



Monday Mirchi

PAMELA SATPATHY BREAKS THE INTERNET

It requires tremendous patience to be an indulgent mother when her child capers on her work desk at a time when her plate is full, requiring her to carry home a part of her day's work. Karimnagar Collector Pamela Satpathy shared a clip showing her son standing on her massive work desk and jumping about excitedly. Wearing a blue T-shirt emblazoned with 'Superman' and a red cape, he perhaps got into the skin of the fictional character. He is seen delivering heroic dialogues as his mother in the background looks on with remarkable composure. While posting the short clip, Satpathy highlighted both sides of a summer vacation -- her point of view as well as her son's. "The most awaited time of the year has now become the most dreaded time of the year. SUMMER VACATION. POV: You are a Boy Mum". Some netizens carped over 'allowing the kid at work'. However, the fact seems to be that the video was taken at her home around 9:00 pm on a busy day and not at her office. As a working mother on duty even after hours, she was appreciably indulgent, instead of yelling at the boy. For newbies, Pamela's profile is among the warmest ones among those of bureaucrats.

BUREAUCRATS CAN BE BETTER THAN TECHNOCRATS

Technology is a key aspect of governance today. Technocrats often complement and complete the skills and expertise of bureaucrats engaged in the delivery of various services to people. However, in Telangana, because of certain aberrations in the immediate past, bureaucrats in the energy department suddenly found themselves back in the limelight and somewhat turbo-charged when they visited New Delhi recently. They realized to their chagrin that there were many schemes that Telangana could not utilize. Central government secretaries, on their part, were happy about the curiosity and learnings of the representation from Telangana. A little bird told us that over the past 10 years proper communication was lacking between the state and central level officials. At last, Telangana bureaucrats got a chance to drive home their point that they are on par with, if not better, than technocrats. For newbies, former chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao had attributed the supposed successful running of the power sector in the state under his rule to the 'free hand' given to technocrats and subject matter experts in the state. He had blamed bureaucrats, saying they were not able to run the department efficiently. It seems bureaucrats have just plugged into the right source of power.

ARE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATIONS IN TELANGANA SLEEPING?

Bureaucrats have become the cannon fodder in the ongoing war between the Congress

and the Bharat Rashtra Samithi in Telangana. The collateral damage seems to be the inexplicable silence of the officers' associations. Even when police officers asseverate that they are being targeted in the phone tapping case, the IPS officers' association has not yet taken any stand. When the ruling party had apparently targeted IPS officers belonging to a specific caste, opposition parties dropped a few names while their fraternal colleagues looked the other way. For newbies, a couple of months ago, a few bureaucrats complained to the Chief Secretary about a 'slander campaign' being run against them by some of their peers on social media. Now, although the role of many IPS officers from all sides is under lens in the phone tapping case, not one association has come out and made a statement. A little bird told us that if more and more names keep coming out, trust in bureaucracy will be the ultimate casualty.

AP CEO ROLE UNDER LENS

Chief Electoral Officer Mukesh Kumar Meena has been the focal point of administration in Andhra Pradesh since March 16, following the release of the election schedule. Therefore, even his role has come into the picture now, with the opposition parties blaming Saturday's stone pelting at Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's convoy on 'security lapse' during YSRCP's campaigning in Vijayawada. Already YSRCP has lodged several complaints in vain against leaders of TDP and its alliance parties for their 'derogatory' and 'provocative' comments against Jagan and other ruling party leaders.

ELECTION DUTIES MEAN HEADACHE

Officials 'relieved of election duties' at the best of the Election Commission face an uncertain future, though it has become quite common for opposition parties to name and accuse certain officials of "working in favour of the ruling party". In Andhra Pradesh, around 20 officers have been suspended due to various reasons. So, official circles are wondering whether officials can really change the fate of political parties during elections. The opposition parties are claiming that the suspended officials had been working in favour of the ruling YSRCP. The larger question in bureaucratic circles is: When the Election Commission is supposed to be observing everything, how can officials work in favour of one political party? Besides, even if they prefer to do it, can they change the mind of the public? Since in most cases, 'suspension' involves just relieving the named (and, therefore, tainted) officials of election duties, their future hangs in balance. If the ruling party retains power, they may get plum posts. If the opposition alliance wins, they could be sidelined and given insignificant posts. On the whole, it looks like 'election duties' come bundled with headache.

-- Yours truly

CM staged attack drama: Nara Lokesh

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a controversial statement on X (formerly Twitter), Nara Lokesh alleged that the stone pelting incident targeting CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy originated from the CM's residence in Tadepalli. Drawing parallels to the 'Kodi Kathi' incident of 2019, the TDP leader insinuated that the attack was staged for political theatrics. Lokesh urged Jagan Reddy to adopt a different approach.

Lokesh's remarks have sparked widespread outrage for their insensitivity towards the recent assault on the Chief Minister. Despite ongoing investigations and the interrogation of suspects, Lokesh took to social media to ridicule the Chief Minister, drawing sharp criticism for his inappropriate tweet. By suggesting that the attack originated from the CM's residence, Lokesh's comments have been deemed highly disrespectful and inappropriate.

The response from Lokesh has been condemned across the board as a new low in the political discourse of the state. It highlights a concerning lack of empathy from the opposition towards a serious threat to the Chief Minister's life. Lokesh's statement appears to politicize the attack, revealing a troubling mindset towards such grave matters.

Interesting battle on cards in Vijayawada LS segment

DASARI SRINIVASA RAO ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Lok Sabha constituency holds sway in national politics, with its elected representatives playing pivotal roles in New Delhi. Dr KL Rao, Parvathaneni Upendra, Lagadapati Rajagopal, and Kesineni Nani have each left their mark on the national stage.

Regardless of their party affiliations, MPs from Vijayawada have actively engaged in Central politics. Dr KL Rao, a distinguished engineer and former Union minister, served as the irrigation minister, contributing to several crucial multi-purpose projects. Parvathaneni Upendra, a former Opposition leader and Union minister for Parliamentary Affairs, wielded influence in the corridors of power. Likewise, Lagadapati Rajagopal and Kesineni Nani demonstrated their political acumen in New Delhi.

The upcoming elections in the Vijayawada Lok Sabha constituency promise an intriguing spectacle, with sitting MP Kesineni Nani facing off against his brother, Kesineni Chinni. Nani, a two-time MP, has switched allegiance from TDP to YSRCP, adding a layer of complexity to the electoral landscape. Meanwhile, Chinni carries the banner of the TDP, setting the



The sibling rivalry between Kesineni Nani and Kesineni Chinni adds an intriguing dimension to the electoral narrative, capturing the attention of political observers and parties alike. As the spotlight remains firmly fixed on the Vijayawada Lok Sabha constituency, the outcome of these elections will undoubtedly shape the region's political trajectory.

- MPs representing Vijayawada wield significant influence in the corridors of power in New Delhi.
- Dr KL Rao and Parvathaneni Upendra served as Union ministers.
- Lagadapati Rajagopal and Kesineni Nani have demonstrated exceptional political acumen.

stage for a familial political rivalry.

Historically, the constituency has seen diverse political affiliations. While it was once a stronghold of the undivided CPI, the Congress party has emerged victorious in the majority of elections, underscoring its historical dominance. Dr KL Rao's electoral triumphs remain unmatched, with his formidable margins securing his legacy in Vijayawada's political annals.

The political landscape shifted post-bifurcation, with the YSRCP gaining substantial

ground at the expense of Congress. Incidents, such as Lagadapati Rajagopal's unconventional tactics during the anti-bifurcation movement, have left indelible marks on the region's political memory.

While several MPs have made their mark with multiple terms in office, none have matched Dr KL Rao's feat of three consecutive victories. Nevertheless, Kesineni Srinivas's bid for a third term underscores his enduring influence in Vijayawada's political landscape, despite changing party affiliations.

The forthcoming elections are poised to be fiercely contested, with both the ruling YSRCP and the opposition TDP vying for supremacy. The sibling rivalry between Kesineni Nani and Kesineni Chinni adds an intriguing dimension to the electoral narrative, capturing the attention of political observers and parties alike. As the spotlight remains firmly fixed on the Vijayawada Lok Sabha constituency, the outcome of these elections will undoubtedly shape the region's political trajectory.

Tribals take out 'Doli Yatra' for voting rights

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a determined bid to ensure their participation in the upcoming assembly and Lok Sabha elections in Andhra Pradesh, women from Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) embarked on a symbolic 'Doli Yatra' in the Arla panchayat of the Chodavaram constituency on Sunday. This resolute move highlights their unwavering commitment to exercising their voting rights, despite encountering logistical hurdles.

The journey of these tribal communities, predominantly residing in hilltop villages like Pitrigadda and Neelu Banda, Banda, Pedda Karuvu, Kottalasingi, Patalosingi, and Arla undertook a remarkable journey of 15 km during the 2019 elections to reach the Gurrula Bailu, Gadabapalem Sarabhavaram panchayat polling centre. However, following the establishment of the new Arla panchayat in 2020, elections were conducted within its boundaries, sparing the villagers the daunting trek.



Despite this respite, a recent revelation in the voters' list for the 2024 general elections has stirred concern among the tribal population. It has come to light that they are once again compelled to traverse the significant distance to the Sarabhavaram panchayat centre to cast their votes.

Voicing their discontent, protester Panghi Shanti stressed the suitability of the Arla panchayat centre for hosting a polling booth, given its existing infrastructure such as a school building and access to fresh water. Moreover, citing electoral guidelines mandating the establishment of special booths within 3 km for 600 voters, protester Kilorukma questioned the local

officials' disregard for this directive.

Residents highlighted the challenges they encounter when descending from the hills to vote, often discovering their votes already cast by others upon arrival. Such occurrences not only disenfranchise them but also undermine the integrity of the electoral process. In response to these grievances, the villagers have urged the Election Commission to intervene and facilitate the establishment of a polling booth at the Arla panchayat.

Doing so would enable them to cast their votes promptly and forestall potential instances of electoral malpractice.



3-corner fight in Tekkali

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

The political scenario in the Tekkali Assembly constituency is ablaze with the Congress party's announcement of former Union minister Killi Kruparani as its candidate for the upcoming elections. This move is anticipated to escalate tensions and set the stage for an intriguing electoral showdown with far-reaching implications for the region.

Tekkali, renowned for its political significance, braces itself for fierce competition among notable contenders. The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) has nominated incumbent MLA and State president Kinjarapu Atchannaidu, representing the Velama community, as its candidate within the NDA coalition. Meanwhile, the Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) has put forth MLC Duvvada Srinivas, a figure hailing from

the Kalinga community, aiming to consolidate its position in line with the legacy of Kuppam.

The entrance of former Union minister Killi Kruparani into the Congress fold injects fresh vigour into the political landscape of the constituency. Kruparani's candidature for Tekkali, after she departed from the YSRCP due to the denial of ticket, introduces a new dynamic to the electoral dynamics, promising a gripping contest.

Tekkali encompasses four mandals - Tekkali, Nandigam, Kotabommali, and Santhabommali - and boasts a diverse demographic composition. The Kalinga community constitutes the largest voting bloc, followed by Velama, Reddika, Yadava, and fisherfolk. Historically, the TDP has dominated Tekkali, clinching victory on eight occasions, notably including a triumph by party founder NT Rama Rao in 1994.

Naidu, PK too 'stoned'...

Continued from Page 1

He condemned the stone-throwing incident against Chief Minister Jagan Reddy and questioned the actions of the intelligence police.

In Tenali, Pawan Kalyan predicted Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy's downfall, urging people to support alliance candidates. He criticized Jagan Mohan Reddy's perceived arrogance and expressed confidence in his eventual defeat.

Reflecting on his own past defeats, Pawan Kalyan emphasised his commitment to challenging the current regime and promised initiatives to support skilled individuals, particularly women. He also acknowledged the support of actor Chiranjeevi, who donated Rs 5 crore to assist tenant farmers through JSP initiatives.

TODAY	
ALMANAC	
Month & Paksham:	Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Saptami:	Apr 14 11:44 AM to Apr 15 12:11 PM
Ashtami:	Apr 15 12:11 PM to Apr 16 01:24 PM
Nakshatram:	
Punarvasu:	Apr 15 01:34 AM to Apr 16 03:05 AM
Pushya:	Apr 16 03:05 AM to Apr 17 05:16 AM
Rahukalam:	7:36 AM to 9:10 AM
Yamagandam:	10:43 AM to 12:16 PM
Varjyam:	11:49 AM to 01:33 PM
Gulika:	1:49 PM to 3:22 PM
Amritakalam:	12:32 AM to 02:14 AM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	11:51 AM to 12:40 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Sunny
Temp: 41°
Humidity: 50%
Sunrise: 5:52 AM
Sunset: 6:23 PM



Updated: April 14, 2024 5:00 PM

Political slugfest on...

Continued from Page 1

Chandrababu Naidu condemned the attack on Reddy. "I strongly condemn the attack on Jagan. I request the Election Commission of India (ECI) to initiate an impartial and unbiased inquiry into the incident and punish the responsible officials," he said in a post on X.

However, the TDP alleged that the attack on Jagan Reddy was stage-managed.

Backing Naidu's appeal to the Election Commission to undertake an impartial and unbiased probe into the attack, TDP spokesperson Pattabhiram Kommareddy questioned the timing and circumstances of the attack. Condemning the alleged attack on the CM, Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president Y S Sharmila said she believes it was accidental. However, if it was not so, she said, everybody should condemn it. Sharmila said she is praying to god for the quick recovery of her older brother Jagan Reddy.

Ramakrishna Reddy said the ruling party would submit a representation to the EC to expedite the inquiry into the incident and unearth the facts.

Jagan Reddy is unperturbed by the attack he said, but he is taking rest today, pausing his 'Memantha Siddham' (We Are All Ready) election canvassing bus tour, to resume on Monday.

TDP conspiracy...

Continued from Page 1

"Would anyone plan an attack on himself? We will give the same stone to Lokesh. You have to board a bus in the same area and ask someone to throw the stone at you to know whether it is possible to properly plan and hit the target with a stone," Peddireddy said.

He accused Chandrababu Naidu, Lokesh, Pawan Kalyan, and Purandeswari of being in despair and unable to digest CM Jagan's growing popularity. Recalling past instances when Naidu had made light of CM Jagan's padayatra, the minister stated, "(Naidu had said) If the padayatra goes beyond Guntur, it will lose its steam." But as the party's in-charge of the Krishna district, we have made the bus yatra in the region a grand success, he added.

Sharmila promises...

Continued from Page 1

Sharmila also took aim at unfulfilled promises made by the ruling YSRCP, including pledges to reopen a sugar factory and provide 500 units of free power to power looms. She pledged that under Congress leadership, initiatives such as the completion of the Polavaram project, agricultural loan waivers of up to Rs 2 lakh, disbursement of Rs 400 to NREGA scheme workers, financial assistance of Rs 1 lakh to eligible impoverished women, and a monthly pension of Rs 6000 for disabled individuals would be prioritised and implemented effectively.

US & UN condemn...

Continued from Page 1

Biden said "We helped Israel take down nearly all" of them. His comments came as American forces joined efforts to down drones and missiles launched by Tehran.

"Earlier today, Iran—and its proxies operating out of Yemen, Syria and Iraq—launched an unprecedented air attack against military facilities in Israel. I condemn these attacks in the strongest possible terms," Biden said after his call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Saturday. Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) said the attack was aimed at "specific targets".

Iran had vowed to retaliate for a strike on its consulate in Syria on 1 April which killed seven IRGC officers, including a top commander. It accused Israel of carrying out that attack, but Israel neither confirmed nor denied it.

Netanyahu called a war cabinet meeting after the start of the Iranian attack, and later spoke to President Biden, who said he had reaffirmed "America's ironclad commitment to the security of Israel".

Biden said at his direction, to support the defence of Israel, the US military moved aircraft and ballistic missile defence destroyers to the region over the course of the past week. "Thanks to these deployments and the extraordinary skill of our servicemembers, we helped Israel take down nearly all of the incoming drones and missiles," he said. "I've just spoken with Prime Minister Netanyahu to reaffirm America's ironclad commitment to the security of Israel," he said.

