power dynamics at play, acted as a formidable barrier", preventing individuals from voicing their griev-

> The rights panel has made sought an action taken report (ATR) within eight weeks on each of the recommendations made therein from the government of West Bengal, the NHRC said in a statement on

"The Commission's spot inquiry has revealed several instances of atrocities inflicted

moment out of the 70, ten have

already joined us. Now, in this

Parliamentary elections, you

are claiming to win 400. I tell

you to get 200 first," she said. Banerjee described the BJP

leaders as "birds who surface

"You (BJP) have destroyed the country's Constitution

drafted by Babasaheb Ambedkar. You have sold the

entire country," she alleged.

The TMC supremo, without

naming BJP leader Amit

Malviya, lambasted him for

calling West Bengal a 'safe

haven for terrorists' soon after

NIA arresting two persons in

Claiming that Bengal is the

the Bengaluru blast case.

during elections".

'BJP will not win even 200 Lok Sabha seats'

Sandeshkhali incident



upon the victims, which cleardemonstrate, prima facie, that there was a violation of human rights due to negligence in the prevention of such viothe public servant," it said.

The report has been uploaded on the NHRC website for "wider dissemination of information," the statement

The Commission has sent its spot inquiry report to the chief secretary and DGP, West Bengal for submitting the

more. They must have forgot-

ten that Bengaluru and Bengal

are separate states. The arrest-

ed persons are from Karnataka.

They were only for two hours

at Contai in Purba Medinipur

district when our police arrest-

the BJP-led Centre not alleged-

ly clearing dues related to the

'PM Awas Yojana' and '100 days' scheme' to West Bengal. "They have taken over Rs

6.80 lakh crore as revenue and

the due amount is Rs 1.74 lakh

crore. How will I run the gov-

ernment? Before calling us

thieves, I challenge you to

bring out the statistics of

Gujarat, Maharashtra and UP

The chief minister attacked

The NHRC report made an observation that the "atmosphere due to the atrocities by the alleged accused persons and intimidation, and terror made them "reluctant to seek justice"

This "climate of terror" not only "perpetuates the cycle of abuse" but also underscores the urgent need to create a safe and supportive environment for victims to "break free from the shackles of silence", it has

PNS SHIMLA

12 companies of Himachal

Police deployed in other

states on poll duty

The Himachal Pradesh police

have deployed 12 companies in

other states for duties related

to Lok Sabha Elections-2024,

as per the orders of the

Election Commission of India,

according to an official state-

Eight companies led by Superintendent of Police (SP)

Arvind Chaudhary have been

deployed in Rajasthan and

four companies led by SP

Khushal Chand Sharma in

Uttarakhand, the statement

issued here on Saturday said.

The rights panel has also

made an observation that the 'atmosphere of fear" not only affects the victims but also has a "negative impact" on the growth and health of the children who constantly witness the ordeals of their parents at the hands of these alleged

On February 21, the NHRC had taken suo motu cognisance of print and electronic media reports that in Sandeshkhali, North 24th Paragana, "innocent and impoverished women have been harassed and sexually assaulted by a group of local gang of a political person".

As a result, for the last fe

days, local villagers had started protesting, seeking appropriate legal action against the perpetrators of horrific crimes indulged by various goons and anti-social elements, when the local administration failed to take appropriate legal action against the perpetrators of crime," it added.

19, the eight companies from

there will be sent for deploy-

ment in Andaman and

Similarly, after the elections

in Uttarakhand on April 20,

the four companies of

Himachal Pradesh police

deployed there will be sent to

have undergone rigorous training to handle various election-

related duties, including main-

taining security at polling sta-

tions, ensuring the safety of

voters and election officials,

and managing any potential

The deployed personnel

Nicobar Islands, it said.

INDIA CORNER

Terror hideout busted in J-K; arms, explosives recovered



busted a terror hideout on Saturday and recovered arms and ammunition, police said. The hideout was busted during a joint operation by the J-K police and Rashtriya Rifles in the Lancha area of Mahore sub-division in Reasi,

a police spokesperson said. Acting on a tip-off, the team conducted a search operation and recovered an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) fitted in a Tiffin box and two pistols, police said. The operation was still going on when the last reports were received. Besides the IED and two pistols, the search parties also recovered three electric with 24 rounds, 40 rounds of AK assault rifle, eight batteries, 40 metres of electric wire, five metres of plastic rope, one steel plate, one glass, a bag, three bedsheets and some pictures, the

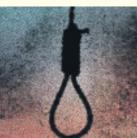
Woman stabbed to death by neighbours in Delhi



34-year-old woman was allegedly stabbed to death by her neighbours in Shahdara here, while the suspects claimed that the injuries could be self-inflicted police said on Saturday. The police received a call on Friday night regarding a woman being stabbed. A team rushed to the spot and found Soni lying in a pool of

blood at her home in Bhikam Singh Colony in Farsh Bazar, police said. During the initial investigation, the police found that Soni and her husband Satbir had gotten into a fight with their neighbour and his family members, over some issues, he said. "Soni had two or three cut marks on her left hand and a small wound on her stomach " a police officer said. She was rushed to the Dr Hedgewar Hospital where the doctors declared her dead on arrival, he said. "The suspects claim she inflicted the injuries herself. But we are verifying the claims and corroborating the sequence of the incident, Deputy Commissioner of Police Surendra Chaudhry (Shahdara) said. Satbir's statements were recorded and a case was registered under the Indian Penal Code section 302 (murder), the DCP said. Further investigation is underway he said

Man hangs self after losing Rs 1 lakh in gambling



42-year-old man allegedly hanged himself from a tree Alin a forest here, after losing Rs 1 lakh in gambling, police said on Saturday. According to police, the victim, identified as Narendra alias Narhari Dhakad, a resident of Shivpuri in Madhya Pradesh, had been missing since Monday. Narendra, a truck driver by profession, had come to unload

his truck in Baran in Rajasthan. The initial investigation revealed that he had lost Rs 1 lakh while gambling in an inebriated state due to which he allegedly committed suicide, Station House Officer Jitendra Singh said. His body was found in a forest in the Dhakad Khedi area under the Udhyog Nagar police station on Friday, the SHO said. However, no suicide note was recovered, he said. Narendra's truck was found parked near the area, he said. The police had filed a case under the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) section 174 (unnatural death). The body was handed over to the kin after the post-mortem, he said.

safest place in India, she said, on the Awas Yojana and the After the first phase of disturbances or conflicts, the "Yesterday, some people said 100-day scheme. polling in Rajasthan on April police statement said. IAF'S ROLE IN 'OPERATION MEGHDOOT'

40 years of flying in ruthless terrain of Siachen

The IAF on Saturday recalled its contribution in Operation Meghdoot' 40 years ago when its tactical and strategic airlifters and key helicopters had ferried men and material to "dizzying heights" in Siachen, the world's highest battlefield.

The Indian Army marked four decades of its presence on the strategically-significant Siachen glacier.

Operation Meghdoot was launched on April 13, 1984,

Indian Air Force had advanced to the Siachen glacier to secure the heights dominating the northern Ladakh region, officials said.

not to give Bengal its dues,

Banerjee said at the TMC's

at crossing the 400 Lok Sabha

seat mark in the upcoming

elections. "Before the (2021)

Assembly elections, you (BJP)

had said they would win over

200 seats in Bengal, but your

The BJP-led NDA is aiming

programme.

Playing an "irreplaceable role" in this effort, IAF's tactical and strategic airlifters, AN-12s, AN-32s and IL-76s transported stores and troops and airdropped supplies to high altitude airfields, from where Mi-17, Mi-8, Chetak and Cheetah helicopters "ferried men and material to dizzying heights on the



run stopped at 70. At the that Bengal is not safe any-

ed them?

glacier, far above the limits set by the helicopter manufacturers," a senior official said.

While the initial operations involved only the use of transport and helicopter aircraft

transporting men and material, the IAF gradually expanded its role and presence in the region with the deployment of fighter aircraft as well.

The official acknowledging the role of the IAF in Siachen in the past few decades, said, "flying in such ruthless terrain, records of human endurance, flying and technical proficiency" are being set by it nearly every day. 'Operation Meghdoot' involved the airlifting of Indian Army soldiers by the IAF and dropping them on the glacial

"Although the operation began in 1984, IAF helicopters were already operating in the Siachen glacier since 1978, flying the Chetak helicopters which was the first IAF helicopter to land in the glacier in October 1978," the senior official said.

By 1984, Pakistan's "cartographic aggression in the uncharted territory of Ladakh", allowing foreign mountaineering expeditions in Siachen, was becoming a "cause of concern", the officials said.

Gaming industry doesn't require regulation, says PM

The gaming industry does not require any regulation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday while asserting that it must remain free and only then it will boom.

