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In Rahul Gandhi's train, every ally thinks it's the engine

5

INDIA FASTEST

GROWING ECONOMY DURING LAST 3 FINANCIAL YEARS: FM



8

Nidhi Agerwal reportedly joins The Raja Saab SETS



P12

QUOTE OF THE DAY



If we watch the CM speak and his shivering at public meetings we can assume that the people of Telangana have revolted. Survey reports are coming. The Congress won't get more than two seats in the state. Farmers are revolting. During the Narayana meeting, if we see Chief Minister's fear and shiver then it means that the government may not last even a year. Who knows when who will join the BJP or whether the CM himself will jump to the BJP? The CM talks one thing here and in Delhi on TV he says vote for the BJP. Who is the B-team of whom?

— KCR, BRS chief

P4

DON'T MISS...

IMPC meet strategises efforts...

The first Inter Media Publicity Coordination Committee (IMPC) was convened at the Central Government Offices Complex in Vijayawada on Tuesday. The meeting was chaired by Press Information Bureau (PIB) Additional Director General (ADG) Rajinder Chaudhry. Representatives of the key government bodies and the representatives of the Railway, Postal, Income Tax, KVIC, Airport Authority, AIIMS, NYKS, NSSO, Doordarshan, All India Radio, Press Information Bureau, Central Bureau of ...

—PAGE: 3

'Breast cancer may cause a ...

Breast cancer is now the world's most common carcinogenic disease with the ailment likely to cause a million deaths a year by 2040, according to a new Lancet Commission on breast cancer. Around 7.8 million women were diagnosed with breast cancer in the last five years until 2020 and about 685,000 women died from the disease the same year, it said. Further, in 2020, women around the world on average had a 1 in 12 risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer before turning 75 years old, and this incidence ...

—PAGE: 5

Equity investors become poorer ...

Investors' wealth tumbled Rs 7.93 lakh crore in three days of market crash amid escalating tensions in the Middle East and weak global trends. Continuing its downtrend for the third day running on Tuesday, the 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 456.10 points or 0.62 per cent to settle at 72,943.68. During the day, it slumped 714.75 points or 0.97 per cent to 72,685.03. The market capitalisation (mcap) of BSE-listed companies was eroded by Rs 7,93,529.61 crore to Rs 3,94,25,823.46 (US\$ 4.75 trillion) in three days. In the ...

—PAGE: 8

Gujarat Titans, Delhi Capitals ...

Gujrat Titans will be striving for much needed consistency when they meet Delhi Capitals in an Indian Premier League match here on Wednesday. Unlike the past two editions, the Titans have not been able to play like a well-oiled machine though they still have time to fix the flaws. A last ball win over table leaders Rajasthan Royals on April 10 was just the kind of result the Titans needed to infuse fresh life to their campaign. They have only managed only two wins from their first six games but with another eight ...

—SPORTS

Naidu stands for deceit: Jagan Urges voters to shun corrupt forces

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy interacted with the public, urging them to consider the welfare schemes of the State for the next five years and to prevent corrupt forces from gaining power.

Addressing a public meeting in Bhimavaram as part of his 'Memantha Siddham Yatra' on Tuesday, Jagan remarked, "This election is a choice between the support for the underprivileged under your Chief Minister and the corrupt practices associated with Chandrababu Naidu. Chandrababu Naidu seems to be perturbed even at the mention of my name, indicating his discomfort with questions regarding his own governance and achievements."



- Jagan contrasted his administration's focus on supporting the underprivileged with the corrupt practices associated with Chandrababu Naidu, alleging Naidu's discomfort with scrutiny of his governance.
- Criticising JSP Chief Pawan Kalyan for his shifting allegiances and personal choices, Jagan emphasised the importance of consistency and commitment in leadership.
- Jagan highlighted the achievements of the YSRCP government, including initiatives such as RBKs, village clinics, educational reforms, and pension schemes for the elderly.
- Refuting claims of development under previous regimes, Jagan challenged the validity of Naidu's promises, citing unfulfilled commitments such as hyperloop projects and attracting major corporations to the state.

Reflecting on his rival, Jagan continued, "When Chandrababu Naidu's name arises, it's not his accomplishments that come to mind, but rather notions of deceit, betrayal, and dishonesty."

Turning his attention to JSP Chief Pawan Kalyan, Chief Minister Jagan criticized his shifting allegiances and personal choices. "Pawan Kalyan, you may make vows of commitment, but your actions speak differently. Your tendency to change affiliations resembles trading in vehicles. Such behaviour not only undermines commitments but sets a poor example for society," remarked the Chief Minister. Drawing a comparison between his governance and that of his predecessors, Jagan emphasised, "While Chandrababu Naidu resorted to deceit and manipulation, my administration has prioritised welfare initiatives for all sections of society. Despite facing opposition from various quarters, our government has consistently delivered on its promises."

2



18 Naxalites killed in encounter with jawans

PNS ■ KANKER

At least 18 Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district on Tuesday, the Border Security Force (BSF) said. Three security personnel suffered injuries in the fierce gun-battle and a large quantity of weapons was also recovered from the spot, the state police said. The gunfight took place at around 2 pm in Hapatola forest between Binagunda and Koronar villages under Chhotebethiya police station limits, when a joint team of the Border Security Force (BSF) and the state police's District Reserve Guard

(DRG) was out on an anti-Naxal operation, a statement issued by the BSF said. The BSF has been extensively deployed in Kanker district for counter-insurgency operations. "Bodies of 18 Maoist cadres were recovered from the encounter spot. Seven AK series rifles and three Light Machine Guns were also recovered from the spot," the statement said. "One BSF personnel sustained bullet injury on his leg in the gunfight and he is reported to be out of danger," the statement added. The Chhattisgarh police said three security personnel were injured in the gunfight and they were being shifted to a hospital for treatment.

Sunitha diverting course of probe into Viveka case: Avinash

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a twist in the Viveka murder case, Kadapa MP Avinash Reddy has made strong rebuttals against the accusations levelled by Viveka's daughter, Sunitha. Avinash has presented a series of evidence challenging Sunitha's claims, accusing her of obfuscating the truth and spreading misinformation to divert the investigation's course.

Avinash disclosed that Viveka's household worker, Pannini Rajasekhara, was allegedly pressured by Sowbhagyamma and Narreddy Rajasekhara Reddy to take leave a day before the murder. During the CBI inquiry, Rajasekhara claimed



that he was repeatedly urged by Sowbhagyamma and Narreddy Rajasekhara Reddy to urgently go to Kanipakam.

2

TONSURING OF DALITS

YSRCP MLC Thota sentenced to jail

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Visakhapatnam SC/ST Special Court has finally given a verdict in the case regarding the tonsuring of Dalit youths in 1996. The judgment was delivered on Tuesday.

YSRCP MLC Thota Trimurthulu has been sentenced to 18 months in jail, with an additional six months under another section of the law. This ruling also includes a fine of Rs 42,000 on each of the nine convicts involved in the case. Trimurthulu is currently vying for the Mandapeta Assembly seat in the Konaseema district, representing the YSRCP in the upcoming elections scheduled for next month.

During the pronouncement of the verdict, MLC Thota Trimurthulu was present in court. The sentencing carries significant



implications, particularly in the realm of politics, as it may influence the electoral prospects of those involved. Legal analysts point out that since the punishment falls short of two years, any legal barri-

ers to electoral participation have been removed. In response to the verdict, Trimurthulu and his associates have applied for bail, offering personal surety.

Accused in attack on CM identified

A resident of Vaddera Colony, Satish, has confessed to pelting a stone at the Chief Minister

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada police have made a breakthrough by identifying a youth from Vaddera Colony near Anitsingh Nagar who threw a stone at Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy during a roadshow on Saturday night. The Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed after the attack apprehended five youths - Aakash, Durga Rao, Chinna, Santosh, and Satish - and interrogated them intensively for two days.

Eventually, Satish admitted to hurling the stone at the Chief Minister. He had concealed a small piece of tile in his pocket and used it in the attack.

2

About 50 from T states crack Civils

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) declared the civil service exam results on Tuesday. About 50 candidates from both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh cracked the exam.

Donuru Ananya Reddy who hails from the Addakal Mandal of Mahbubnagar secured the third rank. She is the first woman from Telangana to secure a top rank in the exam.

She is followed by Nandala Sai Kiran (27th rank), KN Chandana Jahnavi (50th rank) and Merugu Kaushik (82nd rank). Chief Minister Revanthy Reddy congratulated the candidates of



Donuru Ananya Reddy (3rd rank) Chandana Jahnavi (50th rank)

both the Telugu states for cracking one of the toughest exams in India. He congratulated Donuru Ananya Reddy for securing the third rank. "I am very happy to crack this exam but I didn't expect to secure the third rank. I fulfilled my dream today.

Continued on Page 2

Jagan congratulates AP, TG rankers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has congratulated Ananya Reddy, who secured third rank in the UPSC exam. He also complimented Nandala Sai Kiran (27), Merugu Kaushik (82) and all Telugu-speaking candidates who cracked the Civils exam. The Chief Minister wished them all success and a bright future in their career.

Aditya Srivastava gets top rank

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aditya Srivastava, a trainee Indian Police Service officer, has topped the civil services examination 2023, results of which were announced on Tuesday by the Union Public Service Commission.

A total of 1,016 candidates -- 664 men and 352 women -- have qualified in the examination and have been recommended by the Union Public Service

Continued on Page 2

5 of family killed as car crashes into lorry

PNS ■ NELLORE

Tragedy struck in Nellore on Tuesday as a devastating road accident claimed the lives of five persons, including three women and a young boy - all belonging to one family. The incident occurred when the car they were travelling in collided with a stationary lorry at Gowravaram village in Kavali mandal along the Chennai-Kolkata national highway on Tuesday.

According to Circle Inspector Srinivasa Rao, the victims hailed from Chamadhula village in Jaladanki mandal and were en route to Kavali for shopping to commemorate the Sriramanavi festival. The collision,



which took place in the afternoon, resulted in the instantaneous loss of five lives. The deceased have been identified as Ganta Ramanamma, Davuluri Srinivasulu, Davuluri Varalakshmi, Ganta Neelima, and a six-year-old boy named Ganta Nandu.

2

Shah, Nadda & Yogi to campaign for NDA candidates in Andhra

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State vice-president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), V Suryanarayana Raju, has unveiled plans for a formidable lineup of political heavyweights set to join the election fray in Andhra Pradesh. Minister of Home Affairs, Amit Shah, BJP national president, JP Nadda, and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath, are slated to participate in the election campaigns alongside candidates from the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), BJP, and Jana Sena Party (JSP).

Speaking at a press conference held at the party's headquarters in Vijayawada, Suryanarayana Raju said that the BJP's top brass would not only engage in campaigning but also be present during the nomination filing



process across the state. He underscored that party leaders would elucide on the developmental and welfare initiatives spearheaded by the Union government throughout the campaign.

Furthermore, he conveyed the party's plea to the Election Commission of India (ECI) to conduct the polling process with utmost tranquillity. He urged the ECI to consider exempting differently-abled teachers from election duties, criticising the

compulsion imposed on employees grappling with health issues to partake in electoral responsibilities. Expanding on the political landscape, Raju accused Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy of adopting deceptive tactics under the guise of the Bus Yatra initiative. Asserting a contrasting narrative between the governance under the YSRCP and NDA alliance, he called upon voters to discern and support their party's candidates in the upcoming elections.

Ensure all summer storage tanks are filled: CS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Secretary Dr KS Jawahar Reddy has directed officials from the RWS and Municipal Fresh Water Supply Departments to ensure all summer storage tanks are filled in anticipation of the State's summer drinking water requirements. A virtual meeting was convened on Tuesday with District Collectors and officials from relevant departments to address drinking water, employment guarantee initiatives, and the state's electricity supply status from the state secretariat of Velagapudi.

During the meeting, CS Reddy emphasised the need to implement measures ensuring a continuous supply of fresh water through tanks until the conclusion of June. Notably, proposals from two dis-



During the meeting, CS Reddy emphasised the need to implement measures ensuring a continuous supply of fresh water through tanks until the conclusion of June. Notably, proposals from two districts are pending, and CS Reddy indicated that appropriate permissions would be granted upon their submission at the upcoming state-level screening committee meeting.

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CS Reddy highlighted that water has been released from the Nagarjuna Sagar main canal to replenish summer storage tanks in Palnadu, Prakasam, Guntur, and Bapatla districts since April 8. Similarly, water from the Prakasam Barrage has been channelled to NTR, Krishna, Eluru, and Bapatla districts through canals since April 6. He instructed District Collectors to promptly fill all summer storage tanks and undertake necessary precautions to ensure statewide access to drinking water throughout the summer season.

2



BATTLE OF PROFESSIONALS

Oncologist to take on industrialist

DASARI SRINIVASA RAO
VIJAYAWADA

An election showdown is on the horizon in the Machilipatnam Lok Sabha segment within the combined Krishna district for the upcoming general elections. The contest will feature an oncologist, Dr. Simhadri Chandrasekhar Rao, based in Hyderabad, and Vallabhaneni Balashowry, an industrialist-cum-politician who currently holds the MP seat.

Vallabhaneni Balashowry recently parted ways with the YSRCP, aligning himself with the Jana Sena Party (JSP). Consequently, the YSRCP nominated Dr Simhadri Chandrasekhar Rao, the son of prominent Oncologist and former minister Simhadri Satyanarayana, as their candidate for the Lok Sabha. This sets the stage for a head-to-head battle between Chandrasekhar Rao and the seasoned politician Vallabhaneni Balashowry in the upcoming elections.

Despite Dr Simhadri Chandrasekhar Rao's newcomer status in electoral politics, he has been actively engaged in campaign activities. Both candidates have commenced their election cam-



paigns in the Lok Sabha constituency. The opposition TDP and BJP have thrown their support behind JSP candidate Balashowry. Political analysts foresee a closely contested battle between the YSRCP and JSP candidates in the impending elections. Traditionally, the Machilipatnam Lok Sabha segment was a stronghold for the Congress party. However, it has been under the dominance of the TDP since the inception of the latter. Of the nine general elections held for the Machilipatnam LS so far, the TDP emerged victorious five times, while the Congress secured the seat thrice. The YSRCP clinched victory in the 2019 election.

The Machilipatnam LS comprises seven assembly segments: Machilipatnam, Pedana, Avanigadda,

Gudivada, Pamaruru, Penamaluru, and Gannavaram. In the previous elections, except for Gannavaram, all six segments were won by the YSRCP, with Gannavaram being secured by the TDP. However, following recent political shifts, TDP's Gannavaram MLA Dr. Vallabhaneni Vamsi Mohan switched allegiance to the YSRCP from the TDP.

Kavuri Sambasiva Rao, a veteran politician, has etched his name in history by winning three times from the Machilipatnam Lok Sabha constituency. He secured victories as a Congress party candidate in the 1984 and 1989 general elections. Subsequently, he clinched the seat again in the 1998 elections as an MP. Following his tenure, the constituency saw representatives from different parties,

including TDP's Konakalla Narayana Rao and Congress party's Maganti Ankinedu, who served two terms each. In the inaugural general elections of 1952, Sanaka Bucchikotaiah of the Communist Party of India (CPI) emerged victorious as a Parliament Member from the Machilipatnam Lok Sabha. Additionally, Mandali Venkata Krishna Rao (1957), Mandala Venkata Swamy Naidu (1962), Y Ankinedu Prasad (1967), and Meduri Nageswara Rao (1971) represented this segment. Apart from Mandala Venkata Swamy Naidu, who was elected as an Independent, the remaining MPs represented the Congress party.

Similarly, KP Reddaiah Yadav contested as a TDP candidate in the 1991 elections, defeating Congress party's Kavuri Sambasiva Rao. This

was followed by Kaikala Satyanarayana (1996) and Ambati Brahmaiah (1999), who were elected as MPs from the TDP. However, in the 2004 elections, Badiga Ramakrishna of the Congress party emerged victorious. Apart from Kavuri Sambasiva Rao, no other candidate has been elected as MP from this segment three times.

The upcoming elections promise a fierce contest between YSRCP's Chandrasekhar Rao and JSP's Vallabhaneni Balashowry. Notably, Balashowry previously served as an MP from the Tenali Lok Sabha in the 2004 elections and later contested as a YSRCP candidate in 2019. His departure from the YSRCP to join the JSP stemmed from differences with Machilipatnam MLA Perni Venkatramaiah, alias Nani.



Leaders from Palnadu, Eluru districts rally behind Jagan

PNS ■ ELURU

Commencing the 16th day of the Memantha Siddham Yatra from the Narayanapuram night halt, CM Jagan Mohan Reddy initiated the day with a dialogue with leaders from Eluru and West Godavari districts. Personally engaging with numerous party leaders and senior workers, the Chief Minister extended his regards and inquired about their well-being.

Following the discussions, a significant influx of leaders from opposition parties pledged their allegiance to the YSR Congress Party in the presence of the Chief Minister. Details of these notable transitions are provided below:

Joinings from Jana Sena Party

Dr Chintalapudi Ashok Kumar, brother of Srinivas Rao, who contested in the 2019 elections on a JSP ticket from Gurazala Constituency, Palnadu, joined the YSR Congress Party. Also, JanaSena leader Madapati Durga Rao from Dhagepali Mandal made the switch.

Additionally, prominent leaders from JanaSena and the Yadava community, representing Eluru district's Kaikaluru constituency, officially joined the YSRCP in the presence of the Chief Minister. Among them were JanaSena constituency in-charge B.V. Rao, JanaSena District Secretary Pallem Yuan, and Yadava communi-

ty leader Pachigolla Ramakrishna.

Joinings from TDP

N Peraiah, TDP Youth president from Piduguralla constituency, Palnadu, and Guntupalli Rama Rao, a senior TDP leader, also aligned themselves with the YSRCP.

The Chief Minister warmly welcomed and integrated all new members into the YSR Congress party by presenting them with a symbolic scarf.

During a vibrant roadshow preceding the Siddham Sabha in Bhimavaram on Tuesday, CM Jagan Mohan Reddy engaged with a diverse range of individuals, including senior citizens, school children, and many others.

Ensure all summer ...

Continued from Page 1

Notably, repairs on 1669 summer storage tanks have commenced for Rs 101 crore, with orders issued to expedite completion within a week.

CS Reddy also reviewed the progress of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and mandated immediate implementation of water conservation initiatives proposed under this scheme.

He commended the significant increase in daily workdays from 11 lakh to 22 lakh over the past three days and praised the

Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts for their exemplary efforts in generating employment through the scheme.

State Water Resources, Panchayat Raj, and Rural Development Department Principal Secretary Shashi Bhusan Kumar, Panchayat Raj Department Commissioner K. Kannababu, and Rural Protected Fresh Water Supply Department ENC Krishna Reddy participated in the virtual meeting. CDMA Srikesh Balaji Rao, Water Resources Department ENC Narayana Reddy, and other officials also joined remotely.

