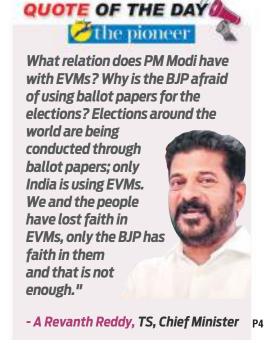
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Cybercrimes on the rise in city: ...

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, ...

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...

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, iunior, mid-senior, leadership and C-Suite level 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 bottomrung 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.

Civil Supplies DT

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.

nabbed while

taking bribe

PNS VIJAYAWADA

-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

Filing of nominations begins today

ROs ready to receive nomination papers: CEO Meena

be allowed to enter the RO's office, while the rest will be stopped 100 m

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 room where the nominations are

received right from the entry gates. 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 cameras have been installed in the from April 18 to 25. The papers will not be accepted on public holidays.

The candidate can submit their As part of the implementation of the nomination either directly or model code, the processions of the candidates and the nomination fil-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 physical-

ly to the RO, the CEO said. Candidates should submit their April 18 - Filing of nominations begins APril 25 - Last date for receipt of

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

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.

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 inci-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

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 of their conversation on the phone.

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

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

Forensics confirmed that the voice was Chandrababu's.

Subsequently, Mangaliagiri 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.

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 tself in a precarious position. Unlike other major manufactur-

ers, 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 agan 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 'Kodikatti' dramas in the 2019 elections and now he is enacting 'Gulakarai' 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

It's advantage Vanga Geetha in **Pithapuram**



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 Iagan Mohan Reddy, many YSRCP leaders have exited the party, he



'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 on the first Ram Navami since its consecra-

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 the event on his computer tablet.



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

"After my Nalbari rally, (Assam) 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

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

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 Lalla was executed at 12:00 pm." 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 over-

crowding," Gupta said. Dr DP Kanungo, Chief Scientist at CSIR-CBRI, Roorkee, told PTI, As planned, the Surya Tilak of Ram

1ST 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.













It's advantage Vanga Geetha in Pithapuram

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

C PRADEEP KUMAR

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. 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

from Kakinada, is fielded by the ruling YSRCP in Pithapuram, posing a chal-lenge 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 pres-

Attack on CM:

Continued from Page 1

Cops clueless ...

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 sit-

uation, the Commissioner said that

they recovered multiple stones, but

were yet to confirm which was used

in the attack. The police have ques-

tioned 52 people and detained some

'local miscreants with criminal back-

grounds'. Eight special teams have



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 YSRCP's MP PV Midhun being denied a ticket,

Dorababu's considerable influence in the constituency has been instrumental in rallying

support for Geetha. His previ-

ous 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 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 healthrelated 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,

Stringent regulations on political ads

Visakhapatnam District Election Officer and Collector Dr Mallikarjuna has emphasised the critical importance of obtaining prior authorisation for political ads aired on elec-tronic 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 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

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 individ-

Dr. Mallikarjuna issued a stern warning against the dissemination of ads lacking MCMC endorsement,

ual aspirants must adhere to a seven-day advance application requirement. Assuring swift processing, Dr. Mallikharjuna affirmed, "We pledge to sanction applications within a swift two-day timeframe upon receipt." These regulations encom-

pass all forms of electronic media, including television channels, cable networks, dig-ital 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 preapproval, with the sanctioned order number mandated to be

visibly displayed. Dr. Mallikarjuna issued a stern warning against the dis-semination 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 authorisa-

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

No parents'

meetings on

April 23

Scheduled parent-

teacher meeting will

take place on June 12,

day of school reopening

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 can-

celled. He said that there will

be only the distribution of

report cards to the students

and there will not be any par-

ent-teachers meeting to dis-

cuss the activities and the

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

performance of the child.

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Naidu campaigning about Jagan's schemes!

SNCN ACHARYULU

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

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-



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

In his election campaign, CM Jagan is asking people to 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

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.

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.

ALMANAC Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha Tithi: Dashami: Apr 17 03:14 PM Ekadashi Apr 18 05:32 PM to Apr 19 08:05 PM Nakshatram: Apr 17 05:16 AM Ashlesha to Apr 18 07:56 AM Magha Apr 18 07:56 AM to Apr 19 10:56 AM 1:49 PM to 3:22 PM Rahukalam: 6:01 AM to 7:35 AM Yamagandam: 09:26 PM to 11:14 PM Varjyam: 9:08 AM to 10:42 AM

TODAY

Gulika:

Amritakalam:

Humidity: 46% Sunrise: 5:50 AM

Sunset: 6:24 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER Forecast: Mostly Sunny **Temp:** 43°°

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:50 AM to 12:40 PM

06:10 AM to 07:56 AM

Updated: April 17, 2024 5:00 PM

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 Chandrababu should be seven years. Even after they included as an accused. Apart from these, three more cases are pending. also approached the ministers Jagdish Reddy Chief Minister. The person and Satyavathi Rathore who sent the notes is try-

have also asked the ing his luck to become the Supreme Court to transfer CM of Andhra Pradesh. Chandrababu is denying his involvement."

The MLA further said this. case has been delayed for are caught-red handed with they are roaming free. The with bundles of notes

this case to Madhya Despite all the evidence, Pradesh. The Supreme the case is delayed. Court issued notices in Everyone knows who the this case. Even though accused is, but he is roamthere are so many cases, ing free. There should be signs to instill confidence in the judiciary system. There are five cases in the that for petty reasons the Supreme Court regarding the cash-for-vote case. Ravanth Reddy has finalised the deal for Rs 5 audio and video evidence, crore and was caught giving Rs 50 lakh. The KCR Mattaiah and Sebastian person who was caught government has been delaying this case for years Supreme Court. Former became the Telangana 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

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

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

'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 but-

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 Vallabaneni Balashowry and appealed to the voters to elect

'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 Institute Indian 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, year.

the project said that the basic objective of the Surya Ttilak 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

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

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TDP's legacy vs YSRCP's vows

FOR YEARS, ICHCHAPURAM HAS STOOD AS A STRONGHOLD FOR TDP

PNS SRIKAKULAM

The electoral battleground in Ichchapuram Assembly segment is ablaze with fervour as the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and the Yuvajana Śramika and the Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRC) engage in a high-stakes contest. This showdown not only reflects the clash of political legacies but also hinges on promises of development and resolution of long-standing issues. For years, Ichchapuram has stood as a stronghold for TDP, securing victory in eight out of nine elections since its inception. However, the ruling YSRC is now determined to challenge this dominance. They nominated Piriya Vijaya, wife of Piriya Sairaj, who previously secured the seat under the TDP banner before switching sides to YSRC. In response, TDP has put forward Bendalam Ashok, the incumbent MLA, aiming for a third consecutive triumph.

The demographic mosaic of Ichchapuram, embracing diverse communities like

Reddika, Yadava, fishermen, Kalinga, Bentho Oriya, and Sri Shayana, underscores the intricate dynamics of the electoral landscape. Furthermore, the region's affiliation with the Uddanam area, notorious for its chronic kidney disease

jects, adds depth to the polit-The CKD prevalence in the Uddanam region has been a pressing concern, attracting attention from local and international quarters alike. Past governments, notably TDP, have taken steps such as med-

(CKD) epidemic and resis-

tance against industrial pro-

ical screenings, establishing dialysis centers, and providing social security pensions. The current YSRC administration has promised additional support, including increased pensions and healthcare infrastructure. However, the failure to pinpoint the exact cause of the disease and address its underlying factors has left many dissatisfied.

The migration of Ichchapuram residents due to water scarcity and agricultural hurdles highlights the need for sustainable solutions. While both parties have pledged irrigation projects and agricultural research centres, tangible progress remains elusive. The cancellation of crucial projects like the Vamsadhara-Bahuda river link by YSRC has exacerbated discontent among farmers and locals. As the electoral showdown escalates in Ichchapuram, voters are confronted with a critical choice between upholding traditional loyalties and embracing promises of transformation and progress. With issues like health care crises and agricultural sustainability taking centre stage, the outcome of this election stands poised to chart the future course of the region.

Cybercrimes on the rise in city: Commissioner for tight vigil

Over 12,000 individuals fell victim to various schemes in past three years, leading to a loss of Rs 85 crore

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

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,

Ravi Shankar said over the past three years, the city has witnessed a staggering surge in cyber fraud cases, with more than 12,000 individuals falling victim to various schemes, resulting in losses amounting to Rs 85 crore. Shockingly, a mere Rs 18 lakh has been recovered thus far, underscoring the magnitude of the challenge faced by law enforcement agencies.

Ravi Shankar emphasised the imperative of proactive measures to stem the rising tide of cybercrime. To this end, an extensive awareness campaign has been launched, comprising informative videos, a handbook, and wall posters elucidating

the modus operandi of cyber frauds and preventive measures. These educational resources will be disseminated across

educational institutions, including colleges, schools, and universities, to empower students with the knowledge to safeguard themselves against online threats.