In a free-wheeling interaction with top Indian online gamers on a host of issues about the future as well as the challenges before the e-gaming industry, the prime minister posed questions to the gamers while trying his hands at some of the games.

When a gamer Naman Mathur asked Modi if there was any need for regulations for the gaming sector, he said regulate wouldn't be the right word because it is the government's nature to intervene.

"There are two things -either you try to impose restrictions under a law or try to understand and mould it based on our country's needs and bring it under an organised and legal structure and uplift



"There are two things -- either you try to impose restrictions under a law or try to understand and mould it based on our country's needs and bring it under an organised and legal structure and uplift its reputation," the prime minister said.

its reputation," the prime min-

nation to a level that by 2047 the government is out of the lives of

middle-class families in particular. Our life is stuck in paperwork. It is the poor who need the government, the govern-

in difficult times," he added. Another gamer Animesh Agarwal said the government should recognise esports and gaming as a mainstream sport.

"It is a skill-based gaming and does not involve gambling. Once it is established and understood by all government bodies, including those involved in financial transactions, it will be really beneficial. As you said, the industry does not need a regulation. We should let it grow freely. With a little push, the industry will be ready," he told the prime minister.

To this, Modi replied, "It (esports and gaming) does not require any regulation. It must remain free, only then it will

The prime minister sought to know from the gamers about how they deal with the conflict between gaming and gambling. The gamers also discussed with the prime minister certain terminologies used in the industry such as "noob" and "grind".

Remove drinks, beverages from 'health drinks' category

Govt directs e-commerce firms

drinks

PNS NEW DELHI

The government has asked all the e-commerce companies to remove drinks and beverages, including

category from their portals.
" National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), a statutory body consti-

tuted under sec-

tion (3) of the

Bournvita, from

the health drinks

Commission of Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act 2005 after its inquiry under Section 14 of CRPC Act 2005 concluded that there is no 'health drink' defined under FSS Act 2006, rules and regulations submitted by FSSAI and Mondelez India Food Pvt Ltd," the Commerce and Industry Ministry said in an advisory to all e-commerce companies. The

order is dated April 10, 2024.

It said that all e-commerce

food business operators (FBOs) to ensure appropriate categorisation of food products being sold on their The Food Safety and

companies/portals are advised

to remove drinks and bever-

ages, including Bournvita,

from the category of health

from

platforms/sites.

On April 2, food safety stan-

dards regulator

FSSAI directed

all e-commerce

their

Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has noted that instances of food products licensed under 'Proprietary Food' with the nearest category Dairy-Based Beverage Mix or Cereal-Based Beverage Mix or Malt-Based Beverage being sold on e-commerce websites under the category Health Drink, Energy Drink, etc, it

As per the arrangement,

PPA holders. If the power

offered is not utilised by any

PPA holder, then it shall be

offered in the power market.

offer their generation in the

power market. A high-level

committee headed by

Electricity Authority has been

constituted to facilitate the implementation of this direc-

Central

Mishra was

speaking to PTI

on the sidelines

of the signing of

a Memorandum

of Understanding

(MoU) with Indian

Institute of Foreign

Trade (IIFT), Delhi on

Friday to launch the

Executive and Regular PG

programs, integrated with

Certified Financial Planner

(CFP) certification.

Chairperson,

GBSs not tied to PPAs must

MONEY MATTERS

Data recovered, restored shortly after it was deleted : Welspun



Living on Saturday recovered and restored all the data shortly after it was deleted by some miscreants in January this year. In the clarification issued a day after the filing of the first information report with the city police, the company said the dashboard data residing on the Power BI

platform was deleted, but within a short time, it was recovered and restored by the company via backups. "...all underlying company data and reports are safe and secure. There is no loss of any data, a statement said. A case was registered against unidentified persons at NM Joshi Marg Police after data of the company was allegedly deleted, with unauthorised entry to the systems in January this year. The incident, in which confidential data, daily operation reports and the firm's dashboard, residing in the Power BI platform, were wiped out, is alleged to have happened between 8 pm and 8:50 pm on January 17 this year, the police had said.

'All 224 flats in Gurugram project sold in 15 minutes'



ealty firm Ashiana Housing on Saturday flats in Gurugram for Rs 440 crore within 15 minutes of its launch. The project is located at Sector 93 in Gurugram, Haryana. In a statement, the company said it has "sold out the entire phase 3 of its prestigious project, Ashiana Amarah within 15 minutes of launch". "We are very happy

with the incredible response to Ashiana Amarah phase 3 launch. We started registration at 11 am and we had received 800 cheques for 224 units by 11.15. In 15 minutes it was oversubscribed four times," Ashiana Housing Joint Managing Director Ankur Gupta said. He attributed the oversubscription to the company's brand value and execution track record. "Our novel kid-centric concept is also working. People want their children to be brought up in better places, with better amenities and quality of life and that is what Amarah is promising. "So there is a lot of excitement in the market Ashiana is also planning to launch phase 4 in the coming quarter," Gupta said. Ashiana Housing is one of India's leading real estate firms, listed on the stock exchanges. Present in nine cities in India Ashiana Housing has constructed and delivered over 23 million (230 lakh) sq ft to over 17,000 buyers. According to PropTiger, sales of residential properties in Delhi-NCR jumped more than three times during the January-March period to Rs 12,120 crore from Rs 3,476

crore in the year-ago period.

Petregaz India commissions its

LPG import and storage terminal



etregaz India, a subsidiary of Petredec Group has commissioned its new state-of-the-art LPG Import and has been set up at an outlay of Rs 600 crore, the company said on Saturday. The new facility located within

the Adani

Krishnapatnam Private Port at Krishnapatnam in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh would benefit private marketers as well as residential, commercial, industrial, and automotive consumers. The newly commissioned facility, with an investment of Rs 600 crore, enables Petregaz to deliver cost-effective, and dependable solutions to LPG marketers, the company said in a statement. With an annual capacity of over 1.5 million metric tonnes, the facility has excellent road connectivity to the hinterland of Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. The terminal also has two refrigerated storage tanks, a modern jetty with no congestion and capable of berthing all types of LPG vessels, 16 truck loading bays among others. "Government-run oil companies can utilise our terminal's capacity to improve LPG supplies in the hinterland, optimising logistics and strengthening India's LPG landscape," said Petregaz India CEO Susheel Raina. This new facility would benefit private marketers and bottlers by improving access to LPG infrastructure, Raina said.

'India-Mauritius tax pact yet to be ratified, notified'

PNS NEW DELHI

The Income Tax Department on Friday said the amended India-Mauritius protocol on double taxation avoidance agreement is yet to be ratified and notified by the depart-

India and Mauritius on March 7, 2024, signed an amendment to the DTAA and included a principal purpose test (PPT) in the pact which aims to curtail tax avoidance by ensuring that treaty benefits are only granted for transactions with a bona fide pur-

There were concerns that foreign portfolio investments coming via Mauritius would face increased scrutiny by tax authorities. Also, there were apprehensions that past investments could be covered by the amended protocol.

In a post on X (formerly Twitter), the I-T department said some concerns have been ty of capital gains from the sale

PNS NEW DELHI

to Vestian.

Saturday.

period.

Institutional investments in

real estate declined 55 per

cent annually in January-

March this year to US\$ 552

million as cautious foreign

investors stayed away, pumping

in only US\$ 11 mn, according

attracted US\$ 1,238.3 million

(US\$ 1.23 billion) in the

January-March period of 2023

calendar year, as per the report, which was released on

The latest data by global property consultant Vestian showed that the institutional

inflow from foreign funds in

the country's real estate

plunged 99 per cent to just US\$ 11 million in the first

quarter of 2024 from US\$

791.4 million in the year-ago

Domestic investors pumped

in US\$ 541.1 million in the

Indian real estate in January-

The real estate sector had

raised on the India Mauritius DTAA amended recently.

"In this context, it is clarified that the concerns /queries are premature at the moment since the Protocol is yet to be ratified and notified u/s 90 of the Income-tax Act, 1961



"As and when the Protocol comes into force, queries, if any, will be addressed, wherever necessary," the I-T department said.

Historically, Mauritius has been a preferred jurisdiction for engaging in investments in India due to the non-taxabili-

of shares in Indian companies until 2016.

In 2016, India and Mauritius signed a revised tax agreement, which gave India the right to tax capital gains in India on transactions in shares routed through the island nation beginning April 1, 2017. However, investments made before April 2017 were grand-

IndusLaw Partner Lokesh Shah said with PPT test now introduced in the India-Mauritius tax treaty, tax authorities in India are likely to look beyond TRC (tax residency certificate by Mauritius tax authorities) and will have the ability to deny the benefit of India-Mauritius tax treaty if it is reasonable to conclude, having regard to all relevant facts and circumstances, that obtaining the treaty benefits was one of the principal purposes of any arrangement or transaction that resulted directly or indi-

rectly such tax benefit.

