QUOTE OF THE DAY

The pioneer

- Dharmapuri Arvind. BJP's Nizamabad LS candidate

Published From: VIJAYAWADA HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN from jail?

World sure of Modi's win:

Rajnath

EC focused on narratives being...

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...

'Will to achieve goals more...

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.

Demand for private jets, choppers...

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 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 engine helicopter, they said. While the demand has surged compared to the normal...

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We need exceptional...

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.



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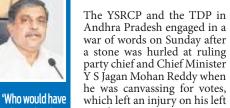
'Geethanjali Malli Vachindi has another twist, which will be explored

STONE ATTACK ON JAGAN

Political slugfest on in AP

A pre-planned and cold-blooded act downplayed by the Oppn: Sajjala

PNS VIJAYAWADA



planned such an temple. The Chief Minister was hit attempt? It stems by a stone on the left side of his from the insecurity head in Vijayawada on that the TDP is Saturday night while canvassing. The stone was allegedly experiencing. hurled by some unknown per--SAJJALA sons at high speed, leading to

'I strongly condemn the attack on Jagan.

I request the ECI to

initiate an impartial

and unbiased inquiry

into the incident.

'I believe it was

accidental. However,

everybody should

condemn it.

a small cut. YSRCP general secretary S Ramakrishna Reddy claimed that the attack was a pre-meditated cold-blooded attack on the CM. "Who would have planned such an attempt? It stems from the insecurity that the TDP is experiencing as they are witnessing the response our leader is getting through the poll campaign, through the roadshows and 'Siddham sab-

has' (meetings)," he said,

addressing a press conference. Ramakrishna Reddy alleged that TDP supremo Chandrababu Ñaidu had

recently instigated the crowd in sensitive. Further, he claimed that he (Naidu) engages in his 'prajagalam' (canvassing) meetings to attack Jagan Reddy, and claimed that Naidu and his YSRCP chief could not mingle

with the masses. "This leads us to presume that the TDP and their leader (Naidu) are responsible for the attack," he said, adding that the injury is a fact and location

that the opposition party is trying to downplay the incident due to the "fear of exposure" party would benefit if the and also resorting to making inhumane comments.

Meanwhile, YSRCP Nellore Vijayasai Reddy alleged that tics believing in development". CM.

"It has been proven again

cowardly politics, believing in violence and conspiracies," said Vijayasai Reddy in a post on social media platform X.

Ruling party leaders, ministers and others castigated Naidu and the TDP, claiming that the opposition party was

Continued on Page 2

Naidu, PK too 'stoned'

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM/TENALI

As tensions rose following the alleged attack on Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy with stones, resulting in an injury to him and MLA Vallampalli Srinivas on Saturday night, similar incidents unfolded during election gatherings of TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu and JSP chief K Pawan Kalyan in Visakhapatnam and Tenali respectively on Sunday.

Reports suggest that during N Chandrababu Naidu's address at the 'Prajagalam' election meeting in Gajuwaka, a stone was allegedly thrown from behind. However, Naidu remained unharmed as the stone failed to reach him. Alert security personnel swiftly responded, providing additional protection to Naidu.

Similarly, in Tenali, during an election meeting addressed by Pawan Kalyan, a stone was report-

edly hurled towards him. Although the stone fell some distance away from Pawan Kalyan, JSP activists apprehended the person responsible and handed him over to the

Undeterred by the incidents, Naidu continued his speech, recalling past instances where he faced danger, such as claymore mine blasts on his way to Tirumala.



Lok Sabha candidate V Naidu "never engaged in poli- involved in the attack on the

4 to 5 suspects apprehended

The city police in Andhra Pradesh have rounded up four to five suspects in the stone pelting case against Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy and will be investigating the offence from the angle of an 'attempt to murder' case, said an official on Sunday. Unidentified miscreants hurled a

stone at the Chief Minister on Saturday night near Vivekananda School Centre in Vijayawada's Singh Nagar, which injured his left temple when he was canvassing for polls. The stone was hurled at a high speed, leading to a small cut. Vijayawada police commissioner Kanthi Ratan Tata said a case has been booked under IPC Section 307 (attempt to



We have identified some suspects. We are interrogating them and that process is going on now—four to five suspects. A case has been registered under IPC Section 307, Tata said

Further, he highlighted that a Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been formed with six officers and four policemen, who are scrutinising video footage and technical data to identify the stone

pelters. According to Tata, a stone which could fit in a palm was hurled at the CM, which first hit him and then struck former minister and YSRCP leader V Srinivas, who stood beside him. The police commissioner said all the suspects are locals and exuded confidence that the real culprits could be identified in a few days





Sharmila promises SCS for AP if Cong voted to power

PNS CHITTOOR

President of the Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC), YS Sharmila, reiterated the commitment to grant Special Category Status (SCS) to Andhra Pradesh for 10 years if the Congress party is elected to power. She emphasized the potential of SCS in fostering significant industrial development and generating substantial employment opportunities for the region.

Speaking at an election rally in the Nagari constituency on Sunday, Sharmila criticized both Jagan Mohan Reddy and Chandrababu Naidu for their perceived alignment with the BJP. Despite the BJP not securing a single seat in Andhra Pradesh, Sharmila slammed the TDP and YSRCP for maintaining close ties with the BJP, questioning their motivations for cosying up to the Modi-led government.

Sharmila urged voters to refrain from supporting the YSRCP or the TDP, arguing that voting for these parties essentially amounted to indirectly supporting the BJP. She encouraged voters to accept financial incentives from other parties if offered but to ultimately cast their vote in favour of the Congress.

In a scathing critique of Nagari MLA and Tourism Minister RK Roja, Sharmila accused Roja and her family of undue interference in various affairs. She highlighted issues such as unchecked exploitation of natural resources by the sand and gravel mafia and alleged encroachment on government lands within the constituency. Sharmila urged voters not to be swayed by monetary inducements from Roja's camp, portraying such funds as illgotten gains from unethical prac-

Continued on Page 2

TDP conspiracy BJP manifesto shuns populism behind attack

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy has blamed the Telugu Desam Party for the stone attack on Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, alleging that the opposition rising popularity in the state.

Addressing the media on Sunday, the minister claimed that Nara Lokesh's comments on X (formerly Twitter), alleging "2019 Kodi Kathi and 2024 attack with stone," clearly indicated the TDP's involvement in the attack on the CM during his Memantha Siddham bus yatra in Singh Nagar on Saturday evening.

It may be recalled here that Janapalli Srinivas, alias Kodi Kathi Srinu, had attacked the then YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy at the Visakhapatnam airport when he was the Leader of the Opposition.

a pitch for electing a strong and sta-ble government in an uncertain world beset by geopolitical tensions as the BJP on Sunday released its manifesto, prioritising development and welfare while shunning populist measures and contentious issues like the NRC. Named "Modi ki Guarantee",

manifesto largely builds on the government's existing welfare schemes targeted at different sections of society, while reiterating the BJP's commitment to roll out one-nation-oneelection and Uniform Civil Code, two issues mentioned in its 2019 manifesto too. The government has taken some concrete steps for their implementa-

The BJP promised to include all senior citizens above the age of 70 years in the 'Ayushman Bharat' scheme, which provides health insurance of up to Rs 5 lakh.