Israel demonstrated a remarkable capability to defend against and defeat even unprecedented attacks – sending a clear message to its foes that they cannot effectively threaten the security of Israel, he said.

TDP PLANNED TO HARM CM, ALLEGES KODALI



Nani recalled a recent public meeting at Tulluru where he claimed Chandrababu instructed TDP supporters to throw stones at Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy. He accused TDP supporters, driven by a sense of community pride, of attempting to harm CM Jagan following Chandrababu's alleged instructions.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Kodali Srivenkateswara Rao (Nani) has made startling remarks regarding the attack on CM Jagan Mohan Reddy. Nani vehemently denounced what he described as a cowardly act by opposition parties, suggesting that due to an inability to confront CM Jagan Mohan Reddy politically, there was an alleged attempt to harm him. He alleged that similar attacks were carried out during the last election and now, under the guise of Chandrababu, there's suspicion of involvement. He demanded that CM Jagan Mohan Reddy be provided with top-tier security.

Nani recalled a recent public meeting at Tulluru where he claimed Chandrababu instructed TDP supporters to throw stones at Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy. He accused TDP supporters, driven by a sense of community pride, of attempting to harm CM Jagan following Chandrababu's alleged instructions. He expressed outrage that the opposition resorted to violence as part of a calculated strategy, narrowly missing their target as the

vehicle was in motion, resulting in a minor injury to CM Jagan's eyebrow.

Kodali condemned and expressed anger toward opposition leaders, alleging that the attack was premeditated. Nani further cited nine surveys conducted by reputable organizations indicating their party's anticipated victory in 125 Assembly constituencies and 20 Lok Sabha segments. He claimed that certain politically marginalized individuals, unable to contend with Jagan Mohan Reddy, orchestrated the attack in Vijayawada with the help of certain factions. Nani accused influential figures of being behind the attack, asserting that it was meticulously planned, resulting in CM Jagan being struck first by a stone followed by Vellampalli Srinivas being injured.

Addressing former CM Chandrababu Naidu, Nani questioned whether he was aware of power cuts during the Prime Minister and Chief Minister's road shows, expressing anger at allegations that CM Jagan deliberately ordered such cuts. He criticized Chandrababu's remarks about taking action against officials as baseless.

CBI probe sought

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The attack on Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy in Vijayawada has sparked controversy, with TDP leader Varla Ramaiah dismissing it as a staged event aimed at garnering sympathy and political advantage.

Ramaiah alleged that the stone attack on the CM was orchestrated by Jagan Mohan Reddy himself as part of a ploy to maintain his grip on power. He went on to claim that Jagan Reddy, sensing his impending defeat, is resorting to dramatic tactics to sway public opinion in his favour.

Ramaiah raised doubts about the severity of the attack, questioning whether a small stone thrown from a distance could seriously injure a Chief Minister. He pointed to a tweet by Sridhar Reddy days prior, suggesting, upcoming sensational incidents that could



influence the election atmosphere. Given Sridhar Reddy's criminal history, including a past jail term for contempt of court, Ramaiah questioned why the Intelligence DG PSR Anjaneyulu did not act on such warnings, potentially foretelling the attack. He also speculated about MLA Vellampalli Srinivas being collateral damage from the same stone, adding to the suspicion.

Accusing Jagan Reddy and key YSRCP figures like Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy, along

with certain police officials, of being complicit in the planned attack, Ramaiah criticized the lack of prompt security measures such as flashlights and bulletproof sheets. He highlighted the rapid response of YSRCP leaders staging a protest within minutes of the incident and criticized security personnel for not taking preventive actions, noting that only Jagan Reddy remained standing while his security detail was seated.

Calling for a thorough investigation into the incident, Ramaiah urged for a CBI inquiry to uncover the truth. He announced plans to meet with Mukesh Kumar Meena, the Chief Electoral Officer for Andhra Pradesh, to formally request such an investigation. Additionally, he stressed the importance of enhancing security measures to safeguard the lives of other political figures like Sharmila and Suneetha.

TDP urges CEC to transfer top AP police officers for 'failing' to protect CM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) on Sunday requested the Chief Election Commissioner to immediately transfer the top three Andhra Pradesh police officers for their alleged failure to protect Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, who was hurt in a stone pelting incident and maintain law and order.

The chief minister sustained a minor injury on his left eyebrow in stone-pelting in Vijayawada during his election campaign on Saturday.

In a letter written to the CEC, former TDP Rajya Sabha MP and senior advocate Kanakamedala Ravindra Kumar strongly condemned the attack on the CM and expressed concern over the police department failing to provide "adequate protection" to the CM in Vijayawada city itself where top brass of police are stationed. Kumar said Jagan's party YSRCP is now blaming the opposition leader for this attack and TDP fears that the police may foist false cases against its workers to cover up their failures.

"If the police cannot provide protection to the CM and make proper arrangements for the PM's programme, we cannot expect that they would ensure law and order and allow free and fair elections in the state on May 13," he said.

He requested the EC to immediately transfer Director General of Police (DGP) K V Rajendranath, DGP Intelligence PSR Anjaneyulu and Commissioner of Police Vijayawada Kanti Rana Tata.

Stating that the state police department has "lost its professionalism and impartial conduct", Kumar cited past incidents of attacks on several TDP leaders including stone pelting on the party chief N Chandrababu Naidu in Chittoor district and the attack on the TDP party office at Mangalagiri.

6 teams on hunt for perpetrators

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The City police are intensifying efforts to apprehend the perpetrators responsible for the recent attack on Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, viewing the incident at Ajith Singh Nagar with utmost seriousness. Approximately six special teams have been mobilised to swiftly identify those involved in the stone-pelting incident that occurred on Saturday night.

Led by Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) S Hari Krishna, North Zone ACP Prasad, and other senior officers, investigations have been underway since the incident.

NTR Police Commissioner Kanthi Rana Tata personally oversaw operations at the scene, offering necessary guidance to officials tasked with identifying the culprits.

Following a complaint from Vijayawada-West MLA and Central Constituency candidate Velampalli Srinivasa Rao, the Ajith Singh Nagar police have registered a case under Section 307 against unknown individuals. Despite efforts, including the use of drones to reconstruct the scene, the stone used in the attack has not been recovered, prompting continued diligence from law enforcement.



Key figures from various police departments, including the Police Commissioner's Taskforce, Intelligence, and Special Branch, have visited the Ajith Singh Nagar area to gather information. Notably, inquiries have focused on individuals near the Vivekananda School and organizers of nearby tea stalls.

While investigating, police officials have reportedly obtained crucial data regarding the stone-pelting incident during Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's 'Memantha Siddham' Bus Yatra. However, official sources have remained tight-lipped about these developments.

Although three individuals are suspected to be involved, none have been detained thus far. Authorities are relying on video footage captured by the Chief Minister's personnel videographers, as well as CCTV recordings, to aid in their investigation.

In response to the incident, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has expressed concern and instructed law enforcement to furnish a comprehensive report promptly. Meanwhile, NTR Police Commissioner Kanthi Rana Tata maintained a presence at the scene until the early hours of Sunday, underscoring the gravity of the situation.



YSRCP complains to DGP about attack on CM Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Planning Board Vice Chairman and Vijayawada Central MLA Malladi Vishnu on Sunday asked DGP Kasireddy Rajendranath Reddy to conduct a comprehensive inquiry into the incident of attack on Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. Malladi Vishnu along with party leaders Ravela Kishore Babu, Ankamreddy Naga Narayanamurthy and YSRCP Legal Cell President Manohar Reddy complained on Sunday.

Later Vishnu spoke to the media and said that there is no room for violence in democracy. He said that he has asked the DGP to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the incident of the attack on CM Jagan and arrest the culprits immediately. Also, since the Election Code came into force, the Election Commission



responded by submitting complaints to the EC with evidence of the violations committed by Telugu Desam on social media, and the CB CID has been instructed to take further action.

Many issues including morphing photos to denigrate the Chief Minister, and putting up posts with Axe and Telugu Desam songs were mentioned on this occasion. He said that he has asked the DGP to conduct an investigation and take action on all of them.

Kadapa police develop AI tool to answer poll-related queries

PNS ■ KADAPA

The Kadapa district police of Andhra Pradesh developed an Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool called Election Mitra, which enables various stakeholders to quickly and easily obtain information on poll-related matters, said an official on Sunday.

Kadapa district superintendent of police (SP) Siddharth Kaushal noted that the AI tool will tap into a vast database running into more than 25,750 pages of source literature on election manuals, handbooks, compendiums, circulars, press notes, Mode Code of Conduct (MCC) and others to generate authentic information.

"All the various rules, regulations, and guidelines that govern the election process are scattered in various sources. It is not possible to remember all this text. It is not even easy to refer to. Election Mitra makes it extremely easy and authentic to refer to and obtain any required information," Kaushal said.

Developed by Kadapa district police and a Hyderabad-based startup in response to a call given by the Election Commission during its review meeting in the southern state on January 9, Kaushal said the tool will be refined further based on feedback.

Explaining how the tool works, the SP observed that the desktop and mobile-friendly Election Mitra (electionmitra.in) can be operated by asking simple questions in human language, while the system generates responses from the vast data available with it.

Some sample queries to which the tool can generate answers include 'What are the measures to be taken for critical polling stations', 'Can press or electronic media reporters be allowed inside the polling station for media coverage during polling day', 'Under what circumstances can an investigation officer search a place with-

"Election Mitra is advanced enough to understand the context and the intent of the user and can also create responses by putting together multiple sources of information to generate a comprehensive response," he said.

The tool is handy for various officials engaged in election management like returning officers, police officers, election observers, senior district officials, nodal officers, legal advisers and others, including common people.

Further, Kaushal highlighted that the tool, available in English for now, is anchored to servers based in India without scope for data to leave Indian territory, unlike other popular AI tools.

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Ayodhya Ram temple trust gets TTD report on crowd management

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

A team of engineers from Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) visited Ayodhya upon the Ram temple trust's invitation and provided technical advice to them on crowd management.

A press release from the TTD said a meeting was held between the TTD Executive Officer A V Dharma Reddy and organisers of the trust. A comprehensive report comprising technical advice on crowd management, queue lines, water points, and entry and exit ways was submitted to the trust.

It may be recalled that upon the request of Shri Rama Janmabhumi Theertha Kshetra Trust, the TTD officials team have earlier visited Ayodhya on February 16 and 17 to assess the requirements of the trust for providing hassle-free darshan to the devotees akin to Tirumala.

TTD's Technical Advisor Ramachandra Reddy and other officials participated in the meeting on April 13 while on behalf of Ram Mandir Trust Champath Roy-General Secretary of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Gopalji and others took part.



Volunteer system in the eye of a political storm in run-up to polls in Andhra

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Ward and village volunteer system, a wing of the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) government, has emerged as the eye of a political storm between rivals YSRCP and TDP in the run-up to the upcoming elections in Andhra Pradesh, with both ruling and opposition parties trading charges against each other.

Introduced in 2019 by the ruling YSRCP, the volunteer system is a decentralised governance delivery mechanism, entailing one volunteer to oversee 50 households for delivering welfare pensions and other schemes at the beneficiaries' doorstep.

However, the opposition NDA coalition of TDP, BJP and Janasena allege that the volunteer system is being deployed to further the electoral prospects of YSRCP and perform advantageously to the ruling party run by Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy.

TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu and Janasena chief Pawan Kalyan have reg-

ularly targeted the volunteers, numbering around 2.6 lakh over the past five years.

However, after realising the sensitivity of the issue, Naidu is now trying to woo them with lucrative remuneration if TDP is voted to power in the state.

On March 30, the Election Commission (EC) barred volunteers from carrying out two specific job duties and delivering social pensions.

The EC move restricted the volunteers from disbursing the monthly welfare pensions, which they usually do on the first of every month, April 1 in this case.

This caused delays and hardships to the beneficiaries, most of them aged people, providing ammunition to YSRCP to allege the EC barred them only after Naidu's 'henchmen' lodged complaints.

Further, Reddy alleged during his electioneering bus tour in Prakasam district that Naidu obstructed welfare schemes aimed at the poor by frequently approaching the

Courts, asserting that the former CM could not digest the fact that volunteers were serving the poor selflessly by delivering pensions on time.

Disappointed by the poll body's curbs, scores of volunteers 'tendered' their resignations across the state.

YSRCP seized the opportunity and further amplified the resignations, claiming that volunteers had resigned on their own volition, though there were allegations that the ruling party lead-

The EC move restricted the volunteers from disbursing the monthly welfare pensions, which they usually do on the first of every month, April 1 in this case. This caused delays and hardships to the beneficiaries, most of them aged people, providing ammunition to YSRCP to allege the EC barred them only after Naidu's 'henchmen' lodged complaints.

ers motivated them to resign.

"Local YSRCP leaders motivated us to resign but did not compel us. They also shared the resignation format.

Most of the volunteers have resigned," a volunteer from the West Godavari district, who recently resigned, said.

Naidu, taking a turnaround, noted that he is not against the volunteers and promised to double their honorarium from Rs 5,000 per month on forming the govern-

ment in the southern state.

Alleging that YSRCP is deceiving the volunteers by engaging them in opportunistic politics, the opposition leader noted that he will support volunteers as long as they work for the people and not for YSRCP.

However, the fallout of EC orders against the volunteers and their subsequent prohibition from executing welfare duties compelled Naidu to write multiple letters to the EC, the chief secretary and the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) to make alternative arrangements for the disbursal of pension.

In the aftermath of several old people struggling to go to government offices to collect pensions and also in the face of allegations that some of them succumbed to sunstroke, Naidu alleged a political conspiracy.

He claimed that the chief executive of the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP), a wing of the rural development department, had issued orders calling the

PART-II

Are there no detention centers in India?

The Rules under Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019 are different from the Rules under the National Register of Citizens (NRC). Let us be clear about this. The NRC was made part of law in 2003 by an amendment to the Citizenship Act. Then there is the third dimension: creation of comprehensive identity data base of every resident in the country for the National Population Register. In this context, there are some more important claims that warrant a close look.

The fourth claim: The NRC and the National Population Register are not linked. Amit Shah says the NPR has nothing to do with the NRC. **The truth:** The Rules notified in 2003 for NRC state that the process will begin with the house-to-house enumeration for the creation of a National Population Register (NPR). The Rules for the NRC in Clause 4 say: "A population register will be prepared by collecting information relating to all persons who are

usually residing within the jurisdiction of the local registrar. The local register of Indian citizens (as part of the national register) shall contain details of persons after due verification made from the population register."

It means NRC will be completed only after verification of Population Register. Rule 3 of Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003, (2003 Rules) mentioned in the gazette, is about the concept of "NRC and its sub-rule (4) provides for "Preparation of the National Register of Indian Citizens".

The fifth claim: Former Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar had claimed that the National Population Register was only for the purpose of the Census and that it had nothing to do with the NRC or citizenship.

The truth: The Home Ministry, in its annual report of 2018-2019, stated in Ch 15, para 15. 40: "Government of India has approved a scheme

The Central government on 9.1.2019 sent consolidated instructions for the construction of detention centers to all state/union administrators. The Ministry of Home Affairs sent instructions on 24/29 April 2014 and again on 9-10 September 2014. On this basis, a model detention center/holding center/camp manual was issued to all states/union territories in 2018. In an affidavit, the Centre told the Karnataka High Court on November 28 that it wrote to all State governments in 2014 and a follow-up letter in 2018 to have detention centers.

of creation of NPR which is the first step towards creation of NRI."

The sixth claim: Government of India says: There are no detention centers at all.

The truth: The Home Ministry told the Rajya Sabha in November 2019: *In Assam detention camps, where suspected immigrants are confined, 28 people have died, and 988 "foreigners" were lodged in six detention centers in Assam. Home Ministry told the Rajya*

Sabha on December 11, 2019: The instructions have been issued to all States for setting up detention centers to detain illegal migrants or convicted foreigners pending deportation.

