



# sunday pioneer

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# Telangana... 10 Years Festive Celebration

**People's Telangana**, stepping into the 11<sup>th</sup> year  
heralding a new era of progress.

**Telangana Formation Day Celebrations**

on **2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2024.**

*Jaya Jayahe Telangana...  
Janani Jaya Kethanam...*



Issued by Special Commissioner, I&PR Dept., Government of Telangana

### Programmes

**Celebrations reach a new high:**  
Tankbund will be the Grand Venue for  
Laser show, Fireworks, Carnival and  
Cultural programmes from 5pm onwards.

**ALL ARE INVITED...**

**Hon'ble Chief Minister**

**Sri A. Revanth Reddy Garu**

will pay tribute at Gun Park Martyrs Stupa at 9:30am

will unfurl the National Flag and receive the  
Guard of Honour at 10:00am in Parade Grounds.

**Congratulations and welcome to the people of Telangana on the eve of Telangana Formation Day**



# Andhra CEO of We-Hub on a spree of sacking Telanganites

When hire and fire rules are governed by political or regional considerations, there is no 'permanent' job even in a government or quasi-government set-up. The ground can be shaky for those hired and for those who hire! Newly appointed Chief Executive Officer of We-hub Sita Pallacholla is visibly distancing herself from the Bharat Rashtra Samithi for obvious reasons. It is a different matter that in 2015 the very same CEO had invited BRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha for India's first Angel Summit. Let alone BRS, the buzz is that the CEO seems disinclined to be associated with even Telangana, going by the current deviations in hiring and firing procedures at We-Hub. Generally, We-Hub announces openings and sets the last date for receiving applications. The hiring is ostensibly done purely on the basis of merit. However, the CEO is reportedly on a firing spree targeting mainly Telanganites. What is worse, she is recruiting on her own without issuing any public notifications. One among those so recruited has declared openly that "they" would leave for Andhra Pradesh should TDP leader Chandrababu Naidu form the government.

would entail sharp backlash from the public. So, confident that the upcoming new logo cannot go against log, irrespective of the party in power, the other day BRS working president KT Rama Rao led a walk at Charminar opposing the move. His walk found resonance in public perception that the Congress government cannot afford to tinker with TG logo.

## Attack government, but don't pinpoint CM

In the rough and tumble of present-day politics, it may be fine to criticize the chief minister for everything that seems wrong in the state. However, detractors need to be wary of the clout of the communities backing the CM; otherwise, their diatribe could backfire. In Telangana, on the face of it, Chief

Minister Revanth Reddy has been instrumental in deciding the state anthem and modifying the state emblem, with only the near-final versions being shared with others. It appears like a one-man show; yet the Opposition is very careful while attacking him on the move to drop Kakatiya Thoranam and Charminar. Explaining the conundrum, a senior leader in Telangana politics said, "We cannot distance ourselves from the 'Reddy community', who are in huge numbers, by targeting one leader. Besides, he is no less than the 'Dora KCR' we had in the past; the latter used to sit in his farmhouse, while the former is ensconced in his Jubilee Hills residence. But Velamas are small in number. If you see a leader attacking only Revanth Reddy; then it means the population is not significant in their constituency."

## Aam-aadmi scribe

A journalist, deemed to be 'the eyes and ears of the public', may have the privilege of interacting with the chief minister of a state and raising queries on mat-

# REPORTERS' DIARY

## The closer the contest, the higher the tension

With the D-Day fast approaching, both people and netas in Andhra Pradesh are facing extremely tense moments over conflicting claims made the ruling party and the opposition combine with supreme confidence! The fate of political parties and their leaders will be known on June 4th, but the nagging question is: Who is going to be the next Chief Minister?

While YRRC chief and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is confident of retaining power with additional seats in his kitty, former chief minister and TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu is equally sure of becoming the chief minister again. Both the leaders are preparing to be sworn in as chief minister, with their prominent chelas aspiring cabinet berths. The talk of the town is "never in the past has an election been so closely fought".