Highlighting prevalent avenues of cyber fraud, the Commissioner warned against scams masquerading as courier services, gaming tasks, trading platforms, and loan apps. Victims of cybercrime are urged to immediately report incidents by dialing 1930, facilitating swift response measures to trace and freeze illicit trans-

Providing grim statistics, it was revealed

that in 2023 and 2024, 12 individuals were defrauded of Rs.1.08 crore under the guise of FedEx Courier services, while 213 vic-

tims lost Rs.18.42 crore to fraudulent gaming tasks between 2022 and 2024. Additionally, 21 individuals fell prey to loan app scams, losing Rs.77 lakh in 2022 and 2023.

Victims were urged to report incidents promptly, facilitating swift response measures to trace and freeze illicit transactions.

However, apprehending perpetrators remains challenging due to their adept use of fake SIM cards and bank accounts. While a breakthrough has seen the apprehension of 10 individuals involved in supplying fake bank accounts to cybercriminals, the battle against cybercrime continues. Ongoing investigations have identified 126 individuals from the city in connection with cybercrimes, with 36 currently detained pending further inquiry. Notably, perpetrators often hail from other States, complicating efforts to track and prosecute them.

Objectionable remarks by Chandrababu condemned

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Social Welfare Minister Merugu Nagarjuna condemned terming masses coming to CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy as 'coolies' by TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu. He said that Andhra people have understood the politics of Chandrababu, who acts in various guises during the elections especially degrading and insulting the SC, ST, BC and minorities.

Speaking to the media on Tuesday, the Minister stated that if ÝS Jagan Mohan Reddy gives MLA seats to the common man, Chandrababu mocked Dalits as fingerprint illiterates and also termed SC, ST, BC, and minorities as all labourers, which is severely objectionable. He further said, "Chandrababu is calling those who live on the strength of their wings and attending Jagan's meetings as 'Kulijanam' (coolies). How bad is this word? How much ego? Jagan Mohan Reddy's gatherings are labourers? Are the rich people coming to Chandrababu's meetings? In his eyes, are all the poor in SC, ST, BC, and minority and Kapu communilabourers? Chandrababu wants the same labour votes in tomorrow's

election? Know that people are watching your ideological politics closely and would teach a befitting lesson to Telugu Desam in the election with vote power." He a He alleged that Chandrababu is extremely arrogant in politics as a man

who cannot see man as a man is arrogant. He recalled that Chandrababu was the chief minister who insulted Dalits by saying would anyone want to be born in the Dalit caste and from that day to today, Chandrababu has never regretted that word. He further said Chandrababu said that he will cut the tails of the BCs and never apologised to the BCs even for that. Further Chandrababu said BCs are useless as judges.

Minister Nagarjuna stated that claiming that Jagan has the honour of thinking like no other chief minister calling communities like Na (my) SC, Na ST, Na BC and Na minority and Jagan is the only Chief Minister who directly deposited Rs 2.70 lakh crores of welfare to all the people in the state through the DBT without bribery. The Minister predicted that SC, ST, BC and Minorities all come together to make such a revolutionary visionary Jagan Mohan Reddy as the Chief Minister again.

33 cases for littering, rule violations

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Vijayawada Municipal Corporation registered 33 cases in the mobile court held at the Circle 3 office of the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation on Tuesday and imposed Rs 19,350 as a fine. VMC Commissioner Swapnil Dinkar Pundkar said that the mobile court will be held every Tuesday for those who litter on the roads and violate the rules of the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation. The Judge imposed a fine of Rs 19,350 on violators after investigating 33 cases registered by sanitary inspectors under circle 3.

Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar has warned that if the same mistake is made a second time after being fined, strict action will be taken and the licence will

171ST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Waltair Division opens art gallery

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

In commemoration of the 171st anniversary of the Indian Railways, the Waltair Division of the East Coast Railway (ECoR) hosted a ceremony celebrating the national railway system's rich legacy. A key highlight of the event was the official opening of an art gallery within the concourse area of the Divisional Railway Manager's (DRM) office. The gallery, inaugurated by Saurabh Prasad, DRM Waltair, showcases the vibrant cultural heritage of Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh, the States served by the Waltair Division.

The centrepiece of the gallery is a captivating 24foot acrylic painting meticu-lously created by Moka Vijaya Kumar, a dedicated railway employee and freelance artist. This three-month endeavour depicts the cultural, social,



and economic integration fostered by Indian Railways across the ten districts it serves. Further enriching the artistic display is a charcoal portrait on the Canson sheet, capturing the architectural splendour of the iconic Bridge 249 near Shivalingapuram in Alluri Seetharamaraju District. This piece serves as a tribute to the remarkable engineering achievements of the Indian

During the ceremony, Saurabh Prasad emphasised the significance of the art gallery. He underscored its role in honouring the endur-ing spirit of the Indian Railways and its contribution to national cultural exchange and connectivity. He further committed the division to promoting artistic expressions and heritage displays across various railway establishments

Do not hold programmes affecting SHGs

PNS VIJAYAWADA

State Chief Electoral Officer Mukesh Kumar Meena has issued instructions to the officials of the departments concerned not to organise programmes which affect the members of self-help groups as the model code of conduct is in force.
The CEO instructed the

officers and field level staff working under the auspices of the State Panchayat Raj & Rural Development, State Municipal & Urban Development Departments not to organise programmes which affect the members of self-help groups. He added that as long as the election code of conduct is in force, no mobilisation, awareness, survey or other activities shall be conducted which may influence the members of SHGs individually.

No political ads in print media on polling day, the day before

PNS VIJAYAWADA

per the Election Commission of India (ECI) orders, no political advertisements and announcements should be published in the print media on the day of polling or the previous day in the State, without obtaining permission from the Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC), said Information & Public Relations Commissioner T

Vijay Kumar Reddy. The many objectionable and misleading advertisements in the previous general elections have come to the notice and the ECI has decided that without permission from the MCMC, no advertisement should be published in the print media this year, he

In a press release here on Tuesday, Vijay Kumar Reddy

said that misleading advertisements have come to the notice of the ECI several times. So, there would be no time for political parties and candidates to clarify or give rejoinder notice to the media. At this stage, this type of advertise-ments and announcements would harm the spirit of the process of the election, he

Further, he said that the Election Commission has taken all necessary steps to prevent misleading advertisements and announcements per Article 324 of the Constitution. If any print media publishes such news, the MCMC will take stringent action using its powers, he said. He explained that political parties and candidates are interested in advertisements and took permission from the MCMC at the district and State levels.

Srivari sevaks lauded for | NDA leaders file complaint voluntary service

PNS VONTIMITTA

The role of srivari sevaks rendering voluntary service in Vontimitta Sri Kodanda Ramalayam is gaining popularity akin to Tirumala.

Hundreds of sevaks are coming forward with enthusiasm to participate in rendering services to fellow pilgrim devotees in various areas like serving Annaprasadam, distribution of buttermilk and water, pilgrim crowd management etc. at Vontimitta during the annual Brahmotsavams.

The popularity of the festival of Sri Šita Rama Kalyanam at Vontimitta Kodanda Ramalayam has spread across Andhra Pradesh. Devotees, not only from Kadapa and Annamaiah districts, but Kurnool, Rajamundry and other districts, are participating voluntarily as srivari sevaks, said JEO Sri Veerabrahmam to the media on Wednesday, on the occasion of preparation of Talambralu.

TTD has invited services of



eds of sevaks are coming forward with enthusiasm to participate in rendering services to fellow pilgrim devotees in various areas like serving Annaprasadam, distribution of buttermilk and water, pilgrim crowd management etc. at Vontimitta during the annual Brahmotsavams.

drafted another 1,200 exclusively for Sri Sita Rama Kalyanam

500 sevaks every day while on April 22. Besides, another 300 are deployed for the preparation of Talambralu, he added.

against 'partisan' AP cops

Police officials accused of purported lack of neutrality and unfair disposition in elections

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The NDA is represented by BJP's Rajya Sabha member Arun Singh, TDP MP Kanakamedala Ravindra Kumar, JSP PAC Chairman Nadendla Manohar, Rajya Sabha member GVL Narasimha Rao of BJP, and Om Pathak of the BJP national executive filed an official complaint against senior police officials for their purported lack of neutrality and unfair disposition in Andhra Pradesh elec-

The letter openly calls out KS Jawahar Reddy, Chief Secretary, KV Rajendranath Reddy, DGP, Dr Kolli Raghuram Reddy, and five other officers, for their 'grave misconduct' towards the people and especially, Opposition leaders. The alliance demanded immediate action against violations of ECI's instructions, and schemes in favour of the YSRCP government

"The Election Commission officers themselves agreed on having received many such complaints from Andhra Pradesh alone. This paints a clear picture of influence and power invested in this election by the YCP to tilt the results in their favour," said Ravindra Kumar, while speaking to the press, post their meeting with the Chief Election Commissioner.

