

QUOTE OF THE DAY
 The pioneer
 An August crisis will arise in Telangana if the Supreme Court punishes Revanth Reddy in the vote-for-note case. The Supreme Court will deliver its verdict on Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's vote-for-note case on July 24. That is why Revanth said on Sunday that Komatireddy Venkat Reddy is fully eligible to become the Chief Minister. Revanth has been saying 'You are the next CM' to Congress leaders wherever he goes.
 - Alleti Maheshwar Reddy, BJLP Leader P4

Kerala CM poses questions to Rahul over CAA
 5

VIKING SOUL EVOKING A TRIBAL TULUM VIBE
 10

Satyabhama in cinemas ON MAY 17
 P12

DON'T MISS...
Estimated power demand this ...
 Chief Secretary Dr KS Jawahar Reddy has instructed the officials of the Power Department to take appropriate measures to ensure uninterrupted power supply. He further said that it is expected to be 245 million units this month, 236 million units in May and 253 million units in June, and ordered appropriate measures to supply electricity accordingly. He made it clear that if there is any interruption in the electricity supply, immediate...
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'Father's diet can affect anxiety...
 The father's diet can affect the anxiety levels in their sons and the metabolism of their daughters before they are even conceived, according to new research conducted in mice. While a mouse father's diet is known to impact his and his children's reproductive health, it was not yet known if differing its macronutrient composition of proteins, fats and carbohydrates could have differing impacts on children's health, researchers said. The team of...
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'Most Indian travellers...
 Even as 95 per cent of Indian travellers interviewed said sustainable travel is important to them, more than half feel the irreversible damage has already been done, a report said on Monday. Online travel agency Booking.com's ninth 'Sustainable Travel Report 2024' revealed that almost two-thirds (62 per cent) of Indian travellers stated they would feel guilty when they make less sustainable travel choices and 20 per cent of them want to travel more sustainably...
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Revenge on CSK mind as...
 Revenge will be on defending champions Chennai Super Kings' minds when they host an unpredictable Lucknow Super Giants here in their reverse IPL fixture on Tuesday with both the teams desperate to break out of the mid-table logjam. The last time the two teams faced off in Lucknow last week, KL Rahul and Quinton de Kock put up a record opening partnership which proved to be the difference as LSG joined CSK at eight points in the IPL standing. The Super Kings have been...
 -SPORTS

AP SSC RESULTS OUT
Girls outperform boys

- Girls achieve a pass percentage of 89.17, boys 84.32
- Girls' pass percentage is 4.85 higher than boys
- Overall pass percentage stands at 86.69.



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 Once again, girls have exhibited their academic prowess over boys in the Class 10 results declared by the Board of Secondary Education, Andhra Pradesh, on Monday.
 With a pass percentage of 89.17, the girls have surpassed the boys who secured a pass percentage of 84.32. The overall pass percentage of girls stands at 4.85 per cent higher than that of boys, resulting in an overall pass percentage of 86.69. Commissioner of the School Education Department, S Suresh Kumar, unveiled the AP SSC results 2024 at a press conference held in Vijayawada. The scorecards are accessible online since 11 am on the official website at results.bse.ap.gov.in.
 Parvathipuram Manyam district emerges at the top of the district-wise list with an outstanding pass percentage of students at 96.37 per cent. Conversely, Kurnool finds itself at the lower rung with a pass rate of 62.47 per cent.
 The examination, conducted from March 18 to March 30, witnessed participation from over 6.3 lakh students.

Parvathipuram Manyam district emerges at the top of the district-wise list with an outstanding pass percentage of students at 96.37 per cent. Conversely, Kurnool finds itself at the lower rung with a pass rate of 62.47 per cent.

- Parvathipuram Manyam district leads with a remarkable pass percentage of 96.37 while Kurnool lags at 62.47%.
- Exams conducted from March 18 to March 30
- Over 6.3 lakh students appear for the exams
- Audio question papers provided for visually impaired students.
- 2,803 schools achieve a perfect 100% pass rate.
- Telugu medium candidates had a pass rate of 71.08% while English medium candidates achieve 92.32%.

carried out from April 1 to April 8, leading to the timely declaration of results before the school closure.
 Among the 11,645 schools presenting candidates, a commendable 2,803 achieved a flawless 100% pass rate, while only 17 schools grappled with a 0% pass rate. Notably, institutions such as AP Residential Schools and AP BC Welfare Schools boasted exceptional pass rates of 98.43%.
 Medium-wise analysis reveals that while 1,61,881 candidates appeared for the exams in Telugu medium, 71.08% successfully cleared the assessments. Conversely, 4,50,304 candidates opted for the English medium, achieving an impressive 92.32% passing rate.
 Private schools have dominated the scene with 1,988 securing a perfect 100% pass rate, followed by 436 zilla parishad schools and 75 KGBV schools. However, a stark contrast is evident with 13 private schools, along with 3 aided and 1 government school, grappling with a disheartening 0% pass rate.
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Technical glitch grounds Pawan Kalyan's chopper
Forces Jana Sena chief to cancel meetings

PNS ■ GUNTUR
 Jana Sena chief K Pawan Kalyan faced a setback on Monday as a technical issue with the helicopter slated for his travel compelled him to cancel several election meetings.
 Just before takeoff from Pithapuram to Tadepalligudem, the pilot detected a technical snag while Pawan Kalyan was onboard. Consequently, the scheduled election rallies in Tadepalligudem and Ungatur had to be called off.
 Following the pilot's assessment that the helicopter required main-



Following the pilot's assessment that the helicopter required maintenance, Jana Sena's chief postponed his engagements in the aforementioned constituencies.

tenance, Jana Sena's chief postponed his engagements in the aforementioned constituencies. However, he has assured that reschedule and address these meetings at a later time. In related developments, Pawan Kalyan is set to submit his nomination papers in Pithapuram on Tuesday, where he is contesting for the Assembly seat.

Jagan declares Rs 529-cr assets
PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's assets grew by 41 per cent during the last five years at Rs 529.50 crore while he declared an income of Rs 57.75 crore for the year 2022-23.
 Jagan had, during the 2019 Assembly polls, declared Rs 375.20 crore worth of assets.
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Pemmasani richest politician in AP

TDP's Guntur LS nominee owns over Rs 5,598 cr

PNS ■ GUNTUR
 Pemmasani Chandrasekhar, the TDP-JSP-BJP alliance candidate, filed his nomination papers from the Guntur Lok Sabha constituency on Monday.
 According to the declarations, the opposition MP candidate owns movable assets worth Rs 5,598.65 crore and immovable assets worth Rs 186.63 crore, while his liabilities amount to Rs 1,038 crore. In the 2019 general elections affidavits, Ramesh Kumar Sharma (Independent candidate from Bihar) was India's richest parliamentary candidate, having declared assets worth Rs 1,107 crore. In comparison, Chandrasekhar is over five times

richer than Sharma. The opposition alliance has fielded Pemmasani Chandrasekhar as its MP candidate from Guntur. The TDP's candidate is an NRI doctor who has now turned into an industrialist. Chandrasekhar, who hails from Burrripalem village in the Tenali constituency, is known to be a staunch TDP supporter and has been involved in various charity activities for the party over the last 10 years.
 After completing his high school in Narasaraopet and obtaining his MBBS from Osmania Medical College, Hyderabad, Chandrasekhar moved to the US for higher studies. He has also worked as a faculty member at Johns Hopkins University."

TDP plotted to kill RGV

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 Actor-politician Posani Krishna Murali stirred controversy on Monday by alleging a conspiracy within the TDP leadership to harm renowned director Ram Gopal Varma. "I have received credible information about a plot to kill Ram Gopal Varma, which I've learned from sources close to the TDP," he claimed.
 Posani asserted that Anil (from Maha TV) had shared this plan with Rajesh Kilaru (a close associate of Lokesh), who then discussed it with Lokesh, son of Naidu. Allegedly, Lokesh approved of the plan, but upon Naidu's intervention, it was halted.
 "Naidu thought there was no threat from RGV and the plan was abandoned. I appreciate his decision to spare Varma," Posani stated. However, Posani didn't hold back



in his criticism of Naidu, suggesting he had a dangerous mindset. "I fear his intentions, evident from the attempted harm on CM Jagan," he remarked.
 "I'm not afraid for myself, but I implore, do not target CM Jagan. His safety is paramount for the well-being of millions," he pleaded.
 Posani also aimed Pawan Kalyan for his remarks about CM Jagan's reference to his multiple marriages. "Pawan Kalyan was upset when CM Jagan mentioned his marital status.

Vote for welfare schemes of YSRCP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 YSRCP Lok Sabha candidate V Vijayasai Reddy has appealed to the people to vote for the YSRCP keeping in view the efficient implementation of welfare schemes and he assured of continuing the volunteer system, if voted to power
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Naidu 'controlling' Oppn alliance: Sajjala

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 General secretary of YSRCP, Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy, has accused the TDP-BJP-JSP alliance of plunging the State into darkness in 2014.
 Speaking to the media on Monday, Sajjala asserted that the political machinations of the Chandrababu Naidu-led TDP involved not only sending its leaders to other parties like the BJP and Jana Sena Party but also exerting influence to secure seats for them. He highlighted this strategy's implementation in the Bhimavaram, Avanigadda, and Anaparthi constituencies.
 Sajjala underscored the disappointment of Janasainiks who had



- Sajjala that AP was pushed into darkness by the same alliance (TDP-BJP-JSP) in 2014.
- He highlighted the disappointment of Janasainiks, who had hoped to see Pawan Kalyan serve as chief minister.
- 'The YSRCP general secretary said that the TDP's approach suggests that Pawan Kalyan might be replaced by the TDP's ticket aspirant SVSN Varma at the eleventh hour.

envisioned their leader, Pawan Kalyan, as the potential chief minister under the opposition's victory. However, Naidu dashed these hopes by restricting the alliance to two Lok Sabha and 21 Assembly seats according to the seat-sharing agreement.
 Continued on Page 2

Drinking water releases into summer storage tanks extended

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 Chief Secretary of the State, KS Jawahar Reddy, has said that water releases into the canals are being extended to fill all drinking water and summer storage tanks to overcome the potable drinking water scarcity in the State. The Water Resources Department agreed to continue water releases from the Prakasam Barrage up to April 29, he said. Also, water will be released from the Nagarjuna Sagar Right Main Canal until April 25, he added.
 Jawahar Reddy convened a review meeting with officials concerned about drinking water and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme (MGNREGS)



Speaking on the occasion, Jawahar Reddy instructed that because of the summer season, officials concerned should fill all summer storage tanks in the State. So far, 680 summer storage tanks have been filled by canal water out of the 1,046 tanks, he stated.

at his chamber at the secretariat in Velagapudi on Monday.
 Speaking on the occasion, Jawahar Reddy instructed that because of the summer season, officials concerned should fill all summer storage tanks in the State. So far, 680 summer storage tanks have been filled by canal water out of the 1,046 tanks, he stated. Officials

should take the necessary steps to fill the remaining tanks before April 29 in Krishna, Guntur, NTR, Bapatla, and Eluru districts through the Bandar, Ryves, and Eluru canals, and by April 25 in Gunturu, Palnadu, Prakasam, and Bapatla districts through the Nagarjuna Sagar, he added.
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President Murmu presents Padma awards

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
 Former vice president M Venkaiah Naidu, founder of Sulabh International Bindeshwar Pathak and a host of other prominent persons were conferred with Padma awards by President Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here on Monday.
 Renowned Bharatanatyam dancer Padma Subrahmanyam was conferred with the Padma Vibhushan. Pathak's wife Amola received the award from the President.
 Actor Mithun Chakraborty, singer Usha Uthup, former Uttar Pradesh governor Ram Naik and industrialist Sitaram Jindal were conferred with the Padma Bhushan.
 Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and External Affairs Minister S



Jaishankar, among others, were present at the function.
 Gujarat-based cardiologist Tejas Madhusudan Patel, veteran Marathi film director Dattatray Ambadas

were given the Padma Bhushan. Padma Shri awardees include master carpet weaver from Uttar Pradesh Khalil Ahmad, Madhya Pradesh's folk singer Kaluram Baniya, Bangladeshi singer Rezwana Choudhury Bannya and Chikankari embroidery artist from Uttar Pradesh Naseem Bano.
 Rajbongshi folk singer from West Bengal's Cooch Behar Gita Roy Barman, tennis player Rohan Bopanna, spiritual figure from Tripura Chitta Ranjan Debbarma, banker Kalpana Morparia, philanthropist Kiran Nadar, social worker from Haryana Gurbinder Singh and folk singer from Uttar Pradesh Urmila Srivastava were also given the Padma Shri.
 The Padma Awards ceremony also witnessed some heartwarming moments.
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Huge rally marks Sribharat's nomination filing event

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

M Sribharat, the alliance candidate for the Visakhapatnam Parliament seat, formally filed his nomination here on Monday. The event, marked by a bustling crowd of supporters and party workers, saw Sribharat accompanied by his wife Tejaswini as they embarked on a rally from the election office on MVP Double Road to the Collectorate, where he submitted his nomination papers.



Expressing dissatisfaction with government inaction, Sribharat lamented the delay in critical projects like the metro rail, attributing it to neglect. He advocated for innovative solutions, including exploring avenues to leverage government properties to mitigate funding shortages. Further more, Sribharat urged educated citizens to actively engage in the electoral process, cautioning against the perils of voter apathy leading to the ascent of incompetent candidates. He stressed the significance of exercising the right to vote judiciously to ensure competent leadership and genuine progress for Visakhapatnam.

The event drew a bustling crowd of supporters and party workers, underscoring the enthusiasm surrounding Sribharat's candidacy. Notable figures, including Visakha patnam TDP President Gandhi Babji and MLA contenders of the alliance such as Velagapudi Ramakrishna Babu, Palla Srinivas, and PGVR. Naidu, Vamsikrishna Srinivas, and Vishnu Kumar Raku graced the gathering, further amplifying the momentum. The atmosphere resonated with chants of "Jai Balaya, Jai Jai Telugu Desam, Jai Bharat," as supporters rallied behind the alliance candidate, showcasing unwavering support for his vision.

and traffic congestion, pledging to prioritize addressing these concerns if elected. Sribharat outlined his vision for a "Healthy Visakhapatnam," focusing on combating air pollution, particularly stemming from the port area.

Additionally, he underscored the importance of fulfilling essential needs such as drinking water supply, improving road networks, upgrading the underground drainage system, and resolving traffic bottlenecks.

Botsa Jhansi files papers

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Dr Botsa Jhansi Lakshmi, representing the YSRCP, officially entered the electoral fray for the Visakhapatnam Parliament seat by filing her nominations on Monday. The nomination process took place at the district collectorate office, where Dr. A. Mallikarjuna, the Election Returning Officer, accepted her submissions.



Accompanied by party leaders, including Visakhapatnam Mayor Golagani Hari Venkata

Kumari, State Education Minister Botsa Satyanarayana, Rajya Sabha Members YV Subbareddy, and Industry Minister Gudivada Amarnath, Dr. Jhansi Lakshmi's nomination papers were proposed, showcasing a formidable unity within the ranks of the YSRCP. Addressing the media after

completing the nomination formalities, Dr. Jhansi Lakshmi underscored Chief Minister Jaganmohan Reddy's visionary agenda for the development of Visakhapatnam. She fervently urged the electorate to rally behind the YSRCP, emphasizing the party's unwavering commitment to the city's progress.

Expressing heartfelt gratitude to all supporters and stakeholders, she reiterated the YSRCP's steadfast dedication to the welfare and growth of Visakhapatnam.

Dimili's legacy of political powerhouses

The village has produced several remarkable figures who have etched their names on to the fabric of Andhra Pradesh politics

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Dimili village, nestled in the heart of Andhra Pradesh's Rambilli Mandal, pulsates with a rich history of political activism and unwavering courage. More than just a place on a map, Dimili stands as a testament to the unwavering spirit of its people, who have not only fought for India's Independence but also carved a distinguished path in the State's political landscape.



The village has produced several remarkable figures who have etched their names onto the fabric of Andhra Pradesh politics. Pappala Chalapati Rao stands out as a political stalwart, having secured an impressive four consecutive victories as an MLA under the Telugu Desam Party banner. His illustrious journey extends beyond the State assembly, encompassing a stint as an MP and a seat in the Legislative Council, solidifying his position as an undefeated leader.

Dimili's political significance is further exemplified by Pappala Bapunaidu, who emerged victorious against the Congress party in the erstwhile Madras State Assembly elections, representing the Krishikar Lok Party. Though his political trajectory faced challenges after the formation of Andhra Pradesh, his initial win remains a noteworthy achievement. Nagireddy Satyanarayana adds another layer to Dimili's political legacy. Carving his own path as an independent candidate, he triumphed over Congress contenders in the

1967 elections. While his later attempt under the Janata Party banner proved unsuccessful, his initial victory underscores the village's ability to produce formidable political leaders.

A commemorative plaque adorns the village's high school, immortalising the names of Shishla Ramdas, Kalanatha bhatla Jagannathchayanulu, and other freedom fighters who valiantly fought for Independence.

Interestingly, these political stalwarts share familial ties. Pappala Chalapati Rao's lineage boasts of illustrious predecessors, with Bapunaidu serving as his paternal grandfather and Satyanarayana as his paternal

uncle. But Dimili's legacy extends far beyond the realm of politics. The village takes immense pride in its brave sons who actively participated in India's freedom struggle.

Potable water releases into...

Continued from page 1

Furthermore, he said that officials should take precautionary steps to avoid drinking water scarcity in urban areas. Meanwhile, he directed Municipal Department officials that no urban area should face any potable drinking water problem in the summer season. Officials are concerned about monitoring groundwater levels, he added. Also, department authorities should submit detailed reports to their district collectors, he said.

Later, CS Jawahar Reddy enquired about the Upadha scheme and work. Meanwhile, Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Principal Secretary Sashibhushan Kumar explained that his department employed 22.59 lakh people so far in the state. The number would be increased in the coming days, he added. Rural Water Supply Department Engineer-in-Chief (ENC) Krishna Reddy, Municipal Administration and Urban Development ENC Ananda Rao, NREGA Director China Tataiah, Groundwater Department Director John Satya Raj, and others were present.

Poll campaigns focus on development of neglected Mudasarilova Park

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

With the political battlefield heating up in the Visakhapatnam East Assembly constituency, attention has turned towards the long-neglected Mudasarilova Park, as promises of revitalization dominate the discourse. Leading the charge are contenders MVV Satyanarayana of YSRCP and Velagapudi Ramakrishna of Telugu Desam, both vowing to inject fresh life into the expansive 800-acre park, the largest in Vizag.



Despite assurances spanning years from both the TDP and YSRCP, the park has remained in a state of neglect, with developmental promises left unfulfilled. Proposals from the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) aimed at uplifting the

park have met with silence from successive administrations. Visible signs of decay such as rusty play equipment and crumbling water fountains depict a sombre picture of neglect. While sporadic activity is witnessed during the sacred month of 'Kartika,' foot traffic remains scant on ordinary days. The GVMC envisions a holistic transformation, including playgrounds, walking trails, recre-

ational hubs, and even a boating facility at the Mudasarilova Reservoir. However, financial constraints pose a significant hindrance to these ambitious plans.

