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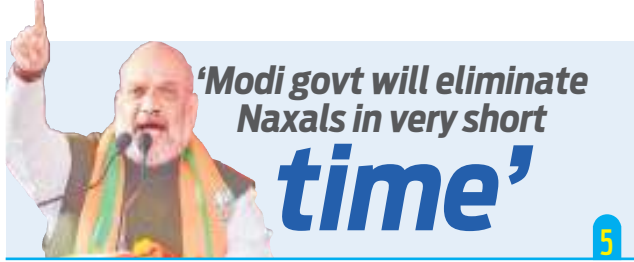
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QUOTE OF THE DAY  
The pioneer

**What relation does PM Modi have with EVMs? Why is the BJP afraid of using ballot papers for the elections? Elections around the world are being conducted through ballot papers; only India is using EVMs. We and the people have lost faith in EVMs, only the BJP has faith in them and that is not enough.**



- A Revanth Reddy, TS, Chief Minister P4



**DON'T MISS...**

**Cybercrimes on the rise in city: ...**

Police Commissioner Dr A Ravi Shankar has voiced grave concerns over the escalating instances of cybercrime within the city. Expressing apprehensions about the potential transformation into a cybercrime hotspot, Commissioner Ravi Shankar highlighted the urgent need for heightened public awareness and vigilance. Speaking during a press conference, ...

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**Study links being online to...**

Spending too much time online to the point of giving up necessary activities, such as eating, sleeping and exercising, is linked to heightening the risk of school absence among teens, new research conducted in Finland has found. Girls are more vulnerable to using excessive internet than boys, possibly because they tend to use social media more than boys, researchers said. However, more boys were found to report truancy or absence from...

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**Women participation...**

Women's participation in technology roles in non-tech businesses is expected to grow by nearly a quarter by 2027 across all levels, including freshers, junior, mid-senior, leadership, and C-Suite levels, a report said on Wednesday. The tech women's participation rate in non-tech industries stood at 19.4 lakh workforce in 2023, which is expected to grow by 24.3 per cent to 24.1 lakh employees by 2027, TeamLease Digital's report - Women...

-PAGE: 8

**Punjab Kings, Mumbai Indians ...**

Punjab Kings and Mumbai Indians will be desperate to resurrect their faltering campaigns in the Indian Premier League when the two bottom-rung teams face-off here on Thursday. Only a few decimal points separate the two teams after six matches each with Punjab's marginally better Net Run Rate of -0.218 keeping them at the seventh spot in the IPL points table, one above Mumbai Indians (-0.234). Both Punjab and Mumbai have lost four matches each ...

-SPORTS

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Mukesh Kumar Meena has said that nomination papers will be received from the candidates from Thursday onwards, which is the most important phase of the election process. The election officials of all the districts have already completed the arrangements for this. The CEO said that the candidates for Lok Sabha seats are to file their nominations in the respective collectorates and those for Assembly seats, at RDO offices or Tahsildar Offices in their respective constituencies.

Each candidate can file a maximum of four sets of papers and contest in any two seats only. Along with the candidate, only four others will

be allowed to enter the RO's office, while the rest will be stopped 100 m away. The CEO added that only three vehicles are allowed with the candidate. The Lok Sabha candidates will have to pay Rs 25,000 and the Assembly candidates, Rs 10,000, as security deposit. SC and ST candidates are required to pay 50 percent of the amount. The candidates are to file their nominations following the election code of conduct. The process will be video recorded; CC



cameras have been installed in the room where the nominations are

received right from the entry gates. As part of the implementation of the model code, the processions of the candidates and the nomination filing will also be video recorded. The candidates have to bring 13 types of documents to file nominations. Those contesting for Parliament seats should apply in Form 2A and Assembly candidates in Form 2B. The nominations will be received from 11 am to 3 pm from April 18 to 25. The papers will not be accepted on public holidays. Candidates should submit their

The candidate can submit their nomination either directly or through his proposer to the RO or to the concerned ARO only. They should submit details of newly opened bank accounts in their name along with the nomination. A help desk will be set up for receipt of nominations. Though nominations can be filed through the Suvidha app, copies of the nominations have to be submitted physically to the RO, the CEO said.

**Election schedule in Andhra Pradesh**  
April 18 - Filing of nominations begins  
April 25 - Last date for receipt of nominations  
April 26 - Scrutiny of nominations  
April 29 - Last date for withdrawal of nominations  
May 13 - Polling  
June 04 - Counting of votes

affidavit through Form-26. The value of Form 26 stamp paper is Rs 10 or more. E-stamp can also be used if physical stamp paper is not available.

From the time of nomination of the candidate, the cost incurred will be accountable. Advertisements in newspapers and paid news are also counted in the candidate's account, CEO Meena added.

## Filing of nominations begins today ROs ready to receive nomination papers: CEO Meena

## Attack on CM: Cops clueless about the actual culprit

### Police arrest one more suspect

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

After detaining five youth from Vaddera Colony in connection with the stone-pelting incident on Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Saturday night, the police nabbed one more suspect from the same colony in connection with the incident.

According to sources, the suspect identified as Vemula Durga Rao, an auto-rickshaw driver, was picked up by the police on Wednesday morning. Even after interrogation, the NTR district police remain clueless about the actual culprit in the stone attack on CM Jagan.

Stones were pelted on CM Jagan's 'Memantha Siddham' bus yatra four days ago. The CM was injured after being struck by a stone above



his left eyebrow. Despite detaining five suspects for questioning, the authorities are yet to identify the actual assailant.

### 'Naidu behind stone attack'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Senior YSRCP leader Kanumuri Ravichandra Reddy has alleged that TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu was behind the stone attack on Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. Speaking to the media persons at the party central office on Wednesday, Ravichandra Reddy strongly condemned the allegation that the AP police are working for YSRCP.

He said that Chandrababu is worried that TDP Vijayawada Central candidate Bonda Umamaheswara Rao is being implicated in the case of the attack on CM Jagan Mohan

Reddy and made weird statement that the police officers were working with the involvement of YSRCP, which is totally false.

The YSRCP leader said that the police have not yet said anything about their investigation, however, Chandrababu and other TDP leaders knew who carried out the attack and it clearly shows the involvement of TDP in the attack. Chandrababu thought the craze for Jagan's bus yatra would subside after crossing Guntur, but when it came to Vijayawada the yatra turned into a big hit and the TDP chief was upset seeing the flow of people.

## SC to take up trial of cash-for-vote case today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Supreme Court will hear the sensational cash-for-vote case on Thursday. YSRCP MLA from Mangalagiri Alla Ramakrishna Reddy has filed a petition to include TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu as an accused in the case and hand over the investigation to the CBI. Chandrababu's advocate Siddhartha Luthra sought adjournment in the previous hearing. The Bench of Justice Sundaresh and Justice SVN Bhatti will conduct the trial.

During the Telangana MLC elections in 2015, Chandrababu offered money to MLCs to vote in favour of TDP. Chandrababu allegedly tempted MLC Elvis Stephenson to vote for the TDP candidate. The Telangana ACB released the audio

of their conversation on the phone. Forensics confirmed that the voice was Chandrababu's.

Subsequently, Mangalagiri MLA Ramakrishna Reddy filed a petition that the CBI should investigate this case. The MLA said that he had filed a petition to include Chandrababu as an accused in the case and mentioned in the petition that the investigation should also be handed over to the CBI. The incident happened in 2015, and RK filed a case in the Supreme Court in 2017. During the past five months, the case was adjourned for petty reasons. The case will be taken for trial on Thursday.

M L A Ramakrishna said that delaying the trial of a case despite all the evidence sends wrong signals.



## ADANI GANGAVARAM PORT Protests hit steel production at VSP

Port workers have been on strike for the past five days

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The ongoing protests by workers of Adani Gangavaram Port Ltd. has dealt a significant blow to production at Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL), the corporate entity of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP). As two ships laden with imported coal remain stranded without discharge, the steel plant faces a dire shortage of essential raw materials. For the past five days, workers at the port have been on strike, demanding the fulfillment of promises regarding employment conditions and wage increases along with social security measures. This standoff has paralysed operations at the port, hindering the timely delivery of crucial resources to VSP.

In response to the escalating crisis, both the RINL management and trade unions have issued an urgent appeal to the State government for intervention. They seek permission for a select group of RINL



Workers protesting at Adani Gangavaram Port

workers and a portion of the port workforce to facilitate the discharge of cargo from the stranded ships. A senior official from RINL expressed concerns over the situation, stating, "We are trying our level best to tide over the crisis." However, with production capacity already curtailed due to rising raw material prices and

procurement challenges, VSP finds itself in a precarious position.

Unlike other major manufacturers, RINL lacks captive mines and heavily relies on external sources for iron ore and coking coal, essential for steel production.

## 'People won't believe dramas' YSRCP planning to buy votes with tainted money: Chandrababu, Pawan Kalyan

PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

Telugu Desam party chief N Chandrababu Naidu and Jana Sena chief K Pawan Kalyan have come down heavily on Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy alleging that the YSRCP is planning to buy votes using the huge money earned with corrupted means.

Addressing an election meeting jointly in Pedana on Wednesday, Chandrababu said that Jagan Reddy enacted 'Goddalipotu' and 'Kodikattam' in the 2019 elections and now he is enacting 'Gulakara' drama, adding that the people will not believe the dramas. "Stones were also hurled on me and also on Pawan Kalyan. Did they not see? We have condemned the



TDP chief Chandrababu and JSP president Pawan Kalyan greeting people at a jointly held election meeting in Pedana on Wednesday

hurling of a stone toward Jagan Mohan Reddy. But Jagan Reddy did not condemn when stones pelted on us," Chandrababu pointed out.

Blaming the YSRCP as corrupt, Chandrababu said that the YSRCP leaders are planning to buy votes using huge money which they have

earned through liquor, sand and land scams. Unable to bear harassment and humiliation of Jagan Mohan Reddy, many YSRCP leaders have exited the party, he claimed.

## 'Surya Tilak' adorns Ram Lalla on Ram Navmi

PNS ■ AYODHYA

A beam of sunlight fell directly on Ram Lalla's idol at the new temple here on noon Wednesday, marking the "Surya Tilak" of the idol in the first Ram Navami since its consecration.

Devotees began queuing up at the Ram temple here before the break of dawn, district officials said. The local administration and the temple authorities had made special arrangements to handle the crowds on Ram Navami.

As the "Surya Tilak" of the deity took place, devotees outside in the sanctum sanctorum hailed the event by chanting "Jai Shri Ram". Inside, priests conducted an "aarti".

The "Surya Tilak" was made possible by an elaborate apparatus involving mirrors and lenses that directed sun rays into the sanctum



sanctum of the temple, and onto the deity's forehead.

The Ram idol was consecrated in a ceremony led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 22.

In the middle of his Lok Sabha election campaign, Modi watched the event on his computer tablet.

"After my Nalbari (Assam) rally, I watched the Surya Tilak on Ram Lalla. Like crores of Indians, this is a very emotional moment for me. The grand Ram Navami in Ayodhya is historic. May this Surya Tilak bring

energy to our lives and may it inspire our nation to scale new heights and glory," he wrote on X.

He also shared pictures of him watching the 'Surya Tilak'.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi

Adityanath also shared a video of the 'Surya Tilak' on his official handle on X. "The grand 'Surya Tilak' adorned on the forehead of Suryakul Bhushan Shri Ram Lalla is today illuminating the entire nation with its eternal glory. Jai Jai Shri Ram!", he wrote.

Temple spokesperson Prakash Gupta said, "The Surya Tilak was done for around four or five minutes when the sun rays were directly focused on the forehead of the Ram Lalla idol."

"The temple administration prevented the devotees from entering the sanctum sanctorum at the time of the Surya Tilak to avoid overcrowding," Gupta said.

Dr DP Kanungo, Chief Scientist at CSIR-CBRI, Roorkee, told PTI, "As planned, the Surya Tilak of Ram Lalla was executed at 12:00 pm."

## 1<sup>ST</sup> PHASE OF LS POLLS Campaigning ends for in 102 seats



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Campaigning ended Wednesday evening for 102 Lok Sabha seats across 21 states and Union territories which will go to polls in the first phase on April 19 with top leaders of the BJP-led NDA and the opposition INDIA bloc making a last-gasp effort to woo voters.



**Civil Supplies DT nabbed while taking bribe**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) officials nabbed Deputy Tahsildar (DT) Chennuri Srinivas, who is working at the Civil Supplies Department in Machilipatnam, while he was accepting a bribe of Rs.10,000 on Wednesday.



# It's advantage Vanga Geetha in Pithapuram

Pawan's non-local status may weigh him down this time around

**C PRADEEP KUMAR**  
VIJAYAWADA

The Pithapuram Assembly constituency emerges as a focal point among the 175 constituencies in the upcoming 2024 elections, being a significant battleground for both the ruling YSRCP and the NDA alliance.

Following deliberations on the choice of the constituency, Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan has decided to contest the 2024 elections from the new segment of Pithapuram, foregoing his previous attempts in Bhimavaram and Gajuwaka. Pawan Kalyan is anticipating victory in this constituency with support from alliance partners Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Vanga Geetha, the incumbent Member of Parliament from Kakinada, is fielded by the ruling YSRCP in Pithapuram, posing a challenge to Pawan Kalyan. Geetha, who previously won from this constituency in 2009 under the Praja Rajyam Party (PRP) banner, brings a wealth of political experience from East Godavari district. Having held various positions during the TDP government, including Rajya Sabha membership and Zilla Parishad chairmanship, Geetha's roots in East Godavari and her affiliation with the Kapu community give her a strong local presence.

YSRCP's MP PV Midhun



Having previously contested and lost in Bhimavaram and Gajuwaka during the 2019 elections, Pawan Kalyan now faces allegations from the YSRCP of neglecting these constituencies post-defeat. Voters in Pithapuram are apprehensive that if elected, Pawan Kalyan may not prioritise local issues, contrasting with Geetha's track record of accessibility and familiarity with constituents.