Foreign funds shy away from real estate

Invest only US\$ 11 mn in Jan-Mar: Vestian

The latest data by global property consultant

Vestian showed that the institutional inflow from

per cent to just US\$ 11 million in the first quarter of

2024 from US\$ 791.4 million in the year-ago period.

March 2025, up 21 per cent from 446.9 million in the year-

said, "Domestic investors are

bullish about India's growth

story, and continue to pour in

investments in the real estate

sector. On the other hand, for-

Vestian CEO Shrinivas Rao,

ago period.

foreign funds in the country's real estate plunged 99

Govt asks all gas-based plants to be operational from May 1 ment," the statement said.

The government has directed all gas-based power generating stations to operationalise their plants from May 1 to June 30 in view of rise in electricity demand due to a likely prolonged heat wave this

A significant portion of Gas-Based Generating Stations (GBSs) is currently unutilized, primarily due to commercial considerations.

The ministry has projected 260 GW peak power demand this summer (April to June 2024). Peak power demand had touched an alltime high of 243 GW in September last year.

The decision to operationalise GBSs is part of a series of measures taken by the Centre to ensure that electricity demand in the summer is met.

According to a power ministry statement, the order shall

quarter, as against US\$ 484.8

million in the year-ago peri-

Institutional investments in

residential assets fell 33 per

cent to US\$ 225 million from

Investments significantly

decreased 73 per cent in the

industrial and warehousing

sector to US\$ 58.9 million in

the January-March period

from US\$ 215.8 million a year

ago.
Bengaluru dominated the

institutional investments dur-

ing the quarter with US\$ 299

million, followed by Delhi-

ed for around 74 per cent of the

total investments received in

Edelweiss Capital turned

out to be the most active

investor during the quarter with over US\$ 300 million

worth of investments across the

asset classes and geographies,

NCR at US\$ 110 million. Both cities together account-

the current quarter.

US\$ 337.7 million.



remain valid for generation and supply of electricity from May 1, 2024 to June 30, 2024.

To ensure maximum ower generation from Gas-

based power is required.

Based Generating Stations, the government has issued directions to all Gas-Based Generating Stations under Section 11 of the Electricity Act, 2003, under which the appropriate government may specify that a generating company shall, in extraordinary circumstances operate and maintain any generating sta-tion in accordance with the directions of that govern-

GBSs holding Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) with distribution licensees shall first offer their power to

"new breed of financial planning professionals" who can act as consultants for customers, Financial Planning Standards Board (FPSB) CEO Krishan

ment.
"Most people who are in the industry might be navigating their organisations very well but when it comes to their personal finances they also struggle, be it CEOs, CFOs, CHROs.

phase for a prolonged period

and the World Bank too said

last week that another 10 mil-

lion more people might fall

into the poverty trap because

of any adverse shocks. About

98 million people are already

living a poor life in Pakistan.

rather optimistic economic scenario close to Pakistan's

In the past, the ADB gave a

However, the latest ADB

India currently has 2,731 certified financial planners (CFPs) who are currently working in the industry as well as practising individually, FPSB said in a state-

create a new breed of financial planning professionals who can be consultants for

planning professionals'

The country needs Mishra said.

'Create new breed of financial

"This is why we need to

IMPORTING PULSES FROM MYANMAR

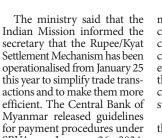
Payment mechanism for traders simplified: Govt

The government on Saturday said the payment mechanism for traders importing pulses from Myanmar has been eased and simplified.

The importers have been asked to utilize Rupee/ Kyat direct payment system using Special Rupee Vostro Account SRVA) through Punjab National Bank, the consumer affairs ministry said in a statement.

India depends on imports of pulses to meet the domestic shortage. The country imports tur and urad dals from Myanmar.

Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare discussed with Indian Mission in Yangon issues relating to pulses imports from Myanmar such as import prices in the wake of revised exchange rates and stocks held by importers in Myanmar, it said.



SRVA on January 26, 2024. The Indian Mission also informed the secretary that the new mechanism will apply for both sea and border trade and for trade in goods as well as ser-

"Adoption of the mecha-

nism by traders will reduce costs associated with currency conversions and eliminate complexities related to exchange rates by eliminating the need for multiple currency conversations," the ministry statement said. It said "dissemination about the operationalization of this

mechanism among trading communities especially pulses importers is being separately done wherein they are being requested to utilize Rupee/ Kyat direct payment system using SRVA through Punjab National Bank.

'Pak has highest living cost with a 25% inflation rate'

eign investors are cautious

due to global macroeconom-

ic uncertainty and geopoliti-

retail, co-working, and hospi-

tality projects) garnered the

highest investments of US\$

231.6 million in the March

Commercial assets (office,

cal tensions.

PNS ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has the highest living cost in all of Asia with a 25 per cent inflation rate and its economy may grow at the fourth lowest pace of 1.9 per cent in the region, according to a new Asian Development Bank (ADB) report.

The report was released on

Thursday in Manila. The Express Tribune reported that the Asian Development Outlook also painted a gloomy picture for the next fiscal year as well, projecting a 15 per cent inflation rate for the next fiscal year -- again the highest among 46



countries and a 2.8 per cent agency stated that the inflation growth rate -- the fifth lowest rate in Pakistan is expected to for FY 2024-25.

The Manila-based lending

rate in Pakistan is expected to be 25 per cent in the current fiscal year -- the highest in all

of Asia. This makes Pakistan the most expensive nation in Asia. Earlier, the cost of living in Pakistan used to be the highest in South Asia.

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and federal government had set the inflation target at 21 per cent for this fiscal year but they are going to miss it despite inflicting huge losses in the shape of a 22 per cent interest

The ADB said during the current fiscal year, the country's economic growth rate might remain at 1.9 per cent -- the fourth lowest after Myanmar,

Azerbaijan and Nauru. Pakistan is in a stagflation

report stated that Pakistan would continue to face challenges from substantial new external financing require-

official forecasts.

ments and the rollover of old debt, exacerbated by tight global monetary conditions.



WE'RE BORN ALONE, WE LIVE ALONE, WE DIE ALONE. ONLY THROUGH OUR LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP CAN WE CREATE THE ILLUSION FOR THE MOMENT THAT WE'RE NOT ALONE - ORSON WELLES

navratri special 07

VIJAYAWADA, April 14, 2024

A FESTIVAL OF TRADITION, INNOVATION, AND WELLNESS

Beyond its religious significance, Navratri embraces fasting practices that promote detoxification, improved digestion, and overall wellness. DIVYA BHATIA explores how this nine-day celebration intertwines spiritual devotion with a mindful approach to nourishmentYou can experience Navaratri at Edesia, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla, in all its charm and majesty

avratri, a nine-day festival celebrated in Northern India, holds immense significance, dedicated to Goddess Durga. Derived from Sanskrit, 'Navratri' signifies 'nine nights,' with each day devoted to one of Durga's nine forms. Falling twice a year, Navratri marks the onset of joyous festivities after the spring or during the harvest season.

Legend surrounds Navratri, with stories of Goddess Durga's triumph over evil. Whether battling Mahishasura for nine days or seeking refuge in a cave at Vaishno Devi, fasting and feasting rituals commemorate these tales. Regardless of the narrative, Navratri heralds a season

of exuberance, marked by vibrant celebrations and abundant sweets.

During Navratri, adherents observe dietary restrictions, abstaining from grains and opting for satvik foods like Sabudana, kuttu, and rajgira. Fasting typically involves consuming only once typically involves consuming only once or twice daily, with a focus on water, dairy, and fruits. Some prefer meals made from buckwheat or water chestnut flour, reflecting individual fasting

Health experts advocate controlled fasting, citing benefits such as reduced inflammation, improved digestion, and enhanced overall well-being. Despite myths surrounding weight gain, Navratri fasting encourages a healthier lifestyle, emphasizing fruits, salads, and detoxification practices.

In recent years, the F&B industry has recognized Navratri's potential, leading to innovations in Navratri cuisine. Evolving with changing dietary trends, Navratri food offerings now cater to health-conscious consumers, featuring health-conscious consumers, featuring lighter cooking methods and nutritious ingredients. As people prioritize health during the festival, Navratri continues to inspire culinary creativity while promoting well-being.