The Central government on 9.1.2019 sent consolidated instructions for the construction of detention centers to all state/union administrators. The Ministry of Home Affairs sent instructions on 24/29 April 2014 and again on 9-10 September 2014. On



PROF MADABHUSHI SRIDHAR ACHARYULU
Dean, Mahindra University, Hyderabad

this basis, a model detention center/holding center/camp manual was issued to all states/union territories in 2018. In an affidavit, the Centre told the Karnataka High Court on November 28 that it wrote to all State governments in 2014 and a follow-up letter in 2018 to have detention centers.

MHA told the Lok Sabha on July 9, 2019 (Question Number 2660) the detention centre in Goalpara of Assam, housing 267 detainees and

another one at a cost of Rs 46.51 crore was sanctioned. Karnataka & Maharashtra earmarked sites for detention centres. MHA sanctioned Rs 46.51 crore for one detention centre to house 3,000 detainees. MHA estimated that a total of 26,658 detention centres are needed, costing Rs 12.4 lakh crore in all. This amounts to 8.8% of GDP in Financial Year of 2019.

The seventh claim: "The people of India need not fear about these processes. Only infiltrators and enemies of the country will be excluded. It is for the protection of our nation" -BJP leaders & Ministers.

The truth: *The Home Ministry stated that citizenship is not automatically accorded to people. This means that it is presumed that each person is not citizen, and the burden is on each to prove that he/she is Indian.*

The eighth claim: "The CAA 2019 is not discriminatory"-Government.

The truth: *The Articles 5 to 11 of Constitution explain the citizenship of people at the time*

of commencement of the Constitution, without referring to religion. The Citizenship Act 1955, enacted under authority given by Article 11, had no provision to consider religion. The Citizenship Amendment Act 2003 introduced Section 2(1)-b that defines 'illegal immigrants'. It did not define illegal immigrant by religion.

The CAA 2019 it amends Sec 2(1)-b to include "any person belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian community from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan who came on or before 31 December 2014 will not be considered an illegal immigrant."

For the first time in the independent India, in 2019 religion was prescribed as ground to secure citizenship of India. Among two such immigrant residents if one is Hindu or Christian or Sikh with proof of their residency even if there are no documents about his ancestors, he can still be considered legal immigrant. In similar circumstances, another person belonging to religions other

than six specified in CAA 2019, including Muslim, will be considered illegal. Because of this, one lakh Hindu Tamils residing in south India for several decades may not be considered 'legal' immigrants.

The ninth claim: "The CAA 2019 or NRC are meant to give citizenship and not to deny the citizenship"-Government.

The truth: *The process of NRC in Assam resulted in loss of citizenship for more than 19 lakh persons. It will affect persons belonging to all kinds of religions, not just Muslims. Out of 19 lakh new 'foreigners' found by officers in Assam, only five lakhs were Muslims, and others include Hindus and others belonging to various religious communities. Most of them are being sent to detention centers. The Centre has added six new questions in making NPR. The new six questions include name of the father and mother, their places and dates of birth and others.*

(Concluded)
The first part was carried on 14-04-2024

EC watching narratives being disseminated on social media

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

District Collector Sumit Kumar has said that the Election Commission has laid focus on the narratives, being disseminated on social media, and action will be taken against inciting narratives.

In a statement here on Sunday, the Collector said that as per the Election Commission's directions, spreading doubts about EVMs, disseminating stories causing law and order problems and expressing doubts about conducting fair elections are violations of the code of conduct.

"If messages like hate speech, false information and fake news are circulated on social media, such messages will be considered illegal and legal action will be taken against those who posted the respective messages," the Collector made it clear.

"Under IPC Section 505, any statement or message which leads to public vilification, any person who makes,

publishes or transmits any statement, rumour or report to incite any other class or community to commit any offence against any other class or community shall be punished with imprisonment," the Collector warned.

Collector Sumit Kumar said that according to IPC Section 298 Act, making statements with intent to hurt religious sentiments, attempts to promote feelings of enmity or hatred between different classes of citizens of India by a candidate or his agent or any other person on grounds of religion, race, caste, community or language, by a candidate or his election agent are considered violation of code of conduct and action would be initiated.

The Collector also made it clear that under RP Act 1951 Section 126(1)(b) opinion polls during the silence period are banned. RP Act 1951 Section 126A prohibits the conduct of exit polls and the publication of their results within a specified period.



"If messages like hate speech, false information and fake news are circulated on social media, such messages will be considered illegal and legal action will be taken against those who posted the respective messages," the Collector made it clear.

Attack on Jagan Reddy a drama: Raghurama Raju

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leader and MP K Raghurama Krishna Raju described the attack on Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy as a drama.

Talking to the media at Pedaadmiram village on Sunday, he said that no wise man made an attempt on the life of the Chief Minister using a catapult.

People understood and strongly believed that it was a drama enacted to gain people's sympathy before the elections. "Is it possible to harm a Chief Minister, who is in Z Plus security, using a catapult? It is all pre-planned and it is a drama," he felt.

RRR said that he was forced by some people to withdraw his comments on the attack otherwise they would take action against him. "Since I am scared of action, I would like to withdraw my comments," he said ridiculously. He announced that he would file his nominations on April 22 at 11 am. Interestingly he did not say whether he is contesting for the Assembly or Lok Sabha.

Steps taken to shift EVMs under tight security: DC

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh has said that required steps were taken to shift Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) safely amid tight security to the constituencies.

The Collector here on Sunday inspected the process of shifting of EVMs in the godowns in the Collectorate. The first randomization process was conducted online in the presence of the representatives of the political parties last Friday and was completed by Parliament Assembly segments and Assembly constituencies.

The BUs, CUs and VVPAT were divided 120, 120, and 130 proportionately at the EVM godowns. A total of 4,184 BUS, 4,184 CUs and 4,534 VVPATs were being shifted to the seven constituencies, including the Parliament and the Assembly segments, he said. These polling equipment being moved in GPS-equipped DGT closed vehicles with police escort to the Parliamentary constituency and Assembly segments to preserve them in separate strong rooms, he stated



These polling equipment would be preserved and sealed in separate strong rooms in the presence of representatives of local political parties till the commissioning of EVMs, the Collector stated, adding that he inspected the process. So far the process has been completed for Chintalapudi, Polavaram, Nuzvid, Eluru, Denduluru and Kaikaluru Assembly constituencies.

After nominations are scru-

tinized, commissioning (ballot paper fixing in EVMs) is done and then sealed and preserved again in the presence of representatives of political parties, he said, stating that finally a second randomization process is conducted and the EVMs are shifted to the polling stations. Joint Collector B Lavanya Veni, DRO D Pushpa Mani and Deputy Collector Bhanusri were among those who were present.

YSRCP protests against attack on Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP leaders and supporters across the State staged peaceful protest rallies on Sunday, against the attack on Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. The party leaders carried black flags in protest against the attack. Ministers Ambati Rambabu, RK Roja, TTD chairman Bhumana Karnakar Reddy, YV Subba Reddy and other leaders took part in the protest.

Ministers Gudivada Amarnath, Usha Sri charan, Merugu Nagarjuna, Ambati Rambabu, MLC Dokka Manikya Varaprasad Balineni Srinivas Reddy and other leaders from across the State took out rallies.

YSRCP leader YV Subba Reddy said the attack on Jagan was a cowardly act and condemned the incident. He said that the attack was pre-planned that reflects Chandrababu's crude political nature.

Minister Roja said that unable to bear the support and response from the people to

CM Jagan, the attack was planned by Chandrababu. She said that the authorities should take stern action against Chandrababu and Pawan Kalyan.

YSRCP leader Mudragada Padnabham said that in democracy, these kinds of attacks to eliminate the opponent are not good.

He said that the people across the state are observing the Opposition alliance activities closely.

Minister Amarnath strongly condemned the attack on Jagan and termed it as a cowardly act.

Minister Ambati took out a rally with the YSRCP supporters in peaceful protest against the attack wearing black badges and holding black flags.

Minister Usha Sri Charan, too, held a peaceful protest. Minister Merugu Nagarjunatook out a rally against the attack on CM Jagan and strongly condemned it. He said that Chandrababu is showing his true colours through his crude politics.



Property tax hike sparks political concerns

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Property owners in Visakhapatnam are set for another blow as the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) is gearing up to issue increased property tax demand notices for the upcoming fiscal year. The move has raised eyebrows in political circles, particularly among those affiliated with the Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YCP), who are apprehensive about potential repercussions stemming from the timing of the tax hike.

The transition to property tax calculations based on property values rather than annual rent represents a significant departure from the previous system. Initiated by the YCP in the latter half of the financial year 2021-22, this change has



led to a gradual escalation in tax burdens on property owners since its implementation. For instance, property tax rates for houses in the Abidnagar area have seen a steady climb from Rs 11,576 in the financial year 2021-22 to a staggering Rs 14,698 for the ongoing financial year 2024-25. Similarly, in the Maddilapalem Pithapuram Colony, property tax surged from Rs 1,410 in 2021-22 to Rs 2,146 for the current fiscal year.

While GVMC officials are

contemplating further increases, politicians are wary of the timing's political ramifications. YCP members, particularly those contesting in constituencies under the GVMC, fear that the issuance of demand notices and subsequent tax hikes during elections could dent their electoral prospects. Despite the rise in tax rates, collections have consistently fallen short of municipality targets. In the financial year 2023-24, only Rs. 460.12 crore were collected against a

target of Rs. 504.65 crore. This trend persisted into the current financial year, with collections standing at a mere Rs. 20.16 crore as of April 11, against a target of Rs. 535.16 crore.

In an attempt to ease public discontent, the GVMC has opted for a gradual tax increase, not exceeding 15 percent per annum. However, concerns linger among YCP candidates regarding potential voter dissatisfaction triggered by tax hikes and demand notices. The surge in property taxes in Visakhapatnam mirrors broader shifts in taxation policy and governance strategies. As residents brace for heavier tax burdens, politicians tread carefully, balancing revenue generation with public sentiment, especially in the run-up to elections.

Amarnath leads campaign in Gajuwaka as women lend support

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a remarkable testament to solidarity and determination, the streets of Gajuwaka bore witness to an unprecedented display of unity as women marched alongside Gajuwaka Assembly constituency candidate and State Minister, Gudivada Amarnath, amidst sweltering temperatures exceeding 40 degrees Celsius. This fervent demonstration, marked by unwavering support for Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and deep admiration for Amarnath's leadership, signals a monumental shift in the political landscape as



the electoral battle gains momentum.

Paying homage at the Ambedkar statue at Pedagantyada fire station, Amarnath symbolically reaffirmed his commitment to justice

and equality. Leading a rally through the bustling streets of Samata Nagar and beyond, Amarnath, flanked by stalwarts such as former MLA Chinthalapudi Venkataramaiah and YSRCP district general sec-

retary Tippala Devan Reddy, amplified the clarion call for progress and prosperity in Gajuwaka.

Addressing the gathering, Amarnath extended profound gratitude to the women whose unwavering support forms the bedrock of the YSRCP's vision for a brighter tomorrow. He lauded the impact of Jagan's welfare schemes, particularly on the lives of women across the State, while vowing to uphold the legacy of service and development. Amarnath's promise to usher in a new era of progress for the constituency resonated deeply with the enthusiastic crowd.

Will welcome if Revanth wants to join BJP: Arvind

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Stating that the BJP will welcome Chief Minister Revanth Reddy if he wants to join the BJP, the BJP's Nizamabad Lok Sabha constituency candidate, Dharmapuri Arvind, said that Revanth has at least 15 more years of political life but the Congress has no future.

It may be recalled that BRS Working President KTR has been stating that Revanth will join the BJP after the Lok Sabha elections.

Arvind said that the BRS lost elections due to corruption. The Congress will lose the next Assembly elections due to its inefficiency. He said that the Congress government is neglecting farmers and concentrating on politics.

"Revanth is an efficient CM, but he will remain inefficient if he continues in the Congress. Revanth should think about his future. Revanth Reddy's 'Aap Ki Adalat' show is a big comedy and so Revanth supported Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal ruling the state from jail. Is Revanth also preparing to rule the state from jail," Arvind said.

Demanding that Revanth should reveal his stand on the Gyanvapi and Mathura issues, Arvind said that the Congress government has been wasting time in the phone-tapping case. The Congress government is diverting attention from problems by creating hoo-ha in the name of phone tapping.

"Why is the Congress government not taking action

against former CM K. Chandrashekar Rao and former Minister KT Rama Rao if they are involved in phone tapping?" he asked.

Arvind said that the public thinks that the CM engages in land settlements and added that the Revanth Reddy government deceived people regarding the 6-guarantees.

"The Congress government too is deceiving people like the KCR government. The days are very near when the people would chase the Congress government away. The zero power bills were limited to just one month," he said.

The Congress assured farmers that it would procure paddy by giving a bonus of Rs 500 per quintal, he said and asked the CM to respond on that.

The Congress government has been troubling people by giving impossible promises, Arvind said.

He said that the Congress is not in a position to find LS candidates and that the Congress will not get even 30 LS seats across the nation. Congress leaders are not showing interest in contesting the Lok Sabha elections on a Congress ticket, he said.

The Congress has been giving tickets to useless candidates, he said and added that the BRS and the Congress fielded LS candidates together.

Arvind said that KCR has no regard for the Nizam Sugar Factory. He asked KCR to explain why he did not open the Nizam Sugar Factory although the BRS was in power for the last 10 years.



INDIA CORNER

Girl stabs to death neighbour over water

The Delhi Police on Sunday apprehended a 15-year-old girl for allegedly stabbing a neighbour to death in a fight over water from a common tap in Delhi's Farsh Bazar area, an officer said. The victim was a 34-year-old woman, who received several cuts in her left hand and a stab wound in the stomach, they said. According to the police, on Friday at 10.59 pm, a PCR call was received with the caller saying that his wife had been stabbed in the stomach and needed an ambulance. "Acting on the call, the police team reached the spot which was Gali no 2, Bhikam Singh Colony and found injured Soni in her room. She had three cut marks on her left hand and a small wound on her stomach," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Surendra Choudhary said. Soni was immediately taken to Hedgewar Hospital where she was declared dead on arrival by doctors.



India gifts 101 vehicles to various organisations in Nepal

India on Sunday donated 35 ambulances and 66 school buses to various organisations across Nepal, enhancing the local infrastructure in the health and education sectors. Indian Ambassador to Nepal Naveen Srivastava handed over the vehicles to the Nepalese officials in the presence of Finance Minister Barshaman Pun at a ceremony. Out of 101 vehicles, two ambulances were handed over on location in the earthquake-affected Jajarkot and West Rukum districts by the representative of the Embassy of India in the presence of district officials and local residents, a statement from the Indian Embassy here said. "This donation, part of a longstanding initiative coinciding with India's national celebrations, underscores the deep-rooted partnership between India and Nepal, aimed at fostering development and strengthening bilateral relations through improved access to essential services," the statement said.



Indian prisoner Sarabjit Singh's killer shot dead in Pakistan

Amir Sarfaraz Tamba, an accused in the murder of Indian death row prisoner in Pakistan Sarabjit Singh and a close associate of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror outfit founder Hafiz Sayeed, was killed by unidentified gunmen in Lahore on Sunday, official sources said. Tamba was attacked by motorcycle-borne assailants in the Islampura area of Lahore in Pakistan and was rushed in critical condition to a hospital where he succumbed to his injuries, the sources said. Singh, 49, died of cardiac arrest in Jinnah Hospital Lahore in the wee hours of May 2, 2013, after being comatose for nearly a week following a brutal assault by inmates including Tamba, inside the high-security Kot Lakhpat jail. Tamba, son of Sarfaraz Javed, was born in Lahore in 1979 and was a close associate of the LeT founder who felicitated him for killing Singh.