Reddy, serving as the regional coordinator for both East and West Godavari districts, is actively spearheading the campaign in Pithapuram. The party has strategically appointed mandal-wise in-charges to oversee poll management across the four mandals within the constituency.

Current MLA Pendem Dorababu's role in supporting YSRCP candidate Geetha cannot be overstated. Despite being denied a ticket,

Dorababu's considerable influence in the constituency has been instrumental in rallying support for Geetha. His previous victory with a substantial margin over his closest TDP rival underscores his sway among voters.

In a significant turn, M Seshu Kumari, who secured the third position in the 2019 elections as a Jana Sena candidate, has defected to the YSRCP. This defection bolsters Geetha's candidature while

dealing a blow to Pawan Kalyan's prospects.

Having previously contested and lost in Bhimavaram and Gajuwaka during the 2019 elections, Pawan Kalyan now faces allegations from the YSRCP of neglecting these constituencies post-defeat. Voters in Pithapuram are apprehensive that if elected, Pawan Kalyan may not prioritise local issues, contrasting with Geetha's track record of accessibility and familiarity with constituents.

Pawan Kalyan's electoral strategy hinges heavily on securing Kapu votes, supplemented by support from the TDP and BJP alliance. However, recent campaigning reflects a shift in focus, with Pawan Kalyan emphasising his candidature over broader political narratives.

Reports suggest discontent among Jana Sena leaders and cadre in Vijayawada regarding Pawan Kalyan's campaign priorities. They criticise his perceived neglect of the party's grassroots and allocation of tickets to leaders from allied parties. Concerns also arise over Pawan Kalyan's health-related breaks during crucial campaign periods.

Pithapuram boasts nearly 260,000 voters, comprising approximately 90,000 from the Kapu community, 87,000 from the BC community, and the remainder from various other demographics, including OCs, fishermen, SC/ST/minorities, among others.

# Stringent regulations on political ads

**PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM**

Visakhapatnam District Election Officer and Collector Dr. Mallikarjuna has emphasised the critical importance of obtaining prior authorisation for political ads aired on electronic media, stating, "Securing prior authorisation for political advertisements is imperative to ensure fairness and transparency in electoral communication." To streamline this process, a dedicated district-level Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC) cell has been set up within the Collectorate.

Under the directive, recognised national and State political parties, as well as candidates contesting electoral positions on their behalf, are mandated to seek permission for political campaign advertisements in electronic media at least three days prior to their intended broadcast. Conversely, unrecognised

Dr. Mallikarjuna issued a stern warning against the dissemination of ads lacking MCMC endorsement, cautioning that such transgressions would be unequivocally regarded as violations of the election code of conduct, inviting appropriate punitive measures as per the guidelines stipulated by the Election Commission of India. In terms of print media, ads featured in newspapers are permitted solely on polling day and the antecedent day, subject to the requisite MCMC authorisation.



political entities and individual aspirants must adhere to a seven-day advance application requirement. Assuring swift processing, Dr. Mallikarjuna affirmed, "We pledge to sanction applications within a swift two-day timeframe upon receipt."

These regulations encompass all forms of electronic media, including television channels, cable networks, digital displays, SMS, and mobile network voice messages. Notably, major social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram,

WhatsApp, Google website, and Wikipedia are comprehensively included within the regulatory ambit. Additionally, political ads distributed through cinema theatres, private FM radios, and electronic magazines are subject to pre-approval, with the sanctioned order number mandated to be visibly displayed.

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election code of conduct, inviting appropriate punitive measures as per the guidelines stipulated by the Election Commission of India. In terms of print media, ads featured in newspapers are permitted solely on polling day and the antecedent day, subject to the requisite MCMC authorisation.

Dr. Mallikarjuna outlined stringent guidelines governing ad content, prohibiting any material that disparages castes, religions, incites violence, or undermines national unity and integrity.

# Naidu campaigning about Jagan's schemes!

**SNCN ACHARYULU**  
HYDERABAD

In the crucial Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections the campaigning of TDP supremo and former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu is surprising the political circles. Naidu, who is determined to defeat AP Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, is campaigning for the brainchild schemes of the latter. In every public meeting Naidu is assuring people that if he is voted to power, he will continue the volunteers system, village and ward secretariats system, enhancing the pension amount to Rs 4,000 and give it at the doorstep of beneficiaries.

Interestingly, the same Naidu criticised these systems in the past. In fact the volunteers system and village secretariat system had become popular across the nation. Among the people of Andhra Pradesh also, these systems have become very famous. Finally, Naidu realised about the importance of these schemes to the public and assuring to continue these systems if he comes to power. In the 2019 Assembly elec-



tions, YSRCP supremo YS Jagan campaigned his own agenda of Navaratnalu and never said that he will implement any scheme of his predecessor Naidu. The political circles question if Naidu implements the same present schemes, where is the need to defeat CM Jagan? Instead campaigning for TDP agenda, Naidu is speaking more about Jagan's schemes. It appears that Naidu fell into the trap of Jagan.

In his election campaign, CM Jagan is asking people to

vote to his party if they feel that they were benefitted by his government. At the same time, Jagan is warning people that if Naidu comes to power he will scrap volunteers system, village secretariats system and other schemes.

These two systems have created positive impact on the people towards YSR Congress. To counter CM Jagan's campaign against him, Naidu is assuring the people that he will continue the present systems if he becomes the chief minister.

# No parents' meetings on April 23

Scheduled parent-teacher meeting will take place on June 12, day of school reopening

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

AP School Education Department Principal Secretary Parveen Prakash has said that there is a slight change in the activities planned for April 23, Tuesday, the last day of the academic year, as the scheduled parents' meetings have been cancelled. He said that there will be only the distribution of report cards to the students and there will not be any parent-teachers meeting to discuss the activities and the performance of the child.

Praveen Prakash added that the scheduled parent-teacher meeting will now take place on June 12, day of reopening of schools for the academic year 2024-2025. He further stated that the DEOs have been instructed to take note of the changed instructions and to intimate all the headmasters about the change in schedule.

Praveen Prakash added that however, they have to ensure that on April 23, the report card is distributed to all the students and the marks obtained by the students in the summative assessments (final exams) are to be uploaded on the portal for detailed analysis.

# Attack on CM: Cops clueless ...

*Continued from Page 1*

NTR District Commissioner of Police Kanthi Rana Tata, on Monday, announced Rs 2 lakh reward for any information that could help in resolving the case. Clarifying the situation, the Commissioner said that they recovered multiple stones, but were yet to confirm which was used in the attack. The police have questioned 52 people and detained some 'local miscreants with criminal backgrounds'. Eight special teams have been formed to catch the culprit. A case under IPC section 307 (attempt to murder) has been registered, and the Commissioner expressed confidence in obtaining strong leads to nab the accused.

# SC to take up trial of cash...

*Continued from Page 1*

"If there is no investigation for seven years, will the common people get justice? Chandrababu was caught red-handed in the cash-for-vote case. The Telangana ACB is not investigating this case properly, so the CBI should investigate this. Chandrababu should be included as an accused. Apart from these, three more cases are pending. Mattaiah and Sebastian also approached the Supreme Court. Former ministers Jagdish Reddy and Satyavathi Rathore

have also asked the Supreme Court to transfer this case to Madhya Pradesh. The Supreme Court issued notices in this case. Even though there are so many cases, Chandrababu is denying his involvement."

The MLA further said that for petty reasons the case has been delayed for seven years. Even after they are caught-red handed with audio and video evidence, they are roaming free. The person who was caught with bundles of notes became the Telangana Chief Minister. The person who sent the notes is try-

ing his luck to become the CM of Andhra Pradesh. Despite all the evidence, the case is delayed. Everyone knows who the accused is, but he is roaming free. There should be signs to instill confidence in the judiciary system. There are five cases in the Supreme Court regarding the cash-for-vote case. Ravanth Reddy has finalised the deal for Rs 5 crore and was caught giving Rs 50 lakh. The KCR government has been delaying this case for years and now they are asking for transfer of the case, said MLA RK.

# Protests hit ...

*Continued from Page 1*

With blast furnace-3 shut down for an extended period due to raw material shortages, RINL had recently entered agreements with other companies to procure necessary resources. Despite the ongoing challenges, RINL managed to achieve a sales turnover of Rs 23,129 crore during the fiscal year 2023-24, reflecting a marginal growth. However, the current disruption threatens to derail any progress made.

With buffer stocks dwindling rapidly, RINL is resorting to procuring coal from alternative sources, including Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL). However, the immediate concern remains the two ships stranded at Gangavaram Port, carrying 2.2 lakh tonnes of coal urgently needed by VSP.

District Collector A Mallikarjuna has intervened in the matter, urging port officials to resolve the impasse swiftly. Meanwhile, representatives from the Visakha Steel Workers' Union (VSWU) have emphasized the critical nature of the situation, appealing to the government for prompt action.

# Civil Supplies DT nabbed while ...

*Continued from Page 1*

Following a complaint received from a rice mill owner, ACB Additional SP Snehitha detained Srinivas.

According to Additional SP Snehitha, rice mill owner Kamireddy Vinay Kumar, hailing from Avanigadda, complained against Deputy Tahsildar Ch Srinivas. The official was demanding a bribe (Mamullu) of Rs.10,000 every month citing the fact that a huge stock was stored in the rice mill, she said.

Following the ACB officials' directions, Vinay Kumar Reddy gave Rs.10,000 to Srinivas at a petrol bunk on the Machilipatnam Bypass road on Wednesday, where he was caught red-handed. The bribe money of Rs.10,000 was recovered from Srinivas. They have also registered a case and started an investigation, she added.

# 'People won't believe ...

*Continued from Page 1*

"Machilipatnam MP Balashowry quit YSRCP with a disgust that he could not do anything for Machilipatnam during his five years tenure as a ruling party MP and he joined the Jana Sena party. TDP, JSP and BJP. keep in view the progress of the State and protect its interests," Chandrababu asserted.

The TDP-JSP-BJP alliance is committed to uphold democracy and for the development of AP, Chandrababu

observed. He called upon people to remove Jagan from the Chief Minister post by electing the alliance, stating that Jagan does not know anything except pushing buttons.

The State does need a Chief Minister only to push a button as even an elderly woman can do that, Chandrababu lambasted. Jagan Mohan Reddy has ruined the State, he alleged and wooed the voters to vote for the alliance.

Addressing the crowd, Pawan Kalyan alleged that

Jagan Reddy came to power asking for one chance and he ruined the State in five years with his misrule. He vowed to punish those who plunder natural resources, if the alliance is voted to power. Pawan Kalyan said that Jagan Reddy denied tickets to 70 sitting MLAs with the fear of defeat, which is clearly reflecting his frustration. He introduced Kagita Krishna Prasad and JSP MP candidate Vallabani Balashowry and appealed to the voters to elect them.

# 'Surya Tilak' adorns Ram...

*Continued from Page 1*

As per an official statement, a crown made of sustainable precious gemstones was adorned by the idol of Ram Lalla on the occasion.

In consultation with the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bangalore, the CSIR-CBRI, Roorkee team developed a mechanism for 19

years to steer the sunlight from the third floor of the temple to the 'garbha griha'. A detailed design to bring sunlight to the 'garbha griha' was developed by CBRI, with the IIA providing consultancy for the optical design.

The system was tested by the scientists on Tuesday.

Dr S K Panigrahi, a scientist at CSIR-CBRI Roorkee,

who was also associated with the project said that the basic objective of the Surya Tilak project is to focus on the 'Tilak' on the forehead of Shri Ram idol on every Shri Ram Navami day. Under the project, sunlight will be brought on the forehead of Lord Ram at noon on Shri Ram Navami in the Chaitra month every year.

# Campaigning..

*Continued from Page 1*

Leading the charge, Prime Minister Narendra Modi took whirlwind tours of various constituencies in the past few days, addressing rallies and holding roadshows, and asserting that he went to people with hope in 2014, trust in 2019 and guarantee in 2024. Many times he said there is "Modi's guarantee across the country and I am giving the guarantee of fulfilling all these guarantees".

Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and several of their cabinet colleagues, leaders of the Congress such as Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, and other parties also canvassed for their candidates.

The BJP has come out all guns blazing at the INDIA bloc over corruption, dynasty politics and insulting the Constitution and Hinduism.





INDIA CORNER

Woman kills self by jumping from PG building in Delhi

A 29-year-old woman allegedly committed suicide by jumping from the second floor of a paying guest accommodation in northwest Delhi, police said on Wednesday.



Elgar Parishad case accused Shoma Sen walks out of prison

Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case accused and former Nagpur University professor Shoma Sen was released from a prison here on Wednesday afternoon, an official said.



School headmaster stabbed multiple times, hospitalised

The Government Railway Police (GRP) have arrested a 39-year-old man for trying to kill a school headmaster at Dombivli in Maharashtra's Thane district by stabbing him multiple times, an official said on Wednesday.



'Modi govt will eliminate Naxals in very short time'

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

The Narendra Modi government will eliminate Naxals from the country in a very short period of time, Union Home Minister Amit Shah asserted on Wednesday.



Shah said a large number of camps of security forces have been set up in Maoist-affected areas since 2014. Since 2019, as many as 250 such camps have been set up, ending the security vacuum, he said.

Bullet marks on trees at encounter site where 29 Naxals were killed

PNS ■ KANKER

Silence hangs over the hillslocks adjoining Hidur and Kalpar villages in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district where 29 naxalites were gunned down by security forces in an encounter.

was killed in the encounter. He came to know about it only on Wednesday, he said, talking to reporters at Kalpar village.