Controversy surrounds proposed additions like a ropeway to Kambala Hills, with the YSRCP government cautious of allegations concerning land encroachment. Residents of Vizag express mounting frustration over the neglect of this vital

A recent visit by environmentalist Rajendra Singh highlighted the park's significance as a crucial water source. Singh advocated for its rejuvenation, emphasising the necessity for political determination and community participation to revive the reservoir's waning vitality.

recreational space. Recent endorsements from YSRCP corporators offer a ray of hope, with funds earmarked for playgrounds and civil works in the park. Nevertheless, progress remains sluggish, sparking concerns from environmentalists such as Sohan Hatangadi, who warn against disturbing the park's fragile ecosystem. A recent visit by environmentalist Rajendra Singh highlighted the park's

significance as a crucial water source. Singh advocated for its rejuvenation, emphasising the necessity for political determination and community participation to revive the reservoir's waning vitality. As election fervour reaches its zenith, the destiny of Mudasarilova Park hangs in the balance, awaiting concrete action to fulfil pledges and metamorphose into a thriving urban sanctuary.

Sajjala lacks 'standing' to criticise Chiranjeevi



PNS ■ JAGGAMPETA

TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu remarked on Monday that Government Advisor Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy lacks the stature to criticise Mega Star Chiranjeevi. Naidu criticised YSRCP leaders for resorting to personal attacks on rivals.

Naidu called for unity to remove CM Jagan, accusing him of pursuing destructive and corrupt aims. He highlighted a distressing incident where a woman named Lakshmi from the state cut her thumb in protest, underscoring ongoing hardships.

Addressing a large gathering, Naidu asserted that the state's future lies in the National

Democratic Alliance (NDA) coming to power. He praised NDA candidate Uday Srinivas for creating 20,000 jobs through Tea Time, contrasting with Nehru's 40-year tenure. Naidu condemned YSRCP leaders for using inappropriate language against Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan, calling it shameful. He emphasised that neither TDP nor any party had stooped to discussing family members in the Assembly.

Expressing regret over the state's systemic failures, Naidu claimed victimhood at the hands of CM Jagan. He pledged to create 20 lakh jobs over five years by attracting industries if the NDA wins, urging support for NDA candidates.

Girls outperform...

Continued from page 1

Expressing satisfaction with the substantial improvement in the March 2024 SSC examination results, Commissioner S Suresh Kumar commended the diligent efforts of the teaching faculty. He noted a significant rise in the number of schools achiev-

ing a perfect 100% pass rate, soaring from 933 schools in the previous year to 2,803 schools this year. Director of Public Examinations, D Devananda Reddy, announced the schedule for the SSC Advanced Supplementary Examinations, slated from May 24 to June 03, 2024.

Jagan declares assets...

Continued from page 1

Pulivendula local YSR Congress Party leaders filed the nomination with authorities on behalf of Jagan on Monday. According to the affidavit with the Election Commission, Jagan's wife Bharati Reddy has assets,

both movable and immovable worth Rs 176.30 crore. The YSR Congress chief is contesting from the Pulivendula Assembly constituency. Bharathi also has gold and diamonds of 6.4 kg whose market value is at Rs 5.30 crore.

Naidu 'controlling' Oppn...

Continued from page 1

Moreover, considering the TDP's manoeuvres, there's speculation that Pawan Kalyan might be substituted by the TDP's ticket aspirant SVSN Varma at the eleventh hour. Sajjala noted that Naidu is well aware of his party's diminishing popularity and thus formed alliances with the BJP while maintaining a tacit understanding with the Congress for the elections.

Addressing Chiranjeevi's support for the TDP-BJP-Jana Sena alliance, Sajjala asserted that it wouldn't significantly bolster the opposition's electoral prospects. While acknowledging Chiranjeevi's talent as an actor, he clarified that no disrespect was intended towards him.

Sajjala emphasised the Jana Sainiks' desire for Pawan Kalyan to serve as CM for at least two years. However, Chandrababu initially offered only 24 seats, eventually reducing it to just 21 for JSP, with 10 to 12 candidates from other parties securing Jana Sena tickets. This indicates that only a handful of seats are allocated to actual Jana Sena leaders. Sajjala suggested that Pawan Kalyan might withdraw from the race, citing the need for statewide campaigning.

Highlighting Chandrababu's strategy to retain control over all seats, Sajjala speculated that even in Pithapuram, they might replace Pawan with Varma. He accused Chandrababu of mocking the electoral process by forming alliances with both the BJP and

Congress, alleging that voters would not support him due to his lacklustre governance from 2014-19.

Sajjala contrasted the YSRCP government's transparent and corruption-free governance with the TDP-led alliance's feeble stance, confident in facing the upcoming elections with integrity. He asserted that the TDP has forfeited its moral authority as a political entity, with Naidu disconnected from the people and his leadership marked by frustration.

Sajjala warned against TDP's NRI wing members enticing rural voters with money, urging people to remain vigilant and report such incidents to the police. He also called on YSRCP workers to stay alert regarding TDP NRIs.

President Murmu...

Continued from page 1

One such moment was when noted folk dancer from Assam Drona Bhuyan made Ojapali and Deodhani dance form gestures to express his gratitude as he walked on the red carpet to receive the Padma Shri from the President. While returning to his seat, he went to Modi and touched his feet, a gesture the prime minister reciprocated.

Bhuyan is a prominent Ojapali and Deodhani dancer from Darrang district in Assam, where he has been working to preserve a thousand-year-old tradition, performing stories from epics and Puranas. The prime minister was also seen

interacting with Tripura's spiritual leader Chitta Ranjan Debbarma, who was wearing a saffron attire. Tribal farmer from Assam Sarbeswar Basumatary sat on his knees to express his gratitude before coming to accept the award from the President. Padma Awards, one of the highest civilian honours of the country, are conferred in three categories -- Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.

The awards are given in various disciplines or fields of activities, viz.- art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc.

38 nominations filed in NTR dist, 31 in Krishna

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In the fervour of the forthcoming general elections, a vibrant display of democratic participation unfolded as 38 candidates zealously submitted their nomination papers for the esteemed Vijayawada Lok Sabha Constituency and seven assembly segments within the NTR district on Monday. Additionally, the Machilipatnam Parliamentary Constituency and its accompanying seven assembly constituencies witnessed the filing of around 31 nominations, further underscoring the spirited engagement in the electoral process.

On the fourth day of the nomination filing phase, six candidates vied for the Vijayawada Lok Sabha seat, while three aspirants threw their hats into the ring for the Machilipatnam Parliamentary constituency. Among them, prominent figures such as Dr Simhadri Chandrasekhar Rao of the YSRCP, D Deva Mani from the BSP, and independent candidate G Venka Kedarawara Rao asserted their electoral ambitions by formally filing their nomination papers before the esteemed election officer and Krishna district collector, DK Balaji.

In a ceremonial display of democratic fervour, incumbent MP Kesineni Srinivas, popularly known as Nani, led a procession from the revered Vinayaka Temple to the Collectorate after performing a special Pooja. Accompanied by MLA candidates Samineni Udaya Bhanu, Nallagatla Swamy Dasu, and Sarnala Tirupati Rao, Kesineni Nani submitted his nomination papers alongside other contenders such as Kesineni Swetha, Ch Gangadhar Gandhi of the Pyramid Party of India, Sayyed



Vijayawada Parliamentary Constituency YSRCP candidate Kesineni Srinivas (Nani) taking out a rally as part of the filing of his nominations on Monday.



Vijayawada-East Assembly constituency TDP candidate Gadde Ramamohan taking out a rally as part of the filing of his nominations on Monday.



Vijayawada-Central Assembly constituency YSRCP candidate Velampalli Srinivasa Rao taking out a rally as part of the filing of his nominations on Monday.

Kamurinnisa representing the Navarag Congress party, N Daradha Rami Reddy from the All India Jaihind Party, and Independent candidate D Mallikharjuna. Following suit, 32 additional nominations were tendered for the seven assembly constituencies within the NTR district. Notably, YSRCP candidate and MLA for Vijayawada Central, Velampalli Srinivasa Rao, orchestrated a spirited rally from Sivaji Café at

nominations amidst fervent support from their respective party members and well-wishers.

Meanwhile, in a strategic move, TDP's Vasantha Krishna Prasad, accompanied by MP candidate Kesineni Sivanath and former minister Devineni Uma Maheswara Rao, filed their nominations before the esteemed RO and joint collector Dr P Sampath Kumar at Mylavaram. Krishna Prasad led a spirited rally from Ibrahimpatnam to Mylavaram, showcasing robust support for the party's electoral endeavours. Furthermore, TDP's Tangirala Sowmya of Nandigama and Kolikapati Srinivasa Rao for Tiruvuru submitted their candidatures, underscoring the party's widespread participation across various constituencies.

In the Krishna district, the political landscape saw former minister and sitting MLA Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao, also known as Nani, alongside Kodali Nageswara Rao, asserting their electoral presence by submitting two sets of nomination papers for the Guduvada segment as YSRCP candidates. Similarly, Kagitha Krishna Prasad filed his nomination as a TDP candidate for the Pedana segment, while Perni Vaka Sai Krishna Murthy represented the YSRCP in the Machilipatnam assembly constituency.

Adding to the tapestry of political engagements, Jana Sena Party's Mandali Buddha Prasad-Avanigadda and YSRCP's Kaile Anil Kumar and Gnana Mani threw their hats into the electoral ring for the Pamarru segment, signalling the diverse spectrum of political aspirations amidst the electorate.

Congress releases fresh list of 28 candidates for AP Assembly polls

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The All India Congress Committee (AICC) Central Election Committee (CEC) has released a fresh list of candidates, comprising 28 names, for the forthcoming general elections in the State. The AICC has also made changes in candidates for 10 Assembly constituencies previously announced. This announcement was made by AICC general secretary, KC Venugopal, in New Delhi on Monday. With this, the Congress party has now nominated a total of 142 candidates in the State to vie for assembly seats.

The Congress party is set to enter the State's general elections in alliance with the CPI and CPM. Out of the 175 Assembly constituencies, the CPI and CPM are fielding candidates in 16, leaving the rest to the Congress party. Notable constituencies in this lineup include Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam North, Vijayawada East, Ongole, Kadapa, Srisailem, and Hindupur.

According to the press release, the Congress party has replaced Padi Nagabushan Rao with Ambati Krishna Rao for the Srikakulam assembly constituency. Additionally, candidates for various constituencies have been finalized, including Bobbili-Maripi Vidyaasagar, Gajapathinagar-Dola Srinivas (replacing Gadapu Kurminaidu), Nellimarla-Saragada Ramesh Kumar, Visakhapatnam North-Lakkaraju Rama Rao, Chodavaram-Jagath Srinivas, Elamanchili-Tar Narsing Rao, P Gannavaram (SC)-Kondeti Chittibabu, Achanta-Nekkanti Venkata Satyanarayana,

Vijayawada East-Sunkara Padmasree, and Jaggayapet-Karnati Appa Rao.

Furthermore, the Congress party has selected Manichala Sushil Raja to replace Cilaka Vijay Kumar for the Tadikonda (SC) assembly constituency. The party has also finalized candidates for Repalli-Mopidevi Srinivasa Rao, Tenali-Sk Basheed, Guntur West-Dr Rachakonda John Babu, Chirala-Amanchi Krishna Mohan, Ongole-Turakapalli Naga Lakshmi (replacing Butti Ramesh Babu), Kanigiri-Devarapalli Subba Reddy (replacing Kadiri Bhavani), Kavali-Podalakuru Kalyan, Kovur-Narapreddy Kirankumar Reddy (replacing N Mohan), Sarvepalli-PV Srikanth Reddy (replacing Poola Chandrasekhar), Gudur (SC)-Dr U Ramakrishna Rao (replacing Vemayya Chhillakuri), Sullurpet (SC)-Chandanamudi Shiva (replacing Gadi Tilak Babu), and Venkatagiri-Panta Srinivasulu.

Meanwhile, the party has also announced candidates for Kadapa-Tumman Kalyal Aszal Alikhan, Pulivendula-Mulam Reddy Dhruva Kumar Reddy, Jammalamadugu-Brahmanandareddy Pamula, Proddutur-Shaikh Poola Mohammed Nazeer, Mydukur-Gundlakunta Sridamulu, Allagadda-Baragolla Hussain, Srisailem-Asar Syed Ismail, Banaganapalle-Gutam Pullaiah, Dhone-Garlapati Madhuleti Swami, Adoni-Golla Ramesh, Aluru-Naveen Kishor Arakata, Kalyandurg-P Rambhupal Reddy, Hindupur-Mohamad Hussain Inayathulla (replacing V Nagaraju), and Dharmavaram-Ranga A Aswardha Narayana.

The AICC has also made changes in candidates for 10 Assembly constituencies previously announced. This announcement was made by AICC general secretary, KC Venugopal, in New Delhi on Monday.

Sharmila owes Rs 82 crore to her CM brother Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) chief Y S Sharmila owes over Rs 82 crore to her Chief Minister brother Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, according to her election affidavit in which she has declared that her family owns total assets worth Rs 168 crore.

According to the election affidavit filed by Sharmila, the state Congress chief also owes Rs 19.56 lakh to her sister-in-law and Jagan's wife Bharathi Reddy.

Sharmila filed her nomination on April 20 as the candidate for the Kadapa Lok Sabha constituency. "It has been included that Jagan Mohan Reddy gave a loan to me. For the sake of clarification, in society, any brother should give away his sister's share in the property, because that is her right. It is the responsibility of the brother. "There are some people who will give a pittance (of the rightful share) to the sister and show it as a loan. All our family members know about it," she

had told media people when asked about her affidavit.

The affidavit says that she owns total assets worth nearly Rs 133 crore, and her husband Anil Kumar owns assets worth Rs 49 crore.

Sharmila's husband Anil Kumar also owes nearly Rs 30 crore to his wife, according to the affidavit.

The Congress leader has declared Rs 97 lakh as her income for the assessment year 2023-24.



Medical Health Dept launches campaign in view of heatwave

ORS packets being distributed to public

PNS | SRIKAKULAM

In response to the escalating temperatures of the summer season, District Collector Dr. Manazir Jeelani Samoon issued a cautionary advisory emphasising the potential risks of heat-related illnesses, including fatal consequences. Urging vigilance and precautionary measures, the District Medical Health Department, under the directives of Manazir Jilani Samoon and in collaboration with District Medical Health Officer B Meenakshi, initiated a comprehensive awareness campaign.

A key element of the campaign involves distributing Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) packets through primary healthcare centres, village clinics, Anganwadi centres, Asha workers, and field personnel.

Printed materials like banners, wallpapers, and leaflets will be distributed widely, focusing on sunburn preven-

tion strategies. The campaign has already seen the deployment of these materials in key locations.

Highlighting the dangers of rising temperatures, officials stressed the potential impact on the body's ability to regulate temperature, particularly the hypothalamus. Heat-relat-

Printed materials to be distributed focusing on sunburn prevention strategies

ed illnesses like heatstroke, with symptoms like reduced sweating, high body temperature, and neurological problems, pose a serious threat, especially to vulnerable groups like the elderly, pregnant women, and those with pre-existing health conditions. Residents are advised to

take measures like using umbrellas, wearing light-colored clothing, and staying hydrated. Recommendations include drinking room-temperature water before going outside and opting for hydrating beverages like lemon juice and coconut water. For sunburn emergencies, immediate action is crucial. Move the affected person to a shaded area, cool the body with damp cloths, and administer ORS or salted buttermilk. Importantly, unconscious individuals should not be given fluids and should be rushed to the nearest healthcare centre.

The campaign's success is attributed to the participation of healthcare professionals from various primary health centres and the dedicated efforts of support staff. As the campaign progresses, residents are urged to follow these recommendations and take preventive measures to stay safe from heatstroke and sunburn throughout the summer.



Parvathipuram Manyam district retains top spot in SSC results

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Parvathipuram Manyam district has emerged as the frontrunner in the Andhra Pradesh SSC examinations, securing the first position for the second consecutive year. The impressive results, announced by the government on Monday, showcased a significant improvement in the district's pass rate, rising from 87.47 per cent in the previous year to a commendable 96.37 per cent. A total of 10,064 students passed the exam, with a balanced representation of 4,861 boys and 5,203 girls. Academic performance was strong, with 8,955 students achieving a first division, 854 students securing a second division, and 255 students obtaining a third division.

The district's success is credited to a strategic initiative implemented by the district administration - the "My School My Pride" programme. This programme assigns dedicated adoption officers to each high school, tasked with overseeing and monitoring the educational develop-

ment of students in grades 9 and 10. Notably, District Collector Nishant Kumar himself championed this programme by adopting the DVM Municipal High School of Parvathipuram. Going above and beyond his administrative duties, Kumar took a hands-on approach, personally instructing students in mathematics and evaluating their reading comprehension skills. Project Officers from Seethampeta ITDA and Parvathipuram ITDA actively participated as well, contributing their expertise as Adoption Officers.

These Adoption Officers, including all district officers, played a pivotal role by fostering a supportive learning environment. They conducted regular visits to their assigned schools, with a minimum frequency of twice a week. During these visits, they provided academic guidance and encouragement to the

students. Moreover, they offered valuable career counselling, outlining potential pathways for further education beyond grades 10 and 12, and equipping students with knowledge about prospective career paths.

Expressing immense satisfaction with the district's consecutive year of excellence, Nishant Kumar stated, "This achievement fills me with immense pride, akin to achieving the first rank in the SSC examinations myself. It represents a true testament to the collective effort of our students, teachers, and Adoption Officers." He emphasised the significance of maintaining this momentum and building upon this success in the years to come. District Educational Officer Gara Pagadalamma and other officials extended their heartfelt congratulations to the District Collector on the district's remarkable accomplishment.

Significant improvement in the district's pass rate -- from 87.47 pc in the previous year to 96.37 pc

6 Maoists cadres surrender in Vizag

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Six CPI (Maoist) cadres surrendered before Andhra Pradesh police at Visakhapatnam on Monday. The surrendered Maoists include K Mithilesh (37), B Masa (30), V Beema (32), V Rame (28), M Sukki (27) and D Sony (23), said a police official in a press release.

"Today, six underground cadres of CPI (Maoist) surrendered before DIG, Visakhapatnam Range (Vishal Gunni) and Superintendent of Police Alluri Sitamaraju district (Tuhi Sinha)," said the Andhra Pradesh Police in its post on X.

The surrendered Maoists used to operate in South Bastar and Dandakaranya regions, who carried a bounty ranging from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh and were active for several years.

Mithilesh, Masa, Bheema and Sukki were part of violent

incidents and ambushes on security forces in the border region of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Telangana.

Mithilesh and Masa were also involved in three murders, while Rame and Sony played a role in recruiting youth into the Maoist ranks.

According to police, the surrender of these Maoists will weaken village and pocket level committees, enable peaceful conduct of forthcoming polls, impact Maoist cadres operating in Kistaram, Kanta and Andhra Odisha Border (AOB) formations.

"Gives scope to open up the core areas in Maoist affected regions with developmental activities and implementation of government schemes," the release added.

The DIG and SP appealed to all the underground Maoist cadres to surrender and avail rehabilitation benefits, highlighting that the Maoist ideology does not have any relevance in the present times.

BAPATLA POLICE LAUNCH 'SAMARTH' APP TO SERVE PUBLIC DURING POLLS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Bapatla District SP Vakul Jindal has said that the SAMARTH (Security Arrangement Mapping Analysis Response Tracking Hub) app has been created to perform the duties of the district police more effectively during the elections. The app has been designed in such a way that if any un-

ward incident occurs at the polling centres or other places on the day of the election, the police officers nearby can reach the spot immediately. The SP launched the SAMARTH app developed by the District IT Core Department on Monday.