It also spoke of considering bullet trains in north, south and east India and expanding "new age" trains like

Prime Minister Narendra Modi made Focuses on development, welfare



Vande Bharat, Amrit Bharat and Namo Bharat.

Promising to strengthen the sports ecosystem to make India a world leader in sports, the BJP manifesto -Sankalp Patra - said its government will facilitate the Indian Olympic Association to bid for hosting the Olympic Games in 2036. The party also promised to continue efforts to remove the Armed Forces (Special

Powers) Act (AFSPA) in a phased manner in the northeast states and leverage the region as a strategic gateway for the "Act East" policy.

It underscored the commitment to defending India's citizens and interests at "home and abroad from all threats of terrorism" as it cited surgical and air strikes during the first term of the Modi government to highlight its zero-tolerance.

Heatwave to intensify in AP from today

PNS VIJAYAWADA

intensify across Andhra Pradesh from April 15 to 18, with temperatures soaring across North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema, as reported by the Meteorological

Centre on Sunday.

UNPRECEDENTED REVENGE ATTACK

The forecast indicates hot, humid, Heatwave conditions are expected to and uncomfortable weather prevailing at isolated locations within these regions over the next 24 hours.

There's a possibility of light rain occurring at a few places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh from April 17 to 20, with similar conditions

expected in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh on April 19 and 20, and in Rayalaseema from April 17 to April 20. Dry weather is anticipated in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next five days, in Rayalaseema for the next three days, and in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh on April 15

In the past 24 hours, rainfall was recorded at a few places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh, while Rayalaseema experienced dry conditions. Anantapur and Nandyal in Rayalaseema recorded the highest maximum temperature of 40.4 degree Celsius on Saturday, according to the

Threat to regional

peace: India

NEW DELHI: Hours after Iran

launched dozens of drones and

CM pays tributes to Ambedkar

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Honouring the legacy of Dr B.R. Ambedkar on his 134th birth Dr Ambedkar's tireless dedication anniversary, Chief Minister YS towards uplifting the marginalised. Jagan Mohan Reddy paid

ic figure. In a statement shared on X (formerly Twitter), CM Jagan underscored Dr Ambedkar's profound emphasis on the transformative power of education in combating

social injustices.

his respects to the icon-

Reflecting on Dr. Ambedkar's pivotal role in championing education to combat societal discrimination, CM Jagan remarked, "Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar exemplified visionary leadership, utilizing education as a potent tool to disman-Our government's initiative to erect legacy.

a 206-foot Statue of Social Justice in Vijayawada is not only a state endeavour but a national tribute to Today, we pay homage to

this great soul on his birth anniversary." As the nation commemorated the 134th birth anniversary of Dr B.R. Ambedkar on April

14, Sunday, the ruling YSR Congress Party honoured the principal architect of the Indian Constitution. In a video message, the party reiterated its commitment to realizing

Dr. Ambedkar's vision. Recently, Chief Minister Jagan unveiled the 'Statue of Social Justice,' standing tall at Swaraj Maidan in Vijayawada, a monumental tribute tle the scourge of untouchability. to Dr B.R. Ambedkar's enduring

Iran fires drones and ballistic missiles at Israel

Iran launched dozens of drones and ballistic missiles toward Israel late Saturday in an unprecedented revenge mission that pushed the Middle East ever closer to a regionwide war.

The attack marked the first time Iran had ever launched a direct military assault on Israel, despite decades of enmity dating back to the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Israel's military said over 100 drones had been fired but that its air defenses were prepared for the attack and it was ready to respond. It didn't mention ballistic missiles, which are less easily shot down, but Iran said they were part of the attack. The U.S., with its large troop presence in the region, said it would provide unspecified support to Israel.

spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari

announced in a nationwide television address, saying it would take several hours for the drones to reach Israel. The Israeli military said it could not confirm if it had intercepted any drones or what their targets were.

Iran had vowed revenge since an April 1 airstrike in Syria killed two "We are monitoring the threat," the Iranian generals inside an Iranian con-

Israeli military's sular building. Iran accused Israel of

Israel and Iran have been on a col-

lision course throughout Israel's sixmonth war against Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip. The war erupted after Hamas and

Islamic Jihad, two militant groups backed by Iran, carried out a devastating cross-border attack on Oct. 7 that killed 1,200 people in Israel and kidnapped 250 others. An Israeli offensive in Gaza has caused widespread devastation and killed over 33,000 people, according to local being behind the attack. Israel hasn't health officials.

missiles at Israel in a retaliatory attack, India on Sunday said it is concerned over escalating hostilities between the two sides that threaten regional peace and security. Iran carried out the attack on Israel in response to a suspected Israeli strike on its consulate in Damascus on April 1 in which seven Iranian Revolutionary Guards personnel, including two generals, were killed. In its reaction, India called for immediate de-escalation of the situation and return to the path of diplomacy. New Delhi said its embassies in the region are in close touch with the Indian community in the region.

US & UN CONDEMN IRAN'S ATTACK

WASHINGTON: The US, Canada and the UN have condemned the Iranian air attack on Israel, with President Joe Biden reaffirming America's "ironclad commitment" to the Jewish nation and vowing to convene a meeting of the G- 7 leaders on Sunday to develop a coordinated response to the brazen assault. Israel said it and its allies have intercepted the vast majority of more than 200 drones and missiles launched by



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 is engrossed at her work 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 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 bureaue just plugged into the righ

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

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 locurity larged designs and the Security 1800 CP! 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. 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

-- Yours truly

Naidu, PK too 'stoned'...

Continued from Page 1

TODAY

He condemned the stone-throwing incident against Chief Minister Jagan Reddy and ques-

tioned the actions of the intelligence police. In Tenali, Pawan Kalyan predicted Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy's downfall, urging peo-

ple 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 challeng-

ing 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.

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: Apr 15 01:34 AM to Apr 16 03:05 AM Pushva: 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 11:49 AM to 01:33 PM Varjyam: 1:49 PM to 3:22 PM 12:32 AM to 02:14 AM Abhiiit Muhurtham: 11:51 AM to 12:40 PM VIJAYAWADA WEATHER Forecast: Mostly Sunny **Temp:** 41° Humidity: 50% Sunrise: 5:52 AM

Updated: April 14, 2024 5:00 PM

Sunset: 6:23 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.

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. t 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.





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 ground at the expense of Congress. Incidents, such as Lagadapati Rajagopal's unconventional tactics during the antibifurcation 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

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 upcomtions 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, Kottalosingi, Patalosingi, and Arla undertook a remarkable journey of 15 km during the 2019 Sarabhavaram panchayat polling centre. However, following the

elections to reach the Gurrala Gadabapalem 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 Pangi 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 direc-

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 panchavat.