Woman can't be held accountable for abetting suicide of lover: Delhi HC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A woman cannot be held accountable for abetting the suicide of a man if he ends his life due to 'love failure', the Delhi High Court has observed while granting pre-arrest bail to two persons in an abetment of suicide case.

Those in power worship 'satta' not 'Shakti': Priyanka

PNS ■ SAHARANPUR (UP)

Attacking the BJP, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday said those ruling the country are not worshippers of 'satya (truth) or 'Maa Shakti' but only of 'satta (power)'.



(Goddess Shakti) but only of 'satta' (power). "For 'satta', they can go to any extent, they can topple governments, buy MLAs and give the country's assets to the rich," she said.

BJP accuses DK Shivakumar of 'brazen abuse of power'

PNS ■ BENGALURU

BJP leader Amit Malviya on Wednesday accused Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar of "brazen abuse of power" after a video of him seeking votes from the residents of a housing society in Bengaluru Rural Lok Sabha segment was shared widely on social media platforms.

responsibility as a minister to provide amenities to the people. "DK Shivakumar, Deputy CM of Karnataka, in a brazen abuse of power, holds voters of a large housing society in his brother DK Suresh's constituency, to ransom. Sounding every bit menacing, he wields a threat, couched in crass humour, that if the residents don't vote for his brother, he would know (since their vote is in 2/3 booths) and not provide water and CA site..." he alleged in a post on 'X'.



10 killed as car rams into truck on Expressway

PNS ■ NADIAD (GUJARAT)

As many as 10 persons travelling in a car died after their speeding vehicle rammed into a truck on the Ahmedabad-Vadodara Expressway near Nadiad town of Gujarat's Kheda district on Wednesday, police officials said.

Poll strategists turn campaigners in political war rooms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Excel sheets, powerpoint presentations, targeted content sharing, survey reports, technology and endless data -- these elements may have been missing from traditional election campaigns in India a couple of decades ago but today they drive the winning strategy with poll strategists assuming an important role in a shift from being backroom boys.

rise of poll strategists would suggest otherwise. The poster boy of political consulting had emerged in the form of Prashant Kishor whose team advised the Narendra Modi-led BJP to a resounding win of 282 seats in the 2014 general elections.

the marquee campaigns to build "brand Modi" like 'Chai pe charcha' (conversations over tea) and the Statue of Unity movement; it also implemented 3D hologram rallies in India for the first time with Modi while positioning him as Vikas Purush (man of progress).



Having worked with many parties in shaping their election campaigns, often successfully, before launching his 'padayatra' in Bihar with a stated goal to usher in transformative changes to boost the backward state's development, Kishor says he does not think he is doing anything drastically different.

building grassroots organisation," he said during a recent interaction. Sunil Kanugolu, who played a crucial role in several BJP state campaigns, is now part of the Congress task force for 2024. He is credited with the Karnataka victory and the Bharat Jodo Yatra.

ISRO to continue lunar mission until an Indian lands on Moon: Somanath

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

The Indian Space Research Organisation will continue its Chandrayaan series of lunar probes until an astronaut from the country lands on the Moon, said ISRO Chairman S Somanath on Wednesday.



Chandrayaan series till an Indian lands on the Moon. Before that, we have to master many technologies, such as going there and coming back. That we are trying to do in the next mission," he told reporters

on the sidelines of an event. Somanath was in Ahmedabad as the chief guest of a programme organised by the Astronautical Society of India. About India's first-ever human space flight mission, Gaganyaan, Somanath said ISRO will carry out an uncrewed mission, a test vehicle flight mission and an air-drop test this year.

Govt divided farmers, orchestrated split in Morcha: Rakesh Tikait

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Farmer leader Rakesh Tikait has attacked the BJP, alleging that the split in the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), which had led the 2020-21 farmers' movement, was orchestrated by its government at the Centre.

debt waiver. "The agitation started on February 13 with the organisations calling for a 'Delhi Chalo' march, and since then, farmers, mainly from Punjab, are at camping at the Shambhu border after being stopped by the Haryana Police. Referring to the past clashes between protesters and police at the border, Tikait said the SKM has condemned the use of force against farmers. However, the splinter group (the SKM (Non-Political)) has not tried to initiate any discussions with the SKM, he claimed.



Study links being online to higher risk of absenteeism

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Spending too much time online to the point of giving up necessary activities, such as eating, sleeping and exercising, is linked to heightening the risk of school absence among teens, new research conducted in Finland has found.

The team of researchers, including those from the University of Helsinki, found that getting the recommended 8-10 hours of sleep and exercise, and a trusting relationship with parents with whom they could share concerns seemed to be protective. Their findings are published in the journal Archives of Disease in Childhood.



sleep and physical activity. The internet use of the teenagers was measured using a validated scale -- Excessive Internet Use (EIU) -- which is based on aspects, such as neglect of family, friends, and study, and not eating or sleeping because of being online.

found that about a third slept for fewer than eight hours over the weekdays, and roughly the same fraction of the participants reported low levels of physical activity -- less than three days a week. The research team found that spending too much time online was associated with a 38 per cent higher risk of truancy and 24 per cent higher risk of school absence due to medical reasons.

likely to play truant and roughly 40 per cent less likely to be absent from school because of an illness. Good relations with parents, longer night sleep over weekdays and physical activity were all found to be significantly protective, the team said.

Under the SKM's banner, a large number of farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, had held a year-long protest on Delhi's border points -- Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur -- against the now-repealed three farm laws.

Now, a number of new farmer unions are being formed to divide farmers, he claimed and added that this is part of a "conspiracy".



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## SC votes for EVMs

The apex court has summarily rejected the idea of reverting to ballot papers for registering votes

General elections would be held through Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) as the Supreme Court has voiced its disapproval of criticism directed towards them; it has summarily dismissed the idea of reverting to ballot papers. This statement comes amid debates regarding the reliability of EVMs. Many Opposition leaders have publicly expressed scepticism regarding the accuracy of EVM results, citing concerns of tampering and the potential undermining of the democratic process. The Supreme Court's stance underscores the need for a pragmatic approach towards electoral reforms, balancing concerns of transparency and efficiency in democratic practices. The use of EVMs in elections has been a subject of contention since its introduction in India in the 1990s by the Congress Government. While proponents argue for its efficiency, accuracy and ability to streamline the voting process, critics raise concerns over potential vulnerabilities to tampering, hacking and manipulation. These concerns have fuelled calls for a return to traditional paper ballots, perceived by some as a more secure and transparent method of voting. However, the Supreme Court's recent remarks shed light on the practical challenges associated with such a regression. The transition from paper ballots to EVMs was a significant leap forward in the electoral process. Reverting to paper ballots would not only be a step back in terms of technology but also pose logistical challenges in managing large-scale elections in a country as populous as India. The Supreme Court is right in its stand as replacing EVMs with paper ballots will be a humongous exercise. However, there is a middle ground called VVPAT



— the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT). A tangible link between electronic voting and the traditional paper ballot system, it provides voters with the opportunity to verify their vote by displaying a paper slip containing the chosen candidate's name and symbol. A little tweaking of the system to collect paper slips with the candidate's name the voter voted for and counted along with the electronic votes would go a long way in making the system transparent. Critics of EVMs have often pointed to instances of alleged tampering and discrepancies in election results. While these concerns merit attention, it is essential to distinguish between genuine issues and unsubstantiated claims driven by political agendas. The integrity of the electoral process is paramount, and any allegations of malpractice should be thoroughly investigated and addressed. Perception plays a crucial role in shaping the legitimacy of election outcomes, and measures to strengthen transparency and accountability are essential. Rather than advocating for a wholesale rejection of technological advancements, the focus should be on enhancing the security, transparency and accountability of the electoral process. Making VVPAT counting and matching mandatory would indeed go a long way in clearing the doubts about the EVMs.

— the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT). A tangible link between electronic voting and the traditional paper ballot system, it provides voters with the opportunity to verify their vote by displaying a paper slip containing the chosen candidate's name and symbol. A little tweaking of the system to collect paper slips with the candidate's name the voter voted for and counted along with the electronic votes would go a long way in making the system transparent. Critics of EVMs have often pointed to instances of alleged tampering and discrepancies in election results. While these concerns merit attention, it is essential to distinguish between genuine issues and unsubstantiated claims driven by political agendas. The integrity of the electoral process is paramount, and any allegations of malpractice should be thoroughly investigated and addressed. Perception plays a crucial role in shaping the legitimacy of election outcomes, and measures to strengthen transparency and accountability are essential. Rather than advocating for a wholesale rejection of technological advancements, the focus should be on enhancing the security, transparency and accountability of the electoral process. Making VVPAT counting and matching mandatory would indeed go a long way in clearing the doubts about the EVMs.

# Showdown in Karnataka

### As Karnataka braces for the Lok Sabha elections, the political arena is set for a fierce clash between the Congress and the BJP-JD(S) alliance

The Lok Sabha elections are coming up in Karnataka and will be held in 28 constituencies on April 26 and May 7. The Congress party and the BJP-JD(S) alliance will compete to win voters' support. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has visited the State multiple times to campaign for BJP candidates. BJP has the support of former chief minister Yediyurappa, who is widespread among the Lingayat community and is a significant vote bank in the State. These elections are crucial for Karnataka's future and mark a pivotal moment in its history. Karnataka has been a stronghold of Congress for many years. It supported Prime Minister Indira Gandhi even after the Emergency, is a testament to its political significance. This historical significance is evident from the victories of Indira Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi, who both won seats in Karnataka for the Congress party. These elections are not just a contest but a high-stakes battle between Congress, BJP and the Bharatiya Janata Party-Janata Dal (Secular) alliance. They symbolise the BJP's re-entry into Karnataka's political landscape. The election could shift policy priorities and governance style, potentially impacting various sectors of the State's economy and society. The results will have significant consequences for people's lives, making their participation and understanding of the process crucial.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) seeks to emerge victorious in the upcoming Karnataka elections to solidify its regional dominance in the South, enhance its standing in national politics and extend its sphere of influence in southern India. In contrast, the Indian National Congress is committed to protecting its Government in the State. At the same time, the Janata Dal (Secular) [JD(S)] endeavours to survive in a highly competitive political climate. In essence, JD(S) is striving to attain political longevity. The BJP's campaign in Karnataka centres around PM Modi's achievements and Congress's fail-



ures. It targets two influential communities, the Lingayats and Vokkaligas, who are crucial to its electoral strategy. The Lingayats, being a dominant community in the State, have traditionally supported the BJP. In contrast, the Vokkaligas, another influential community, has been a JD (S) stronghold. Winning over these communities is crucial for the BJP's electoral success. The BJP faces some local conflicts. For the first time since 2014, the party has had an open rebellion. The reason for this is the BJP-JDS alliance, which has yet to be well received. The Congress, too, has its rebel candidates. Congress is targeting SCs, STs and Muslims in Karnataka. The Congress Government implemented five essential poll guarantees promised last year, which included free bus rides for women, increased funding for education and job creation. These promises were designed to address specific concerns of the region's voters and reflect the party's commitment to social welfare and economic development. Three pre-poll surveys by Edina, News 18 and India Today Group predict con-



THE CONGRESS GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTED FIVE ESSENTIAL POLL GUARANTEES PROMISED LAST YEAR, WHICH INCLUDED FREE BUS RIDES FOR WOMEN, INCREASED FUNDING FOR EDUCATION AND JOB CREATION

flicting results for Karnataka's upcoming elections. Edina predicts Congress will win 17 seats and the BJP-JDS alliance will bag 11. News 18 forecasts NDA will win 25 seats, Congress only 3. India Today Group predicts NDA will win 24 seats with a 53 per cent vote share. The INDIA alliance, a regional party alliance, is expected to secure only four seats with a 42 per cent vote share. These surveys provide a snapshot of the current political landscape. They can help readers gauge the potential outcomes of the election. There is a significant shift from the 2019 polls when Congress and JD(S) were allies. The BJP aims to secure the Vokkaliga vote in Old Mysore and tilt the election in their favour. The Vokkaligas, a dominant community in the Old Mysore region, have traditionally supported the JD (S). The BJP's strategy to win over this community involves a combination of caste-based outreach, promises of development and highlighting the failures of the JD (S) Government. If successful, this strategy could significantly impact the election outcome and the State's political landscape.