(With inputs from Naveena Ghanate, SNCN Acharyulu and K Venkateshwarlu)

# Sanjay to CM: Scrap ban on CBI operating in TG

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP General Secretary Bandi Sanjay Kumar asked Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to abolish the GO issued by the BRS government banning the CBI from operating in Telangana.

He sent a letter to the Chief Minister regarding this on Saturday. In his letter, Sanjay said the TG government should seek a CBI probe into the phone tapping case considering its importance and how it violated the Constitution and the spirit of democracy.

In his letter, Sanjay asked the CM to send a letter to the Centre seeking a CBI probe keeping the state's interests in mind.

He appealed to the CM to order a probe after issuing notices to former Chief



Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao and his son KT Rama Rao as both engaged in cyber attacks on the opposition through phone tapping.

He said that both KCR and KTR are ineligible to become MLAs as they had committed a serious crime. Sanjay appealed to the CM to send a

letter to the Speaker to declare both KCR and KTR ineligible to be Members of the Assembly.

He said the government is leaking info to the media regarding the phone tapping case, but nobody knows what is happening and this gives scope for doubts about the

probe agencies.

The BJP General Secretary said that pressure is being exerted on the state government from Delhi to ensure that a comprehensive inquiry is not held into the Kaleshwaram Project scam and phone tapping case. He also said that mega-money deals took place regarding this.

Sanjay said the credibility of the Congress government would have increased if they had probed KCR and his son KTR by issuing notices to them about the phone tapping case.

However, the Congress is trying to shield KCR and his family to protect its political interests. It is this that makes the intervention of Central investigation agencies like the CBI and the ED inevitable, Sanjay said.

## TELANGANA TURNS 10

# Revanth vows to make state role model

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana turned 10 on Sunday as it was formed on June 2, 2014, bifurcating Andhra Pradesh after decades of struggle.

On the occasion of the decadal celebrations of the formation of Telangana State, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy extended his greetings to the people of the state. He noted that Telangana, gained through the struggles of the people has completed 10 years and is stepping into its eleventh year.

Highlighting the significance of June 2, he expressed happiness that Telangana has now attained complete liberation and is a separate state.

He reminded that, as per the Bifurcation Act, Hyderabad, which had been the joint capital until now, will henceforth be exclusively the capital of Telangana. The people of Telangana can now avail the lion's share of educational and employment opportunities in TG, he said.

The Chief Minister reiterated that the government is committed to rebuilding Telangana and fulfilling the

**The CM promised to restore the democratic atmosphere and revive systems ruined in the last 10 years. The Chief Minister reiterated that he will uphold the trust reposed in him by the people.**

dreams of the people. The CM promised to restore the democratic atmosphere and revive systems ruined in the last 10 years. The Chief Minister reiterated that he will uphold the trust reposed in him by the people.

He said the government is formulating plans and policies to promote Telangana as a role model for the country in all fields.

The Chief Minister also paid tributes to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the struggle for statehood.

He hailed the poets, artists, students, teachers, government employees, intellectuals, journalists, lawyers, workers, farmers, women and political leaders who participated in the long-drawn Telangana state movement.

# Mixed predictions for AP Surveys project a keen contest between YSRCP & TDP alliance

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The much-awaited exit poll survey results have been widely disseminated across media platforms since Saturday evening. These surveys present a mixed picture, with some indicating a close contest between the ruling YSRCP and the Opposition bloc, which comprises the NDA alliance (Telugu Desam Party - Jana Sena - Bharatiya Janata Party).

Some exit polls suggest the YSRCP will secure a second term, while others predict a victory for the NDA alliance. Notably, national media houses report contrasting results compared to regional survey agencies regarding the Lok Sabha polls.

Andhra Pradesh went to polls on May 13 to elect a 175-member State Assembly and 25 Lok Sabha seats. A total of 503 candidates contested for the Lok Sabha, while 2,705 vied for Assembly seats.

The differing predictions have left political analysts and media houses puzzled about the exact voter sentiment in Andhra Pradesh. The final results, set to be announced on June 4, will determine the actual winners.