Adding to this spiritual significance, Chef Mani Mohan Pathak of Pilibhit

Chef Mani Mohan Pathak of Pilibhit House, Haridwar- IHCL SeleQtions, culinary world, stating, "Fasting is performed from ancient times, there are certain restrictions on fasting. Now fasting is getting fashioned, business, innovation and popular trends. Now the trend is towards healthier Navratri food options, with dietary preferences. The incorporation of superfoods like Makhana, quinoa and chia seeds, as well as creative twists on traditional recipes using ingredients such as sweet potato, sabudana, and buckwheat Additionally, an emphasis on lighter cooking methods such as baking, or air frying, to reduce oil consumption. Overall, there's a growing awareness of nutrition and a desire to enjoy Navratri festivities without compromising on health goals.'

Agreeing with Chef Pathak, Chef Sreenivasan Govindarajan, Director Culinary, Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport, shared, "In recent years, Navratra food trends have seen a steady focus on tradition with a subtle shift towards health consciousness and innovation. However, the fundamental choices in Navratra cuisine have remained largely unchanged. What's notable, though, is the growing emphasis on hygiene and the meticulous preparation of dishes. People today are more conscious about the cleanliness of their food, reflecting a broader trend towards prioritizing health and wellbeing even during cultural celebrations. This nuanced approach ensures that while the flavors remain traditional, each dish is prepared with care and attention to hygiene, meeting the evolving tastes and standards of modern times.

While Navratri presents chefs with challenges, including limited ingredients, Chef Ashutosh Bisht of Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla remains undeterred. He explains, "Creating a menu that is both healthy and tasty within the constraints of limited ingredients poses a significant challenge. With a restricted palette of options, the key lies in maximizing flavor and variety despite the constraints." This sentiment is Chef echoed by Sreenivasan Govindarajan, who emphasizes the importance of balancing taste and

nutrition in Navratri cuisine. He said, "Balancing taste and nutrition becomes paramount, requiring careful selection and preparation of ingredients to ensure that each dish is not only fulfilling but also delicious. Overcoming this challenge demands creativity and ingenuity in the kitchen, as chefs strive to craft flavorful Navratra meals that satisfy both the palate and the nutritional



SPIRITUAL FOOD

CHEF ADITI DIXIT, a culinary virtuoso at CYK Hospitalities., is renowned for her innovative approach to gastronomy. With a passion for crafting exquisite dishes that tantalize the taste buds, Chef Dixit elevates dining experiences to new heights. Chef Adıtı Dixit talked about Navaratra offerings. Excerpts



hat trends have you observed in Navratri food over recent years, particularly in response to increasing health consciousness and a desire for

innovative dishes? In recent years, especially in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, several noteworthy trends have emerged in Navratri cuisine. These trends are predominantly driven by a growing awareness of health considerations and a desire for culinary innovation.

One significant trend involves the use of healthier ingredients, where there has been a notable shift away from refined flours towards alternatives such as buckwheat flour, amaranth flour, kuttu flour, and water chestnut flour. These alternatives, being gluten-free and often considered healthier options, have gained popularity among healthconscious individuals.

Moreover, there has been an increasing adoption of low-oil cooking techniques to reduce overall calorie intake and create lighter meals. Techniques such as baking, steaming, and air-frying have become preferred methods during Navratri, aligning with healthconscious dietary preferences.

What benefits does Navratri food offer, and what challenges do you face when creating a menu that is both healthy and tasty within the limitations of ingredients?

Navratri fasting offers several benefits when approached mindfully. It encourages the consumption of a diverse array of foods, including fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and dairy products, promoting the absorption of essential nutrients, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Moreover, Navratri fasting emphasizes the intake of fluids such as water, coconut water, and herbal teas, aiding in hydration and overall well-being. For many, Navratri

fasting can also support weight control by emphasizing lighter, plant-based foods and avoiding processed and

high-calorie options. However, creating a Navratri menu that is both healthy and flavorful comes with its challenges. Fasting during Navratri imposes restrictions on certain ingredients such as grains, pulses, onions, garlic, and common spices, necessitating creativity in utilizing alternative ingredients without compromising taste and nutrition. Additionally, maintaining a nutritional balanced profile, particularly in terms of protein intake, can be challenging due to limitations on traditional

protein sources like lentils and beans. Hence, increasing the incorporation of dairy products, nuts, seeds, and plant proteins crucial. becomes Moreover, catering to individual allergies, intolerances, dietary preferences adds another layer of complexity when designing a menu that

caters to a diverse group of people observing Navratri fasting. Could you share one of your most unique Navratri dishes that you've created recently, which has been

particularly popular? Certainly! We recently introduced an extensive Navratri menu featuring innovative dishes such as sweet potato & amaranth kebab, vegan millet tikki, arbi tuk chaat, hasselback aloo chaat, paan rose lassi, and kesar pista lassi. Among these offerings, the sweet potato and amaranth kebab stands out for its unique and versatile flavour profile. It has garnered significant popularity among our patrons and remains a personal favourite of mine as

Which ingredient do you find most versatile in Navratri cuisine?

For me personally, sabudana, also known as tapioca pearls or sago, is an incredibly versatile ingredient commonly used during Navratri fasting. Its adaptability lends itself to a myriad of beloved dishes, including sabudana khichdi, thalipeeth, kheer, vada, salad, chiwda, and papad, making it an indispensable element in Navratri cuisine.

HEALTHIER SHIFT IN NAVRATRI CUISINE

With a passion for blending traditional flavors with modern techniques, CHEF GAURAV has carved a niche for himself in the culinary world. His dedication to quality ingredients, attention to detail, and commitment to culinary excellence have earned him accolades from both diners and peers alike. Here he talks about Navratri food. Excerpts.

What trends have you observed in Navratri food over recent years, particularly in response to increasing health consciousness and a desire for

innovative dishes? Over recent years, we've noticed a significant shift towards healthier ingredients in Navratri cuisine. Millets like Foxtail and Rajgira are now replacing refined sabudana in dishes like khichdi, offering a more nutritious alternative. Moreover, there's been an increased emphasis on incorporating fruits and vegetables, such as Buckwheat flour rotis stuffed with veggies and salads featuring ingredients like lotus stem and water

estnuts. Additionally, alternatives to dairy like chestnuts. almond milk, coconut milk, and soy milk are being used in dishes like halwa, cheela, and These puddings. changes reflect a growing desire among people to celebrate while Navratri maintaining a healthy

requirements of the fasting

While it's often said that Navratra can ward off evil, Chef Deshraj Punia,

Executive Sous Chef at Citadines Paras

Square Gurugram, highlights another

aspect. He emphasizes that Navratra

food possesses the ability to cleanse the

body of toxins and impurities. He

emphasized, "I want to mention that

Navratri food is healthier than what we

eat every day. It's not too heavy on the

stomach, so it keeps you feeling fit and

energetic all day long. Surprisingly, it

also helps boost the immune system and

reduces the risk of cancer and heart

attacks for those who fast. We don't really

face any challenges because Navratri has

been around for a long time, so it's part

of our culture. We're used to the ingredients used in Navratri food, and

since we're living in a time where health is important, it encourages us to try new

and creative dishes. It's always good to

explore new things instead of sticking to

Despite challenges, chefs remain

undeterred in their quest to create

unique dishes and push culinary

boundaries. For example, Kuttu Lapsi by

Chef Ashutosh Bisht, Executive Sous

Chef, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla is an innovative dish. "We created this dish

using raw kuttu in its early stage of

the same old dishes."

period.'

lifestyle. What kind of benefits does Navratri food offer? What challenges do you

face when creating a menu that is both healthy and tasty with limitations of ingredients? Navratri food, despite its limitations in ingredients, offers a surprising range of health benefits. The focus on whole grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables

provides a detoxifying effect, improves digestion, and boosts immunity. However, creating a menu that is both healthy and can challenging due to restrictions such as no onions, garlic, or certain grains. The key

lies in getting creative with spices, herbs, and alternative flours to craft flavorful dishes that satisfy the palate while meeting dietary requirements.

Could you share one of your most

created recently, which has been super popular?

Certainly! One of our most beloved Navratri dishes is our Tandoori Sweet Potato Chaat. We start with tandoorroasted sweet potatoes, which are then tossed in a vibrant medley of mint chutney (crafted without onion and garlic), sweet and tangy

dates chutney, a touch of rock salt (sendha namak), black pepper, a squeeze of lemon juice, chopped green chilies. Finally, we add a delightful crunch of roasted peanuts and crispy fried potato laccha. It's a harmonious blend of textures and harmonious flavors that has quickly become a Navratri favorite among

our patrons.

Which ingredient do you find most

versatile in Navratri cuisine? unique Navratri dishes that you've Chef: Black pepper.