KALYANI SHANKAR

The BJP has fielded a top cardiologist, a member of the Mysuru royal family and an ex-chief Minister among its candidates. It has also fielded some new faces. The Congress has many ministers' relatives and these candidates can impact the result. Since the BJP formed its first Government in 2008, the 'toppling game has been ongoing. Money and positions often play a significant role in luring legislators to shift loyalties, adding another layer of complexity to the State's political landscape. Both parties are willing to spend money. The upcoming election in the State poses a decision for voters. They must choose between supporting the Congress party they previously elected in the Assembly polls or the BJP, which had held power earlier. While some may prefer the Congress, the BJP still has a loyal following. Suppose the voters choose to reject the BJP. In that case, it'll signify that the political party's access to the South has been closed, at least temporarily and the return of Congress is on the right track. (The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)

### PICTALK



National Cadet Corps perform a drill during their 10-day summer season camp at Nagrota, in Jammu

PTI

## The new age of quantum technology

The scientific community celebrated April 14 as World Quantum Day to raise awareness of quantum science's impact across diverse fields

The world of science is on the cusp of a transformative era driven by the burgeoning field of quantum technology. Quantum science is founded on several key principles that underpin the behaviour of particles and systems at the quantum scale.



communication between them. These counterintuitive phenomena, once relegated to the realm of theory, are now being harnessed to create groundbreaking technologies with the potential to revolutionise numerous fields. India has a long and rich history in quantum science. Pioneering work by Satyendra Nath Bose on quantum statistics laid the groundwork for many modern quantum technologies, including Bose-Einstein condensation, quantum superconductivity and quantum information theory. Over the past few decades, advancements in quantum science have surged, laying the groundwork for a new era characterised by unparalleled computational power, secure communication and transformative applications across various sectors. One of the most captivating applications of quantum mechanics is the

development of quantum computers. These machines leverage the power of superposition to perform calculations exponentially faster than traditional computers. By manipulating qubits (quantum bits) that can be 0, 1, or both simultaneously, quantum computers can explore a vast array of possibilities concurrently. This unparalleled processing power holds immense promise for drug discovery, where simulating complex molecules can accelerate the development of life-saving medications. Another revolutionary application of quantum technology is in secure communication. Quantum key distribution (QKD) utilises the principles of quantum mechanics to establish secure cryptographic keys between parties. By encoding information into the quantum States of particles and leveraging entanglement properties, QKD ensures that any attempt to intercept or eavesdrop on the communication would disturb the quantum State, thereby alerting the parties involved. Quantum cryptography safeguards sensitive information

in critical areas like financial transactions, national security communications and protecting intellectual property. By exploiting the extreme sensitivity of quantum systems to minute changes, scientists are developing sensors capable of detecting the subtlest variations in magnetic fields, gravity and temperature. This has profound implications for medical imaging, where ultra-high-resolution MRIs can provide detailed analyses of tissues and organs, aiding in early disease detection and personalised medicine. In navigation, quantum sensors can lead to more precise GPS and navigation systems, which are crucial for autonomous vehicles and various scientific endeavours. The Government of India, under the Department of Science and Technology, has initiated the National Quantum Mission (NQM), which aims to harness the transformative potential of quantum technology to address national challenges and foster innovation. (The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies; views are personal)



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### MEDICAL SUPPLIES SCANDAL

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Delhi Government's Vigilance Department Exposes Kejriwal", published on April 16, this is my response. Recent revelations concerning irregularities in medical procurement by the AAP-led Delhi Government raise serious concerns. The findings of the Vigilance Department indicate a pattern of favouritism towards specific individuals and companies during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in significant losses for the Government. The involvement of high-ranking officials, including the Health Minister's OSD RN Das, in managing tenders to benefit particular entities is troubling. The exploitation of the pandemic crisis to swindle funds from the public exchequer is deplorable. The notice's assertion that procurement procedures were blatantly ignored, coupled with allegations of cartelisation among suppliers, paints a grim picture of corruption within the health department. The revelation that certain companies, allegedly linked to influential individuals, secured lucrative contracts further deepens suspicions of foul play. While the AAP-led Delhi Government dismisses the allegations as baseless, the call for accountability is paramount. Swift and transparent investigations are necessary to restore public trust and ensure such egregious malpractices are rooted out effectively.

Vishwajeet Aparta | Jaipur

#### NATO'S EVOLVING CHALLENGES

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Challenges galore for NATO@75", published on April 16, this is my response. NATO, an alliance born in the aftermath of World War II, faces a multitude of challenges as it marks its 75th anniversary. Criticism from within Europe, coupled with the rise of right-wing nationalism, underscores the need for NATO to adapt. Its traditional focus on military might must now contend with non-traditional threats like cyber warfare and terrorism. Moreover, NATO's credibility is under

#### The power of young citizens



Apropos the news article, "A call to vote responsibly beyond party lines", published on April 16, this is my response. India's youthful population yields immense power through their vote, a power intrinsically tied to responsibility. As we step into adulthood, we're not just celebrating a milestone but embracing a civic duty to shape the nation's

future. The call is clear: transcend party lines and scrutinise progress objectively. Our nation's trajectory demands introspection—are we advancing equitably? Are policies benefiting all strata of society?

The electoral process is our mechanism for accountability, a tool to measure leadership against promises made. Infrastructure, industry, healthcare, education—these sectors reflect our collective welfare. As citizens, we must assess policies impartially, ensuring transparency and inclusivity. Our vote signifies unity, transcending divisive lines for the greater good. Informed decision-making isn't just a privilege but a necessity. Our diverse nation thrives when every voice is heard and every concern addressed. Let's harness the power of our vote to pave the path towards a stronger, more inclusive India.

Keerti Punia | Chandigarh

scrutiny due to perceptions of American hegemony and its military interventions worldwide. The proposed aid package to Ukraine highlights NATO's role in geopolitical tensions, particularly concerning Russia. However, India's rejection of a US offer to join NATO signals a broader reluctance among nations to align too closely with Western military alliances. As NATO faces an uncertain future, navigating the complexities of global power dynamics will require strategic reforms and a renewed commitment to its founding principles of security and cooperation.

Aryan Kant | Sonapat

#### MENTAL IMPACT OF NUTRITION

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Mangoes are nature's antidepressants", published on April 15, this is my response. Poor nutrition doesn't just affect our bodies—it deeply impacts our mental well-being too. In an insightful exploration by Rajdeep Joshi, the link between nutrition and mental health is emphasised, with a focus on the often overlooked benefits of mango consumption. Nutrition is the

cornerstone of good health and its deficiency is intertwined with mental health issues like depression and anxiety. While various factors contribute to depression, nutritional imbalances are often sidelined. Key vitamins and minerals play pivotal roles in managing psychological well-being, influencing optimal brain function and stress levels. Mangoes emerge as natural mood enhancers, packed with serotonin-boosting tryptophan and vital minerals like potassium and magnesium. Incorporating mangoes into our diet not only promotes physical health but also aids in relieving nervous tension and improving mood. The recipe provided, a nutritious mango salad, offers a delicious way to harness the mental wellness benefits of mangoes, blending their goodness with other wholesome ingredients. It's a flavorful reminder that what we eat profoundly impacts not just our bodies, but our minds too.

Jitu Majumdar | Kolkata  
Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN SPIRITUAL APPROACH TO CLIMATE CHANGE

To return to a life of harmony with nature, we need to realise our spiritual identity



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

A few centuries ago no one worried about climate change, because there was no reason to do so. But as humans extracted more from nature and dumped an increasing amount of waste, including highly toxic substances, on it, the ecological balance began to get disrupted. This process has accelerated over the centuries and brought us to the present situation where, according to some experts, the entire human race faces extinction shortly.

Climate change and global warming are sometimes thought of as things that will happen in the future. But scientists are finding increasing evidence that the planet is changing now - and that people must take a large share of the blame for this phenomenon. They further explain that excessive carbon emissions through industrial and vehicular pollution, use of CFCs and plundering of forests and natural resources have depleted the ozone layer. This has trapped more and more solar radiation inside the earth's atmosphere. As a result, the earth is heating up which has begun to trigger a chain of natural upheavals like floods, earthquakes, tsunamis and landslides in recent times.

To prevent such an eventuality, humans need to work on themselves. Man does not need to master nature. The human soul is the master of all that is material. It is when the soul begins to identify itself with the body that it comes under the influence of matter and vices. In the Golden and Silver Ages, when all human souls had self-awareness and divine qualities, nature was their obedient servant. The elements of nature made life pleasant in that era, which is remembered in religious texts as paradise or heaven.



Because the divine beings of that world were free of vices, they never exploited or despoiled nature. Instead of having to be environment-friendly, they had a truly friendly environment. They were friends not only to their fellow beings but also to all matter. This State of affairs continued till the beginning of the Copper Age when the souls forgot who they were and began to come under the influence of the body and the vices. They then began to exploit natural resources, gradually harming the environment. In return, nature too ceased to obey souls who had lost mastery over themselves. As the influence of the vices grew, so did the plunder of nature and what was once a harmonious relationship turned more into one between an exploiter and the exploited.

The Prime Minister of India in his speech at the UN said "We can achieve the same level of development, prosperity and well-being without necessarily going down the path of reckless consumption. It doesn't mean that economies will suffer; it will mean that our economies will take on a different character. For us in India, respect for nature is an integral part of spiritualism. We treat nature's bounties as sacred. Yoga is an invaluable gift of our ancient tradition. Yoga embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfillment; harmony between man and nature; and a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and nature. By changing our lifestyle and creating consciousness, it can help us deal with climate change."

Now, if we wish to go back from the brink and return to a life of harmony with nature, we need to realise our spiritual identity and values. Such awareness will make us naturally eco-friendly and send out a positive energy that will bring the elements of nature into harmony with us again. If a critical mass of humans begin to live with this spiritual awareness, nature will by itself become our friend and humanity will look at a golden instead of a doubtful future.

*(The writer is a spiritual educator and a popular columnist; views are personal)*

# The roots of Wahhabi extremism



HASAN KHURSHID

The world reels under the grip of Wahhabi terrorism, orchestrated by Saudi rulers with Zionist affiliations, masquerading behind a façade of Islam



Today entire world is gripped in the clutches of Wahhabi terrorism spearheaded by Zionist Saudi rulers, wearing the cloak of pseudo-Islam, who are hiding their faith in Judaism. All terrorist organisations, such as Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Lashkar e Taiyaba, Lashkar e Jhangvi, etc; follow the ideology of Wahhabism, a newly created cult of Saudi rulers, the pseudo-Muslims.

The activities of this cult can be best explained through the words of renowned British historian Charles Allen, who in his book, God's Terrorists - The Wahhabi Cult and the Hidden Roots of Modern Jihad, writes, "Wahhabi is a guiding ideology behind modern Islamist terrorism. In the 18th century, a violently intolerant re-interpretation of Islam took root in the Arabian desert. Its followers became known after their founder (Sheikh Muhammad Najdi ibn Abd-al Wahhab), as Wahhabi. The creed was then exported to India and its north-west frontier Afghanistan."

Sheikh Najdi was born in 1702, in the desert of Najd, a rocky plateau of the Arabian Peninsula. About Najd, Charles Allen writes, "Indeed for many Arabs, Najd had only negative associations. There was a popular saying that 'Nothing good ever came out of Najd' and it was related in the Hadith that the Prophet had three times been called upon to ask God to bless Najd and had three times refused, answering on the third occasion, 'Earthquakes and dissension are there and there shall arise the horn of Satan.' In the years following the ministry of Al-Wahhab, there were many who argued that this prophecy had been confirmed." In 1744, Najdi ibn Wahhab, sidelining the preaching of true Islam by Prophet Mohammed, created a new version of



WAHHABISM IS NOTHING BUT PSEUDO-ISLAM. HOWEVER, WHEN OPPOSITION MOUNTED AGAINST HIS IDEOLOGY, NAJDI WAS SHREWD ENOUGH TO FIND A PATRON IN MUHAMMED-IBN SAUD, A BEDOUIN TRIBAL CHIEF WHO MADE USE OF HIS NEW VITRIOLIC VERSION OF ISLAM FOR POLITICAL CONSOLIDATION

Islam called Wahhabism. His ideology is enshrined in Kitab-al Tawhid (book of unity), which prescribes the forceful conversion of Muslims and non-Muslims to his Salafi or Wahhabi ideology, wherein he manifestly says, "Follow my ideology, else get ready to be killed." His ideology was strongly opposed by Muslim masses, including his father and uncle.

So, Wahhabism is nothing but pseudo-Islam. However, when the opposition mounted against his ideology, Najdi was shrewd enough to find a patron in Muhammed-ibn-Saud, a Bedouin tribal chief, who made use of his new vitriolic version of Islam for political consolidation. Ibn Saud belonged to the Jewish tribe of Anza Ben Wael.

Islam is not the original religion of Saudi Arab rulers. Sheikh Najdi, also belonging to Jewish ancestry, not only made an alliance with Ibn Saud but also got his daughter married to Ibn Saud's son Abd-al-Aziz ibn Saud. Thereafter, the faith was of Sheikh Najdi and the sword was of Ibn Saud. A dynastic government was established as a result of this partnership, which is continuing in the name of Saudi Arabia.

In 1766, Muhammed ibn Saud was killed and his son Abd-al-Aziz took over as Emir (temporal leader). He introduced firearms in the holy war or jihad, replacing conventional weaponry. He accelerated his attacks in a spectacular bid to extend his territory and as Allen says, "He issued every holy warrior a 'firman' or written order addressed to gate-keeper of heaven, requir-

ing him to be admitted forth-with should he die on battle." Since then it has been the common schismatic, fraudulent practice of terror operators to misguide and exploit the youth for recruitment with the promise of paradise.

The history of Wahhabism has been written with the blood of innocent people. On June 2, 1792, Sheikh Muhammad Najdi-ibn-Abd-al-Wahhab died, leaving his 24 wives and 18 children and his son-in-law Abd-al-Aziz speeded up his violent actions and conversions. In 1802, he attacked Karbala in Iraq, desecrating the holy shrine of Hazrat Imam Husain. Lieutenant Francis Warden wrote, "They pillaged the whole of it and plundered the tomb of Hazrat Imam Husain, slaying in the course of the day, with circumstances of peculiar cruelty, killing about 5,000 of the inhabitants. A huge amount of booty was seized."

In 1803, Abd-al-Aziz ibn Saud obtained a visit permit from the Shareef of Mecca on the pretext of performing Hajj; whereupon his Wahhabi fighters laid waste in Islam's holiest shrine (Ka'aba), like the accursed Yazid had desecrated it in 682 AD. According to T.E Ravenshaw, author of A Memorandum on the Sect of Wahhabis, "They robbed the splendid tombs of the Mahomedan saints, who were interred there; and their fanatical zeal did not even spare the Prophet's Mosque (in Medina) which they robbed of the immense treasures and costly furniture to which each Mahomedan Prince of Europe,

Asia and Africa had contributed his share."

In 1804, a Wahhabi gang again crossed the great desert in the Hijaz and destroyed tombs of the Prophet's family members at Jannat-ul-Baqi, the ancient cemetery of Medina and even despoiled the grave of Prophet Mohammed. In 1925, Wahhabis demolished the holy shrines of Hazrat Fatima Zehra, daughter of Prophet Mohammed and his grandsons, as well as the birth-place of Prophet Mohammed.