SP Vakul Jindal said that the mobile app has been created for smart and quick policing to provide effective services to

the people during the general elections. "SAMARTH is a powerful, robust and real-time application for district police officers to track locations of personnel, identify problematic and common polling stations, call the control room directly, and reach the area promptly. The details of the police personnel of the entire district are included in the app," he said.

RINL appeals to stakeholders for assistance amid severe coal crisis

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Atul Bhat, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), the corporate entity of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, has called upon all stakeholders to join forces in tackling a critical coal shortage that threatens the company's operations. Hailing RINL as a pillar of India's industrial strength and a source of national pride, Bhat highlighted the company's longstanding contributions to the nation's development. "From bridges to

railways, highways to high-rise buildings, RINL's high-quality steel has been instrumental in shaping our nation's infrastructure," he said.

Bhat further emphasized RINL's positive impact beyond steel production, particularly in Andhra Pradesh. The company, he explained, has catalyzed social and economic progress, creating jobs, fostering skill development, and implementing community outreach programs that have benefitted countless individuals and families. However, Bhat painted a grim



picture of the current situation. The recent halt in operations at Adani Gangavaram Port

Limited (AGPL) since mid-April has thrown RINL into an unprecedented crisis. This dis-

ruption has severely hampered the company's access to coking coal and limestone, essential raw materials for steel production.

Underlining the urgency of the situation, Bhat stressed that without these critical resources, RINL's ability to operate and contribute to the nation's progress is in jeopardy. In this critical juncture, Bhat made a fervent appeal to citizens, stakeholders, contract workers, and public representatives to unite and help RINL weather this storm. "Timely intervention is crucial to ensure the uninter-

rupted and safe operations of RINL," Bhat emphasized. "This will not only safeguard jobs but also sustain economic growth in the region."

Acknowledging the significant challenges faced by RINL, Bhat nonetheless expressed unwavering faith in the power of collective action. "We are confident that by working together, we can overcome these obstacles," he declared. Bhat concluded his appeal by urging cooperation in facilitating the swift transfer of coking coal and limestone from AGPL to RINL.

Estimated power demand this month is 245 MU: CS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Secretary Dr KS Jawahar Reddy has instructed the officials of the Power Department to take appropriate measures to ensure uninterrupted power supply. He further said that it is expected to be 245 million units this month, 236 million

units in May and 253 million units in June. The daily coal stocks in various power generation companies are being monitored from time to time. The complaints coming from the people regarding the power supply are being solved in time by the respective power distribution companies.

The officials explained that AP Discoms have met 244.888 MU of power demand on April 21 against the total demand met on the same day in 2023 (241.292 MU) registering a growth of 1.49 per cent. They further explained that the peak demand during the day is 12,675 MW at 2.27 PM. On the same day in 2023, it was 12,074 MW, which means a growth of 4.98 per cent. They mentioned that Andhra Pradesh's maximum power demand during the day was 12,675 MU without energy shortage, which is better than Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh which are facing energy shortages.

It is 236 million units in May and 253 million units in June

The day-dreaming Opposition fails to see BJP's growth

There is not even an iota of truth in the Opposition propaganda against the BJP branding it as a purely north Indian party and would not be able to succeed in South India. Recently, at a rally, Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy levelled a meaningless allegation against the BJP accusing it as a party of North India and would give priority only to north Indians. In fact, in Telangana, Revanth Reddy is in trouble.

The impact of the BJP could be seen even in rural areas and urban intelligentsia to the extent of it is likely to capture not only the BRS seats but also the Congress seats too. The BJP has made significant inroads into the former seat held by Revanth in Lok Sabha - Malkajgiri - and it is barging ahead in majority of the LS seats in Telangana. The way the BJP is expanding in AP is surprising.

The BJP's strength can be

gauged by the way its leaders are vying with one another to secure nomination in each constituency. Wherever the BJP leaders go, the people have been extending a grand welcome. The alliance of BJP, TDP and Janasena is sending shivers down the spine of Jaganmohan Reddy's followers. The BCs, Dalits, Adivasis and the down-trodden sections in Telangana and AP are getting veered towards the BJP. How can anyone believe that the Congress, which failed to open its account in 13 states - AP, Gujarat, Rajasthan, HP, Delhi, J and K, Uttarakhand, Dadra Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura - is going to lock horns with the BJP?

Is there any substance in the Opposition criticism that the BJP, which secured more than 50% of the total 224 seats, confined to only some areas? Noted economist Surjeet Bhalla commented that the BJP is spreading in Tamil Nadu and

Is there any substance in the Opposition criticism that the BJP, which secured more than 50% of the total 224 seats in 21 states, confined to only some areas? Noted economist Surjeet Bhalla commented that the BJP is spreading in Tamil Nadu and Kerala and is going to post surprising results.



Y SATYA KUMAR
BJP National Secretary

Kerala and is going to post surprising results. According to him, there is no surprise if the BJP were to get at least 5 seats in Tamil Nadu. It is clearly seen that the main contest in Tamil Nadu is between the DMK and the BJP. The BJP, which failed to open its account in 2019 LS polls, is giving a tight contest to the rival DMK in at least 10 seats. The strength of BJP is increasing with each passing day in Kanyakumari belt and in Ramanadhapuram

and Coimbatore. There is no surprise even if the BJP were to secure a vote share of 25% and Modi becoming familiar with the people of Tamil Nadu by virtue of his extensive visits to the State. He built a bridge between the North and the South right from installing the Sengol of Chola period in new Parliament building to Kasi-Tamil Sangamam and other series of measures Modi had initiated. He assailed the Congress government style of functioning for

success of the BJP in the South would surprise everyone. In the South, people in all constituencies know about the weaker section housing programme, free LPG cylinders for the poor, health insurance, free good grains supply and so on. Majority of the youth from AP, Telangana, TN and Karnataka are veering towards the BJP. Perhaps the Opposition parties have ignored it.

TRULY SPEAKING

is helping the BJP gain deep roots. Surjeet Bhalla predicted that the BJP on its own is likely to get 330-350 seats. He said that the number of seats to the Modi-led BJP will increase by 5-7 per cent this time, compared to the previous tally.

Anyone who notices the development and construction of infrastructural amenities that are under way in the country, implementation of welfare programmes, cash transfer direct into bank accounts of beneficiaries will never believe that the country economy's is very weak. Economists feel that Modi is going to get the highest number of LS seats in elections because of the development of the country's economy. Roads, airports, ports and the largest sea bridge Atal Setu, the largest cable suspension bridge Sudarsansetu, the highest

bridge in world on River Chenab, the longest tunnel in world Atal tunnel were built to create infrastructure worth Rs 33 lakh crore. The per capita income doubled and expressed increased by 400% to cross \$ 750 billion.

The political pundits feels that the welfare measures, Modi's leadership qualities, Ram temple construction in Ayodhya, scrapping of Art 370 regarding special status for J and K, global reputation of India, safeguarding the interests of the Hindus will contribute to the Modi's series of successes.

The CSDS-Lok Neeti survey indicates that 57% of the people are satisfied with the Modi's rule and 50% of the population of the country want Modi is returned to power. Because of this, if anyone is day dreaming of Modi-led NDA would not come to power, they should be included under the list of fools defined by the 5th century linguistic philosopher Bhartruhari.

Vote for welfare schemes of YSRCP: Vijayasai Reddy

PNS ■ NELLORE

YSRCP Lok Sabha candidate V Vijayasai Reddy has appealed to the people to vote for the YSRCP keeping in view the efficient implementation of welfare schemes and he assured of continuing the volunteer system, if voted to power.

Vijayasai Reddy participated in a rally flanked by MLA candidate MD Khaleel Ahmad, here on Monday. He interacted with the voters at various places and knew their opinions.

Speaking on the occasion, Vijayasai Reddy made it clear that the YSRCP adheres to its secular policy and all castes and religions are equal to it. He demanded TDP chief and former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu to make it clear his stand on the 'Uniform Civil Code'. He said that the TDP-JSP-BJP are resorting to opportunistic politics, ignoring the principles and ideals of their parties.

"The Congress party, which filed cases against YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, is indirectly supporting the TDP-JSP-BJP



Vijayasai Reddy made it clear that the YSRCP adheres to its secular policy and all castes and religions are equal to it. He wanted TDP chief Naidu to make his stand CM on the 'UC Code'.

alliance by fielding their candidates in the state," Vijayasai Reddy criticized. He claimed that MLA candidate Khaleel Ahmad and he are representing the weaker sections and the poor while the TDP fielded Vemireddy Prabhakar Reddy and P Narayana who are opulent.

Referring to Chandrababu

as Chief Minister, he added.

Praising Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy for his commitment to the uplift of underprivileged sections and the poor, Vijayasai said that the Chief Minister is working towards the welfare of the poor and implementing many welfare schemes for them. Vijayasai Reddy vowed to protect the volunteer system if voted to power.

Vijayasai wooed the voters to vote for the YSRCP keeping in mind the implementation of many welfare schemes and the development carried out during the last five years.

Vijayasai said that Rs 63 crore had been spent in the third division of Nellore city during the last five years by cash transfer under various welfare schemes. A road through 3, 4 and 5 divisions is being constructed to Myypadu for Rs 9 crore. He said that the construction of drains and footpaths is still pending in the divisions for which the Centre has sanctioned Rs 5 crore. NUDA chairman Mukkala Dwarakanath was among those who took part in the rally.

'YSRCP, TDP regimes failed to complete 'Veligonda' project

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Coming down heavily on the YSRCP leaders' corruption, APCC President YS Sharmila questioned why the incumbent YSRCP and the erstwhile TDP regimes have failed to complete the very important Veligonda project.

Addressing an election meeting at Yerragondapalem on Monday, she recalled that the then Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy started the PS Veligonda project. After his death, the successive Chief Ministers failed to complete the project. If the Veligonda project was completed, it would provide irrigation water to 4.50 lakh acres and supply drinking water to over 15 lakh people. She claimed that 60% of the Veligonda project works had been completed when YS Rajasekhara Reddy was the CM.

"Jagan Mohan Reddy, when he was in the Opposition, criticized the then Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu for the tardy works of the Veligonda project. Jagan Reddy assured of completing the project works in six months if he was voted into power. During the last five



years, the works of the project have been going in a snail phase," she slammed and questioned whether these are the heirs of YS Rajasekhara Reddy.

The YSRCP-headed government is not extending support to the farmers on drip irrigation nor disbursing crop loss compensation, she decried. YS Sharmila pointed out that Jagan Reddy hoodwinked the unemployed by making a hollow promise to fill over 2.35 lakh vacant jobs.

"Now Jagan Mohan Reddy has come to the streets with 'Siddham' bus yatra, I ask him 'Siddham' for what?," she

flayed. She blamed Jagan Reddy for pushing the state into a Rs 8 lakh debt trap. The YSRCP regime is fraught with mafias, scams and corruption, she charged.

Addressing another election meeting at Santhanuthalapadu, she alleged that the local MLA has become a commission king and demanded commissions from granite industries. The APCC president also criticized the YSRCP regime for neglecting the Gundlakamma project. The government failed to carry out repairs to the crest which was washed away two years ago, she regretted.

AP woman chops off thumb in Delhi to highlight ganja-related crimes

PNS ■ GUNTUR

In a bizarre incident, a woman hailing from Guntur district, chopped off

her thumb at India Gate in New Delhi on Monday to highlight the ganja batch crimes.

Kovoor Lakshmi is running Adarsha Mahila mandal. She has been waging a war against the ganja menace in the district for a long time. She complained to the Nallapadu police station, took the issue to the notice of the Human Rights Commission, and lodged a complaint with the Guntur SP, DSP, AP CID and municipal commissioner asking to take action to curb the ganja sale but no action was taken.

She went to New Delhi along with some women to submit a representation to the President of India, the Chief Justice of India and the Prime Minister on the crimes being committed by some gangs under the influence of ganja intoxication.

However, she could not meet them today. Disappointed with this, she went to the India Gate and chopped off her left-hand thumb with a knife. The profusely bleeding Kovuri Lakshmi was shifted to a hospital and was treated.

She told the media that she was not affected by the ganja batch directly. But a large number of youth are being attracted to ganja consumption. The ganja consumption is spoiling the future of youths.

AP to remain hot and humid for next 5 days

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The upcoming days are expected to bring continued hot, humid, and uncomfortable conditions to various parts of North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema, according to the Meteorological Centre's latest update on Monday.

Thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty winds, ranging in speed from 30 to 40 kmph, may occur at isolated locations in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema within the next 24 hours.

Over the next four days, light to moderate rain or thundershowers are forecasted for one or two places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, while Rayalaseema may experience such conditions within the next 24 hours. Dry weather is anticipated to persist in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh for the next seven days, in Rayalaseema from April 23 to 28, and in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh from April 26 to 28.

Main accused in Rs 66 lakh robbery case ends life

PNS ■ ONGOLE

The main accused in the sensational Rs 66 lakh robbery case committed suicide by hanging himself in his house at Kamepallivaripalem village in Santanuthalapadu mandal on Monday.

Police said that the deceased S Mahesh Babu (23) was the main accused in the Rs 66 lakh robbery case. He along with two others broke open the CMS company van, which was carrying currency to replenish in ATMs on April 18, 2024, near Ayush Ayurvedic Hospital on the Kurnool road near here in



Prakasam district in AP. However, the police cracked the case within 24 hours by arresting all the accused and recovered the cash. However, the deceased Mahesh Babu was freed on bail.

He went to his house in the village and allegedly hanged himself from the ceiling fan. He left a suicide note in which he stated that he felt humiliated by the robbery and subsequent arrest ending his life.

The police registered a case and shifted the body to the GGH for postmortem.

Pawan's provocative statements hint at his unstable mental state: Grandhi

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

YSRCP MLA Grandhi Srinivas launched a scathing critique against Jana Sena Chief Pawan Kalyan, highlighting concerns over his language and conduct while criticising the State government. Speaking at a press conference on Monday, Srinivas remarked that Pawan Kalyan's inflammatory rhetoric and provocative remarks suggest a symptom of mental instability.

Drawing a stark comparison, Srinivas likened Pawan's communication style to that of a "rowdy," expressing doubts about Pawan's mental well-being. He went on to suggest that Pawan undergo evaluation in the presence of his actor brother, Chiranjeevi, at a hospital.



Srinivas further lambasted the Jana Sena leader for his lack of consistent political principles, likening him to a colour-changing chameleon. He pointed out the irony of the party fielding a candidate who had previously criticized Pawan Kalyan.

In response to Chiranjeevi's support for the TDP-led alliance, the YSRCP legislator accused the actor-turned-politician of betraying the trust of his followers by trading his Praja

Rajyam party to Congress for a ministerial position in the former government. Srinivas asserted that Chiranjeevi's allegiance lies solely with commercial interests, alleging that his support for the Jana Sena Party is merely a ploy to promote his upcoming film.

Regarding the development of the Bhimavaram assembly constituency, Srinivas clarified that substantial progress has been made between 2019 and 2024. He highlighted the acquisition of six acres of land for a compound yard, with farmers receiving fair compensation under the YSRCP administration. Srinivas expressed doubt that Anji Babu, the Jana Sena candidate, would contribute meaningfully to the constituency's development.

Officials told to keep vigil on poll expenditure

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Election Observer Neena Nigam directed the officials to lay a strict vigil on the expenditure of the candidates' contesting in the elections.

She held a meeting with the coordination committee, nodal officer and officials and reviewed the auditing of expenditure of candidates here on Monday. She directed the officials concerned to intensify checking of vehicles, and at the same time, ensure that the common men will suffer.

The election staff should act impartially in registering the expenses in the accounts of the candidates, she told them. Candidates of recognized political parties, registered and unrecognized political parties and independent candidates have been advised to give comprehensive attention to their campaign expenses, distribution of gifts and other expenses.

She said that the candidates should be aware of the expenditure limit and they should be made aware of



them in this regard, adding that special attention should be paid to suspicious cash transactions from banks, large transactions and cash deposits. The officials should keep a constant vigil on the sale of liquor and the transportation of goods.

She instructed the officials to keep a strict vigil on huge transactions of money across the district. The special teams should observe the election campaign of the

candidate to assess the spending of money.

Election Observer Neena Nigam also inquired about the positive and negative stories and paid news being circulated in magazines, channels and on social media. She underlined the need for intensive vehicle checking by flying squads static surveillance teams and excise department teams to prevent the transportation of liquor, cash and other articles. She told the officials to monitor the online cash transfer but at the same time, she instructed them not to conduct checking for GST purposes.

Collector Sumit Kumar explained to the expenditure observer the election process being carried out in the district and the formation of special teams. SP Ajit Vajendla explained to Neena Nigam the security setting up of check posts at the border and the details of gold, liquor and ganja which have been seized in the district so far. Later the Election Observer visited the Integrated Command Control Centre and MCMC Centre flanked by the Collector.

BJLP leader Maheshwar predicts 'August crisis' in TG

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharatiya Janata Legislature Party (BJLP) leader Alleti Maheshwar Reddy predicted an 'August crisis' in Telangana politics. He said that the Supreme Court will deliver its verdict on Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's vote-for-note case on July 24.

"A crisis will arise in August if the Supreme Court convicts Revanth. That is why Revanth said on Sunday that Komatireddy Venkat Reddy is fully eligible to become the Chief Minister. Revanth might have announced Komatireddy Venkat Reddy's name as the CM thinking that Venkat is his man. Revanth might have said that Venkat is fully eligible to be the CM thinking that Venkat will become the Chief Minister after he goes to jail. However, the Congress leadership will decide who will be the Chief Minister. I don't know how many leaders Revanth has said is eligible to become the Chief Minister. He has been saying 'you are the next CM' to Congress leaders wherever he goes," Maheshwar said.

He said that Revanth has lost the confidence of the people and that is why he said that he will implement the loan waiver scheme by August 15 and took a pledge before gods. People would have believed Revanth if had said that he would waive loans in

June. But people are getting doubts about Revanth as he said that he will implement the loan waiver scheme in August, Maheshwar pointed out.

He said that Komatireddy Venkat Reddy could be in touch with KCR as KCR had said that he is in touch with 20 Congress MLAs.

Maheshwar said that many scams are taking place under Congress rule. Farmers are facing severe problems. They are facing water scarcity on the one side and on the other side they are facing problems as the government is not procuring paddy. The government is not procuring rain-soaked paddy and it is not giving bonuses to paddy farmers, he said.

He said that he is sending a letter to the CM regarding the assurances given to farmers. The government needs Rs 1 lakh crore to fulfil the assurances it gave to farmers. How will the government raise that money? Women are postponing marriages thinking that they will get 10 grams of gold and Kalyana Laxmi, he said.

"What happened to scooters for girl students? We will expose all the false assurances of the Congress. Will Revanth fulfil all these assurances by August or will he quit? Revanth is making use of gods for politics. Nobody knows whether Revanth will be the CM till August or not," Maheshwar said.