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







3-corner fight in Tekkali

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

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, 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

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 padayatras, 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 vatra in the region a grand success, he

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 Iraqlaunched 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 Íslamic 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 capacity 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.

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ATTACK ON CM

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

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 tion 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, narrow-ly 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 criticized Chandrababu's remarks about taking action against officials as

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 fore-telling the attack. He also speculated about MLA Vellampally Srinivas being collateral damage from the same stone, adding to the suspicion.

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

Congress condemns attack

with certain police officials, of being complicit in the planned attack, Ramaiah criticized the lack of prompt security mea-sures 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

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, 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 Nadu in Chittoor district and the attack on the TDP party office at Mangalagiri.

6 teams on hunt for perpetrators

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

Deputy Led Commissioner of Police (DCP) S Harikrishna, 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 guid-ance 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

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 tight-lipped about these developments. Although

three individuals are suspectto 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.



Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) vice-pres-ident Kolanukonda Sivaji has condemned the stone-pelting incident in which Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy suffered a minor injury Reddy suffered a minor injury,

and at the same time, the Congress leader expressed doubts about the incident. Talking to the media here on

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Sunday, Shivaji said that such violent incidents are detrimental to democracy. All democrats should condemn the incident. The right to vote should be used as a weapon to teach a lesson but violent incidents should not be carried out in a democratic nation, Shivaji stated.

Significantly, the APCC vicepresident raised doubts about the stone pelting incidents and recalled that people of the state still remembered what happened to the case of attack on Jagan Mohan Reddy with a knife in Visakhapatnam airport when he was the Leader of the



Opposition in the Legislative Assembly about six years ago.

"I demand the ECI to transfer the DGP, Intelligence Chief and Commissioner of police of Vijayawada for their failure in providing adequate protection to the Chief Minister. I demand the ECI to order a comprehensive investigation by either the CBI or NIA on the incident. The offenders must be punished in the incident and the facts should come out," the Congress senior leader said.

The APCC Vice-president said that APCC president YS Sharmila, who is the younger sister of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, has been on an election campaign for the last few days and she is getting overwhelming support from the people in Chief Minister Jagan Reddy's constituency Pulivendula. She is contesting LS from the Kadapa constituency and raising the murder of her paternal uncle YS Vivekananda Reddy.

In this context, the hurling stone of Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy and suffering minor injuries are giving way to several doubts. "People doubt whether the stone-throwing incident and Jagan Reddy's injury were preplanned.

The power failure and snapping of internet wires in the area were also giving way to doubts. The Chief Minister will always be amid heavy security and the Congress leader wondered how a small stone caused injury to the Chief Minister and a former Minister. The YSRCP leaders within minutes came before the media explained about the incident which is also raising

Ayodhya Ram temple trust gets TTD report on crowd management

PNS TIRUPATI

A team of engineers from Tirumala 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. Á 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.



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

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

to answer poll-related queries Developed by Kadapa district police

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) Siddarth 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 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,"

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.

Kadapa police develop Al tool

Explaining how the tool works, the SP observed that the desktop and mobile-friendly Election (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 are scattered in various sources. 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 cir-

cumstances can an investiga-

tion officer search a place with-

out a warrant', and others. Not just restricted to election matters, Election Mitra is also

equipped to help police officers with readily available information on all major criminal laws such as the IPC, CrPC, Indian Evidence Act and others.

It also offers immediate information on local and special laws such as the SC/ST Atrocity Act, Representation of People Act, Excise Act and others, including guidebooks and manuals for scientific investigation, police administration and

According to Kaushal, the AI tool makes it easy to refer to the vast body of data anytime and

"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

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.

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 regularly 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

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 deliver-

ing pensions on 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-

ers motivated them to resign. "Local YSRCP leaders EC move restricted motivated us to resign but did not compel the volunteers from us. They also disbursing the monthly welfare shared the resignation format.

resigned, said.

turnaround, noted

Naidu, taking a

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. the volunteers and promised to double their honorarium from Rs 5,000

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 Most of the volthe volunteers and their subsequent prohiunteers have bition from executing welfare duties compelled Naidu to write multiple letters to the resigned," a EC, the chief secretary and the Chief volunteer Electoral Officer (CEO) to make alternative from the West arrangements for the disbursal of pension. Godavari district, who recently

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 conspira-

that he is not against He claimed that the chief executive of the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP), a wing of the rural development per month on forming the governdepartment, had issued orders calling the

pensioners to government offices to collect their pensions.

According to the TDP supremo, this move is a conspiracy to convey a message to the public that TDP is responsible for obtaining the orders for non-distribution of pensions at the doorsteps and causing delays. Though the volunteers have been sidelined by the EC, Naidu contended that 1.26 lakh-strong government employees in the ward and village secretariats as an ample workforce which can easily distribute pen-

sions in two days.

Meanwhile, Reddy vowed that 'reviving' the volunteer system would be his first step after being re-elected, even though it is amply clear that the system was not scrapped but only restrained from carrying out election and welfare duties.

Elections for the 175-member Assembly and 25 Lok Sabha seats in Andhra Pradesh are scheduled on May 13 and the counting of votes is slated for June 4.



Are there no detention centers in India?

Rules under Citizenship Amendment (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 conthe gazette, is about the concept of "NRIC 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 Prakash the National Population Register was only for the purpose of the Census and that

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

it had nothing to do with the

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 cen-

The truth: The Home Ministry told the Rajya Sabha in November 2019: İn 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 deporta-

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

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 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 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.

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 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

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 Interectingly say whether he is contesting for the Assembly or Lok

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 cy 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 completfor Chintalapudi, varam, Nuzvid, Eluru,

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

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 preplanned that reflects Chandrababu's crude political

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

ÝSRCP 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 strong-

ly condemned the attack on Jagan and termed it as a cow-

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 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 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 evebrows 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

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM



Amarnath leads campaign in

Gajuwaka as women lend support

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

the electoral battle gains

Pedagantyada fire station,

Amarnath symbolically reaf-

firmed his commitment to jus-

Paying homage at the

statue

momentum.

Ambedkar

contemplating further increases, politicians are wary of the timing's political ramifica-tions. 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

tice 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-

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.

amplified the clarion call for

progress and prosperity in

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 wel-

fare schemes, particularly on the

lives of women across the State,

while vowing to uphold the lega-

cy of service and development.

Amarnath's promise to usher in

a new era of progress for the

constituency resonated deeply

with the enthusiastic crowd.

Gajuwaka.

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.

Denduluru and Kaikaluru

After nominations are scru-

Assembly constituencies.

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 farm-

ers 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 rul-

Revanth also preparing to rule the state from jail," Arvind 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.

ing the state from jail. Is

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

Čhandrashekar Rao and former Minister KT Rama Rao if they are involved in phone tap-

ping?" 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 govern-

ment 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.