5 of family ...

Continued from Page 1

The impact of the crash was so severe that half of the car became wedged into the rear end of the stationary lorry, claiming the lives of all people on board. Rescue efforts proved challenging as authorities worked tirelessly to extract the bodies from the mangled wreckage. Utilising a crane, the police and the national highway team successfully removed the car from the lorry. The lorry, registered in Tamil Nadu, had been parked by its driver on the roadside. DSP Venkataramana visited the accident site, and a case has been registered. The bodies have been transferred to the GGH in Kavali for post-mortem examination.

Jagan only politician to fulfil 99% promises: YSRCP MLA

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The ruling party MLA TJR Sudhakar Babu said that CM Jagan Mohan Reddy is the only politician to implement the 99 per cent manifesto and challenged to prove it. He asked the opposition for an open discussion on the manifesto. Speaking to the media, the MLA objected to the derogatory remarks calling CM Jagan a Bandipotu (a dacoit) and asked if the CM became a bandit who distributed Rs 2.75 lakh crores for the welfare of the poor in the past five years in the YSRC government.

He called Chandrababu as a Bandipotu, who turned all the schemes into scams during his 14-year rule and challenged that he would prove that 95 per cent of what Naidu says are lies. He said that retired IAS officers are remov-



ing masks with the name of Ex-IAS fuming venom on YSRC in the name of Citizen for Democracy.

He pointed out that if Chandrababu is the Chief Minister, they (ex-IAS) will get benefits, so they are supporting Naidu in spreading lies on the Jagan government. He alleged that there was a conspiracy to physically attack Chief Minister Jagan in Vijayawada to kill the Chief Minister. He said that Naidu and his cronies resorted to

conspiracies tearing that he was confronting these bandit gangs and stripped them of their clothes regarding their corruption and illegalities.

Sudhakar Babu stated that there is a festive atmosphere in any village as a huge number of people are coming for Jagan's yatra. He further stated that supporters of Telugu Desam who can't bear to see it are taking off their masks one by one and fuming poison on the Jagan government.

He recalled that Naidu set up gangs of robbers in villages in the name of Janmabhoomi Committees who collected bribes for bathrooms, pensions or small certificates. He stated that Pawan Kalyan is an anti-social element and a monster in the form of an anthropomorphism who made riots, castes and divisions in the society and was creating political violence.

Aditya Srivastava gets top...

Continued on Page 1

Commission (UPSC) for appointment to various services. Congratulating the successful candidates, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said their efforts will shape the future of the nation in the

times to come.

In his posts on X, the prime minister also reached out to the unsuccessful aspirants for the coveted government services, saying they have chances ahead to succeed while noting that India is rich with opportunities where their talents

can truly shine.

Three of the top five rank holders -- Srivastava, Ramkumar and Ruhani -- are IPS trainees and currently undergoing training at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy in Telangana, officials said.

Sunitha diverting course...

Continued from Page 1

Avinash raised questions about the motives behind this action, particularly given the sidelining of Viveka's close associates, Sunil Yadav and Uma Shankar Gangireddy, by the same individuals.

Avinash highlighted the inconsistency in Sunitha's statements, noting her denial of Vivekananda Reddy's connections with Sunil Yadav and Umashankar Gangireddy, despite evidence suggesting otherwise.

Avinash then directed attention to the initial propagation of the 'heart attack theory'. He claimed that Sunitha was aware of the injuries on Viveka's body

when informed by Krishna Reddy in the morning but chose to conceal this information. He cited Sunitha's statement to the SIT, where she acknowledged Krishna Reddy informing them about the injuries but attributed them to a heart attack due to Viveka's previous health issues. However, Avinash alleged that Sunitha, along with Narreddy Rajasekhar Reddy and Sowbhagyamma, left Hyderabad together and deliberately concealed Viveka's murder, even displaying photographs of the body to others without informing the police. Avinash asserted there was a conspiracy to suppress the truth and implicate him in the case.

Avinash vehemently dis-

missed Sunitha's assertion that Viveka was murdered over an MP ticket. He argued that Viveka had campaigned for him until his last moments and had expressed his desire for his victory. Avinash also pointed out that he had already been granted the MP ticket in 2014 and 2019, rendering the notion of the murder being linked to the ticket baseless. Avinash questioned Sunitha's newfound camaraderie with Viveka's rival, BTech Ravi, accusing her and her associates of attempting to coerce false statements from various individuals, including Lakshmi Devamma, Jagadish Reddy, and Lakshmi Devi's son, to implicate him in the case.

SNCN ACHARYULU
HYDERABAD

In order to see that ant-government votes do not split, the TDP, Jana Sena and the BJP have formed an alliance to fight the ruling YSR Congress in the coming Andhra Pradesh Assembly and Lok Sabha elections. But,

in the ground level, there is no unity among the cadre of the alliance parties. A joint election campaign by the cadre of these parties is not to be seen. In addition to this discontent in the local-level leaders of these parties has become a big headache to the leaderships of these parties. It appears that the alliance has failed at the ground level. Under these circumstances, transfer of votes among the candidates of the alliance partners is doubtful. The determination of the TDP and Jana Sena leaderships was not visible in the cadre of these parties.

Meanwhile, the local leaders are burning with discontent due to losing their seat in the alliance and denial of Assembly tickets. At the same time, the followers of these leaders are also burning with discontent as their leaders have lost the chance of contesting in the Assembly elections. The alliance is not

working out as expected by the TDP and Jana Sena leaderships in fighting with the ruling YSR Congress. Several important leaders of TDP and Jana Sena left their parties and joined the YSR Congress.

In this juncture, the ruling YSR Congress is trying to cash in on the disunity in the cadre of TDP, Jana Sena and the BJP. If the alliance fails in the Assembly elections, the BJP has nothing to lose. It makes no difference to BJP if the ruling YSR Congress retains power in the Assembly elections. The BJP can restore the relations with YSR Congress at the national level.

But the situation of TDP and Jana Sena is different. If the alliance fails in the Assembly elections the political future of Chandrababu Naidu and Pawan Kalyan will fall into confusion. Chandrababu already announced that he will quit politics if the TDP will not come to power. Pawan Kalyan also may have to follow suit. Pawan Kalyan has to follow his brother Chiranjeevi when he merged the Praja Rajyam party in the Congress. Pawan Kalyan may merge the Jana Sena into the BJP under the circumstances.

Accused in attack ...

Continued from Page 1

It as a swift assault, the police remarked, "Satish executed a lightning-fast strike against CM Jagan."

The police are investigating the motive behind the stone attack on the Chief Minister, scrutinising Satish Kumar's bank account details and verifying his call records. They are also investigating any potential political affiliations, prior crim-

inal records, employment history, and whether he has benefited from any schemes under the YSRCP government.

Sources revealed that the police are interrogating Satish Kumar to determine whether the decision to throw the stone was solely his or if there were others involved. "Once all the necessary information is gathered, he will be presented before the media," the sources stated.

TODAY ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Navami: Apr 16 01:24 PM to Apr 17 03:14 PM
Dashami: Apr 17 03:14 PM to Apr 18 05:31 PM
Nakshatram: Ashlesha: Apr 17 05:16 AM to Apr 18 07:56 AM
Soola: Apr 18 11:16 AM to Apr 17 11:50 PM
Rahukalam: 12:15 PM to 1:49 PM
Yamagandam: 7:35 AM to 9:09 AM
Varjyam: 07:29 PM to 09:16 PM
Gulika: 10:42 AM to 12:15 PM
Amritakalam: None
Abhijit Muhurtham: Nil

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Partly Cloudy
Temp: 35°C
Humidity: 39%
Sunrise: 5:51 AM
Sunset: 6:23 PM
Updated: April 16, 2024 5:00 PM

Naidu stands for ...

Continued from Page 1

Highlighting the achievements of the YSRCP government, Chief Minister Jagan underscored initiatives such as RBKs, village clinics, educational reforms, and pension schemes for the elderly. He further noted the substantial financial support provided directly to women beneficiaries.

Asserting the readiness of his administration for the upcoming electoral battle, Jagan rallied the support of the people. "I am not alone in this endeavour; every household is a part of the YSRCP movement. Despite attempts by certain sections of the media to mislead the public with baseless accusations, our track

record speaks for itself."

Refuting claims of development under previous regimes, Chief Minister Jagan challenged the validity of Chandrababu Naidu's promises, citing unfulfilled commitments such as hyperloop projects and the attraction of major corporations to the state.

"In 2014, Chandrababu Naidu made grandiose pledges alongside his allies, none of which materialized. The people remember the broken promises of farm loan waivers and employment assurances. Now, these same parties are resurrecting similar assurances under new banners," remarked Chief Minister Jagan, urging voters to scrutinize records before casting their ballots.

About 50 from T states crack Civils

Continued from Page 1

I used to study 10 to 12 hours. I took coaching only for anthropology and finally cracked it in my first attempt," Ananya Reddy said. "I am very happy to crack

this exam after five years of study. This is my third attempt. On my first attempt, I got into the Indian Corporate Law Service (ICLS) while on the second attempt, I was selected for the Indian Revenue Service (IRS) in 2022.

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CPM unveils central, state poll manifesto

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

CPM State secretary V Srinivasa Rao unveiled the party's State and Central election manifesto at the Balotsav Bhavan in Vijayawada on Tuesday. The manifesto, themed 'CPM Struggle for the People's Agenda', highlights the party's commitment to addressing the pressing issues faced by the populace.

During a press briefing at the Balotsav Bhavan, Rao called upon the ruling YSRCP, the opposition TDP, and JSP, aligned with the BJP, to address 14 key questions about their governance and policies. He accused these parties of neglecting the welfare of the state and failing to prioritize the concerns of the people.

Rao criticized the lack of inclusion of people's issues in the election agendas of the YSRCP, TDP, BJP, and JSP, alleging that they were diverting attention by inciting unrest rather than addressing substantive issues.

Highlighting concerns over the implementation of the CAA, Rao demanded clarity



CPM State secretary V Srinivasa Rao and other leaders of the party released their General Election Manifesto in Vijayawada on Tuesday. Pic by Ch. Vijaya Bhaskar

from alliance parties TDP and JSP regarding their stance on the matter. He also urged the YSRCP to clarify its position on the CAA, which it purportedly supports.

Encouraging support for the INDIA bloc parties, including Congress, CPI, and CPM, Rao highlighted grievances such as the cancellation of the SC and ST Sub-Plan by the BJP-led NDA government and the absence of Minimum Support Price for agricultural products.

Rao pointedly questioned the silence of YSRCP, BJP, TDP, and JSP on the issue of

the privatisation of the Visakha Steel Plant, emphasising the need for transparency and accountability from political leaders.

He attributed the burden of increased property tax and electricity charges to the policies of both State and Central governments, particularly affecting low-income households.

Accompanying Rao at the event were CPM State secretariat members Y Venkateswara Rao, and V Venkateswarlu, along with state committee members D. Subba Rao, J. Jayaram, and K. Hari Kishore.

IMPCC meet strategises efforts to tackle fake news

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The first Inter Media Publicity Coordination Committee (IMPCC) was convened at the Central Government Offices Complex in Vijayawada on Tuesday. The meeting was chaired by Press Information Bureau (PIB) Additional Director General (ADG) Rajinder Chaudhry.

Representatives of the key government bodies and the representatives of the Railway, Postal, Income Tax, KVIC, Airport Authority, AIIMS, NYKS, NSSO, Doordarshan, All India Radio, Press Information Bureau, Central Bureau of Communication, AP State Information and Public Relations Department, Lead Bank (Union Bank of India), FCI, and School of Planning and Architecture were attended.

The primary agenda of the meeting was to strategise and align efforts for a coordinated approach to ensure outreach action in response to any fake news, misleading information etc. and also suitable propagation of the SVEEP (Systematic Voter's Education and Electoral Participation) programme.



Speaking on the occasion, PIB ADG Rajinder Chaudhry underscored the critical importance of effectively showcasing departmental schemes to the public. He said that the purpose of the meeting was to enhance comprehensive coordination and communication management among all the stakeholders in government departments, PSUs, and Media units for a better reach of government programmes to the people.

Later, he briefed about the role of the Press Information Bureau (PIB) as the nodal agency of the Government of India, with the mandate to disseminate information to the print and electronic media, on government policies, pro-

grammes, initiatives and achievements. PIB functions as an interface between the Government and the media, and also serves to provide feedback to the Government on people's reactions as reflected in the media, he added.

Further, he said the meeting decided that the members should keep a close watch on any news or information that may be misleading or false and make suitable use of the Fact Check Unit of PIB. Also, he informed that any information regarding its being genuine or otherwise could be sought at fact check WhatsApp No.91-8799711259 or group of PIB fact units or E-mailed factcheck@pib.gov.in.

Packaged commodity ads must mention quantity info: Metrology Dept

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Legal Metrology Department on Tuesday said companies advertising the price of their pre-packaged commodities must also mention their quantity and non-compliance is a violation, citing the case of Hindustan Unilever Ltd.

Selectively mentioning the price of the pre-packaged commodity and refraining from revealing its net quantity of violates Section 18 (2) of the Legal Metrology Act, 2009, an official said.



"Any advertisement mentioning the retail sale price of a pre-packaged commodity shall contain a declaration as to the net quantity or number of the commodity contained in the package in such form and manner as may be prescribed," said Andhra Pradesh Legal Metrology controller H Arun Kumar in a press release.

Kumar, who is also the civil supplies commissioner, noted the inspector of Legal Metrology, Visakhapatnam City has registered a case under Section 18 (2)

of the Legal Metrology Act, 2009 against Hindustan Unilever Ltd on October 4, 2023.

He said the inspector registered the case for not declaring the quantity of an advertisement on YouTube in connection with Bru instant coffee.

Incidentally, the global FMCG giant appealed to the controller, claiming the advertisement was telecast on a private YouTube channel and argued it was not the authorised channel of Hindustan Unilever Ltd, prompting the controller to initiate a probe.

In this backdrop, Kumar highlighted that every advertisement of packaged commodities indicating their sale price must also inform their corresponding weight.

"Such cases where MRP (maximum retail price) is only indicated without (the) corresponding net quantity is a violation of Legal Metrology provisions and consumers may take note of it and such violations may be brought to the notice of the controller," Kumar added.



No VIP darshan at Simhachalam Chandanotsavam this year

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a move ensuring equal access for devotees during the upcoming Chandanotsavam festival on May 10, the Simhachalam Temple Trust has announced the cancellation of protocol darshan (special entry for VIPs). This decision comes ahead of the Andhra Pradesh general elections, adhering to the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) guidelines.

District Collector A

Mallikarjuna led a review meeting on Tuesday, directing officials to prioritise regular darshan for devotees and strictly enforce the MCC regulations. Special arrangements have been made for the morning puja, with hereditary trustees performing rituals and offerings presented from the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD). However, general darshan will begin after 4:30 am, with no special entry allowed into the inner sanctum.

Decision comes ahead of AP general elections, adhering to Model Code of Conduct guidelines

AP makes good progress in Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

BV Rao, State Nodal Officer, Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), has said that Andhra Pradesh has been implementing ABDM and the progress so far is good. He said ABDM is aimed at digitising health records across all health institutions in the State. The State has embraced e-hospital and next-gen e-hospital for electronic Health Records (eHR), he said.

A two-day training programme organised in this regard began at Haailand on Monday, with an ABDM overview by BV Rao. He said that to further propel eHR initiatives at the grassroots-level, the State Mission Director has directed the coordination of a District Masters Training (ToT) programme. This initiative, conducted in collaboration with the NIC team, targets medical officers, nurses, pharmacists,



and lab technicians associated with the Director of Secondary Services (DSH) from all districts.

The subsequent sessions were led by PO Dr Naresh and other NIC rollout managers. Notable participants included Dr Dumpala Venkata Ravi Kiran, NHM State Programme Manager, Director of Secondary Health ABDM Nodal Officer Nagalaxmi, and project coordinators from ABDM.

The training sessions, aimed at providing hands-on training to ground-level health functionaries, will continue on Tuesday.

The objective is to equip participants with the necessary skills for the effective implementation of electronic health records.

Moreover, District Master Trainers will play a pivotal role in cascading this knowledge to their respective districts.

Students' progress reports to be distributed on April 23

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Principal Secretary, School Education, Praveen Prakash, has said that progress reports will be distributed to students on the last working day of the school on April 23. The PS said that from this year, the students need not return their textbooks to the schools.

He said after the success of last year's parent-teacher meeting held on the final day of the academic year, similar arrangements are expected this year. Like in previous years, parents will receive their child's annual exam progress report and have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress with teachers during the meeting.

Praveen Prakash said that the principals and teachers should ensure 100 per cent parent attendance at these meetings. Class teachers are responsible for reminding parents about the upcoming meeting on April 23, he said. Principals are encour-

aged to promote reading among students by recommending science and social science books from the past two academic years, both during the school year and summer vacation. Prakash emphasised the benefits of revisiting previously studied subjects, noting that it solidifies understanding and improves English comprehension through bilingual reading. All related e-books will be available on the CSE.AP.GOV.IN website.

The PS discouraged the practice of students returning their textbooks at the end of the academic year to the school libraries, emphasising that textbooks are the students' property and serve as references for the following year. Students are encouraged to take their textbooks home for further reading. He also instructed District Education Officers (DEOs) to ensure that schools do not collect textbooks under the guise of setting up libraries.

Sandeep Mandava elected as NAREDCO president

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Malaxmi Group CEO Sandeep Mandava has been unanimously elected as the central zone president of the National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO).

NAREDCO is a self-regulatory organisation under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs of the Union Government providing services in the field of real estate development. The central zone is headed by NTR, Krishna, Eluru, Bhimavaram, Kakinada and Konaseema districts.

On the occasion, Sandeep Mandava said NAREDCO will try to progress with the coordination of the Central and the State governments. He said that would represent effectively with the aim of protecting the interests of the NAREDCO members.

Parvathipuram Manyam sees dramatic drop in infant mortality with PRISM 10

Mortality rate fell from 24 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2021-2022 to eight in 2023-2024

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A health initiative in a remote tribal region of Andhra Pradesh is yielding significant results. PRISM 10 (Project for Reduction of Infant's Mortality below 10) has achieved a two-thirds reduction in infant mortality rates (IMR) within a year, offering a beacon of hope for mothers and children. "The success is a testament to community and interdepartmental collaboration," said Parvathipuram Manyam District Collector Nishant Kumar, the driving force behind PRISM 10. "We will continue

to provide personalised care and support to pregnant women. These officers conduct home visits, offer health education, and assist

with government aid programs. Collaboration with local Self-Help Groups (SHGs) further strengthens outreach efforts. The initiative goes beyond the traditional healthcare sector, emphasising collaboration with various departments. Anaemia action committees, comprising representatives from social welfare, education and local governance, work together to address health issues. This unified approach ensures coordinated efforts, ultimately improving overall health outcomes.