In India, the 500-year-old Babri Masjid in Ayodhya was demolished on December 6, 1992, by a radical Hindu mob led by Sangh Parivar leaders. Intellectuals across the globe, irrespective of caste, creed, religion or region, condemned the demolition. Muslims across the world protested. Several lives were lost. In its landmark judgement of 2019, the Supreme Court held that the demolition was illegal and directed the authorities to allot an alternative plot for a mosque as compensation.

On the other hand, the more heinous crime of multiple demolitions of holy shrines, relics and heritage sites together with massacres took place in Saudi Arabia at the behest of Saudi Arab's Wahhabi/Salafi rulers of Zionist ancestry, on 8th Shawwal 1344 Hijri (1925 A.D), but surprisingly no Muslim of any sect reacts or protests against the pseudo-Muslim Saudi rulers. Is it because those perpetrators are Muslim for name sake?

*(The writer is a legal journalist and author. The views expressed are personal)*

# Temperature soars as our ignorance threatens Earth's future

The relentless rise in global temperatures paints a stark portrait of humanity's disregard for the environment, echoing a dire warning for the planet's future

The temperature in the world is increasing day by day, due to the ignorance and carelessness of the people. The problem of rising temperatures is seen all over the world. The world's Climate changes day by day. The rising temperature is a bell of danger for the living world. If we are not aware, then we will not be able to deal with the problems of the future. All living beings need water, air and heat to survive. The changes in the quality and quantity of water and air will give birth to uncountable problems. When the atmosphere or the climate changes the changes are also seen in the living world, as we see now. The desert's biome is differ-



KALI DAS

ent from Iceland's biome. In Australia we can see its national animal kangaroo, In Iceland we can see polar bears and penguins. Fruits, vegetables, flowers and forests also differ due to climate change. When the temperature of the earth is increasing, it poses a big threat to everyone. We don't know whether we will get the same fruits and vegetables tomorrow that we get now. Today the animals, birds or insects that we see all around us will be extinct or survive we don't know. We don't have any information about living beings, how many species of them have already extinct every year is not known doubt they enrich our lives. We

don't account for how much our lives have been affected since they disappeared. If our outer is affected then our inner is also affected. It is worth considering. We are destroying our environment because of our greed. Inhumanity is seen in humans today. There are two reasons behind the increase in global temperature, one is man-made and the other one is natural. Man-made causes are deforestation, cutting of trees, use of vehicles and excessive use of fossil fuels. Natural causes where earthquakes, Storms, forest fires, gas accidents coal burning etc. The main cause of global warming is the greenhouse effect. A greenhouse is a glass house for keeping trees,



which does not allow the heat to go away from the glass house. It is used to save the trees. The greenhouse effect is seen in the increase of carbon dioxide and methane gas. When the temperature increases by one degree, it greatly affects our environment. The ice accumulated

in the South Pole and the North Pole of the Earth is starting to melt. The glaciers in the Himalayas of India are also starting to melt and the water from these glaciers is causing floods in the rivers coming out of the glaciers. Nowadays days Shiv ling in Amarnath is melting within in few days. In the future, as

the heat increases, the rivers will cause flood and they will join the sea with the flood water. Many intellectuals of the world are concerned about the increase in global temperature. The solution to these problems is only by planting trees. The only way we can save our planet is by plantation and forest protection. Trees give us oxygen and reduce the amount of carbon in the atmosphere. So planting trees is only one solution to the problem. The tree planting program should be carried out regularly. When the Seawater rises it enters nearby cities and villages. In the fourth chapter of the twelfth skanda of the Bhagavatam, there is a description of the flood or the pralaya where the

matter of Prithibi becomes hot and causes a flood or pralaya. It is also said that the rays of the sun will destroy the living world. How to save the living world should be the main subject of our course of studies in educational institutions. As long as the world is standing at the door of destruction we should not count the numbers of profit and loss but the message of collective development and collective happiness and peace should be spread. The intellectual people of India always sent messages of peace and goodwill to the world. Today let India be the guide of the world to protect the planet. *(The writer is a columnist, poet and social worker; views are personal)*





## Tom Holland's X account reportedly hacked



There have reportedly been hacks into Hollywood actor Tom Holland's X account. On April 16, a post on Holland's timeline about a relationship with a cryptocurrency startup raised suspicions among fans. Since then, the post has been removed. In the now-deleted tweet, users were asked to sign up to gain access to Spider Coin, a virtual currency. Holland's bio on X was also modified to mention the purported collaboration between the actor and the website. A different segment of the internet expressed dissatisfaction about Holland's reported inability to publicly support co-star Francesca Amewudah-Rivers, who has faced racist comments and online harassment as a result of her pairing with Holland in the West End production of *Romeo and Juliet*, because of the hacking. Regarding his professional life, Tom Holland most recently starred in the American miniseries *The Crowded Room*.



## Janhvi Kapoor gets intertwined with lies & betrayal in *Ulajh*

The teaser for *Ulajh*, starring Janhvi Kapoor, is here. Along with it, the makers also revealed the release date. With Gulshan Devaiah, Roshan Mathew, and Janhvi in hitherto unseen avatars, the teaser gives viewers a first look at the high-stakes world of IFS (Indian Foreign Services). The movie, which is helmed by Sudhanshu Saria, will open in theaters on July 5.

*Ulajh* chronicles the travels of a youthful ambassador from a well-known patriotic family who becomes entangled in a perilous personal plot while serving abroad in a position that will define her future.

A glimpse of Janhvi as Suhana can be seen in the teaser when she is shown secretly breaking into a government facility, taking phone videos, and looking over confidential documents. A gunshot is heard, and the screen darkens menacingly.

Suhana is also heard saying that betrayal is the price of life itself, emphasising how important it is to either eradicate or be eliminated to protect the country.

Superstars like Adil Hussain, Rajesh Tailang, Meiyang Chang, Rajendra Gupta, and Jitendra Joshi are also featured in the movie. *Ulajh*, which has dialogue by Atika Chauhan and was written by Parveez Shaikh and Sudhanshu Saria, will be released in theaters near you in July.

# what's brewing?



## Manisha Rani back with her electrifying moves in *Bairan Begani*

Fresh off the heels of her triumphant success on *Jhalak Dikha Ja 11*, Manisha Rani is gearing up to captivate audiences once again with her upcoming music video, *Bairan Begani*. The scintillating track, set to be released on Saga Music's official YouTube channel, promises to be a visual and auditory spectacle.

Featuring vocals by Amit Uchana, *Bairan Begani* is poised to enrapture listeners with its melodic charm. However, it's Manisha Rani's mesmerising presence and killer looks that are sure to steal the spotlight! Directed by the talented Filmy Boys, the music video is anticipated to be a cinematic masterpiece, seamlessly blending captivating visuals with the infectious rhythm of the song. With their track record of delivering captivating visuals, they are set to elevate *Bairan Begani* to new heights. As anticipation builds for the release of *Bairan Begani*, fans can expect nothing short of excellence from Manisha Rani and the entire team involved. Stay tuned for the much-anticipated *Bairan Begani* and get ready to witness the magic unfold.



## KUNAL KEMMU-STARRER GULKANDA TALES ON AMAZON PRIME

Actor-turned-director and singer-songwriter Kunal Kemmu is undoubtedly the man of the moment right now, thanks to the enormous success of his directing debut, *Madgaon Express*. He will be entertaining audiences once more with his next web series, *Gulkanda Tales*. The series, directed by Rahi Anil Barve and written by Raj and DK, is a unique satire that takes place in the made-up nation of Gulkanda. In a recent podcast, Kunal Kemmu discussed *Gulkanda Tales* and talked about his character, the world of Gulkanda, and other topics. "It's coming out this year on Amazon Prime Video and was made by the director of *Tumbbad*, Rahi Anil Barve, with production handled by Raj & DK," stated Kunal Kemmu. "I have never seen something like this in Indian television or film, and it's a really intriguing subject. In *Gulkanda Tales*, I have a drastically distinct appearance that portrays an entirely different planet. It's sort of epic, so it is kind of epic in a lot of ways, as the slogan puts it. I'm eager to watch it since I know it will be something truly unique." With major performances by Pankaj Tripathi and Patralekha and a talented group of writers that includes Rahi Anil Barve, Raj and DK, and Mitesh Shah, this eagerly awaited series on Amazon Prime Video is sure to provide viewers with a memorable visual treat!

## MOMMY-TO-BE DEEPIKA IS BACK ON SINGHAM AGAIN SETS!

Back on the sets of Rohit Shetty's *Singham Again* is Deepika Padukone. The actress, who is expecting her first child, was photographed by Paparazzi filming the movie with Rohit and other actors while dressed in costume. Deepika had her hair up in a bun and was dressed in a police uniform. She used sunglasses to finish off her "cool" appearance. After revealing her pregnancy in February, her return to work startled her fans. Her growing pregnancy bump was hidden in the pictures.

In the film *Singham Again*, starring Ajay Devgn, Ranveer Singh, Akshay Kumar, and Kareena Kapoor, Deepika portrays Shakti Shetty. All of the big personalities from Rohit Shetty's world of cops appear in the movie. A poster of Deepika as Shakti, dressed in a frightening pose, was previously shared by Deepika and Rohit. In the film, Arjun Kapoor portrays the antagonist.



## SUBHASH GHAI HUNTING FOR HIS 'BALLU BALRAM' FOR *KHALNAYAK 2*: SOURCES

A source claims that Subhash Ghai has completed writing *Khalnayak 2* script. In addition, the director—who co-directed *Khalnayak* with Sanjay Dutt more than three decades ago—is in negotiations with a number of well-known young performers to play Ballu Balram.

According to a source close to Subhash Ghai, the director has already completed the film's script. Ghai is eager to choose a youthful and vibrant actor to play Ballu Balram in the 1993 film's sequel, even though it is unclear if Sanjay Dutt will return. On his list, in reality, are well-known actors from the South.

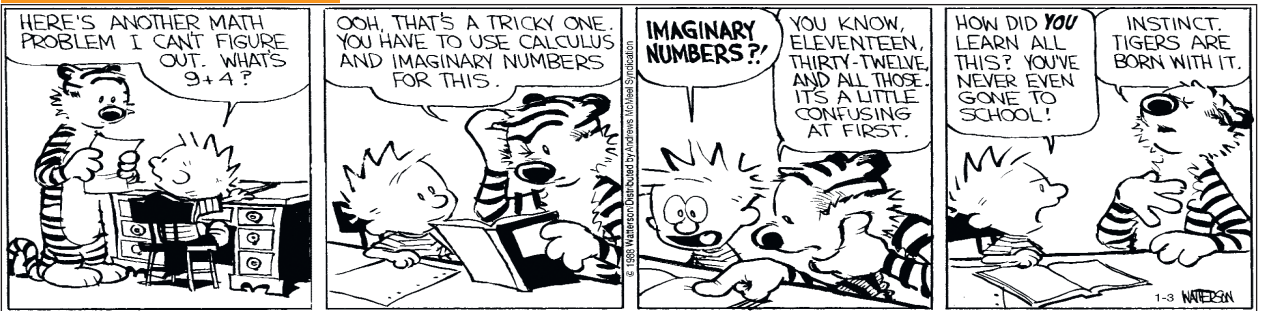
"Subhash Ghai wants to approach actors like Ranveer Singh and Ranbir Kapoor for the role of Ballu Balram," the insider informed. "He's not even limiting himself to Bollywood. He wants to talk to Yash and Allu Arjun as well, who are also on his list. He only desires a replacement who can carry on Ballu's legacy."

## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



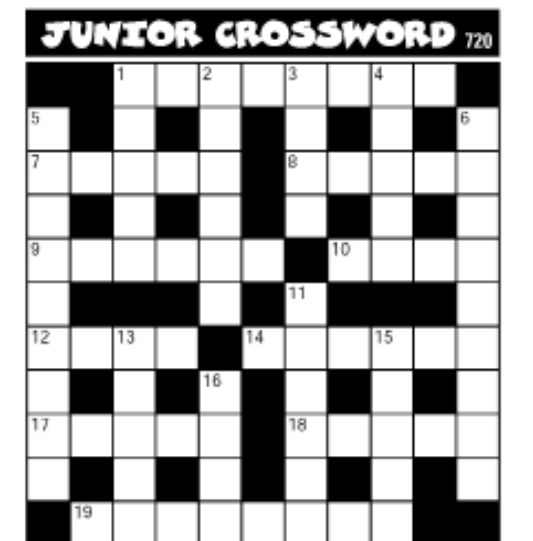
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### NANCY



### SUDOKU



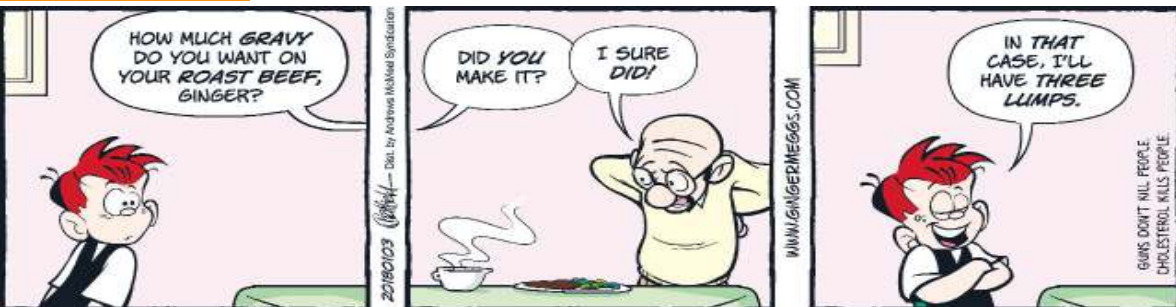
Yesterday's solution

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

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.