Girl stabs to death neighbour over water

he 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

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-

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 essentia

affected Jaiarkot and West Rukum



Indian prisoner Sarabjit Singh's killer shot dead in Pakistan

mir 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 Afounder 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



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

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: + 9 8 9 1 2 8 1 0 9 1 1 5 ; + 9 8 9 1 2 8 1 0 9 1 0 9 ; + 9 8 9 9 3 2 1 7 9 5 6 7 ; +989932179359; +98-21-8 8 7 5 5 1 0 3 - 5 ; cons.tehran@mea.gov.in," the Indian Embassy at Tehran post-

ed on its official X handle. Earlier on Friday, April 12, the

the country's freedom but now

Modi asks what the party has

done in the past 70 years, he

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

"The RSS did nothing during

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 +989128109115) for any assis-

tance. It also asked all İndians residing in Iran to register themselves and gave a URL to use for 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 deescalation, 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

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

People view these times vith a degree of consternation, but not so in the ase of India. The entire orld believes PM Modi vill be back for a third consecutive term in office Modi is already being nvited to functions abroa which are scheduled in October this year or even next year. This is rare dur ng 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

PNS ■ MEERUT (UP)

Akhilesh: Can country where

80 crore people survive on free

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'

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

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 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 during UPA rule, Kharge said.

Kharge alleged.

"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 "not fulfilled" by the saffron party in the last

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 Ramayan festivals the world

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 BJP in the last 10 years... In 2014 as well, Modiji'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

communities and making reser-

vations in promotion redun-

dant. "In the last few years, with

the BJP in power at the Centre

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

every month.

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

The Samajwadi Party (SP) leader was making a veiled ref-

erence to the Pradhan Mantri

Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana,

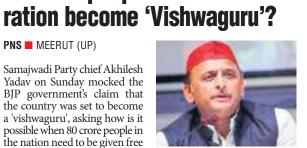
under which 80 crore people in

the country are given free rations

'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 Kalvan Anna Yojana. under which 80 crore people in the country are given free rations

every month.

"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

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 Privanka 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 Ialore 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 some-

thing 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 gather-

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

"Most of the BJP's time was pent on making wealthy busi
recruiting people for vacant posts reserved for backward 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

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

and in most states, the progress of Muslims has stopped to a great extent. Violence in the name of bond data," she 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-



ied 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

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.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Promises to keep

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

he 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 Shrinate 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.



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

Unravelling the Roy family's legacy



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

ith the campaign for the 2024 Lok heating, mudslinging isn't left behind, although one wishes this weren't so. The Trinamool Congress has abused Smt. Amrita Roy, the BJP's KrishnanagarLok 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 RaiDurlabh, picked by his grandfather Nawab Alivardi Nawabhumiliated 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 HumayunMirza, son of Iskandar Mirza). The merchant inces 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



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 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 Sirajud-Daula and his life.

At the time we are 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-DAULA, 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 Paramhansa 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 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

E EDITO

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 Índia 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-Siraj-ud-Daula had continued i-n-i-m-a-l", with emphasis on each letter and a contemptu ous 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)

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

very 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 prin-



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 CJI 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, cipal tool of activism in the etc. He also added that the

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 vears 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 politi-

co 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-

Supreme Court is final not tional morality over majoribecause they(judges) are tarian 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 socioreligious 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) **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 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 north-

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 persever-

The journey from prophecy to reality, spantowards fostering cultural understanding continues to echo through history, with its

Fix accountability bothers? Administration wakes up from the slum-



propos 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

and global harmony. Prime Minister Modi's pivotal role, alongside the visionary leadership of HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan, underscores the sigalmost all the incumbent state nificance of diplomatic collaborations in shaping monumental endeavours.

Beyond its aesthetic allure, the temple stands as a symbol of inclusivity, with its design echoing the ethos of unity amidst diversity. The meticulous craftsmanship and innovative solutions employed in its construction exemplify human ingenuity overcoming geographical and climatic challenges. In essence, the Swaminarayan Temple in Abu Dhabi is not merely a place of worship; it's a testament to the transformative power of collaboration, bridging nations and cultures in a shared pursuit of

peace and progress. Ishana Arya | Thane

REFLECTIONS ON JALLIANWALA BAGH

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Honouring the martyrs of Jallianwala ning nearly three decades, mirrors the Bagh", published on April 12, this is my shared commitment of India and the UAE response. The tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh

ber 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

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

desired strength to overcome the loss.

105th anniversary drawing sombre reflections on the atrocity committed on April

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

FIRST COLUMN

SPIRITUAL SOLUTION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Limiting procreation is perhaps the most significant step towards sustainability



ACHARYA PRASHANT

oday the world that we live in, people are-trying to do small, small good things, so that we can conveniently escape away from the If 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 bodyidentification. 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)

Income inequalities hamper sustainable growth-



While the nation's GDP is poised to surge by 7.6 per cent in the current financial year, concerns loom large over the sluggish pace of private consumption



uring the current financial year, the Indian economy is expected to register a growth of 7.6 per cent in real gross domestic product or GDP. Coming on top of growth of 9.1 per cent during 2021-22 and 7.2 per cent during 2022-23, India's performance is spectacular. Emboldened by this trend and Modi's commitment to pursue economic reforms with greater vigour during its third term, analysts are hoping for growth of above 7 per cent on a sustainable basis. But, there

Private consumption which accounts for as much as 55 per cent of the Indian economy has acted as a major drag. For instance, during FY 2023-24, it is expected to grow by a meagre 3 per cent (even lower than 4.4 per cent as given in the first advance estimate). This is the slowest growth in private consumption since FY 2002-03 when growth was 2.9 per cent. It is impossible to sustain an overall GDP growth of 7-8 per cent in the years to come if the most important component (read: private consumption) is growing at less

than half this rate. What is private consumption?

Apart from essential consumption items such as food, shelter, clothing, education, health etc, it includes spending by people on a host of discretionary items such as consumer durables viz. ACs, refrigerators, washing machines, TVs, automobiles, mobiles and so on. The demand for these goods depends on the 'purchasing power' of the people at large which requires that at least all working-age persons (18 years to 60 years) have adequate incomes. This brings us to another stark reality namely the distribution of income and wealth.

Where does India stand? According to a report 'Time to Care' by Oxfam that came ahead of the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) held in January 2020 'India's richest one per cent hold more than four times the wealth held by 953 million people who make up for the bottom 70 per cent of the population". It also showed that there were a total of 63 Indian billionaires (billionaire is a term used to describe a person having wealth over US\$ one billion) and their combined total wealth was higher than



PRIVATE CONSUMPTION. WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR AS MUCH AS THE INDIAN: ECONOMY, HAS ACTED AS A

> MAJOR DRAG. FOR INSTANCE, DURING FY 2023-24, IT IS EXPECTED TO GROW BY A MEAGRE

> > 3 PER CENT

India's Union Budget for the FY

Another Oxfam report, "Inequality Kills", released ahead of the WEF meeting held in early 2022, mentioned that the number of Indian billionaires grew to 102 by March 2020 and further to 142 in November 2021. During this period, their wealth increased from Rs 2300,000 crore to Rs 5300,000 crore. At the same time, the income of 84 per cent of households declined and the share of the bot-tom half of the population in national wealth was a mere six per

Meanwhile, a report titled 'Survival of the Richest' released by Oxfam International at the 2023 annual meeting of the WEF in Davos, Switzerland, says that 'the wealthiest one per cent of individuals in India possess over 40 per cent of the nation's total wealth. Juxtapose 55 PER CENT OF this with the bottom half of the population getting a mere six per cent of the nation's wealth, we end up with glaring inequalities.