PRISM 10 focuses on improved prenatal and postnatal care, enhanced nutrition programmes, increased immunisation rates

Min questions CBN's commitment to Dalits'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Minister for Animal Husbandry, Dairy, and Fisheries, Dr Sidiri Appalaraju, unleashed a barrage of accusations against former TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu, shedding light on a series of alleged misdeeds under his administration.

Addressing the media at his camp office in Palasa on Tuesday, Appalaraju accused Naidu of presiding over a regime marred by corruption and favouritism. He alleged that Naidu's inner circle was embroiled in looting the state, painting a picture of financial irregularities and manipulation of funds, particularly in skill development programs, to the detriment of the state's youth.

Stating further, the Minister



highlighted the challenges faced by Dalits under Naidu's leadership and raised doubts about the former chief minister's commitment to their well-being. He highlighted discrepancies in budget allotments and develop-

ment efforts, emphasizing the stark difference between Naidu's approach and the inclusive strategies enacted by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy's administration.

Continuing his critique, Appalaraju condemned Naidu's purported negligence of vital sectors such as healthcare and education throughout his fourteen-year term, contrasting it with the advancements achieved under the present administration. He emphasized the ongoing endeavours dedicated to enhancing healthcare and educational accessibility, juxtaposing them with what he described as Naidu's shortcomings.

The Minister also aimed for Naidu's track record on infrastructure development, particularly along the coastline, where

promises supposedly went unfulfilled. He showcased the progress made under the current government, citing port expansions and harbour constructions as evidence of tangible advancement. In a direct challenge to Naidu's recent claims on industrial growth, Minister Appalaraju dared him to name a single industry brought to the state during his tenure. He emphasized the government's efforts to attract investment and promote industrialization, especially in the Uttarandhra region, where ambitious projects are underway.

Appalaraju cautioned Naidu against resorting to divisive language and personal attacks, asserting that such tactics no longer sway the people of the state.

Narsipatnam Area Hospital issues plea for urgent blood donation

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Narsipatnam Area Hospital, a vital healthcare provider in the region, is experiencing a severe blood shortage. Hospital administrators are urging the people to participate in blood donation drives to avert a potential crisis. The hospital's blood bank inventory currently stands at a critically low 16 units. This falls significantly short of the monthly requirement exceeding 100 units, jeopardising the hospital's capacity to deliver effective medical care.

Dr Neelaveni, Hospital Superintendent, issued a fervent plea to residents of Narsipatnam and neighbouring areas to embrace blood donation as a noble act. She underscored the life-saving impact of donors



and the critical need for community participation to rebuild dwindling blood reserves. The blood shortage poses a significant challenge to the hospital's ability to provide timely and potentially lifesaving interventions for a diverse patient population. The current inventory, lacking essential blood types like A positive, AB positive, O negative, B negative, and A negative, further exacerbates the strain on healthcare resources.

The ramifications of this

shortage extend beyond routine medical care, particularly impacting vulnerable populations like pregnant women, trauma victims, anaemic patients, and individuals with thalassemia and sickle cell disease. Their survival often hinges on timely access to blood transfusions, highlighting the urgent need for a coordinated community response. The onset of summer traditionally witnesses

a decline in blood donations due to seasonal trends. Student migration during summer vacations further depletes the pool of potential donors.

In response to these challenges, Dr Neelaveni has called upon volunteer organisations to organise blood donation camps and initiatives to mitigate the crisis. She emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts to address the shortfall and underscored the vital role of community solidarity in safeguarding public health.

Hospital's blood bank inventory currently stands at a critically low 16 units

ITDA equips tribal youth for Civil Services Exams

PNS ■ PADERU

In a significant step towards promoting tribal representation in the Civil Services, the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) held a crucial meeting at the Youth Training Centre on Tuesday. The session, led by Project Officer V Abhishek, provided vital guidance and inspiration to students enrolled in the organisation's free Civil Services training programme. Abhishek stressed the importance of dedicated preparation and unwavering determination for success in the upcoming Group-2 Mains examination.

Abhishek emphasised the critical role tribal candidates play in achieving diversity within the Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission (APSC). He envisioned a positive ripple effect across tribal regions, empowering unemployed individuals and instilling greater confidence within communities. Drawing inspiration from leadership excellence, Abhishek cited the exemplary career of Chief Electoral Officer Mukesh

Kumar Meena. He encouraged students to emulate Meena's dedication and perseverance in their pursuit of Civil Service positions. Notably, Abhishek highlighted the remarkable progress Meena's leadership brought about in three districts of Rajasthan.

The session offered not just motivation but also practical guidance. Participants gained valuable insights on crucial subjects like geography and the Economic Survey of Andhra Pradesh. Regular examinations were implemented to assess their readiness for the Group-2 Mains, ensuring a comprehensive approach to preparation.

L. Rajani, Assistant Tribal Welfare Officer, actively participated in the programme, reflecting the collaborative effort undertaken by ITDA to support and mentor aspiring tribal civil servants. Additionally, ITDA announced plans to showcase success stories, including those from Paderu, to serve as a constant source of motivation for students across the network of 117 tribal welfare ashram schools.



Neutral voters bound to see Modi as ultimate beneficiary!

Neutral voters will remain indecisive even minutes ahead of reaching the polling booth to cast their votes! It is because they hope that the candidate to whom they cast their vote would win with their support. In other words, they want to be a deciding factor in the election.



PIN POINT

one of the strong candidates emerging victorious, is a rare phenomenon.

Where is such a peculiar political situation prevailing? Which person / party will emerge victorious with unprecedented support offered by both rivals at the State level? Who will be the ultimate beneficiary of the electoral fight? How can it be possible for one party to take advantage of a situation in which rival parties encounter fierce contest?

In an election in which clashing titans command equal public support in a peculiar political situation, neutral voters may influence the outcome of the contest. Even most experienced politicians would get confused and bite dust sometimes because of their inability to assess the situation on the ground. Ultimately, the neutral votes will succeed in including the outcome.

The situation, in which neutral voters play a vital role in decision-making that leads to

Such a situation is witnessed in Andhra Pradesh. Every political party has its own agenda in the ensuing general elections, particularly for Lok Sabha. The ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) on one side and the principal opposition Telugu Desam Party (TDP) on the other are at loggerheads. The ruling

The Congress, BJP's arch-rival party at the national level, is considered to be not at all a force in AP and BJP is fighting elections against Jagan by aligning itself with TDP and JSP. 'A friend in need is a friend indeed will be the way of approach for Jagan that can be applied to both the BJP and Congress.'

party is going it alone in the elections whereas the opposition has the advantage of forming an electoral alliance with Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Jana Sena Party (JSP). The BJP has been enjoying the status of ruling party at the national level for a decade and it is playing the role of junior partner to the TDP in AP. The BJP under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is striving to

score a hat-trick and thus dealing a deadly blow to the Congress party. The Congress party has been making all-out efforts to make its presence felt in the AP Assembly. Now coming back to the point of one party i.e. BJP's plan of action to get maximum benefit from a State like Andhra Pradesh where its presence is considered minimum. Earlier, the BJP benefited from the alliance with TDP



M D RATNA KUMAR
Senior Journalist

in erstwhile undivided AP on two occasions in two elections held in 1999 and 2014. The BJP got 7 Lok Sabha seats from AP and 12 Assembly seats in 1999 which is the biggest ever tally in its history as far as AP is concerned. The party won two LS and four Assembly seats in residual AP in 2014 in

alliance with TDP on both occasions. It is pinning its hopes on the alliance this time and also on getting a good number of seats this time also. Now in 2024, the BJP is contesting 10 Assembly and six LS seats and it expecting good results.

The TDP-led alliance that comprises BJP and JSP also would be a strength indeed for the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) if the three-party combine wins the electoral race. Surprisingly, it would benefit the same BJP in the event of YSRCP retaining power in the State. If YSRCP emerged victorious, its leader and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy may extend outside support to the BJP at the Centre helping the latter to form government at the national level. Jagan appears to be caught in a tangled web due to cases of financial offences

that include corruption, money laundering and disproportionate assets (DA) cases. No other leader in the entire country who is a sitting Chief Minister is facing such cases with serious possible repercussions. So, Jagan needs support from the Union government to safeguard himself from such serious cases of punishable offences.

In case of Congress coming to power at the Centre with the help of its alliance partners, Jagan will be compelled to become Congress' friend for the same purpose.

Any political party which will come to power at the Centre may be compelled to have a flexible approach towards Jagan as it needs his support. The former chief minister of undivided AP N Chandrababu Naidu enjoyed political proximity with national leaders like the then

prime minister Vajpayee and the deputy prime minister LK Advani because of his party's unprecedented number of 29 members in Lok Sabha.

Despite crossing swords even with BJP's alliance partners, Jagan's final possible approach towards the saffron party will be based on his party's strength in Lok Sabha.

The Congress, BJP's arch-rival party at the national level, is considered to be not at all a force in AP and BJP is fighting elections against Jagan by aligning itself with TDP and JSP. 'A friend in need is a friend indeed will be the way of approach for Jagan that can be applied to both the BJP and Congress.'

In the same way, neutral voters may be in for a shock when they are likely to realise that whomever they vote for would become a friend of Modi.

'Vote for YSRCP if you want welfare and development'

PNS ■ NANDYALA

Finance Minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy has called upon the people to vote for YSRCP if they want welfare and development.

An interactive meeting was held at Pyapili on Tuesday. Speaking on the occasion, he asked people to contemplate whether the present government had done justice to them by providing the benefits of welfare schemes.

He asked the people to see the capabilities of the candidate and not caste or religion he belonged to before electing him. He highlighted that the YSRCP government has implemented the flagship schemes including Amma Vodi, Rythu Bharosa, Vidya Deevana and Vasati Deevana transparently



and all eligible people have received the benefits of the schemes. The social security pension has been disbursed at the doorsteps during the last four and half years, he stated.

The Finance Minister has claimed that many develop-

ment works have been taken up in Pyapili during the last five years. Taking a dig at former Union Minister and TDP leader Kotla Surya Prakash Reddy, Buggana slammed that as a Union Railway Minister, Prakash Reddy failed to estab-

lish a railway coach factory. He appealed to the people not to trust the assurances being given by Chandrababu Naidu as he failed to fulfil the same after winning the elections in 2014.

The Finance Minister said that educational institutions were set up in Pyapili while an indoor stadium was constructed. The drinking water scarcity was also resolved by filling up irrigation tanks with water, he claimed. Many roads were constructed in Pyapili and drinking water is being provided to every household, Buggana Rajendranath Reddy claimed.

Nandyala YSRCP MP Candidate Pocha Brahmananda Reddy, Meat Corporation chairman Sriramulu were among those who were present.

'Fully prepared to hold transparent polls'

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

District Collector K Madhavilatha has made it clear that the government machinery has fully prepared to conduct elections transparently and all required arrangements are being made.

The Collector inaugurated the media point in the Collectorate on Tuesday. Later, addressing a press conference, flanked by SP P Jagadish, she said that all arrangements were being made to conduct elections transparently and impartially without place for violence.

She said that the nomination process begins on April 18 and ends on April 25. All arrangements have been made to accept nominations from the candidates. However, nominations will not be accepted on April 21 as the day is being Sunday. The nomination papers will be accepted from 11 am to 3 pm.

She said that to file nominations, 3 vehicles would be allowed up to 100 meters from the RO's office, and only four other people would be allowed inside the RO's chamber along with the person filing the nomination.

Collector Madhavilatha said that 41 complaints have been received on Modal Code of Conduct violations of which 39 complaints have been resolved and two were



under consideration. As many as 312 complaints were received through the Central government Seva Portal. As many as 9,644 polling staff are available in the district, she added. The Collector said that 422 Micro Observers, 16 Nodal Officers, 63 Flying Squad Teams in 3 shifts, 24 Video Survival Teams, 23 Model Code of Conduct Teams, Static Surveillance Teams 63, Video Viewing Teams 26, Accounting Teams 16, and the Media Certification and Monitoring Committee are monitoring the election process through the 24 x 7 integrated command control room.

SP Jagadish said that so far cases have been registered against 6,005 people. There are 236 licensed weapons in the district of which 177 have been deposited with the police. The SP stated that 230 critical vil-

lage and ward polling stations were identified and police flag marches have been conducted at the villages since March 1, adding that four companies of CSF have been conducting duties in the district since March 1.

He said 8 checkpoints were set up at various places and 8 more checkpoints are being established. "Since December 25, Rs 5.41 crore worth cash, liquor, drugs and other articles have been seized in the district of which Rs 1.22 crore cash, Rs 2.75 crore worth liquor and drugs worth Rs 29 lakh," the SP stated. The SP said that 367 problematic polling stations were identified and adequate security is being provided to the polling stations. Joint Collector N Tej Bharat, DRO G Narasimulu and other officials were present.

Three-pronged security being provided to EVM strong rooms

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam district Superintendent of Police Garud Sumit has said that three-pronged security with central forces has been provided to the EVMs' strong rooms.

The SP inspected the EVM strong rooms located on the campus of RISE Engineering College, and IIT on Tuesday. He reviewed the security arrangements for the EVM strong rooms with the security personnel posted there. He advised them.

The strong rooms, surrounding areas and main roads should be examined and armed arrangements should be made as per the guidelines of the Election Commission in terms of security and strong security measures should be taken, the SP told the officials.

The SP directed the officials to take steps to erect barricades around the counting centres and strong security should be established with central armed



forces and local police, adding that security guards should check the strong room and vigilance should be maintained 24x7 and the local authorities should monitor the strong rooms from time to time.

Talking to the media on the occasion, the SP said that a three-tier security has been provided to the strong rooms of EVM. Furthermore, CC cameras were installed at the strong rooms and counting centres to avoid any untoward

incidents. The SP said that there would be strong security by the police and central armed forces at the strong rooms, and safe dispatch/deposit of EVMs constituencies-wise. He ordered the officials concerned to prepare plans with the coordination of departments in this regard. RDO Subba Reddy, DSP M Kishore Babu and other officials were among those who accompanied the SP.

Graft rampant in YSRCP govt: Sharmila

PNS ■ RAYACHOTI

APCC president YS Sharmila has targeted YSRCP senior leader and Minister for Energy and Panchayat Raj Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy alleging that corruption is rampant under his direction and he did not do anything for the development of the Rayalaseema region.

Addressing an election meeting attended by a moderate crowd in Pileru on Tuesday, she said that Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy and MP PV Mithun Reddy have sway in the region and they were involved in massive corruption. She said that they promised to construct cold storage in Pileru and establish a food processing unit but they failed to fulfill the promises. YS Rayasekhara Reddy, when he was the Chief Minister, made farming festive but Naidu and Jagan Reddy made farming as waste.

"The YSRCP government is not extending subsidy to the drip irrigation equipment, it left the farming to lurch and the farmers are bearing the



brunt, she lashed out. "The farmers have become debt-ridden during the Jagan Reddy-headed regime. The input subsidy is not being paid," she lamented.

Recalling that 11 commodities used to be distributed during the YSR regime, now only rice is being given in ration shops in Jagan Reddy's regime, she lamented. Stating that the government is selling liquor and she questioned whether it is implementing prohibition. "AP has been stuck in the hands of land mafia, sand mafia and mining mafia. The government ignored development and has kneeled before the BJP leaders at the Centre,"

she flayed.

Reiterating that voting for the YSRCP and TDP amounted to voting for the BJP, Sharmila assured of granting Special Category Status to AP, if the Congress was voted to power. Both the TDP and the YSRCP deceived the people of AP for 10 years, she criticized and asked the voters not to trust the promises of the parties.

Later, addressing a huge election meeting at Madanapalle, she recalled that YSR intended to construct the Handri Neeva project and 90% of the project works had been completed during the tenure of YSR in the combined AP state.

"The YSRCP government is not extending subsidy to the drip irrigation equipment, it left the farming to lurch and the farmers are bearing the brunt," she lashed out.

The present YSRCP government failed to complete 10% of the project works, she regretted. The government also promised to establish a tomato processing unit in Madanapalle but that has not been materialized so far, she lambasted. Ridiculing Jagan Reddy "Memantha Siddham" bus yatra, Sharmila asked "Memantha Deniki Siddham".

Vontimitta temple gears up for Rama Navami

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has made extensive arrangements for the grand annual Brahmotsavam of Sri Kodandarama Swamy temple at Vontimitta in YSR Kadapa district from April 17-25 and Ankurarpanam on April 16.

The temple is also popular by the name Ekasila Nagaram, as the presiding deities were carved out in a single stone.

Among elaborate arrangements are separate queues, cool shelters, colourful rangolis and cool paintings, shining flowers and colourful lighting.

There will be daily Vahana Sevass both in the mornings and in the evenings, cultural programmes by artists of the Annamacharya project and bhajans, Kolatams and spiritual-cum-devotional discourses by HDPP.

Cyclonic circulation lies over Rayalaseema

PNS ■ GUNTUR

A cyclonic circulation lies over Rayalaseema at 1.5 km above mean sea level, the Meteorological Centre said on Tuesday.

A meteorological department weather report here, it said that heat wave conditions are likely to prevail at isolated places over North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and South Coastal Andhra Pradesh from April 17 to 21.

Hot, humid and uncomfortable weather is likely to prevail at isolated places over Rayalaseema during the next five days and in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and South Coastal Andhra Pradesh during the next 24 hours and on April 20.

Thunderstorms accompanied by lightning are likely to occur at isolated places over North Coastal Andhra Pradesh

and Rayalaseema from April 17 to 20 and in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh from April 18 to 20. Light to moderate rain or thundershowers are likely to occur at one or two places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh from April 17 to 22, in Rayalaseema from April 17 to 21 and in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh from April 18 to 21.

Dry weather is likely to prevail in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh during the next 48 hours and in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the next 24 hours. Rain occurred at one or two places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and dry weather prevailed in Rayalaseema during the last 24 hours.

The highest maximum temperature of 43 degrees Celsius was recorded at Nandyal in Rayalaseema on Monday, the report added.

TTD to release online darshan quota for July

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

TTD is all set to release the online quota for darshan, accommodation and Srivari Seva voluntary services for July.

Electronic DIP registration for Srivari Arjitha Seva tickets will be available from 10 am on April 18 till 10 am on April 20. Srivari Arjitha Seva tickets viz. Kalyanam, Unjal Seva, Arjitha Brahmotsavam and SD Seva will be available from 10 am on April 22 while Virtual Seva tickets, from 3 pm on the same day. Tirumala Angapradaakshinam tokens will be available from April 23, 10 am. Darshan and accommodation quota for Srivani Trust donors will be available from 11 am on April 23. The quota for senior citizens and physically challenged persons will be available from 3 pm on the same day.