Trough runs from Gulf of Mannar to south Telangana

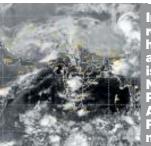
PNS ■ GUNTUR

Heat wave conditions continue to prevail in North Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema region, according to the Meteorological Centre on Wednesday.

In a daily weather report here, it said that heat wave conditions are likely to prevail at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema in

the next three days. Hot, humid and uncomfortable weather is likely to prevail at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema on April 20 and 21 April 20 and 21.

Thunderstorms accompanied with lightning are likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra



Pradesh, South Coasta Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema in the next three days.

Pradesh, South Coastal Pradesh and Andhra Rayalaseema during the same period.

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers are likely to occur at one or two places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh during the next seven days, in Rayalaseema from April 18 to 22 and in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh from April 19 to 21. Dry weather is likely to prevail in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh during the next 48 hours and on April 22 & 23 and in Rayalaseema during the next 24 hours and on April 23.

Rain occurred at one or two places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and dry weather prevailed in Rayalaseema during the last 24 hours. The highest maximum temperature of 43.4 degree celsius was recorded at Nandyal on Tuesday, the report added.

YSRCP complains against Balakrishna, TDP

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The leaders of YSRCP have the Election Commission to take immediate action against TDP leader Nandamuri Balakrishna for his comments insulting Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. To this extent, the YSRCP leaders filed a complaint with the Additional CEO Koteswara Rao on Wednesday.

Later, YSRCP MLA Malladi Vishnu spoke to the media and said that the Opposition alliance are unable to bear the overwhelming response and support from the people to the ongoing Memantha Siddham bus yatra and are making con-

Balakrishna's comments made at Kurnool meeting on April 16 'disgusting'

TDP Hindupur candidate Balakrishna's comments made at the Kurnool meeting on April 16 are disgusting. It is highly objectionable to insult the Chief Minister and to make personal attack such as Janakanthri and Mudarashta Valakam". He said that such comments are against the election rules and hence brought to the notice of the EC. Vishnu expressed anger that the leaders of the alliance have no agenda and their main agenda is to send wrong signals to the people against YSRCP. He said

against election rules. He said that the EC has been asked to immediately remove the song from TDP leader Nara Lokesh's

that Balakrishna, who has not visited Hindupur for five years while TDP was in power, was talking ill about the Chief

On the other hand, Vishnu said that a complaint has been already given to EC against playing the song 'Psycho Povali Cycle Raavali', which is

Secretary and many other officials have been brought to the notice of the Election Commission. The MLA was accompanied by leaders Ravela Kishore

He also informed that the

false articles were published in

yellow media against the Chief

YouTube channel.

Babu, Ankamreddy Naga Narayanamurthy and YCP legal cell member Srinivasa the pioneer



Cops asked to intensify checking at check-posts

Guntur range IG Sarvashresta Tripathi directed the police officials to intensify checking of vehicles at the check-posts and enforce model code of

conduct strictly.

The IG, flanked by Prakasam district SP Garud Sumit, held a meeting with the district police officials here on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, the IG told the officials to take all needed steps to conduct elections peacefully and impartially.

He ordered the officials to conduct checking of vehicles constantly at the check posts to curb the transportation of cash, liquor and other articles to lure the voters.

The IG reviewed the implementation of election code, model code of conduct rules, rules to be followed in terms of duties, actions to be taken in advance by the police department in the context of general elections.



SP Garud Sumit gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Assembly and Parliament Constituencies, Mandals, Polling Locations, Polling Stations, Check Posts and Police Actions.

The IG said that it is the responsibility of all to perform duties with vigilance, transparency and impartiality in accordance with the guidelines of the Election Commission of India in the general elections and to see that the people exercise their right to vote fearlessly

through the constitution. The IG instructed the police officials to perform their duties with diligence and sincerity to conduct elections fairly and impartially and warned of stringent

ous elections, physical assaulters and those who commit crimes should be action if indifference is found. He told the officials that bound over. The IG directed security arrangements should the police officials to intensibe made for the VVIPs who fy checking of vehicles at the 18 check-posts. Additional SP (Admin) K Nageswara come to the district for election campaigns. Adequate information should be col-Rao, ASP (Crime) SV Sridhar lected in advance and Rao and other officials were required arrangements should be made for their among those who attended

Awareness

The IG told the officials that

every Assembly segment

should be thoroughly dis-

cussed and precautions should

be taken, polling stations should be visited, security measures should be taken

there and adequate infrastruc-

ture should be ensured. Steps

should be taken to install CC

cameras at important places within the police stations, he said, adding that visible polic-ing, regular patrolling should

The trouble mongers

should be bound over and

electoral offenders of previ-

be carried out.

programmes held at petrol bunks

PNS VIJAYAWADA

As part of the Fire Service Week, Vijayawada-1 Fire Station officials conducted an awareness programme at the petrol bunks in Vijayawada on Wednesday. Following the directions received from the higher authorities, the staff explained the fire prevention

Also, they distributed pamphlets to all people who visited the petrol bunks. They explained the steps to be taken for safety, however, if the fire erupted suddenly. The authorities said that the Fire Service Week celebrations would be continued until April 20. The week aims to promote a fire-safe

Buggana slams Oppn for politicising drought issue

Finance Minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy strongly objected to politicising the drought issue stating that 8 mandals were declared as drought hit in Nandyal district. The Finance Minister participated in an interaction meeting held at Betamcharl on Wednesday.

Addressing the meeting, the Finance Minister said it is improper to the Opposition politicizing the drought issue even as the government declared 8 mandals as drought affected in the district. He pointed out that the Betamcherla mandal was declared as drought affected. "If I had the power, I would have declared the entire Kurnool district as drought affected. The Opposition in the fear of defeat, politicising the drought issue," Buggana Rajendranath Reddy criticized.

The YSRCP is providing an administration which is proud of the state, he claimed. The then Chief Minister YS

ments for the nomination

process within the scope of

AROs of all the constituencies

were made. The RVO office

for the Parliament constituen-

cy has been set up at Bhimavaram Collectorate.

The Candidates who are filing

nominations for the

Parliament Constituency will

The Collector explained

that the candidates who file

nominations for the Assembly

constituencies have to make a

security deposit of Rs 10,000,

adding that the SC candidates

can deposit only 50 percent in

reserved constituencies. All

steps were taken to ensure

that there is no violation of

the Model Code of Conduct

nominations are allowed to

use only three vehicles and

such vehicles have to be

parked at a distance of 100

meters from the RO room.

Apart from the candidate,

only five other people will be

allowed to enter the Returning Officer's office, the

Collector added.

The Candidates who file

anywhere.

have to deposit Rs 25,000.



Reddy developed Pulivendula extensively, he said, and questioned former Union Minister Kotla Surya Prakash Reddy who is the TDP candidate of Dhone, why he failed to develop Kurnool district.

"When Kotla Surya Prakash Reddy was the Union Railway Minister, what was the develop ment he had carried out in Dhone. He also failed to establish a coach factory here. Prakash Reddy dared to quit politics, if he failed to establish a coach factory but he is continuing in politics," the Finance Minister slammed. Even during the Coronavirus pandemic, the

YSRCP government continued to achieve development while protecting the people from the virus. "Though there was no Coronavirus pandemic during the TDP regime, they accumulated bills of contractors which have come as an additional burden to the YSRCP government after coming to power," the Finance Minister said.

The YSRCP regime has proved that it is a pro poor government and is providing corruption free administration, he claimed. The TDP government had failed in fulfilling its election manifesto assurances, at the same time, the YSRCP had assured all its promises, he

MP participates in Sitarama Kalyanam



PNS RAJAHMUNDRY

Rajahmundry MP Margani Bharat Ram, along with his wife Mona, participated in the Sitarama Kalyanam, solemnized at Margani estates at here on VL Puram Wednesday.

The MP couple participated in the Sitarama Kalyanam and performed pooja on the occasion. YSRCP leaders and a large number of activists attended the religious programme.

Speaking on the occasion, Ramachandra and Sita Devi's perity.

history is ideal for the world. Sri Rama Navami, Sri Sitarama Kalyanam and in some places Sri Rama Pattabhishekam are also celebrated with great splendor across the country.

The Sitaram Kalyanam is considered to be a true festival for humanity and a sign of world welfare, he felt. The MP said that solemnizing of the devotional Sitarama Kalyanam every year is a custom to his family. Margani Bharat Ram said that he invoked Sri Rama to bestow the people of Rajahmundry to live in pros

Expenditure will be recorded in candidate's account from April 18: DC

PNS BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari district Collector Sumit Kumar said that the election expenditure would be registered into the accounts of candidates contesting in the election from

The Collector here on Wednesday said that the nomination process for the Assembly and General elections would begin on April 18. The election expenditure of the candidates would be registered into the accounts of the candidates from April 18 after they filed nomination papers. He said that the expenses

will be registered in the candidate's account from the time of nomination. Election meetings, election campaign programmes, flags, banners, posters, vehicles used for election campaigns and food for agents and activists would also come under the candidate's expenditure. He said that if both the Parliament want to hold meetings, they been instructed to enter the



organize such meetings jointly then the cost would be adjusted for both, the Collector clarified.

