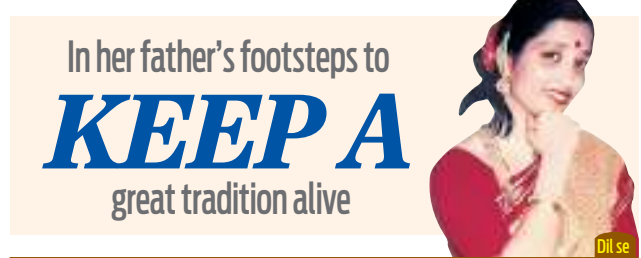


sunday pioneer

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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

— KCR, former Chief Minister

P4

DON'T MISS...

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...

-PAGE: 4

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 strategically-significant 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 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...

-PAGE: 6

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, have 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 dinosaurs and...

-PAGE: 10

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

PNS ■ DUBAI

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 had a crew of 25.

The Middle East had braced for potential Iranian retaliation over a suspected Israeli strike earlier this month on an Iranian consular building in Syria that killed 12 people, including a senior Guard gen-

eral who once commanded its expeditionary Quds Force there.

The Israeli war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip meanwhile is now six months old and is inflaming decades-old tensions across the whole region.

With Iranian-backed forces like Hezbollah in Lebanon and Yemen's Houthis 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 Portuguese-flagged MSC Aries, a container ship associated with London-based



Zodiac Maritime.

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 the vessel into Iranian territorial

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 Iranian 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

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 incident.

Despite the unexpected attack, immediate medical aid was administered to the Chief Minister and the MLA inside 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



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 attack on CM Jagan has elicited widespread 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 an overnight stay

■ 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 aid.

■ 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 prevent similar 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.



Uphill task for PK in Pithapuram: Mithun

PNS ■ KAKINADA

YSRCP regional coordinator and MP PV Mithun 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 electorate.

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

Speaking specifically about the Pithapuram constituency, Mithun 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. Mithun 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, Mithun 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.

2



CM's aunt raps Sharmila, supports Avinash Reddy

PNS ■ KADAPA

YS Vimala Reddy, Sister of the late YS Rajasekar 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 evidence.

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 murder?" 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

OBTUSE ANGLE



Heatwave stares R'seema in its face

PNS ■ GUNTUR

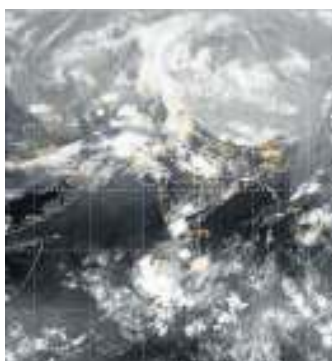
Hot, humid and uncomfortable weather is likely to prevail at isolated places in the Rayalaseema region during the next five days, the Meteorological Centre said on Saturday.

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 Pradesh from April 15 to 17.

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 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 and 17.

Rain occurred at one or two places 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 too big for his boots?

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 upon becoming MLC. Going by his arrogant behavior while touring the state in his capacity 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 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 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, 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 cafe look far better!

Crediting Sunil Kanugolu is 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 demoralise us," said another leader.

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

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 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 Krishnam 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 option: say 'Ram Ram' to politics.

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

REPORTERS' DIARY

YSRCP confident of tribal support in upcoming polls

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As Andhra Pradesh braces itself for the impending elections next month, the ruling Yuva Jana 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 tribal-dominated 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 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 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 initiatives 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 programmes.

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.



'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.

Drawing a contrast with the previous regime's pension distribution, CM Jagan highlighted the government's efforts to provide Rs 3,000 as a pension and ensure doorstep delivery through dedicated volunteers.

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 Sriharat accompanied by Alliance candidate Vishnu Kumar Raju from BJP, took to the streets of Akkayapalem in the North Constituency for a vibrant roadshow. Addressing the gathered crowd, Sriharath lamented the lack of materialization of several central government-sanctioned projects in Visakhapatnam, attributing the delay to the state government's purported inefficiency.