'Lilliput' Cong govt may not last for 1 year: KCR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Chief K Chandrashekar Rao termed Congress government as "Lilliput government" during a public meeting at Sultanpur. He said, "They won and we want them to stay for 5 years so we will know black and white. But factually if we watch the Chief Minister speak, his shivering in public meetings, survey reports are coming, Congress won't get more than 2 seats in the state. In all districts farmers are revolting. In the Narayapet meeting held yesterday, if we see Chief Ministers fear and shiver, this government may not last even for 1 year in power. Who knows when will they join BJP or if CM will jump to BJP, what will happen. CM talks here one thing and in Delhi in TV says vote for BJP. What's happening, who colluded. Who is B-team of Whom?"

Terming Congress govt in Telangana as "Lilliput govt",

• Says Shiver in Revanth's voice indicates people's revolt



BRS Chief said, "Some Lilliputs also get power. These lilliputs government couldn't pay floral tributes to 125 Ft Ambedkar's statue. They closed down the gates and didn't even provide water to visitors. Isn't this arrogance or ignorance? Why are you shamelessly sitting in secretariat named after Ambedkar built by BRS? Why did you go to Yadadri which was redeveloped by BRS govt? MLA Quarters were built by BRS govt, why are the newly elected Congress MLA staying there? Will you

stop Mission kakatiya?" KCR said, "I am asking Dalits, is it okay to insult in Ambedkar, is it okay to stop Dalit Bandhu?"

KCR said that there need to give a shock to Congress govt in Lok Sabha elections. KCR gives a call to farmers to conduct post card campaign demanding Rythu Bandhu, Loan waiver and MSP

KCR said, "We demand police to do their duty. BRS will come to power again, then what will happen to you. DCP you should change. We are recording everything."

He said that DGP should start inquiry in the BRS Karimnagar karyakarta's Salvaji Madhavrao, who has been arrested over a social media post "Like you have written Bond paper during elections, now give Bonus to paddy crop", KCR said.

KCR said that Voting for BJP

is like throwing it in Manjeera river. He said he will again bring BRS government to power. "Ignorant people are questioning why Lok Sabha seats for BRS. Now BRS needs more seats in Lok Sabha. Telangana's interests can be protected only if BRS MPs are in Lok Sabha. Lilliputians sometimes come to power in politics. If people empowered them to do good, they are doing wrong things"

KCR said, "We have made water supply to Zaheerabad with Sangameshwara and Basaveshwara. Tell me why you put it in cold storage?"

KCR said, "Congress must be defeated if they want to implement the promises they gave"

He Demanded this government to immediately provide compensation, bonus, farmer's bond and loan waiver for the withered crops. He sought votes for Venkatrami Reddy as Medak candidate and Anil Kumar in Zaheerabad.

IG denies reports on AP Police Seva app

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

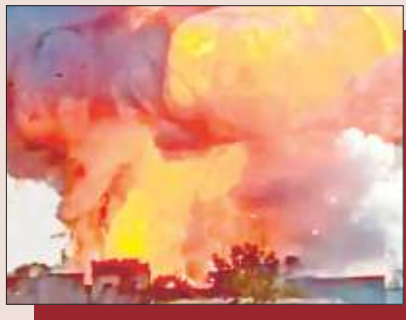
The reports appearing in various vernaculars about the AP Police Seva app for the past few days are completely untrue and false, said Harikrishna, IG, Technical Services, in a release on Tuesday. He said that the Technology Service of the Police Department is providing services and facilities for the convenience of the public through the police website and AP Police Seva app.

He said that as part of the implementation of the election code, the AP Police Seva app is currently undergoing changes and additions. The services of the app are being provided to people through the police website. There is no room for any other doubts regarding this.

INDIA CORNER

Three workers hurt in explosion at firecracker factory in Indore

Three workers sustained burn injuries in an explosion at a firecracker factory in a forest area of Madhya Pradesh's Indore district on Tuesday afternoon, police said. As per preliminary information, the explosion occurred when the workers were making 'sutli' bombs in a shed-like structure at the factory, about 5 km from Amba Chandan village, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Umakant Choudhary said. The trio have been admitted to Choithram Hospital in Indore, he said. One of the injured labourers is from Indore, while the others were from Yavatmal district in neighbouring Maharashtra, the official said. Officials from the police and local administration have reached the spot and started a probe, he said, adding that the cause for the explosion is yet to be ascertained. The DSP said the initial investigation has revealed that the factory was run by one Shakir Khan, a resident of Rau town adjacent to Indore.



SC to WB Governor : Appoint VCs from list sent by Mamata govt

The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed West Bengal Governor C V Ananda Bose, who is also the chancellor of state-run universities, to appoint six suitable persons as vice-chancellors from a list of candidates provided by the state government. Attorney General R Venkataramani, appearing for the chancellor, apprised the top court that he has approved six names from the list sent by the Mamata Banerjee government. The ruling TMC dispensation has a running feud with Bose over how the state's universities should be run. "Let these six be appointed immediately," said the bench comprising justices Surya Kant and K V Vishwanathan. It also asked the state government to send a fresh list of suitable candidates to the office of the chancellor, who may decide to appoint some more VCs from among them. The bench said it may consider setting up a search committee later for short-listing candidates.



Four get life term for killing constable in Central Delhi

More than 11 years after a Delhi Police constable was fatally stabbed in front of a brothel in Central Delhi's G B Road, a court here has sentenced four convicts to life imprisonment for his murder, saying the offence was "heinous, diabolical and barbaric". Additional Sessions Judge Virender Kumar Kharta was hearing the arguments on sentencing against the four persons -- Ashish Bahuguna alias Ashu, Suraj, Manoj and Aakash -- convicted under various Indian Penal Code offences, including murder and attempt to commit murder. According to the prosecution, the four accused had fatally stabbed constable Bijender besides causing stab injuries to two people -- Irshad and constable Sandeep -- on the intervening night of September 10 and 11, 2012. "Offences committed by the convicts are heinous, diabolical and barbaric. The trauma of the family members of deceased can be understood," the court said.



EC ON PROBE AGAINST POLITICIANS

Not correct to take steps that can overlap legal and judicial process

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the Opposition charge of being targeted by central probe agencies in the poll season, the Election Commission on Tuesday said it is committed to protecting level playing field but asserted that it is not correct to take any step that can overlap the legal and judicial process.

Several political parties from the INDIA bloc had approached the poll panel seeking its intervention in the alleged misuse of probe agencies by the government to target their leaders over graft. Following the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case linked to the alleged excise scam, the opposition parties had mounted renewed attack on the government for its alleged bid to silence their leaders ahead of parliamentary elections.

It was guided by constitutional wisdom when presented with "live situations" involving political persons which have been under active consideration and orders of the courts based on criminal investigations.

"While the Commission remained unwaveringly committed to protection of level playing field and campaign entitlement of political parties and candidates, it has not found it correct to take any step that could overlap or overrun the legal judicial process," it said.

The poll panel said though it is not obliged to do so, it has put in public domain, for the first time, its enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) during first month of its operation, along with details of action taken.

The EC said its move will help address and stop "misgivings and insinuations" coming from certain quarters, "however small or limited".



During the one-month period of the model code, 16 delegations from seven political parties met the commission to lodge their complaints on alleged violations of poll code and related matters.

Many delegations met its chief electoral officers at the state level.

Nearly 200 complaints have been filed by various political parties and candidates at the level of EC and across states. Of these, action has been taken in 169 cases, it pointed out.

The total number of complaints received from the BJP were 51, out of which action has been taken in 38 cases. Similarly, 59 complaints were lodged by the Congress, with action taken in 51 cases.

Complaints received from other parties were 90, out of which action has been taken in 80 cases, the EC added.

The poll code came into force on March 16 with the announcement of the Lok Sabha election schedule. With a month completed

since the model code came into effect, the EC said it is "broadly satisfied" with the compliance of the code by political parties. The campaign by various parties and candidates has remained "largely clutter free", it added.

At the same time, the commission said it has decided to keep under strict watch some disturbing trends and to keep special track of certain deviant candidates, leaders, and practices more than ever before.

The EC also underlined that while enforcing the model code, it has been guided by its mandated responsibility, legal premises, institutional wisdom, equality, and transparency in dealings and irrespective of status and influence of persons concerned and irrespective of political affiliations.

The poll panel also asserted that all political parties have been treated at par and time given to all even at short notice and their grievances heard patiently.

Modi has given 'guarantee' to bring UCC: Amit Shah

PNS ■ KOTDWAR (UTTARAKHAND)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given a "guarantee" to bring uniform civil code in the country on the same lines as Uttarakhand, Union Minister Amit Shah said on Tuesday.

Addressing an election rally here, Shah said right from the inception of Bharatiya Jana Sangh, its leaders had made a promise that there would be no law based on religion in this country and that there would be a Uniform Civil Code (UCC).

"For the first time in the country, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Dhami has introduced UCC in the state. Modi has given a guarantee in our 'Sankalp Patra' (manifesto) to introduce UCC in the whole country on the same lines," the BJP leader said.

He also attacked Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge for questioning the "relevance" of Kashmir issue for other states.

"Congress national president Kharge says what do the people of Uttarakhand and



Rajasthan have to do with Kashmir.

"Kharge does not know that the soldiers of Garhwal shed maximum blood to save Kashmir," Shah said at the poll rally here in favour of BJP candidate for Pauri Garhwal Lok Sabha seat Anil Baluni.

He said during Congress-led UPA anyone would come from Pakistan and return after setting off explosions but after Narendra Modi took over, Pakistan got a fitting retaliation for its dastardly attacks in Uri and Pulwama through surgical and air strikes which eliminated terrorists on their turf.

Shah also accused the Congress of using "abusive words" against former CDS Bipin Rawat, saying the opposition party's culture allowed it to insult a brave warrior like him.

He also dismissed Kharge's claim that a third term for Modi as PM would end reservation in the country.

"Kharge says reservation would go away if Modi becomes PM for a third time. Modi ji is the biggest supporter of reservation. We would neither withdraw reservation nor let anyone do it," Shah said.

FADNAVIS TAKES DIG AT INDIA BLOC

In Rahul Gandhi's train, every ally thinks it's the engine

PNS ■ SOLAPUR

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Tuesday used the analogy of a train to take a dig at the opposition INDIA bloc, saying that in Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's train, every ally considers itself to be the engine.

He also hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi, calling him the "powerful engine of development" followed by the coaches of allies, including the Shiv Sena, NCP, RPI (Athawale) and other regional parties.

Fadnavis, who was campaigning for BJP candidates Ram Satpute and Ranjit Naik-Nimbalkar, said persons from all castes and religions have seats in the Mahayuti's train. Satpute and Nimbalkar filed their nominations from the Solapur and Madha Lok Sabha constituencies, respectively.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the engine of our development. Modiji is a powerful engine, followed by other coaches comprising Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, Ajit Pawar's NCP, Ramdas Athawale's RPI and other regional parties. Every person from every caste and religion has a seat onboard Mahayuti's train," Fadnavis



said. The 'Mahayuti' (grand alliance) comprises the ruling BJP, Shiv Sena led by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, and the Ajit Pawar-headed Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).

Targeting the INDIA bloc, the BJP leader said, "On the other side, there is Rahul Gandhi's train, of which NCP (SP) supreme Sharad Pawar, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, TMC's Mamata Banerjee and DMK chief M K Stalin think they are the engine."

PM Modi is the only one who works for the country's progress, he said.

"This year's election is about making Narendra Modi the Prime Minister for the third time," Fadnavis said.

Cong 'expert' in misleading public: Sitharaman

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman here on Tuesday targeted the Congress, saying it is an "expert" in misleading the public by making promises just for the sake of elections and forgetting them after taking votes.

"The Congress party is an expert in making promises just for the sake of elections, misleading the public, taking votes and then forgetting about it," Sitharaman told reporters at a press conference.

She also hit out at the previous Ashok Gehlot government in Rajasthan over restoring the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) for government employees.

She said, "The previous Congress government in the state made a wrong and impossible promise and tried to implement it even though its own party people had told it not to do so." She said the Congress made the same promise in the Himachal Pradesh elections and won too.

After its implementation here, Rajasthan's former chief minister said the money that went to the central pool through the National Pension Scheme should be returned.

Farmers disillusioned with political parties: Rakesh Tikait

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Asserting that farmers are disillusioned with all political parties, prominent farmer leader Rakesh Tikait on Tuesday said people should follow their conscience by voting for the right candidates in the Lok Sabha elections.

Refusing to extend open support to any political party, Tikait said he won't even tell his wife whom to vote for when the model code of conduct is in place but those who know him already know which party or candidate is good for farmers.

In an exclusive interaction, Tikait, one of the key faces of the 2020-21 farmers' protest against the now-scrapped sugarcane laws, also claimed that peo-



ple are not voting for the BJP but the party may still win as he alleged manipulation in the process.

He claimed that today's BJP is no more just a political party and it has become a front for rich industrialists who are out to grab farmers' lands.

"Farmers ka moh-bhang ho gaya hai, lekin wo hataash nahin hain (Farmers are disillusioned but they have not lost

hope). They'll cast their votes and come back to join the protest," he said when asked whether farmers and the Jat community have become disillusioned with all parties including BJP, Congress, SP, BSP and RLD.

The Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader said the farmers can vote for anyone as per their conscience but they must stay with the movement.

"NOTA (None of the above) should not be pressed. Only those press the NOTA button who have lost any hope," Tikait said. Asked what would be his advice for farmers and his community, the prominent Jat leader said, "We have told people to vote as per their conscience."

Coast Guard ship rescues stranded fishing boat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

An Indian Coast Guard ship on Tuesday rescued a fishing boat, which had encountered engine failure nearly 215 nautical miles from Karwar in Karnataka, officials said. ICG Ship Savitribai Phule had swiftly responded to a distress call from Indian Fishing Boat (IFB) 'Rosary' on April 13, and soon, established communication with the



boat amid adverse sea conditions, they said. The ship successfully rescued 'Rosary', which had encountered engine failure approximately 215 nautical miles from Karwar, the Defence Ministry said in a statement. "Upon its arrival, the boarding team of the ICG ship made efforts to fix the seized engine, before the boat was rendered immobile," it said. "The fishing boat was, then, towed towards Karwar with the help of Coast Guard District Headquarters (Karnataka), in collaboration with the fisheries department," the statement said.

'Accused opened fire outside Salman Khan's house in bid to kill him'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Mumbai police's crime branch on Tuesday submitted to a local court that the two arrested accused opened fire outside Bollywood superstar Salman Khan's house here "in an attempt to kill him".

The accused, Vicky Gupta (24) and Sagar Pal (21), both residents of Bihar, were on the run after the firing incident outside Khan's house at the Galaxy Apartment in Bandra area here early Sunday morning.

They were apprehended late Monday night from Mata No Madh village in Gujarat's Kutch district and later brought to Mumbai. As per the police, Gupta was riding the motorcycle at the time of the incident and Pal, who was riding pillion, had fired shots at the actor's house.

The duo was produced on Tuesday before a magistrate's court here.

The police sought their custody for 14 days on the ground that custodial interrogation was required to unearth the

conspiracy and to identify the mastermind behind the incident.

Additional chief metropolitan magistrate L S Paden remanded the two accused in police custody till April 25.

The crime branch in its remand note submitted to the court said the duo had opened fire outside Khan's residence with an intention to kill him.

"The two accused opened fire outside Salman Khan's house in an attempt to kill the actor. Custodial interrogation is required to identify the

mastermind and to also ascertain the motive," the note said.

The police said a preliminary probe has established that the duo "played an active role in the alleged offence".

During preliminary questioning, the two arrested accused accepted that they had carried out the firing, the police said.

"Custody of the accused is required to probe if the accused had plans to attack anyone else other than Salman Khan," the police said in their remand note.



'Breast cancer may cause a million deaths a year'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Breast cancer is now the world's most common carcinogenic disease with the ailment likely to cause a million deaths a year by 2040, according to a new Lancet Commission on breast cancer. Around 7.8 million women were diagnosed with breast cancer in the last five years until 2020 and about 685,000 women died from the disease the same year, it said.

Further, in 2020, women around the world on average had a 1 in 12 risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer before turning 75 years old, and this incidence is rising, researchers found. They estimated that cases

of breast cancer cases will increase from 2.3 million in 2020 to more than 3 million by 2040, with low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) being "disproportionately affected".

By 2040, deaths due to the disease will be a million a year, the team added.

"This is neither acceptable nor inevitable as action now can prevent many of these future cancers," the authors wrote.

Knowledge gaps, such as unknown numbers of women with metastatic breast cancer in which the cancer spreads to other parts, continue to prevent effective action, they said.

The scale of suffering associated with breast cancer, along



with other costs, are not well-measured, with the society and policymakers only seeing the tip of an iceberg," the authors of the commission said.

"Recent improvements in breast cancer survival represent a great success of modern medicine," said the commission's

lead author, Charlotte Coles, University of Cambridge, UK, referring to 40 per cent reduced deaths due to the disease achieved in some high-income countries (HICs). "However, we can't ignore how many patients are being systematically left behind," said Coles.

The commission builds on previous evidence, presents new data, and integrates patient voices to shed light on a large unseen burden, according to the authors. It points to "glaring inequities" and suffering from symptoms, despair and financial burden due to breast cancer, which are often "hidden and inadequately addressed".

Laying out recommendations for tackling these challenges in breast cancer, the commission suggested better communication between patients and health professionals as a crucial intervention that could improve quality of life, body image, and adherence to therapy, and positively impact survival.

'India aims to achieve debris-free space missions by 2030'

PNS ■ BENGALURU

ISRO Chairman Somanath on Tuesday announced that India aims to achieve debris-free space missions by 2030.

Addressing the 42nd Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) annual meet here, he said ISRO has a very clearly laid out plan as far as space exploration and space utilisation are concerned for the coming days.

"It is one of the intent or initiative of India to ensure that debris-free space missions are conducted so as to ensure the sustainability of space. I would



like to make this initiative a declaration today, possibly this can be discussed and debated in the coming days," Somanath, also Secretary in the Department of Space, said.

"This initiative aims to achieve debris-free space mis-

sions by all Indian space actors, governmental and non-governmental, by 2030. India also encourages all state space actors to follow this initiative for long-term sustainability of outer space," he said. "Currently, we have 54 spacecraft in orbit, plus there are non-functional objects."

"We have been taking very careful action wherever it is possible to dispose of or remove the space objects from its active role once it is over to deorbit and bringing them to a safe location has been one of the important topics that we have been taking action all throughout," he said.