He said that the Election Commission has appointed three officials as expenditure observers for the district, one for the Parliament and the other two for the assembly constituencies, adding that soon they will come to the district and by the time they come, all the necessary registers will be prepared.

The Collector said that the

used for election campaigns and food for agents and activists would also come under the candidate's expenditure. expenses in the candidate's account within 24 hours of the meetings and meetings. It has been clarified that the expenses incurred by the can-

didate from the time of nom-

ination till the day of count-

ing of votes will be included

in his account. Collector Sumit Kumar said that the expenses would be recorded in coordination with the Department of Assembly and Meetings, MCMC, MCĆ, Flying Squads, Video Surveillance Teams and other

He stated that all arrange-

Amaravati gallery vandalised

Unidentified persons smashed boards displaying Amaravati's cover image, historical events, maps, models and features of buildings

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Amaravati model gallery has been vandalised by miscreants. The model gallery was set up at the place where the foundation stone of the capital was laid in Uddandarayunipalem. Local farmers found that the gallery was destroyed. Unidentified persons smashed the boards displaying Amaravati's cover image, historical events, maps, models and features of

the buildings. Ashok Kumar Goud, DSP, Thulluru, said that models and other artifacts were damaged as there was no maintenance after the YSRCP government planned to repeal the Capital Regional Development Authority, which was enacted by the TDP government. Due to a lack of salaries, the watchmen who were deployed left the job. Since then no one has taken care of the gallery, and the sand models and artifacts were damaged due to lack of maintenance. A case was regthe gallery. Guntur TDP MP candidate

Pemmasani Chandrashekar visited the gallery on Wednesday morning and on observing the situation alleged that the gallery was vandalised recently. It can be recalled that the

foundation stone for the Amaravati Capital City was laid in 2015 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the TDP tenure. Since then, the gallery has faced multiple security breaches, including the theft of construction materials such as sand, concrete, mud, and iron, and the destruction of the gallery gate. Opposition leaders expressed their frustration and anger towards the government for not providing security to safeguard this significant landmark. The recent act of vandalism has only intensified these sentiments. The Amaravati Model Gallery holds great importance as it showcases the vision for the development of the new capital city unidentified men vandalizing pride.

NTR, Krishna districts all set to receive nomination papers

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The formal election process will kick off on April 18, i.e., Thursday with the issuance of Form-1, which will notify the elections and lay out the nomination schedule. Nominations will be accepted from 11 am to 3 pm from April 18 to 25, except for April 21, due to a public holi-

day.

In this connection, NTR District Collector and District Election Officer Dr S Dilli Rao and Krishna District Collector and District Election Officer DK Balaji spoke to the media at different platforms in Vijayawada and Machilipatnam, respectively. They said that they are all set to receive nominations from the contesting candidates from April 18 onwards.

They said that candidates are to use forms 2A and 2B for filing nominations. All Returning Officers (ROs) for the Parliament constituencies and Assembly constituencies are available at their respec-



tive RO offices from 11 am to 3 pm. An orientation programme for political parties on the nomination process has already been conducted.

NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao and Joint Collector Dr P Sampath Kumar briefed the media at the Media Centre on the premises of the State Guest House on the election nomination process. They confirmed that returning officers are ready for the nominations. The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) has been active for 33 days, marking the preparatory phase for the elections, they added.

Dilli Rao made it clear that candidates must submit their form-A and form-B by 5 pm on April 25. A security deposit of Rs.10,000 and Rs.25,000 are required for general candidates to contest for the Assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies, respectively, he said. However, he said the security deposit will be half for the reserved candidates irrespective of their contesting segments.

Further, he informed that to assist candidates, help desks would be set up in every Returning Officer's office. Additionally, special kits with checklists would be provided to ensure candidates have all the necessary information for the nomination process, he explained. On the other hand, the filing nominations scrutiny will be held on April 26, while the last date for the filed nominations withdrawals is April 29, he said.

Rahul will be PM for 20 years: TG CM

PNS HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has asserted that AICC leader Rahul Gandhi is going to be the Prime Minister of the country for 20 years. He said, "For the last 10 years, the Prime Minister has been from Varanasi and for the coming 20 years, the Prime Minister will be from Wayanad. Wayanad is not voting for MP, but for PM".

Revanth said, "Rahul Gandhi has done 4,000-km Padayatra Kashmir Kanyakumari, and from Manipur to Mumbai he did bus yatra. Whenever people were in difficulties, he was always there to help during the past 20 years. Who else will be Prime Minister? Rahul Gandhi is going to be the Prime

Referring to concerns over the use of electronic voting



machines which could reportedly be hacked or otherwise misused for polls, Revanth Reddy said, "Everyone has the same doubt, even when the BJP leaders meet us in Central Hall, they say 'To date, PM Modi and EVMs are there; you (Congress) won't be coming to power'. What relation does PM Modi have with EVMs? Why is the BJP afraid of using

ballot papers for the? 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." On BJP's 'Ab ki Baar 400 par slogan', the Chief Minister said, "It is good for sloganeering, but it won't succeed as PM

Modi has got two terms but he has betrayed people. South India is in India only, why did he not come here earlier? Why did he not give us the bullet train and riverfront like Sabarmati. He is remembering south India for votes".

Revanth said, "He has not given political representation (President, Vice-President, Home Minister, Defence Minister) and financial allocation to south India. BIP has no right to seek votes here; south has banned them... BIP is doing legal corruption and all those who are doing such including Pinarayi Vijayan are coordinating with PM Modi. Why is he (Kerala CM) not supporting the LDF candidate in Wayanad? He is supporting Surendran (BJP's can-

Rs 13.17 cr. worth cash, liquor seized: Collector

PNS ELURU

District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh has said that the police and the election officials so far have seized cash, liquor and other articles worth Rs 13.17 crore in the district.

Addressing a press conference, flanked by SP D Mary Prasanthi, Joint Collector B Lavanya Veni and DRO D Pushmani, here on Wednesday, the Collector said that the filing of nominations would begin on April 18 and all required arrangements had

been made for the same.
The Collector said that there are 16.34 lakh voters in the district and 1744 polling stations would be set for them. All needed basic amenities are



being provided at the polling

stations. Form 6 applications received up to April 15 th, regarding voter list would be processed at the stipulated time, he said adding that the issuance of application of Form-7 and 8 has been stopped.

Collector Prasanna Venkatesh said that the distribution of photo voter identity cards was completed. The inspections of EVMs were also completed. The random process of dispatching EVMs to respective polling stations was also completed, he stated. "Security is being provided to the EVMs, the CRPF and CISF personnel. Training was provided to each political party on the nomination filing process. Training has been provided to the micro observers, extended observers and other election personnel,"

the Collector informed. The Collector said that 8 check posts were set up at the inter-state borders during the election, stating that cash, liquor and other goods worth Rs 13.17 crore were seized. Postal ballot papers will be issued after the last date for filing nominations, he informed.

"In order to increase the polling percentage, awareness programmes are being organized under Systematic Voter's Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP)," he said, adding that awareness programmes are being conducted to sensitize those who crossed the age of 18 to exercise the right to vote.

SP Mary Prashanthi said that all arrangements were made to ensure that the voters exercise their right of vote in a peaceful atmosphere. Cases would be registered against those who violate model code of conduct. "A strong vigil has been laid on the news being disseminated on social media. The misleading and inciting news items are detrimental to the tranquility and peace and stringent action will be taken against the persons who post such news items on

social media," the SP said.

Sri Rama Navami celebrated on a grand scale in Vijayawada

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Sri Rama Navami was celebrated on a grand scale in the NTR and Krishna districts and Vijayawada City on Wednesday. On this occasion, special poojas were performed at Ramalayams including the many temples in these two districts besides Vijayawada City.

The festivities were organised Ramalayams at Besant Road, Satyanarayanapuram, One Town, Kodanda Rama temple at Patamata, Prasadampadu Saibaba temple, the Ram Mandiram at Eluru Road and

Sri Abhaya Anjaneya Swamy temple on Ghat Road atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada among other places.

As part of the celebrations, Sri Rama Kalyanam was performed at various temples and residential localities in the city and parts of both districts. The wedding of Lord Rama and

Goddess Sita was performed at 12 noon. The deities were decorated with silk clothes

and the 'Kalyanam' was performed amid 'Veda Mantras' and 'Mela Talams'. 'Theerta prasadams' were distributed to the devotees after the utsavam.