INDIA CORNER

NIA raids 9 locations in Kashmir in terror conspiracy case

The National Investigation Agency on Monday carried out raids at nine locations in Kashmir, including Srinagar, in a terror conspiracy case, officials said here. The case relates to a terror conspiracy involving plans by terrorist organisations and their newly floated offshoots to unleash violence in Jammu and Kashmir by using sticky bombs, improvised explosive devices and small arms, they said. "In a massive crackdown in the Jammu and Kashmir terror conspiracy case involving Pakistan-backed banned terrorist organisations and their offshoots, the NIA raided nine locations across Kashmir," a spokesman of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) said. He said digital devices containing large volumes of incriminating data and documents were seized during the raids conducted on the premises of hybrid terrorists and Overground Workers (OGWs) linked to the newly formed offshoots and affiliates of proscribed outfits.



Defection by MLAs major poll issue in Himachal Pradesh: Sukhu

The Congress is contesting elections to save democracy in Himachal Pradesh, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said on Monday, stressing that the defection by its six MLAs will be a major issue in the polls. Six Congress rebels, who were later disqualified and are now contesting on BJP ticket in the assembly bypolls, and three independents had voted in favour of the BJP nominee Harsh Mahajan in the Rajya Sabha elections held on February 27. "Elections are being held, it is a festival of democracy and in Himachal Pradesh, we are contesting elections to save democracy. We are appealing to the general public why the leaders they elected for five years voted in favour of the BJP candidate in Rajya Sabha polls in 14 months and then got disqualified," Suku said in Kangra district. The six Congress MLAs -- Rajinder Rana (Sujaipur), Sudhir Sharma (Dharamshala), Ravi Thakur (Lahaul and Spiti).



Chithirai fest: Thousands take part in car festival with fanfare

Thousands of devotees took part in the car festival here on Monday, the 11th day of the popular, annual Chithirai fest. With devotees raising spiritual slogans, the chariots of Goddess Meenakshi and Lord Sundareswarar (Lord Shiva) were taken around the Masi streets as per tradition and were taken back to the temple premises. A highlight of the annual Chithirai festival, Lord Kallazhagar (Lord Vishnu) entering the Vaigai river is scheduled to be held on the morning of April 23. On Sunday, the celestial wedding of Lord Sundareswarar and Goddess Meenakshi was held amid fanfare, the 10th day of the annual 13-day long festival. As per practice, women who took part in the event replaced their Thaali (Mangalsutra) with a new one. The Chithirai festival, one of the identities of this ancient southern city of Tamil Nadu, began on April 12 with hoisting of the traditional flag on the premises of Meenakshi temple.



SHAH WARNS NAXALS

Surrender or will be rooted out

PNS ■ RAIPUR

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday asserted the Narendra Modi government has eliminated terrorism from the country as he issued a stern warning to Naxalites in Chhattisgarh, asking them to surrender or else they will be rooted out from the state in two years.



He said in the last four months alone, 90 Naxalites were neutralised in Chhattisgarh under the BJP government, comments coming after 29 Maoists were gunned down by security forces in an encounter in Kanker, which is part of the Bastar region, on April 16.

Addressing an election rally in Kanker town, around 150km away from the encounter site, four days ahead of the second round of Lok Sabha polls, Shah took on the Congress and asked party MP Rahul Gandhi to explain what four generations of his family have done for the poor in Chhattisgarh when they were in power. The BJP stalwart maintained Congress leaders did not attend the January 22 consecration of Lord Ram idol at the Ayodhya temple due to vote bank politics and referred to then-PM Manmohan Singh's statement that "minorities have first right to India's resources" to hit out at the rival party.

The Union minister hailed PM Narendra Modi, saying he has brought a huge trans-

formation in the country in the last two years and has outlined an "agenda for the next 25 years".

"Narendra Modi ji has eliminated terrorism from the country, while Naxalism is on the verge of eradication. Mahadev app brand Bhopush Baghel government did not take action against Naxalites," Shah said. He was referring to the previous Congress rule and the alleged involvement of former CM Baghel in the Mahadev betting app scam.

Highlighting the state BJP government's success in tacking Naxal insurgency after assuming office in December, Shah pointed out that in the last four months, 90 Naxalites were neutralised in the state.

While 123 Naxalites were arrested, 250 others surrendered (during this period), he added.

Under Modi's leadership, Naxalism has been eliminated from states like Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Bihar, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh, the Home Minister said.

"Elect Modi ji for a third term and the menace (of Naxalism) will be rooted out from Chhattisgarh in two years," he asserted. "As long as there is Naxalism, tribal brothers and sisters will not have access to electricity, schools, ration shops and hospitals. I would like to tell them (Naxalites) to surrender, otherwise the result of the fight is certain. We will finish them. We will root out them from Chhattisgarh," he said.

The Home Minister hit out at the Congress, saying the grand old party believes minorities have the first right over the country's resources, while the BJP firmly feels this right belongs to the poor, adivasis, Dalits and backward.

Recently, the Congress party got offended when the PM spoke about its manifesto and asked why it wanted to conduct a survey of properties of all citizens, the senior BJP leader said.

"I want to ask the Congress whether its manifesto mentions a survey or not? Rahul baba should make it clear. Their PM Manmohan Singh had said (in 2006) the minority has first right over the resources not adivasis and Dalits. But we say the poor, adivasi, Dalit and backward have first right to over the resources of the country."

Constitute medical board to examine Kejrival: Court

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Monday directed the AIIMS to constitute a medical board to examine Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to determine whether he needs insulin to control his blood sugar levels and said the home-cooked food that the politician was consuming was different from the diet chart prepared by his doctor.

Special Judge for CBI and ED cases Kavari Baweja passed the order while declining Kejriwal's plea for video consultation with his doctor in the presence of his wife.

Kejriwal had alleged he was not being administered insulin in jail leading to "alarming" rise in his blood sugar levels.

The ED had claimed on Friday the AAP leader was consuming sugar-laden food like mangoes and sweets on a regular basis to create grounds for medical bail.

2G spectrum: Centre moves SC seeking change in verdict

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than 12 years after it was delivered, the Centre on Monday moved the Supreme Court seeking modification of its verdict in the 2G spectrum case which said the State was duty bound to adopt the auction route while transferring or alienating the country's natural resources.

In its judgement delivered on February 2, 2012, the apex court had quashed 2G spectrum licences given to various firms during the tenure of A Raja as the telecom minister in January 2008.

On Monday, Attorney General R Venkataramani, appearing for the Centre, mentioned an interim application before a bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice J B Pardiwala.

While seeking urgent listing of the application, the top law officer told the bench that the plea seeks modification of the 2012 verdict as the Centre wanted to grant 2G spectrum



licences in some cases. Advocate Prashant Bhusan, who appeared for NGO Centre for Public Interest Litigation which was one of the petitioners on whose plea the February 2012 verdict was delivered, opposed the application and said the issue has been well-settled by the apex court in its judgement that auction is the only mode for granting licences for natural resources like spectrum, the radio frequencies allocated to the mobile phone industry for communication over the airwaves.

"We will see, you please move an e-mail," the CJI told Venkataramani.

In its 2012 judgement, the apex court had said, "When it comes to alienation of scarce natural resources like spectrum etc, it is the burden of the State to ensure that a non-discriminatory method is adopted for distribution and alienation, which would necessarily result in protection of national/public interest".

The top court had said in its view, a duly publicised auction conducted fairly and impartially was perhaps the best method for discharging this burden. "In other words, while transferring or alienating the natural resources, the State is duty bound to adopt the method of auction by giving wide publicity so that all eligible persons can participate in the process," it had said. On March 22 this year, the Delhi High Court had admitted a CBI appeal against the acquittal of Raja and 16 others in the 2G spectrum allocation case, paving the way for hearing the matter six years after the plea was filed by the agency.

QUADRUPLE MURDER CRACKED

Son gave Rs 65 lakh 'supari' to eliminate parents, brother

PNS ■ GADAG (KARNATAKA)

The Gadag police have cracked the mystery behind four murders that took place on April 19, with the arrest of eight people, including kingpin Vinayak Bakale, who allegedly gave a contract Rs 65 lakh contract to assassins to eliminate his parents and brother Karthik Bakale.



The plot went awry and the parents survived. However, Karthik Bakale and the family's close relatives were hacked to death in the early hours of April 19.

Karthik (27), Parashuram Hadimani (55), Lakshmi Hadimani (45) and Akanksha Hadimani (16) were found murdered at Dasara Oni in Gadag, police said.

Karthik was the son of BJP leader Prakash Bakale and Sunanda Bakale, who is the vice-president of Gadag-Betageri City Municipal Council.

Police sources said Karthik's

marriage had been fixed, which the Hadimanis had come to attend.

Since the jewellery, valuables and cash were intact in the house, police doubted that the motive was not robbery but something else, police sources said.

They said that a property dispute among the siblings was suspected to be the reason behind the murder as Prakash was to give all his properties to Karthik, which irked Vinayak, who allegedly decided to wipe out his parents and brother.

On Monday, Inspector

General of Police (North Zone) Vikas Kumar told reporters that they had arrested Vinayak Prakash Bakale (35), Fayroz Khazi (29), Jishan Khazi (24), all from Gadag; twin brothers Sahil Ashfaq Khazi (19), Sohail Ashfaq Khazi (19), Sultan Jilani Sheikh (23), Mahesh Jagannath Salunke (21) and Waheed Liyaqat Bepari (21), all from Miraj in Sangli district of Maharashtra.

Vinayak had given a Rs 65 lakh contract to Fayroz, who arranged vehicles and weapons and carried out surveillance, Kumar said.

The assailants broke into the house thinking that only three people were present, the IGP said, adding that the targets were Vinayak's parents and brother.

The agreement between Vinayak and the contract killers was such that the proceeds of the loot after killing the trio would belong to the contract killers.

Kerala CM poses questions to Rahul over CAA

PNS ■ KANNUR (KERALA)

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Monday continued to accuse the Congress of not being part of anti-CAA agitations in the country and sought to know from senior leader Rahul Gandhi whether the national leadership had barred its state unit from participating in the protests.

He alleged that the party's top brass had asked the state unit to withdraw from the anti-CAA agitations.

"This is just our guess. It may be right or wrong. If we are wrong, they (Congress) can tell that. Rahul Gandhi is touring Kerala...He can tell that what you (CM) have said is not fact," Vijayan said.

Gandhi was not saying anything against it, as it is a fact, the chief minister alleged.

As Lok Sabha polls are just four days away in the state, Vijayan was addressing an election meeting in Mattannur, in this northern district.

Targeting Gandhi, the Left veteran further said the Congress leader was carrying out a tour across the country when the CAA came out.

Though he had reacted to all the problems being faced by the country and the world, he did not respond to the contentious law, Vijayan alleged.

The CM also claimed that Gandhi could not raise his voice on such issues because of the presence of leaders with a Sangh-



Parivar mindset with him.

Lashing out at the BJP government at the Centre, he said no civilised nation in the world has made religion the basis of citizenship.

He alleged that when everyone came forward protesting against the CAA and to safe-

guard secularism, the Congress did not raise any significant protests against the BJP government's move.

"No civilised nation has decided citizenship on the basis of religion. No country divides refugees on the lines of their religion," Vijayan said.

India is making religion the basis for deciding citizenship. It is destroying secular values, he charged.

While several national leaders, including those from Communist parties, were arrested for protesting against the CAA in New Delhi years ago, no Congress leaders were among them, Vijayan alleged.

The CM accused the 18 Congress-led UDF MPs from

the state of attending a feast hosted by the party president on the day when the national capital witnessed the fiercest agitation against the CAA.

Vijayan further asked why the Congress, which is claimed to be a secular party, cannot oppose the RSS agenda being implemented in the country.

The LDF government in the state has been adopting a strong stand against dividing people on the lines of religion, he said.

The Marxist veteran also claimed that the southern state is witnessing a pro-LDF wave during the election campaign and that the ruling front would achieve a remarkable success in the Lok Sabha elections to be held on April 26.

Constantly attacking Congress not a wise decision: Pawar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Nationalist Congress Party (SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Monday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's constant attack on the Congress was not a "wise decision" as that party is not in power.

Speaking to Marathi news channel Zee 24 Taas in Amravati, he further said the PM keeps criticising opposition parties but does not discuss plans of his government or the BJP for the future.

"The Congress party has not been in power for some time. But Modi keeps attacking it and calling it a wall



obstructing the development of the country. It is not a wise decision. Just because some parties are in the opposition it does not mean they should not be taken into confidence on key issues," Pawar said.

Asked about Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister

Devendra Fadnavis' recent statement that he returned to power after splitting two parties, a reference to the splits in the Nationalist Congress Party and the Shiv Sena, Pawar said he was thankful that the senior BJP leader had himself revealed the truth.

"It is not a decent strategy to lure people, create a situation that would split a party, then describe it as revenge, or influence some people to make certain decisions. These cannot be called civil political moves. We had an image of Fadnavis as a decent politician, but now his true face has emerged," Pawar asserted.

No major concern regarding heat wave for 2nd phase of LS polls

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

There is "no major concern" regarding heat wave for the second phase of Lok Sabha polls to be held on April 26, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) told the Election Commission on Monday.

Director General, IMD, Mrutunjay Mohapatra also told the poll panel that the weather forecast is "normal" for the 13 states and Union Territories going to polls in phase two, according to an official statement.

Amid concerns over rising temperature, the commission on Monday held a meeting with the agencies concerned to understand the developing

weather situation and discuss measures to mitigate any risk due to hot weather conditions during the Lok Sabha polling period.

The elections are being held in seven phases beginning April 19 and ending June 1.

The meeting also comes amid concerns that heat wave could affect voter turnout.

It was decided at the meeting that a task force comprising officials from EC, IMD, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the Union health ministry will review the impact of heat wave and humidity five days before each polling phase for any "concerning developments" and mitigation measures required, the statement said.

'Father's diet can affect anxiety, metabolism of kin'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The father's diet can affect the anxiety levels in their sons and the metabolism of their daughters before they are even conceived, according to new research conducted in mice.

While a mouse father's diet is known to impact his and his children's reproductive health, it was not yet known if differing its macronutrient composition of proteins, fats and carbohydrates could have differing impacts on children's health, researchers said.

The team of scientists, co-led by the University of Sydney, Australia, found that male mice fed with diets low on proteins and high on carbohydrates are more likely to have male offspring with higher levels of anxiety.

They also found that male mice fed with high-fat diets are more likely to have daughters with higher body fat and more biological indicators of metabolic disease.

The findings, published in the Nature Communications journal, showed that in mice,



the father can shape their children's health through their diets.

"It is extraordinary that by (adjusting proportions) of pro-

tein, fat and carbs in the father's diet we could influence specific features of his sons and daughters health and behaviour. There is some important biology at play here," said Stephen Simpson from the University of Sydney and the study's co-senior author.

For the study, the researchers fed male mice one of 10 diets differing in the amount of protein, fats and carbohydrates, and then allowed them to mate with females reared on a standard diet. They then analysed the behaviour and physiology

of the resulting offspring.

The team also found that males consuming a low-protein diet also ate more food overall. However, macronutrient composition, along with calories, were found to influence the mice's offspring's health.

"Our study shows that it's not just eating too much or too little, but the composition of the diet that can have an impact on future children," said Romain Barrès, from the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, and the study's co-senior author.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Cold comfort

All parties must own responsibility for the low voter turnout and work to reverse it

In the ongoing elections, a significant cause for concern has emerged with the low voter turnout, particularly in the Hindi heartland. This trend has set off alarm bells among political parties, forcing them to delve deeper into understanding the root causes of this apathy and strategise effectively to boost participation in the remaining phases. The Hindi heartland holds immense electoral significance. However, the voter turnout here was dishearteningly low on April 19. The polling of over 62 per cent, as per the Election Commission of India's figure, is lower compared to the first phase of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, when it stood at 69.43 per cent. The trend is not localised as voting was held in 102 Lok Sabha seats across 21 States and UTs. Was it the summer heat or other pressing engagements? If it is about the weather, it is understandable but if it is political disillusionment, then it is a matter of grave concern. It could well also be logistical challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, long queues at polling booths and difficulties in accessing polling stations. Despite several efforts by the EC, voters in large numbers chose not to go out to cast their vote. We have had several elections during summers where voters thronged polling stations; so maybe, and it is yet to be validated, voters are losing interest in the political system. Many voters do feel disconnected from the political process, perceiving that their votes do not significantly impact policymaking or address their concerns. This disenchantment often stems from the failure of political parties to fulfil their promises, leading to a sense of betrayal among the electorate. Traditionally, voting in the urban areas has always been low but now even voters in rural areas are giving it a pass. In such areas, where transportation facilities may be limited, reaching the polling booths becomes a daunting task for many individuals, particularly the elderly and physically challenged. Another aspect of voting in the first phase was zero voting in six districts of Nagaland. It is unprecedented and shocking, to say the least. It might have been a reaction of voters to what happened in Manipur or a call by disrupting elements; either way, it does not augur well for the country. We can agree on a few things which could have resulted in the voter's cold shoulder. Social and economic factors play a significant role in voter apathy. A large section of the population, especially in rural areas, faces issues like poverty, illiteracy and unemployment, which overshadow their engagement with the electoral process. Furthermore, the prevalence of identity politics and polarisation in the Hindi heartland may have contributed to a sense of disillusionment among voters. Divisive narratives propagated by certain political entities often sow seeds of distrust and alienation among communities, discouraging them from participating in the electoral process. Political parties must prioritise engaging with the electorate beyond election cycles, fostering dialogue and building trust through consistent communication and transparent governance.



The next phase of polling is scheduled for April 26, when the constituencies of Amroha, Meerut, Baghpat, Ghaziabad, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Bulandshahr (reserved), Aligarh, Meerut and Mathura would go to the hustings. On these seats, Bahujan Samajwadi Party (BSP) leader and former Chief Minister Mayawati has trumpeted the old issue of a separate State for West UP, probably to remain electorally relevant in the times to come. Choosing the birth anniversary day of the man credited with the drafting of the Constitution, Dr BR Ambedkar, Mayawati made a major announcement at a rally in Muzaffarnagar of according Statehood to western UP and also establishing a bench of the Allahabad High Court in the region, if voted to power at the Centre. This has once again brought the issue of Harit Pradesh, the name envisioned for western UP by late Chowdhary Ajit Singh, the erstwhile leader of the Rashtriya Lok Dal and heir of Chowdhary Charan Singh, the tallest leader of West UP.