### GINGER MEGGS



- ACROSS
- Observing
  - A thrown weapon
  - A large stream
  - The writer of a book
  - A small green creature
  - Weapons
  - Purchased
  - Beneath
  - Railway coaches pulled by an engine
  - Soft shoes worn indoors
- 4 Not over  
5 A green pointy vegetable  
6 Scares  
11 A container for a drink  
13 A soldier's award  
15 Sheep eat this  
16 A journey
- DOWN
- Grind this up for flour
  - Extreme fear
  - Difficult

## BEING A 'MARHAM' FOR THOSE IN NEED

Dedicated to supporting different causes, including autism, thalassemia, and issues of transgender people, *The Pioneer* brings to you the NGO Marham Resonating Resilience, as we connect with the founder on the causes.



SHIKHA DUGGAL

**T**he question is not what I have achieved, but what have I done for others to achieve?" said His Highness Aga Khan. This feeling was the driving force behind the founding of the NGO Marham Resonating Resilience in Hyderabad. Their goal with Marham is to make every moment of tears valuable, every heart unique, and every smile that is lost come back. They went through several delicate subjects to try to make a difference in the lives of at least a few people. They have, in fact, begun working on issues including autism, thalassemia, and transgender people.

We find out more in an exclusive interview with the founder, Dr. Nabat Lakhani: "As the founder, I was already very clear about the kind of philanthropy I wanted to perform in the city and for the people living in the city when I first arrived here in Hyderabad. Something truly remarkable! My main goal was to tell the tales of the unsung heroes. I

began with a magazine that had stories that weren't very popular or successful but that did highlight a number of the difficulties they had overcome."

In the stories that she wrote, she first encountered a group of transgender people. Later, she came across two autistic champions named Varun and Usaid, whose tales touched her differently—as if they had always been family. Also an obstetrician-gynaecologist, she shares, "They grew closer to me as I learned more about them and listened to them more. One of my family members has major thalassemia; thus, I felt our nation needed to take action to stop something preventable."

To raise awareness of thalassemia, Marham organised a panel discussion with representatives from all relevant fields, such as gynecologists, hematopathologists, pediatricians, blood bank pathologists, and parents. The goal was to reach a consensus and persuade them that the most effective way to prevent this fatal disease is through antenatal screening for thalassemia. She also mentioned, "We didn't end there, either. Depending on the lab, the test can cost between Rs. 1500 and Rs. 4000. After almost seven months of steadfast work despite many obstacles, Marham started persuading gynecologists to screen all pregnant and planning couples at just 200. Now, after nearly seven months of hard work, we are almost at the finalisation of our tie-up with the Telangana Health and Family Welfare Department, where tests



will be performed at no cost."

They produced a short video about autism; the performers are all autistic, and it was shown in front of the governor. It has taken home multiple awards and is currently undergoing testing on over-the-top platforms to educate the public about autism and the fact that people with autism are not disabled. In addition, she emphasises, "We conducted a walk and encouraged other bloggers and Instagrammers to talk about it for it to spread further. The autism odyssey was a two-day conference that I created out of my brainchild's desire to bring together all the players involved in improving these people's lives, whether it be in education, therapy, a job, or other areas. With it, we held a cultural event to highlight the Asd's abilities and demonstrate inclusivity. We opened the first autism discussion forum in Hyderabad to meet the goal of providing support for every parent who asks, "What's next for us?"

The foundation has asked the Telangana CSR Wing Director to assist them in getting brochures

Marham, I took the brunt of the consequences."

Then their literary works support inclusion by encouraging those who are stigmatised to tell their stories and come out to live on par with society. They also try to integrate them at different levels in their works before even urging others to do the same. For instance, "When we discuss employment with people who have autism, we first offer them jobs in different capacities within our own businesses, as well as those of our friends and family, and then we push society to follow suit. We place more faith in deeds than in words. Collaboration

and teamwork, in my opinion, can only slightly alter the marginalised work we are trying to do. For a greater impact, it is crucial to unite individuals working on related projects in clusters under one roof."

What about their turning points? Alright, together with spouse screening, they have examined over 1000 samples for thalassemia major, with a 4% detection rate. Although parent groups already exist, they have launched the first-ever forum just for individuals with autism. However, the founder's goal was for the individuals to have a voice that goes beyond their parents, just like any of them. More than 100 members have enlisted thus far. They created the first awareness film, which isn't a documentary and features acting by autistic people themselves. It has four festival victories. They are still employing people with autism in a

variety of ways. They have taken care of the needs and outings of the thirteen girls they adopted from an orphanage, as well as their English and soft skills training.

The achievements don't stop there: "We have funded four college degrees for the city's impoverished families. We have several locations set up for menstruation products, literature, and rations for different city slums. We've established libraries in two slum education centers. We conducted a free breast screening event featuring heavily discounted scans and patient follow-ups (we screened 150 people, of whom 3 were identified and received treatment). We have been successful in persuading the Telangana government to collaborate with private practitioners to test patients for thalassemia at a modest cost of only Rs. 200. We are currently doing the first breast screening in the city, using visually challenged people who have had extensive training from Enable India."

Future plans call for them to actually include these stigmatised groups in schools, open a transgender cafe, eradicate Thalassemia major, usher in a time when people with autism work alongside them in a variety of fields, enable autistic people to live independently even after their parents pass away, and, above all, live up to their core motto, Return Every Missing Smile.

The founder states, "I don't understand why the marginalised communities are given less attention in this society, as she ends our interview with us. "Why treat them with contempt? When there is work to be done, these individuals are asked to work hard and are exploited as cheap labour. And these 'owners' don't even bother to give them payment!"

SUBODHINI PUROHIT

Bhoomika Meena, known for her compelling movies like *Slum Golf* and *Chuhedaani*, shines in the women-centric movie *Dukaan*, which delves into the sensitive topic of surrogacy, often surrounded by several misconceptions. "The process began with extensive script readings, discussions with the directors, and working on the Gujarati accent," reveals the actress, who plays the character of Kinjal. Basically, understanding Kinjal's background extends beyond the film by providing a fantastic way to fully understand and portray her complexities.

In the realm of *Dukaan*, where performances have garnered acclaim, embodying the role of Kinjal was challenging for her. "Bringing Kinjal to life in film presented an exhilarating challenge. Navigating her complexities, understanding her origins, and deciphering her reactions required a deep dive into the character's nature. While the director's vision provided invaluable guidance, it was my exploration and interaction with the character that truly shaped the portrayal. Embracing the unknown territory of Kinjal's persona was both daunting and rewarding—an aspect of acting that I relish."

"Her childhood memories, her relationship with her father, and how the absence of her mother shaped her worldview. Her passion for mathematics and the challenges she faced in pursuing education led her to become a math teacher in Ahmedabad. For me, understanding the character deeply is crucial," she explains.

The film sheds light on surrogacy while also exploring themes of love and sacrifice, and there is something for the audience to learn from. She recalls, "When I was in my 8th grade, I created a presentation on surrogacy for my mother, who is a gynecologist. With surrogacy being a sensitive topic, there have been several misconceptions surrounding it. Siddharth and Garima have meticulously researched and portrayed both the commercial and emotional suspects of surrogacy in our film. By doing so, they aim to dispel misunderstandings and provide a clearer understanding of this complex issue. From this perspective, our film became a must-watch."

Working with visionary directors is a dream for most actors, and so has it been for Bhoomika too. Collaborating with Siddharth-Garima, renowned for their compelling storytelling, was a truly enlightening experience for her. "Their meticulous vision and profound understanding of the script profoundly influenced my portrayal of Kinjal. With their clarity and direction, half the battle was already won, ensuring a performance aligned with their impactful narrative."

As a newcomer to Bollywood, the role of Kinjal, she feels, tends to shape the representation of women and their compelling narratives. She expresses, "*Dukaan* truly celebrated the strength and depth of women's experiences and

relationships. My character Kinjal embodies this empowerment by playing a pivotal role in Jasmine's journey, showcasing the resilience and support among the women. Through characters like Kinjal, the film highlights the nurturing yet formidable nature of women, shaping a narrative that resonates with real-life experiences."

Her journey from being a Kathak dancer to Bollywood, she believes, has been incredibly influential in shaping her approach to acting. Theatre experiences during her school, college, and professional years also played a significant role. "Drawing inspiration from life itself, I am eager to learn, often seeking out new teachers and workshops that enhance my craft. Just like my days as a student juggling academics and extracurriculars, I continue to explore and learn in Mumbai. *Mujhe tho aisa lagta hai har jagah gyaan bat raha hai bas seekh lo* (It seems to me that knowledge is everywhere, just grasp it)."

In the realm of cinema, where stories often delve into the depths of human emotions, there exists a profound responsibility for actors and actresses. When a film tackles sensitive issues, it demands more than just memorising lines and hitting marks. It necessitates a deep understanding, empathy, and a willingness to bear the emotional weight of the characters they portray. She says, "As an actor, my solemn duty is to embrace the essence of the character. Guided by the director's vision, I tread the delicate line between reality and illusion, weaving authenticity into every gesture and every dialogue. It is in this truthful portrayal that the soul of the character unfurls—a tapestry of emotions, struggles, and victories. Through the lens of the camera, I honour the weight of responsibility, ensuring that even the most charged themes find their gentle resonance on the silver screen."

Be it her characters in *Slum Golf* or *Chuhedaani*, she feels that what unites all these characters is their blend of vulnerability and relatability.

In the fast pace of life and working in a dynamic industry like Bollywood, Bhoomika tends to prioritise self-care and maintain her unique self. "When I first set foot in Bombay, a sense of belonging enveloped me," she recalls. It was as if the city whispered, "You're home." Amidst the myriad challenges, everything seemed to align—the chaos, the dreams, and the relentless pursuit of my passion. But let me digress; that's a tale for another day. Love and focus became my guiding stars. They kept me grounded, even during the tempests. And discipline? Oh, I embraced it like a cherished partner. Early mornings, crisp routines—I enjoy them. My body and mind, my instruments, demanded care after all working hours. So, I danced, sang, and immersed myself in acting exercises. Books became my confidantes, whispering secrets of the craft. And then there's my secret garden—the window grill adorned with dozens of plants. In Bombay, where

## 'In Bombay, where dreams collide, I found content in art'

Bhoomika Meena, who is currently gaining much traction for her portrayal of Kinjal in *Dukaan*, gets candid with *The Pioneer*, sharing insights on her character, working with the director's on the sensitive topic of surrogacy, and more.



dreams collide and realities intertwine, I find content in the art, the process, and the simple joys—a symphony of belonging."

As an artist, Bhoomika intends to reflect the truth through her work. Movies are the mirrors of society, and so, "I crave to be part of impactful movies that portray the

complexities of a character and explore various aspects of real life. I am an aspiring visionary, fueled by dreams and a deep desire to create a lasting impact through my work. With unwavering faith and the grace of a higher power, I am confident that my aspirations will indeed become reality."



## The importance of preconceptional counselling

INTRODUCTION:

In today's society, many people choose to postpone motherhood for a variety of reasons, including job growth, financial stability, and personal aspirations. While this trend encourages individuals to follow their goals, it also emphasises the significance of smart family planning. Planning for a child later in life requires distinct considerations and potential problems; thus, preconception consultation with an appropriate specialist is an important step in motherhood.

ADDRESSING UNDERLYING HEALTH CONDITIONS:

During preconception counselling, couples can address any underlying health issues that may impact fertility or pregnancy outcomes. Conditions including polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), endometriosis, thyroid issues, and reproductive organ anomalies can all have an influence on fertility and need specific treatment. Fertility specialists can assist patients in overcoming these hurdles and improving their chances of pregnancy by conducting a thorough examination, doing all the necessary investigations, and developing tailor-made programs in terms of weight loss or any ailments that need further control before planning pregnancy.

Periconceptional counselling involves consulting a fertility expert before conception to improve reproductive health and increase the likelihood of a healthy pregnancy. This comprehensive approach tackles numerous elements of fertility, such as lifestyle choices, medical history, genetic testing, and fertility preservation alternatives. Couples may confidently navigate the complexity of family planning when they work with a fertility expert.

AGE-RELATED FERTILITY CHALLENGES:

As people age, both male and female fertility declines, with a steady drop in reproductive capacity and an increasing chance of infertility. Women's ovarian reserve and egg quality drop, and men's sperm quality and quantity may

decrease. Couples who meet with a fertility expert can examine their reproductive health and explore proactive strategies to improve fertility results. If the tests show that the fertility potential has gone down, you should take appropriate steps immediately. If the fertility status is good, then you can be reassured that you can comfortably delay the pregnancy in case you are not planning. If you are in the borderline range, you can think of egg freezing.

Genetic counselling and screening are essential for couples considering having a baby later in life to determine the risk of hereditary illnesses and chromosomal abnormalities. Certain genetic disorders, such as Down syndrome, Tay-Sachs disease, and cystic fibrosis,

Couples who get genetic testing and counselling can make educated decisions regarding family planning, including the possibility of preimplantation genetic testing (PGT) during assisted reproductive treatments.

Couples may explore fertility preservation strategies to delay pregnancy for personal or medical reasons. Women who expect to have children later in life may choose to consider egg freezing (oocyte cryopreservation) as a way to preserve their fertility. Similarly, men might explore sperm banking to save their sperm quality and viability for future use. Individuals who approach fertility preservation proactively can maintain reproductive autonomy and parental possibilities later in life.

Planning for a child later in life allows people to follow their dreams and objectives before beginning a family. However, in order to maximise reproductive health and fertility potential, this decision must be carefully considered and implemented. Periconceptional counselling with a fertility specialist can provide vital advice and support, addressing age-related reproductive issues, underlying health concerns, genetic considerations, and fertility preservation strategies. Couples can confidently begin on their route to motherhood by taking proactive precautions and obtaining professional counsel.

(The author, Dr. Lakshmi Chirumamilla, is a Fertility Consultant, at Nova IVF Fertility, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad.)