FIRST COLUMN STRIVE TO DEVELOP FAITH

The pursuit of guidance from the Divine holds the promise of revelation



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Let me start with why we often don't endeavour to develop faith, as is commonly observed. Lord Krishna has aptly stated, "Out of thousands of men, hardly anyone strives for perfection" (The Bhagavad Gita 7.3). The essence of a perfect life lies in becoming a devotee of God, for He is the ultimate controller of the entire world. There exist numerous reasons, or perhaps excuses, for this reluctance. Beginning with a straightforward argument: who has truly seen Him? If God holds such significance, why does He not present Himself so that we may behold Him? In this age of the internet, one might argue that He could easily make His presence felt. Some may argue that God is unmanifest, yet we lack any tangible experience of such an entity. If God is indeed a reality without whom we cannot thrive, then why do some ideologies, such as communism, appear to manage so well, especially in certain countries? Why is there pervasive poverty and suffering in the world? If God possesses omnipotence as described, why does He not rectify these injustices? We encounter many ascetics on the streets, leading some to conclude that only those who have failed turn to God, while they believe they can manage without divine intervention. Perhaps they might consider turning to God later if the need arises. These excuses, however, varied, ultimately lead us to a sense of emptiness. In reality, it is often our ego that serves as the primary hindrance. We struggle to accept an entity so vast and incomprehensible, leaving us feeling insignificant and powerless. Another significant barrier lies in the acceptance of spiritual practices, which may seem unfamiliar and daunting. Yet, all these excuses only serve to deepen our sense of emptiness. Why not begin by praying for what we deeply desire? Even a child can pray and often does. If our prayers are sincere and aligned with righteousness, God may consider them.



The next step involves seeking guidance from God, who is eager to provide it. Given His omniscience, God communicates in various ways; to advanced devotees, He may impart intuition or even speak directly, while beginners may receive guidance through mediums such as family members, friends, or even seemingly random occurrences like messages in newspapers. It should be evident that following God's instructions is a wise course of action, yielding manifold benefits. Let us now explore some basic practices that are both accessible and highly rewarding. My personal favourite is 'darshan' — simply gazing upon an image or idol of God.

Observing God's benevolent countenance, we can feel His attraction towards us. However, it's crucial to remember that adherence to righteousness, or 'dharma', is of paramount importance to God. While deity forms or images serve as focal points, God's presence transcends physical limitations, permeating all existence. Another simple yet profound practice is offering 'namaskar' — paying homage to God with folded hands. This act serves to humble our egos, which often obstruct our connection with the divine and hinder our interactions with fellow beings. As we persist in these practices, we will gradually experience God's responses, not necessarily through miraculous events, but through subtle yet discernible manifestations. We can liken this experience to connecting to the internet—where there is a network, there is connectivity. Similarly, God, omnipresent as He is, can be experienced in various ways. God's subtle presence is accessible to all. He eagerly awaits our approach, desiring nothing but our well-being. Let us cast aside our doubts and excuses and wholeheartedly commit to forging a deeper connection with the divine.

(The writer is a spiritual guide; views are personal)

Iran strikes threaten regional stability

The assault, though primarily symbolic in nature, highlights the mounting tensions in the region. However, the US endeavours to uphold a balance of power



NILANTHA
ILANGAMUWA



REUTERS

At a time when people in several countries in South Asia and East Asia were celebrating the traditional new year, Iran, the second-largest country in West Asia, launched a series of missile attacks targeting its arch-enemy Israel. Jordan and Saudi Arabia supported Israel and intercepted most of the missiles fired by Iran. The attack appears to be symbolic, aimed at boosting the morale of organisations such as Hamas in Palestine, Yemen's Houthis, pro-Iranian militias in Iraq and Hezbollah in Lebanon, all of which have declared war against Israel in West Asia, as well as countries like Lebanon and Syria, rather than engaging in an official war against Israel. This attack serves as a morale booster. Shortly after the attack, Hamas rejected the Cairo agreement, a result of discussions between top intelligence agencies, the CIA and Mossad, together with other stakeholders mediated by Egypt, concerning Israeli hostages.

However, many encouraged Israel to respond quickly. However, United States President Biden stated that he would not yield if attacks were made against Iran. It is seen as a matter of prior agreement by both parties rather than a threat. The truth is, that the US administration cannot afford to assist Israel in another war at this point. At a time when the country's reputation has been tarnished at the international level and when Biden's political power is extremely weak if the United States makes such an unwise decision, it will have to face unprecedented consequences shortly, similar to how the United States has caused irreversible damage to world peace and order. Elon Musk's recent statement that the possibility of the United States becoming the victim of a September 11-style surprise attack is very high seems to hold deep truth. The consequences of these conflicts may not only affect Washington or New York but also American military bases around the world. The likelihood of an attack similar to the one on Pearl Harbor is high. The United States cannot always continue to create military conflicts in other countries for its war trade and keep its superpower status as it desires. The superpower, as history has proven, will inevitably crumble at any



THE ATTACK BY IRAN WAS RETALIATION. IT IS A RESPONSE TO THE ISRAELI PROVOCATION AT THE IRANIAN CONSULATE IN SYRIA, A GROSS VIOLATION OF THE VIENNA CONVENTION WHICH CLAIMED THE LIVES OF THE IRANIAN REVOLUTIONARY GUARD CORPS

given point. Compared to its lifespan, the United States is a relatively young superpower in the grand scheme of civilisation, considering the collapse of great empires. Throughout history, mighty empires have risen and fallen, leaving lasting legacies. The Roman Empire, spanning from 27 BC to AD 476, peaked in the 2nd century AD, but internal strife, economic instability and external invasions, such as by the Visigoths and Vandals, led to its fragmentation. The Ottoman Empire, dominant in the 16th and 17th centuries across the Eastern Mediterranean, North Africa and Western Asia, declined due to internal conflicts and challenges from European powers like Russia and Austria. The Mongol Empire, founded by Genghis Khan in the 13th century, stretched from Eastern Europe to the Pacific Ocean, but internal divisions and the death of key leaders led to its fragmentation by the late 14th century. Lastly, the British Empire, spanning from the 16th to the 20th century, faced economic strain and nationalist movements, ultimately dissolving due to internal weakness and external pressures. These collapses, driven by political, military and socioeconomic factors, reshaped the world, underscoring the transient nature of power and the enduring impact of history on modern geopolitics and civilisation.

However, the deep state of the United States has certainly studied and comprehended global history better than many other countries. That is why the basic strategy of the United States has been to create new wars while talking about peace and turn those wars into long-term tragedies to keep uncertainties. This strategy can weaken its rivals and maintain its power continuously. These issues become clear when many conflicts are understood in their political and economic context. The ideology that Israel has contin-

uously pursued against Iran in national and international forums is not a single opinion or rivalry of Israel, but it is a long-term propagation through carefully selected facts and objectives together with the United States. On one hand, the West fuels wars against hostile countries. On the other, it manufactures internal crises in those nations by imposing international sanctions. This remains a persistent behaviour of the West.

The thing that should not be forgotten here is that the attack by Iran was a retaliation. It is a response to the Israeli provocation on the Iranian consulate in Syria, a gross violation of the Vienna Convention, which claimed the lives of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. Iran's calculation, as some analysts pointed out, was that if it did not respond, Israel would seek to push back and degrade the axis of resistance across the region. However, it is unreasonable to think that Israel miscalculated its attack on the Iranian diplomatic site in Syria as Israel continues to keep deep intelligence penetration of IRGC and Hezbollah networks in Syria, making those networks highly vulnerable to Israeli attacks. Iran must uphold its reputation among its allies and address internal political crises effectively. Therefore, prioritising attacks conducted through proxies is advisable, while occasional skirmishes from both sides should be acknowledged.

Moreover, it is very important to consider the government's domestic policies and openly mention Iran's inherent weaknesses amid escalating tensions among some politicians and officials in Iran. They highlighted the many crises facing the Iranian government and warned against engaging in direct conflict with Israel without first addressing these pressing issues, which they argued would only worsen the situation. They emphasised the impor-

tance of prudent governance and effective crisis management and the need to mitigate ongoing crises to prevent system collapse.

Economic challenges and psychological instability in society are urgent issues that need to be addressed as they are now breeding grounds for enemy penetrations. They advocated the adoption of conciliatory policies to reduce tensions and promote harmony and empathy in Iranian society. The regime's repressive domestic policies, particularly regarding the mandatory hijab enforcement campaign, have fuelled widespread discontent and delegitimised the government. Recent anti-Israel actions, like seizing a cargo ship, have caused Iran's markets to react negatively. The national currency's value has hit a record low. President Ibrahim Raisi faces criticism and calls for a cabinet reshuffle to address economic hardships affecting many Iranians.

Over the years, Israel has demonstrated its capability in targeting Iranian nuclear scientists and infrastructure. Notably, the Stuxnet cyber-attack, jointly orchestrated by the United States and Israel, delivered a significant blow to Iran's nuclear ambitions. This proves that national interests are never compromised for domestic political issues, except for former President Trump. Stuxnet marked a pivotal moment, ushering in the era of cyberwarfare, where lines of code wielded the power to reshape geopolitical landscapes. Its impact reverberated globally, highlighting the evolving nature of warfare and the formidable role of technology in modern conflicts. In this situation, Iran cannot continue to be silent. It must prove its power numerically. Therefore, the recent attack was more a reputational-preservation move than a declaration of war.

(The writer is a Sri Lankan Journalist. Views are personal)

Uttarakhand women: Agents of change in State politics

From leading environmental crusades to confronting social injustices head-on, they embody the spirit of the region, epitomising resilience and fortitude

Women in Uttarakhand are renowned for their extraordinary resilience and hard work, characteristics deeply rooted in their Himalayan heritage. Despite grappling with the challenges of life in this rugged terrain, Uttarakhand's women have consistently been at the forefront of social and environmental movements, epitomised by figures like Gaura Devi of the Chipko movement and Tinchari Mai (Deepa Nautiyal), who spearheaded the Anti-Liquor movement. These women have fearlessly confronted injustice, embodying the spirit of Uttarakhand. This article seeks to underscore the political engagement of women in Uttarakhand, shedding light on their role in bol-



SHEETAL ARYA

stering democracy. The political participation of women in Uttarakhand can be delineated into two primary spheres: first, women assuming leadership positions within the political domain and second, women exercising their electoral rights as voters. Since the inception of the state, the representation of women in the legislative assembly has seen a significant

albeit gradual rise. From four women members in the first assembly, the number has increased by 50% in the 2022 elections, marking a commendable stride. However, despite this progress, women remain a minority in the assembly, constituting a mere fraction of the total members. Presently, the legislative assembly boasts eight women members, including three Dalit women, the highest number in Uttarakhand's history. Notably, Smt. Ritu Khanduri serves as the speaker, while Smt. Rekha Arya is the lone female minister in the cabinet. Despite these advancements, the disparity in political representation persists, underscoring the challenges women face in accessing political power. While women's representa-

tion in the parliamentary arena remains scant, with only two female MPs out of eight, the discrepancy between the female population (49%) and their political representation is stark. Despite their active participation in grassroots movements, women's presence in formal politics remains disproportionately low. Women in Uttarakhand constitute the backbone of the rural economy, grappling with issues like migration, environmental degradation and inadequate healthcare services. However, societal norms and economic constraints often deter their political involvement. Moreover, political parties' reluctance to field female candidates exacerbates this disparity. For instance, in the upcoming 2024 Lok Sabha



elections, the Congress has not nominated any female candidates, while the BJP has nominated only one, Mrs. Mala Rajya Laxmi Shah. Nevertheless, women voters in Uttarakhand have emerged as a formidable force, outnumbering men in recent elections. Their increasing political awareness, fueled by issues

coupled with higher literacy rates and government initiatives like reservation quotas, has galvanized their participation. Policies such as 30% horizontal reservation in government jobs and 50% reservation in Panchayats have bolstered women's political agency, enabling them to assume leadership roles at the grassroots level.

In the run-up to the 2024 Parliamentary elections, both major parties are vying for women's support, employing diverse strategies. Congress has pledged financial assistance and job reservations for women, emphasizing women's security and justice. Conversely, the BJP highlights its implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) as a milestone for women's rights,

coupled with grassroots mobilization efforts.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal among women voters, attributed to his grassroots connect and initiatives like the Women Reservation Bill, further consolidates BJP's electoral prospects. The "Modi factor" has resonated with Uttarakhand's women, contributing to BJP's continued dominance since 2017.

To bolster women's empowerment, the state government has allocated a substantial gender budget for 2024-25, earmarked for bridging gender disparities and promoting equality. Additionally, measures like deploying women employees to oversee polling booths and facilitating pregnant women's access to voting booths underscore the commitment to

inclusive governance. In conclusion, Dr Ambedkar's assertion that a community's progress is contingent upon women's advancement holds for Uttarakhand. While women have historically been instrumental in social movements, their underrepresentation in formal politics remains a pressing concern. Addressing these challenges is imperative for ensuring women's political representation and expediting the state's development. As Uttarakhand gears up for the upcoming Chunarav Kauthig, with women comprising 48.1 per cent of the electorate, their increased participation promises to be a harbinger of democracy's triumph in the state.

(The writer is a research scholar; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

'Apple's iPhone exports from India almost doubled'

Apple's iPhone exports from India almost doubled to US\$ 12.1 billion in 2023-24 from US\$ 6.27 billion in the preceding fiscal, trade intelligence platform The Trade Vision said on Tuesday. The total smartphone exports from India surged to US\$ 16.5 billion in 2023-24, up from US\$ 12 billion in the preceding year. This surge underscores the broader impact of Apple's presence on the industry, driving growth and innovation in the Indian manufacturing ecosystem, the company stated. Apple's iPhone exports from India witnessed a staggering increase from US\$ 6.27 billion in the fiscal year 2022-23 to US\$ 12.1 billion in 2023-24, representing a massive surge of nearly 100 per cent. This exponential growth underscores the pivotal role that India now plays in Apple's global supply chain, The Trade Vision LLC stated. "Apple's decision to ramp up its manufacturing operations in India has been motivated by various factors, including the need to diversify its supply chain, mitigate risks associated with geopolitical tensions, and capitalise on India's burgeoning consumer market."



Rupee falls 14 paise to close at 83.57 against US dollar

The rupee depreciated 14 paise to close at 83.57 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, weighed down by a negative trend in domestic equities and a strong greenback against major crosses overseas amid geopolitical tensions. Forex traders said a weak appetite for riskier assets and recent foreign capital outflows also dragged down the local unit. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.51 and finally settled at 83.57 (provisional), registering a loss of 14 paise from its previous close. On Monday, the rupee declined 6 paise to settle at 83.44 against the US dollar. According to Anuj Choudhary Research Analyst, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, the 10-year US bond yields rose to 4.66 per cent, the highest since November 2023. Weak domestic markets and simmering geopolitical tensions too weighed on the rupee.



PHF Leasing raises US\$ 10 mn in equity, debt

PHF Leasing Ltd, a deposit accepting NBFC, on Tuesday said it has raised US\$ 10 million capital through a mix of equity and debt which will be used for expanding into newer geographies. This includes around 60 per cent equity and 40 per cent debt, the Jalandhar-headquartered company said in a release. It offers mortgage loans against immovable property (LAP) and financing e-vehicles, primarily e-rickshaws, e-loaders and EV-2 wheelers. "The US\$ 6 million equity infusion will help us maintain a healthy debt equity ratio as per industry norms. We will be utilising the funds to reach newer geographies and maintaining an over 50 per cent year-on-year growth", said Shalaya Gupta, CEO, PHF Leasing. The debt has been raised from existing lenders as well as by onboarding new lenders. Total 82 individuals and companies participated in the equity raising round and the company onboarded three new lenders in March 2024 including Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company, SMC Moneywise and Vivriti Financial.



IMF raises India's growth projection to 6.8 per cent

bullish domestic demand conditions and a rising working-age population

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

The International Monetary Fund on Tuesday raised India's growth projection to 6.8 per cent from its January forecast of 6.5 per cent citing bullish domestic demand conditions and a rising working-age population.

With this, India continues to be the fastest growing economy of the world, ahead of China's growth projection of 4.6 per cent during the same period. "Growth in India is projected to remain strong at 6.8 per cent in 2024 and 6.5 per cent in 2025, with the robustness reflecting continuing strength in domestic demand and a rising working-age population," said the latest edition of the World Economic Outlook released by the IMF ahead of



"Growth in India is projected to remain strong at 6.8 per cent in 2024 and 6.5 per cent in 2025, with the robustness reflecting continuing strength in domestic demand and a rising working-age population," said the latest edition of the annual spring meetings of the IMF and the World Bank.

At the same time, growth in emerging and developing Asia is expected to fall from an esti-

ated 5.6 per cent in 2023 to 5.2 per cent in 2024 and 4.9 per cent in 2025, a slight upward revision compared with the January 2024 WEO Update. IMF in its January update had projected 6.5 per cent

as the positive effects of one-off factors -- including the post pandemic boost to consumption and fiscal stimulus -- ease and weakness in the property sector persists," the IMF said.

Global growth, estimated at 3.2 per cent in 2023, is projected to continue at the same pace in 2024 and 2025. The forecast for 2024 is revised up by 0.1 percentage point from the January 2024 WEO Update, and by 0.3 percentage point from the October 2023 WEO, the IMF said.

Policymakers should prioritize steps toward greater economic resilience such as strengthening government finances and revitalizing economic growth prospects, said Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, chief economist of the IMF.

growth for India in 2024. "Growth in China is projected to slow from 5.2 per cent in 2023 to 4.6 per cent in 2024 and 4.1 per cent in 2025,

Gold, silver prices hit fresh peaks

Extending gains for the second day in a row, gold and silver prices hit fresh all-time high levels on Tuesday, tracking strong trends in the international markets amid fears of escalating tensions in the Middle East.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

According to HDFC Securities, gold prices zoomed Rs 700 to hit its lifetime high of Rs 73,750 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday.

It had closed at Rs 73,050 per 10 grams on Monday. Similarly, silver price jumped Rs 800 to hit a record high of Rs 86,500 per kg.

India fastest growing economy during last 3 financial years: FM

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said here on Tuesday that India has been the fastest growing economy in the last three consecutive financial years and this growth can continue in the coming years as well.

She said the next 25 years will be critical for India. In the financial year 2023-24, India witnessed a growth rate of eight per cent in three quarters and is expecting a similar level of growth in the fourth quarter, she said, adding it has been a sustainable growth.



"India has been the fastest growing economy in the last three consecutive financial years and this growth can continue in the coming years as

well. The next 25 years will be very critical for India," Sitharaman said in a dialogue programme with industrialists and businessmen.

She said that foreign investors are coming to invest in India due to the credibility of its economy.