Maya sees political grass greener in Harit Pradesh



SIDHARTH MISHRA

BSP leader and former Chief Minister Mayawati has once again broached the issue of statehood for western UP, probably to remain electorally relevant in the days ahead



The supporters of the formation of Harit Pradesh claim that it was Dr Ambedkar who had proposed the division of Uttar Pradesh into three separate States — Western, Central and Eastern — for better governance. In 1955, Dr Ambedkar proposed the idea of splitting Uttar Pradesh into three States through his book, 'Thoughts on Linguistic States'. He suggested the creation of three States, with Meerut as the capital of the Western Region, Allahabad as the capital of the Eastern Region and Kanpur as the capital of the Central region. This is what the BSP had in mind while proposing the split in 2011. During her reign as the Chief Minister, Mayawati had backed a resolution which got passed in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly for breaking the State into four smaller States — West, Central, East and Bundelkhand. One part of the undivided Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, consisting of hill districts, had already been carved out in 2000. However, unlike Dr Ambedkar's thought, Mayawati's push is based on the arithmetic of electoral politics. When she proposes a separate State for western Uttar Pradesh, she has in mind the

substantial Dalit and Muslim population inhabiting the region. It was Mayawati's D-M (Dalit-Muslim) combination which had defeated the Samajwadi Party's M-Y (Muslim-Yadav) formation to wrest power in Uttar Pradesh in 2007. Working as a reporter for this publication in the early part of this century, one still remembers how the dominating community of the Jats and other upper castes, by the way of landholding rights, managed to keep the Dalits at bay from electoral process. The late Editor of the paper, Dr Chandan Mitra, had once given a headline to this reporter's story which said, 'Fair polls, free of Dalits'. It was only after the rise of the BSP, especially from the 2004 Lok Sabha election onwards, that the Dalit population of western UP got involved in the process not just in word but also in spirit. This is the time which also saw the emergence of D-M, which changed the electoral calculus of the State. This area has also seen the rise in the Muslim population. As per the 2011 Census, the total population of western Uttar Pradesh is 71,217,132, out of which 72.29 per cent is Hindu and 26.21 per cent is Muslim. The population in the Khadiaboli region is 29,669,035 (Hindus 59.19 per cent and Muslims 39.17 per cent) and the population of the Braj region is 29,754,755 (Hindus 82.78 per cent and Muslims 16 per cent). The districts speaking Khadiaboli, a slightly colloquial version of the Hindi language, include Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur, Shamli, Baghpat, Ghaziabad, Meerut, Hapur, Amroha, Bijnor, some parts of Moradabad, Gautam Buddha Nagar and Bulandshahr. The Braj-speaking districts include Mathura, Hathras, Agra, Aligarh, Etah and some parts of Gautam Buddha Nagar, Bulandshahr, Etawah and Mainpuri. The Muslim population share in the eight districts of Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor, Moradabad, Rampur, Jyotiba Phule Nagar, Meerut and Bareilly has increased from 29.93 per cent in 1951 to 40.43 per cent in 2011. This has made the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) raise the demand for the population control Bill, fearing a loss for space for the Hindu groups. No wonder there is a lot more than meets the eye than the mere explanation behind the demand for a separate State for good governance. It has more to do with politics than people. (The writer is a political analyst and president, Centre for Reforms, Development & Justice; views are personal.)



IN 1955, DR AMBEDKAR PROPOSED THE IDEA OF SPLITTING UTTAR PRADESH INTO THREE STATES. HE SUGGESTED MEERUT AS THE CAPITAL OF THE WESTERN REGION, ALLAHABAD AS THE CAPITAL OF THE EASTERN REGION AND KANPUR AS THE CAPITAL OF THE CENTRAL REGION

PICTALK



People purchase clay pots from a roadside shop during the summer season, in Agra

PTI

From tears to laughter: Navigating life's punchlines



SANJAY CHANDRA

From childhood taunts to adult jests, the journey of one man's relationship with humour is a winding road filled with laughter and tears

I turned into an overweight boy very early in my life. I still remember an incident from my childhood. My younger brother called me 'Fatsy' in front of a couple of house helps, who burst out laughing. I rushed inside the house in tears. Even now, at a more mature age, I still seethe at one-liners directed at me. More recently, my daughters attended a show by a famous stand-up comedian. My ignorance led me to find out more about the term. A stand-up comedian is a person, standing or sitting on stage, delivering tongue-in-cheek one-liners to an appreciative audience. Over a century, it has evolved into taking a punch at whatever the actor considers is wrong in the community - religion, beliefs, taboos and yes, the politician — that eternal punching bag. There are so many anecdotes that one would lose count of politicians trading barbs at others of their ilk. We have heard of Disraeli insulting a rival politician, if Gladstone fell into the Thames, that would be a misfortune and if anybody



pulled him out, that I suppose, would be a calamity. This one is beautiful when Lady Astor said to Churchill, If you were my husband, I'd poison your tea; to which Churchill's reply was a classic, Madam, if you were my wife, I'd drink it. Or the other one about Churchill, who quipped when berated by Bessie Braddock for being drunk, My dear, you are ugly, but tomorrow I shall be sober and you will still be ugly. Or this one about one of our politicians who wanted to make the roads in his State as smooth as the cheeks of a heyday film star — though he was probably only trying to pay a compliment. Many of these might be considered sexist at the very least. Recently, I sat with a few other authors addressing a group of young students during a literature festival. An erudite lady had an immediate connection with the appreciative audience as she spoke about her love for the Korean TV series — particularly her mention of the term Oppa. The students burst into loud laughter when one of their fellow authors wanted to know the meaning of the term. I only smiled knowingly, as if I understood the joke, not wanting to display my ignorance in public. We tend to lose our funny bone when humorous barbs, at least from the viewpoint of the narrator, are directed at us. At the same time, we do not hesitate to laugh, or smile, or even smirk — as I did, at someone else's discomfiture, when it suits us. Life would be far simpler if only we make as much effort in developing our funny bones, as we do in discussing international affairs, politics, religion and much more. Viktor Frankl, Austrian psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor, summed it up almost a century earlier, The attempt to develop a sense of humour and to see things in a humorous light is some kind of a trick learned while mastering the art of living. (The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

UNIFIED STRENGTH

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Astroturf | Mother symbolises convergence all nature driven energies", published on April 21, this is my response. The narrative delves into profound lessons encapsulated in the mythological portrayal of the Mother Goddess, particularly Durga, reflecting on the interplay of ego, collective responsibility and existential challenges. The symbolism of Durga's ten arms, each wielding a specific weapon offered by a Devata, signifies a unified approach to confront diverse energies and challenges emanating from all directions of existence. The analogy of the Mother's multifaceted role, akin to a nurturing mother tending to her child with selfless devotion, underscores the judicious and selfless application of power (Shakti) for the greater good. This portrayal transcends gender stereotypes, emphasising the universal essence of nurturing and protection inherent in the feminine principle. Moreover, the cyclical nature of creation and dissolution, mirrored in the evolution and devolution of nature-driven energies, underscores the perpetual flux of existence. The narrative urges a holistic understanding of existence, emphasising the imperative of harmonising individual virtues with collective existential needs for sustainable progress and evolution. Aditya Banerjee | Kolkata

A GLIMPSE OF RURAL DYNAMICS

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Govt schemes are transforming lives in rural Rajasthan", published on April 22, this is my response. The story of Loyara village in Udaipur district encapsulates the interplay of tradition and modernity, highlighting both progress and persistent challenges. Amba Bai's account resonates with the vital role of Government schemes in sustaining livelihoods, particularly for the elderly and economically vulnerable. The transition towards concrete structures mirrors urban influence, yet economic disparities persist, especially among

Celebrating literary legacies



Apropos the news article, "Celebrating World Book and Copyright Day", published on April 22, this is my response. Books serve as timeless vessels of human thought, bridging generations and cultures.

They embody the essence of our collective wisdom, offering insights into bygone eras while inspiring us to chart new territories of imagination. In today's digital age, they face both unprecedented opportunities and challenges. While e-books and digital formats enrich reading experiences, they also test the boundaries of copyright protection.

World Book and Copyright Day, observed on April 23rd, prompts reflection on the enduring value of literature and the necessity of upholding intellectual property rights. This year's theme, "Read Your Way," underscores the joy of reading while advocating for respect towards authors and publishers. As we commemorate this day, let's renew our dedication to safeguarding literary legacies, ensuring that the flame of creativity continues to illuminate our collective path forward.

Sangeeta Reddy | Hyderabad

Scheduled Tribes. Education emerges as a beacon of change, empowering youth to navigate bureaucratic hurdles and advocate for their rights. However, gaps in access to essential services persist, as seen in Mangi Lal and Tulsiram's plight. Loyara's narrative embodies the complex tapestry of rural India, where strides in education and awareness intersect with enduring economic constraints. As the village evolves, bridging these gaps remains imperative for inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Pooja Khanna | Bengaluru

NAVIGATING FOMO

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Understanding the impact of FOMO", published on April 22, this is my response. In a world fueled by constant connectivity, the fear of missing out (FOMO) has become a prevalent concern, particularly among the younger generation. Social media platforms play a central role, in shaping perceptions and fueling comparisons. It's striking how curated content can

trigger feelings of inadequacy, anxiety and loneliness. To counteract this, fostering digital literacy and promoting healthy social media habits is crucial. Encouraging offline connections and experiences, like sports or art, offers a reprieve from the digital noise. Setting boundaries for screen time and embracing mindfulness practices can cultivate gratitude and positive thinking.

Moreover, prioritising quality over quantity in social connections reinforces the importance of genuine interactions. Creating inclusive online communities emphasises authenticity and empathy, countering the superficiality often found on social platforms. Ultimately, combating FOMO requires self-love and the courage to prioritise personal well-being over digital validation. In a hyper-connected world, finding solace in one's thoughts is a brave endeavour worth pursuing.

Meera Krishnan | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

**FIRST COLUMN**
**A TALE OF HIDDEN WEALTH,
REGRET AND LIBERATION**

These poignant stories have wisdom of the ages and lessons for all



RAVI VALLURI

Once upon a time there lived a woman. She was struck with an unexpected tragedy as her husband passed away untimely. The lady was now left with only one son and precious jewellery. Since she was hounded by creditors to repay the debts accrued by her husband, she conjured a trick to hide the wealth. In sheer desperation to keep the jewellery safe from creditors, the lady wrapped the precious wealth in a piece of cloth and hid it under a tree. The mother and son lived in an impoverished State. Her mind was always disturbed by the fact that she did not share this piece of vital information with her only son. As it turned out, she carried this secret to the grave.

Consequently, the son inherited plenty of debt, a barren hut and a cot. The son had to work hard for sustenance and to repay the ever-rising liabilities. He toiled hard to survive and regretted his misfortune. 'Property is not the sacred right. When a rich man becomes poor it is a misfortune, it is not a moral evil. When a poor man becomes destitute, it is a moral evil, teeming with consequences and is injurious to society and morality,' opined Lord Acton. Indeed, the impoverishment of the poor is heart-wrenching.

One day while cutting the branches of a tree, he stumbled upon the jewellery. Dumbfounded and stupefied, the strapping youngster hid the bijouterie in a pit he dug in the hut, petrified that the creditors would appropriate the wealth. He too committed the cardinal mistake of not sharing the secret with his wife and carried it to his grave. The mother and son were not mindful and wakeful enough to be in the Present Moment and remained prisoners of their past and future.



Two Buddhist monks were once discussing a flag flapping in the wind. While one felt it was the wind moving, the other conjectured it was the flag fluttering. The imbroglia could not be resolved and they sought the intervention of a Zen Master. The master impassively said, 'It is the MIND that moves, neither the flag nor the wind.'

Humans need freedom from their past and future to be in the present. And being in the NOW or present is true enlightenment and mindfulness. The past is full of sorrows and regrets while the future brims with anxieties and worries and humans are caged in that mindset, thereby postponing their happiness quotient. To appreciate true happiness and joy, the human mind should not vacillate between the past and the future but remain in the present.

A young monk was once travelling in pursuit of happiness and truth. During his travels, he encountered a massive river that he could not cross. A short while later, he saw a senior monk on the other side of the river. He hailed him and sought assistance to cross the river to reach the other side. The senior monk pondered and replied, 'You are already on the other side'. This fact can be appreciated only when the mind is centred. Breathing techniques such as Sudarshan Kriya, Pranayama, Yoga, Meditation and Vipassana all help in dissolving the mind so that it becomes centred. 'True happiness is not possible without freedom. We have to learn the habit of being free. We do not allow our past, the future, our projects, or our fear to get hold of us. We are free. Every step is free. Every step is nourishment. Every step is healing. Every step is joy,' says Thich Nhat Hanh.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

The timeless allure of bookstores



MIKE DOWNEY

In a world of fleeting attachments and transient experiences, one traveller finds solace and sustenance in the enduring sanctuaries of literature



I don't normally do nostalgia. The present is a place where I live and thrive and although thoughts of the past serve as a pleasant escape from reality, I tend to be very much permanently in the here and now in former times, I used to be convinced that if the psyche tends to dwell on past and romanticise it then could it be that the present isn't our current happy place and I want the future to continue to excite me. Complicated. I know.

Theatres, galleries and cinemas have come and gone in my life and as a rule, I have formed no specific sentimental attachment to them, even though much of my professional grown-up existence has been centred on these cultural havens. The one exception to that rule is the venerable bookshop. Of all these great edifices crucial to the health of our society the bookshop is the altar at which I worship — and which holds a timeless allure for me which occasionally translates into a wistful homesickness for the best that I have known in my life.

Having lived mostly a life of exile, first from my native Ireland and with more years in adulthood outside my native land than in it, from Belgrade to Munich and Paris to Istria and add to that the peripatetic life of the international film producer spending six months here in Prague, three months there in Iceland, Brazil and even India — sourcing quality English language literature outside of the Anglosphere has become a lifelong passion and quest. My global peregrinations, whether as a writer, theatre director or film producer have allowed me to cultivate relationships with some of the most amazing bookshops across the earth - I don't mean the Blackwells, the Shakespeare and Co's, the Dussmann's, the Strand's and the Foyle's of this world. I'm talking about havens much more intimate, personal and off the beaten track. Here are just a few of them as



INDIA'S EVER-POPULAR BOOK MARKETS REVEAL A PROFOUND NATIONAL LOVE FOR LITERATURE FROM THE BOI-PARA IN COLLEGE STREET IN KOLKATA TO MOORE MARKET IN CHENNAI AND FLORA FOUNTAIN IN MUMBAI

a taster: How I long for The Book Exchange, Amsterdam. This a canal-side, Dickensian warren on Kloveniers-burghal in the Venice of the North's red-light district, presided over by the idiosyncratic Jeff Stone who took it over in 2005, having been founded in 1978. Its four long, thin, deep floors are home to an extraordinary collection of over 80,000 second-hand English language books sold at bargain prices, in a studios atmosphere marked by a chaotic Bohemian that is the antithesis of the Amazons of this world. The whiff of reefer as it wafts over from the Plug 3 coffeshop improves greatly the William Burroughs and Paul Bowles sales, so I'm told. Moving on from Paul Bowles and his palace in the Casbah, we arrive at the Luxor Book Palace, Prague. Last week, while prepping my new movie about Franz Kafka I took time out to visit this old friend on the famed Wenceslas Square I have been buying books here for the last 25 years and am always amazed by the laid-back atmosphere, the super helpful and smiling staff and the extraordinary selection of new books often at prices less than in the UK or New York. I don't know how they do it, but the self-styled Palace, which runs over 4 massive floors, manages to feel like a small privately run enterprise, full of nooks, crannies and all manner of Kafka-esque dead ends. I once ended up in the storeroom, looking for the young adult section. I was escorted back to where I belonged. In the foreign adult section. Speaking of being found, The Lost Bookstore, Chiang Mai

is very easy to find in a highly prominent position on the Ratchamanka Road. I came across it when receiving a planned adaptation of an early Anthony Burgess novel and was shocked to come across such a richly sourced treasure trove for book lovers and a selection of 60,000 books, from old to new, from every genre imaginable. It was here found a dog-eared copy of John Griesemer's Nobody Thinks of Greenland, an anti-war novel set in the Arctic which I eventually adapted into a feature film with American Pie's Jason Biggs in the lead.

In addition to these beauties, there are a few others around the globe that once visited always gave me the unique Proustian involuntary memory moments on my return. They are in no particular order: Book and Bed, Kyoto: sleeping inside a bookshelf is all part of the experience at this bookstore/ hostel and it rushes me back to the Japan distribution of my film Deathwatch and a junket I did there with Jamie Bell (Billy Elliot); the superb El Ateneo Grand Splendid, Buenos Aires, was an oasis of high culture at the end of a two-month research odyssey from Valparaiso in Chile around the coast of Patagonia in Darwin's reverse footsteps; Notting Hill Travel, London. I used to live around the corner from that lovely bookshop on Bleinheim Crescent. We all know the scene from the eponymous film in which Julia Roberts slowly pursues Hugh Grant between the shelves, followed by his infamous eye-turn and blushed slew of book recom-

mendations. But it is to India that I return. A five-year-long relationship with a Keralite Malayali, many many years ago, brought me into contact with the wonderful and varied book stalls of Thiruvananthapuram way back in the eighties.

I feel a deep nostalgia now as I write this for the timeless allure of the amazing book emporia of Palayam, next to the State Central Library, which at that time boasted 50-odd book stalls of all shapes sizes, creeds and colours. I could spend hours just sifting through the mazes of books just for the pleasure of discovering something, unique, precious and inspiring - something that no marketing campaign or advertising or critic's review could ever find for me.

It is the iconic book markets from all over India that bear witness to the extraordinarily diverse literary culture and heritage of the nation. India's ever-popular book markets reveal a profound national love for literature from the Boi-Para in College Street in Kolkata to Moore Market in Chennai and Flora Fountain in Mumbai.

Let's hear it for these affordable, yet rich havens for book lovers and seekers of literary gems and bargains. In the context of our theme of nostalgia and sentimentality - the huge success of the online book business may signal their death knell and they may not be with us for much longer.

(The writer is Chair of the European Film Academy and President of the LUX Prize of the European Parliament; view are personal)

Ladakh's path to autonomy: Overcoming adversity

Against the backdrop of historical marginalisation and neglect, Ladakh's journey towards autonomy has been marked by struggle, negotiation and triumph

The accession of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir to India on October 26, 1947, inflicted significant socio-economic and political setbacks on the Buddhist-dominated Leh district in the strategic Trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, renowned as "the roof of the world" and "the land of the Lamas". Likewise, the predominantly Buddhist Zaskar tehsil in the Karil district of Ladakh bore the brunt of these consequences, enduring even greater hardships than its counterpart, Leh.

The genesis of the Muslim-majority Kargil district in 1979 under Sheikh Abdullah's leadership aimed at fostering discord between



HARI OM

his co-religionists and the Buddhists, aiming to thwart the latter's aspirations for autonomy and union territory status for Ladakh. This move exacerbated the plight of the Buddhists, imperilling their religion, culture, societal fabric and demographic integrity due to two primary factors. Firstly, successive Kashmiri-dominated administrations viewed Ladakh as an

appendage to Kashmir, disregarding the political and economic aspirations of its Buddhist populace. Ladakh, akin to Jammu province, was seen as a colony by Kashmiri rulers, perpetuating a sense of marginalisation among the Buddhists. Secondly, the pernicious influence of the Kashmiri elite over New Delhi's corridors of power further marginalised the Buddhists' voices, with central authorities consistently favouring Kashmiri interests and dismissing Ladakh's concerns. In response to this systemic neglect, under the astute leadership of Head Lama Kushok Bakula Rinpoche, the Buddhists initiated protests in 1952, demanding meaningful political repre-

sentation and autonomy. Despite their fervent appeals and warnings, both Srinagar and New Delhi brushed aside their grievances, exacerbating disillusionment among the Buddhist populace. The culmination of discontent erupted in October 1989, with widespread protests and clashes between Buddhists and authorities. The resultant Tripartite Agreement of October 29, 1989, brokered by the central Government, temporarily assuaged tensions by establishing the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) at Leh. However, this resolution faced vehement opposition from Kashmiri leaders,



including Farooq Abdullah, who viewed it as a threat to Kashmiri hegemony. Despite the establishment of LAHDC Leh in 1995, the Buddhists remained dissat-

isfied due to continued interference from Kashmir-centric authorities, rendering the council ineffectual. Consequently, they intensified their agitation, advocat-

ing for Ladakh's Union Territory status and other demands, citing central rule as the sole recourse to address their grievances. The turning point came after June 19, 2018, when the central Government assumed direct control of Jammu and Kashmir, embarking on a series of measures to appease the Buddhist community. These included the establishment of the University of Ladakh, granting divisional status to Ladakh and ultimately, separating Ladakh from Jammu and Kashmir to fulfil the long-standing demand for Union Territory status. Additionally, substantial budgetary allocations were made to bolster Ladakh's development.