Key exit poll results include: Jan Ki Baat: NDA alliance 12-17 seats, YSRCP 8-13 seats;

PMARQ: NDA alliance 19-22 seats, YSRCP 5-8 seats

News18 Mega Exit Poll: NDA alliance 19-22 seats, YSRCP 5-8 seats

ABP-CVoter: NDA alliance 21-25 seats, YSRCP 0-4 seats

Several regional surveys provide varied outcomes:

Atmasakshi: YSRCP 98-116 assembly seats, NDA alliance 59-77 seats, YSRCP 16 MPs, NDA alliance 8 MPs, with 1 MP seat being closely contested.

Aaraa Mastan: YSRCP 94-104 assembly seats, NDA alliance 71-81 seats, YSRCP 13-15 MPs, NDA alliance 10-12 MPs, Chanakya Partha Das: YSRCP 110-120 assembly seats, NDA alliance 55-65 seats, YSRCP 13 MPs, NDA alliance 11 MPs. Wrap Strategies: YSRCP 158 assembly seats, NDA alliance 4 seats, with 13 seats closely contested; YSRCP 23 MPs, NDA alliance 2 MPs.

Pulse Today: YSRCP 46-54 assembly seats, NDA alliance 121-129 seats, YSRCP 5-6 MPs, NDA alliance 19-20 MPs. Chanakya Strategies: YSRCP 47 assembly seats, NDA alliance 109 seats, with 19 seats closely contested; YSRCP 7 MPs, NDA alliance 18 MPs. Smart Poll: YSRCP 82 assembly seats, NDA alliance 93 seats, YSRCP 9-12 MPs, NDA alliance 13-16 MPs.

# Believe in people's poll, not exit polls: TMC

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Rejecting the exit poll predictions about the 42 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal, the Trinamool Congress on Saturday said it believed in people's mandate.

Most of the exit polls have predicted that the BJP will get more seats than the TMC in the state.

"Most of the exit polls had predicted a victory for the BJP in the 2021 assembly elections. But we all know what the actual results were -- TMC won a two-thirds majority. We believe in people's polls, not opinion polls or exit polls. The TMC will win more than 30 Lok Sabha seats in the state," party leader Santanu Sen claimed.

TMC MP Sougata Roy, who is seeking re-election from the Dum Dum Lok Sabha seat for a fourth consecutive term, also rejected the exit poll predictions. "The CPI(M) too declined to attach much importance to the exit polls."

"On most occasions, the exit polls or opinion polls don't match. So, we think that we should wait for the actual results to be declared on June 4," CPI (M) leader Sujan Chakraborty said.

# 'Will not lift ban on CBI'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy made it clear that the Congress government will not lift the ban imposed by the BRS government regarding the CBI's entry into the state. "If everything is in the hands of the Centre what would be left in the hands of the state?" the Chief Minister said. Speaking to journalists on Saturday at his residence, the Chief Minister said the TG police are doing their job well.

"The police are doing a good job in the phone-tapping case. Why is the BJP demanding a CBI inquiry into the phone tapping case? Don't they trust the state police?" he said.

The CM was replying to a question about BJP's General Secretary Bandi Sanjay Kumar writing a letter to the Chief Minister demanding that the Congress government revoke the ban on the entry of the CBI into the state. The CM said that there

is no question of revoking the BRS government's decision on CBI's entry into the state.

The Chief Minister said that he did not review phone-tapping cases as the Model Election Code is in force. He said that he would not respond to media reports as he doesn't know whether the reports are true or not.

However, the CM said there will be an ultimate beneficiary in any crime, and the same applies to phone-tapping cases too.

# Sonia will attend Formation Day fete...

Continued from page 1

Stating that KCR made Telangana a business item and gained a lot from that, the CM asked why the Congress government should allow the Charminar and the Kakatiya Kalathoranam in the state emblem. The CM said the Congress government had declared in the Assembly that it will change everything.

"Did KCR's grandfather construct the Charminar and the Kakatiya Kalathoranam? Both are symbols of monarchic rule. Why did the KCR family object when we

included the Martyrs' Memorial in the emblem? We see the Kakatiya kings as the killers of Sammakka, Sarakka and Jampanna. We will not allow any trace of monarchy. I have to respect the Cabinet's decision. We will convene an all-party meeting including the AIMIM," the CM said.