Many residential welfare associations also performed the Sitaram Kalyanam on their premises. The temples echoed with devotional

songs and the chants of Jai Sri Rama, Kodanda Rama, and Janaki Rama. Besant Road, which used to wear a festive look for nine days of celebra-

Woman kills self by jumping from PG building in Delhi

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.

According to police, the woman was a native of Meerut in Uttar Pradesh and had been preparing for competitive exams for the last 10 years in Delhi. The police received a PCR call regarding a woman jumping from the second floor of a paying guest

accommodation in the Mukherjee Nagar area at around 3:20 pm. A team was immediately rushed to the spot, the officials said. The police team took the woman to a nearby hospital where the doctors declared her dead on arrival, they said. During the initial probe, the woman had been staying in PG for the last few months, they said. She was also a YouTuber. "We are probing the matter and the police are taking statements from students living in PG," the official



Elgar Parishad case accused Shoma Sen walks out of prison

Igar Parishad-Maoist links case accused and former Nagpur University professor Shoma Sen was released from a prison here on Wednesday afternoon, an official said. The 66-year-old professor of English literature had obtained bail from the Supreme Court on April 5. Sen, arrested in the case on June 6, 2018, walked out of the Byculla jail in central Mumbai after the completion of all formalities, the senior prison

official said. Her lawyer Indira Jaising tweeted about her release on X, saying, "She is finally out, Shoma Sen with her daughter outside Byculla jail. Sen was one of the 16 persons including activists and academics arrested in the case, related to the Elgar Parishad conclave held in Pune on December 31, 2017. Pune Police had alleged that the conclave was backed by Maoists, and the 'inflammatory' speeches made there fuelled caste violence



School headmaster stabbed multiple times, hospitalised

he 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. The incident took place on Monday afternoon, he said. Senior inspector Kiran Undre of the Dombivili GRP said the accused, identified as Shakil Humayun Sheikh, caught hold of the 56-year-old victim

when he was walking along the tracks near the Kharbao railway station and asked him why he was not completing the service record of his wife who worked in the same school at Bhiwandi. "The victim told the accused that her service book has gone missing. His answer annoyed the accused, who then took out a knife and stabbed him several times, leaving him badly injured. The victim was rushed to a nearby hospital. where he is presently undergoing treatment," he said.



'Modi govt will eliminate Naxals in very short time'

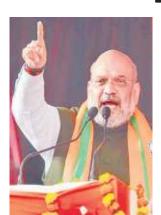
PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

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.

The central government has been conducting incessant operations against terrorism and Naxals, he said in a statement, a day after security forces gunned down 29 Maoists in Chhattisgarh.

"I can say with conviction that operations against Naxals will continue in the times to come, and under the leadership of Modi, we will uproot Naxalism from our nation in a very short period of time," Shah said.

The home minister said since the formation of a BJP government in Chhattisgarh three months ago, more than 80 Naxals have been eliminated, more than 125 arrested and more than 150 have surren-



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.

In the biggest ever encounter in Chhattisgarh, security personnel on Tuesday gunned down 29 Naxalites, including some senior members, in

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

PNS KANKER

Silence hangs over the hillocks adjoining Hidur and Kalpar villages in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district where 29 naxalites were gunned down by security forces in an encounter. Hours after the biggest encounter ever in the state ended, bullet marks could be seen on the trees at the site on Wednesday, Bloodstains were also visible on the ground which is covered by a thick carpet of fallen bamboo leaves. In the nearby villages, local tribals, most of them women, could be seen outside, but they were reluctant to speak about what they saw or heard during the encounter on

Lingaram, a resident of Akameta village in the area, claimed that his cousin Sukku, an active Naxalite,

was killed in the encounter. He came to know about it only on Wednesday, he said, talking to reporters at Kalpar village. Sukku had joined the outlawed CPI (Maoist) as a child and despite the family members trying to persuade him to guit, he staved with the Maoist movement. Lingaram said. The family was yet to contact the police to claim Sukku's body, he added. The route to the encounter site, mostly dirt roads or forest paths, was dug up at multiple locations. Naxalite posters appealing locals to boycott the Lok Sabha elections and crude memorials of slain Maoists could be seen nearby. To reach the area, considered as a stronghold of the North Bastar

Division Committee of Naxalites,

one has to cross the Kotri river

PNS NEW DELHI

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 prearrest bail to two persons in an abetment of suicide case.

The court said another person cannot be blamed for the wrong decision taken by a man of a "weak and frail mentality".

"If a lover commits suicide due to love failure, if a student commits suicide because of his poor performance in the examination, a client commits suicide because his case is dismissed, the lady, examiner, lawyer respectively cannot be held to have abetted the commission of suicide," Justice Amit Mahajan said. The court's order came while granting anticipatory bail to two persons, a woman and her friend, who are facing prosecution for allegedly instigating the man to commit sui-

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)".

She was speaking during her first roadshow in Uttar Pradesh in support of the INDIA bloc candidate from Saharanpur Imran Masood, hours before the campaigning for the first phase of Lok Sabha elections came to an

The roadshow covered a distance of about two kilometres in areas with a sizeable Muslim population. It started from the Jain Bagh area, passed through Raiwala, JBS Inter College, Kamboh Bridge and ended at the Qutub Sher police station area.

Addressing a large crowd, she appealed to them to make Masood victorious with an overwhelming majority.

"The people in power are not worshippers of 'satya' (truth) or 'Maa Shakti'

Poll strategists turn campaigners in political war rooms

(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.

Her remarks come in the backdrop of the BJP attacking the Congress over its leader Rahul Gandhi's "fight againt Shakti remark and accusing the opposition party of insulting Hindu Gods.

Targeting the BJP, the Congress leader claimed that "if there is no glitch in EVM, these people are not going to

The Congress general secretary also attacked the ruling party over the electoral bonds

"If the electoral bond is transparent then why was the list not made available to the people earlier? It was only when the Supreme Court intervened that the list came out," she said

"The company which was earning a profit of Rs 180 crore donated Rs 1100 crores to BJP. Black money was converted into white through electoral bonds," she alleged, adding that it has exposed "Modi's cor-

BJP accuses DK Shivakumar of 'brazen abuse of power'

PNS BENGALURU

BIP leader Amit Malviva on Wednesday accused Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shiyakumar 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 plat-

In the video clip, Shivakumar was purportedly heard saying that he had come for a "business deal" and if the 2,510 houses in the housing society --6,424 votes -- go to his candidate -- his brother D K Suresh

is seeking re-election from Bangalore Rural in the coming elections -- then he assured them that their major issues concerning supply of Cauvery river water and need for a civic amenity site would be resolved by him within three months.

Sharing the video clip, Malviya, the BJP IT department head, attacked Shivakumar, the state Congress chief, and said that irrespective of who the people choose to vote for, it is his

responsibility as a minister to provide amenities to the peo-

"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 res-

idents 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

"Irrespective of who the people choose to vote (for), it is DK

Shivakumar's responsibility as a minister to provide amenities to the people. If he doesn't, then the BJP will, when they come to power. But such threats and quid pro quo for delivering what one has been voted for is UNACCEPT-ABLE," he further alleged.

Tagging the Election Commission of India on 'X', he urged them to take note of the multiple model code of conduct violations and intimidation in this case.



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.

"The car was going towards Ahmedabad from Vadodara when it rammed into the rear side of the truck on the expresswav

While eight people died on the spot, two injured persons, who were shifted to a nearby hospital in an ambulance, succumbed later," said Inspector of Nadiad Rural police station Kirit Chaudhary.

Nadiad MLA Pankaj Desai said it is possible the truck stopped on the left lane of the expressway due to some technical fault and the car driver did not get enough time to apply brakes and crashed





suggest otherwise. The poster boy of political

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 couthey drive the winning strategy with poll strategists assum-

As India goes to polls, the stakes are higher than ever. It is said elections are fought on emotions and they are an art more than science, but the

ing an important role in a shift

from being backroom boys.

rise of poll strategists would

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. Kishor started

Accountable Governance (CAG) as a non-profit in 2013. Two years later, it was rechristened Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC), which has since strategised and campaigned for candidates in several elections.

In 2014, it launched some of



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 'padyatra' in Bihar with a stated goal to usher in transformative state's development, Kishor says he does not think he is doing anything drastically dif-

"What I was advising political parties and their leaders earlier, I am now directly communicating to people, be the issues they should raise or

building grassroots organisation," he said during a recent interaction.

Sunil Kanugolu, who played a crucial role in several BIP state campaigns, is now part of the Congress task force for 2024. He is credited with the Karnataka victory and the

Partha Pratim Das got into consulting when as his final project at IIM-Bangalore, he advised Ajay Singh, who was contesting from Jewargi in Karnataka in 2013 for the assembly elections. Singh went on to defeat the sitting BJP MLA by 36,700 votes.

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.

Last August, the premier space agency's Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft made a soft landing on the south pole of the lunar surface, making India the first country to achieve the feat.