"Due to the economic policy, larger macroeconomic stability, stable government, stable taxation policy, transparent tenders and procurement, there has been immense credibility of India's economy abroad. So, the investors are coming here to invest," she said.

Power Grid Corp bags 3 transmission projects

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Power Grid Corporation on Tuesday said it has bagged three inter-state transmission projects under tariff-based competitive bidding.

The three projects would help evacuate power from renewable energy projects in Rajasthan and Gujarat, the company said in a BSE filing.

The first project is Transmission System for evacuation of power from Rajasthan (Jaisalmer/Barmer Complex).

It comprises establishment of new 765/400/220 kV pooling



substation at Mandasaur, 765kV D/C Transmission Line and extension of associated bays at existing substation in Madhya Pradesh. The second project -- Transmission System for Evacuation of Power from potential renewable energy zone at Khavda in Gujarat -- com-

prises augmentation works at existing substation in the state.

The third project is Transmission System for evacuation of power from Rajasthan involving the establishment of new 765 kV substation at Rishabhdeo, 765kV D/C transmission lines and extension of associated bays at other substations in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd has been declared as the successful bidder under tariff-based competitive bidding to establish inter-state transmission system for three projects on build, own operate and transfer (BOOT), it stated.

Equity investors become poorer by Rs 7.93 Lcr in 3 days



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Investors' wealth tumbled Rs 7.93 lakh crore in three days of market crash amid escalating tensions in the Middle East and weak global trends.

Continuing its downward trend for the third day running on Tuesday, the 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 456.10 points or 0.62 per cent to settle at 72,943.68. During the day, it slumped 714.75 points or 0.97 per cent to 72,685.03.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of BSE-listed companies was eroded by Rs 7,93,529.61 crore to Rs 3,94,25,823.46 (US\$ 4.75 trillion) in three days.

In the past three days, the BSE benchmark tanked 2,094.47 points or 2.79 per cent.

"Markets extended their losing streak for a third straight session on the back of weak global cues as a sharp rise in US bond yields due to rising Middle East tensions has made equity markets less attractive and prompted investors to resort to profit-taking."

"Investors are fearing that the ongoing conflict could fuel buoyancy in crude oil prices and in turn weigh on inflation," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research) at Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

From the Sensex basket, Infosys, IndusInd Bank, Bajaj Finserv, Wipro, HCL Technologies, Tech Mahindra, Bajaj Finance, Tata Consultancy Services and Larsen & Toubro were the major laggards.

Drone Destination plans to increase its headcount

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Drone Destination is planning to grow its workforce by about four-fold to 1,200 people by the year-end, a senior company official said.

While announcing the expansion plan, Drone Destination CEO Chirag Sharma said the company



plans to set up 250 hubs

through which it will offer services.

"We are a team of around 350 people. We are looking to deploy 250 hubs in the next two months, for which we will hire 500 people. Based on the response to technology adoption, we intend to be 1,200 people company by the end of the year," Sharma said.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ERA

Kerala IT firms revamp hiring strategies

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala IT firms are changing how they hire people as they believe conventional methods are no longer suitable for finding candidates who can thrive in today's digital era with the advent of Artificial Intelligence.

Instead of the traditional recruitment process, they are using longer tests to see if candidates can actually do the job and keep up with new technology.

This helps find people who can put their knowledge into action in today's fast-changing tech world, according to a release here on Tuesday.

Under the traditional system, candidates are selected through shortlisting based on marks in engineering, written tests, and interviews.



Launchpad Kerala 2024, a month-long talent acquisition programme organised by the Kerala Section of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and Group of Technology Companies (GTech) across the state, piloted the new hiring process, the GTech release said.

In the pilot edition, over 10,000 engineering students will undergo a series of tasks

designed to test and enhance their problem-solving capabilities, technical skills and adaptability to secure jobs offered by more than 100 IT companies, including multinational firms operating in the state, it said.

The organisers exuded confidence that companies across the country would replicate this model.

A job fair will follow on May 6, 8 and 10 at IT Parks in Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, and Kozhikode, respectively, under the new recruitment model.

Inaugurating the initiative, Dr Saji Gopinath, Vice Chancellor of Kerala University of Digital Sciences, Innovation, and Technology (Digital University Kerala), and APJ Abdul Kalam Technological University, said Launchpad is

a great learning experience and a new recruitment model in which graduates are being taken at an accelerated pace.

It helps youngsters get involved in problem-solving tasks, and it would be great if this model could be extended beyond IT to benefit other sectors.

"As per the pioneering model, a real-world problem-solving challenge will precede the interviews for jobs in software companies in the state," said V Sreekumar, secretary, GTech and Kerala head, Tata Elxsi.

Deepu S Nath, Convenor of GTech ATPG and MD of Faya India, said Artificial Intelligence (AI) agents like Devin and Devika and AI software engineers are redefining roles and responsibilities.

China's Q1 GDP grew by 5.3% amid realty crisis

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Beijing, Apr 16 (PTI) China's economy grew at 5.3 per cent in the first quarter, making a stronger-than-expected start to the year even as the downturn of its property market continued while the domestic demand remained subdued.

The GDP grew 5.3 per cent year on year to 29.63 trillion yuan (about US\$ 4.17 trillion) in the first three months of 2024, data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed on Tuesday.

The pace accelerated from 5.2 per cent overall GDP growth for 2023, appearing on course to meet the target set by the government at around five per cent.

On a quarterly basis, the



economy expanded by 1.6 per cent in the first three months of this year, according to the NBS.

"China's high-quality development has made new achievements in the first quarter. The national economy has sustained recovery momentum and got off to a good start," Sheng Laiyun, Deputy Head of the NBS, said at a press conference.

"China's high-quality development has made new achievements in the first quarter. The national economy has sustained recovery momentum and got off to a good start," Sheng Laiyun, Deputy Head of the NBS

Sheng mentioned positive factors during this period, such as rising production demand, stable employment and prices, and growing market confidence.

"These positive factors driving economic recovery are accumulating and strengthening, laying a good foundation for full-year growth," he said.

Sheng also noted that the 5.3 per cent GDP growth was mainly driven by a rebound in the industrial sector and an improvement in the service sector.

He, however, was silent on the continued crisis in the property sector, which accounts for 20 per cent of the world's second-largest economy, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The home prices fell at a faster pace for more than eight years, according to the latest data.

In the same period, property investment fell 9.5 per cent, highlighting the challenges faced by China's real estate firms.

"You cannot manufacture growth forever, so we really need to see households come to the party if China wants to hit that around five per cent growth target," Harry Murphy Cruise from Moody's Analytics told the BBC.

The real estate industry crisis was highlighted in January when property giant Evergrande was ordered to liquidate by a court in Hong Kong.

China's other property developers, like Country Garden and Shimao, have also been hit with winding up petitions in the city.

HPE starts rolling out Made-in-India servers

Plans to enhance local sourcing

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hewlett Packard Enterprise has started deploying its 'Made-in-India' servers at a large scale in the country in less than a year after it announced plans for making them locally, the company said on Tuesday.

HPE unveiled its Make-in-India plan in July 2023 with Indian manufacturer VVDN Technologies and is planning to manufacture approximately USD 1 billion worth of high-volume servers in the first five years of production.

The company announced



that 'its 'Made in India' servers are now being deployed at large scale to serve the growing demands of Indian customers ahead of schedule". "HPE's plan to manufacture servers in India aligns with its broader objective of supply chain diversification and resiliency. The company is actively exploring opportuni-

ties to deepen localisation by leveraging VVDN's backward integration capability and expanding its portfolio of products manufactured from India," the statement said.

HPE said printed circuit board (motherboard) assembly through surface-mounted technology is one of the most technically complex and critical aspects of server manufacturing and the PCBAs (printed circuit board assembly) capability in India creates significant local value enhancement for the servers beyond just assembly and testing.

what's brewing?

Richa Chadha draws inspiration from Meena Kumari for her role in Heeramandi

Actress Richa Chadha has revealed that she delved into the iconic performances of legendary actress Meena Kumari to craft her character in the upcoming series *Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar*. Directed by the visionary filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali, the series promises to be a cinematic masterpiece, delving into the intricate world of courtesans. Richa Chadha, who essays the role of Lajjo, a courtesan with a captivating persona, shares that she found inspiration in Meena Kumari's portrayal of Shahibjaan in the timeless classic *Pakeezah*. Upon Bhansali's suggestion, Richa immersed herself in studying Kumari's character, drawing parallels between Shahibjaan and Lajjo. "Carefully observing, learning from, and taking lessons from Meena Kumari ji's character in *Pakeezah* was a truly enriching and deeply transform-

ing experience for me ahead of shooting for *Heeramandi*," says Richa Chadha. "In the movie *Pakeezah*, Meena Kumari's character has a certain tragic depth and complexity that resonated with Lajjo, the character that I play in the show. I worked on the voice and diction while studying Meena Ji's work, sometimes to the point of imitation! I felt like I was walking in the footsteps of a cinematic legend, and it was an honour to pay tribute to Meena Kumari Ji through my portrayal of Lajjo." A source from the production describes Richa's dedication to her craft, stating, "Richa has brought an unparalleled passion and understanding to her role in *Heeramandi*. Her commitment to immersing herself in the nuances of her character is truly commendable. Drawing inspiration from Meena Kumari's iconic perfor-



mance has added layers of authenticity to Lajjo's character." *Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar* promises to be a riveting exploration of love, power, and resilience set against the backdrop of a bustling courtesan quarter. With Richa Chadha's nuanced portrayal and homage to Meena Kumari, audiences can anticipate a captivating cinematic experience.

Bhuvan to woo audiences with new murder mystery alongside iconic 90s actress

Renowned content creator and actor Bhuvan Bam, celebrated for his captivating performance in the debut web series *Taaza Khabar*, is gearing up to mesmerise audiences once more with the highly anticipated *Season 2*. Fresh off the success of the first season, Bhuvan Bam is ready to embark on another thrilling journey filled with intrigue and excitement. This, is interestingly, the first time that Bhuvan will be working on a project outside of his own production. Amidst the shoots for *Taaza Khabar 2*, exciting news has emerged regarding Bhuvan's next project—a riveting murder mystery featuring one of India's top actresses from the 90s. The project, helmed by a debutant director, promises to deliver

an unparalleled viewing experience for audiences. Speaking about the upcoming project, a source close to the production reveals, "The murder mystery project starring Bhuvan Bam alongside one of India's iconic actresses from the 90s is set to captivate audiences. Shot in Mumbai, the film guarantees to keep viewers on the edge of their seats with its gripping storyline and suspenseful narrative. Bhuvan's excitement to share screen space with this female superstar is palpable, as he has long been an admirer of her work and never missed watching her films." With production slated to commence in mid-2024, anticipation is already building for Bhuvan Bam's next cinematic endeavor. As fans eagerly await the release of *Taaza Khabar 2* and the unveiling of this intriguing murder mystery project, Bhuvan Bam continues to solidify his position as one of India's most versatile and talented entertainers.



The Broken News S2 promises intense newsroom dramas!

ZEE5 unveiled the trailer of the second season of its much acclaimed series, *The Broken News*. The show which is based on the BBC Studios format 'Press' is directed by Vinay Waikul and written by Sambit Mishra. The new season will see Sonali Bendre, Jaideep Ahlawat, and Shriya Pilgaonkar reprise their roles as Ameena Qureshi, Dipankar Sanyal and Radha Bhargava respectively. Returning after a gap of two years, the new season will see the fight for ideologies between the two broadcast news channels, 'Josh 24x7' and 'Awaz Bharti' scale new heights and will premiere on 3rd May. Additionally, the new season will see the entry of actors - Akshay Oberoi, Suchitra Pillai and Geetika Vidya Ohlyan in pivotal roles.

Actor Sonali Bendre said that *The Broken News* will always be special to her as it marked her OTT debut. "We truly were ecstatic with the response to the first season and I am glad that we are returning with another season. In the first season, Ameena and Radha were a team however, in this new season, Ameena will be fighting the battle for 'sach' on her own. Meanwhile, actor Jaideep Ahlawat said, "I am thrilled to dive back for its second season. This time around, viewers can expect more newsroom drama, action and lines getting blurred as things get personal. Playing Dipankar has been a true delight and it was great getting back together with the gang." Actress Shriya Pilgaonkar, shares, "This show holds a special place in my heart, and I've been eagerly anticipating its comeback for quite some time now. The dynamic between Radha and Dipankar is going to be intensely personal this season, as they both strive to outmaneuver each other at every turn. It's going to be a roller-coaster ride for the viewers, with twists and turns keeping them guessing until the very end. Working alongside Jaideep sir and Sonali ma'am has been an incredible experience for me. They are both powerhouses of talent, and I've learned so much from sharing the screen with them. I can't wait for audiences to see the magic that we've all created together."



Henry Cavill and girlfriend Natalie expecting first baby

Hollywood star Henry Cavill will soon become a dad. The *Man of Steel* actor and his girlfriend Natalie Viscuso are expecting their first baby.

The *Justice League* star shared the exciting news at the New York City premiere of *The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare*, reports People magazine.

He told Access Hollywood: "I'm very excited about it. Natalie and I are both very excited about it. I'm sure you'll see much more of that." Before the interview wrapped, the reporter added that the movie star will make "a great dad."

"Thank you," he replied with a smile. As per People, the couple was spotted out and about in New York City on Sunday, April 14. Viscuso wore a fitted black dress and coordinating boots while holding hands with her beau, who wore a blue jacket over a tan-coloured t-shirt and blue trousers, as well as black shoes.

In January, Cavill and his girlfriend of more than two years stepped out at the London premiere of the actor's movie *Argylle*. The star wore a dark blue suit with black buttons and black shoes for the occasion, while Viscuso opted for a floor-length white gown and matching shoes.

She also wore an equally long white-and-gold coat with horizontal stripes over the dress. Cavill and Viscuso went official on Instagram in April 2021 when they each shared a photo of themselves playing chess together to their respective profiles.



KEANU REEVES TO VOICE SHADOW IN SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 3

After breaking bones and stabbing people with just a pencil in the *John Wick* franchise, Hollywood star Keanu Reeves has a new task waiting in the wings. The actor will voice the character of Shadow in *Sonic the Hedgehog 3*. He joins a cast that includes Ben Schwartz as Sonic as well as Jim Carrey as the villainous Dr. Robotnik, reports Variety. A spokesperson for Paramount Pictures, the studio behind the film, declined to comment.

As per Variety, in the games, Shadow, an anthropomorphic hedgehog (his fur is black, whilst Sonic's is blue), is an antihero of sorts. He's also often an antagonist to Sonic.

Keanu's credits include *Speed*, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, and *My Own Private Idaho*, as well as the *Matrix* franchise. He will next appear in the *John Wick* spinoff, *Ballerina*, opposite Ana de Armas. Reeves is also set to co-star in *Good Fortune* alongside Aziz Ansari, Seth Rogen, Keke Palmer, and Sandra Oh.

Jeff Fowler, who oversaw the first two *Sonic* movies, is returning as the director of the latest sequel. Neal H. Moritz, Toby Ascher, Toru Nakahara, and Hitoshi Okuno will produce *Sonic 3*, which will open in theatres on December 20, 2024. Reeves' casting in *Sonic 3* was first reported on *The John Campea Show*.

The franchise is one of Paramount's most successful, with the combined global box office for *Sonic the Hedgehog* and *Sonic the Hedgehog 2* standing at \$725.2 million. The studio is also making a spin-off series, *Knuukles*, that will premiere on Paramount+.

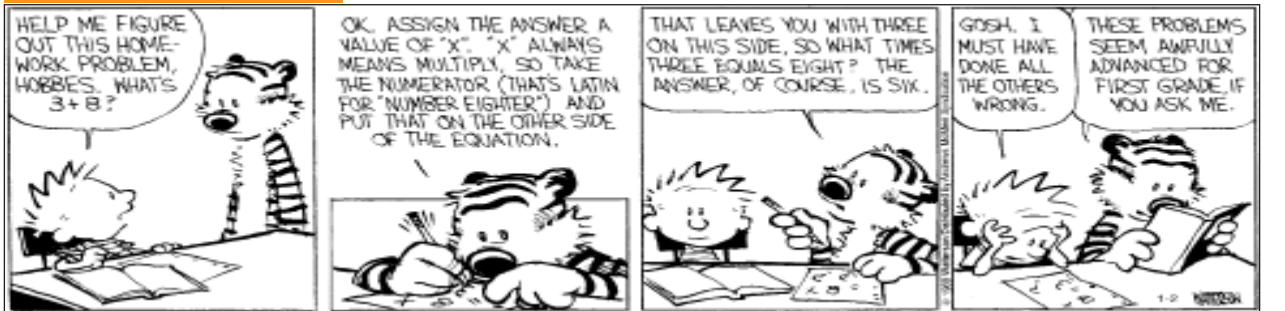


FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



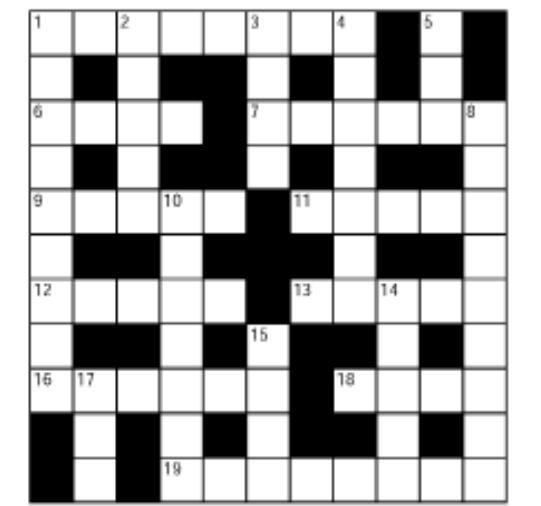
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- Squirmed about
- Tidy
- The cold ocean at the North Pole
- Perhaps
- A gloved fighter
- Permitted by law
- The remains of a fire
- Become smaller
- A fruit with a stone
- Always ready to give or share
- Health professionals
- 7 in Roman numerals
- An annual festival for Christians
- Burning strongly and flaming brightly
- A greeting
- The body's covering
- Cured meat from a pig

DOWN

- Dutch buildings with spinning blades attached
- Country with capital Rome
- Jump over



POOJA BHATT:

When I was making *Tamanna*, people came up to me saying, 'Production is not for women'

TEJAL SINHA

The 'Boss Lady', who has been an inspiration to not only people of her times but of the current generations too, is the one who ruled the 90s era with her hits at an early age itself. Right from her debut with *Daddy* and further going ahead with *Dil Hai Ke Manta Nahin*, *Sadak*, *Prem Deewane*, *Kranti Kshetra*, and so on, she has proved every now and then who Pooja Bhatt is, apart from being the daughter of the renowned director Mahesh Bhatt!