NO EVACUATION AS YET

Indian missions in Israel, Iran issue fresh advisories for Indians

PNS ■ TEL AVIV/TEHRAN

The Indian diplomatic missions in Israel and Iran on Sunday issued fresh advisories for its nationals after Tehran launched an unprecedented drone and missile attack on the Jewish state, advising them to stay calm, adhere to safety protocols along with activating additional helpline numbers.

Iran and its proxies launched 330 missiles and drones on Israel late on Saturday night in retaliation to an alleged attack by Israel on a diplomatic mission of the Islamic Republic in Damascus on April 1 in which several people, including two top commanders, were killed.

The Indian embassy in Israel issued a fresh 'important advisory' for its nationals after the overnight attacks by Iran. "In light of the recent events in the region, all Indian nationals in Israel are advised to stay calm and adhere to the safety protocols issued by the local authorities,"



the Indian mission said in the 'important advisory' posted on its social media handles.

"The Embassy is closely monitoring the situation and it is in touch with the Israeli authorities and Indian community members to ensure the safety of all our nationals," it added.

It also urged Indian nationals to register with the embassy at a given link.

Hours later, the Indian embassy in Tehran said it has activated additional telephone

lines for its nationals.

"Embassy of India in Tehran has activated additional helpline numbers. For any assistance, please contact the Embassy at: +989128109115; +989128109109; +989932179359; +98-21-88755103-5; cons.tehran@mea.gov.in," the Indian Embassy at Tehran posted on its official X handle.

Earlier on Friday, April 12, the Indian Embassy in Tehran had

issued an advisory that said:

"Travel advisory for Iran and Israel: In view of the prevailing situation in the region, all Indians are advised not to travel to Iran or Israel till further notice." It gave a mail ID (cons.tehran@mea.gov.in) and two phone numbers (+98-21-88755103-5 and +989128109115) for any assistance. It also asked all Indians residing in Iran to register themselves and gave a URL to use for the same.

Same day, the Indian embassy in Tel Aviv too had also issued an advisory amid growing speculation of a retaliatory attack by Iran advising its nationals asking them to "avoid unnecessary travel, remain calm and follow safety guidelines issued by the local authorities."

In New Delhi, the Ministry of External Affairs said India was seriously concerned at the escalation of hostilities between Israel and Iran which threatens the peace and security in the region.

"We call for immediate de-escalation, exercise of restraint, stepping back from violence and return to the path of diplomacy. We are closely monitoring the evolving situation. Our Embassies in the region are in close touch with the Indian community," the ministry said in a statement.

The statement highlighted that it is vital that security and stability are maintained in the region.

World sure of Modi's win: Rajnath

Says PM getting invitations for events scheduled after polls

PNS ■ JAMUI/BANKA (BIHAR)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been receiving invitations for functions scheduled much after the Lok Sabha polls, which showed the "entire world believes his return to power is inevitable".

The former BJP president made the claim during his back-to-back rallies in Jamui and Banka Lok Sabha constituencies of Bihar, where he canvassed for allies Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) and JD(U) respectively.

Addressing an election rally in Jamui district, Singh said, "Election season is known to be volatile everywhere. People view these times with a degree of consternation, but not so in the case of India. The entire world believes PM Modi will be back for a third consecutive term in office. Modi is already being invited to functions abroad which are scheduled in October this year or even next year. This is rare during elections."

"But in case of Modi, the entire world seems to believe that he will be back for a third



"Election season is known to be volatile everywhere. People view these times with a degree of consternation, but not so in the case of India. The entire world believes PM Modi will be back for a third consecutive term in office. Modi is already being invited to functions abroad which are scheduled in October this year or even next year. This is rare during elections."

consecutive term in office," Singh asserted.

The Defence Minister also said under Modi, India has transformed into a power "capable of repulsing cross-border

terrorism as was seen during the surgical strikes".

"Another example of India's rise in global stature was the release of retired navy officials, who were awarded death sentence by a court in Qatar, following a telephone call from Modi to the head of the West Asian state," said Singh.

The minister also lauded Modi's intervention which helped Indian students stranded in war-torn Ukraine, underscoring that it was yet another proof of "our rising global stature".

He also said "earlier, we were dependent on imports for our defence needs. Modi decided that this has to change. Now, missiles, bombs, mortars and shells, all are not just being manufactured on our soil, but we have started exporting these items".

"Just look at the CPI(M)'s talk of nuclear disarmament while our neighbours like Pakistan and China are piling up nukes. The opposition party wants to lay waste our nuclear power which got global recognition after the Pokhran tests during the rule of late Atal Bihari Vajpayee," he added.

'LS polls fight against Manuwadi'

PNS ■ NAGPUR

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday said the 2024 Lok Sabha polls was not a fight against Prime Minister Narendra Modi but against the "Manuwadi" ideology of the ruling dispensation.

Addressing a poll rally for Congress' Nagpur Lok Sabha candidate Vikas Thakre, who is pitted against Union minister and BJP heavyweight Nitin Gadkari, he said his party was fighting to save Babasaheb Ambedkar's Constitution that safeguards the rights of 140 crore Indians.

"Thakre is not a high profile candidate but a ground level worker. He has been selected to defeat Manuwadi ideology



(thought process based on the contents of Manusmriti). The 2024 Lok Sabha polls is not a fight against Modi or Gadkari but against Manuwadi ideology," Kharge asserted.

If the RSS-BJP wins, there will be no elections henceforth and they will finish the Constitution, Kharge claimed.

The Congress worked for

the country's freedom but now Modi asks what the party has done in the past 70 years, he said.

"The RSS did nothing during the freedom struggle but now they come asking for votes in the name of Ram Temple and Babasaheb Ambedkar. Leave alone a photo of Ambedkar, these people did not even keep the

national flag in their offices," Kharge alleged.

The youth do not know the history of these organisations and are only misled by Modi's falsehoods, he further said.

Under Modi, the GDP of the country was growing at 5-6 per cent, whereas it was 8-9 per cent during UPA rule, Kharge said.

"Modi calls the opposition corrupt but his party inducts tainted leaders. The BJP is a laundry where the corrupt are inducted by Modi, put in for washing by Amit Shah and taken out (clean chit) by Gadkari," the Congress president said.

People got the right to vote after the Constitution was drafted due to the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr Ambedkar, he said.

'Jumla patra': AAP on BJP's poll manifesto

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP on Sunday termed the BJP's Lok Sabha poll manifesto a "jumla patra" and claimed that the document presents a clear picture of promises "not fulfilled" by the saffron party in the last 10 years.

The 'Sankalp Patra' of the BJP released by Prime Minister Narendra Modi talks about making 'one nation, one election' a reality, preparing common electoral rolls, abolishing waiting list for train travel, expansion of 5G networks and organising Ramayana festivals the world over.

Addressing a press conference, senior Aam Aadmi Party

(AAP) leader Atishi said, "The Prime Minister has announced the 'Jumla Patra' (document of rhetoric) of his party for 2024 elections."

"It presents a clear picture of the unfulfilled promises of the BJP in the last 10 years... In 2014 as well, Modi's rhetoric was that his government will give two crore jobs every year. But after 10 years in their 'jumla patra' (manifesto) of 2024, they aren't ready to give any figures on jobs," she said.

The Delhi minister said the government has told the Parliament that it hasn't provided even two crore jobs in the last 10 years, leave alone 20 crore jobs.

Akhilesh: Can country where 80 crore people survive on free ration become 'Vishwaguru'?

PNS ■ MEERUT (UP)

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday mocked the BJP government's claim that the country was set to become a 'vishwaguru', asking how is it possible when 80 crore people in the nation need to be given free rations.

The Samajwadi Party (SP) leader was making a veiled reference to the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, under which 80 crore people in the country are given free rations every month.

"Can a country where 80 crore people survive on free ration become a 'vishwaguru' (global leader)," Yadav told reporters here in response to a question.

He also expressed confidence that the SP and the opposition INDIA bloc will emerge victorious in the Lok Sabha elections.

"SP will register a historic win in the elections. This time, the western wind which is blowing from the west (part of Uttar Pradesh), is in favour of INDIA (bloc), and will reach the last corner (of the state)," Yadav said.

On whether he would contest the Lok Sabha elections, the SP chief said, "Let the date come."

To another question on whether his Meerut visit was out of love for Dalits, Yadav said, "Netaji (SP patron Mulayam Singh Yadav) had himself sent (prominent Dalit leader) Kanshiram to Lok Sabha from



The Samajwadi Party (SP) leader was making a veiled reference to the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, under which 80 crore people in the country are given free rations every month.

Etawah."

"This fight is very old and big. It is one that was once fought by Chaudhary Charan Singh. He was respected by people from all sections of society," the SP chief said.

He also said that this election is one to save the Constitution and democracy.

"Does the youth not know that they have been cheated? Those who were looking to get permanent jobs are deriving satisfaction from Agniveer scheme, and the BJP is exploiting their poverty and helplessness," Yadav claimed.

PM cut off from people, their issues: Priyanka

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday, claiming that he is completely cut off from the people and their issues and blamed him for inflation and unemployment in the country.

The Congress leader also claimed that Modi enjoys so much power that those around him are scared to tell him the truth. "Your biggest problem is inflation. I believe that Modiji is not able to understand that. When there is too much power, people do not tell the truth."

Officers and colleagues are scared of telling him about the reality," Gandhi told a public meeting in Rajasthan's Jalore. The rally was organised to garner support for Vaibhav Gehlot, the son of former Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot and the Congress candidate from Jalore in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

"I really feel that Modi is now completely cut off from the people of the country," Gandhi said.

She said that a strange atmosphere prevails in the country now and all kinds of things are happening to divert people's attention.



Sometimes the prime minister shows "false bravery," sometimes he has to boast, he talks about meat and fish, sometimes he flies in the air and sometimes they go under the sea, she said.

"What do these things mean to your life?" she asked. "What is your biggest problem? Inflation. I think something has happened to Modi ji. He is not able to understand," she said. "The farmers are under debt. But it is not talked about. On TV, media and phones, it is shown that the country is moving forward. It is progressing. Everyone is happy. Is this reality?" Gandhi asked.

The Congress general secretary added, "We also feel proud when events like the G20 Summit are held in India. But another reality is that the poor are suffering from the rising inflation and youngsters due to unemployment."

Will make west UP separate state if voted to power at Centre: Mayawati

PNS ■ MUZAFFARNAGAR (UP)

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) supremo Mayawati on Sunday said her party will take concrete steps to make western Uttar Pradesh a separate state if voted to power at the Centre.

Addressing a rally here in support of the BSP's candidate from the Muzaffarnagar Lok Sabha seat Dara Singh Prajapati, Mayawati also said the BJP has a very slim chance of coming to

power again. "You want western Uttar Pradesh to become a separate state. For this, concrete steps will be taken if our government comes to power at the Centre," Mayawati told the gathering.

The BSP chief said if free and fair elections are held and voting machines are not tampered with, the BJP will not return to power this time.

"Most of the BJP's time was spent on making wealthy businessmen wealthier and protecting them... The BJP and other parties run their organisations and contest elections with the support of these businesses. This was revealed by electoral bond data," she added.

The former chief minister hit out at the BJP government for not



recruiting people for vacant posts reserved for backward communities and making reservations in promotion redundant. "In the last few years, with the BJP in power at the Centre and in most states, the progress of Muslims has stopped to a great extent. Violence in the name of religion has increased here," Mayawati said, adding that poor people of the general category have also not received any benefits under the BJP's rule.

'Will to achieve goals more trustworthy than using apps'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

People relying on willpower to resist temptations and achieve goals are perceived as more trustworthy compared to those resorting to "commitment strategies" such as using apps, a new research has shown.

In one experiment, participants were found to judge hypothetical users of commitment strategies as less trustworthy despite recognising that sometimes these strategies are more effective than willpower alone, researchers said.

Approaches involving commitment strategies have been shown to be successful for a var-



ried range of goals such as quitting smoking, weight loss, academic achievement and saving money, according to Ariella Kristal of the Columbia University, US, and lead author

of the study published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.

Commitment strategies can also include having to pay a fine upon engaging in unwanted

behaviour or relying on apps that help people avoid websites like Facebook and Instagram.

However, the researchers believe that resorting to commitment strategies could possibly signal a weakness in an individual's character, or a past failure, because of which they are having to rely on external incentives, rather than overcoming self-control problems on their own. "Past failures of self control can be seen by others as moral failures. Because morality is an important component of integrity in particular, and trustworthiness more broadly, people who rely on commitment strategies may be viewed as less trustworthy than those who simply use willpower," Kristal said.

Through online experiments, the researchers involved more than 2,800 participants in the US for their study.

The participants were asked to rate the integrity of individuals in hypothetical situations who attempted to achieve a certain goal either through willpower or through a commitment strategy.

In one such situation, the participants were asked to judge people relying on willpower to avoid eating junk food or drinking alcohol, while in another people either displayed self control or depended on an app to avoid using Facebook or Instagram.

Generally, the researchers found that individuals described as depending on commitment strategies to achieve goals were judged to be less trustworthy than those relying on willpower alone.

In another experiment, the participants were found to be less likely to resort to a commitment strategy, if they had a hint that others might find out.

"People appear particularly hesitant to adopt commitment strategies when their use will be made public and, while not as high, people's resistance continues to remain elevated even when the use of strategies will be kept private," Kristal said.

Promises to keep

The BJP unveils its Lok Sabha poll manifesto with emphasis on ‘GYAN’ and development

The ruling BJP has unveiled its long-awaited manifesto, ‘Sankalp Patra’, for the Lok Sabha elections, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasising the party’s commitment to the welfare of ‘GYAN’ — Garib, Yuva, Annadaata and Naari Shakti (the poor, youth, farmers and women). Accompanied by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and BJP chief JP Nadda, the Prime Minister presented the manifesto at the party headquarters in New Delhi. Modi outlined that the paper’s thrust areas were centred around the concept of ‘Viksit Bharat’ — empowering the youth, women, farmers and the economically disadvantaged. He stressed the importance of enhancing both the dignity and quality of life for all citizens, promising initiatives such as providing piped gas to every household and supplying free electricity through solar power. The manifesto pledges to extend the Centre’s free ration scheme and prioritise self-reliance in essential food items like pulses, edible oils and vegetables to stabilise



prices and ensure food security. Additionally, it vows to expand flagship schemes like Ayushman Bharat and the PM Awas Yojana while ensuring access to clean drinking water in every home. In agriculture, the BJP promises to continue providing annual financial assistance of Rs 6,000 to farmers, enhance crop insurance through technology and implement periodic increases in the Minimum Support Prices. It also addresses the party’s commitment to implementing a uniform civil code, One Nation One Poll initiative, expansion of 5G networks, bolstering national security and abolishing waiting lists for train travel.

The main rival Congress’ manifesto, on the other hand, focuses on social welfare, economic reforms and addressing inequality through targeted interventions such as healthcare expansion, agricultural support and a caste census. In contrast, the BJP emphasises national security, infrastructure development and cultural issues, with a lesser emphasis on caste-based policies and regional grievances. Nadda reiterated the commitment to fulfil all promises encapsulated in ‘Modi Ki Guarantee’, the BJP’s slogan for the elections. Responding to the BJP’s manifesto, the Congress has criticised it over alleged shortcomings. Party spokesperson Pawan Khera labelled it a ‘maafinama’ or apology, highlighting unfulfilled promises from previous elections. Supriya Shrinete accused the BJP of misleading the public and ignoring critical issues such as ethnic violence in Manipur and protests in Ladakh. As the mudslinging match between the arch-rivals continues, it is for the people to judge who kept promises and who did not. Manifestos are no commitment and, therefore, not legally binding. Nonetheless, these do spell out a party’s ideology and the direction it wants to take the country in. As the campaign gains momentum, the debate over competing policy agendas is likely to intensify, shaping the discourse leading up to the polls. An informed voter would better not judge a party by its manifesto but by its track record.