How does it impact demand? Let us look at India's population of around 140 crore and nominal GDP of about Rs 300,00,000 crore. Apply Oxfam percentages to these

The wealthiest one per cent or 1.4 crore individuals have 40 per cent of GDP or Rs 120,00,000 crore whereas a vast 50 per cent of the population or 70 crore individuals have a mere 6 per cent of GDP or Rs 18,00,000 crore. On per per-person basis, those in the wealthiest category have annual purchasing power (PP) of Rs 85 lakh each whereas others in the bottom 50 per cent have a PP of a mere Rs 25,000 each.

Such an income distribution pattern is far from conducive to boosting demand on a sustainable basis. There are inherent limits to how much a wealthy person can buy. On the other hand, if a good portion of the money with him is

distributed among those who are not so blessed (read: the bottom 50 per cent), this would give a big boost to private consumption. We hear loud voices from various quarters including from indus-tries and businesses asking the Government to formulate policies,

reduce taxes even give direct income support. But, there isn't even a whisper of 'why inequalities in income arise in the first place. An analysis of the financials of India's largest companies—those comprising the BSE 500 index gives us some clues.

The profits of corporations included in this index went up from Rs 480,000 crore during FY 2017-18 to more than Rs 1000,000 crore during FY 2021-22 - an increase of over 100 per cent, whereas their revenue growth was only 47 per cent during this period. This means that payments to factors of production other than the owners of capital (read: shareholders) such employees/workers, purchase of inputs, interest payments, etc., have been kept under a tight leash, resulting in a disproportionate boost to profits.

The aggregate dividend paid by these firms increased from Rs 176,000 crore during FY 2017-18 to Rs 302,000 crore during FY 2021-22, which is an increase of 72 per cent. In each of the last five years, they paid at least 30 per cent of aggregate net profit as dividends. Cumulatively, the companies distributed 34 per cent of profits as dividends. This is an unusually high payout ratioeven higher than 30 per cent paid by the world's largest companies included in America's S&P 500. Thus, the companies have done little to reinvest the profits for growth.

Whether profits, albeit extraordinary, to the company or high dividends to shareholders, they have been paid for or come at the cost

1000,000 crore profits of firms in the BSE 500 index during FY 2021-22 came at the cost of undermining the purchasing power of millions of consumers. If even 50 per cent of this amount or Rs 500,000 crore had remained with the latter, aggregate demand would have gone up manifolds. Likewise, look at the Rs 302,000 crore dividend paid to shareholders during FY 2021-22. An overwhelming share of this went to the promoters and other minority shareholders. If, instead of filling their coffers—the money that merely adds to their cash balances or is spent on a few discretionary/luxury items-more of it were to be distributed in higher salaries to their employees, particularly at the lower rung, imagine what it would do to demand. Several businesses enjoy pricing power. For instance, those operating in metals such as copper and zinc, or in hydrocarbons like oil and gas, enjoy a natural monopoly. Leveraging this, they charge high prices, resulting in windfall gains for themselves. Enterprises in the chemical, petrochemicals, pharmaceutical and agrochemical sectors have hugely benefited from a pro-

Over 60 million small and medium enterprises (SMEs) also ape large enterprises when it comes to distributing the wealth generated. Their owners spend the least on payments to workers. To conclude, all businesses are structured to result in the concentration of income in the hands of their owners or those who wield power and influence. Instead of deflecting the ball to the Government, they need to bring about a fundamental change in the way they operate. They need to shed over zealousness for profits, charge less from consumers, distribute more to workers and pay more taxes.

tective policy environment.

(The writer is a policy analyst; 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

he 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 the tenure of Rajiv Gandhi as of Prime Minister following Opposition to sit idle while the



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

the assassination of his mother 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 cor-India took a new low during ruption charges ranging from Bofors Gun to HDW subma-Prime Minister (1984-1989). rine deals. It was futile to Rajiv, who took over the post expect the truncated

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-upman-ship against old-time Congress

On seeing that Rajiv Gandhi was upset with the allegations corruption, Ram Jethmalani, the doyen among the country's lawyers launched a fusillade of questions at the Prime Minister. "Ill 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

whole world was discussing he shot back saying that he lized words, it was futile to speeches full of chosen abusthe gun contract. Rajiv would not answer barking expect the opposition to sit es. 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 uncivi- information got degraded into

expect the opposition to sit back and suffer silently. Barring leaders like A B Vajpayee, L K Advani, Murali Manohar Joshi, George and Fernandes 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

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.

Congress 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

demnable. 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

politics only because of his

family connections, is repre-

hensible as well as con-

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 My.. 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)

Godrej Locks eyes 50 per cent market share

ocks 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

takeholders, 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 Khadakbhavi 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

lenmark Pharmaceuticals is recalling 6,528 bottles of a medication used to treat high blood pressure in the American market due to talled dissolution opposition of 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 crossborder 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 Mukhopadhaya 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



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 (IIIPI) jointly with the Foreign, Commonwealth &

"We will have to

respect the law of

does not mean

other countries, but it

superseding our law.

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 wherein 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,

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 furtheris a need to strengthen data ing cyber security and checking financial fraud, sources

> During 2023, as many as 11,28,265 cases of financial

crore were reported, as per the data compiled by National Crime Records Bureau

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, macroeconomic 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

"This week promises to be crucial for the market as fresh flict 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

The IT services major logged a 9 per cent growth in net profit at Rs 12,434 crore in the fourth quarter of FY24 ness even as the company struggled in its key markets

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

INVESTMENTS IN ADAMI 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 vear after the conglomerate made a smart recovery since being hammered by a

damning 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 slugfest after allegations of stock manipulation fuelled by Hindenburg report. Adani group denied any wrong Adani

Group's stocks, which at lowest point took a beating of about USD 150 billion, have staged remarkable

profit growth across its diverse

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.

FPIs infuse over Rs 13,300 crore in equities

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 K Vijavakumar Chie Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

institutions for onboarding

merchants to safeguard cus-

tomers against cyber risks,

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

According to sources, there

security and data protection at

the level of merchants and BCs

as chances of compromise are

higher at that level

ecosystem, sources said.

sources 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 domes-

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 sta-

ble 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 dur-

ing January-March across top eight cities amid strong 0 61 demand for luxflats, according to

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.