Apart from her finesse in acting, she has also donned the roles of producer and director. But of course, things didn't come to her plate as easily as they may seem. Recently, in one of our interviews with the star, she revealed her father was clear about not lying about whether she was good or not with her work and not giving the world the privilege of telling her that she can't act.

Now, as we go ahead and bring to you some personal insights, during our exclusive chat, she recalled the time when she had put on the producer's cap: "When I was making *Tamanna*, people had come up to me and were like it's not the work of a woman. Production is not for women. I made it." And guess what? *Tamanna* won Best Film on Other Social Issues at the 44th National Film Awards. But still, people didn't stop their bad talk there. "When I was making *Dushman* with Kajol, people pointed out, saying, 'Oh, you're taking a woman; now it's finished.' I was like, 'I'm going to do what I want to do, and here I am doing it.' When I became a producer, I was told why I wanted to become a producer. This is not for women; stick to acting and focus on your acting career. People are going to say so, and I was like, 'Do hell with you guys.'"

Going very much ahead, when she was back after a 21-year-long break with *Bombay Begums*, she recalled, "People were so generous. It was so overwhelming. The response I got for *Bombay Begums* was greater than that I got for my first 3-4 films to keep together. Even when I stopped, people were like, 'Why did you stop acting? When this came my way, I felt like life was bringing something to me. I just felt to take it upon myself to open the door to life, a dead life into my life! I did *Bombay Begums*, and I was privileged to play the part of a 49-year-old. The director would not want me to look younger, thinner, darker, or fairer. She just wanted me for what I was and who I was, and there can be no greater gift than a director can give an actor for who they are. You feel very comfortable in that person's gaze, and you want to give it your all. Being away from it for 21 years and understanding the nuances of filmmaking

and running a set has made me more respectful of the process. I can take instructions far better today and far more easily today."

The *Dil Hai Ke Manta Nahin* star was recently seen playing the character of Anita Verma in *Big Girls Don't Cry*, winning many accolades for the same.

Sharing some personal relatable aspects from the series, she strongly explains, "What I related to a lot was these young girls who are kind of like Anees character, for example, where she comes from this dysfunctional home, and supposedly the parents are trying to put on this facade. I mean, my parents were not like that, but I remember feeling relief when my parents decided to kind of sit me down and say that, you know, this relationship of ours is technically over but will never be over as far as you are concerned. That, for me, was such an important conversation. I realised the relationships are not made on paper or broken on paper either. Your father might shift from your geography, but he never stops being your father. In the conversation that Anees has in her head, she says that guys don't do it for me. It was also where she became the parents of her parents. That comes to a point in children's lives when you got to come and be generous back with your parents too."

Well, as we head towards the end, how could we not ask her about her darling niece Raha? In fact, in one of the posts wishing Pooja a happy birthday, Mahesh Bhatt shared how he could see the resemblance of Pooja's attributes to those of his granddaughter.

"I'm glad you are the first one who has read it clearly," she gleefully enthuses adding, "He felt the wide eyes of looking into the world and the passion and that is something that you bond with."

Infact, as we went on ahead, she shares that she still looks at the world with wide eyes and still gets butterflies in my stomach when she gave her first shot. "I feel so excited when I have a show coming out. We had a countdown before 12 and I couldn't sleep after that. Nitya was like even after so many years you feel like this and I was like the day I stopped feeling like this that means I am dead. The day we lose is the day when we die." sAnd so, "I just hope I always have the attributes of glorious Raha and if there's one thing that I'll fight not only with the world but even myself is to hold on to the child in me. No matter how cruel the world gets, it's a cruel place to live in right now and as an artist, you cannot be separated from it. Our job is to feel and if I can't only feel good and edit the bad. There's so much magic around you and as an adult, we tend to ignore the magic and thus it's important to keep the child within you alive."



Actress-director-producer Pooja Bhatt, who has been very much known as the Boss Lady, recalls the time when she was degraded for donning the cap of a producer, her mark as 'Pooja Bhatt' post her 21 years of hiatus, and more.

Shattering stereotypes to become Telangana's first transgender PMEGP loan recipient

Asha Ashadam, a transgender photographer from Telangana who has had her share of struggles to set up her photo studio and take up her passion for photography, gets candid with *The Pioneer*, sharing her journey and hardships in this exclusive chat.

RASHMI BHUMIREDDY

Asha, as we are all aware, refers to hope. Well, that's what kept Asha Ashadam, a transgender person from Telangana, keep up the zeal to set up a photo studio here. In the heart of adversity, Asha's journey is one of her extraordinary strength, determination, and victory of the human spirit. Asha faced societal judgment and personal tribulations. However, her firm desire to thrive led her to a transformative encounter with the transgender community, a pivotal moment that became the catalyst for her journey.

Asha holds a PG Diploma in Hotel Management from the city and lives in Karimnagar. She has always had a zeal to do something around photography, and it was in 2017 that she became a photographer.

Speaking to *The Pioneer* about her journey, Asha shared, "I have a huge passion for photography. I love to take photos for my community, especially when there are events such as birthdays, weddings, and baby photo shoots. These photographs capture everyone in our community. The community members appreciated my talent and motivated me to pursue photography. Though I have learned photography on my own, I am still not aware of how to design or edit photos and make them creative and memorable. Since then, my desire to learn Photoshop and editing has led me to enroll in a computer training institute."

This decision has turned a new leaf in her life. When she enrolled in a computer training institute to learn Photoshop and editing, Asha encountered various challenges due to her gender. She said that, being transgender, her classmates looked down on her and made fun of her. Not only her classmates, but society negatively treats her due to her gender issues. At one point, she even asked her professor, Shanti, to teach her

separately. However, her professor didn't approve her request but instead asked her to focus on classes.

On witnessing her burning passion, Shanti encouraged her to pursue Photoshop and editing courses. Asha blindly followed her professor's words; she completed her course in photo and video editing. She also overcame several societal judgments and personal tribulations.

During her journey as a professional photographer, the Karimnagar collector advised her to approach We Hub and apply for a PMEGP loan. This small piece of advice changed her entire life.

We Hub was the place where Asha could showcase her talent to the world. She became the first transgender person in Telangana to acquire a Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) loan.

This is where the WE Hub came into play. Asha said, "WE Hub is like God sent it to me. I am very grateful to the officials, as they have supported and guided me from the start of setting up a studio. With their aid, I have finally set up my own photography and design studio. Since then, a lot of opportunities have come where I can showcase my talents. People began appreciating my work. Currently, two more members are working with me."

However, Asha still faces societal judgment. She said, "Upon knowing my gender, some firms or clients don't approve of giving opportunities to me, while others give me opportunities upon seeing my work. So, no matter how many hurdles life throws at me, my talents speak volumes about me. I have confidence in my talents and myself. I only request that people around me change their perspective on transgender people. It's really pathetic to witness such people having narrow mindsets in the fast-moving world."

Finally, Asha proves the meaning of her name by capturing precious moments at special ceremonies or occasions.



Haemophilia is a rare bleeding disorder manifested by the inability of the blood to clot. The disease occurs due to alterations in genes that regulate our body to stop bleeding. As we celebrate World Haemophilia today, *The Pioneer* brings to you a detailed write-up on Haemophilia. Haemophilia A and B are the most common. It is caused by alterations or mutations in the F8 or F9 genes, respectively, on X chromosomes. The genes associated with haemophilia A and B, F8 and F9, respectively, provide instructions for producing clotting factors VIII and IX. Mutations in these genes result in reduced or non-functional clotting factors, leading to bleeding disorders. The severity of haemophilia in affected individuals can vary depending on the specific mutation and the level of clotting factor present in their blood. Haemophilia C, caused by a deficiency in factor XI located on an autosome, however, is rare. Haemophilia A/B is an X-linked recessive genetic disorder. This means that the affected gene responsible for haemophilia is located on the X chromosome. Since males have one X and one Y chromosome (XY) and females have two X chromosomes (XX), haemophilia primarily affects males. Females can be carriers of the haemophilia gene if they inherit one normal X chromosome and one with a mutation, but they usually do not show symptoms themselves.

Dr. Dipanjan Datta, a BCGI Level II certified genetic counsellor at Renew Healthcare, shares that though haemophilia A and B have treatment in the form of factor and gene therapy, males affected by haemophilia suffer from various co-morbidities, including joint pain, bone-related issues, swelling, and internal bleeds, apart from excessive bleeding even in minor injuries. Undiagnosed, in the case of mild haemophilia, surgery or an accident can cause death! Thus, the diagnosis of the disease is of utmost importance. "Affected individuals are diagnosed through biochemical testing of the factors. Genetic testing can confirm the diagnosis of haemophilia and help in understanding the specific type and severity of the condition. A carrier female will have normal factor levels in most cases. Thus, female family members may choose to undergo carrier testing by genetic studies to determine if they carry a mutation in the F8 or F9 gene, which could be passed on to their children. Biochemical testing is not a suitable method, as biochemistry might be normal."

DEMYSTIFYING HEMOPHILIA

HEMOPHILIA AND PREGNANCY

Up to 50% of neonatal males with severe haemophilia have no previous family history. In these cases, there is a 90% chance that the mother is a carrier, with risk to the next male child.

A family tree should be constructed to assess the likelihood of haemophilia carrier status in at-risk female families.

RISKS IN PREGNANCY FOR MOTHER AND BABY:

The levels of clotting factors VIII and IX should be checked before an invasive procedure or in association with bleeding symptoms. Carriers of haemophilia are at increased risk of bleeding with invasive procedures, termination, spontaneous miscarriage, and at the time of delivery. Male neonates with haemophilia are at increased risk of bleeding, including intracranial hemorrhage (ICH), extracranial hemorrhage (ECH), and iatrogenic bleeding following delivery.



Dr. Kinjal Kothari, Associate Consultant Obstetrician Gynecologist, Manipal Hospital, shares, "The baseline factor level should be determined before the onset of pregnancy. Before pregnancy, the general health of women who are carriers of haemophilia should be optimised. Genetic counselling should be provided to women at risk. Carriers of severe haemophilia should be offered a preimplantation genetic diagnosis. Antenatal care should be delivered in the context of a multidisciplinary team setting with hematologists and obstetricians with expertise in this field. Maternal factor VIII/IX should be checked at booking, before any antenatal procedure, and in the third trimester. Drugs like tranexamic acid, desmopressin (DDAVP), and recombinant factor VIII/IX can be considered given the altered clotting factor profile. A clear plan for the intrapartum care of a carrier and the baby should be available in advance of 37 weeks of gestation. The woman should be seen in the anaesthetic clinic, and the neonatologists should be informed of the intended delivery of a baby with haemophilia. A decision regarding the timing and mode of delivery should be agreed upon jointly between the woman and the multidisciplinary team."

There needs to be a full assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of the mode of delivery and consideration of obstetric factors, maternal bleeding risk, patient preference, and reproductive expectations.

"Measures should be taken to

ensure expertise and necessary resources are available at all times.

External cephalic versions and the use of ventouse and mid-cavity forceps should be avoided for male babies at risk of haemophilia. Experienced clinicians should be involved in decisions about whether or not to perform a central neuraxial anesthetic technique, and the woman should be given all the information she needs to make an informed choice based on the level of clotting factors.

To minimise the risk of postpartum hemorrhage (PPH), it is important to recommend or offer active management of the third stage of labour & management should be guided by the results of factor assays," shares Dr. Kinjal.

Genetic testing involves analysing a person's DNA to identify mutations in the F8 or F9 genes from blood or buccal swabs. In cases where there is a family history of haemophilia, invasive diagnostic methods like chorionic villi sampling and amniocentesis, followed by specific targeted genetic testing around 11 weeks (about 3 months) of pregnancy, can help determine the status of the fetus. This can help families make informed decisions about the pregnancy and prepare for the care of a child with haemophilia. Alternatively, pre-implantation genetic testing can be performed by taking a biopsy of the embryos formed by IVF at 5th day and screening for the targeted mutation. This process is called PGT (M), which can help to identify healthy embryos without the trauma of repeated abortions after prenatal diagnosis.

Genetic testing and genetic counselling can play a pivotal role in diagnosis and management. Understanding the genetic basis and inheritance patterns helps predict recurrence risk and plan a healthy baby.

Haemophilia is a rare bleeding disorder, manifested by the inability of the blood to clot. The disease occurs due to alterations in genes that regulate our body to stop bleeding. As we celebrate World Haemophilia today, *The Pioneer* brings to you a detailed write up on Haemophilia.



GUJARAT TITANS, DELHI CAPITALS SEARCH FOR CONSISTENCY

PTI AHMEDABAD
Gujarat Titans will be striving for much needed consistency when they meet Delhi Capitals in an Indian Premier League match here on Wednesday. Unlike the past two editions, the Titans have not been able to play like a well-oiled machine though they still have time to fix the flaws. A last ball win over table leaders Rajasthan Royals on April 10 was just the kind of result the Titans needed to infuse fresh live to their campaign. They have only managed only two wins from their first six games but with another eight matches remaining, the Shubman Gill-led team has enough time to turn things around. The absence of Mohammad Shami has hurt them but they must best use the available resources. Umesh Yadav has taken seven wickets but has leaked more than 10 runs per over. His new ball partner

Spencer Johnson and the seasoned Mohit Sharma too can improve on their economy rate. Star spinner Rashid Khan has been at his frugal best but would like to have more wickets in his kitty. His cameo in the last game helped Titans seal a thrilling win and the team would also be expecting more out of him with the bat. Delhi Capitals, on the other hand, have struggled to assemble their playing eleven due to form and fitness issues. After four losses in five games, they got a much needed boost with the win against Lucknow Super Giants but they still have a lot to sort out if they are to push themselves for a place in the play-offs. The presence of a fit again Kuldeep Yadav made a huge difference as he broke the backbone of the opposition with three timely strikes in Lucknow. Kuldeep, who has added more speed to his craft, seems to be at the peak of his powers and it could be difficult



for Titans batters to face him, especially against his googlies. In Jack Fraser-McGurk, Capitals seem to have found an able number three and will be hoping that the Australian builds on the success of his maiden IPL game. Anrich Nortje, who has been taken to the cleaners by the batters so far in the IPL, did not play the last game. Mukesh Kumar has conceded 10 runs per over in the five games and was also expensive in his comeback game against LSG. The biggest positive for the team has been the batting form of skipper Rishabh Pant, who seems to be getting better with every outing. It would be fair to say that the southpaw is in prime position to make India's squad for the T20 World Cup despite stiff opposition from the likes of Sanju Samson and Ishan Kishan. Thin on Indian batting talent, the Capitals rely heavily on the likes of David Warner, who would itching to make an

impact after not contributing much in the last three games. **THE TEAMS (FROM):**
Gujarat Titans: Shubman Gill (c), David Miller, Wriddhiman Saha, Sai Sudharsan, Shahrukh Khan, Matthew Wade, Kane Williamson, Azmatullah Omarzai, Abhinav Manohar, Rashid Khan, Vijay Shankar, Rahul Tewatia, Spencer Johnson, Kartik Tyagi, Joshua Little, Darshan Nalkande, Noor Ahmad, Ravishrivasan S Kishore, Mohit Sharma, Jayant Yadav, Umesh Yadav, Sushant Mishra, Sandeep Warrier, Sharath BR, Manav Suthar.
Delhi Capitals: Rishabh Pant (c), David Warner, Abhishek Porel, Ricky Bhui, Yash Dhull, Shai Hope, Prithvi Shaw, Tristan Stubbs, Kumar Kushagra, Swastik Chikara, Ishant Sharma, Jhye Richardson, Rasikh Dar Salam, Vicky Ostwal, Anrich Nortje, Mukesh Kumar, Kuldeep Yadav, Praveen Dubey, Khaleel Ahmed, Sumit Kumar, Axar Patel, Mitchell Marsh, Lalit Yadav, Jake Fraser-McGurk.

We want to attack Power Play: Head says, revealing SRH batting philosophy



PTI BENGALURU
Sunrisers Hyderabad have taken T20 batting to the next level with sustained range-hitting in the Indian Premier League, and Travis Head said maximising Power Play segment was central to their aggressive approach. Head, whose 39-ball 100 led SRH to a record-setting 287/3 against Royal Challengers Bengaluru on Monday, underscored that approach with a fifty inside the Power Play. It was also the second time Head completed a half-century within the first six overs. "We've definitely got a lot of power through our top and

middle-order and I think we've sort of got to tailor the way we want to play around that power that we've got, especially in power play," said Head in the post-match press conference. The Australian opener has a perfect ally at the top in an equally belligerent Abhishek Sharma, who blunts slower bowlers upfront while Head goes about destroying the pacers. "I guess Abhi and I at the top of the order try to maximise that (Power Play) as much as we can. It may be fours, it may be sixes. "But yeah, we want to try to attack the power play with the two of us and then obviously we've got a lot of power

through that middle-order," Head added. It wasn't a mere tall claim as a quick check will reveal SRH's power play scores in six matches this season as 65/1, 81/1, 58/1, 78/1, 40/3 and 76/0, and none of the other nine teams have come close to those numbers. But it was not blind hitting. Head revealed his approach in the initial six overs. "Depending on the field positions, I try to sum up what the bowlers are trying to do. In the power play, with just two fielders out, I try to think about hitting the ball 360, around the whole ground, as you only have to go over the infield or through the infielders for boundaries. "I'd worked on a few things over the last couple of days. I did not execute the way I would have liked (in the last two matches). But today, especially in the power play, I was able to strike the ball the way I wanted," said the left-hander. The 30-year-old also lauded Hyderabad bowlers, especially skipper and premier pacer Pat Cummins, for holding their nerves when RCB batters were scoring briskly. "We knew that we probably needed three or four really good overs in the game to win it. So, it's amazing to sit here and think that when we make 280, but it's going to be one of the nights for the bowlers to hold on and I thought Pat bowled exceptionally well. "We were able to get wickets throughout the middle of the overs which set the game up. DK (Dinesh Karthik) played an unbelievable innings. But we did really well to get them back at 125 or 130 for five," he added.