Photo: Pankaj Kumar

ripening. This innovative twist has vielded fantastic results, offering a healthy and delicious alternative to traditional Navratri fare," he shared. Whereas, Mr. Kamal Kanth, Executive

Chef, Sambarpot, defines his 'Kashmiri dum aloo with stuffed paneer, khoya & dry fruits' as the person's favorite from Navratra thali. What surprised us were Sabudana Dumplings that are created by Chef Deshraj Punia, who shared with pride, "We give them a unique twist by

shallow frying them, which makes them look like a fusion dish. They're cooked in desi ghee, which is good for both your skin and stomach, and they taste really

delicious and light. Bringing out the best dish also depends on the ingredients used in creating the best dish. But with limitations of options, innovation is key to success. Ingredients like Potato, Sweet Potato, Buckwheat, all are there, but which ingredients are most versatile? Chef Ashutosh Bisht thinks it's curd as he rightly pointed out its benefits. It can be used to create refreshing drinks, flavorful subzi preparations, or even desserts. Additionally, it's a great source of energy that can be digested quickly, making it an ideal component for

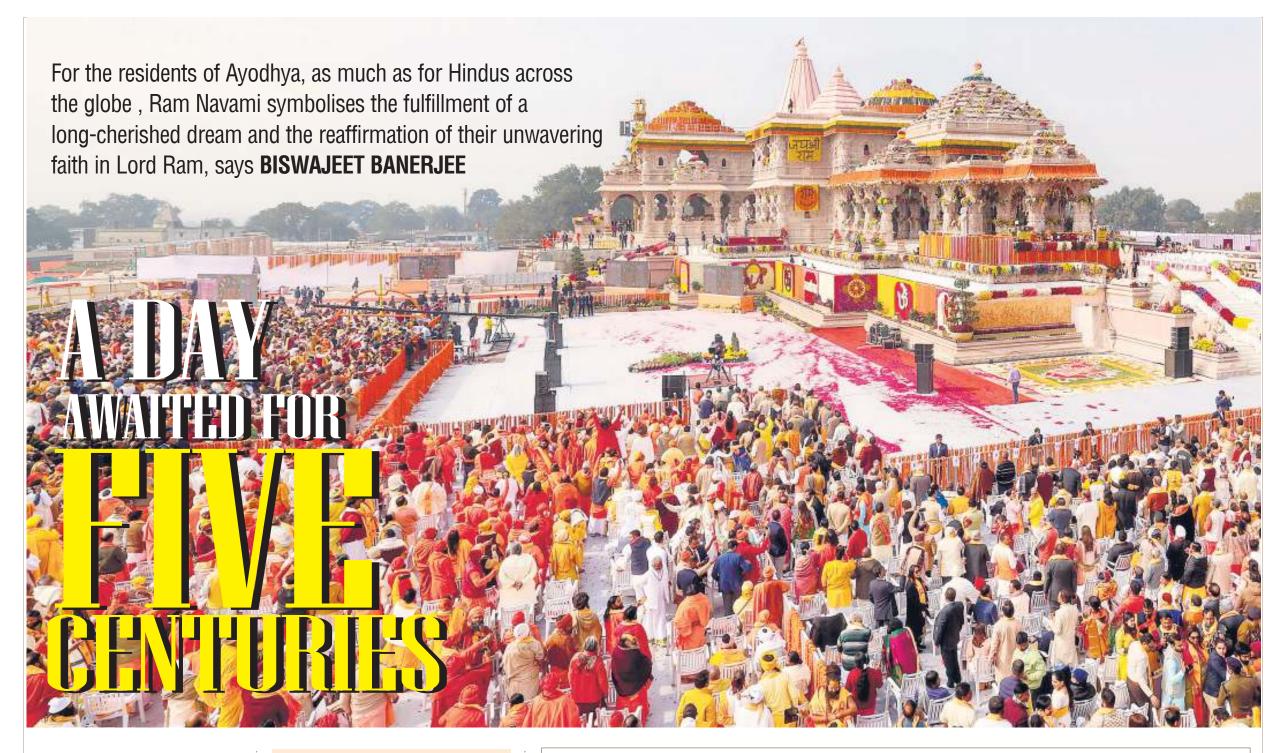
Navratri meals. According to Chef Mani Mohan Pathak, the key ingredient is potato/ sweet potatoes and sabudana. Potato is been used plain boiled/ fried and roasted. Further, potato is used in sabudana khichdi, tikkis, sabzi, and even kuttu ki puris or parathas made from potato flour.

Overall, we can say that Navratri brings with it a delightful culinary experience that caters to both tradition and taste. This vibrant festival has brought out the creative side of the F&B world and continues to inspire many without compromising on health.

The pioneer Color Color

"So long as you have food in your mouth, you have solved all questions for the time being" — Franz Kafka





AYODHYA

the ancient city steeped in the rich tapestry of Hindu mythology and history, is poised to witness an unparalleled spectacle as it gears up to celebrate its first Ram Navami following the consecration of the majestic Ram Mandir. The air is filled with anticipation and reverence as devotees from all corners of India flock to this sacred land to partake in the festivities honoring Lord Ram, the epitome of righteousness and virtue.

Months of meticulous planning and fervent preparations have culminated in the grandeur that envelops Ayodhya today. The city, adorned with vibrant colors and resounding chants of "Jai Shri Ram," exudes an aura of spirituality and devotion that is palpable in every nook and cranny. The consecration of the Ram Mandir, a

momentous event that resonated deeply with millions of devotees across the globe, has added an extra layer of significance to this year's Ram Navami celebrations. For the residents of Ayodhya, it symbolizes the fulfillment of a long-cherished dream and the reaffirmation of their unwavering faith in Lord Ram.

Radha Sharma, a local resident, encapsulated the sentiments of many when she said, "This Ram Navami holds a special place in our hearts. It's not just about celebrating the birth of Lord Ram; it's about witnessing the fruition of our faith and denotion."

As the countdown to Ram Navami begins, devotees throng the Ram Mandir, eager to offer their prayers and seek the blessings of the divine. The atmosphere is electric with fervent devotion as chants of "Jai Shri Ram" reverberate through the streets, transcending linguistic and cultural barriers.

Ramesh Singh, a pilgrim from Bihar, echoed the sentiments of countless others as he remarked, "Ram Navami is not just a festival; it's a spiritual journey. Being here in Ayodhya, amidst the sacred surroundings, fills my heart with joy and peace."

At the heart of the celebrations lies the Ram Mandir, believed to be situated at the very spot where Lord Rama, the seventh avatar of Lord Vishnu, was born. For devotees, it is not merely a structure but a sacred sanctum that serves as a beacon of hope and divine connection.

ADMINISTRATION STRATEGY

As Ayodhya braces itself for the influx of around 50 lakh devotees in all nine days of Ram Navami, the administration has meticulously crafted a comprehensive crowd management strategy to ensure the safety and convenience of all participants. The maximum rush of 25 lakh-30 lakh devotees is expected on the Ram Navami day of April 17 – when people take a dip at river Saryu.



Ram Navam

A Celebration of Faith and Virtue

am Navami transcends the realms of mere festivity; it embodies a profound reaffirmation of faith and the timeless virtues exemplified by Lord Rama. Though revered as a deity, Lord Rama epitomizes the human manifestation of a divine force, embodying qualities of

epitomizes the human manifestation of a divine force, embodying qualities of righteousness and compassion that resonate with every individual. The celebration of Ram Navami serves as a spiritual compass, guiding devotees towards a path of benevolence and virtuosity, fostering personal growth and evolution.

As the culmination of the nine-day Chaitra Navratri celebrations, Ram Navami holds a special significance, particularly in Ayodhya, the birthplace of Lord Rama. The Hindu month of Chaitra, heralding the transition from spring to summer, sets the stage for this auspicious occasion, elevating its sanctity and joy.

The celebration unfolds with a prayer to the sun at the break of dawn, symbolizing the dawn of enlightenment and spiritual awakening. At midday, a special prayer commemorates the divine birth of Lord Ram, invoking blessings and divine grace upon all. The spirit of celebration extends beyond the temples, as Rath yatras or chariot processions of Lord Ram, accompanied by his consort Sita, brother Lakshman, and devoted Hanuman, traverse the streets, spreading joy and spiritual fervor. The devotees converge on the banks of the sacred Sarayu River, immersing themselves in its purifying waters, seeking spiritual rejuvenation and divine blessings.

BRING\SATTU TO STAY COOL

s temperatures soar in anticipation of Ram Navami, the Ram Mandir Trust has issued a special plea to devotees: bring along Sattu. Recognized for its cooling properties, Sattu, a traditional flour, promises respite from the scorching heat, ensuring the well-being and comfort of pilgrims during their visit to Ayodhya.