PICTALK



A woman applies vermilion to another woman on the occasion of the Satuni festival, in Patna

PTI

Constitutional morality: The pillar of India’s democracy

Central to India’s dynamic democracy is the principle of constitutional morality, serving as a compass guiding the nation’s advancement and growth

Every Quadrennial year, the election season in India sets a stage for new hope, a new batch of electorates and especially a power in each electorate to exercise their right of adult universal suffrage. News channels are brimming with discourses and the candidates are doing their best to secure a seat in the political engine of society. The vibrancy of the largest democracy was foreseen by the members of the constituent assembly who wanted the ruling ideals to rise from the Constitution itself to guide the coming of a new independent nation. The father of the Indian Constitution, Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar defined Constitutional morality as a paramount reverence for all the forms of the Constitution, enforcing obedience to authority and acting within these forms in addition to the habit of open speech and action subject only to definite legal control. He believed that constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment rather it needs to be cultivated consciously. In contemporary times, it has become a principal tool of activism in the



hands of the judicial wing of our country. Unlike other ideals of brotherhood, equality, fairness, non-arbitrariness, etc. which sprung from the need for pre-independent India, constitutional morality had to be injected into the bloodstream of the country. The Judiciary has brought back the discourse on constitutional morality through a slew of judgments in contemporary times. Thereby reinstating the nature of the Indian Constitution, an organic and living document, pulsating life into a more than half-century-old Manga Carta of India. The CJJ of India, D.Y. Chandrachud speaking in the same vein said that judges go by the values derived from the Constitution that the courts are intended to espouse such as human dignity, personal liberty, equality, fairness, etc. He also added that the

Supreme Court is final not because they (judges) are right, but they are right because they are final. Transformational jurisprudence on constitutional morality is a pre-constitutional concept. For Instance, practice, which was within the bounds of the then — prevailing social morality, was abolished and this act was a part of constitutional morality, even though the constitution was drawn up years later. Post Independence may not have found an explicit place in the text but it is embedded in the essence of constitutionalism. It demands morality to be objective based on the prevailing dynamics of society. The conscience-keepers are duty-bound to draw a balance between individual/class liberty and societal acceptance of change in the socio-legal and political scenario. From LGBTQ+ rights recognition in Navtej Singh Johar vs. Union of India to the striking down of section 497 of IPC, 1960, dealing with the law of adultery in Joseph Shine vs. Union of India, the Judiciary has advocated its mandate to include constitu-

tional morality over majoritarian or popular morality. Constitutional morality is derived from public morality, however, slightly divorced from it and sifted through constitutional idealism. The intersectionality of social and religious belief systems entangles it further, for instance, in the Sabarimala judgment, the debate circled between the popular socio-religious belief and the fundamental right of freedom of religion of a class of women (menstruating women) under Article 25 of the Indian Constitution, is a worthy example in this regard. Constitutional morality may also at times be at a crossroads with Jus naturale. Euthanasia as a practice or the Right to Abortion, both were initially entrenched in belief systems to be against societal morality. It was not until the Supreme Court of India balanced the interests of the right seekers and the opposers, allowing both the above practices in a judicially permissible manner, that it found its acceptance. (The writer is a research scholar; their views are personal)



ABHAYA DUBEY

Madam — Apropos the editorial, “Southern Comfort”, published on April 12, this is my response. I fully agree that “Modi’s forays into the southern parts of the country may bear some fruits but it would be naive to think that the results will be immediately delivered; it will happen perhaps only sometime in future. Indeed, the BJP has managed to break ice in the northeast and southern India but that has taken considerable time and effort. Of course, efforts done now in the south would not go in vain and will pave the way for success in future elections”. He talks to the people about the failures of the incumbent DMK Government. In Kerala, the BJP is crazy to open its account. It is to be seen on 4th June. In Telangana, it fared well in the Assembly elections in 2023 improving its tally. It is quite encouraging for the party. In AP, the BJP party needs to do a lot of groundwork. Along with Naidu, it may get a few seats. In Karnataka, the BJP is equally poised with the Congress. Modi’s guarantees that the corrupt will be jailed in his third term may fetch the party some votes for in the south almost all the incumbent state Governments are mostly corrupt. So, the BJP is to open its gateway to the south in this scenario. More cannot be expected. It has to wait for a little more time to make its dent in the south as it did in the northeast.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BJP’S SOUTHERN STRATEGY

Madam — Apropos the editorial, “Southern Comfort”, published on April 12, this is my response. I fully agree that “Modi’s forays into the southern parts of the country may bear some fruits but it would be naive to think that the results will be immediately delivered; it will happen perhaps only sometime in future. Indeed, the BJP has managed to break ice in the northeast and southern India but that has taken considerable time and effort. Of course, efforts done now in the south would not go in vain and will pave the way for success in future elections”. He talks to the people about the failures of the incumbent DMK Government. In Kerala, the BJP is crazy to open its account. It is to be seen on 4th June. In Telangana, it fared well in the Assembly elections in 2023 improving its tally. It is quite encouraging for the party. In AP, the BJP party needs to do a lot of groundwork. Along with Naidu, it may get a few seats. In Karnataka, the BJP is equally poised with the Congress. Modi’s guarantees that the corrupt will be jailed in his third term may fetch the party some votes for in the south almost all the incumbent state Governments are mostly corrupt. So, the BJP is to open its gateway to the south in this scenario. More cannot be expected. It has to wait for a little more time to make its dent in the south as it did in the northeast.

N R Ramachandran | Chennai

THE UAE’S SWAMINARAYAN TEMPLE

Madam — Apropos the news story, “Swaminarayan Temple: The UAE’s Monument of Harmony”, published on April 13, this is my response. The tale of the Swaminarayan Temple in Abu Dhabi encapsulates more than just an architectural marvel; it speaks volumes about the convergence of faith, diplomacy and perseverance. The journey from prophecy to reality, spanning nearly three decades, mirrors the shared commitment of India and the UAE towards fostering cultural understanding

Fix accountability



Apropos news article, “Drunken driving leaves six school children dead”, published on April 12, this is my response. Six children were killed and 20 injured after a school bus carrying them overturned in Mahendragarh. Shockingly the driver was allegedly drunk and the bus did not have the fitness certificate. This is atrocious, after the accident they are finding fault. Many schools don’t follow Government rules. Hundreds of school buses are in the same condition. But who

bothers? Administration wakes up from the slumber only when poor kids lose their lives. Dismiss the district administration for not following inspection beforehand remove them from the job and do criminal proceedings against them why shouldn’t the city Traffic Police, Police Department & Transportation Department be made a party in the case for their negligence (since 2017 when the bus was operating without paying Road Tax, even the bus unfit to run. What are the RTO officials doing since 2017?), but this will never happen. People want to know, were the local traffic police sleeping till this mishap happened? Now they are saying the gross violation but no one checked & impounded the bus for these violations before the mishap? It’s a pity that their timely action would have saved precious lives. RIP the departed soul may the lord give their parents the desired strength to overcome the loss.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

REFLECTIONS ON JALLIANWALA BAGH

Madam — Apropos the news article, “Honouring the martyrs of Jallianwala Bagh”, published on April 12, this is my response. The tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh continues to echo through history, with its

105th anniversary drawing sombre reflections on the atrocity committed on April 13, 1919. The massacre, orchestrated by Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer, stands as a stark reminder of the brutality of British rule in India. The unjust firing upon unarmed civilians, amidst peaceful protests against the Rowlatt Act, left hundreds dead and wounded and condemnation both nationally and internationally. The reactions of prominent figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore and Jawaharlal Nehru underscore the magnitude of the tragedy and its profound impact. Their calls for peaceful resistance and condemnation of British colonialism reflect the resilience of the Indian spirit in the face of oppression. As we remember the lives lost at Jallianwala Bagh, it serves as a solemn reminder of the sacrifices made in the pursuit of freedom and justice, urging us to never forget the lessons of history.

Bahadur Shah | Dhanbad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Unravelling the Roy family’s legacy



PRAFULL GORADIA

The recent mudslinging between the TMC and BJP has highlighted a historical narrative concerning the role of the Roy family in the downfall of Bengal’s Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula

With the campaign for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections heating, mudslinging isn’t left behind, although one wishes this weren’t so. The Trinamool Congress has abused Smt. Amrita Roy, the BJP’s Krishnanagar Lok Sabha candidate, for belonging to the family of Krishna Chandra Roy, who had sided with the East India Company to take down Bengal’s Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula in 1757. The current Rajmata of Krishna Nagar has justified her family’s act, saying had they not done so, Sanatana Dharma and Bengali culture under the tyrannical Siraj would have ceased to exist. Moreover, Raja Krishna Chandra Roy, Amrita’s forefather wasn’t alone; Jagat Seth, Raja Naba Krishna Deb and above all Mir Jafar and many others wanted to see the end of Siraj-ud-Daula. Such was the ill-will he had generated.

What would have been Bengal’s fate had these merchant princes not contrived to overthrow Siraj? More than likely, Nadia district and today’s West Bengal might have gone to Pakistan and subsequently Bangladesh. Pakistan’s first President Iskander Mirza was a direct descendant of Siraj-ud-Daula. The family lived in Murshidabad, but on the morrow of Partition, promptly migrated to Karachi, then Pakistan’s capital. Iskander first became defence secretary and then Pakistan’s president in March 1956. To go back to Murshidabad, Siraj-ud-Daula came to the throne in 1756. He soon showed his colours by dismissing his chief minister Rai Durlabh, picked by his grandfather Nawab Alivardi Khan. The young Nawab humiliated the wealthy state banker Jagat Seth by publicly slapping him in the durbar and threatening him with sunnat, i.e., circumcision (see Plassey to Pakistan by Humayun Mirza, son of Iskander Mirza). The merchant princes were resentful of the rule by people of Central Asian stock and wanted more say in governance for the local people. However, they lacked the military organisation to effect an overthrow. Come 1757, upon the orders of the East India



Company’s Court of Directors arrived from Madras, along with some sailors and soldiers, to teach Siraj-ud-Daula a lasting lesson for humiliating the British at Fort William in Calcutta the previous year. This is where the Black Hole tragedy was perpetrated on the nawab’s orders. The nawabate’s merchant princes saw this as a rare opportunity to do away with this odious regime. British arms and Bengali money as well as contacts would ensure victory. Clive had only about 3,000 men, whereas Siraj-ud-Daula had an army of a lakh, plus a cavalry and elephants. This large army had to be truncated in numbers. Mir Jafar, who commanded half of the army of the Nawab, was promised that if he helped to overthrow Siraj-ud-Daula, he would be made the Nawab. Consequently, over half of Siraj’s army did not fight. The Battle of Plassey on June 23, 1757, ended the saga of Siraj-ud-Daula and his life. At the time we are talking about, there were two cultures in Bengal, namely Bengali and Islamic. Since the 12th century, the region had been slipping out of Bengali influence and had become two-thirds Arabized. The Battle of Plassey

MIR JAFAR, WHO COMMANDED HALF THE ARMY OF THE NAWAB, WAS PROMISED THAT IF HE HELPED TO OVERTHROW SIRAJ-UD-DULA, HE WOULD BE MADE THE NAWAB. CONSEQUENTLY, OVER HALF OF SIRAJ’S ARMY DID NOT FIGHT

in 1757 was the first decisive setback. After Siraj was defeated and killed and his nawabate erased, Hindus for the first time in many years could celebrate puja openly. A grand Durga Puja was held at the palace of Raja Naba Krishna Deb, where the chief guest was Robert Clive. Imagine if Bengal had remained on the Islamic track, there would have been no historic renaissance for which Bengal is justly renowned and respected. There would have been no Raja Rammohan Roy, no Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, no Rabindranath Tagore, no Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda, no Yogi Aurobindo, no Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and certainly no Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. One can only imagine what this region might have become. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, more than a hundred years ago, had famously said “What Bengal thinks today, India thinks tomorrow”. But if the likes of Siraj-ud-Daula had continued on the throne, there would not have been a Bengal today. Gandhi did awaken Indians to the value of freedom, politics, soul and economics, but the find winner was Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and his Indian National Army (INA). This

was admitted and affirmed by none other than Clement Atlee, Prime Minister of Britain from 1946 to 1951 the British leader who signed the Indian Independence Act of 1947 heralding India’s independence. After relinquishing office, Atlee came to India and was a guest of the then West Bengal Governor Justice P.B. Chakraborty. During a dinner conversation, Chakraborty asked his guest why the British quit India in a hurry in 1947, when there was no immediate cause, with the Quit India movement of 1942 having failed. The former British Prime Minister in reply quoted several reasons, principal among them being the erosion of loyalty to the British Crown among the Indian army, navy and air force, as a result of the action of Subhas Chandra Bose. Atlee’s reply to Chakraborty’s question on how much the non-violent satyagraha of Gandhi had influenced the British to free India, was “m-i-n-i-m-a-l”, with emphasis on each letter and a contemptuous smile. Had there been no Bengal, there wouldn’t have been a Netaji in the first place. (The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha; views are personal)

FIRST COLUMN

SPIRITUAL SOLUTION
TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Limiting procreation is perhaps the most significant step towards sustainability



ACHARYA PRASHANT

Today the world that we live in, people are-trying to do small, small good things, so that we can conveniently escape away from the fact that there is something humongously evil that we are doing. Most people are habituated towards consumption, it is not consumption per se that is the problem; it is the mad and blind consumption of stuff that is anyway not going to do you any good. That's the problem. So, wisdom or spiritual wisdom is not about the renunciation of consumption altogether. There are signs which clearly show the impact of various activities on climate change. For example: going car-free, avoiding transatlantic flight; choosing green energy; switching from an electric car to car-free; choosing a vegan diet; replacing a typical car with a hybrid; washing clothes in cold water rather than hot water; recycling; hanging dry clothes; upgrading to energy-efficient light bulbs. And the title of the graphic is 'Tonnes of CO2 equivalent saved per year for one person undertaking each action' (Wynes & Nicholas, 2017; Environmental Research Letters, Volume 12, Number 7). But these are 10 activities that are popular where all the do-gooders are busy doing all these ten activities and they walk around with great missionary zeal and even greater missionary pride.

And then there is this huge bar that corresponds to around sixty tonnes of CO2 which comes from doing a single action — which is, having one child. We don't talk about the largest contributor to climate change because this is where our ego lives, this is where the physical and bodily tendencies live. You must be wondering why I am speaking about this thing regarding procreation, regarding having kids. It's because this is the single most important issue facing you and me and the planet



and the millions of species today. This is the one thing that man immediately needs to address at this moment. There is no greater challenge in front of mankind — not the Third World War, not nuclear proliferation, nothing at all. This is the biggest challenge. Can you please either stop or limit having babies? This is the one challenge that nobody wants to talk about. If you can address this, then everything will be addressed. For every urge for development, you will see linkages between body identification, consumption, procreation and followed by devastation. When the global temperatures rise by three degrees or four degrees, all these baby flowers will wilt. Anyway, not too many species of flowers are going to remain to be planted. How much is climate change to blame? It affects at least 10,967 species on the IUCN Red List and projections suggest that if global temperatures increase by 2°C by 2100, about 18 per cent of all species on land will face a high risk of going extinct.

And this cannot be addressed merely by way of litigation. You require a spiritual movement; you require a deeply spiritual consciousness to understand what I am saying and act on what I am pointing to. You cannot limit the number of kids without first putting an end to this body-identification. As long as your material body is there, you will continue to consume, you will have to consume. We do not see the linkage between body-identification, consumption, procreation and devastation; we look at them as different things. This urge for development — what do you think, it has nothing to do with the devastation of this planet? What is exactly the definition of development? That which brings pleasure to you; that which brings comfort and convenience to you, right? That's how you define development. In the history of mankind, the time has come when without addressing that root problem, you cannot address any of the problems. And if you do not address the root problem now, there is going to be no tomorrow.


(The author is a Vedanta teacher, author and the founder of Prashant Advait Foundation; views are personal)

Indian political discourse plummets: Standards in free fall

Elections serve as a litmus test for the health of a nation's democracy, revealing the true character of leaders

The narrative that happens during the time of the General Election is an indicator of the quality of democracy practiced in a country. Leaders, especially the star campaigners, should set a standard for the public discourse through their speeches and interviews with the media persons. They should bear in mind that every word they utter is being recorded digitally with cameras and audio instruments. Whatever they speak is under public scrutiny and any aberrations would lead to major mishaps.