Sriharath voiced concerns 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



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 public interests.

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 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 impassioned call for clarity from Chandrababu Naidu underscores the imperative of transparent and accountable political leadership. The divergent approaches of the ruling YSRCP and the opposition TDP paint a vivid picture of competing 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 Portuguese-flagged 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 helicopter operation on the ship's deck, directing it towards Iran's territorial waters.

Uphill task...

Continued from Page 1

He dismissed concerns about Pawan Kalyan's tactics and alleged financial dealings, labelling his rhetoric on money matters as ironic.

Looking ahead, Midhun 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.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha

Tithi: Shashthi: Apr 13 12:04 PM to Apr 14 11:44 AM

Saptami: Apr 14 11:44 AM to Apr 15 12:11 PM

Nakshatram: Ardra: Apr 14 12:49 AM to Apr 15 01:34 AM

Punarvasu: Apr 15 01:34 AM to Apr 16 03:05 AM

Rahukalam: 4:55 PM to 6:28 PM

Yamagandam: 12:16 PM to 1:49 PM

Varjyam: 02:20 PM to 04:02 PM

Gulika: 02:20 PM to 04:02 PM

Amritakalam: 03:15 PM to 04:54 PM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:51 AM to 12:41 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Sunny

Temp: 40°

Humidity: 51%

Sunrise: 5:53 AM

Sunset: 6:23 PM

Updated: April 13 2024 5:00 PM

Many Oppn leaders join YSRCP



PNS ■ GUNTUR

Prominent figures from several opposition parties joined the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) at a ceremonial event held in Guntur.

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 Sena Party (JSP), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and Congress party into the YSRCP fold.

FROM JSP

Veerashetty Subbarao (Jana Sena State Convener, Guntur West Constituency)

Sheikh Ziaur Rehman

Dr. K Sivakumar

K. Nagaraju

Kandula Raja

Bharat

Sunil Reddy

Mangi Reddy

FROM BJP

Chandu Sambasivarao

Dr. TV Rao

FROM TDP

Byra Ajay Babu

Naga Goud

Sheikh Shahji

S Raghupathi Rao

T Surendra Kumar

Pendyala Venkataramana

FROM CONGRESS PARTY

Sheikh Usman

Yarlagadda Venkataramana

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

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.

32 women honoured with Ugadi Nandi Awards

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

AP Women's Commission Chairperson, Gajjala Venkatalakshmi Reddy, expressed the significance of 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. 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 unwavering dedication has resulted in the training of over



3000 women, revolutionizing the employment landscape, especially for married women aspiring for career advancement.

Moreover, Rekha's influence transcends her professional

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 women worldwide. Through

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

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 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 Sathya 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: Collector

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, 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 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 inter-linking 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 Revenue 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 RO G. Venkateswarlu, EVM Nodal Officer G. Maheswara Rao, and Election Cell Superintendent M. Durga Prasad were also present during the proceedings.

TECKZITE-24 of RGUKT-Nuzvid ends

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

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 enthusiasm.

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 various colleges.

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 TTD

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



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 significance 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 himself.

Lokesh voices concern over possible poll disruptions

PNS ■ MANGALAGIRI

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 instigated 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 from individuals in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, who claimed to be receiving the illicit substance from Andhra Pradesh.

Lokesh further criticised the



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.

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 youth.

Looking ahead, Lokesh outlined the NDA's proposed strategy for economic revitalisation, emphasising plans to establish diverse industries tai-

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 significantly augmenting the State's revenue.

Intrinsic motivation in teaching profession stressed

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a thought-provoking address at GITAM Deemed to be University, Professor Nibir Mandar, a distinguished scholar in Geological Sciences and an 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 conduct.



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

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 textbooks.

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 generation.