Champat Rai, the Convener of the Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, underscored the significance of hydration and maintaining a cool



demeanor amidst the festivities. He urged devotees to embrace Sattu as a means to combat the sweltering temperatures, emphasizing its effectiveness in beating the

With the welfare of devotees at the forefront, the Trust's initiative aims to ensure a pleasant and comfortable experience for all pilgrims as they partake in the sacred celebrations of Ram Navami in Ayodhya.

(Additional reporting done by BP Singh from Ayodhya).

In anticipation of the monumental crowds expected to throng the city, a strategic deployment of magistrates and police personnel has been planned. Heightened security measures will be implemented at sensitive areas and major temples, including the Ram Janmabhoomi temple, to prevent any untoward incidents. Efforts are underway to facilitate smooth entry and exit at the Ram Janmabhoomi temple, with the Trust exploring multiple entries and exits to avoid potential stampede-like situations. Additionally, arrangements have been made to provide water and mats on open floors, considering the approaching hot weather conditions, ensuring the comfort of devotees. To address any medical emergencies, round-the-clock medical facilities with extra beds will be available in both government health institutions and private hospitals. Traffic management will be streamlined, and vigilant monitoring will be conducted to identify and segregate any criminal elements.

The administration is leaving no stone unturned to enhance safety and convenience for devotees taking a dip in the sacred Sarayu River during Ram Navami. Additional fiber motorboats have been deployed, and barricades will be set up in the river to regulate the flow of people, facilitating secure access for devotees.

Moreover, elaborate arrangements are being made for public toilets and regular cleaning, with over 2,000 sanitation workers mobilized for this purpose. Chief Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra affirmed, "We have taken all necessary precautions to ensure the safety of pilgrims and residents alike. Our priority is to facilitate a peaceful and joyous celebration of Ram Navami."

ECONOMIC STIMULUS THROUGH FESTIVITIES

The festivities have not only kindled the flames of spirituality but have also breathed new life into Ayodhya's economy. Local businesses have witnessed a surge in sales

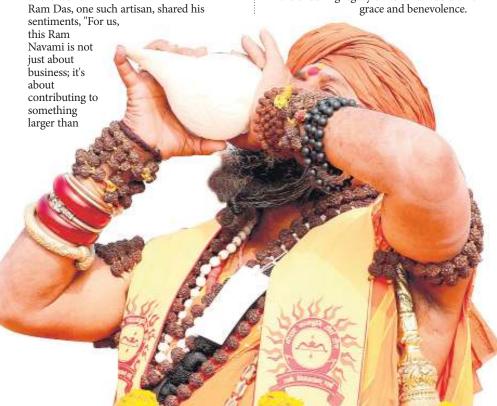
of religious artifacts, sweets, and traditional attire, as tourists and pilgrims alike immerse themselves in the spiritual ambiance of the city.

Ram Gupta, a local businessman, remarked, "The consecration of the Ram Mandir has brought prosperity to Ayodhya. We've seen a significant increase in sales, and tourists are eager to experience the cultural heritage of our city."

Behind the scenes, skilled artisans have toiled tirelessly to craft intricate idols and decorations for the celebrations. From colorful rangolis adorning the streets to ornate idols of Lord Ram, Sita, and Lakshman, their craftsmanship adds a

Lakshman, their craftsmanship adds a touch of elegance to the festivities, showcasing Ayodhya's rich cultural heritage to the world.

ourselves. Crafting these idols is a way of expressing our devotion to Lord Ram and our love for our heritage. Footfall in these days is tremendous bringing smiles on the faces of hoteliers. Sharad Kapoor, Director, Shaane Awadh Hotel told this reporter that not a single room is available till Ram Navami. "All the hotels, home stays and dharmashalas are booked, and the hospitality sector is doing very well since January 22," he said. Ram Navami is not merely a commemoration; it is a transformative journey, a celebration of faith, virtue, and the eternal triumph of good over evil. As the devotees unite in reverence and devotion, Ayodhya reverberates with the timeless chants of "Jai Shri Ram," echoing the enduring legacy of Lord Rama's divine



Today is Poila Boishakh, a day when Bengalis across the globe usher in their new year. And what better way to celebrate than food. SHOBORI GANGULI joined the feast and festivities at Hyatt Gurugram with critically acclaimed CHEF ANANYA BANERJEE whose signature take on a traditional Bengali feast made it a special







he first day of the Bengali New Year is not just another date on the calendar to mark for rituals and ceremonies. It is all about cultural bonhomie, dance and music, a day to let your hair down, meet friends and family over a grand meal, a day when even the most humble of kitchens becomes the fulcrum of all celebrations, with everyone on the lookout for a feast to remember. Truth be told, nothing can vie with the spirit that enwraps all of Bengal this day. But for probashi (non-resident) Bengalis like me, scattered across the country, we crave to partake of a sumptuous spread, course by course, from a traditional kitchen this special day which, for many of us, dwells only in the realms of nostalgia.

In this context one draws immense consolation from the fact that roving itinerant chefs like Ananya Banerjee are rewriting centuries old traditional manuscripts, rich with secret spices and untold innovations, for a generation that is clawing back to find its roots today. The Chef's

Bengal Bhoj Hyatt this weekend provided exactly that opportunity. For my generation, Banerjee's creations are a warm nostalgic from a embrace distant past when our tiny lives revolved grandmother's or mother's kitchens, a time when festivals meant food, each meal a feast. Little did

from those kitchens, from their aromas and flavours. It is therefore heartening to know that someone like Chef Banerjee, while keeping her much wider international clientele in mind, has carved a unique niche for herself in her quest to recover the history and philosophy that informs exquisite culinary she puts it, that while going traditional, "I

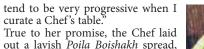
we know back then that as we grew older

we would simultaneously travel far away



CHEF ANANYA BANERJEE





out a lavish Poila Boishakh spread, from a live Bengali street food counter of *Phuchkas* and Churmur to appetizers like Chicken Kobiraji, Mochaar Chop and Bhetki Paturi or the vegetarian alternative of Paneer

The main course meandered its delectable way through *Phulko* Loochi, *Chholar Daal*, *Kosha* Maangsho and Aloo Posto. Accompanied by steamed rice were Chef Banerjee's innovative twists to the traditional Prawn Malai Curry and Lebu Lonka Murgi.
Bengalis are never far behind when

it comes to desserts. Even after a rich and sumptuous meal, there's always space left to accommodate always space left to accommodate some *mishti* to sign off a great feast. Chef Banerjee's Baked *Roshogulla* with *Jhola Nolen Gur* (a liquid syrup of date jaggery) delicately poured on top was really an elixir from heaven. So was the *Patishapta*, crepes with a rich filling of grated coconut and khejurer gur (date jaggery). The Mango Baked Yogurt too beckoned our undivided attention

attention. Even as technology takes over our time and lives, and reels and Instagrams provide

instant and vicarious pleasure millions viewers, nothing in the world can ever replace the wholesome s e n s o r y experience enjoying a good meal real time, even as our senses come alive to the sight, aromas,

textures and sounds of a live kitchen. The one attribute that sets Chef Banerjee apart from the rest of her tribe

is the personal attention she devotes to every guest. She flits around the entire dining hall, at times personally





mixing the magical phuchka filling to the guests's guests's satisfaction, or taking them on a guided tour through her handcrafted menu, her play with spices and herbs writ large on the fare she puts out. Chef Banerjee's energy and vivacity is truly infectious, her creations culinary

"something to live for," as a friend at the table put it. A very Happy New Year to all of you

> (Please reach out for the May Edition of our magazine EXOTICA for a detailed story on the above)

EXPLORING THE WORLD OF SINGLE ORIGINS, FLAT WHITES, AND BEYOND!