The campaign speeches in India took a new low during the tenure of Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Minister (1984-1989). Rajiv, who took over the post of Prime Minister following



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

the assassination of his mother, the late Indira Gandhi, was a refreshing change from the image of conventional Congress leaders spotting the ear-to-ear smile and perverted smile. But that did not last long as the Government he headed was enmeshed in corruption charges ranging from the Bofors Gun to HDW submarine deals. It was futile to expect the truncated Opposition to sit idle while the

whole world was discussing the gun contract. Rajiv Gandhi, who was upset with the charges, went to the extent of describing the opposition as political limpets. This is a term coined by a speech writer of Rajiv who always flouted his Indian Foreign Service background to play one-upmanship against old-time Congress leaders.

On seeing that Rajiv Gandhi was upset with the allegations of corruption, Ram Jethmalani, the doyen among the country's lawyers launched a fusillade of questions at the Prime Minister. "I'll ask you ten questions each day about the Bofors deal and if you claim that there is no corruption involved in it, please answer my questions," said Jethmalani. This made Rajiv furious and

he shot back saying that he would not answer barking dogs. Ram Jethmalani was a highly respected lawyer and social activist and the general public did not take the comments of the then Prime Minister lightly. Ram Nath Goenka, the founder of Indian Express, who had said in a signed front-page editorial in his newspaper that he could die peacefully with Rajiv Gandhi occupying the Prime Minister's chair had to make a retreat and wrote that the earlier Rajiv Gandhi goes the better for the country. The Congress alone was responsible for the falling standard in the national narrative during the election. When the Congress made use of public discourses with unparliamentary and uncivilized words, it was futile to expect the opposition to sit back and suffer silently. Barring leaders like A B Vajpayee, L K Advani, Murali Manohar Joshi, George Fernandes and S Chandrasekhar, the opposition too had an array of leaders capable of spitting venom and fire at the rivals.

Though many seasoned statesmen like Nani Palkhivala and J R D Tata cautioned the nation about the falling standards in the quality of debates and discussions, it did not make any impact as politicians continued their harangues with the sole purpose of scoring brownie points. The result was that the political campaigns that should have served as a source of knowledge and information got degraded into

speeches full of chosen abuses. The present-day Congress leaders are no different. Manmohan Singh, the former Prime Minister said in a media meeting on 4 January 2014 that it would be disastrous for the country to have Narendra Modi as Prime Minister. Now it is for the people of India to decide whether Narendra Modi's decade-long regime was disastrous or not.

President Mallikarjun Kharge is no different from M M Mani, the Marxist leader of Kerala when it comes to "showering" rivals with the choicest of abuses. Being the president of the GOP, Kharge has the major responsibility to ensure the dignity of the narratives. But the kind of words he has used and is using do not augur well for the position he holds.

Politics is a profession that requires dignity, decency and decorum. One could not speak or behave in a manner that would put hooligans to shame. A politician should be able to control the language and mannerisms while he interacts with the people. The behaviour of former union minister Dayanidhi Maran (grand nephew of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin) who is in politics only because of his family connections, is reprehensible as well as condemnable.

When he was asked about K Annamalai, the state chief of Tamil Nadu BJP, Maran went to the extent of describing him as a joker and said he does not know any Annamalai. This is

the zenith of arrogance as Annamalai is the most talked about person in South India as of date. His rise in BJP was not because of his family background while his educational and professional qualifications are sufficient to make one say My Mr.. Maran and his ilk need sensibility to cherish the beauty of Annamalai's qualifications.

In his decade-long service as an IPS officer, Annamalai earned encomium from all his seniors while Maran was dropped from the Manmohan Singh-led Government within three years of being sworn in following corruption charges against him. This much for dynasty politics.

(The writer is special correspondent with The Pioneer; views are personal)



MONEY MATTERS

Godrej Locks eyes 50 per cent market share

Locks and security solutions company Godrej Locks has said it aims to increase market share from 30 per cent to 50 per cent in three years, riding on a new range of affordable products and reduced prices of existing ones. Shyam Motwani, business head for Godrej Locks and architectural and systems, said the company's newly-launched products are over 50 per cent affordable than the existing locks, while efforts have been undertaken to make the existing locks cheaper by 7-8 per cent. The company will rely on new affordable range and price cuts in the existing locks to achieve the objective of having the dominant market share in around three years, Motwani said. The target is to grab 50 per cent market in the segment from the current 30 per cent, Motwani said, adding that the company sees a massive opportunity for its products in the tier-2,3, 4 cities and towns.



Digi Yatra: Stakeholders working to address tailgating issue

Stakeholders, including the Digi Yatra Foundation, are working on ways to address tailgating at airports through the Digi Yatra gates, an issue that has been flagged by Aviation security watchdog BCAS, according to officials. Digi Yatra, which uses Facial Recognition Technology (FRT), provides contactless and seamless entry into airports through e-gates. Broadly, tailgating refers to an additional person getting through a gate whereas the credentials for access have been used for only one person. As part of the routine review of various security aspects, an official in the know said the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) has flagged tailgating at Digi Yatra gates and that discussions are going on to address the issue. In a recent interview, Digi Yatra Foundation CEO Suresh Khadakhavi told PTI that stakeholders are discussing the best way forward to address the issue of tailgating.



Glenmark recalls 6,528 bottles of blood pressure drug in US

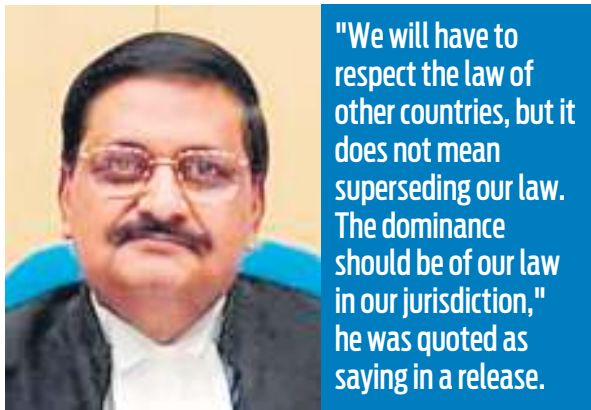
Glenmark Pharmaceuticals is recalling 6,528 bottles of a medication used to treat high blood pressure in the American market due to failed dissolution specifications, the US health regulator said. The US-based arm of the Mumbai-headquartered drug firm is recalling the affected lot of Diltiazem Hydrochloride extended-release capsules, the US Food and Drug Administration said in its latest Enforcement Report. The affected lot has been produced in India and is being recalled by New Jersey-based Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Inc for "failed dissolution specifications", the USFDA said. "Out of Specification (OOS) was reported in a test of dissolution at the 12th month time point in long-term stability study," it noted. Glenmark initiated Class II recall of the drug across the US on March 26 this year.



'Efforts on to develop cross-border insolvency framework'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Efforts are going on to develop a cross-border insolvency framework with a cautious approach and such a framework should respect the laws of other countries without superseding Indian law, according to experts. Former NCLAT (National Company Law Appellate Tribunal) Chairperson S J Mukhopadhyaya emphasised the importance of having a robust cross-border insolvency framework in the country. "We will have to respect the law of other countries, but it does not mean superseding our law. The dominance should be of our law in our jurisdiction," he was quoted as saying in a



"We will have to respect the law of other countries, but it does not mean superseding our law. The dominance should be of our law in our jurisdiction," he was quoted as saying in a release.

He was speaking at the conference on 'Cross-Border and Group Insolvency in India: Challenges and Opportunities' in the national capital on Saturday. The conference was organised by the Indian Institute of Insolvency Professionals of ICAI (IIPI) jointly with the Foreign, Commonwealth &

Development Office-United Kingdom (UKFCDO), the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI). IBBI Whole-Time Member Sudhaker Shukla said efforts are on to develop a cross-border insolvency framework with a cautious approach as well as working on the group insolvency framework. According to the release, National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) Member (Judicial) Ashok Kumar Bhardwaj said there is an increasing emphasis on a hybrid model of cross border insolvency framework where in different jurisdictions have their laws and also have space for common interest.



Firm to connect tech pros with global job opportunities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Technology startup SkillsCapital has launched a programme to connect technology and SAP professionals, mainly from Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, with global job opportunities, a statement said on Sunday. The NCR-based startup has introduced AI-powered Talent Cloud, which allows companies across the world to access technology talent for their projects remotely, Skills Capital said.

Finmin for enhanced KYC, due diligence to check fraud

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to check incidence of BoB World app scam and other such financial frauds, the finance ministry makes a case for an enhanced KYC procedure and extensive due diligence by banks and financial institutions for onboarding merchants to safeguard customers against cyber risks, sources said. Appropriate due diligence of merchants and Business Correspondents (BCs) who offer banking services in rural and remote areas is necessary not only to check frauds but also to fortify the financial ecosystem, sources said. According to sources, there is a need to strengthen data security and data protection at the level of merchants and BCs as chances of compromise are higher at that level.



Therefore, sources said, RBI may advice banks and financial institutions to review the concentration of BCs in cyber fraud hotspots and their onboarding, blocking of micro ATMs found to be involved in frauds. This was one of the suggestions made at an inter-ministerial meeting held recently with the objective of furthering cyber security and checking financial fraud, sources said. During 2023, as many as 11,28,265 cases of financial

cyber fraud worth Rs 7,488.63 crore were reported, as per the data compiled by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). To strengthen the mechanism to deal with cyber crimes in a comprehensive and coordinated manner, the central government, through the Ministry of Home Affairs, has set up the 'Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre' (I4C) to deal with all types of cyber crime in the country. As part of its efforts to curb growing cyber fraud, the Reserve Bank is considering setting up a Digital India Trust Agency (DIGITA) to stop the mushrooming of illegal lending apps. The proposed agency will enable verification of digital lending apps and maintain a public register of verified apps, sources said.

Markets to track geopolitical events, earnings & macro data

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Geopolitical events, macro-economic data and quarterly earnings of corporates would guide the stock market in a holiday-shortened week ahead, analysts said. Stock markets will remain closed on Wednesday for Ram Navami. "This week promises to be crucial for the market as fresh worries about a potential conflict between Iran and Israel emerge. Any significant escalation in tensions could trigger panic selling and volatility in global equity markets. The market will also be closely monitoring the movement of crude oil prices, which are often impacted by geopolitical events," said Santosh Meena,

Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd. Investors will be watching for earnings reports from Infosys, Bajaj Auto, and Wipro later in the week, he said.



On the macroeconomic front, China's GDP data, US retail sales figures, and movements in the US bond yields

and the dollar index will be important factors influencing market sentiment, Meena added. Shares of TCS will remain in focus on Monday. The company reported its January-March quarterly earnings on Friday. The IT services major logged a 9 per cent growth in net profit at Rs 12,434 crore in the fourth quarter of FY24 due to strong domestic business even as the company struggled in its key markets overseas. In the entire fiscal year, the Tata Group company's net profit surged 9 per cent to Rs 45,908 crore, while the revenue went up to Rs 2,40,893 crore from Rs 2,25,458 crore a year ago.

INVESTMENTS IN ADANI STOCKS

LIC sees 59% jump in value

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

LIC, the state-owned insurance behemoth, has seen a 59 per cent rise in value of its investments in Adani group companies in 2023-24 fiscal year after the conglomerate made a smart recovery since being hampered by a d a m n i n g short seller report. The value of LIC's investment in seven Adani group companies has soared from Rs 38,471 crore as on March 31, 2023 to Rs 61,210 crore on March 31, 2024, registering an increase of Rs 22,378 crore, according to stock exchange data. Last year, the insurance giant faced intense scrutiny over its decision to

invest in the Adani group amidst a political sluffest after allegations of stock manipulation fuelled by Hindenburg report. Adani group denied any wrong doing.



A d a n i Group's stocks, which at lowest point took a beating of about USD 150 billion, have staged a remarkable comeback, fuelled by robust profit growth across its diverse businesses. Facing political pressure, LIC strategically reduced its exposure to two of the group's flagship companies -- Adani Ports & SEZ and Adani Enterprises -- only to witness their shares surge by an impressive 83% and 68.4%, respectively.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign investors have infused over Rs 13,300 crore in Indian equities in the first two weeks of the month owing to a resilient domestic economy with promising growth prospects. Going ahead, concerns over changes in India-Mauritius tax treaty will weigh on Foreign Portfolio Investor (FPI) inflows in the near-term till clarity emerges on details of the new treaty, V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said. Another major concern is the surcharged geopolitical situation in the Middle East with heightened tensions between Iran and Israel. These will keep the markets on tenterhooks in the near-term, he added. Since domestic institutional investors (DIIs) are sitting on huge liquidity and the retail and HNIs in India are highly optimistic about the Indian market,

FPI selling will be largely absorbed by domestic money. According to the data with the depositories, FPIs made a net investment of Rs 13,347 crore in Indian equities this month (till April 12). Although, Friday witnessed FPI selling to the tune of Rs 8,027 crore on fears of changes in India-Mauritius tax treaty. Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director, Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said that several factors might have helped in the huge inflow including Fitch's downgrade of China's sovereign credit rating outlook from stable to negative due to growth concerns. In addition, anticipation of a normal monsoon season this year that could alleviate inflationary pressures, and a resilient domestic economy with promising growth prospects too helped in massive inflows, he added.



Share of affordable homes, priced up to Rs 45 lakh

Shrinks to 22% in Jan-Mar: PropTiger

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Share of affordable homes -- priced up to Rs 45 lakh each -- in total housing sales more than halved to 22 per cent during January-March across top eight cities amid strong demand for luxury flats, according to PropTiger. Share of affordable homes in total housing sales stood at 48 per cent in the January-March period of 2023 calendar year. Housing brokerage firm PropTiger.com data showed

that housing sales grew by 41 per cent to 1,20,640 units during January-March 2024 across top eight cities from 85,840 units in the corresponding period of the previous year. In the total sales of 1,20,640 units during January-March, the share of affordable homes, priced less than Rs 25 lakh each, was 5 per cent. In the same period last year, the share of this low-cost housing category in total sales was 15 per cent.



SATCOM SPECTRUM ALLOCATION, LICENSING PROCESS

Telecom department to seek Trai's view

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) is expected to approach Trai this month to seek the regulator's views on method and pricing for allocation of spectrum and scope of licences to be issued for satcom services, according to sources. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) had floated a consultation paper on "Assignment of Spectrum for Space-based Communication Services" on April 6, 2023 but returned the reference back to DoT after announcement of new Telecommunication Act. "DoT will seek views of Trai on pricing and methodology to allocate spectrum for space



based communication services. It may also look to fine-tune existing licences to bring in full clarity on the kind of services that satcom companies with administratively allocated spectrum can provide," a source, who did not wish to be named, told PTI. Satcom or satellite communication technology enables

service providers to ensure internet connectivity in remote areas or difficult terrain. Bharti Group-backed OneWeb and Reliance Group Jio Satcom have been issued GMPCS (satellite telephony) and VSAT licence for the services. Elon Musk-owned Starlink has also applied for the permit to start satcom services in India. With constellation of 4,000 low earth orbit (LEO) satellites, Starlink dominates satcom space. OneWeb has over 600 LEO satellites. According to the source, VSAT licence has norms that are not in sync with the provisions of new Telecommunication Act and therefore need to be fine-

tuned. Under the Telecommunications Act 2023, satellite communication companies can get spectrum without auction for point-to-point communications. However, there are provisions that allow a VSAT service operator to provide internet services to multiple independent subscribers, which may be interpreted differently than envisioned in the Telecommunication Act 2023. "Hence, there is a need felt to fine-tune licences for satcom services. A decision will be taken based on Trai's recommendation on the permits that should be issued to satcom service providers," the source said.