PTI BENGALURU
A crestfallen Bengaluru skipper Faf du Plessis conceded that a string of defeats had taken a toll on the team and the confidence had hit an all-time low after losing by 25 runs to Sunrisers Hyderabad in a match where a plethora of batting records were eclipsed. SRH posted an all-time IPL record total of 287 for 3 and then restricted RCB to 262 for 7 as 38 maximums were hit across two innings. The match also entered the record books for the highest cumulative match total of 549 scored by both teams. "It's crazy the amount of runs scored today, a world record. I wouldn't say 270 is par, Danny. It's tough (to bowl on a day like this), we tried a few things and they weren't quite working,"

No way to hide when your confidence is low: Faf du Plessis

Du Plessis said at the post-match presentation ceremony. Just like winning provides a lot of confidence, back-to-back defeat can also rob teams off it, feels the former Proteas skipper. "There's no way to hide when your confidence is low. The fast bowlers found it quite difficult out there. Similar to the batting perspective, we need to work on a few areas. Need to make sure the run rate doesn't go down after powerplay. The guys put up their hands and never gave up (in the run chase). "It was good to see the fight, 30-40 runs from the bowling perspective was a bit too



much." Du Plessis admitted that the pressure is way too much and mind could explode at any time. "It's important to go away and freshen your mind, it's such a

Winning skipper Cummins, who was the best bowler on view among the two teams, also said in jest how he wished that he was a batter on days like these. "Wish I was a batter," Cummins could afford to smile after his team emerged victorious. The SRH skipper said that when his team scored 277 a few weeks back, he never thought that total could be surpassed. "Against Mumbai a few weeks ago, I thought it won't happen again, but it has happened again. Give me a few more years please (on whether bowlers will go extinct)! It feels like you bowl an over for seven or eight feels great." The Chinnaswamy track seemed a bit slower in earlier games but things have indeed changed. "I've given up trying to read the pitches," Cummins said.

Every game is like semifinal for us now: RCB coach Flower

PTI BENGALURU
After his side's sixth defeat in seven matches in the ongoing Indian Premier League, Royal Challengers Bengaluru head coach Andy Flower confessed that each of their remaining seven matches will have to be treated like a semifinal. In the latest setback to their playoff aspirations, RCB went down by 25 runs against Sunrisers Hyderabad here on Monday. "It is obviously knockout time and every game is like a semifinal for us now. But we will have to think that we will come back stronger," Flower said on RCB Game Day. RCB conceded the highest-ever IPL total - 287 for three - as the Hyderabad batters went



on a merry ride against their directionless bowlers. Flower admitted that it was a tough night for his side. "It was a really tough night in the field, of course, as they finished so powerfully that it probably took the wind out of our souls," he said. However, Flower found shards of positives during RCB's chase such as Dinesh Karthik's superlative 83 off 35 balls and

skipper Faf Du Plessis' 28-ball 62. The Zimbabwean wanted to build on them in the coming matches. "I am really proud of the way we fought with the bat out there in the middle. We lost the game but I was really proud of the way we fought," said Flower. The former England coach lauded Karthik for the way he took on SRH bowlers, and said it would not be surprising if the wicketkeeper batter made it to India's T20 World Cup squad. "Dinesh Karthik is really making a push for the World Cup team (of India) as well and is only getting better on the field," he added. RCB will next face Kolkata Knight Riders at Eden Gardens on April 21.



RCB-SRH game was one of sixes, not of batsmanship: Finch

PTI BENGALURU
Sunrisers Hyderabad and Royal Challengers Bengaluru unleashing a barrage of sixes in their IPL match left little room for batsmanship and what mattered was who hit the most number of sixes, said Australia's T20 World Cup-winning skipper Aaron Finch. Travis Head's maiden T20 ton and Heinrich Klaasen's piling 67 drove SRH to a record-breaking 287 for three, which helped them go past their own 277/3 against Mumbai Indians at Hyderabad this March 27. Dinesh Karthik then smashed a blazing 35-ball 83 but RCB ended up losing the match in which 38 sixes were hit all around the park. "It was never going to be a game where you talk about batsmanship. It's a game where you talk about who hit the most sixes and that was the difference," Finch said on Star Sports. "They (RCB) had to start at 14 (runs per over). And if you have one bad over it goes to 16." Finch said the Hyderabad side used the Powerplay segment well. "They (SRH) were getting lucky in the first powerplay and they needed those sixes and Travis Head was the difference there. "He started off well, his intent to get the ball rolling and then a courageous move to keep Klaasen at No. 3 and say we need to keep going, we have a deep batting line-up and we are going to put the bowlers to the sword here," added Finch. Head's destructive hundred, crafted off 39 balls, was the fourth fastest in the tournament, the cornerstone of SRH's 25-run win.

Finch said IPL teams had started changing their strategies by bringing in big-hitters like Klaasen up the order as they play fearless cricket. "A lot of times teams think that Klaasen has so much power to the back end, let's hold him back. Like (RCB's) Glenn Maxwell at times, you don't want to expose him right now because if he gets out, then we've got to rebuild. Teams don't think like that anymore. "SRH coach) Dan Vettori has talked about that, play aggressive, play fearlessly and bear the consequence if it doesn't go right. If it does go right, you don't lose." Dinesh Karthik once again underlined his value making a 35-ball 83 at a strike-rate of 237. Finch said the ability to strike the ball comes naturally to Karthik, given his more than two decades of experience in the game. "Well, once you've got 20-25 years of experience behind you, and you've got that bulk of balls you've hit throughout your whole career since you were five years old, you don't lose that ability to bat. "So, I think, it works in their favour because they train specifically for that role which they play for their team. They don't over train, they aren't trying to improve on their skills or they aren't trying to improvise anymore, they just train specifically," said Finch. The Victorian cricketer added that players like Karthik are examples for others preparing to be specific about their roles. "That should be a lesson for players around the world, that you have to be really specific with your preparation and how you go about it.

PTI BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bengaluru all-rounder Glenn Maxwell has decided to take an indefinite "mental and physical" break from the Indian Premier League, blaming his wretched batting form for the decision. Maxwell's absence from RCB's match against Sunrisers Hyderabad here on Monday was initially attributed to a finger injury he suffered during the previous match against Mumbai Indians. But he later admitted to dropping himself from the squad. "It was a pretty easy decision. I went to Faf and the coaches after the last game (vs Mumbai Indians) and said it was probably time we tried someone else (in his place)," Maxwell said in the post-match press meet. "It's actually a good time to give myself a bit of a mental and physical break, get my body right. If I'm required to get in during the tournament, I can, hopefully, get back into a solid mental and physical space where I can make an impact," he added. This is the second time in his career that Maxwell has opted out of competitive cricket in order to gather himself. He had taken a similar break in October 2019, stating that he felt mentally and physically ruined at that time. The 35-year-old made his comeback a couple of months later. In the ongoing IPL, Maxwell has been quite underwhelming with the bat in the six matches he has played this season, contributing just 32 runs at an average of 5.33 and a strike-rate of 94.

RCB Maxwell takes mental and physical break from IPL 2024

Twenty eight of those 32 runs came against Kolkata Knight Riders alone, helped to a great degree by two dropped catches. "I have been in this situation in the past where you can keep playing and get yourself deeper into a hole. We have had a pretty big deficiency after the power play, which has been my area of strength over the last couple of seasons. "I felt like I wasn't contributing with the bat, and with the results and the position we find ourselves on the table, I think it's a good time to give someone else an opportunity to show their wares, and hopefully, someone can make that spot their own," a candid Maxwell said. The big-hitting Australian, however, still hoped to return and make an impact in the later stages of the tournament. "The management here has been outstanding. I don't think I've had a better six months in cricket leading into this tournament. "So, it's frustrating when it ends up like this. But if I can get my body and my mind right, there's no reason I can't finish the tournament well if I do get another opportunity," he said. The sudden dip in his form was surprising, considering the hot run he had in the run-up to the IPL. Maxwell had made 552 runs from 17 T20Is from



November onwards, averaging 42 and his strike-rate was an impressive 185. But the Victorian started the IPL with a first-ball duck against Chennai Super Kings in an away match, and from that point his fortunes plummeted. "T20 cricket is a pretty fickle game.

Even if you look at the first game, I ran one off the middle of the bat to the keeper. I picked up the length, saw a scoring opportunity, but opened the face a little bit too much. "When you are going well, that goes wide of the (wicketkeeper's) gloves, you

get a boundary. You are 4 off 1, and you are away for the tournament," he noted. Maxwell said luck was not on his side in this tournament. "I probably just haven't got away. In the first few games, I feel I made reasonably good decisions (for shot selection). But I was finding ways to get out. "It can happen in T20 cricket and when it snowballs like that, you can go searching and try too hard and forget the basics of the game," he said. Maxwell experienced a similar barren run in IPL 2020 while playing for Punjab Kings. During that season, the Australian scored a mere 108 runs from 11 matches and failed to hit a single six. However, Maxwell did not draw parallels between the two seasons. "I was bowling really well back then. I was actually playing more as a spinner. We had KL (Rahul) and Mayank (Agarwal) who were the two leading run-scorers at that time. "So, there weren't a lot of balls left in the game (for him). I wasn't able to get any match rhythm. So, I said the same thing to the Punjab management that we can have an overseas bowler in my place. "But we didn't have an off-spinner, so, I sort of played as an overseas off-spinner who could bat a little bit," he explained.

SHREYAS TALPADE TO PLAY A DEVOTED PANDIT IN *Love You Shankar*

K. RAMYA SREE

Actor and dubbing artist Shreyas Talpade has garnered significant attention from Telugu audiences following his Hindi dubbing for Allu Arjun's character in *Pushpa*. Now, he is set to captivate audiences once again with his upcoming film, *Love You Shankar*, a composite animated film scheduled for a grand theatrical release on April 19 in Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, and Kannada languages. Set against the backdrop of the sacred city of Banaras, *Love You Shankar* promises to enchant viewers with its heartwarming tale of faith, friendship, and adventure. The film revolves around the endearing bond between an eight-year-old boy and Lord Shiva, offering a wholesome family entertainment experience.

As the release date draws near, Shreyas Talpade shared his excitement about the film's multi-language release. "Today, language is not a barrier for the audience if they like a particular story," expressed Shreyas, adding, "I will be extremely happy if it works in all those languages that we are releasing it in, especially Telugu, considering I dubbed for a Telugu film that made major business in Hindi. So I would really like it if the Telugu fans also gave the same kind of love to our film, *Love You Shankar*, when it was released there."

In this exclusive interview, Shreyas provided insights into his character in the film, portraying a devoted pandit whose faith is put to the test by unfortunate events. He praised director Rajiv Ruia's narrative sensibilities and expressed gratitude for being part of the project: "My role is that of a man who works as a pandit in a temple and has a sweet family. There are certain events that happen to them that are very unfortunate. And after that, how his faith is restored, how his belief in the deity and Lord Shiva basically come to his rescue, is what my character is all about in this film."

He further continued, "I heard the story, and I was pretty impressed with the

way the director was dealing with the narrative, especially. These days, there are not too many children's films coming, and Rajiv has successfully done quite a few in the past, including *Ganesh*. His sensibilities and his psyche pretty much understand the psyche of kids. So I went with my gut feeling, and I said, Okay, let me give it a shot and see how it works out. I am glad that I said yes because I completely enjoyed the experience of working in this one."

Regarding the film's mythological theme, Shreyas clarified that *Love You Shankar* is a completely fictional story, blending elements of classic Hindi masala films with modern children's adventure tales. He expressed hope that the fusion would resonate with audiences upon release.

Reflecting on his experiences during filming, Shreyas fondly recalled shooting at the serene ghats of the river Ganga as one of the most memorable moments. He emphasized the film's underlying themes of faith and belief, which he believes resonate deeply with viewers. He shared, "The moment we stepped into Ganga, it was extremely calm and serene, and I think there are very few locations that have that kind of vibe and atmosphere. So that is something that I will never forget. We would sit for hours in front of the balcony and keep looking at the river flowing calmly and beautifully. The biggest takeaway from films like these is faith and our belief in whatever we believe in, whether it is God, nature, superpowers, or super energy. I think it is films like these and stories like these that just reinforce our faith and belief system in that power. So when you are part of a film that deals with your spirituality or your culture, I think it's very satisfying, and there are a lot of takeaways that you take from stories like these."

Shreyas further expressed eagerness to explore roles in various languages, includ-



ing Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, and others. He hinted at an upcoming collaboration with a South Indian production house, showcasing his commitment to diverse linguistic and cultural experiences. They are releasing the film in Hindi, but it is also going to be released in multiple languages.

When asked about his involvement in *Pushpa 2*, Shreyas revealed that dubbing has not yet begun, as the film is still in the shooting process. He expressed anticipation for the project and affirmed his readiness to commence work once production concludes.

In preparation for his role in *Love You Shankar*, Shreyas credited director Rajiv Ruia for simplifying his approach. He recounted immersing himself in the ambiance of Banaras, observing local pundits to enhance his portrayal of the character: "My director, Rajiv Ruia, made my job a lot easier here. When I went there, he asked me to just take a stroll around the ghats of the Ganga and said, You will see a lot of pun-



Actor and dubbing artist Shreyas Talpade, who has captivated the Telugu audience with his Hindi dubbing in *Pushpa*, gets candid with *The Pioneer* about his upcoming multilingual film, *Love You Shankar*.

dots over there, either performing some pujas or, you know, maybe chanting some mantras and things like that. And you can go around and have a look. I just went around at a local observing, whatever I could, whatever they do, and I just, and of course then there is a certain character sketch that the director has in mind, so I combined the two and tried to perform it to the best of my ability." In conclusion, Shreyas encouraged audiences to embrace *Love You Shankar* as a beautiful adventure film suitable for the entire family. He emphasized the film's educational value, providing insights into faith and beliefs while offering a delightful cinematic experience.

Market Mahalakshmi is a unique blend of love and family entertainment



Director VS Mukkesh, who is coming up with *Market Mahalakshmi* on April 19, shares some interesting insights on the film.

Mahalakshmi to life. Reflecting on his transition from short films to feature films, Mukkesh shared, "I've made a lot of short films on the TeluguOne YouTube channel, close to 100+ videos, and there are videos on other channels too. I met Akhilesh and narrated the *Market Mahalakshmi* script, which then began my feature film journey."

Discussing the film's unique premise, Mukkesh emphasized, "Many people claim their films touch on new points. Honestly, we did touch on a new point that has not been explored until now, and that's going to be a major conflict. I don't want to exploit this sensitive topic for promotions. We couldn't reveal it in the teaser or trailer, as it would spoil the experience."

Starring Parvateesam and Praneekaanvika in lead roles, *Market Mahalakshmi* delves into the intricacies of love and family dynamics. Mukkesh shared insights into the casting process, stating, "I chose Parvateesam and an unknown actress because they fit the characters perfectly. As a debut director, it was challenging to attract established stars. This project was about proving my directorial capabilities." With meticulous attention to detail, Mukkesh ensured that the film's authenticity resonated with audiences. "The film will be close to reality because I know a man who loved a vegetable seller girl and married her. The film is based on a real-life love story. I've also observed a few people in the markets," he revealed.

From innovative promotions to a crisp runtime, Mukkesh highlighted the efforts put into every aspect of *Market Mahalakshmi*. Expressing confidence in the film's success, he remarked, "With confidence, I can say that even if only one person watched my film in theaters, they'll surely like it."

K. RAMYA SREE

In the bustling world of Tollywood, where innovation is revered, director VS Mukkesh brings forth a refreshing narrative in his upcoming film, *Market Mahalakshmi*. Set to hit theaters on April 19, this film promises to captivate audiences with its intriguing storyline and heartfelt performances.

In an interaction with the media on Tuesday, the director shed light on the journey of bringing *Market*



Super Good Films, is coming to the audience with another crazy project. *Bhavanam* is a suspense thriller directed by Balachari Kurella, starring Saptagiri, Dhanraj, Shakalaka Shankar, Ajay, Malvika Satheshan, and Sneha Ulal in lead roles. Produced by RB Chaudhary, Wakada Anjan Kumar, and Virendra Seervi! Recently, the first look and teaser of *Bhavanam* was released, and it got an incredible response.

Samyuktha Menon all set to make her Bollywood debut

In the glitzy realm of Tollywood, one name has been shining brighter than ever: Samyuktha. With a string of consecutive successes under her belt, this talented actress has quickly ascended the ranks to become a household name synonymous with meaningful roles and stellar performances.

Since her debut in the industry, Samyuktha has captivated audiences with her versatility and charm. Her journey to stardom reached new heights with five consecutive super hit films. Each role showcased her depth as an actress and solidified her status as a rising star in Tollywood.

Currently, Samyuktha is gearing up for two highly anticipated projects. She is set to star opposite Nikhil in the Pan India movie *Swayambhu*, promising audiences an unforgettable cinematic experience. Additionally, she is slated to be the leading lady in Sharwanand's upcoming film, further solidifying her presence in the industry.

However, amidst her flourishing career in Telugu cinema, rumours have been swirling about Samyuktha's potential foray into Bollywood. Speculation is rife that she has received an enticing offer for an interesting project in Hindi cinema. Recently, photos of Samyuktha at the Hyderabad airport, bound for Mumbai, have sent social media into a frenzy, fuelling further speculation about her Bollywood aspirations. It seems that Samyuktha is on the brink of making a significant announcement regarding her Bollywood debut. As she sets her sights on new horizons, the actress is poised

to conquer hearts on a national scale with her talent and dedication. With her sights set high, Samyuktha is ready to mesmerise audiences across the country with her enthralling performances.

NIDHII AGERWAL REPORTEDLY JOINS THE RAJA SAAB SETS

One of the Tollywood star heroes, Prabhas is a pan-Indian actor with a strong filmography that includes the Marathi-directed film *The Raja Saab*. Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt plays a key role in the horror comedy. According to the most recent information, Nidhi Agerwal, the *iSmart Shankar* beauty, has started working on *The Raja Saab* sets in Hyderabad. This schedule, which will run for a few days, includes scenes where she is seen with Prabhas that are being canned. We'll soon have more information regarding this continuous schedule available. In addition to Nidhi Agerwal, Malavika Mohanan plays the key female role in the movie. This film is financially supported by the renowned production company People Media Factory, and Thaman is the music director.

Bhale Unnade welcomes Singeetam Srinivasa Rao on board

Hailed as one of the legends of Indian cinema, Singeetam Srinivasa Rao had faded into the shadows, leaving behind a legacy of timeless classics. But now, like a phoenix rising from the ashes, he returns to the limelight in a stellar role, breathing life into the silver screen once again.

In the eagerly awaited film *Bhale Unnade*, Rao joins hands with the charismatic actor Raj Tarun, promising audiences a cinematic experience unlike any other. With music by the talented Shekar Chandra Musical and direction by J Sivasai Vardhan, expectations soar sky-high with this announcement. Singeetam



Srinivas' mere presence commands attention, drawing viewers into a world of intrigue and excitement.

Welcoming him aboard, the makers released a small video that showed him shooting some scenes. The makers announced: The legendary #SingeetamSrinivasaRao who has enthralled us all these years is now back again in another stellar role. Welcome aboard sir! #BhaleUnnade (sic)."

Recently, a new song from the film was released and it received a good response from the audience.

While N.V. Kiran Kumar is producing the film as its Production No. 1 under the Ravikiran Arts banner, director Maruthi's Maruthi Team Product is presenting it. Actress Manisha Kandkur is making her acting debut in Tollywood with this movie.