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

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A delegation from the Republic of Angola visited Andhra University (AU) here on Saturday to explore avenues for collaboration and forge closer 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 educational 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

J A Francisco expressed satisfaction with the quality of education offered at AU and commended the institution's dedication to academic excellence.

AU's Dean of International Student Affairs, Prof. EN 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.



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 prohibited.

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 elections.



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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 board examinations. Undeterred by adversities and the looming spectre of child marriage, Nirmala has emerged victorious with an awe-inspiring score of 95.7%.

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

suit. However, amidst the shadows 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 Balika Vidyalaya 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.

PART-I

Would Ambedkar have agreed with CAA?

The 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 citizenship with India and other neighbors. Article 6 gave rights of citizenship to persons who had migrated to India from Pakistan at the commencement 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.

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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



PROF MADABHUSHI 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

it is false to link the two" - PM and others.

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, but 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 Rajya Sabha.

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), 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 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 plays aunt Vimala for supporting Avinash Reddy

PNS ■ KADAPA

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 Rajasekhara 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 the media on Saturday.

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 their actions."

Vimala Reddy also questioned whether Sharmila and Sunita had any evidence implicating Avinash Reddy in the Vivekananda Reddy case, cautioning against dragging Jagan Mohan Reddy into the matter.

She lamented the incarceration of her cousin, YS Bhaskar Reddy, for the past year, expressing sorrow over the family's internal disputes. "Sharmila's allegations against Jagan Mohan Reddy stem from personal animosity," she criticized.



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 involvement in the Vivekananda Reddy murder case. We are not making baseless accusations but speaking the truth supported by evidence," Sharmila 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 Palnadu 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) was studying sixth class at a 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 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 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 Loco Pilot & 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 bogie stationed on the bridge.

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 towards duty.



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 Snananam and the preparation of Talambalra.

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

PNS ■ ELURU

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 process.

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 told them.

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.

Gold & silver ornaments worth Rs 1.40 cr seized

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

The police and election officials seized gold jewellery and silver ornaments worth Rs 1.40 crore at Pottilanka check-post 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



of conduct.

They found gold jewellery and silver ornaments worth Rs 1.40 crore were being transported in an SUV. The Income Tax and GST officials rushed

to the check-post and examined the documents. Later the gold and silver ornaments were shifted to the district grievances committee to take further action.

Alliance leaders in fear of defeat: Buggana

PNS ■ NANDYALA

Finance Minister Buggana Rajendranath 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.

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 behalf 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.

"Development does not mean 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 Rajendranath Reddy in his camp office in Dhone on Saturday. The Finance minister released the Telugu calendar on the

Gaming industry doesn't require regulation, says PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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 minister said.

"My attempt is to uplift the 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 government should be there with them

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 boom."

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has asked all the e-commerce companies to remove drinks and beverages, including Bournvita, from the category of health drinks from their portals.

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), a statutory body constituted under section (3) of the 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

companies/portals are advised to remove drinks and beverages, including Bournvita, from the category of health drinks from their platforms/sites.

On April 2, food safety standards regulator FSSAI directed all e-commerce food business operators (FBOs) to ensure appropriate categorisation of food products being sold on their websites.

The Food Safety and 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 added.



'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 department.

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 purpose.

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

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-taxability of capital gains from the sale

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 grandfathered.

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 indirectly such tax benefit.

Govt asks all gas-based plants to be operational from May 1

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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 summer.

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 all-time 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



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

To ensure maximum power generation from Gas-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 station in accordance with the directions of that govern-

ment," the statement said.

The order under Section 11, which is on similar lines as done for imported coal-based power plants, aims to optimise the availability of power from GBSs during the ensuing high demand period.

As per the arrangement, GRID-INDIA will inform GBSs in advance, of the number of days for which gas-based power is required.

GBSs holding Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) with distribution licensees shall first offer their power to PPA holders. If the power offered is not utilised by any PPA holder, then it shall be offered in the power market.

GBSs not tied to PPAs must offer their generation in the power market. A high-level committee headed by Chairperson, Central Electricity Authority has been constituted to facilitate the implementation of this direction.