> 1,20,640 units during January March, the

sales

In the total

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

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



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,

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 provi-Telecommunication Act and therefore need to be fineUnder

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 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

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 holidayshortened last

week. with Bharti Airtel and ICICI Bank emerging as the biggest gainers. Stock markets

were closed on Thursday on account of Eid-Ul-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 6,92,861.27

ICICI Bank added Rs 15,363.23 crore, taking its valuation to Rs

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

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 vears, there is lesser number of fixed wing aircraft and helicopters available. Some of the operators are looking to take planes and helicopters on wet

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

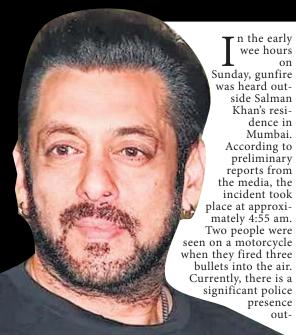
operators will be looking for maximum utilisation of air-"There is always a gap between supply and demand.

planes are done in advance and

Some entities are looking to wet lease planes and helicopters to meet the demand, Bali said.

what's brewing?

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



side 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 Ćrime Branch is reportedly going to take up the case. To find out who was engaged in the inci-

dent, investigations are being conducted. Given that he received death threats earlier this vear, Salman Khan always travels with a highly guarded entourage.



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

radgaon 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

ebecca Ferguson, who starred n Dune: Part Two, disclosed that her vociferous charges an actor who was 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 myselfwhere 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

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 HOBBES







GARFIELD

NANCY



WE'LL BE SPENDING THE

SUMMER IN ROBOTICS CLUB

PRACTICING CRITICAL

THINKING



CAN YOU FIGURE OUT A

WAY TO ALWAYS WIN

I DON'T

KNOW.

OR TIE IN TIC-TAC-TOE?





REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



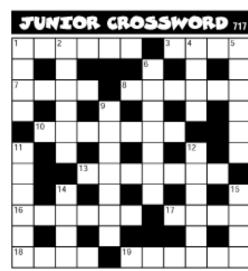
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- 13 Parts of a minute
- 16 Tired and drowsy

19 Happening every twelve

months

4 A law

- 17 Meat and vegetables boiled slowly 18 Drink made from grapes
- 14 A plant with fronds that grows in shady places 15 Absent

11 A puzzle with many pieces

5 The one bought most

6 Sleep in this room

12 A newspaper boss

recently

9 Try



DIVOIL EVER PLAN GINGER?

GINGER MEGGS







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Monday April 15, 2024

There's tampible excitement when people inchity me as Masterchef Australia india identity me as Masterchef

cooker in 2021. "MasterChef

am incredibly proud of," she

Australia represents the apex of

my career, an accomplishment I

states. "Every time someone asks me about it, I feel quite honoured.

The encounter is always enjoyable

stand

and stimulating. Individuals of

various ages, from young

children to senior citi-

worldwide

importance.

There's tangible

people in India

identify me as

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particular about the dish-

es I use. It's really amaz-

ing."
She then discusses the

difficulties she encountered while performing on the show. "To create a

work of art never seen

before, concentrate on

unusual flavours and allur-

to be modest in my

SUBODHINI PUROHIT

Pastry chef Anna Polyviou works her culinary magic in the kitchen, turning everyday treats into imaginative works of art. Diners were mesmerised by her dishes, which resembled a symphony of flavours with each note harmonising with the next, when in

Hyderabad in association with Conosh for a masterclass. Anna started her career as

a chef at The Sofitel Hotel in Melbourne. There, she won the Les Toques Blanc competition for "Best Apprentice in Victoria" and was given a scholarship that allowed her to work anywhere in the world.

For her, the dessert dances on the brink of anarchy, beckoning one to accept life's delicious disarray. "I consider things that people know and then I recreate," she explains. Imagine a dessert that rebels against the norm! The quickest approach to making 'Anna's mess' is to combine cream, raspberry, and meringue kisses to produce a delightful collision of

flavours and textures.

According to her, "The way to create it is to create a mess; the dessert that everyone is familiar with is about you picking it up and throwing it!" Desserts like 'Firecracker' require attentiveness. It's all about taste, she explains, leading up to that last burst of joy. And as soon as you take that first bite, you're sent to a place where desserts are gravity-defying and the possibilities are endless. She discov-

duplicate the desserts, she also makes sure that her recipes are doable. striking a balance between inventiveness and usability. She tells,

Instagram, I encourage creating dishes using pantry and fridge ingredients. I'm all about accessibility and simplicity, so no three-hour kitchen marathons here! Instead, in a matter of minutes, let's prepare something delicious. The key is to maximise the resources you already have at home. Try it out. I was thrilled when people began tagging me in their dishes that they made utilising the three items that you have on hand. I love to get my cookbook dirty with splattering ingredients and wiping off the dust." "I also make content with my mother, and she is the star of the show. She always wanted people to recreate what she had created, so she wrote cookbooks, one of which, Street Sweet, sold out within a few weeks of its release. Thankfully, my cookbooks are selling like crazy, and I hope that my next book will be a fantastic cookbook. I want readers to be motivated to cook, and I think it's important for anyone to try their hand at cooking—they don't have to be the best chef—because for me, food is my passion."

She also says, "I am learning and exploring food in Hyderabad, and next time I come here, I want to write a cook book on it, which would include an Indian twist to desserts with spices and to educate myself about different flavours as I am having a great time exploring Indian cuisine." Making a cookbook featuring desserts with an Indian influence is a fun way to honour the blending of

Anna offers some guidance for aspiring young pastry cooks too.
"Acknowledge the kitchen, we receptive to new ideas, and absorb information like a well-seasoned sponge, just like a modest cook. Seek advice from seasoned chefs and people who support your culinary education, rather than relying only on TV broadcasts or social media snippets to prove your expertise in cooking. I've been cooking for seven years, and now I find myself in the colourful kitchen of Hyderabad, known for its diverse cuisine. Discover a wide variety of foods, appreciate each spice, and let your palate move to the beat of local specialties! Additionally, educate yourself by reading cookbooks, enrolling in classes, and following Instagram profiles. And get comfortable using scales to measure components." Upon her return to Australia, Anna spearheaded the patisserie revolution in hotels throughout the nation while serv-

ing as the Creative Director of

Pastry at Shangri-La Hotel.



What causes body tremors, how to know if it's Parkinson's?

DR. GAJENDRA SINGH SANDHU CONSULTANT - NEUROSURGERY MANIPAL HOSPITAL

remor refers to an uncontrollable rhythmic movement affecting body parts like legs, hands or fingers. This a common symptom which is often linked to neurological conditions such as multiple sclerosis, stroke, and Parkinson's disease. Tremors are classified into two categories: resting tremors and action tremors. The former occurs when your body is at rest whereas the latter occurs when you are doing something. However, tremor is one of the very first symptom of Parkinson's disease, it can also be a symptom of other conditions as well. For the unversed, Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative disorder that particularly affects the body movement and balance. It is believed that people with Parkinson's don't have enough dopamine (a body chemical responsible for controlling

movement and mood). This happens because the brain cells that produce dopamine gets damaged resulting in unintentional body movements. Few symptoms of this disease include tremors, stiffness, postural instability and more.