The CM said that KCR and KTR have been saying that they will burn the city if the Telangana Martyrs memorial is seen in the state emblem. He said that he is ready for a debate on it in the Assembly. "Our policy is that there must not be any trace

of monarchic rule," he said. The CM said that his tenure as TPCC president will end on June 9 and the high command will decide the new TPCC president.

He said the government will take action as per the NDSA report on the Kaleshwaram Project.

The CM said the government will conduct a caste census soon as orders have already been issued.

He said that BRS MLA Harish Rao has been raking up the common capital issue although Andhraites are not speaking about it. Harish wants to engage in politick-

ing through it as he has nothing else to do, the CM said.

The CM said his government will implement the farm loan waiver scheme by August 15 and that the government has sent letters to banks which give loans to farmers. He said the government will move forward after assessing all factors.

The Chief Minister said the Congress government is neither supporting nor opposing the operations of Som Distilleries in Telangana and that he would explain about it after the election code is lifted.

# AP's capital connections with...

Continued from page 1

At that time Hyderabad was made the joint capital of AP and TG for 10 years. The 10-year period comes to an end on June 2, 2024. Now Hyderabad is the capital of Telangana alone.

Even though Hyderabad was the joint capital for 10 years, in 2016, the TDP government headed by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu shifted the AP secretariat and administrative offices to

Amaravati from Hyderabad.

The capital of AP became a controversy between the TDP and the YSR Congress government. While the TDP government proposed Amaravati as the capital, the YSR Congress government proposed three capitals instead of a single capital. However, the TDP and YSRCP governments failed to construct a capital when they were in power. As a result, even after 10 years, Andhra Pradesh remains a state without a capital.

# BJP on top...

Continued from page 1

The Jan Ki Baat exit poll says that of the 17 LS seats in Telangana, the BJP will win nine to 11 seats, while the Congress may win seven to eight seats. The BRS and the AIMIM are likely to win one each. On May 13, 2024, the voters of Telangana cast ballots in all the 17 Lok Sabha constituencies. Election results are scheduled to be announced on June 4, 2024.

The Indian National Congress led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has significant strength in Telangana. Its main rivals are the BRS and the BJP.

**TODAY**

**ALMANAC**

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha  
Tithi: Ekadashi: Jun 02 05:04 AM to Jun 03 02:41 AM  
Dwadashi: Jun 03 02:41 AM to Jun 04 12:18 AM

**Nakshatram:**  
Revati: Jun 02 03:16 AM to Jun 03 01:40 AM  
Ashwini: Jun 03 01:40 AM to Jun 04 12:05 AM

**Rahukalam:** 5:06 PM to 6:43 PM  
**Yamagandam:** 12:14 PM to 1:51 PM  
**Varjyam:** 08:20 PM to 09:50 PM  
**Gulika:** 3:29 PM to 5:06 PM  
**Amritkalam:** 11:26 PM to 12:55 AM  
**Abhijit Muhurtham:** 11:48 AM to 12:40 PM

**HYDERABAD WEATHER**

Forecast: Scattered Thunderstorms  
Temp: 38°  
Humidity: 45%  
Sunrise: 5:41 AM  
Sunset: 6:48 PM

Updated: June 1 2024 5:00 PM

# KCR to...

Continued from page 1

Listing out the failures of the Congress, KCR said the government had failed in implementing its poll promises and the state's image was being dented by power outages.

"As people are facing problems under your rule, I regret to inform you that the BRS will not be attending the decennial celebrations," KCR said in his letter.

He also hoped that the government would strive for public welfare and fulfil all its poll promises.

# 'Modi set for...

Continued from page 1

The Republic TV-Matrize poll gave 353-368 seats to the NDA and 118-133 seats to the opposition.

The Jan Ki Baat poll gave 362-392 seats to the ruling NDA and 141-161 to the opposition alliance. The India TV-CNX gave them 371-401 and 109-139 seats respectively, while the corresponding tally predicted by News Nation was 342-378 and 153-169.