These initiatives underscored the efficacy of central rule in addressing the aspirations of the marginalised Buddhist population.

Rather than pursuing Statehood, the Buddhists are urged to strengthen LAHDC Leh and collaborate with the Modi Government to safeguard their cultural heritage and counter demographic challenges. The period between 2018 and 2023 epitomises a transformative phase for Ladakh, wherein central intervention proved instrumental in redressing historical injustices and empowering its Buddhist populace.

(The writer is former Dean of Jammu University's Faculty of Social Science; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

Startup Accacia raises USD 6.5 mn to expand business

Startup Accacia, a decarbonisation platform focusing on real estate and infrastructure sectors, on Monday said it has raised USD 6.5 million (around Rs 54 crore) from investors to expand the business. In a statement, the company said it has 'closed a USD 6.5 million pre-Series A round led by Illuminate Financial'. Southeast Asia-based AC Ventures also participated in this round, alongside continued support from early backers Accel and B Capital. Founded in 2022 by Annu Talreja and co-founders Piyush Chitkara and Jagmohan Garg, Accacia offers an AI-enabled SAAS platform that helps real estate asset managers, owners and developers track their emissions, and design their decarbonisation journey. "We have already deployed our solution to over 25 million square feet of real estate and are poised to leverage this opportunity and scale globally," said Talreja, Founder and CEO at Accacia. Accacia's tech platform integrates with existing property management, energy management and procurement systems to automate real-time data capturing and tracking.



Flipkart Ventures to fund, mentor GenAI-based startups

Flipkart Ventures, the investment arm of e-commerce major Flipkart, on Monday invited applications for its accelerator programme. As part of the Flipkart Leap Ahead (FLA) programme, selected startups will receive equity investments between USD 200,000 and USD 500,000, according to a statement. Announcing the third cohort of FLA, the firm said the programme aims to accelerate the growth journey of early-stage startups. Applications for the programme will be open from April 22 to May 26. "Selected companies leveraging GenAI in their core solutions across sectors will receive equity investments between USD 200,000 and USD 500,000 alongside invaluable mentorship to achieve product-market fit, build scalable architecture, and assemble strong teams," the statement said. It added that these startups will also receive two-month mentorship, wherein industry veterans, operators, and founders will guide these entrepreneurs to prepare them for hyper-growth.



Domestic air traffic touches new single-day high

Domestic air traffic touched a new single-day high of 4,71,751 passengers on Sunday, according to official data. The traffic on Sunday was more than 14 per cent higher than the average pre-Covid count of 3,98,579. On April 21, the total number of domestic air passengers stood at 4,71,751 and the number of flights was 6,128, as per the data from the civil aviation ministry. This is higher than the domestic air traffic of 4,28,389 passengers and 5,899 flights recorded on April 21, 2023. In a post on X, the ministry said India's domestic aviation is 'everyday at a new high'. "Domestic aviation in India is witnessing unprecedented growth, driven by factors such as concrete policies, economic development, and expansion of low-cost carriers. As more people gain access to air travel, the sector is expected to continue its upward trajectory," it said.



Gold, silver retreat from record levels as Iran-Israel tensions ease

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold and silver prices retreated from record high levels in the national capital on Monday, with the precious metal plunging by Rs 450 per 10 grams, due to weak global trends and easing tensions in West Asia.

Gold prices declined by Rs 450 to Rs 73,650 per 10 grams amid weak trends in the overseas markets, according to HDFC Securities. The yellow metal had settled at Rs 74,100 per 10 grams on Friday.

Silver prices also tumbled by Rs 1,100 to Rs 85,500 per kg. In the previous close, it had closed at Rs 86,600 per kg.

"Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 73,650 per 10 grams, down by Rs 450 against the previous close," Saumil

Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

In the international markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,365 per ounce, down by USD 26 from the previous close.

Gold resumed trading on a weaker note on Monday as demand for the safe haven asset decreased after easing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

Furthermore, a rise in the US dollar and Treasury yields, along with declining expectations from the Federal Reserve's interest rate cuts in 2024, weighed down on precious metal's prices, Gandhi said. Silver was also trading lower at USD 27.95 per ounce. In the previous session, it had finished at USD 28.66 per ounce.

'Sustained growth of 7pc feasible for India'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sustaining the economic growth momentum of 7 per cent in 2024-25 and beyond is feasible on the back of favorable monsoon, higher farm productivity and improved global trade, RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) member Shashanka Bhide said on Monday.

During 2023-24, the economy is likely to record a growth rate of near 8 per cent on account of good performance of manufacturing and infrastructure sectors.

"(India's economic) growth in the current year is likely to be supported by agriculture with a favourable monsoon and improved global trade. Sustaining the growth momentum of 7 per cent seems feasible," he said.

Bhide further said that in the long-term, the need for productivity improvements will remain the key factor to achieve food price stability.



"The slow pace of recovery in global demand on one hand and supply chain disruptions on the other hand... if the ongoing geopolitical conflicts are not resolved quickly, (it will) pose significant challenge in terms of demand as well as input prices."

Asked what are some of the headwinds he is wary of, Bhide said one area of concern is the global environment. "The slow pace of recovery in global demand on one hand and supply

chain disruptions on the other hand... if the ongoing geopolitical conflicts are not resolved quickly, (it will) pose significant challenge in terms of demand as well as input prices. "We should also

be prepared for minimising the adverse impact of extreme weather events on output," he said.

Recently, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) raised India's growth projection to 6.8 per cent for 2024 from its January forecast of 6.5 per cent citing bullish domestic demand conditions and a rising working-age population. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) also raised India's GDP growth forecast for the current fiscal to 7 per cent from 6.7 per cent earlier, saying the robust growth will be driven by public and private sector investment demand and gradual improvement in consumer demand. Asked what is the long-term solution for high food prices, Bhide noted that one aspect of high food inflation in the recent years has been the impact of weather conditions on the perishable commodities such as vegetables.

Mutual funds collect Rs 66,364 core through NFOs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Asset management companies (AMCs) floated 185 new fund offerings mobilising Rs 66,364 crore in 2023-24, marking a 6.5 per cent increase from the previous year, amidst growing interest of retail investors and significant uptrend in broader markets.

This was higher than Rs 62,342 crore garnered by AMCs through 253 New Fund Offerings (NFOs) in 2022-23.

"The financialisation of savings in India is currently underway, signifying a growing recognition among investors that investing in financial assets is integral to building wealth. With income



and expenditure levels rising constantly, there is a heightened need to channel monthly savings into avenues offering higher returns. The substantial inflow of investments into equities underscores a notable shift in investor attitudes and risk appetites," FYERS Research said in its report.

Wipro shares climb 2 pc post earnings announcement

Mcap advances by Rs 4,756.93 cr



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of IT services company Wipro on Monday climbed 2 per cent as investors remain unfazed by the below market expectations guidance provided by the company.

The stock advanced 2.01 per cent to settle at Rs 461.95 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it jumped 2.90 per cent to Rs 466.

On the NSE, it climbed 2 per cent to Rs 461.95 per share. The company's market capitalisation (mcap) climbed Rs 4,756.93 crore to Rs 2,41,377.31 crore.

Wipro on Friday reported a 7.8 per cent year-on-year decline in its consolidated net profit for the March quarter to about Rs 2,834.6 crore, and cautioned that the macroeconomic environment remains "uncertain".

The Bengaluru-headquar-

tered company, which recently saw a change of guard with Srinivas Pallia taking over at the helm as the new Chief Executive Officer, has given IT Services revenue growth guidance in the (-)1.5 per cent to 0.5 per cent band for the June quarter on a constant currency basis.

While the numbers were in line with the analysts' estimates, the guidance of the company was below industry expectations.

Pallia asserted that the immediate priority for the company is to "accelerate growth" as he spelt out clear focus areas for the IT services firm, which has been lagging peers on performance and operational metrics quarter-after-quarter.

For the Q4FY24, Wipro's revenue from operations slipped 4.2 per cent year-on-year to Rs 22,208.3 crore.



Small exporters seek continuation of amnesty scheme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Several small exporters have requested the government to continue the amnesty scheme for one-time settlement of default in export obligation till September, an industry body said on Monday.

Ludhiana-based Hand Tools Association President S C Ralhan said the number of small exporters has not been able to avail of benefits of the scheme due to fulfilling their obligations to make payments to MSMEs within 45 days.

According to Section 43B(h) of the Income Tax Act, introduced through the Finance Act 2023, if a larger company does not pay an MSME on time -- within 45 days in case of written agreements -- it cannot deduct that expense from its taxable income, leading to potentially higher taxes.

"Due to this, we diverted our funds to make payments and several of us were not able to apply for the amnesty scheme. We urge the government to continue the scheme till September," Ralhan said.

MDH, EVEREST MASALA ROW

FSSAI to check quality of spices sold in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Food safety regulator FSSAI has started taking samples of spices in powder form of all brands, including MDH and Everest, from across the country in view of quality concerns flagged by Singapore and Hong Kong, a government source said.

"In view of the current development, FSSAI has taken samples of spices of all brands, including MDH and Everest, from the market to check whether they meet the FSSAI norms," the source told PTL.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) does not regulate quality of exported spices, they said.



FSSAI, which operates under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, takes samples of spices regularly from the market to check the quality of product sold in the domestic market. Meanwhile, the Spices Board

of India is looking into the ban imposed by Hong Kong and Singapore on the sale of four spices-mix products of Indian brands MDH and Everest, which allegedly contain pesticide 'ethylene oxide' beyond permissible limits.

Paytm launches Made in India 4G soundboxes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian fintech giant Paytm on Monday launched two Made-in-India soundboxes for UPI and credit card on UPI payments that promise to provide better instant notification when payments are received via QR code.

Founder and CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma said the advanced soundboxes provide superior sound quality and battery life, making them better suited to Indian conditions.

Enables credit card-based UPI payments

The launch came as One97 Communications Ltd, which runs Paytm, completed the migration of merchant customer accounts from Paytm to other unified payments interface (UPI) handles.

The company on April 17 started the customer migration to partner payment service provider (PSP) banks Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, SBI and Yes Bank.



A PSP is a bank that helps the UPI app to connect with the banking channel. Only banks

Reliance Jio net profit rises to Rs 5,337 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's largest telecom operator Reliance Jio on Monday posted a 13 per cent year-on-year rise in its standalone net profit at Rs 5,337 crore in March quarter. Its revenue from operations for Q4FY24 came in at Rs 25,959 crore, up 11 per cent over the year-ago period. The net profit was pegged at Rs 5,337 crore for just-ended quarter, up from Rs 4,716 crore in the fourth quarter of FY23, which translated into a 13.16 per cent increase.



According to a BSE filing by the company, for the full FY24, the net profit stood at Rs 20,466 crore, which was 12.4 per cent higher than that of FY23. The revenue for full fiscal ended March 2024 was Rs 1,00,119 crore, up 10.2 per cent over the preceding fiscal.

'Most Indian travellers interested in sustainable travel'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Even as 95 per cent of Indian travellers interviewed said sustainable travel is important to them, more than half feel the irreversible damage has already been done, a report said on Monday.

Online travel agency Booking.com's ninth Sustainable Travel Report 2024, is based on insights gathered from more than 31,000 travellers across 34 countries and territories, including 1,000 in India.

However, the report found that a sense of disillusion towards making more sustainable travel choices might be counteracting these positive intentions.

For the first time this year, the report revealed that some travellers



don't recognise the importance of being more mindful. Almost a quarter (24 per cent) of Indian travellers felt travelling

more sustainably is important, but not a primary consideration when planning or booking a trip, it added. More than half (52 per

cent) feel that the damage already done is irreversible and that the travel choices they make are not going to change that, said the report.

In fact, 39 per cent don't believe climate change is as severe as people make it out to be and 47 per cent feel their time spent travelling is too precious to put sustainability at the top of their decision-making list, it noted.

Over 53 per cent of travellers believed that being more sustainable in a destination that is not

implementing sustainability practices itself feels pointless, it added.

"This year's new insights show that a sense of weariness could be emerging among travellers fuelled by the ongoing challenges that they experience to make more sustainable travel choices... we believe working together across the industry, simple changes when taken together can start to make a big difference," Booking.com Country Manager, India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Indonesia, Santosh Kumar, added

DIRECTOR SANTOSH REVEALS BEING AFFECTED POST-SHOOTING PULWAMA ATTACK

In the landscape of modern entertainment, where heroes often remain unsung, there are rare moments when their valorous tales are etched onto screens, immortalising their sacrifices. Director Santosh Singh, a maestro of storytelling, is on the brink of unraveling one such saga with his upcoming series, *Ranneeti: Balakot & Beyond*. Now, the director opens up about his series, sharing insights that transcend mere filmmaking. Director Santosh Singh, the guiding force behind this monumental project, peels back the layers of his creative process, offering poignant insights that went into the making of this series. *Ranneeti: Balakot and Beyond* is a series inspired by true events, namely the Pulwama blast and its aftermath leading up to the Balakot airstrikes and the aerial combat that occurred between India and Pakistan after a hiatus of 50 years. While these events unfolded before our eyes, what remains unknown to many is the behind-the-scenes action in the war rooms—the planning, plotting, and execution. It's the war of narrative and perception, that fascinated me to undertake this series," says Singh. Talking about authenticity, Singh confronts the daunting task of navigating conflicting versions of history and says, "When you claim that your show draws inspiration from real events, there's a heightened expectation from the audience regarding its credibility, particularly when it involves our armed forces and defense establishment." Santosh continues, "Entertainment stems from the drama inherent in the events themselves. The reality of this event surpasses any scripted drama, so our focus was simply on capturing it accurately. We aimed to keep the story as close to reality as possible, straightforward, and simple. We took a practical approach by portraying there's no clear villain in this story. It's about two countries and their people, each doing what they believe is best for their nation's safety. Viewing the emotions through this lens allowed us to capture them in a genuine and meaningful way." He further adds that as a director, there's no margin for error in such a sensitive narrative space. "The events surrounding this whole incident are classified, resulting



in multiple conflicting versions of what actually happened. Therefore, conducting thorough research and pinpointing the most accurate portrayal was the most difficult task. Our writers faced lots of challenges navigating through many drafts until we achieved the level of accuracy required to do justice to this kind of story." Reflecting on the profound impact of one pivotal scene, Santosh opens up about the challenges of recreating the Pulwama bus blast. "One moment that deeply impacted me was recreating the Pulwama bus blast and filming the aftermath—the sight of the soldiers' lifeless bodies. The emotions on set were palpable, and a sombre silence enveloped the entire crew," he recounts. "It was difficult to comprehend the magnitude of grief." On the work front, director Santosh Singh is currently gearing up for his series *Ranneeti: Balakot & Beyond*, produced by Spire Origins, the series is all set to release on Jio Cinemas on April 25th. Apart from that, Santosh has left an indelible mark on the world of entertainment with his diverse portfolio of work. From directing acclaimed series like *Broken But Beautiful*, *Fitrat*, and *Apharan 2*, to collaborating with renowned directors such as Ayan Mukerjee, Karan Johar, and Goldie Behl, Singh's journey in the industry is a testament to his versatility and talent. With notable contributions to blockbuster films like *Wake Up Sid*, *Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani*, *Brothers*, *Gippi*, *Ae Dil Hai Mushkil*, and the highly anticipated *Brahmastra*, Santosh Singh continues to captivate audiences with his unique storytelling and directorial prowess.

Priyanka Chopra confirms not attending the Met Gala 2024

Global icon Priyanka Chopra has announced that she will not be going to the 2024 Met Gala. In an interview, the star, who is now filming for *Heads of State*, disclosed that she will not be attending the yearly event this year due to her production schedule. In an interview, Priyanka—who is now promoting the new documentary *Tiger*—was questioned about the Met Gala this year and if she anticipated any specific attendees.

While talking about the same, the actor said, "I don't even know who's going this year. I'm definitely not attending this year because I'm filming, but I think I really do enjoy watching people's creativity during the Met Gala and I am really excited to see how it will turn out. I actually have not read anything about who all is going this year."

Priyanka Chopra's life is significantly impacted by the Met Gala. The actor and his husband, Nick Jonas, walked the red carpet together at the yearly gala event in 2017.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City will host the 2024 Met Gala on Monday, May 6. The Costume Institute's *Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion* exhibition will open on that day. This year, The Garden of Time is the subject.

ZAKIR KHAN RETURNS IN CHACHA VIDHAYAK HAIN HUMARE S3

Amazon miniTV announced the latest season of the popular show *Chacha Vidhayak Hain Humare* with an exciting trailer that gives us a peek into its blend of politics and comedy. Following the massive success of its first two seasons, fans have been eagerly anticipating the next chapter in the hilarious saga of Ronny, portrayed by the immensely talented Zakir Khan. Directed by the acclaimed Gaganjeet Singh and written by Zakir Khan & Gopal Datt, *Chacha Vidhayak Hain Humare S3* is ready to take comedy and excitement to new heights. The third season of this renowned franchise will showcase the enthralling tale of Ronny, who finds himself in a whirlwind of comical misadventures after reluctantly agreeing to steer clear of politics at the firm insistence of Ashwini (Chacha Ji), essayed by Abhimanyu Singh. Despite his best efforts to avoid the political arena, Ronny's fate repeatedly intertwines with Ashwini's, leading to a series of hilarious incidents and crazy encounters. As Ashwini's fury escalates, he uses cunning tactics to disrupt Ronny's personal life, even bringing his beloved family into chaos. With Ronny's fate hanging in the balance, will he emerge victorious and protect his beloved family or will Ashwini's sly politics prove too much to overcome? Zakir Khan, who not only has written the show but also essays the character of Ronny in the series, shared, "Bringing the third season of *Chacha Vidhayak Hain Humare* feels like homecoming. The love and support we've received from fans has been truly humbling. Their enthusiasm fuels our passion for storytelling and it's an honour to be able to entertain and connect with them through our work. With each passing season, we've witnessed Ronny evolve, grow, and face new challenges head-on. *Season 3* promises to be no different, it's an adventurous journey of emotions, filled with unexpected twists and turns that will keep viewers on the edge of their seats."

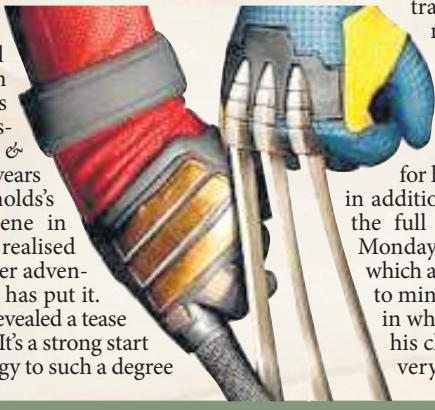


Deadpool & Wolverine unite on the big screen

The seven-year-old Ryan Reynolds's wish to see Hugh Jackman's *Wolverine* back in action is finally coming true.