Melbourne boasts an abundance of café choices that can enchant even the most dedicated caffeine enthusiasts

BY RUPALI DEAN

day indeed

deeply into Melbourne's essence, caffeine has coursed through the veins of this vibrant Australian city. With its cobblestone alleyways and hidden gems, Melbourne boasts a staggering array of cafes that number well above a thousand. With only two days to explore this caffeinated paradise, I decide to embark on a sensory journey in pursuit of the perfect brew. Opting for a guided excursion to delve into Melbourne's coffee tapestry, I booked a walking tour led by a knowledgeable local. The tour, starting at Tulip Coffee, introduced me to Monique Bayer, passionate

founder of Melbourne. meticulously

tracing its origins back to the 195s with the iconic Pellegrini Espresso Bar-a legacy brought forth by Italian immigrants infusing the city with their profound love for coffee. The Italians' indelible influence catalysed a coffee revolution, paving the way for a proliferation of expert roasters and skilled baristas in the early 200s. Today, Melbourne stands as a coffee connoisseur's haven, where the alluring aroma

Savouring a meticulously crafted

single origin and a robust house

blend espresso, Monique gently unveiled the rich history of Melbourne's coffee culture,

of freshly brewed espresso dances through laneways and spills onto bustling streets. Amidst this caffeinated symphony, as I indulged in various espresso creations, my palate gravitated towards the comforting familiarity of the house blend complemented by a hint of milk, embracing the city's love affair with coffee-one fragrant sip at a

A PLETHORA OF PASSION

Hailing from Tasmania, the industrious Bayer curates around three tours weekly, orchestrating bespoke experiences for small groups of no more than ten individuals. The genesis of her guided tours can be traced back to a leisurely café expedition with like-minded coffee enthusiasts in September 2012, sparking the



inception of her immersive walking adventures. Immersed in the ambrosial world

of coffee, I found myself savouring a potent single origin espresso, a departure from my usual cup of joe. As Monique divulged the emerging predilection for filter coffee-a gentle brewing method that

intrigued my taste buds-she promised to introduce me to this nuanced approach during our escapade. The art of coffee filtration, she explained, unfolds like a scientific exploration, effering an array of techniques to offering an array of techniques to unlock diverse flavours and aromas. Monique's insatiable quest for hidden local treasures



unearthed gems like Bean by Bros, discreetly marked by a modest overhead sign, and Industry Beans, celebrated for its trendy ambiance and revered for concocting velvety Aussie Flat Whites. In her relentless pursuit of culinary marvels, she unveils these wellkept secrets, enriching our expedition with tantalizing discoveries at every turn.

COFFEE LOVE

Immersed in the vibrant tapestry of Melbourne's coffee culture, I found myself navigating a world of tantalizing options tailored even to those adhering to a paleo diet. The allure of butter coffee, touted for its purported benefits of heightened vitality and drive,



A local coffee maker

beckoned from establishments like Patch Café in Richmond and Seedling in Flinders Lane, promising a unique caffeinated experience. Enlightened by Monique's insights, I learned that a true Melbournian's relationship with coffee hinges on quality, with subpar brews failing to captivate discerning palates. Amidst the lively chatter of coffee lively

aficionados, terms like cupping, siphon, AeroPress, and poursiphon, over resonated across the eclectic coffee shops lining our path, each method a testament to Melbourne's fervent coffee affair.

Our sojourn led us to Maker, where I indulged in the intricate art of filter coffee, opting for the elaborate cold drip

variant-a meticulous 12 to 24hour extraction process that accentuates the bean's essence while tempering bitterness. Here, I unearthed the enchanting novelty of frozen coffee, a departure from the conventional iced coffee of my homeland, where coffee is customized, frozen, and preserved until

beckoned for consumption. In Melbourne, coffee transcends mere refreshment; it is a sacred ritual, where reverence for the brew and the bean intertwine seamlessly. As the day unfolded with myriad caffeine-infused revelations, this latest discovery stood as a crowning jewel, a testament to a city that embraces coffee with a sanctity unmatched elsewhere.

(Awarded the "Best food writer in the country" by the Indian culinary forum, WACS and the ministry of Tourism, Rupali Dean writes on food and travel.)



Parents increasingly organise

entertainment – ranging from

music classes to family cinema

trips – for their children, rather

play dates and sports and

than letting them come up

with it themselves.

Perhaps this can help

To understand the risks posed by AI, follow the money

≺ime and again, leading scientists, technologists, and philosophers have made spectacularly terrible guesses about the direction of innovation. Even Einstein was not immune, claiming, "There is not the slightest indication that nuclear energy will ever be obtainable," just ten years before Enrico Fermi completed construction of the first fission reactor in Chicago. Shortly thereafter, the consensus switched to fears of an imminent nuclear holocaust.

Similarly, today's experts warn that an artificial general intelligence (AGI) doomsday is imminent. Others retort that large language models (LLMs) have already reached the peak of their powers.

It's difficult to argue with David Collingridge's influential thesis that attempting to predict the risks posed by new technologies is a fool's errand. Given that our leading scientists and technologists are usually so mistaken about technological evolution, what chance do our policymakers have of effectively regulating the emerging technological risks from artificial intelligence (AI)?

We ought to heed Collingridge's warning that technology evolves in uncertain ways. However, there is one class of AI risk that is generally knowable in advance. These are risks stemming from misalignment between a company's economic incentives to profit from its proprietary AI model in a particular way and society's interests in how the AI model should be monetised and deployed.

The surest way to ignore such misalignment is by focusing exclusively on technical questions about AI model capabilities, divorced

environment in which these models will operate and be designed for profit.

Focusing on the economic risks from AI is not simply about preventing "monopoly," "self-preferencing," or "Big

users. Its GPT store and developer tools need to return value to those who create it in order to ensure ecosystems of innovation remain viable and dispersed.

By carefully interrogating



Open AI is already becoming a dominant player with US\$2 billion (£1.6 billion) in annual sales and millions of users. Its GPT store and developer tools need to return value to those who create it in order to ensure ecosystems of innovation remain viable and dispersed. By carefully interrogating the system of economic incentives underlying innovations and how technologies are monetised in practice, we can generate a better understanding of the risks both economic and technological, nurtured by a market's structure. Market structure is not simply the number of firms, but the cost structure and economic incentives in the market that follow from the institutions, adjacent government regulations, and available financing.

Tech dominance". It's about ensuring that the economic environment facilitating innovation is not incentivising hard-to-predict technological risks as companies "move fast and break things" in a race for profit or market dominance.

It's also about ensuring that value from AI is widely shared, by preventing premature consolidation. We'll see more innovation if emerging AI tools are accessible to everyone, such that a dispersed ecosystem of new firms, startups, and AI tools can arise.

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DEGRADING QUALITY FOR HIGHER PROFIT

It is instructive to consider how the algorithmic tech-

nologies that underpinned the aggregator platforms of old (think Amazon, Google and Facebook among others)

initially deployed to benefit

users, were eventually repro-

grammed to increase profits for the platform. The problems fostered by social media, search, and recommendation algorithms was never an engineering issue, but one of financial incentives (of profit growth) not aligning with algorithms' safe, effective, and equitable deployment. As the saying goes: history doesn't necessarily repeat itself but it does

To understand how platforms allocate value to them-selves and what we can do about it, we investigated the role of algorithms, and the unique informational set-up of digital markets, in extracting so-called economic rents from users and producers on platforms. In economic theory, rents are "super-normal profits" (profits that are above what would be achievable in a competitive market) and reflect control over some scarce resource.

Importantly, rents are a pure return to ownership or some degree of monopoly power, rather than a return earned from producing something in a competitive market (such as many producers making and selling cars). For digital platforms, extracting digital rents usually aptails depending the ally entails degrading the quality of information shown to the user, on the basis of them "owning" access to a mass of customers. For example, Amazon's millions of users rely on its product search algorithms to show them the best products available for sale, since they are unable to inspect each product indi-

CURTAILED CHILDHOOD FREEDOM

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE **GETTING UNHAPPIER**

by external forces, such as parental

can lead to frustration,

helplessness and low

self-esteem.

the

absence of

Moreover,

supervision or societal expectations, it

Experts often highlight social media and harsh economic times as key reasons why young people are getting unhappier. And while those factors are important, I would like to emphasise another.

Younger generations have less freedom and independence than previous generations did. The area where children are allowed to range unsuper-vised outside has shrunk by 90% since the 1970s.

Parents increasingly organise enter-tainment – ranging from play dates and sports and music classes to family cinema trips – for their children, rather than letting them come up with it themselves. Perhaps this can help explain recent reports that many teenagers today choose to be holed up in their bedrooms.

The lack of childhood freedom isn't just a result of parental control. Societal expectations and school policies also have huge influences.

It is important to note that constraints to freedom often stem from well-meaning intentions, such as safety concerns (location tracking, for example) or cultural norms.

Understandably, nobody wants to be the parent who lets their kid take (perceived) risks if others don't. But there are risks to over-protecting children too. It can inadvertently hinder their psychological development.

EMOTIONAL, SOCIAL AND COGNITIVE EFFECTS

Psychologist Jean Piaget emphasised the importance of exploration and experimentation in cognitive develop-ment in the 1950s. He noted that chil-dren construct their understanding of the world through active engagement with their environment. By restricting children's freedom to explore and take age-appropriate risks, we deprive them of opportunities for intellectual curiosity and innovation.

A lack of independence can undermine young people's sense of agency and control over their lives. And research in psychology consistently demonstrates that when people, young or old, feel powerless and constrained

autonomy limits young people's opportunities for self-discovery, creativity and personal growth. When children are constantly guided and supervised, they miss out on the invaluable experiences of problem-solving, decisionmaking and learning from mistakes. The decline in independence can have implications for social and emotional development. Children may get love, support and attention within the family unit. But spending too much time with parents may lead to difficulties getting on with peers, who don't provide the same unconditional love and

Indeed, when children are constantly surrounded by adults and structured activities, they may struggle to develop meaningful relationships, assertiveness and resilience. Research highlights the importance of peer interactions in shaping social competence and emotional intelligence. After all, parents may not require you to empathise with them, but friends will.