"Chandrayaan 3 has done very well. Data has been collected and scientific publication has just started. Now, we want to continue the



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. Somnath Ahmedabad as the chief guest of a programme organised by the Astronautical Society of

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 airdrop test this year.

The airdrop test will happen on April 24. Then two more uncrewed missions will happen next year and then the manned mission, if everything goes well, by the end of next year," the ISRO chairman said.

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

Under the SKM's banner, a large number of farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana Uttar

Pradesh, had held year-long protest on Delhi's border points --Singhu, Tikri and against the nowrepealed three

farm laws. 'The Samyukt Kisan Morcha left Delhi as one, but some people later parted ways. The government of India wanted to create another movement and they created it," he said in an inter-

view with PTI. The split, the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader said, led to the creation of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political).

The SKM is not part of the ongoing protest of the SKM (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) over farmers' demands, including a legal guarantee for minimum support price (MSP) for crops and farm

debt waiver. The agitation started on February 13 with the organisations' calling for a "Delhi Chalo" march, and since then. farmers, mainly from Puniab. are at camping at the Shambhu border after being stopped by the Harvana 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. "Our effort for the last two years has been that the SKM remains together and any call is given together. The SKM is not a part of that (Delhi Chalo) movement. They (SKM (Non-Political) and

KMM) are talking with the central government," he said. The SKM was created so that farmers can be united, said Tikait, whose outfit was among the 41 organisations that came together under the banner of the SKM to protest

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

against the laws.

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. 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 truincy or absence from school than girls, while girls were found to report more of absences due to medical reasons

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 ublished in the journal Archives of Disease in Childhood.

For the study, the researchers analysed the data of more than 86,000 adolescents aged 14-16, taken from the School Health Promotion study, a national biennial survey. The teens were asked about their relationship with parents, including how often they shared concerns with them, along with their neglect of family, friends, and



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

study, and not eating or sleeping because of being online. The researchers found that girls were 96 per cent likelier to use the internet excessively

than boys, who were 79 per

cent likelier to do so. They also

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.

They also found that being able to share concerns with parents was strongly associated with the lowest risk of both truancy and school absence due to medical reasons, with close to 60 per cent being less

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 pro-

ly 40 per cent less likely to be

tective, the team said. Being an observational study, however, a cause-andeffect relationship could not be established, they said.

"Our results are relevant for professionals organising and working in school health and wellbeing services, especially when professionals meet students whose school absences raise concern," the authors www.dailypioneer.com

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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

neneral 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.



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

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

he 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 his-

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, otentially 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

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 anata Dal (Secular) [ID(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 add cific 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

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 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.

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 followwin over this community ing. Suppose the voters choose involves a combination of 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)

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

he 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

The term "quantum scale" refers to the realm of physics that deals with phenomena occurring at very small scales, typically at the level of atoms, subatomic particles and fundamental particles. It encompasses the principles of quantum mechanics, which govern the behaviour of particles and systems at these tiny dimensions. At the heart of quantum technology lies the principles of quantum mechanics, a branch of physics that describes the behaviour of particles at the smallest scales. Quantum mechanics introduces uncertainty and the notion of superposition, where particles can exist in multiple States simultaneously. Furthermore, entanglement, another fundamental quantum phenomenon, links the properties of particles regardless of dis-



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 tum information theory.

superconductivity and quan-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 tance, enabling instantaneous of quantum mechanics is the

development of quantum in critical areas like financial computers. These machines transactions, national securileverage 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 lifesaving 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

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)

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 effective-

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.

The power of young citizens



propos the news article, "A call to vote responsibly beyond party lines", published on April 16, this is my response. India's youthful population wields 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 inclu-

Keerti Punia | Chandigarh

scrutiny due to perceptions of American cornerstone of good health and its deficienhegemony 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 NATÓ 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 | Sonipat

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 wellbeing 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 Moreover, NATO's credibility is under mango consumption. Nutrition is the

cy 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 wellbeing, 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 Majumdaar | Kolkata

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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

few centuries ago no one worried about climate change, because Athere was no reason to uo so. Dut as numbers of waste, including high-nature and dumped an increasing amount of waste, including highthere was no reason to do so. But as humans extracted more from ly 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 par-



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



oday entire world is gripped in the clutches of Wahhabi ter-rorism 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

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 never 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 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 HOWEVER, WHEN IDEOLOGY, NAJDI ENOUGH TO FIND MUHAMMED-IBN-SAUD, A BEDOUIN VERSION OF ISLAM FOR

PSEUDO-ISLAM. MOUNTED AGAINST HIS WAS SHREWD A PATRON IN TRIBAL CHIEF, WHO MADE USE OF HIS NEW VITRIOLIC

CONSOLIDATION

Najdi, also belonging to Jewish POLITICAL a spectacular bid to extend his

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

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 OPPOSITION 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

> 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

> territory and as Allen says, "He

issued every holy warrior a 'fir-

man' 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 par-The history of Wahhabism has

been written with the blood of innocent people. On June 2, 1792, Sheikh Muhammad Najdiibn-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 radical Hindu mob led by Sangh Imam Husain. Lieutenant Francis Pariyar leaders. Intellectuals Warden wrote, "They pillaged the across the globe, irrespective of whole of it and plundered the tomb of Hazrat İmam 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 century 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 birthplace of Prophet Mohammad. În India, the 500-year-old Babri Masjid in Ayodhya was demolished on December 6, 1992, by a 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.

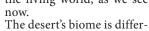
On the other hand, the more heinous crime of multiple demolitions of holy shrines, relics and heritage sites together with massacres took place in Saudi Arabia at the behest of Saudi Arab's Wahhabi/Salafi rulers of Zionist ancestry, on 8th Shawwal 1344 Hijri (1925 A.D), but surprisingly no Muslim of 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

he 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





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 they 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

ent from Iceland's biome. In 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 they enrich our lives. We 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 few days. In the future, as or the pralaya where the

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

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

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)

Hathway Cable and Datacom posts net profit of Rs 34.57 cr

athway Cable and Datacom Ltd on Wednesday reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 34.57 crore for the March quarter. The company had posted a consolidated net loss of Rs 14.61 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal, Hathway Cable and Datacom Ltd said in a regulatory filing. Consolidated revenue from operations during the quarter under review was at Rs 493.37 crore as against Rs 459.59 crore in the year-ago period. Total expenses were marginally higher at Rs 493.52 crore as compared to Rs 484.49 in the corresponding period a year ago, the company said. For FY24, Hathway Cable and Datacom

said its consolidated net profit was at Rs 99.29 crore, up from Rs 65.37 crore in the previous fiscal. Consolidated revenue from operations in FY24 was higher at Rs 1,980.97 crore as against Rs 1,858.44 crore in FY23, it said. The company also said its board has approved the appointment of Prashant Kate as the Chief Information Security Officer with effect from April 17, based on recommendation of the nomination and remuneration committee.



Govt notifies specifications of IFFCO's Nano Urea Plus

he government has notified specifications of a new product 'Nano Urea Plus' fertiliser to be manufactured by cooperative IFFCO in the country in the next three years. Nano Urea Plus is a new version of nano urea meant for meeting crop nitrogen requirements at critical growth phases. According to a gazette notification, the government has approved Nano Urea Plus in liquid form with 16 per cent nitrogen content in weight by weight, and pH value of 4-8.5 and viscosity of 5-30. This product will be manufactured by the

cooperative major IFFCO for a period of three years, it said. Currently, IFFCO offers 'Nano Urea' which has 1-5 per cent weight by weight nitrogen content. The Nano Urea Plus has more nitrogen. "IFFCO's Nano Urea Plus is an advanced formulation of Nano Urea in which nutrition is redefined to meet crop nitrogen requirement at critical growth phases. It is used in place of conventional urea and other nitrogenous fertilisers for promoting soil health, farmer's profitability & sustainable environment, IFFCO Managing Director and CEO U S Awasthi said on a social media platform X.



Funskool seeks to transform India into global hub

oy manufacturer Funskool India, part of tyre major MRF Group, has taken up expansion at its manufacturing facilities in Tamil Nadu to make India a global hub for toy manufacturing. The expansion work at its premises in Ranipet, would effectively double the manufacturing capacities. The upgraded facilities in both Unit 1 and 2 of the manufacturing facilities represent a substantial investment in Funskool's production

capabilities, a company statement here said on Wednesday. "Funskool India has experienced remarkable growth over the years. With this expansion, we solidify our position as a leader in India's toy industry and move closer to our goal of transforming India into a global hub for toy manufacturing" Funskool India Ltd Chairman Arun Mammen said after inaugurating the upgraded facilities. Besides the two units at Ranipet, Funskool India has 1.62 lakh sq ft of manufacturing space at its first plant in Goa.



"India's economy will grow at 8-8.3% in current fiscal"

PNS NEW DELHI

India's economy is estimated to grow at 8-8.3 per cent in the current fiscal, industry body PHDCCI said on Wednesday.