Market valuation of 7 firms climb Rs 59,404 cr

Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank lead gainers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The combined market valuation of seven of the ten most valued firms climbed Rs 59,404.85 crore in a holiday-shortened last week, with Bharti Airtel and ICICI Bank emerging as the biggest gainers. Stock markets were closed on Thursday on account of Eid-UI-Fitr. Last week, Sensex dipped marginally by 3.32 points

after a record-breaking rally. The BSE benchmark had settled at an all-time high of 75,038.15 on Wednesday. It scaled the lifetime peak of 75,124.28 on Tuesday. The market valuation of Bharti Airtel jumped Rs 19,029.37 crore to Rs 6,92,861.27 crore. ICICI Bank added Rs 15,363.23 crore, taking its valuation to Rs 7,75,447.63 crore.



India adds record 18 GW renewable energy capacity

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has added a record renewable energy capacity of 18.48 GW in 2023-24, which is over 21 per cent higher than 15.27 GW a year ago, according to the latest data of the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy. However, industry experts said there is a need to add at least 50 GW of renewable energy capacity annually for



the next six years to meet the ambitious target of 500 GW of renewables by 2030. According to the data, India's installed renewable

energy capacity is 143.64 GW as of March 31, 2024, excluding 47 GW of large hydropower capacity (each plant is more than 25 GW or above). They pointed out that renewable energy capacity stood at around 190 GW, including large hydro projects, and therefore, India needs to add 310 GW in the next six years or at an average of 50 GW per annum.

Demand for private jets, choppers jumps up to 40%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With politicians and political party representatives crisscrossing the country for the Lok Sabha polls, the demand for chartered planes and helicopters has jumped up to 40 per cent, and the operators are expected to net 15-20 per cent more earnings, according to industry experts. The hourly rates for chartered services have also spiked. The charge is about Rs 4.5-5.25 lakh for an aircraft and around Rs 1.5- 1.7 lakh for a twin

Operators set to rake in more profit

engine helicopter, they said. While the demand has surged compared to the normal times and previous election years, there is lesser number of fixed wing aircraft and helicopters available. Some of the operators are looking to take planes and helicopters on wet lease. "There is an increase in demand for helicopters and it is up to 25 per cent more in the



election period compared to the normal period. The supply is less compared to the demand," Rotary Wing Society of India (RWSI) President

(Western Region) Captain Uday Gelli said. Generally, political parties use helicopters for their candidates and leaders to reach places in a shorter time, especially remote areas. Gelli said the use of helicopters is being seen more in bigger states like Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Business Aircraft Operators

Association (BAOA) Managing Director Captain R K Bali told PTI that the demand for chartered planes is 30-40 per cent higher compared to the previous general polls. The bookings for chartered planes are done in advance and operators will be looking for maximum utilisation of aircraft. "There is always a gap between supply and demand. Some entities are looking to wet lease planes and helicopters to meet the demand," Bali said.

Gunshots fired outside Salman Khan's Galaxy Apt, investigation in progress



In the wee hours on Sunday, gunfire was heard outside Salman Khan's residence in Mumbai. According to preliminary reports from the media, the incident took place at approximately 4:55 am. Two people were seen on a motorcycle when they fired three bullets into the air. Currently, there is a significant police presence outside the celebrity's apartment building, Galaxy Apartments. Mumbai Police have started looking through CCTV video in an attempt to find the offenders. An FIR is currently being filed after the event was reported to the Bandra Police Station. Salman Khan received a murder threat last year from Goldy Brar, a Canadian-based fugitive mobster who publicly stated that the Bollywood actor was on his gang's assassination list. After receiving email threats, Salman at his Mumbai home earlier in the year, Mumbai Police had already filed a formal complaint (FIR) against gangsters Lawrence Bishnoi and Goldy Brar as well as another person. Three shots were fired during the incident, stated the police sources. In order to collect evidence, the forensic team is anticipated to show up at the location shortly. The Mumbai Police Crime Branch is reportedly going to take up the case. To find out who was engaged in the incident, investigations are being conducted. Given that he received death threats earlier this year, Salman Khan always travels with a highly guarded entourage.

James McAvoy remarked that sex scene with Keira was awkward!



Keira Knightley has chosen one of her most endearing close-ups. It featured in their movie *Atonement*, starring James McAvoy. The actor from *X-Men: First Class*, however, had a different take on their passionate kissing moment. Ian McEwan's book of the same name served as the inspiration for the 2007 romantic drama. McAvoy and Knightley played the key parts. The movie received numerous Oscar nominations, including ones for Best Picture and Roman's Best Supporting Actress. But! The New York Post quoted James McAvoy as saying that the sex scene with Keira Knightley was awkward and sweaty. This actor from *Split* had a nightmare. "When they call for action if you feel the lady's breast, it's your decision to feel the lady's breast," he stated on the Stuff website in New Zealand. "This seems to be incorrect. There are no parameters for you." The *Pirates of Caribbean* actor later apologized to each other after feeling ashamed, according to the media outlet's claim.



Kunal Kemmu spoke about his boy gang, which includes Ishan Khatter and Shahid Kapoor!




Madgaon Express, Kunal Kemmu's first film as director, is a huge hit! However, the actor-director discussed his boy gang—Ishan Khatter and Shahid Kapoor—in a recent interview. The actor revealed that they always split the expenses when they travel abroad. During the conversation, Kunal discussed how the bill is shared and acknowledged that it does get split. "Our tour is divided into several days, thus there is a split system. While it's still early, it's already too late. In my opinion, both hardwired and *hisbaab lagne lagta hai*. Everyone is thinking about it even if they don't express it. It is predetermined that we will begin calculating the costs!" Kunal, Shahid and Ishaan travel the world on motorcycles frequently. They had visited Nice, France, in 2022 as part of their Euro Biking Trip. They appeared to be posing with their airport luggage in one of their photos. Another showed Shahid and Kunal dressed like motorcyclists, with a number of bicycle paraphernalia visible on a table.

Rebecca Claims her co-stars were alarmed by her charges against Toxic actor's behaviour




Rebecca Ferguson, who starred in *Dune: Part Two*, disclosed that her vociferous charges directed towards an actor who was not yet named sent her fellow cast members into a state of fear as they all wanted to know who the actress was referring to. Ferguson revealed that the internet began speculating about the identity of the Hollywood star Ferguson named after her February interview, in which she branded her co-star "an absolute idiot," went viral. The *Mission Impossible* actress said in an interview said that she had no idea the word would spread so quickly and that it would become a guessing game. "First of all, yes, I did kind of like the grab", Ferguson remarked. "But even at my current age of 21, I've come to the realisation that it's irrelevant. Yes, I think I'm a lot more open. I am also aware of my boundaries. Naturally, people will be curious, but that wasn't the purpose of the interview. However, I found the topic intriguing, as it was posed by Josh Smith and was quite well-thought out." "Because the point was: Is there a point in your career where you were treated in a way that you changed your decision on—this is how I formulated it in myself—where you want change, or you will not accept it?" Rebecca stated, continuing along the same lines. "And dealing with this guy was such a vivid moment for me at that time." The Swedish actress said in her interview that she got calls from "some amazing co-stars" after her remarks went viral. "But I got calls from amazing co-stars who I've worked with saying, 'You understand what you've done, right!'" Rebecca disclosed. "And I was like, 'Oh my God,'" she continued. "No, I wasn't thinking. To be honest, it's not my responsibility. Really, I don't care. You know, 'You're great, but don't worry about it; if you're a good person, then my story is my story.'" "The person was Meryl Steep, and everybody knows it," the interviewer teased the actor, to which Ferguson laughed and retorted, "Dammit." Rebecca Ferguson claimed as she was leaving the set in tears that one of her co-stars had yelled at her in front of the entire crew!


ARCHIE




CALVIN AND HOBBS




GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP




CROSSWORD

JUNIOR CROSSWORD 717

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11				12		
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GINGER MEGGS



SUDOKU

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Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- Nearly
- Wide smile
- Tame animals
- This colour plus red makes orange
- One hundred years
- Parts of a minute
- Tired and drowsy
- Meat and vegetables boiled slowly
- Drink made from grapes
- Happening every twelve months

DOWN

- Mountains
- A parent
- A law

SOLUTION 716

E	V	E	R	E	R	
M	E	N	D	S	G	I
E	L	S	E	G	E	L
S	M	I	L	L		
L	I	S	O	N	S	O
F	R	I	P	P	N	
S	M	A	L	L		
I	O	O	A			
A	N	S	E	R	I	N

At last, she believes she is too little to make a lasting impact. The people who have left a legacy for future generations inspire her. If she gives it some thought, there is definitely more work to be done!



WE NEED EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMANCE TO BEAT RCB, SAYS SRH COACH

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Sunrisers Hyderabad head coach Daniel Vettori did not read too much into the travails of Royal Challengers Bengaluru and said it will require an “exceptional” effort from them to beat the hosts on Monday.

“The Royal Challengers are currently 10th on the IPL table with two points after winning just one out of six matches.

“I don’t think anyone in any team underestimates the quality of RCB. They’re a very good team. So, it’s going to take an exceptional performance from us to try and beat them. Every (IPL) game is hard and particularly when you’re playing away from home,” said Vettori during his pre-match press conference here on Sunday.

“Vettori said RCB might have learned lessons from their past defeats in this IPL and the home side could put SRH under pressure.

““RCB will obviously keep learning from what’s happened in the previous games and they’re going to



come out pretty aggressive. We’re going to be under a lot of pressure as a bowling unit for how aggressive they are going to be.

“So, we need to find ways to counter that and then keep up with our batting form which has been really good,” said Vettori.

“The former New Zealand captain said it would be naive to take a big score at the Chinnaswamy stadium for granted.

“I think most teams come here thinking that it’s going to be a high-scoring fixture. I’ve probably seen a couple of surfaces this year that have

been slightly slower,” he said.

“The former left-arm spinner, who also had a long association with RCB as a player and coach, said teams prefer to chase at Chinnaswamy because of the ease to control the backend of the innings.

““We understand the ball

travels here and the boundary sizes are small. So, I think you have to keep challenging yourself to try and take wickets because any team can score that 60-70 at the backend.

“I know no score is safe (here) and I always feel like you’re in the game, particularly when you are chasing. Most teams will come here and try to chase because they feel that it’s easier to navigate the endings,” he explained.

“Vettori had a word of praise for SRH middle-order batter Heinrich Klaasen, who has been in fine fettle in this IPL. The South African batter has made 186 runs from five matches at a frenetic strike-rate of 193.

““He’s been exceptional for a long period of time and he’s in that category of the likes of (Andre) Russell where teams really fear him in that backend and they set up their bowling plans to try and negate him. “But he’s been so good for such a long period of time that he has allowed us to either win the games or always be in the game.” he added.

RCB eye step up from under fire bowlers

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bengaluru’s IPL campaign that began in cheerfulness has melted into chaos, and their bowlers require a drastic transformation in mindset against Sunrisers Hyderabad for them to register an elusive win here on Monday.

“The Royal Challengers have players of repute and elite coaches with lofty pedigree but none of their plans have worked so far, evidenced by the team’s 10th place in the standings with a solitary win from six matches.

“The RCB’s trundling run in this IPL is directly linked to their bowlers’ ineffectiveness.

“They showed a distinct lack of willingness to adapt and upskill on conditions that needed a different thinking.

“In this IPL, the bowlers have often relied on variations like knuckle balls, slow bouncers and pace-off deliveries to counter a set of ultra-aggressive batsmen.

“However, the Bengaluru bowlers have been largely unidimensional in their approach allowing batters to tackle them with ease and the match against Mumbai Indians offers a case study.

“For once, the RCB batters fired collectively to take them to 196, but MI hunted down the target in just 15.3 overs at the Wankhede Stadium as the visiting bowlers were quite magnanimous in offering freebies.

“Dew, short boundaries etc cannot be counted as excuses when a team leaks above 13 runs per over. In fact, the RCB bowlers did not have the urge or imagination to blunt a batting unit full of intent.

“That’s an ominous sign against the Sunrisers, whose batting line-up is as intimidating as that of the MI.

“Two Hyderabad batters - Heinrich Klaasen (186) and Abhishek Sharma (177) - are inside the top-10 run-makers and Travis Head (133) too has been consistent.

“But more than the quantity of runs, how they made it make them more dangerous as Klaasen (193), Abhishek (208) and Head (177) have torn apart the bowling unit in the Power Play and in the middle-late overs.



“That uniform power allocation through batting ranks makes SRH a tall proposition for the opposition bowlers.

“This is not to say that SRH, currently fifth on the table with six points from five matches, do not have a weak point.

“Similar to RCB, bowling has been Hyderabad’s soft underbelly in this tournament with spinners Shahabaz Ahmed and Mayank Markande giving away more than 11 runs in an over with minimal returns.

“But the Hyderabad outfit has found a saviour in skipper Pat Cummins, their highest wicket-taker with six scalps and he has also conceded just over seven runs an over, a very respectable economy rate in this format.

“Additionally, Cummins has also shown the flexibility to operate at various junctures of a match - with the new ball in the Power Play or bowling as second-change in the middle and death overs.

“The inclusion of left-arm pacer T Natarajan (5 wickets, economy: 8.6) has given their bowling a new dimension and a bit more control in the last three matches.

“Having played on a shirtfront in Hyderabad, the SRH bowlers might not feel out of home at the Chinnaswamy, which has a pitch with similar characteristics.

“But can RCB exploit that above-mentioned minor chink in Sunrisers’ attack? “Star batter Virat Kohli is the

current holder of Orange Cap and fifties by skipper Faf du Plessis, Rajat Patidar and Dinesh Karthik against MI will certainly boost RCB’s confidence. “But the form of Glenn Maxwell (32 runs, average: 5.3) remains a massive concern.

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

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

Dhawan out for at least seven to 10 days: Bangar

PTI ■ MULLANPUR

Punjab Kings skipper Shikhar Dhawan could be out for at least seven to 10 days due to a shoulder injury, the team’s head of cricket development Sanjay Bangar indicated after the narrow loss to Rajasthan Royals.

“Dhawan missed the game against Royals on Saturday night. Sam Curran led the side in his absence.

“He’s having a shoulder injury, so he is likely to be out for at least a couple of days, I would say. Having an experienced opener, somebody like Shikhar, who has experience of playing on such wickets, becomes extremely crucial (for the team).

“We have to wait and see how he responds to the treatment. At the moment, it seems that he could be out of action for at least seven-ten days,” said Bangar in the post match press conference.

“Jitesh Sharma was team’s representative at the captains’ meet at the start of the season as Dhawan, who was down with fever, stayed back in Mullanpur.

“Considering that, Curran walking out for the toss was surprising but Bangar clarified that they were always clear about the Englishman’s role in the side.

““No, no, he (Jitesh) wasn’t the designated vice-captain. The impression could have been because he attended the captains’ seminar at the start



of the IPL. “But the thought was always that ... Because Sam has led the team in the previous year as well; he was late to arrive from UK and he wanted to have a few (training) sessions, that’s the

reason we couldn’t send him to Chennai. Hence Jitesh was sent, because the directive was that a player has to attend.

“It wasn’t the case that Jitesh was the stand-in captain. We were very clear in our mind that if at all there had to be an opening, Sam Curran will be taking over and do the job as the captain,” said the former India batting coach.

“Both Dhawan and Jonny Bairstow have not been able to provide flying starts to the team which has contributed to its inconsistent run in the tournament.

“Dhawan’s replacement at the top for the Saturday’s game, Atharva Taide, too could not do much against Royals.

“Bangar agreed it was a

concern.

“Certainly is a cause for concern that the top order is not making enough runs for us. They are trying hard - I am not saying that they are not applying themselves - but it’s just not coming.

“Low-scoring games, especially at Mullanpur, the way the wicket is... that also is a factor. Because if you see, some of the scores have been pretty low.

“All the three games that we have played here, in the first six overs, with the new ball, the wicket tends to just jag a little bit, and uneven bounce as well. So maybe that is also a contributing factor because, not only us, the visiting teams and their top order are facing issues.”