Linkage between body tremors and Parkinson's

One of the first motor symptoms of Parkinson's disease are tremors. These occur because the level of

dopamine decreases which causes involuntary movement like shaking. However, in a Parkinson's patient, tremor may start with hands or fingers, it may affect the chin, lips, face, or legs. Tremorsis a progressive condition, meaning it initially occurs on one side of the body, but it may start affecting the other side with the passage of time. In most of the cases, Parkinson's disease goes unnoticed until later stages. Therefore, tremors along with stiffness, balance issue, sleep problems, anxiety and increased falls are considered as signs of

Parkinson's disease. **Treatment options**

Although there is no particular cure for tremors, but there are certain ways to manage them. The treatment options are different for every person depending upon their condition. In early stages, it may be treated with the help of few medications whereas in the advance stages, surgical procedure like deep brain stimulation may be

Few drugs like levodopa can help manage the tremors. These drugs increase the level of dopamine or act as a substitute resulting in controlling the body movements and balance

Most of the times, exercise and other physical activities can help improve your brain health and overall well-being.

Deep brain stimulation:
This is a surgical procedure that involves implanting small electrodes inside the brain which can help in controlling the tremors. This treatment is only offered when the regular medications have stopped responding.

Actress Preeti saddles up her refreshing horse-riding love to records

SHIKHA DUGGAL

→ he India Book of Records has recognised Preeti Verma, a renowned Bollywood actress from *Love* Aaj Kal 2, for her remarkable accomplishment of riding a faithful horse, Basanti, 350 kilometers across the Thar Desert. Verma's inclusion in the prestigious India Book of Records confirms her status as one of the country's most accomplished female riders and a pioneer in the desert safari industry!

"My passion for horses has merely inspired me to go to new places and take on new challenges in order to spend more and more time with them. I've been involved in horse shows and contests since 2006, when I first started riding horses. Despite obstacles brought on by employment obligations, I've always made it a

As the first actor/theatre performer from Bollywood to complete one of the hardest and longest desert safaris in India, Preeti Verma's bravery and fearlessness are unparalleled. "Col. Sarpartap Singh and Thakur Raghuvendra Singh Dundlod extended an invitation to me for this journey in 2021, the year I became the brand ambassador for IHSI. Even though I had recovered from dengue and was dealing with health issues, I had a strong need for change and a sense of healing since nothing makes me feel as refreshed as riding horses," recalled the equestrian in an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*.

She continues to explore varied roles in movies, web series, and music videos, demonstrating her dedication to pushing boundaries outside of the equestrian realm. Her roles in notable movies include Love Aaj Kal 2, Jaane Khuda, and numerous music videos with Kailash Kher and Band Euphoria by Dr. Palash Sen. She has also been involved in other projects, such as the coming music video featuring Jaya Kishori and Sonu Nigam! "My passion for horses and adventure, along with the stunning and difficult terrain of the Thar Desert, motivated me to take on the 350-kilometer trek atop Basanti. I'm not sure why, but I've always found Rajasthan to be fascinating. Taken as a whole, it was worthwhile, created lifelong memories. As actors, we constantly study and experiment in order to learn and develop. So—riding for the entire day, camping, seeing nature, people's simplicity, culture everything was so lovely. I always feel closer to myself and have the chance to reflect on my life when I'm riding a horse. At that point, I decided to continue evolving," said Preeti. Preeti started riding horses in 2006, and in the eighteen years since then, she has gained a great deal of expertise with a variety of horse breeds. Her distinguished career has been marked by

multiple wins and awards in horse events approved by the Equestrian Federation of India, which has cemented her respected status in the equestrian world. "When my horse and I rode through a difficult sand dunes course at dusk, I experienced a strong sense of connection with my horse as the golden tones of the twilight sun illuminated the surroundings. We needed trust and understanding to cross the challenging terrain. The exhilaration of the ride mixed with the peace of the desert to produce an absolutely unique experience that made me appreciate the beauty of nature as well as the relationship between a horse and its rider. The feeling of being valuable occurs when you evolve and begin to surrender yourself to your horse. I consider myself lucky and grateful to have seen Rajasthan's splendour in a completely new way

because of Basanti," she explained. Preeti Verma's legacy as a trailblazer in the entertainment business and the realm of equestrian sports is further cemented by her induction into the India Book of Records. Growing up with an intense love for the arts and animals, Verma embodies the ideal combination of skill and inventiveness. Her story is an encouragement to budding actors and horseback riders alike, showing that everything is achievable with bravery and determination. "Like the spirit in a body, there is a deep connection between my passions for equestrian sports and entertainment. You never stop being yourself. You are aware of the worth of things. As an actor, I aim to connect with the soul of a character, and as an equestrian and horse lover, I connect with my horse. I draw on similar abilities and characteristics like attention, communication, dedication, and adaptability," she explained with an emotion shak-

ing in her voice.

Her time spent in the saddle fuelled her love of equestrian sports and improved her acting authenticity! She hopes to advocate for the welfare of horses and spread awareness of the value and beauty of equestrian sports through her position in the entertainment industry. In the end, her passion for both disciplines enhances her life and drives her ambition to have a positive influence on both. "I've always thought that sharing is important since I get inspiration from other people, horses, and environments. You develop differently depending on the circumstances and experiences you have. I claim to be a lifelong student who dreams big and follows her heart. Whether it's the entertainment business or equestrian sports, I think anyone can succeed in any sector with enthusiasm and determination. Through dream-chasing and self-authenticity, young women can surmount challenges and forge their own routes to achievement. These days, skill transcends gender, and no one is inferior to anoth-

er," Preeti Verma added.

She hopes that the next generation will be inspired by their passions to follow their dreams boldly, value their individuality, and aim high, believing that anything is achievable with perseverance and hard work! "Regarding activities and adventures involving horses, the younger generation, in my opinion, has to be prepared with the knowledge and abilities necessary to look after the welfare and well-being of their horses. Whether I'm riding, competing, or going on an expedition, my horse always comes first.

Although it takes careful time management and prioritising to balance her entertainment job and horseback riding, these two hobbies enhance each other and provide balance to her life. "I make it a point to ride horses at Mahalaxmi Racecourse's Amateur Riders Club at least two or three times a week. Mumbai seems to be the ideal location for spending time with and riding horses. I like to ride in the mornings so that I can use the rest of the day for business. This balance gives me a sense of fulfillment and a variety of experiences that not only keep me grounded and focused but also improve my life. It is quite difficult, I must admit, to provide riding facilities everywhere or for everyone! I make every effort to work more and more in order to keep riding horses," she explained quite well. She views every horse as a priceless gift from God, and we agree. She has an exceptionally strong affinity for horses, and she treasures every one of them. "Every horse I've ever owned, from my first mount, Dabbu, to the ones I learned to jump, like Boomerang and Teepu, and the mare I started competing with, Taqila, has imparted invaluable knowledge on friendship, cooperation, and companionship. My older brother and Raju Sir were crucial to my riding experience from the start. I took note of their lessons and realised how disciplined one must be when around horses. It's your behaviour around horses that counts."