The country's GDP will grow at an average of 6.7 per cent over the next 23 years to become a USD 34.7 trillion economy by 2047, with a per capita income of USD 21,000, it added.

"We are projecting a growth rate of 8 to 8.3 per cent for India's economy for the current financial year," PHDCCI Chief Economist SP Sharma said.

Addressing a press conference, he said India's economy has robust growth fundamen-

"Gradually after 2035, the growth rate will start decelerating from the peak, and on an average, our growth rate, the real GDP (gross domestic product), will be 6.7 per cent overall in the next 23 years,"



India's economy will attain the size of USD 34.7 trillion by 2047 with a per capita income of USD 21,000, the industry

body said. The chamber has suggested 10 key enablers for the country to become a developed economy by 2047 in a report.

It has recommended reducing the cost of doing business and enhancing the global scalability of promising sectors like fintech, information technology, automobile and renewable energy to boost the economy.

The chamber has suggested a special focus on the development of the semiconductor

It has called for continued handholding to the startup ecosystem to become the second largest in the world by

The recommendation also includes capacity building for exports -- with a potential 75 products to be focused on to enhance export volumes in

The chamber has suggested reform measures for the agriculture and food processing sector, besides filling the vacant positions at the national and state levels, including the judiciary, police, medical and paramedicals, military and paramilitary and education, among

It has also pitched for a greater push to digital transformation to be among the top five countries in the Government AI Readiness Index by 2047.

The 10-pronged approach also suggests bolstering the renewable energy segment to 1,500 GW by 2047.



'Investment in fixed income products will double'

PNS NEW DELHI

Grip Invest, a technology-driven trading platform for fixed-income products, expects investment through its platform to double to Rs 2,000 crore over the next 12 months.

The total investment in corporate bonds and other debt products has crossed Rs 1,000 crore recently and it should double in the next 12-14 months, Grip Invest Founder and CEO Nikhil Aggarwal said.

There is growing interest among retail investors in fixed-income products as the risk is lesser compared to the stock market, he said.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Billionaire Gautam Adani's

family infused an additional Rs

8,339 crore in Ambuja

Cements, raising its stake in the company to 70.3 per cent, to help the cement maker's manufacturing capacity.

The Adani family previously

invested Rs 5,000 crore in the

company on October 18, 2022,

and Rs 6,661 crore on March 28.

2024. With the latest investment,

it has completed Rs 20,000

crore planned infusion, the

"The promoters of the com-

pany - Adani family - has fully

subscribed to the warrants

program in the company by

ing business processes or ser-

vices to external providers

located abroad, aiming to

leverage cost savings, specialised skills, and operational

The offshoring market, also

known as Business Process

efficiencies.

company said in a statement.

Crude oil import bill drops but import dependency hits new high

2023-24, up from 87.4 per cent, according to PPAC.

Domestic crude oil produc-

tion was almost unchanged at

29.4 million tonnes in 2023-24.

spent USD 23.4 billion on

import of 48.1 million tonnes

of petroleum products like LPG. It also exported 62.2

million tonnes of products for USD 47.4 billion.

year ended March 31, 2024.

Other than oil, India also

Besides crude oil, India

India's crude oil import dropped 16 per cent in the fiscal year ended March 31 as lower international rates but the dependency on overseas suppliers rose to a new high, official data showed.

India imported 232.5 million tonnes of crude oil, which is refined into fuels like petrol and diesel, in the 2023-24 fiscal (April 2023 to March 2024), almost the same as in the previous financial year. But it paid USD 132.4 billion for the imports in FY24 as against USD 157.5 billion import bill in 2022-23, oil ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) data showed.

The world's third largest oil importing and consuming nation has been able to add to its domestic production drop, raising its import dependence. Import dependence of crude

oil soared to 87.7 per cent in

imports gas in its liquid form, called LNG. After the price shock of 2022-23, import of 30.91 billion cubic meters of gas cost USD 13.3 billion in the fiscal

Adani infuses Rs 8,339 cr more in Ambuja Cements

17.1 billion spent on import of 26.3 bcm of gas in 2022-23 when energy prices shot up to record levels in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Net oil and gas import bill (crude oil plus petroleum product plus LNG import bill minus exports) stood at USD 121.6 billion in 2023-24, down from USD 144.2 billion.

Petroleum imports as percentage of India's gross imports (in value terms) stood at 25.1 per cent, down from 28.2 per cent in 2022-23.

Similarly, petroleum exports as a percentage of the country's gross exports came at 12 per cent in 2023-24 as compared to 14 per cent in the previous year.

India's fuel consumption rose 4.6 per cent to a record 233.3 million tonnes in the year ended March 31, 2023.

This compared with 223 million tonnes consumption in 2022-23 and 201.7 million tonnes in 2021-22.

Samsung introduces IoT-driven TV sets

PNS NEW DELHI

Leading consumer electronics maker Samsung is targeting to cross Rs 10,000 crore sales mark from its TV business in 2024 in the Indian market led by growing demand and premiumisation in the segment, Wednesday.

The company, which introduced a new line-up of Artificial Intelligence (AI) enabled TV sets, controls around 21 per cent of the vol-



Indian TV market and expects to consolidate beyond that in 2024, said Samsung India Senior Vice President, Visual Display Business Mohandeep

Tata Comm profit declines marginally

Tata Communications' consolidated profit declined marginally to Rs 321.55 crore in the fourth quarter ended on March 31, 2024, according to a regulatory filing.

it of Rs 326.64 crore in the same period a year ago. The consolidated revenue of

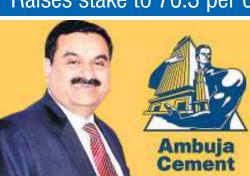
Tata Communications during the reported quarter increased by 24.5 per cent to

Rs 5,691.7 crore from Rs 4,568.66 crore in the same quarter a year ago.

For the year ended on March 31, 2024, net profit declined to Rs 969.58 crore from Rs 1,800.87 crore at the end of 2022-23.

The annual operations Communications increased by 17.5 per cent to Rs 20,968.82 crore in fiscal year 2024 from Rs 17,838.26 crore in fiscal year 2023.

Raises stake to 70.3 per cent



further infusing Rs 8,339 crore, thereby infusing a total amount of Rs 20,000 crore," it said.

The latest infusion raises the Adani family stake in

Ambuja Cement by 3.6 per

In all, its holding in Ambuja Cement has increased from 63.2 per cent to 70.3 per cent. The fund infusion will help

Ambuja accelerate its growth ambitions to almost double its existing capacity to 140 million tonnes per annum by 2028 from 76.1 million tonnes as of December 31.

"With this, promoters have further strengthened Ambuja post-acquisition, giving accelerated growth, capital management initiatives and best-in-class balance sheet strength to accomplish its various strategic initiatives," the statement said.

FY25 to be transformative year, says Vedanta's Anil

PNS NEW DELHI

Mining tycoon Anil Agarwal has said the current financial year that started on April 1 will be a transforma-

tive year for his conglomerate Vedanta as it prioritises disciplined growth while parent eyes a USD 3 billion deleveraging in the next three years. In a commu-

nication to shareholders, Vedanta Ltd Chairman Agarwal said the group will pursue sustainable growth

while maintaining a healthy balance sheet.

"These include further deleveraging (parent) Vedanta Resources by USD 3 billion in the next 3 years

and achieving an annual group EBITDA of USD 7.5 billion within 2 years," he said. "FY25 will be a transformative year for us on many fronts as we prioritise disci-

plined growth, operational excellence, and exploring opportunities along the value

WORKSPACE IN INDIA

GCCs, 3-party IT service providers driving demand: Report

PNS NEW DELHI

International companies outsourcing jobs to India have become a major driver of office demand in the country with global capability centres and third-party IT service providers contributing 46 per cent to the total leasing of workspace during 2023, according to Knight Frank.

Real estate consultant Knight Frank, in its latest report 'Asia Pacific Horizon: Harnessing the Potential of Offshoring', noted that the offshoring industry in India has grown significantly into a



leading global service provider, accounting for 57 per cent of the global offshoring

The consultant explained that the offshoring market involves companies outsourc-

Outsourcing (BPO), encompasses various models such as Global Capability Centres (GCCs) and Global Business Services (GBS).

GCCs are internal units set up by companies in offshore locations, while the GBS involves centralised service delivery units providing a range of services globally.

Retail investors' interest in MFs growing: ICRA Analytics

Rising awareness and growing interest among retail investors in mutual funds (MF) have led to a doubling of the number of

folios in the last five vears, according to leading research **ICRA** firm Analytics.