# Punjab Kings, Mumbai Indians desperate to resurrect IPL campaign

PTI ■ MULLANPUR

Punjab Kings and Mumbai Indians will be desperate to resurrect their faltering campaigns in the Indian Premier League when the two bottom-rung teams face-off here on Thursday. Only a few decimal points separate the two teams after six matches each and are coming off defeats in their respective last outings, which mean pressure will be high on both the camps to get their act together. For Punjab, the challenge of getting the best out of their top order has compounded with regular skipper Dhawan being sidelined for seven to 10 days due to a shoulder injury. The only bright spot for PBKS this season has been resolute displays from their unsung

Indian players Shashank Singh and Ashutosh Sharma, who both bat lower in the order and have had to make up for the shortcomings at the top more than once. The form of Prabhsimran Singh - 119 runs in six matches at 19.83 - is a concern and the same can be said for India wicketkeeper-batter Jitesh Sharma. With selection for the World Cup squad on the horizon, Jitesh, who has managed a mere 106 runs in six outings at 17.66, would be under the pump too. PBKS will have to find more support for their overseas bowling duo of Sam Curran (126 runs and 8 wickets) and Kagiso Rabada (9). The Indian pair of Arshdeep Singh (9) and Harshal Patel (7) have both been easy targets for batters. Mumbai Indians would know they have enough firepower in the camp to turn the tide but a collective effort on a consistent basis is the need of the hour. Two wins at home against Delhi Capitals and Royal Challengers Bengaluru did end



their three-match losing run, but a loss to Chennai Super Kings despite Rohit Sharma's century meant the five-time winners have forced them to go back to the drawing board. It starts with Hardik Pandya's form and role in the side. The all-rounder has looked to share responsibility in bowling department but his economy rate of 12 is alarming. On the same parameter, Gerald Coetzee (9) and uncapped Akash Madhwal (4) have given away more than 10 runs an over. With the bat, Pandya has not provided any consolidation while batting first or finished matches in the latter half. At the same time, Pandya has faced hostile environments at various stadiums in all the games he has played so far this season, something that could have an adverse impact on a player. Rohit and Ishan Kishan's form thus become crucial for Mumbai Indians, for whom Suryakumar Yadav has produced mixed results.

**TEAMS (FROM):**  
**Punjab Kings:** Shikhar Dhawan (c), Matthew Short, Prabhsimran Singh, Jitesh Sharma, Sikandar Raza, Rishi Dhawan, Liam Livingstone, Atharva Taide, Arshdeep Singh, Nathan Ellis, Sam Curran, Kagiso Rabada, Harpreet Brar, Rahul Chahar, Harpreet Bhatia, Vidwath Kaverappa, Shivam Singh, Harshal Patel, Chris Woakes, Ashutosh Sharma, Vishwanath Pratap Singh, Shashank Singh, Chanay Thyagarajan, Prince Choudhary, Rilee Rossouw.  
**Mumbai Indians:** Hardik Pandya (c), Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Dewald Brevis, Jasprit Bumrah, Piyush Chawla, Gerald Coetzee, Tim David, Shreyas Gopal, Ishan Kishan (wk), Anshul Kamboj, Kumar Kartikeya, Akash Madhwal, Kwena Maphaka, Mohammad Nabi, Shams Mulani, Naman Dhir, Shivalki Sharma, Romario Shepherd, Arjun Tendulkar, Nuwan Thushara, Tilak Varma, Harvik Desai, Nehal Wadhwa, Luke Wood.

## Rinku credits Gambhir for Narine transformation as specialist opener

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Sunil Narine opening for Kolkata Knight Riders in this IPL has proved to be a masterstroke and credit for the West Indian's move up the order should go to team mentor Gautam Gambhir, reckons Rinku Singh. Narine smashed his maiden T20 hundred on Tuesday, a 56-ball 109 against Rajasthan Royals. His form at the top this season has been nothing short of remarkable considering he aggregated just 154 runs over the past three seasons while batting lower down the order. As an opener this season, he has already collected 276 runs in six games. After scoring a memorable hundred at the Eden Gardens, Narine gave due credit to former captain

Gambhir for making him open for the first time since 2017. In the post-match interaction, Rinku echoed Narine's words. "You can see the way Narine is batting this time. In every match, he's making runs, opening the batting and that was his (Gambhir's) idea only," Rinku said. Narine was unleashed as an opener under Gambhir's captaincy in 2017 when he smashed IPL's fastest fifty in 15 balls, a record that was gradually improved by KL Rahul (14), Pat Cummins (14) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (13). Narine also has a 13-ball 50 for Comilla Victorians in the Bangladesh Premier League in their match against Chattogram Challengers in 2022. Earlier he would just swivel his bat, but this time Narine is seen batting



with skill and poise as his stroke-making in the arc has vastly improved. Asked about the transformation, Rinku said: "Nothing much has changed. It's the result of his sheer hard work at the nets. 'I've just noticed one change -- he's more patient now. Earlier he used to swing his bat to every ball, now he has restrained himself and playing according to the merit of the ball. He is batting thoughtfully and wisely.' But Narine's century went in vain as Jos Buttler (107 not out; 60b) showed his masterclass to single-handedly steer Rajasthan Royals to an eight-wicket win in the final ball of the match. "It happens sometimes but it won't impact much. Our team is doing very well. We are not thinking much (about the loss). Credit to RR they

did well. Also, you need a bit of luck in your favour. It was there day. Buttler innings was the turning point. Full credit goes to him," Rinku said. With the KKR top-order going strong this time, the finisher Rinku, who was KKR's leading rungetter in IPL 2023 with 474 runs at 59.25, is not getting much opportunities. This season Rinku has an aggregate of 83 runs at 27.66 and is yet to score a fifty. But his strike-rate has been a handsome 184-plus. "Our top order batters are doing so well that I'm not getting much opportunities to show my batting this time." Rinku played as an Impact Sub on Tuesday and that was because of a niggle. "I had a niggle, I will be back to playing the full match against RCB on Sunday," he said.



## Iyer fined ₹12 lakh for first slow over rate offence

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Kolkata Knight Riders captain Shreyas Iyer has been fined Rs 12 lakh for maintaining a slow over-rate during their IPL game against Rajasthan Royals here. KKR lost to Royals by two wickets here on Tuesday with Jos Buttler smashing an unbeaten 107 off 60 balls. "As it was his team's first offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over rate offences, Iyer was fined Rs 12 lakhs," said the IPL in a release. It was the Royals' sixth win in seven matches while KKR suffered their second loss in six games.

PTI ■ KOLKATA

## Guys like Kohli, Dhoni keep believing and that is what I tried to do: Buttler

Jos Buttler has seen "crazy things" happen in the IPL and he drew inspiration from the likes of Virat Kohli and Mahendra Singh Dhoni to single-handedly pull off the highest run chase in the tournament's history here. Buttler smashed an unbeaten 107 off 60 balls as Rajasthan Royals came back from the dead to beat Kolkata Knight Riders by two wickets on Tuesday night. Fittingly, Buttler hit the winning runs. The Englishman was struggling to even walk towards the end but didn't give up. Chasing a record 224, Royals were 121 for six in the 13th over. "Keep believing, that was the real key today. I was struggling a bit for rhythm. At times you feel frustrated or you are questioning yourself. I tell myself it's okay,

keep going, you'll get your rhythm back and try to stay calm. "There's been plenty of times throughout the IPL, you've seen crazy things happen. Guys like Dhoni and Kohli, the way they stay till the end and keep believing and I tried to do the same," Buttler said at the post-match presentation. Both Dhoni and Kohli have played some exhilarating knocks in the ongoing tournament even though the latter has not found enough support from his team and has mostly ended up on the wrong side of the results so far. Buttler also credited head coach Kumar Sangakkara for building



his self-belief. "That's something Sanagakkara has told me a lot - there's always a breaking point. The worse thing you can do is to not fight and give your wicket away. "He (Sangakkara) just tells me to stay there and at some point, the momentum will change. That's been a big part of my play over the last few years." He termed Tuesday's knock as his best IPL innings. "I would think so (best IPL innings). Very satisfying." RR skipper Sanju Samson said Buttler is a special player and when he is on song, no target is safe. "Very happy with the win. We were wondering like the

wickets we lost. Rovman (Powell) hit a couple of sixes and that's when we felt like we were in the game. Some luck also, they also played really well. The quality of spin they had, they bowled really well. This ground suited them. "Jos (Buttler) did what he does for us in the last 6-7 years, so happy for him. It (Buttler's knock) should go right on top. Being an opener, if he gets in, no runs are unchaseable. He does something special," he said. KKR skipper Shreyas Iyer said it was a bitter pill to swallow for his team. "I would second that actually (bitter pill to swallow), emotions were a roller coaster, certainly didn't think we will get into this situation. "It's a funny game at the end of the day, he (Jos Buttler) was striking the ball cleanly and timing them so well, have to take it on the chin and move on," Iyer added.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

## NO FRESH FACES LIKELY INDIA T20 WC SQUAD

The national selection committee is unlikely to blood any rookie IPL performer during the upcoming T20 World Cup in the Americas but a couple of tried-and-tested faces might have to brace up for disappointment when the squad is finalised by the end of this month. With the ICC making it mandatory to announce the provisional 15-member squad by May 1 cut-off date, Ajit Agarkar and his colleagues have some straightforward choices to make if every member of the team is fit. "There would not be any experimentation or left-field selections. All those who have played for India and have done well consistently in T20 Internationals and the IPL will be rewarded," a BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity. It is understood that one among Shubman Gill and Yashasvi Jaiswal might miss out but in case both proven performers are selected in the final 15, then only one among two finishers — Kolkata Knight Riders' Rinku Singh and Chennai Super Kings' Shivam Dube — will get the nod. The other close call could be for the second wicketkeeper's slot where Sanju Samson has competition from Jitesh Sharma, KL Rahul and Ishan Kishan. Rahul and Kishan bat at the top of the order, and they haven't tried batting in the middle order in this IPL so far, which makes it difficult for the selectors to analyse their



impact down the order. Although Hardik Pandya's bowling fitness remains a concern, there is no immediate doubt on his selection. Much like him, Virat Kohli's inclusion is also a formality. The other automatic selections are

skipper Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, Ravindra Jadeja, Rishabh Pant, Arshdeep Singh, Mohammed Siraj and Kuldeep Yadav. These 10 names, if fit, will definitely be on the flight across the Atlantic.

It is understood that Siraj is being rested by RCB as he has been playing constantly and needed workload management. In the choice between Gill and Jaiswal, the former has scored more runs but in case of Jaiswal, who has

been a big find for Indian cricket, the selection committee might not give up easily on him merely for a few low IPL scores. Also, being the only left-hander in inside the top four is a novelty and in a largely unidimensional top

order. However, if Gill piles up enough runs, it will be a difficult choice unless the selectors accommodate both and drop one among Shivam and Rinku from the 15. The reserve spinner's slot could also be a three-way battle between Axar Patel, a handy batter apart from being an accurate left-arm spinner, Yuzvendra Chahal, who is yet to play a single T20 World Cup match in his nine-year international career, and Ravi Bishnoi, who plays for Lucknow Super Giants. While Chahal is head and shoulders above the other two in terms of bowling skills, his repeated omissions from important squads leaves a big question mark about his inclusion showpiece in June. **IMPACT PLAYER RULE IS HURTING TEAM SELECTION:** A former international player, who is also a broadcaster, gave an interesting insight. "The 'Impact Player' rule, which is basically a glorified '12-a-side' cricket contest has been good for IPL viewership but detrimental for Indian cricket. It has killed the concept of all-rounder and hence a half-fit Hardik Pandya also has premium value because he can bowl," he stated. "Think about it, if there was no Impact Player rule, could MS Dhoni (not Ruturaj Gaikwad) as CSK 'skipper' afford to not bowl Dube? Selectors don't know about Dube's bowling form. "Similarly, a guy like Rahul Tewatia is no longer in contention despite being a good finisher, who also used to be a handy leg-break bowler. He

doesn't bowl now as he is an 'Impact Player'. Who is it hurting? The national team," he pointed out. **NEW CROP OF T20 PLAYERS:** The likes of Riyan Parag, Mayank Yadav, Abhishek Sharma, and Harshit Rana have all performed well but it is understood that the selection committee would like to follow the process of easing them in via bilateral cricket instead of putting them to test in a high-stakes World T20 game. There are two white-ball series against Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka and these young men would be in line for their India debuts at that time. Nitish Reddy, who is a seam bowling all-rounder and was part of India Emerging side that toured Sri Lanka last year, could also follow the same path. It will be interesting to see if BCCI makes arrangements for the likes of Mayank Yadav, Harshit Rana or Akash Madhwal to be taken as net bowlers, which will also give them good exposure. **The probable 20 (15+5 stand bys) in contention:** **Specialist Batters (6):** Rohit Sharma, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rinku Singh **All-Rounders (4):** Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Shivam Dube, Axar Patel. **Specialist Spinners (3):** Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Ravi Bishnoi. **Wicketkeeper-batter (3):** Rishabh Pant, KL Rahul and Sanju Samson. **Pacers(4):** Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, Arshdeep Singh and Avesh Khan.

# Akhilesh Kalaru talks about 'Market Mahalakshmi': A PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

Indianapolis-based producer Akhilesh Kalaru, the man behind the upcoming film *Market Mahalakshmi*, is gearing up for its release with optimism and excitement. In an interaction with the media on Wednesday, Akhilesh shared insights into his journey, the film's unique narrative, and the challenges and joys of producing a movie from afar.



K. RAMYA SREE

Akhilesh Kalaru, a familiar name in Indianapolis, is now making waves in the world of Indian cinema with his debut production, *Market Mahalakshmi*. This romantic drama, helmed by acclaimed director VS Mukkesh, promises a refreshing take on love and relationships. Starring Kerintha Parvateesam and Praneekaanyika, the film is set to hit theaters on April 19 under the banner of B2P Studios. Reflecting on his journey into filmmaking, Akhilesh shares, "I've been passionate about movies since childhood. However, family commitments led me down a different path initially. But once the time was right, I decided to pursue my dream, especially after connecting with director VS Mukkesh, whose dedication and vision inspired me."