She can still clearly remember only one horse: Alamgir, the first Marwari stallion she ever rode. She was so happy and comfortable to spend five months with Alamgir throughout the difficult moments of the pandemic. People recognised and valued their deep bond, calling her the "queen of stallions" on social media with fondness.

"Both the Bollywood journey and the saddle offer valuable life lessons that help you become a better version of yourself. A deep sense of self-acceptance and realism are provided by horses. I've studied the art of acting in Bollywood, which teaches me how to interpret nonverbal clues and establish a rapport with horses while in the saddle. In a similar vein, the commitment and discipline needed in both areas have helped me understand the need for tenacity and never-ending education,"



Preeti wanted to share.

Oh, by the way, success in both desert excursions and equestrian competitions depends on a combination of abilities and mindset. Technical riding skills are necessary for successfully negotiating obstacles and terrain, such as balance, coordination, and knowledge of horse behaviour. Additionally, overcoming obstacles and developing trust with the horse require a positive outlook marked by perseverance, adaptability, and resilience. Moreover, a strong

regard for the horse's wellbeing and a dedication to its welfare guarantee a peaceful collaboration and improve the experience for both rider and horse. "The welfare of horses is my top priority. It is impossible to ignore," Preeti

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 | RCB eye step up from under fire bowlers TO BEAT RCB, SAYS SRH COACH

PTI BENGALURU

Cunrisers 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 for how aggressive they are 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 Vettori.



come out pretty aggressive. We're going to be under a lot of pressure as a bowling unit 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

"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

reason we couldn't send him

to Chennai. Hence Jitesh was

sent, because the directive

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.

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

The South African batter has made 186 runs from five matches at a frenetic strikerate 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

PTI BENGALURU

 $R^{\text{oyal}}_{\text{Bengaluru's IPL campaign}}$ Challengers 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 often relied on variations like knuckle balls, slow bouncers and pace-off deliveries to counter a set of ultraaggressive batsmen.
"However, the Bengaluru bowlers have been largely unidimensional in their approach allowing betters to

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 the for opposition bowlers.

AEAM

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

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

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

and he has also conceded just

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 similar with 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,

Mohammed Siraj, Reece Topley, Himanshu Sharma, Rajan Kumar, "Cameron Green, Alzarri Joseph, Yash Dayal, Tom

Mayank Dagar, Vijaykumar Vyshak, Akash Deep,

Deep,

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, Upendra Singh Yadav, Umran Malik, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Shahbaz Ahmed, Travis Head, Javdey Unadkat, Akasl Singh, Jhathavedh Subramanyan.

Dhawan out for at least seven to 10 days: Bangar

PTI ■ MULLANPUR

Punjab Kings skipper At the moment, it seems that he could be out of action for 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 with fever, stayed back in night. Sam Curran led the side in his absence.

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 liber of the side.

Mullanpur.
"Considering that, Curran walking out for the toss was surprising but Bangar clarified that they were always clear about the Englisman's role in the side. somebody like Shikhar, who has experience of playing on the designated vice-captain. becomes extremely crucial (for the been because he attended the wanted to have a few do much against Royals. team).

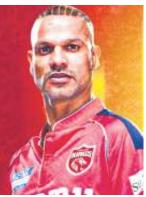
"We have to wait and see how he responds to the treatment. At the moment, it seems that at least seven-ten days," said Bangar in the post match press conference. "Jitesh Sharma was team's

representative at the captains' meet at the start of the season as Dhawan, who was down Mullanpur.

opener, role in the side.

"No, no, he (Jitesh) wasn't

The impression could have captains' seminar at the start (training) sessions, that's the



of the IPL. "But the thought was always that ... Because Sam has led the team in the previous year as well; he was ate to arrive from UK and he

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. top for the Saturday's game, Atharva Taide, too could not

"Bangar agreed it was a

"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 "Dhawan's replacement at the as well. So maybe that is also a contributing factor because, not only us, the visiting teams and their top order are facing

SPORTS OTHER

ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Anju, Harshita reach final

PTI BISHKEK (KYRGYZSTAN)

 $\begin{array}{cccc} R & \text{ailways wrestler Anju,} \\ W & \text{had outclassed} \\ \text{Vinesh Phogat in the recent} \end{array}$ 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 technical superiority against Philippines' Aliah Rose Gavalez and Sri Lanka's Nethmi Ahinsa Fernando.

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 medal favourite in this final, outclassing category. Later Enkhbat lost Uzbekistan's Ozoda Zaripboeva by technical superiority (13-3) and beating Kazakhstan's beating Anastassiya Panassovich 5-0. "She will fight it out with China's Qian Jiang in the medals.

'She faced some resistance "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

her semifinal, closing the repechage route for the Indian.

"Manisha Bhanwala (62kg) and Antim Kundu (65kg) will contest for bronze

Akshay slips at end of Round three but Scheffler moves into sole lead PTI BISHKEK (KYRGYZSTAN)

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Gukesh beats Vidit Gujrathi to regain joint lead

PTI ■ TORONTO

Tndia's D Gukesh bounced back with a finely crafted four points. Gujrathi on 3.5 game to outwit compatriot Vidit Gujrathi and regain his joint lead with Ian is still at the rear of the tables Nepomniachtchi of Russia on 2.5 points. after the eighth round of the Candidates chess tournament

here. "On a day when R Praggnanandhaa played out a draw with Firouza 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 comes in next ahead of Alireza on three points, while Abasov

"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 are rare at this level, in the Gukesh entered the eighth opening he did some



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

inaacuracies 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.

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 "Praggnanadhaa could not

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 Ruv 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. Zhongyi'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 Nurgyul 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 Praggnanandhaa in the men's section, while Guirathi has to face the in-form Nakamura.

Vijayawada | Monday April 15, 2024

Shiva Turlapati



ctress Anjali's landmark 50th film Geetanjali Malli Vachindi hit theatres on April 11. Directed by Shiva Turlapati and produced by Kona Venkat in association with MVV Cinemas, this bigbudget horror come-

dy 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

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

three hours long, like

Animal. That's not what I

the last moment of making Part 2. So, we had a discussion about it, and we will soon reveal those He continued,

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 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

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.

Director

tollywoo

Furthermore, Shiva shared that he

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,

more.

next part, and 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 Geetanjali 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

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

ijay 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

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

Baak releasing on April 26

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 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 foottapping number that has some lively beats. While Sahithi penned funny lyrics, Raghavi's husky voice brings extra enchantment. But it's Tamannaah and Raashi Khanna's glamour that prettified the song. Their graceful mov<u>es.</u>

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 Vennila Kishore, Srinivasalu, 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

ing 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 fam-

ilies 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

niversal 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 postproduction phase. The film's team aims to unveil a powerpacked 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. Jeyamohan, 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

Haasan likely to play key role in Thalaivar 171

ajinikanth 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..

Shruti

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