Foreign funds shy away from real estate

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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 to Vestian.

The real estate sector had 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 Saturday.

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 period.

Domestic investors pumped in US\$ 541.1 million in the Indian real estate in January-



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 period.

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

Vestian CEO Shrinivas Rao, 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-

foreign investors are cautious due to global macroeconomic uncertainty and geopolitical tensions."

Commercial assets (office, retail, co-working, and hospitality projects) garnered the highest investments of US\$ 231.6 million in the March

quarter, as against US\$ 484.8 million in the year-ago period.

Institutional investments in residential assets fell 33 per cent to US\$ 225 million from US\$ 337.7 million.

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 during the quarter with US\$ 299 million, followed by Delhi-NCR at US\$ 110 million.

Both cities together accounted for around 74 per cent of the total investments received in the current quarter.

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, Vestian said.

'Create new breed of financial planning professionals'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The country needs a "new breed of financial planning professionals" who can act as consultants for customers, Financial Planning Standards Board (FPSB) CEO Krishan Mishra said.

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 statement.

"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."

"This is why we need to create a new breed of financial planning professionals who can be consultants for

customers," Mishra said.

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.



IMPORTING PULSES FROM MYANMAR

Payment mechanism for traders simplified: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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.

MONEY MATTERS

Data recovered, restored shortly after it was deleted : Welspun



Textile firm Welspun Living on Saturday clarified that it has 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'



Realty firm Ashiana Housing on Saturday said it sold 224 luxury 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



Petregaz India, a subsidiary of Petredec Group has commissioned its new state-of-the-art LPG Import and Storage Terminal that 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.

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

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 1.5 per cent inflation rate for the next fiscal year -- again the highest among 46



countries and a 2.8 per cent growth rate -- the fifth lowest for FY 2024-25.

The Manila-based lending

agency stated that the inflation 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 rate.

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

phase for a prolonged period and the World Bank too said last week that another 10 million 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.

In the past, the ADB gave a rather optimistic economic scenario close to Pakistan's official forecasts.

However, the latest ADB report stated that Pakistan would continue to face challenges from substantial new external financing requirements and the rollover of old debt, exacerbated by tight global monetary conditions.

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.

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



For the residents of Ayodhya, as much as for Hindus across the globe , Ram Navami symbolises the fulfillment of a long-cherished dream and the reaffirmation of their unwavering faith in Lord Ram, says **BISWAJEET BANERJEE**



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 devotion."

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 Sarayu.



Ram Navam A Celebration of Faith and Virtue

Ram 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 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.

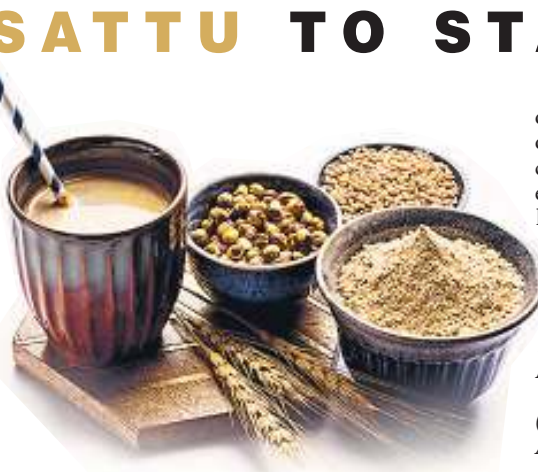
As the culmination of the nine-day Chaitra Navratri celebrations, Ram Navami holds a special significance, particularly in Ayodhya, the birthplace of Lord Rama. The Hindu month of Chaitra, heralding the transition from spring to summer, sets the stage for this auspicious occasion, elevating its sanctity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

As 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 heat.

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.