OTHER SPORTS

ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Anju, Harshita reach final

PTI ■ BISHKEK (KYRGYZSTAN)

Railways wrestler Anju, who had outclassed Vinesh Phogat in the recent selection trials, and Harshita put up a dominant show to reach the gold medal bouts in their respective categories at the Asian Championships, but Sarita Mor was eliminated after a shock defeat in her opening round here Sunday.

“Competing in a highly competitive 53kg weight class category, Anju logged



back-to-back wins by technical superiority against Philippines’ Aliah Rose Gavalez and Sri Lanka’s Nethmi Ahinsa Fernando.

“She faced some resistance from China’s Chun Lei before prevailing 9-6 in the semifinal.

“In the final, Anju will face Korea’s Ji Hyang Kim.

“Harshita conceded just three points en route the final, outclassing Uzbekistan’s Ozoda Zaripboeva by technical superiority (13-3) and beating Kazakhstan’s Anastassiya Panassovich 5-0.

“She will fight it out with China’s Qian Jiang in the final.

“However, a big shock was in store for the Indian squad as 2021 World Championship medallist Sarita lost her quarterfinal bout 4-8 to Mongolia’s Gantuya Enkhbat.

“The 28-year-old was a firm medal favourite in this category. Later Enkhbat lost her semifinal, closing the repechage route for the Indian.

“Manisha Bhanwala (62kg) and Antim Kundu (65kg) will contest for bronze medals.

Akshay slips at end of Round three but Scheffler moves into sole lead

PTI ■ BISHKEK (KYRGYZSTAN)

Railways wrestler Anju, who had outclassed Vinesh Phogat in the recent selection trials, and Harshita put up a dominant show to reach the gold medal bouts in their respective categories at the Asian Championships, but Sarita Mor was eliminated after a shock defeat in her opening round here Sunday.

“Competing in a highly competitive 53kg weight class category, Anju logged back-to-back wins by technical superiority against



Philippines’ Aliah Rose Gavalez and Sri Lanka’s Nethmi Ahinsa Fernando.

“She faced some resistance from China’s Chun Lei before prevailing 9-6 in the semifinal.

“In the final, Anju will face Korea’s Ji Hyang Kim.

“Harshita conceded just three points en route the final, outclassing Uzbekistan’s Ozoda Zaripboeva by technical superiority (13-3) and beating Kazakhstan’s

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Gukesh beats Vidit Gujrathi to regain joint lead

PTI ■ TORONTO

India’s D Gukesh bounced back with a finely crafted game to outwit compatriot Vidit Gujrathi and regain his joint lead with Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia after the eighth round of the Candidates chess tournament here.

“On a day when R Pragnanandhaa played out a draw with Firoouza Alireza of France, Hikaru Nakamura sealed his supremacy in the all-American duel against Fabiano Caruana to come back in to reckoning for top honours.

“Overnight sole leader Nepomniachtchi faltered in the early stages to allow tail ender Nijat Abasov to get away with an easy draw in the other game of the eight-player double round-robin event.

“With six rounds still to come, Gukesh and Nepomniachtchi have 5 points apiece and they are followed by Nakamura and

Pragnanandhaa on 4.5 points each.

“Caruana is now sole fifth on four points. Gujrathi on 3.5 comes in next ahead of Alireza on three points, while Abasov is still at the rear of the tables on 2.5 points.

“Gukesh had his task cut out and went for a rare variation wherein he surprised Gujrathi as early as on move four. Gujrathi sank into a long thought and ended up losing around twenty minutes on the clock.

“In the next few moves Gukesh equalized without much ado even as Gujrathi tried to make some headways on both flanks.

“In the middle game, Gukesh seized control of the only open file and used his queen and rook for an absolute domination to penetrate. Vidit tried hard to resist but the pressure was quite unforgiving especially when he had less time. “The die was cast when Gukesh entered the eighth



rank and it was a picturesque finish as white’s king was taken for a walk before the checkmate became inevitable. The game lasted 38 moves.

““These kind of clean games are rare at this level, in the opening he did some

inaaccuracies and his position was unpleasant, I was in control, it was a nice game,” Gukesh said when asked if he was surprised how he won as black without much counterplay.

“Pragnanadhaa could not

achieve much with his white pieces. Alireza employed the Sicilian Taimanov and the Indian went for another variation that has not been tested very regularly at the top level. “However, for once, Alireza found the going easy

and equalized without many problems, thanks to some timely breakthroughs on the queen side.

“The players reached an equal endgame soon after the Queens got traded on the 30th move the result was never in doubt. The draw was agreed to ten move later.

“Hikaru Nakamura stole the thunder and has clearly been a nemesis for world number two Caruana in the key encounters especially when the former had white pieces.

“It had started in Norway chess tournament when Nakamura defeated Caruana in the last round to win and the trend had continued in the FIDE’s Grand Swiss where he again won in the final round as white.

“In the eighth round game, Nakamura, one point away from leaderboard, took his chances in the closed Ruy Lopez and was duly rewarded as Caruana went for some unwarranted complications

after getting a level position in the middle game.

“Caruana also ran short of time and missed out on a tactic in a difficult position. It was all over in just 35 moves.

“Abasov has not been at his best but in this round the Azerbaijani secured his first half point with the black pieces.

Nepomniachtchi transposed to an exchange French defense and the resulting position was just equal till the longest game of the day ended after 63 moves.

“In the Women’s section, Koneru Humpy scored a victory over compatriot R Vaishali out of a Queen pawn game to jump to 3.5 points.

“The course of the event changed a bit in this section as Tingjie Lei of China accounted for her Chinese team-mate Zhongyi Tan to through the event open.

Zhonyi’s domination was halted as Aleksandra Goryachkina of

Russia and Lei joined her in the lead on five points out of a possible eight.

“Russian Kateryna Lagno is within striking distance of the three leaders on 4.5 points with Humpy and Nurgyl Salimova sharing the fifth spot on 3.5 points each.

“Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine stands seventh on three points, while Vaishali is on the last spot remaining on 2.5 points.

“Vaishali might have drawn but needed high level of accuracy in an exchange down endgame against Humpy.

Known for her technical prowess, Humpy cashed-in on her chances and her pair of rooks eventually proved superior to Vaishali’s Bishop and Rook.

“The ninth round will see an all important clash from the Indian perspective as Gukesh meets Pragnanandhaa in the men’s section, while Gujrathi has to face the in-form Nakamura.



Shiva Turlapati

'Geethanjali Malli Vachindi' has another twist, which will be explored in Part 3'

PNS | HYDERABAD

Actress Anjali's landmark 50th film *Geethanjali Malli Vachindi* hit theatres on April 11. Directed by Shiva Turlapati and produced by Kona Venkat in association with MVV Cinemas, this big-budget horror comedy film is receiving a fairly good response from the audience.

The director of the film, in an interaction with the media, revealed some more interesting details about the film, its next part, and more.

Clearing the air about the third part of the film, he shared, "I read many reviews in which some people wrote that many things were left unanswered in the movie. However, if all those logics are answered, it will be three hours long, like *Animal*. That's not what I want. It is an out-and-out family movie. We didn't think of doing a *Conjuring*-type horror film. We made it an entertaining film. All doubts will be clarified in the third part. I have discussed all these matters with Kona, as a good idea for Part 3 came at the last moment of making Part 2. So, we had a discussion about it, and we will soon reveal those details."

He continued,

"In Part 2, we gave a lead to Part 3. Rao Ramesh captures the soul in the form of a girl. There is another twist in this, which will be explored in Part 3."

The director had a small cameo to play in the film, and he shared that it all happened suddenly as they were shooting in Ooty and they couldn't find a suitable guy. "We couldn't afford retakes at that point in time because of the shooting schedule, so I decided I would only do it as we were not finding the right person. I was recognised in the movie, and I am happy about it."

So far, the director feels he learned a lot from this film, and he is assured to do better in the next film. Shiva, who always dreamt of directing, shared, "Being in the industry for over 20 years, I always dreamt of directing. That's why I told Kona some scripts. He is busy with back-to-back movies, and I couldn't interrupt his work then. However, I did not expect that my debut as a director would happen with this film. They felt this movie was the right one for my launch as a director."

For those unaware of Shiva, he has been a choreographer in the South film industry and has choreographed some good songs in the industry, which not many are aware of. He did *Brahmastra* and *Shankarabharanam*, among many others, and he is a choreographer who likes to tell a story in every song, which is what I liked a lot about him. From learning dance by watching Chiranjeevi's movies to becoming a choreographer, his journey was not all that rosy. However, he took the rough path

and became successful, and that's what matters. He even went to America, but his passion brought him back to his home place, and he now also runs a dance school in Hyderabad, which has about 500-600 students learning dance.

Furthermore, Shiva shared that he has

many stories and is looking to make a sentimental and emotional genre film, as he feels any movie without emotion will not work.

Lastly, "People who have watched *Geethanjali Malli Vachindi* are sending me messages. Because of the weekend, everyone in the US is now watching the movie, and I am getting a good response from there. Sunil and Satya's comedy explodes in the second half. Climax is appreciated by some as extraordinary," he shared in conclusion.

Director Shiva Turlapati, who has been currently receiving good responses for the recently released *Geethanjali Malli Vachindi*, in interaction with the media revealed some interesting deets about the film, next part, and more.



Vijay Antony's Love Guru team offers family trip to audience

Vijay Antony's *Love Guru* is not only achieving good box office collections but also offering an exciting opportunity to the audience. The movie's team announced a special offer where lucky winners from the audience will be treated to a summer holiday tour with their families. The first prize winner will enjoy a trip to Malaysia, the second prize winner to Kashmir, and the third prize winner to Ooty. This offer is now available, and audience members who watch *Love Guru* can participate by submitting their name, phone number, and ticket details in boxes placed near the theaters. Those who purchased tickets online can also participate by sending a photo of their ticket via WhatsApp to 9963466334. The *Love Guru* team will select three lucky winners and send them on a summer holiday vacation. *Love Guru* was released on April 11 and distributed in Telugu by Mythri Movie Distributors. Starring Mrinalini Ravi as the heroine, the film was produced by Vijay Antony under the banner of Vijay Antony Film Corporation and Meera Vijay Antony. Directed by Vinayak Vaidyanathan, the movie continues its successful theatrical run.

Baak releasing on April 26

Aranmanai 4, the fourth film from the highly successful horror comedy series *Aranmanai*, is coming in Telugu as *BAAK*. Directed by Sundar C who also played one of the lead roles, the movie has Tamannaah Bhatia and Raashi Khanna playing female leads. The makers recently started promotional activities by unveiling the first-look posters of all the lead characters. The makers released the promo song called *Panchuko* on Sunday. Hip-hop Tamizha scored a foot-tapping number that has some lively beats. While Sahithi penned funny lyrics, Raghuvaran's husky voice brings extra enchantment. But it's Tamannaah and Raashi Khanna's glamour that prettified the song. Their graceful moves, particularly hip movements, are a treat to watch. Both heroines wore trendy outfits and oozed enough oomph in the song. The promo song also showed some creepy scenes from the movie. Vennila Kishore, Srinivasulu, Delhi Ganesh, and Kovai Sarala will be seen in crucial roles in the movie produced by Khushbu Sundar and ACS Arun Kumar under Avni Cinemax P Ltd. Asian Suresh Entertainment LLP will be releasing the movie in Telugu states. They have also announced that the film will be released on April 26. On the technical front, the cinematography is handled by E. Krishnamurthy, while editing is overseen by Fenny Oliver. Gururaj managed the art direction.

Gautam Krishna's birthday gala

Bigg Boss 7 fame Gautam Krishna is making his debut as a lead actor with the film *Solo Boy*. Produced by Seven Hills Satish Kumar and directed by P Naveen Kumar, the first look poster for this movie was released recently, and it got a good response from the audience.

As the actor celebrated his birthday on Sunday, the makers of the film organised a grand birthday gala where the entire movie cast and crew, along with their families and others, were present.

Speaking at the celebrations, Gautam Krishna said, "I am very happy that the movie team is doing this event on my birthday. Our producer approved the story in a single sitting. All this team also worked on the film with love. Even in terms of budget, we are bringing good content without compromising anywhere."

The actor also thanked Anita Chaudhary and Posani Krishna Murali for accepting to act in this movie, "I would like to express my special thanks to all those who have supported me since my first film and *Bigg Boss* journey until now. Very soon we will come to you with a teaser, trailer, and songs," he added.

Indian 2 shooting wrapped up



Universal Star Kamal Haasan is celebrated for his multifaceted and impactful performances, while esteemed director Shankar is renowned for his grandiose and visually stunning commercial spectacles infused with profound societal messages. Together, they form a formidable duo known for delivering compelling entertainment, and their much-anticipated collaboration, *Bharateeyudu 2 (Indian 2)*, has sent excitement levels soaring.

This film is a sequel to the blockbuster *Bharateeyudu*, where Haasan's Senapathy waged a lone battle against corruption, *Bharateeyudu 2* promises to further captivate audiences with its gripping narrative.

It was made official on Sunday that Shankar has wrapped up principal photography, with the focus now shifting to the intensive post-production phase. The film's team aims to unveil a power-packed trailer by the end of May, setting the stage for a breathtaking global release in June.

Kamal Haasan's Senapathy persona has sparked imaginations, while the tagline "Zero Tolerance" only amplifies anticipation for what's in store. Joining the ensemble cast are the talented actresses Kajal Agarwal, Rakul Preet Singh, and Priya Bhavani Shankar, each adding depth to the narrative. The film also features a stellar lineup of supporting actors, including SJ Suryah, Siddharth, and Gulshan Grover, among others, all contributing to the film's ensemble brilliance.

With Anirudh Ravichander's musical prowess, Ravi Varman's captivating cinematography, and Sreekar Prasad's deft editing, *Indian 2* promises a cinematic experience like no other. Shankar's collaboration with esteemed writers such as B. Jayamohan, Kabilan Vairamuthu, and Lakshmi Saravana Kumar ensures a screenplay that resonates with both heart and intellect.

Indian 2, the original Tamil version, is releasing as *Bharateeyudu 2* in Telugu and *Hindustani 2* in Hindi across the world.



Shruti Haasan likely to play key role in *Thalaivar 171*

Rajinikanth starrer *Thalaivar 171* is one of the most eagerly-awaited films of the actor. Rajinikanth, the legendary actor known as Thalaivar, is set to embark on his 171st cinematic journey, sending waves of excitement throughout the nation. The anticipation reached its peak when whispers emerged about the inclusion of the talented actress Shruti Haasan in this monumental project.

Director Lokesh, renowned for his visionary storytelling, is helming this film. The chemistry between him and Shruti Haasan had already been witnessed in the mesmerising song *Inimel*. Their collaboration was set to transcend boundaries as they delved into the depths of cinematic brilliance alongside the legendary Thalaivar.

If sources are to be believed, Shruti Haasan has been roped in to play a key role in this movie alongside Rajinikanth in this epic tale.

Moreover, sources also say that the title and promo of *Thalaivar171* will be unveiled on April 22.



STAND ALONE

In the heart of Hyderabad, amidst the hustle and bustle of the Tollywood film industry, there was a sense of excitement in the air. The Telugu Film Directors Association (TFDA) was gearing up for a momentous occasion—the "Telugu Film Directors Day" event scheduled to take place at the iconic LB Stadium on May 4.

As preparations for the grand event were underway, members of TFDA decided to pay a special visit to none other than the Padma Vibhushan Magister himself, Chiranjeevi, on the sets of his latest venture, *Viswanathara*.

Amidst the bustling film set, adorned with elaborate sets and bustling crew members, the TFDA members had the privilege of meeting the legendary actor. Chiranjeevi greeted them with warmth and humility, his aura radiating with the charm and charisma that had endeared him to millions over the decades.

The TFDA members extended a heartfelt invitation to Chiranjeevi to grace the "Telugu Film Directors Day" event as the guest of honour, and the actor graciously accepted their invitation, promising to attend the event and extend his support to the esteemed directors of Tollywood.