The total number of MF portfolios, as of March 2024, stood at 17.79

lakh crore, up from 8.97 lakh crore in March 2020. ICRA Analytics said retail

investors are showing greater interest in investing in equities and bonds through the MF

ing to data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India, retail investors account for 91.3 per cent of the MF folios, while high net

worth indiv i d u a l s (HNIs) constitute around eight per cent and institu-

t i o n a l investors at less than one

per cent. ICRA Analytics said that equity-oriented funds top the list of folios at 68.7 per cent, exchange-traded funds (ETFs) at 11.7 per cent, while hybrid schemes comprise 7.7 per

EU questions TikTok on app that pays users

for watching PNS LONDON

European Union regulators said Wednesday they're seeking details from TikTok on a new app from the video sharing platform that pays users

to watch videos. European Commission said it sent TikTok a "request for information" on the TikTok Lite app that has been quietly released in France and Spain.

The commission wants to know about the risk assessment that TikTok should have carried out before deploying the app in the European Union. "We have already been in direct contact with the Commission regarding this product and will respond to the request for information," TikTok said in a statement.

Such evaluations are required under the bloc's Digital Services Act, a sweeping law that took effect last year with the aim of cleaning up social media platforms. The commission is the 27nation bloc's executive arm and top enforcer of digital regulations.

TECH ROLES IN NON-TECH SECTORS

Women participation to grow by 24.3%: Report

PNS NEW DELHI

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 at the Heart of India's



Digital Evolution, has revealed. there is a pressing need to ampli-With only 0.5 per cent of the fy female participation in this total women workforce engaged domain. Having said that, the in tech roles in non-tech sectors, tech sector is increasingly prioritising the employment of women and India's women's STEM participation stands at 43 per cent globally, which is the highest in the world," TeamLease Digital Chief Executive Officer Neeti Sharma said.

This would further grow this year (2025) on the basis of the sustained efforts of the government and women-centric programs enabling increased participation of women in tech, inclusive maternity and childcare support, she stated.

The TeamLease Digital -Women at the Heart of India's Digital Evolution', report is based on data obtained from its wide network and proprietary database, as well as several public sources from 2019 till 2023.

Further, mentioning cityspecific statistics, the report found that the percentage of women joining the workforce from tier I cities (55 per cent) outnumbers the tier II cities. Women hiring is projected to

centre in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Gujarat in the coming months, with talent being hired in locations such as Chennai, Pune, Nasik, Coimbatore, Kochi, Aurangabad, and Vadodara, it stated.

Global uncertanities drag mkts from peaks

PNS NEW DELHI

Global uncertainties, mainly escalating tensions between Iran and Israel, have led to a massive correction in the equity markets in the last 3 days after a record-shattering rally that saw the BSE Sensex crossing the historic 75,000 mark last week.

Hotter-than-expected US inflation data fuelled concerns that the Federal Reserve will hold back on delivering the cuts to interest rates. Also, foreign fund outflows and profit-taking contributed to the correc-



tion in the equity markets.

The heavy correction in the market can be attributed to several factors, including the escalating tensions between Iran and Israel, which have heightened geopolitical uncertainties and prompted risk aversion among investors.

Vijayawada | Thursday April 18, 2024

Tom Holland's X account reportedly hacked

here have reportedly been hacks into Hollywood actor Tom Holland's X 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

A different segment of the internet expressed dissatisfaction about Holland's reported inability to publicly support costar 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*



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.

Ulaih 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

KUNAL KEMMU-STARRER

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 Dikhla 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 captivating visuals with the infectheir track record of delivering captivating visuals, they are set to ele-

Music's official YouTube channel, promises to be a visual and auditory spectacle. Featuring vocals by Amit Uchana, Bairan Begani is poised to enrap-ture 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 tious rhythm of the song. With vate *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.



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 antag-

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!

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,

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

source claims that Subhash Ghai has completed writing Khalnayak 2 script. In addition, the director—who codirected 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 Balaram 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.

ARCHIE

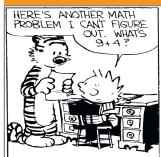


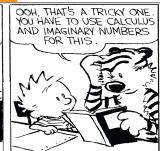


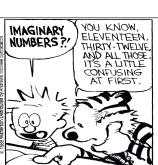


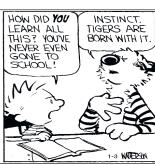


CALVIN AND HOBBES









GARFIELD









REALITY CHECK





CROSSWORD



AUNT FRITZI TOOK HER SCREEN TEST AND WE WAITED BREATHLESSLY







SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ***

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Observing

12 Weapons

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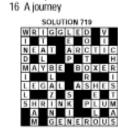
9 The writer of a book

10 A small green creature

18 Railway coaches pulled

8 A large stream

1 Grind this up for flour 2 Extreme fear 3 Difficult



11 A container for a drink

13 A soldier's award

15 Sheep eat this

4 Not ever

6 Scares

5 A green pointy

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GINGER MEGGS







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Thursday April 18, 2024

BEING A 'MARHAM' FOR THOSE IN NEED

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



SHIKHA DUGGAL

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

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

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 trans-gender 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 clos-

er 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 gyne-cologists, 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

about their people on the

spectrum to businesses so they may

place orders and hire them. Aside from that, "Transgender rights are

to live inclusively in the society like

any of us. We have received assis-

tance with regular medical difficul-ties and medication, having under-

gone surgery twice. We educated three transgender people to manage a cloud kitchen. The difficul-

ties we encountered were that if

they choose to go begging or work as prostitutes, they make far more money than if they struggle to acquire orders and make a little

money. They set up kiosks at New Year's Eve celebrations and also

gave orders in the city's best hos-

pitals. We've discovered that,

although they have few opportuni-

ties, they are extremely forgiving of

even tiny mistakes, just like any

other hotel, and as the founder of

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 edu-

cate 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 blog-gers 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 "What's next for us?"

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 firstever 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 tha-lassemia 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

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 rewardingan 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 priortise 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, **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



The importance of periconceptional counselling

INTRODUCTION:

n 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 periconception 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 peoble 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

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 Punjab and Mumbai have lost four 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

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.

The only bright spot for PBKS this season has been resolute displays from their unsung 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 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

Rohit and Ishan Kishan's form thus become crucial for Mumbai Indians, for whom Suryakumar Yadav has produced mixed results.

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, Tanay 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, Shivalik Sharma, Romario Shepherd, Arjun Tendulkar, Nuwan Thushara, Tilak Varma, Harvik Desai, Nehal Wadhera,

Luke Wood.

Rinku credits Gambhir for Narine transformation as specialist opener

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.

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.

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 Challengers in 2022 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.

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 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

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

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."

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.

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

'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

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.

something special," he said.

lyer fined ₹12 lakh for first slow over

rate offence PTI ■ KOLKATA

Kolkata Knight Riders 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

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,

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

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 postmatch 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

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

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.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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-andtested 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 15member 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.

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

It is understood that Siraj is being 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

being a good finisher, who also used to be a handy leg-break bowler. He

📂 the pioneer

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 iourney, the film's unique narrative, and the challenges and joys of producing a movie from

khilesh Kalaru, a familiar name in Indianapolis, is now making waves in the A world of Indian cinema with his debut production, Market Mahalakshmi. This romantic drama, helmed by talented director VS Mukkhesh, promises a refreshing take on love and relationships. Starring Kerintha Parvateesam and Praneekaanvika, 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 Mukkhesh, 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:

uplifting women across diverse backgrounds

holistically and foster their growth

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

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

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

'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 onscreen." Coordinating production while residing in the US presented its own set of challenges, but Akhilesh credits his team and director

Mukkhesh 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 Praneekaanvika 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 emphasises 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**

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

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

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 es as ne taces ott 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

Prakash Kumar and cinematography by Theni Eshwar, elevating



twists. SJ Surya and Dusara Vijayan join Vikram in pivotal roles adding depth to the ensemble cast. The film features music by GV the visual and auditory experience.

Actor Thiruveer's next unveiled on Sri Rama Navami

ersatile 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. Malayalam actress Karthika Muralidharan stars opposite

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 Ardhashathabdham and Loot, is backing this film

on a grand scale alongside RK Director Ghanta

Satish Babu, who previously served as an assis-

tant to Srikanta Addala on films such as Kotha Bangaru Lokam, Mukunda, Seethamma Vaakitlo 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.



Nithiin's Robinhood releasing on December 20

upcoming film *Robinhood*, directed by Venky Kudumula. This exciting project promises a fresh perspective on Nithiin's talent, with Venky Kudumula crafting a character that shows see the actor in ter that showcases the actor in a completely new light.

afar.

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

Prepare to witness Hero Nithiin release date for *Robinhood* 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. Prawin 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.



NARA ROHIT'S NEXT TITLED SUNDARAKANDA, RELEASING IN SEPT

elebrating a significant milestone with his 20th film, actor Nara Rohit teamed Celebrating a significant milestone with his Lean mile comedy produced by Santhosh Chinnapolla, Gowtham Reddy, and Rakesh Mahankalli 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.

90's TEAM ANNOUNCE NEW WEB SERIES TEACHER

irector 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.

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 intriquing 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

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.