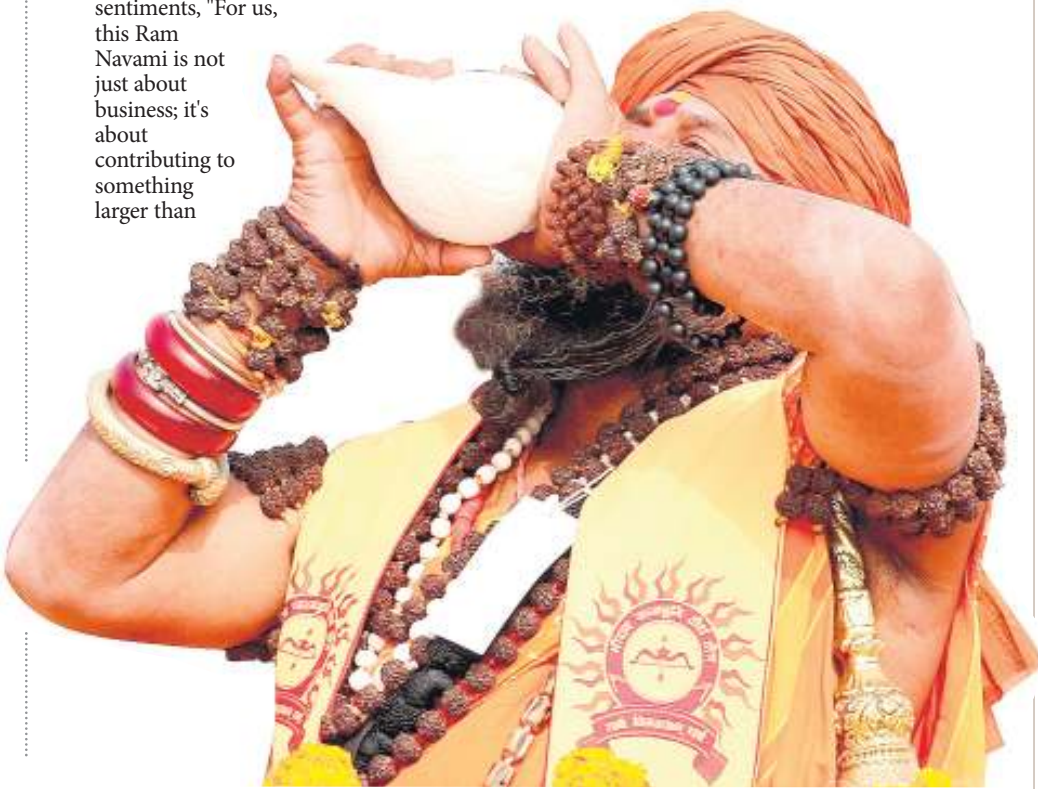
Ram Gupta, a local businessman, remarked, "The consecration of the Ram Mandir has brought prosperity to Ayodhya. We've seen a significant increase in sales, and tourists are eager to experience the cultural heritage of our city."

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 touch of elegance to the festivities, showcasing Ayodhya's rich cultural heritage to the world.

Ram Das, one such artisan, shared his sentiments, "For us, this Ram Navami is not just about business; it's about contributing to something larger than

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 dharmshalas 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 grace and benevolence.



SHUBHO NOBO BORSHO

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 day indeed

The 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 at Hyatt this weekend provided exactly that opportunity.

For my generation, Chef Banerjee's creations are a warm and nostalgic embrace from a distant past when our tiny lives revolved around our grandmother's or mother's kitchens, a time when festivals meant food, each meal a feast. Little did we know back then that as we grew older we would simultaneously travel far away 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 Bengal's exquisite culinary heritage. As she puts it, that while going traditional, "I

tend to be very progressive when I curate a Chef's table."

True to her promise, the Chef laid 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 Paturi*.

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 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.

Even as technology takes over our time and lives, and reels and Instagrams provide instant and vicarious pleasure to millions of viewers, nothing in the world can ever replace the whole sensory experience of enjoying a good meal real time, even as our senses come alive to the sight, aromas, textures and sounds of a live kitchen.