After the seventh and last phase of voting ended on Saturday, Modi on Saturday said that people have voted in record numbers to re-elect the NDA government and said the 'opportunistic INDI Alliance' failed to strike a

chord with the voters who rejected their "regressive politics".

The Congress, however, claimed that the exit polls had been "orchestrated" by PM Modi and said these are all psychological games he is masterminding, but the actual results will be very different. Reacting to the exit polls, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said, "The man whose exit is certain on June 4th has had these exit polls orchestrated. The INDI Janbandhan will definitely get a minimum of 295 seats, which is a clear and decisive majority."

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge told reporters after a meeting of the opposition INDIA bloc that

the alliance will win more than 295 seats.

"We have arrived at this figure after speaking with all our leaders. This is a survey of people. People have given this information to our leaders. The government surveys are there and their media friends also inflate figures and put it out. Therefore, we want to tell you about the reality," he said. BJP president J P Nadda, however, asserted that people have voted in favour of a capable, powerful, developed and self-reliant India and to put aside appeasement, nepotism and corruption, exuding confidence that his party will win more than 370 Lok Sabha seats and the NDA over 400.

# Bhatti puts electricity...

Continued from page 1

Instead, it should be done sequentially from one area to another. Additionally, local consumers should be informed in advance when LC is being taken, Bhatti said.

He stressed that everyone, from the Principal Secretary of the Energy Department to linemen, must stay alert and continuously review the situation to ensure smooth operations. The review meeting was attended by the Principal Secretary of the Energy Department, SMA Rizvi, the CMD of the Southern Power Distribution Company, Musharraf Ali, Transco JMD Srinivas Rao and others.

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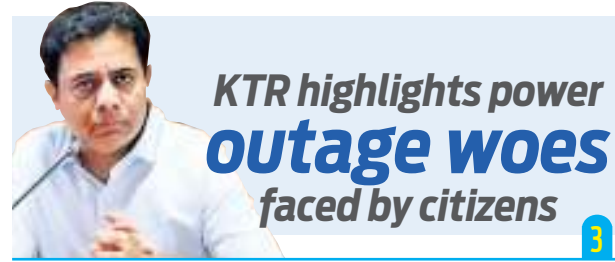
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**KTR highlights power outage woes faced by citizens**



**Air India apologises, offers US\$ 350 travel voucher to passengers**



**Bomma Mahesh Kumar Goud BONDING factor in TPCC**

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
The pioneer

**Did KCR's grandfather construct the Charminar and the Kakatiya Kalathoranam? Both are symbols of monarchic rule. Why did the KCR family object when we included the Martyrs' Memorial in the TG emblem? We see Kakatiya kings as the killers of Sammakka, Sarakka and Jampanna. We will not allow any trace of monarchic rule. I have to respect the Cabinet's decision. We will convene an all-party meeting**

**- Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister**

**DON'T MISS...**

**LS polls: 10,000 personnel...**

The counting of votes polled in the election to 17 Lok Sabha constituencies in Telangana will be taken up at 34 locations on June 4 with about 10,000 personnel taking part in the exercise, a senior official said on Saturday. The counting of postal ballots and votes cast in EVMs would start at 8 am in all constituencies. Postal ballots would be counted in separate halls. Counting will be on June 4. It will start at 8 am. We have separate counting halls for EVMs. We have separate...

-PAGE: 3

**'BRS will disappear...**

Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has predicted that the BRS will vanish into thin air after the counting of votes to take place in the state on Saturday. Venkat Reddy, quoting former Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao as saying on the floor of the State legislative Assembly, said that the statehood to Telangana would not have materialised at all without the intervention of UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi. Statehood to Telangana, which was considered impossible to attain...

-PAGE: 4

**Top 100 cos to verify market...**

The top 100 listed companies by market capitalization will have to confirm or deny any market rumour reported in the mainstream media from this Saturday. The rule will be applicable for top 250 companies from December 1. Under the Sebi's rule, these companies will have to 'confirm, deny, or clarify any reported event or information in the mainstream media that is not general in nature and that indicates that rumours of an impending specific material event' are circulating amongst...