The Canadian actor suggested a confrontation between himself and his rival Logan, who may have been killed in the 2017 movie but has returned as promised, in a teaser for the next *Deadpool & Wolverine* video. After "seven years and a lot of begging," Reynolds's hopes for an end-credit scene in *Deadpool 2* have finally been realised with the "two-hander character adventure," as director Shawn Levy has put it.

The *Deadpool* actor boldly revealed a tease of what's to come on April 21. It's a strong start to his destroying the chronology to such a degree



that it has to double down on making things right. Wade Wilson, who was previously shown in a lengthy scene during the *Deadpool 2* end credits, is prepared to travel back in time and make amends for a number of wrongs. *The Marvel Jesus*, who is scheduled to debut in theaters on July 26, 2024, is returning to the MCU chaos and pulling Hugh Jackman along with him.

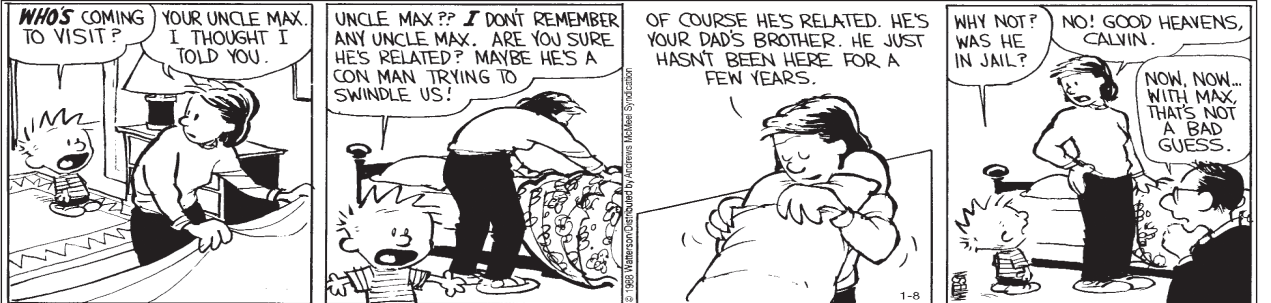
Reynolds also revealed a new poster for his buddy movie with Hugh Jackman, in addition to a teaser that sets the tone for the full trailer that will be released on Monday, April 22. These two revelations, which are full of nostalgic allusions, bring to mind Jackman's 2017 Logan movie, in which he is said to have given up his claws, leaving "a lot of people very sad."

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



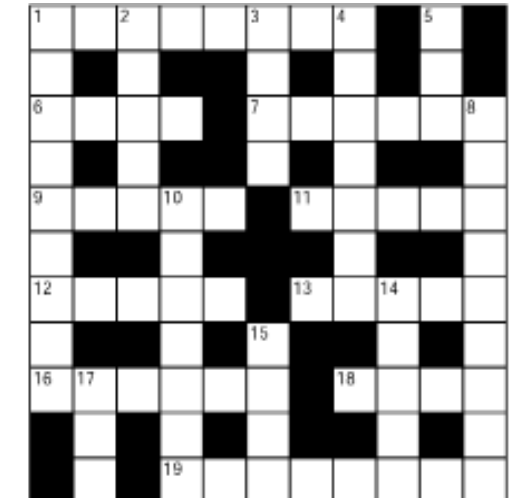
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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Yesterday's solution

2	4	9	6	3	7	1	8	5
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Rules

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

- ACROSS
- Without any bends
 - Travel by horse
 - Bigger
 - A plant's underground parts
 - Flying creatures
 - Sweeten food with this
 - Sit on this
 - Be unalike
 - Too
 - Writer of music
- 4 From Turkey
- 5 Tell a fib
- 8 A large store of water for supplying a town
- 10 The movement of cars and people in the street
- 14 A book of maps of countries
- 15 Wheel a baby about in this
- 17 Liquid in a pen
- SOLUTION
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| A | P | O | L | O | G | I | S | I | N | G |
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| F | I | G | H | T | E | N | T | | | |
| D | S | S | W | S | | | | | | |
- DOWN
- Startled
 - Listen to music on this
 - A precious metal

GINGER MEGGS



VIKING SOUL EVOKING A TRIBAL TULUM VIBE

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Rinaa Shah is a well-known DJ, known as the Viking Soul, and the first female electronic percussionist in India as well. With a remarkable musical career and multiple awards, we had the opportunity to speak with this electronic percussionist in-depth for an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, where she reveals everything!

"Since I was five years old, music has surrounded me. I finished my Bharatnatyam degree at the age of 14, and my Kathak degree at the age of 19. Although music has always played a significant role in my life, I intended to incorporate classical melodies into contemporary electronic songs when I unintentionally followed this path. I use a variety of instruments to produce a unique and varied sound, including the violin, tabla, sitar, African djembe, and more," says Rinaa. "I was aware that I was a little late to the game when I made the decision to pursue a career as a DJ! However I was determined to study under the greatest, so I registered at the DJ School of Amsterdam after reading up on it and getting referrals from friends. Through this experience, I was able to broaden my horizons, connect with amazing DJs, gain insight into their issues, and increase my self-confidence. I kicked things up a level in 2023 by enrolling in an advanced course at the Point Blank Music School in Ibiza, which gave me even more creative inspiration and helped me reach new heights of confidence."

Throughout her musical career, Rinaa Shah has performed on famous stages all around the world. She even achieved a noteworthy feat by ranking among the top 10 DJs at the prestigious DJ Amsterdam School. She has received acclaim for her energetic performances, which effortlessly combine electronic percussion with drums, tabla, sitar, and other instruments. "Because I have a background in classical music, I tried to bring back the old sounds by fusing them with contemporary genres in an original way. I was moved to bring back Indian classical music in a modern style, incorporating Afro and electronic elements to appeal to a younger audience, after witnessing its demise," she says.

With its blend of Afro-house music, intriguing

tribal dances, aerial dancers, fire shows, and real African musicians, Totem Tribe now sounds like a fully immersive experience. We were rather curious about what motivated her to design this one-of-a-kind creation! She remembers travelling to Africa in order to acquire some supplies for her restaurant. She was taken to a completely different world by

the captivating sounds of African and tribal music that she heard along the way. When she realised that Indian audiences had not yet heard this kind of music, she knew exactly which route she needed to take to

expand on it. She has long loved the African vibe, which is now reflected in her music as well as her restaurant. It radiates an infectious, happy energy that evokes beautiful, spiritual emotions that brighten the spirit and encourage movement.

She said, "The idea first sparked at my restaurant, where we embraced a tribal theme," with an irresistible enthusiasm. "In just one and a half years, we welcomed approximately 250 performers to our events, which had this tribal vibe. Thus, the Totem Tribe was founded in November 2023. I combined Afro-house music, which is becoming more and more popular and has brought a new sound to India, with tribal rhythms to create a distinctive musical experience.

My objective is to make this musical the best production in India, providing an immersive experience with tribal culture." Afro-house

music and dance are truly immersing. Eight people work together on this ground-breaking endeavour, providing amazing tribal acts and aerial dancers; a tribal Tulum vibe is created by fire shows and live African musicians playing the Djembe. "With sporadic additions and subtractions, our tribe consists of nine people, but we all have the same goal. What really sets our tribe apart is its cohesiveness. We truly think that we can achieve the pinnacle of achievement if we put our faith in one another and work extremely hard. With the use of tribal fire, compelling acts, and music and dance, we hope to reach as many people as we can and spread joy," she adds.

"I've always thrived on carving out a unique space; that's just how my mind works, and I love challenges," she says in her words. "Afro and tribal house is a new genre that I consistently create new music in by fusing with tech and electronic elements. Using different tribal headresses to enhance the visual experience, I try to take my audience on a journey through my music throughout every performance. Gender differences vanish in those situations; the main focus is on providing individuals with a unique and memorable experience."

A DJ has the ability to change your attitude, your ideas, and much more. "I really think it's important to keep inspiring others with my work. Helping others is always my goal, no matter how big or small. My goal is to inspire the confidence to follow their aspirations and open doors for countless women who want to make a difference in the world. I also stressed in my TED Talk that if I could accomplish my goals later in life, there would be no barriers for anybody else to do the same. My daily goal is to get closer to creating this musical endeavour and using our dancing and music to spread love and joy. One day, I hope to play at places all over the world, starting with India. Whether you're a man or a woman, I believe it's critical to stand out in a competitive environment. Everyone is attempting to get better or earn more money in this fast-paced environment. That's why it's so important to

have a distinct voice that uplifts and makes people happy. To all the women out there: Don't allow anyone to tell you what you can't accomplish, and don't be frightened. You can accomplish amazing things if you put in the effort and are determined!" and with that, the Viking Soul concluded.

DJ Rinaa Shah, popularly known as the Viking Soul, has created a niche for herself by becoming the first female electronic percussionist in India. In this exclusive chat, with *The Pioneer*, the DJ takes us through her journey of DJing, a musical experience called Totem Tribe, & more.



Reuniting sneakerheads and street culture with music in Hyd

SUBODHINI PUROHIT

In a world where fashion meets function and style merges seamlessly with comfort, a cultural phenomenon transcends mere footwear: sneakers. These versatile shoes have evolved from humble athletic gear to coveted symbols of self-expression, rebellion, and individuality! With a rich history rooted in sports, music, and street culture, sneakers have become more than just a fashion statement; they reflect personality, passion, and creativity.

Nestled in the bustling streets of Hyderabad lies Superkicks, a haven for sneaker enthusiasts and fashion aficionados alike. Founded by the visionary Sangeet Paryani, it stands as a beacon of style and innovation, offering a curated selection of the world's leading sneaker brands under one roof. From the iconic swoosh of Nike to the timeless stripes of Adidas and the classic silhouettes of Reebok, Puma, Asics Tiger, New Balance, Vans, and Fila, it boasts a diverse array of footwear that caters to every taste and preference.

Recently, Superkicks made its mark in Hyderabad with the inaugural edition of its beat camp, marking a significant milestone in the city's music scene. Building on the success of previous music sessions, it has established itself as a dynamic force in the realms of fashion and culture.

At the core of the cultural initiatives was a deep appreciation for music and its transformative power, especially in today's musical landscape, where accessibility and inclusivity reign supreme. Gone are the days when aspiring artists needed access to expensive studios or high-profile connections to kickstart their musical journey. Instead, the democratisation of music production has opened doors for anyone with a laptop and a few instruments to realise their creative vision.

Through a blend of online courses and pure passion, individuals can now embark on their musical odyssey, learning the ropes of beat-making, production, and composition from the comfort of their own homes. Superkicks recognised and celebrated this democratization of music, championing the cause of lowkey artists and providing a platform for them to showcase their talent in Hyderabad.

Beginning with the beat-making workshop, it was expertly orchestrated by the Audio and Music Production Club (AMP), a dynamic collective co-founded by Divyansh Choudhary and Anish Devnoor. These visionary leaders are students at the prestigious BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus, where their passion for audio and music production has sparked a vibrant community of like-minded individuals. In their innovative approach, AMP seamlessly integrated musical beats with the ambient sounds of Hyderabad's bustling streets, incorporating elements such as ringing bells and bustling traffic into their compositions. This fusion of urban sounds with musical rhythms added a dynamic dimension to the beat-making workshop, capturing the vibrant essence of the city in each composition.

In an innovative twist, participants were invited to shape the beat-making process by selecting a traditional song from three samples through a live poll. Once the audience made their choice, AMP Club artists worked their magic, transforming the selected track from its traditional roots into a mesmerising masterpiece.



EVENT COVERAGE

sophistication beyond their years. Now, as a smaller group gathered around, they began to explain their technical process. Though the intricacies of their work may seem daunting, the members of the AMP club are dedicated to simplifying complex concepts. While their expertise may initially appear beyond reach, their approach is inclusive."

Attendees were treated to a captivating music-listening session led by none other than Kevin Shaji, also known as Pinacolada Blues, a talented music producer who is a solo electronic indie artist from Kerala. Known for his songs like *Tera Nishaan*, *Raaba* and *Butterfly*, joining him were Damini and Nikitha, gifted singers who brought their unique flair to the performance.

Together, they serenaded the audience with a selection of Malayali tracks and previews from their upcoming album, including the hauntingly beautiful *Medusa*. This track delved into the complexities of toxic relationships, weaving a poignant narrative that resonated with listeners. Additionally, they showcased some of their previously released songs, including the emotive *Red Lights*, which explored the theme of heartbreak and the aftermath of a breakup. Through soulful melodies and heartfelt lyrics, they transported the audience on a journey through the highs and lows of love and loss.

Nikitha shares, "I hail from Kerala. Currently, I'm pursuing my master's degree, but my true passion lies in music. Today, I had the privilege of sharing my love for music with you all by performing a few Malayali songs and a Hindi track, in Hyderabad. One of the highlights of the session was singing *Butterfly*, a beautiful Malayalam song that holds a special place in my heart. Singing alongside Kevin has been an enriching experience as well. Despite juggling a job, he puts his heart and soul into producing songs, giving them depth and texture with his compositions and background work. Together, we strived to create music that resonates with our audience and evokes emotions."

Kevin Shaji, Damini, and Nikitha proved to be a dynamic trio, captivating listeners with their artistry and leaving a lasting impression long after the session came to a close.

The workshop featured a special pop-up by NAIN, a label founded by Naina Bhandary. Known for its exquisite hand-crafted luxury clothing, NAIN has made waves with its spring and summer collections showcased at the prestigious Lakme Fashion Week. Now, these coveted pieces are available at Superkicks Hyderabad.

Following the informative beat-making session and melodic singing and listening sessions, the event transitioned seamlessly into an electrifying after-party starting at 8 p.m. As attendees sipped on cocktails and engaged in lively games, the atmosphere buzzed with excitement and anticipation.

As the night unfolded, guests grooved to the catchy beats and soulful melodies, dancing the night away and revelling in the euphoria of the moment. With each song, the energy soared higher, creating an unforgettable experience for all who attended.

In the heart of Hyderabad, Superkicks' beat camp was more than just a gathering of music enthusiasts; it was a celebration of the transformative power of music to unite, inspire, and elevate.

Brijendra Kala opens up about *Lavaste's* influence on his life

PNS| HYDERABAD

Actor Brijendra Kala has been renowned for his nuanced depictions of realistic characters. His small roles in mainstream films brought him to the attention of the audience. Naturally, despite having less on-screen time, he has made a name for himself in these roles.

Just recently, Zee5 unveiled the trailer for *Lavaste*, which stars Omkar Kapoor alongside Manoj Joshi, Brijendra Kala, Urvasi S Sharma, and Shubhangi Latkar in key roles. *Lavaste*, which was produced and directed by Aditya Verma and Sudeesh Kanaujia, explores the theme of children's treatment of their old parents while also illuminating the hidden side of unclaimed bodies.

To delve a little more into the details of this upcoming film, Brijendra Kala gets candid with *The Pioneer* as he shares, "The takeaway I hope audiences will carry after watching is the importance of being responsible and caring towards the people in our community. It's about looking out for those who may need assistance and support. In my neighbourhood, where I used to stay before, there was always someone who lacked companionship and care. But they were often the ones to step up and help when needed, setting a meaningful example for all of us."

This, he says, underscores the significance of taking initiative and being proactive in lending a helping hand. By showcasing kindness and empathy, one can inspire others to follow suit. Instead of waiting for others to act first, they should take the lead and offer help, and your actions can inspire others to do the same.

Meanwhile, on being a part of *Lavaste's* influence and shaping his perspective on life, he says, "The point is, many parents face situations where they have no one around them in their last moments, especially when their children go away, particularly when they're out of the country. Sometimes, such situations are seen in movies, right? But these aren't just fictional; they happen in real life too. Sometimes, there are instances when their children are around at the moments of their last rights but cannot touch them, as happened during the COVID times, and sometimes their children are away due to work.

There should be organisations that respect individuals and conduct their last rites, even if they are unknown. Everyone deserves a dignified farewell, especially those without close family. Organisations like the one in our film *Lavaste* can provide that support to people who have no one around to take care of them."





REVENGE ON CSK MIND AS LSG EYE A WIN IN DHONI BASTION

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Revenge will be on defending champions Chennai Super Kings' minds when they host an unpredictable Lucknow Super Giants here in their reverse IPL fixture on Tuesday with both the teams desperate to break out of the mid-table logjam.

The last time the two teams faced off in Lucknow last week, KL Rahul and Quinton de Kock put up a record opening partnership which proved to be the difference as LSG joined CSK at eight points in the IPL standing.

The Super Kings have been a force to be reckoned with at home and they will look to set the record straight this time. Following the away loss, CSK will be eager to redeem themselves in the three consecutive home ties to march towards the playoffs.

For CSK, skipper Rituraj Gaikwad and Shivam Dube have done bulk of the scoring and their failure against LSG meant they didn't get a flying start and also struggled in the middle overs.

While opener Rachin Ravindra's form is a concern,

CSK also promoted Ajinkya Rahane as the opener and as a result, Gaikwad pushed himself a spot down to three. Having scored three 50-plus scores as an opener so far, it would once again be a tricky call for Gaikwad to whether stick to the latest shuffle or promote himself back to the top.

While Ravindra Jadeja stepped up with a composed fifty, which allowed Moeen Ali and MS Dhoni to produce the late fireworks and give the team a fighting total, CSK would hope their top-order gets their act together before they face LSG again.

CSK's bowling unit was at their wits end against the rampaging duo of Rahul and Quinton the other day.

Young Matheesha Pathirana was their best bowler but the onus will be on pacers Deepak Chahar, Tushar Deshpande and Mustafizur Rahman to produce a better show when they face the same opposition again.

Left-arm spinner Jadeja too struggled and will need to step up on their home turf, having done so in the past.

For LSG, batting has been an



issue but they have shown how devastating they can be if their top-order fires.

Rahul and Quinton were on a roll and they will once again have to do the heavy lifting at Chepauk. Also Nicholas Pooran has hit top gear when needed and LSG will bank on him a lot.

In bowling, LSG will hope for the return of young pace sensation Mayank Yadav, who had to sit out of two games after suffering lower abdominal strain.

Pacer Mohsin Khan and Yash Thakur did well to restrict CSK initially but found themselves in the firing line of Dhoni in the final overs, something they need to work on before they walk into his den. Matt Henry had a wicketless debut for LSG and he too will be eager to prove himself.

In the spin department, Krunal Pandya's two wickets made a lot of difference in the middle-overs and he will have to take the lead again against CSK, while young Ravi Bishnoi will have to get over the thrashing that he received from Ali to find his mojo back.

The visitors would be fancying their chances but LSG would

need consistency to pull off another win at CSK's fortress.

SQUADS:

Chennai Super Kings: Rachin Ravindra, Rituraj Gaikwad (c), Ajinkya Rahane, Daryl Mitchell, Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Sameer Rizvi, MS Dhoni (wk), Shardul Thakur, Tushar Deshpande, Mustafizur Rahman, Matheesha Pathirana, Nishant Sindhu, Moeen Ali, Mitchell Santner, Shaik Rasheed, Aravely Avnish, Maheesh Theekshana, RS Hangargekar, Srimarjeet Singh, Mukesh Choudhary, Prashant Solanki, Ajay Jadav Mandal, Richard Gleeson and Deepak Chahar.

Lucknow Super Giants: Quinton de Kock, KL Rahul (c & wk), Deepak Hooda, Ayush Badoni, Marcus Stoinis, Nicholas Pooran, Krunal Pandya, Ravi Bishnoi, Mohsin Khan, Shamar Joseph, Yash Thakur, Manimaran Siddharth, Prerak Mankad, Arshad Khan, Krishnappa Gowtham, Amit Mishra, Kyle Mayers, Ashton Turner, Matt Henry, Naveen-ul-Haq, Devdutt Padikkal, Yudhvir Singh Charak, Mayank Yadav and Arshin Kulkarni.