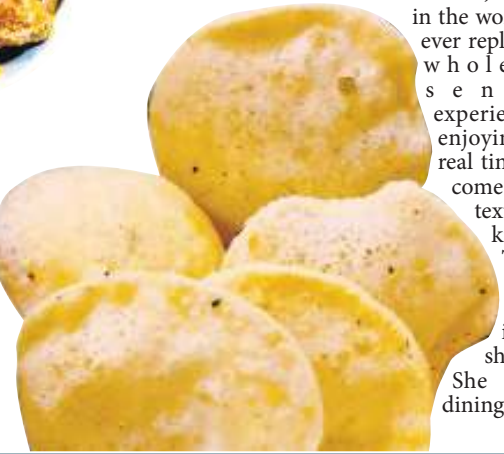
The one attribute that sets Chef Banerjee apart from the rest of her tribe is the personal attention she devotes to every guest. She flits around the entire dining hall, at times personally

mixing the magical *phuchka* filling to the guests's 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 culinary creations "something to live for," as a friend at the table put it. A very Happy New Year to all of you out there!

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



CHEF ANANYA BANERJEE



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**

Woven deeply into Melbourne's essence, caffeine has long 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, the passionate founder of W a l k Melbourne.

Savouring a meticulously crafted single origin and a robust house blend espresso, Monique gently unveiled the rich history of Melbourne's coffee culture, tracing its origins back to the 1950s 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 2000s. Today, Melbourne stands as a coffee connoisseur's haven, where the alluring aroma 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 time.

A PLETHORA OF PASSION

Hailing from Tasmania, the industrious Bayer curates around three tours weekly, meticulously 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, offering an array of techniques to unlock diverse flavours and aromas. Monique's insatiable quest for hidden local treasures



Monique Bayer



A local coffee maker

unearthed gems like Bean by Workshop 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 well-kept 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,

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 aficionados, terms like cupping, siphon, AeroPress, and pour-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 24-hour 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.)



To understand the risks posed by AI, follow the money

Time 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

from the socio-economic 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



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, start-ups, and AI tools can arise.

OpenAI 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

nologies that underpinned the aggregator platforms of old (think Amazon, Google and Facebook among others) initially deployed to benefit users, were eventually reprogrammed 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 rhyme.

To understand how platforms allocate value to themselves 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 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 individually.

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.

DEGRADING QUALITY FOR HIGHER PROFIT

It is instructive to consider how the algorithmic tech-



Right whale found entangled in rope off New England

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

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 six-year pause on new federal whale regulations.

“This is another example that entanglements are happening in US waters,” said Gib Brogan, campaign director with environmental group Oceana. “We need stronger protection from entanglements in US waters.”

The whales were once numerous off the East Coast, but they were decimated 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 said.

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

A new research has estimated more than 2,300 billion tonnes of inorganic carbon in minerals 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 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



While society has recognised the importance of soil to be fundamental to nature-based solutions for combating climate change, the major focus has been on the SOC. It is now clear that inorganic 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.

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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.

JURASSIC OR CRETACEOUS? Scientists can’t agree on when flowers evolved

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, shape 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 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 jurassica and was found in China. But not

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

origin (201 million years ago).

Organisms 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 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.

CURTAILED CHILDHOOD FREEDOM YOUNG PEOPLE ARE GETTING UNHAPPIER

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 unsupervised outside has shrunk by 90% since the 1970s.

Parents increasingly organise entertainment – 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 development in the 1950s. He noted that children 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

by external forces, such as parental supervision or societal expectations, it can lead to frustration, helplessness and low self-esteem.

Moreover, the absence of



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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, decision-making 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 support.

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

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 supervised, they may struggle to find activities that naturally capture their interest and provide a sense of purpose and enjoyment.

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.

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-old “extremely dangerous” Indian national who is wanted in the US for allegedly killing his wife in 2015.

Bhadeshkumar 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, first-degree 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.