By orchestrating play dates and entertainment, parents may therefore

explain recent reports that many teenagers today choose to be holed up in their bedrooms. inadvertently limit their children's ability to navigate social dynamics. This will include learning empathy and

developing interpersonal skills independently. It will also set an expectation that children will come to internalise the idea that "parents will do things so I don't have to" – leading to further lack of accomplishment.

The lack of independence can also contribute to feelings of boredom, restlessness and disengagement. Humans need to be engaged in activities that challenge and absorb our attention, leading to feelings of fulfilment and happiness. When children are constantly entertained and experies. stantly entertained and supervised, they may struggle to find activities that naturally capture their interest and provide a sense of purpose and enjoy-

This is important. In defining happiness, positive psychology emphasises both the emotional aspect, such as experiencing positive emotions, and the cognitive aspect, which involves a sense of overall satisfaction with one's life, including meaning and purpose.



Right whale found entangled in rope off New England

North Atlantic right whale has been spotted entangled in rope off New England, worsening an already devastating year for the vanishing animals, federal authorities

The right whales number less than 360 and are vulnerable to entanglement in fishing gear and collisions with ships. The entangled whale was seen on Wednesday

about 50 miles south of Rhode Island's Block Island, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said. The whale has

rope coming out of both sides of its mouth and has been far from shore, making it difficult for rescuers to help, NOAA said in a statement.

"Given the long distance from shore, experts were unable to safely travel to the last known location of the whale during daylight to attempt a rescue," the statement said. "NOAA Fisheries and our partners will monitor this whale and attempt to respond to the entanglement, if possible, as weather and safety conditions allow.

Several right whales have died this year off Georgia and Massachusetts, and environmental groups fear the species could be headed for extinction. The animal's population fell about 25 per cent from 2010 to 2010.

A whale found dead off Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, in January showed evidence of injury from entanglement in fishing gear. Environmental groups have called for stricter rules to protect the whales from entanglement in gear. However, a federal budget package passed in late 2022 included a sixyear pause on new federal whale regulations.

'This is another example 'Given the long that entangle-ments are hapdistance from pening in US shore, experts waters," said Gib were unable to Brogan, campaign director safely travel to with environthe last known mental group Oceana. "We location of the need stronger protection from whale during entanglements in daylight to US waters." attempt a

rescue."

The whales were once numerous off the East Coast, but they were deci-

mated during the commercial whaling era and have been slow to recover. They have been federally protected for decades.

They migrate every year from calving grounds off Florida and Georgia to feeding grounds off New England and Canada.

The journey has become perilous in recent years because their food sources appear to be moving as waters warm. That change causes the whales to stray from protected areas of ocean and become vulnerable to entanglements and collisions, scientists have

Carbon in top soil could help in climate change mitigation: Study

mated more than in the top two metres of soil worldwide, a finding that scientists say "underscores the urgency of incorporating inorganic carbon into climate change mitigation strategies.' Inorganic carbon is found

new research has esti-

in ores and minerals, as opposed to organic carbon, which can be found in nature through plants and animals. Researchers said that international initiatives aimed at increasing organic carbon content in soil - soil organic carbon (SOC) - should also consider the critical role of soil inorganic carbon (SIC) in achieving sustainable soil management and climate change mitigation. Solid SIC, often calcium

carbonate, tends to accumulate more in arid regions with infertile soils, which has led many to believe it is not important, they said.

However, SIC also plays a dual role in storing carbon and supporting ecosystem functions that depend on it, said the researchers, led by

as been on the SOC. It i now clear that inorgan carbon deserves equal attention.

the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). Thus, they said, SIC can be

an "additional lever" in maintaining and enhancing carbon sequestration, which refers to capturing carbon dioxide, either from the air or directly from the point of production, and storing it for long term. Carbon sequestration is considered a key method for removing carbon from the Earth's atmosphere.

While society has recognised the importance of soil to be fundamental to naturebased solutions for combating climate change, the major

focus has been on the SOC. It is now clear that inorganic carbon deserves equal attention, the researchers said.

They said their SIC estimates of more than 2,300 billion tonnes are more than five times the carbon found in all of the world's vegetation put together, and that this could be key to understanding how carbon moves around the world

"But here's the thing: This huge carbon pool is vulnerable to changes in the environment, especially soil acidification. Acids dissolve calcium carbonate and remove it

either as carbon dioxide gas or directly into the water, said Huang Yuanyuan, professor, the Institute of Geographic Sciences, CAS,

and co-lead author of the study published in the journal 'Science'. "Many regions in countries like China and India

are experiencing soil acidification due to industrial activities and intense farming. Without remedial actions and better soil practices, the world is likely to face a disturbance of SIC in the next thirty years," she said.

INDIAN WANTED IN KILLING WIFE

FBI offers reward of up to US\$ 250,000

The FBI is now offering a reward of up to US\$ 250,000 for information leading to the arrest of a 33-year-Indian national who is wanted in the US for allegedly killing his wife in 2015.

Bhadreshkumar Chetanbhai Patel, who was last known to be in the Newark area of New Jersey, is wanted for allegedly killing his wife Palak Patel by striking her multiple times with an object when they worked at a doughnut shop in Hanover, Maryland.

Patel is on the FBI's list of 'Ten Most Wanted Fugitives' and the federal agency announced a reward of up to US\$ 250,000 for information leading to his arrest.

Initially, the FBI had offered a US\$ 100,000 reward for information about Patel. Patel has been charged with first-degree murder, second-degree murder, firstdegree assault, second-degree assault, and dangerous weapons with intent to injure, the FBI said in a statement.

A federal arrest warrant was issued in the Maryland district court on April 20, 2015, after Patel was charged with unlawful flight to avoid prosecution. According to a 2017 FBI press



release, Patel and his wife worked the night shift at the doughnut shop of one of his relatives. Investigators believe Patel killed his wife, who was 21 at the time, in a back room of the shop just before midnight on April 12, 2015. Patel allegedly stabbed his wife multiple times and fled by a rear door. The statement warned that Patel should be considered "armed and extremely dangerous".

According to the FBI, investigators theorise that Palak Patel wanted to return to India their visas had expired the month before — and her husband was against the idea.

JURASSIC OR CRETACEOUS?

Scientists can't agree on when flowers evolved

¬lowers may look delicate – but → flowering plants, what scientists call angiosperms, are one of the most successful evolutionary organisms on the planet. Including more than 350,000 known species, they dominate the ecological system, shape food webs and play a vital role in oxygen production. Plus, many of

 think of roses, grains and tomatoes. Have you ever wondered when flowers first evolved, and what has been unfolding over millions of years of evolution to cultivate these beautiful species? Recent research is bringing new insights to this longstanding

them are valuable commercial crops

debate among scientists. When you think of fossils, you probably think of dinosaurs and ammonites - creatures with bones or hard shells that stayed preserved in the rock despite huge geological

changes. But flowers with frail petals and tiny pollen can also be preserved by being sealed in amber, crystallised, or carbonised.

Generally, the most convincing fossil evidence is from the Early

Cretaceous period (about 132 million years ago). However, the earliest evidence of a flower bud has a Jurassic origin (around 164 million years ago). It is called Florigerminis jurassi



all scientists agree it is an angiosperm, due to the different definitions of flower organs.

Flowers can be preserved in striking detail. Dripping tree sap and resin fossilised the petals and pollen of a fossil flower in a Baltic conifer forest around 34-38 million years ago. This is the largest known amber-preserved fossil flower, measuring about 3cm across and about three times as large as most floral fossils, showing beautiful details of this ancient flower.

JURASSIC OR CRETACEOUS? The timing of flowers' evolution is still a matter of debate between scientists, but most scientists are in one of

two camps: Jurassic or Cretaceous. Analyses using molecular data (DNA or protein sequences) suggest flowers could be much older than the fossil record shows - a Jurassic (145

million years ago) or even Triassic

Örganisms from different major clades (a group of organisms descended from a common ancestor) might converge as they evolve. But scientists don't always agree about which organisms belong in which evolutionary line. So, we need to combine all the information we have

origin (201 million years ago).

to get a more nuanced understanding of flowers' evolution. **DECIPHERING THE PAST BY MOLECULAR DATA**

Knowing when and how flowering plants first appeared and when they diverged from other plants is important to scientists. It would help us understand how angiosperms adapted to different environments, their interactions with other organisms, and their response to major geological events, such as climate change and mass extinctions.