Taking on a project with a relatively new director might seem like a risk to some, but for Akhilesh, it was a calculated leap of faith. "There's no business without risk," he asserts, adding, "When Mukesh narrated the story of *Market Mahalakshmi*, I saw the potential and decided to back this project wholeheartedly."

Speaking about the film's narrative, Akhilesh maintains a sense of intrigue:

"The story is deceptively simple—a love story between an independent girl and a software professional. We've kept a significant surprise under wraps, waiting for the audience to discover it on-screen." Coordinating production while residing in the US presented its own set of challenges, but Akhilesh credits his team and director Mukkesh for making the process smoother. "Managing shooting schedules and production remotely was initially daunting, but with a dedicated team led by Mukesh, we navigated through successfully."

When asked about casting decisions, Akhilesh is resolute in his satisfaction. He shared, "Both Parvateesam and Praneekaanyika brought their characters to life with incredible chemistry. The ensemble cast delivered beyond expectations."

Addressing concerns about box office success, Akhilesh exudes confidence. "I believe in the potential of *Market Mahalakshmi*. Completing this project was no small feat, and with its imminent release, we are optimistic about its reception." Looking beyond this venture, Akhilesh is already eyeing future projects. "This film has been a tremendous learning experience. I hope to produce more films and carve a niche for myself in the industry."

As *Market Mahalakshmi* prepares to hit screens alongside other releases, Akhilesh emphasizes support for all filmmakers. "Every movie deserves success. I urge audiences to embrace diverse narratives."

For Akhilesh Kalaru, *Market Mahalakshmi* isn't just a debut—it's a testament to his passion and dedication to storytelling. As the countdown to April 19 begins, anticipation mounts for this promising cinematic offering from B2P Studios.

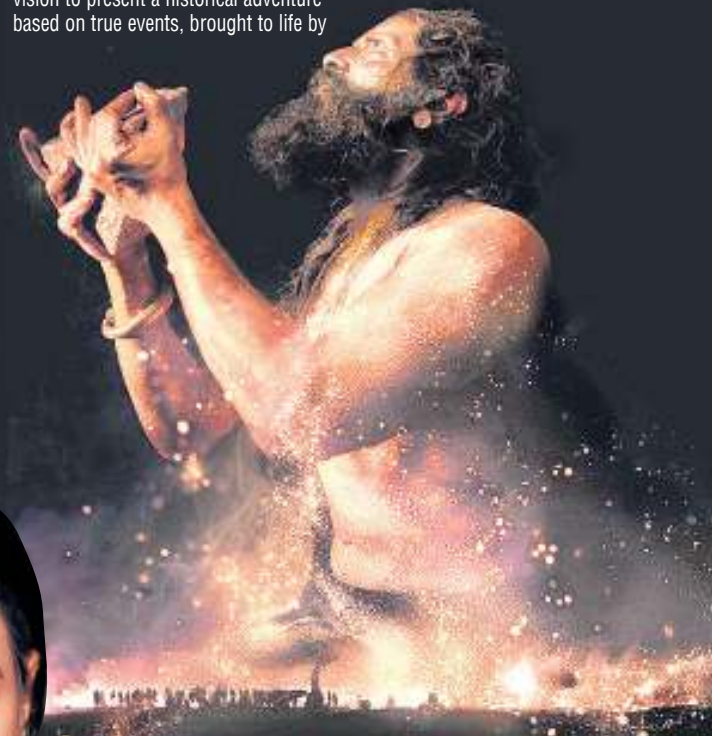
## Vikram's birthday treat from THANGALAAN

In a thrilling development, Jio Studios and Studio Green Films have teamed up for the eagerly awaited film *THANGALAAN*, helmed by acclaimed filmmaker Pa. Ranjith and starring the iconic actor Chiyaan Vikram. The collaboration promises a cinematic spectacle set against the historic backdrop of the Kolar Gold Fields (KGF) in the early 1900s, showcasing the untold story of oppressed communities involved in the exploration of gold in South India.

As anticipation for *THANGALAAN* reaches fever pitch, the project marked a special milestone on Wednesday—Chiyaan Vikram's birthday—with an exclusive glimpse release. This captivating video offers fans a glimpse into Vikram's stunning transformation for the film, serving as a mesmerising tribute to his special day.

Director Pa. Ranjith shared his excitement about the project and the tribute video, stating, "*Thangalaan* is a vision to present a historical adventure based on true events, brought to life by the phenomenal efforts of Vikram sir and the entire team. I am thrilled that Jio Studios, is partnering with our producer, Studio Green K.E. Gnanavelraja, to present this film. I am confident that *THANGALAAN* will resonate globally with audiences."

The ensemble cast of *THANGALAAN* includes Vikram alongside Parvathy Thiruvothu, Malavika Mohanan, Pasupathi, and Harikrishnan Anbudurai. With music direction by G.V. Prakash Kumar, the film promises a compelling narrative rooted in real-life events, shedding light on the overlooked contributions of marginalised communities during the gold exploration era. Currently in post-production, *THANGALAAN* is gearing up for a grand theatrical release across Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, and Hindi languages. The official release date will be unveiled soon, promising audiences a captivating historical adventure brought to life on the silver screen.



## Vikram's Chiyaan 62 officially titled as Veera Dheera Sooran

Celebrated actor Chiyaan Vikram, renowned for his versatile performances and distinctive roles, received a special birthday treat on Wednesday as the makers of his upcoming film released the title teaser. It has been confirmed that his 62nd film is titled *Veera Dheera Sooran*, promising a captivating cinematic experience. Directed by SU Arun Kumar under the banner of HR Pictures, it showcases Chiyaan in a compelling mass avatar that is sure to thrill his fans. The title teaser introduces Vikram's character, Kali, a grocery shop owner who finds himself confronted by villains from his past. In the action-packed teaser, Kali's calm demeanour belies his formidable capabilities as he faces off against thugs determined to exact revenge. Armed with wit and firepower, Kali outsmarts his adversaries, leaving them intimidated and defeated. The teaser hints at a film filled with adrenaline-pumping sequences and the trademark charisma of Chiyaan Vikram. *Veera Dheera Sooran* promises to be a high-octane entertainer, packed with mass appeal and gripping narrative twists. SJ Surya and Dusara Vijayan join Vikram in pivotal roles, adding depth to the ensemble cast. The film features music by GV Prakash Kumar and cinematography by Theni Eshwar, elevating the visual and auditory experience.



## Nithiin's Robin Hood releasing on December 20

Prepare to witness Hero Nithiin like never before in his upcoming film *Robin Hood*, directed by Venky Kudumula. This exciting project promises a fresh perspective on Nithiin's talent, with Venky Kudumula crafting a character that showcases the actor in a completely new light.

The teaser introduced Nithiin as a charismatic thief with a touch of humor, while the recent birthday glimpse unveiled a more action-packed side of his character. Produced by Mythri Movie Makers, *Robin Hood* boasts a lavish budget, ensuring top-notch production values and technical excellence.

Excitement is soaring as the release date for *Robin Hood* has been confirmed for December 20. The strategic timing aims to leverage the Christmas and New Year holidays, offering audiences the perfect blend of entertainment and commercial appeal. The release date poster featuring Nithiin exudes a fierce aura, depicting him seated on a sports bike with intense determination.

Technically, Sai Sriram handles cinematography, while GV Prakash Kumar scores the soundtrack. Prawn Pudi serves as the editor. Rajendra Prasad and Vennela Kishore play pivotal roles in this movie. Further details about the leading actress are yet to be revealed.

## 90's TEAM ANNOUNCE NEW WEB SERIES TEACHER

Director Aditya Haasan made a stellar debut with the web series *#90's - A Middle-Class Biopic*, captivating audiences with its nostalgic and authentic storytelling on the popular OTT platform ETV Win. Now, the team behind *#90's - A Middle-Class Biopic* returns with another compelling narrative titled *Teacher*. Helmed once again by Aditya Haasan and produced by Naveen Medaram under MNOP (Medaram Naveen Official Productions), this new series promises to deliver another delightful treat for viewers.

To kick off the excitement, the makers unveiled a thrilling poster on the auspicious occasion of Sri Rama Navami, showcasing the picturesque setting of a Telangana village named Ankapur. The poster depicts students joyfully cycling to school against a backdrop of lush green fields and coconut trees, hinting at the heartwarming tale that awaits.

*Teacher* explores the humorous escapades of three mischievous students who encounter Color Swathi, playing the role of a teacher, in Ankapur. This encounter sets off a touching story of transformation, filled with innocent love and heartfelt moments between the students and their teacher.

The series boasts a talented ensemble cast



including Swathi Reddy (Color Swathi), Nikhil Devadula (known for *Baahubali*), Nitya Sri (from *C/o Kanchera Palem*), and others. Siddharth Sadasivuni provides the melodious music, while Azeem Mohammed captures the picturesque village through his cinematography.

## Samyuktha launches Adishakti

In a significant and auspicious moment coinciding with Ramanavami and Taranavami, actress Samyuktha Menon unveiled a transformative initiative named *Adishakti*. This pioneering endeavour is dedicated to empowering and uplifting women across diverse backgrounds.

*Adishakti* represents a comprehensive initiative designed to tackle the myriad challenges faced by women and provide them with essential support and resources to thrive. The initiative encompasses areas such as education, skill development, health, and wellness, aiming to empower women holistically and foster their growth.

Samyuktha's vision for *Adishakti* is to create a world where every woman can realise her full potential and live a life of dignity and purpose. Samyuktha's initiative promises to make a lasting impact by addressing systemic barriers and nurturing a supportive environment for women's advancement.



## NARA ROHIT'S NEXT TITLED SUNDARAKANDA, RELEASING IN SEPT

Celebrating a significant milestone with his 20th film, actor Nara Rohit teamed up with debutante director Venkatesh Nimmalapati for an exciting romantic comedy produced by Santhosh Chinnapolla, Gowtham Reddy, and Rakesh Mahankali under the esteemed banner of Sandeep Picture Palace (SPP). Titled *Sundarakanda*, this upcoming movie promises to bring colorful nuances and relatable moments to every viewer. The film's title and essence were unveiled through a captivating first look poster, showcasing Nara Rohit in a suave and stylish avatar, holding a plant with a pot in one hand and a book in the other. Against a backdrop of college students bustling by, the poster sets the tone for a lively and entertaining narrative.

The movie is set to hit theaters on September 6, coinciding with Ganesh Chaturthi, making it a festive treat for audiences.

In addition to Nara Rohit's charismatic presence, *Sundarakanda* features Vriti Vaghani as the lead actress, accompanied by a talented ensemble including Sridevi Vijaykumar, Naresh Vijaya Krishna, and Vasuki Anand in pivotal roles. It has cinematography by Pradeep M. Varma and music by Leon James. With its blend of romance, comedy, and vibrant storytelling, *Sundarakanda* promises to be a delightful cinematic experience, marking a special milestone in Nara Rohit's illustrious career.

## Sree Vishnu's next is an investigative thriller

Actor Sree Vishnu continues to ride high on the success of consecutive blockbusters like *Samajavaragamana* and *Om Bheem Bush*, marking the best phase of his career. The versatile actor, known for his diverse roles, announced his next project—an intriguing investigative thriller helmed by director Hussain Sha Kiran. Produced by Sandeep Gunnam and Vinay Chilakapati under the banners of Lightbox Media and Picture Perfect Entertainment, this upcoming thriller features Reba John as the female lead opposite Sree Vishnu, reuniting them after the blockbuster *Samajavaragamana*. The film has already completed 60% of its shoot and is progressing swiftly towards completion. Joining Sree Vishnu and Reba John is a talented ensemble including Veer Aryan, Ayyappa Sharma, Sudarshan, Racha Ravi, and others, ensuring a compelling and engaging narrative.

Describing the film's genre as an "investigative thriller," Sree Vishnu promises his signature style with an added layer of intrigue and suspense. The movie aims to captivate audiences with its unique storyline and compelling theme.

Behind the scenes, Vidhya Sagar handles the cinematography, while the music is composed by Kaala Bhairava. Renowned editor Sreekar Prasad brings his expertise to the project.



## Actor Thiruveer's next unveiled on Sri Rama Navami

Versatile actor Thiruveer, who has gained fame for phenomenal performances and selecting diverse concepts, has revealed his next project. RES Entertainment and Star Pictures Production No. 1 announced this on the occasion of Sri Rama Navami. The film will be jointly produced by Radhakrishna Thelu and Ramakrishna Reddy.

The movie will be helmed by Ghanta Satish Babu. Thiruveer in this film. Ramakrishna Reddy (RK), who has worked as the chief associate director on films like *Billa*, *Mukunda*, and *Brahmostavam*, will make his debut as a producer with this movie. Radhakrishna Thelu, who has produced projects like *Ardhashathabdam* and *Loot*, is backing this film on a grand scale alongside RK.

Director Ghanta Satish Babu, who previously served as an assistant to Srikanta Addala on films such as *Kotha Bangaru Lokam*, *Mukunda*, *Seethamma Vaakitilo Sirimalle Chettu*, and *Brahmostavam*, made his directorial debut with *Butterfly* and is now poised to captivate audiences with this project. This movie unfolds with a mythological concept set between the Treta Yuga and the Kali Yuga.

Ayyappa P Sharma, Srikanth Iyengar, Sathya Prakash, Sameta Gandhi, Misala Laxman, and Pankaj Kesari play pivotal roles in this film, which promises gripping thrills. Rami Reddy serves as the cinematographer, and Marthand K. Venkatesh is the editor for this film.