Conversation with Virat Kohli really helped me during bad phase: Riyan Parag

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

When Riyan Parag first arrived on the scene, he was known more for his unabashed expression of opinions on social media than for his batting. But then came a "good 10-15 minutes" of advice from the great Virat Kohli, and things changed for the better. From facing criticism for speaking his mind instead of delivering drab clichés in media interaction or on social media, the 22-year-old player from Assam is now staking a claim for India selection with stellar performances this IPL season.

On asking Kohli for advice, Parag told JioCinema, "In my second year, I was having a bad phase in the IPL. I was discussing with him on how to get out of that phase and how he used to handle similar situations, so I can learn from his experience as well."

"He gave me a good 10-15 minutes of his time and shared a few things with me, I think that really helped me."

Rajasthan Royals' Parag has been in top form this season, and is currently third in the list of highest run-scorers with 318 runs in seven

matches. Besides Kohli, Parag has also learned a lot from another cricket legend Rahul Dravid, who was previously associated with the RR franchise.

"I learnt a lot. Cricket-wise, we know he's one of the best in the business, one of the greatest cricketers of our time."

"Outside cricket, how we should conduct ourselves, get involved with the crowd, social media, and how to generally present ourselves outside of cricket, is something I learnt a lot about, from him."

Speaking about his maiden season in the IPL in 2019, Parag said the feeling was surreal when he first went out to bat, in a match against Chennai Super Kings with the legendary Mahendra Singh Dhoni standing a few feet from the newcomer.

"It was a surreal feeling. I don't really remember how I was exactly feeling but I was nervous for sure. Playing against CSK, going in to bat, with Dhoni behind the wicket, was a surreal moment for sure, I'll never forget that. I was more excited than nervous and enjoyed every bit of it."

Starc is a superstar, do not think of him from investment standpoint: KKR CEO Mysore

+PTI ■ KOLKATA

Under scrutiny for his poor show in the ongoing season, IPL's costliest buy Mitchell Starc on Monday received the backing of Kolkata Knight Riders' managing director and CEO Venky Mysore, who said they don't think of him from an "investment standpoint".

KKR had bought Starc for a record Rs 24.75 crore but it always came with a caveat as the Aussie left-arm quick had limited experience in the shortest format and was making a comeback to IPL after nine years.

"He's a superstar and he's a quality player," Mysore said on the sideline of Knight Golf event at RCGC here.

"We don't think of it from an investment standpoint, because you go to the auction and things happen in the hands of the player, nor is it in the hands of anybody else."

"We just felt that an addition to the team like Mitchell Starc would add a lot of value, which it has. I mean, his presence itself in the lineup adds a different dynamic to the team, and there were specific skills that the support staff were looking for. So, we think we had that."

Starc's rustiness in the T20 format came to fore as he conceded 100 runs without taking any wicket from his eight overs in the first two matches.

It turned from bad to worse on Sunday when he leaked 54



runs from 16 balls at Eden Gardens, and in the final over, RCB No 9 Karn Sharma with little batting pedigree smashed him for three sixes in four balls. Starc, however, managed to salvage some pride taking a low return catch to dismiss Karn that eventually sealed a dramatic one-run victory.

"There are times when games are up and down. Everybody gets taken to the cleaners at times, and there are other times they come and just do their thing and win games for the team. So we're super happy having him in the setup," Mysore said.

With five wins from seven

matches at the halfway mark, the second placed KKR look a transformed side under mentor and two-time title winning former captain Gautam Gambhir.

Gambhir, who last represented the side in 2017, returned to his former franchise as a team mentor, relinquishing the same position at Lucknow Super Giants this season.

Mysore said Gambhir has added a lot of "weight" to the side.

"I think the consistency that is shown, I think we look like a more balanced and settled side this year. Needless to say, Gautam (Gambhir) coming in adds a lot of weight purely from the intensity that he brings, the experience that he brings."



Du Plessis, Curran fined for IPL Code of Conduct breaches

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Royal Challengers Bengaluru skipper Faf du Plessis has copped a Rs 12 lakh fine, while Punjab Kings captain has been penalised 50 per cent of his match fees for their respective offences, the IPL announced on Monday.

Du Plessis was fined for maintaining a slow over-rate during RCB's thrilling one-run loss, their seventh of the ongoing season, to Kolkata Knight Riders at the Eden Gardens on Sunday.

"Mr Faf du Plessis, Captain, Royal Challengers Bengaluru has been fined after his team maintained a slow over-rate during Match 36 of the TATA Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 against Kolkata Knight Riders at the Eden Gardens, Kolkata on April 21, 2024," an IPL statement read.

It was RCB's first over-rate offence of the season. Curran, on the other hand, was fined half of his match fees for a Level 1 offence under Article 2.8 of the IPL's Code of Conduct which refers to "showing dissent at an umpire's decision" during PBKS' three-wicket loss to Gujarat Titans in Mullanpur on Sunday.

"Curran committed a Level 1 offence under Article 2.8 of the IPL's Code of Conduct. He admitted to the offence and accepted the Match Referee's sanction. For Level 1 breaches of the Code of Conduct, the Match Referee's decision is final and binding," an IPL media release stated. The loss against GT was Punjab's fourth on the trot, they are now languishing on the ninth place in the points table.

We need middle order to get more runs: PBKS bowling coach Charl Langeveldt

PTI ■ MULLANPUR

Punjab Kings' bowling coach Charl Langeveldt has urged his middle-order batters to step up and "get more runs on the board" following their three-wicket loss to Gujarat Titans in the IPL here.

Punjab Kings made brisk start to reach 45 for no loss in five overs but their innings went downhill thereafter as they lost 7 for 47 runs to be all out for 142. GT overhauled the target in 19.1 overs.

It was their sixth loss in eight games.

"Disappointing. Players are hurt as well as the staff and the fans. We showed a lot of character with the ball. We had a good powerplay with the bat for the first time in three games but in the middle period, their spinners were too quality for our batters and we struggled."

"We just need middle order upfront to get more runs. We were probably 20 runs short on that wicket," Langeveldt said at the post-match press conference.

While Gujarat Titans used their spinners well with the trio of Sai Kishore, Rashid Khan and Noor Ahmad exposing the opposition with

their guile, PBKS picked Harpreet Singh Bhatia as their Impact Player due to the batting collapse even as Rahul Chahar stayed on the bench.

"It was the idea, we could have another spinner [Rahul] Chahar to play in but obviously when you're batting and you've had a collapse like that, it's better to get the runs on board," Langeveldt said.

"That's something we want to improve, get more runs on the board. We are going to travel now and we are going to play on better batting wickets and that would give the batters a bit more confidence going into the last few games. We take every game like a semi-final, final but yeah, it's one of those things"

"The batters are definitely going to be happy about the next venue (Eden Gardens, Kolkata). The bowlers need to



step up as well when we play at different venues, higher scoring grounds. Hopefully our batters will come good for us."

While PBKS are languishing on the second last position on the points table, Langeveldt tried to look at the positives.

"We still have to have that belief. We are a positive side, the boys showed a lot of character in the field. There's a lot to play for, we just need to win."

Rahul Tewatia played an unbeaten 18-ball 36-run innings and scored the winning runs for GT and fast bowler, Mohit Sharma was lavish in his praise for the dashing finisher.

"For the past three years, he (Rahul Tewatia) has been with the GT team. He's done it several times before (finishing games for his team). All credit goes to him," Mohit Sharma said.

"He practices the same scenarios at the nets. It is also a challenge for us when we bowl to him. He played a crucial innings, which was undoubtedly the turning point in the game for us."

We may have got away with Kohli wicket: Phil Salt

PTI ■ KOLKATA

It was a rub of the green call that Virat Kohli was dismissed off a high full toss and Kolkata Knight Riders managed to eke out a narrow one-run win in their high-scoring IPL match against RCB on Sunday, says stumper-batter Phil Salt.

The new Hawk-Eye technology to determine no-balls for height was used when TV umpire Michael Gough deemed a waist-high delivery from KKR's Harshit Rana fair.

Kohli was in full flow, scoring a brisk 18 runs off just seven balls, before Rana took a return catch to dismiss the star batter, as it became a pivotal moment in RCB's narrow one-run loss while chasing a challenging target of 223 at Eden Gardens. "It's split opinion, we know that. From our point of view, we feel like we may have got away with one there. It's the rub of the greens, one of those calls," said the world No 2 T20I batter at the Knight Golf event here.

The Englishman further said leveraging technology in this manner is ultimately beneficial for the game as he hinted at the possibility of a future review to assess the effectiveness of these technological advancements.

"They brought that data in, the no-ball data, for exactly that purpose. I feel like in 12 months' time maybe there'll be some sort of review. Is it working? Is it not working? Is it a new thing to the game?" But personally, from a player's point of view, any time you're using data and technology to be more precise and get the right decisions, that's a good thing for the game," Salt added.

Salt and Sunil Narine, the two KKR openers, have scored the bulk of runs (535 runs from seven innings) for the team who have won five from their seven matches to be in the forefront of a playoff spot.

"It's great batting with Sunil, he is a very, very low-key chill guy. He's got a very different sort of skill set



when he's opening the batting, as opposed to, up and down the order.

"I suppose one of the good things for me is he takes the pressure off, and I don't have to strike at a rate of 200 in my first 10 balls. Some games I might, but I don't have to."

"Normally, one of us gets going, and the other one feeds the strike. So, if we get a good start, we get a couple of boundaries away. You know, we can produce really big power plays, which is something that we've done."

They have went about their ways with a meticulous approach, picking the right bowler to attack and relied on match-ups, Salt said.

"Our conversations are mainly, who's going to take what ball, you know, who likes to match up, left arm spin, right arm pace, all that sort of things."

"Normally one of us who wants to put their hand up and take that arm. We keep it very, very simple."

Narine has been a revelation with the bat at the top of the order as

the KKR spinner who was known as a pinch-hitter, has batted this time with poise and patience.

Narine struck his maiden T20 century, scoring 109 against Rajasthan Royals the other day.

GAUTI INSPIRES CONFIDENCE IN NARINE:

TENDO: KKR fielding coach Ryan Ten Doeschate, a member of their 2014 IPL title winning team under Gautam Gambhir, credited Narine's transformation to the former skipper who is now the mentor of the side. "To be dead honest, I think Gauti did convince Sunil to open the batting and that also comes from the chemistry they have. They've worked together. Sunil played under him. I think it was a pretty easy."

"We've tried to get that up to order in other competitions as well. And he hasn't done it. But for whatever reason, Gambhir inspires a lot of confidence in Sunil. And he was happy to take the job on and hopefully that can continue," he added.



Treat for Malayalam cinephiles as Mohanlal and Shobhana returns!

The legendary Malayalam film duo Mohanlal and Shobana will return on screen for the former's 360th film, directed by Tharun Moorthy. The movie began shooting yesterday, April 22. Mohanlal posted this information on his X account.

"On the set, joining in prayers as we commence filming the project led by director Tharun Moorthy and produced by M. Renjith under Rejaputhra Visual Media," the actor wrote with photos of herself with

Shobana and the cast and crew of the movie. "With great appreciation, I ask for your blessings as I begin my 360th film project."

For the first time in more than 20 years, Mohanlal and Shobana will be sharing a screen. The pair is responsible for some of the most iconic Malayalam movies ever made, such as *Nirattukal*, *Irupattam Noottandu*, and *Chenkol*.

Expectations are already quite high because Mohanlal, Shobana, and Tharun Moorthy are collaborat-

ing on this movie; details regarding the narrative and title are still being withheld. The movie is expected to be a touching love story that brings back the romance of the Mohanlal-Shobana on-screen duo.

For Malayalam film enthusiasts who have been dying to see Mohanlal and Shobana together once more, this reunion is a dream come true. The movie is expected to cause a lot of excitement in the upcoming months and is certain to be a significant event for the Malayalam cinema industry.



Satyabhama in cinemas on May 17

Kajal Aggarwal is next going to be seen playing the character of a cop, a first of hers, in the upcoming film titled *Satyabhama*. The makers of *Satyabhama* on Monday announced the release date, confirming it will arrive in theaters on May 17.

The film is being directed by new director Suman Chikkala. Sashi Kiran Tikka, known for his work on hits like *Major*, has contributed to the screenplay of this movie. Produced by Bobby Tikka and Srinivasa Rao Takkalapalli, the film wrapped up its production. Kajal Aggarwal plays ACP Satyabhama, who leads a high-stakes investigation to find a missing man. The plot takes place in various towns that are shrouded in darkness, providing a thrilling environment for the audience. Prakash Raj and Naveen Chandra are among the cast members.



Nani launched Allari Naresh and Faria's *Aa Okkati Adakku* trailer



With his latest film, *Aa Okkati Adakku*, due out this summer, Allari Naresh is poised to entertain. There was excitement for the recently released trailer because Naresh hasn't done a full-length entertainer in a while and because the teaser was funny. The trailer was unveiled by Natural Star Nani.

The trailer commences with a delivery boy asking for Naresh's address. The comedy with a sealed cover appeals to young people. The challenges faced by Naresh, who tries everything but is unable to find a partner for a wedding, are then depicted to us. Fortunately, Faria Abdullah's proximity to him gives him fresh hope. Regrettably, they find themselves in a difficult predicament. The entire time, Allari Naresh's mark of entertainment is evident. Malli Ankem portrayed the character in a humorous manner. It appears that the film contains more content than what was revealed in the trailer.

Gopi Sundar composed the soundtrack, while Surya handled the cinematography for the Rajiv Chilaka-produced movie. The release date is set for May 3. The film in both AP and TS will be released by Asian Suresh Entertainment LLP.



Sid Sriram dazzles the Coachella audience with his Tamil tunes

Sid Sriram, the singer of *Srivali*, made Coachella 2024 history by being the first South Indian performer. Due to his performance at the festival, Punjabi singer-actor Diljit Dosanjh grabbed headlines last year. At Coachella, Sriram sang a holy Tamil song called *Thiruppugazh*, which is devoted to Lord Murugan, as he concluded his performance.

The performer posted an explanation of his decision on Instagram, saying, "I probably would have laughed and gone back to daydreaming if you had told 9-year-old me that I'd end my @coachella set with the *Thiruppugazh* my mother had just taught me. In 2024, the festival welcomes its first-ever South Indian performer."

"My name is Sid Sriram; I was born in Chennai, India, and I grew up in the Bay Area, California," the caption of his photo said. "I'm proud of every single aspect of my identity, and I'm from a discipline called Carnatic music. I also assure you that we are headed toward a global revolution in music, love, and healing." During his performance at the event, Sriram, a professional Carnatic singer, mixed R&B with Carnatic music. The artist is also well-known for her playback vocals in the Tamil and Telugu cinema industries. In addition to working with Oscar-winning artists like AR Rahman, he made his feature debut in the film *Vaanam Kottatum*, directed by Mani Ratnam.

Vishwambhara's 26-day-long schedule comes to an end

The socio-fantasy *Vishwambhara*, which is being directed by Vassisht of *Bimbisara* fame, stars Megastar Chiranjeevi. The film's massive action scene, which was filmed in Hyderabad on a set, has made headlines.

It was reported yesterday by director Vassishta and his team that the 26-day schedule came to an end on Monday. Along with the VFX crew, Chiru, the Ram-Laxman team, and production designer AS Prakash collaborated on the schedule.

They also said that the interval action scene would be unimaginable. The background features a towering statue of Lord Hanuman.

The movie is produced by UV Creations and is presented by Vikram. Sushmita Konidela is the costume designer for the pan-Indian film, which has music by MM Keeravani and cinematography by Chota K. Naidu.

The production cost of the January 10th release (in 2025) was Rs 185 crore. Sarigama Cinemas, a US-based distribution business, reportedly paid Rs. 18 crore last month to purchase the international rights to the pan-Indian film.

NTR Jr pre-b'day kickstarts, fans celebrate like festival in Hyd



Rightly hailed as the Man of Masses, NTR Jr enjoys a dedicated fan base both locally and worldwide. Currently gearing up for his upcoming blockbuster, *Devara: Part 1*, the actor's birthday is nearing on May 20th. To make the most of the special occasion, fans of NTR Jr. organised a grand pre-birthday celebration in Hyderabad to kick off the less-than-a-month countdown ahead of the actor's birthday.

To celebrate, a gigantic poster of NTR Jr was placed outside the Sudarshan Theatre 35MM in Hyderabad. Decorated with a massive garland, fans cheered 'Jai NTR', wearing 'Jai NTR' t-shirts, holding his posters, and dancing joyfully. The atmosphere truly felt like a beautiful, festive-like celebration, showcasing how much fans adore and love the actor as they eagerly await his birthday.

On the work front, Man of Masses NTR Jr will be next seen in *Devara: Part 1*. Directed by Koratala Siva, the magnum opus is produced by Yuvasudha Arts and NTR Arts, and presented by Nandamuri Kalyan Ram. The film's music is orchestrated by Anirudh Ravichander, and the cinematography is handled by R. Rathnavelu. *Devara: Part 1* hits screens on October 10, 2024.

Na Chei Pattukove from Sabari out now

Versatile artiste Varalakshmi Sarathkumar in the lead role in the movie *Sabari*, produced by Mahendranath Kundla under Maha Movies banner under recently released the song *Na Chei Pattukove*. The audience knows that *Sabari* is being released pan India. This song was also released in five languages besides Telugu, Hindi, Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam. Gopisunder is composing the music for *Sabari*! Rahman has provided Telugu lyrics for the song composed by him. This song is sung by Amrita Suresh. The song was released by Sabari Music channel.

Varalakshmi Sarath Kumar helmed this song on Niveksha, who played her daughter in the film. The song was shot in beautiful locations in Kodaikanal hills. Seeing the visuals, it is understood that the song comes when both the mother and daughter are going on a vacation. Producer Mahendranath Kundla said on the occasion of the release of the song, *Na Chei Pattukove* Varalakshmi Sarathkumar's performance is the main attraction of the film. "Her acting as a mother and her longing for her daughter moves everyone. She made a female oriented film for the first time. The scenes between mother and daughter will impress everyone. This song comes at a crucial point in the story. It is an emotional psychological thriller. We are making preparations for a pan-India release on May 3," he said.



Kalyan Shankar to direct *Tillu Cube*

Known for his involvement in the writing of films like *Jaathirathalu*, writer-director Kalyan Shankar of *MAD* fame is now busy carving out *MAD2*, while he is also entangled in the writing of some of the upcoming projects of Sithara Entertainment. But then there's another big hint coming from sources in the Sithara compound!

Kalyan Shankar was also involved in the writing of Sithara's recent superhit *Tillu Square* as well and reports are now coming that he will be involved with this franchisee more directly now. They say that after wrapping *MAD2*, Kalyan will be kickstarting the shooting of *Tillu Cube* with Siddhu Jonnalagadda and a new heroine in the lead. Already the writing works of this new film

are in discussions, after Siddhu and Kalyan developed a new idea for the sequel.

It's surprising to see that the three *Tillu* films have three different directors including the first one directed by Vimal Krishna, second one by Mallick Ram and now Kalyan Shankar. However, for now, the details of this third installment are kept under the wraps.