-PAGE: 6

**Braving icy heights: Election...**

Prem Lal arrived early at the sub-divisional magistrate's office on Thursday, the icy cold and crisp morning air hinting at the challenges ahead. As one of the 29 booth-level officers deployed from Kaza to polling stations in Lahaul-Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh, Lal knew that the next few days would be demanding. Wearing sunglasses to shield his eyes from the glaring sun, the trained graduate teacher joined others in a semi-circle. The SDM, carrying a bunch of papers clipped together, called out the names of the poll-booth officers and their assignments. It is Tashigang for Lal and his team of five others. Tashigang is a tiny village perched high in the icy Himalayas at a staggering altitude of 15,256 feet. The village holds...

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## 'Modi set for hat-trick'

**Exit polls predict massive win for BJP-led NDA in LS elections**

With the completion of the seventh and last phase of the Lok Sabha elections, there have been exit poll predictions galore, mostly indicating a hat-trick for the Modi-led NDA. The only surprising element among these diverse predictions is the state-wise picture

drawn by some organizations that have come out with their own predictions and varying numbers. At the end of the day, the fact remains that all predictions are estimations of random surveys and not conclusive about who is going to form the next government at

the Centre. Still, they generate interest, whet curiosity, and boost confidence among parties hoping to get positive results. As the proverb goes, 'There is many a slip between the cup and the lip'. The final outcome on June 4th will decide the winner.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Exit polls on Saturday predicted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will retain power for a third straight term, with the BJP-led NDA expected to win a big majority in the Lok Sabha polls. The ABP-C Voter has forecast 353-383 seats for the BJP-led alliance and 152-182 seats for the opposition INDIA bloc.

Today's Chanakya predicted a much higher tally for the BJP and its alliance than the 2019 polls. It gave 335 seats to the BJP and 400 to the NDA, with a margin of 15 seats either way. It gave 107 seats to the opposition alliance with a possibility of its tally going up or down by 11 seats.

The BJP had given the slogan of '400 paar' for its alliance in this Lok Sabha polls.

If the exit polls hold true, Modi will equal the record of the country's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, in leading



his party to victory at the polls for a third straight term.

The Times Now-ETG Research's exit poll gave 358 and 152 seats to the NDA and the INDIA bloc respectively.

Many pollsters said the NDA may surpass its 2019 tally of 353 seats. The BJP had won 303 seats in the election. The Congress had bagged 53 seats and its allies

The 'INDIA' bloc was formed by opposition parties to take on the BJP-led NDA in the Lok Sabha elections.

The NDA in all likelihood will open its account in Tamil Nadu and Kerala and sweep Karnataka but may see a fall in its tally in states like Bihar, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Haryana, according to most pollsters. News 18 predicted that the

BJP on its own will get 306-315 seats while its alliance will bag 355-370 seats. It gave 125-140 seats to the opposition alliance.

The Republic TV-P Marq poll claimed that the ruling alliance will win up to 359 seats and the opposition INDIA bloc will bag 154 seats in the 543-member Lok Sabha.

### INDIA will form govt, Rahul will become PM: CM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that INDIA will come to power at the Centre, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that Rahul Gandhi will become the next Prime Minister. The Chief Minister said the Congress will win more than 10 LS constituencies in the state and four MPs will become Union Ministers this time. The CM also said that the Congress will win two MLC seats and one MLA post.

The CM said the BJP itself had said that it would win only four to five LS seats in Telangana and that INDIA would come to power although exit polls differ. The Chief Minister said the BJP will not win more than 240 LS seats. "My predictions never fail. INDIA will form the next government and Rahul Gandhi will be the Prime Minister."

## 'No power cuts or shortage of seeds'

**CM says KTR thinks he can topple Cong government using social media**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy made it clear that there are no power cuts in the state and that there is no shortage of seeds.

The CM said that former Minister T. Harish Rao is enacting cheap dramas with the help of local BRS leaders and some officials stating that there are power cuts. The CM said that he is ready to table log books and is ready for a debate on power cuts in the Assembly.

The CM said that there is no shortage of seeds in the state. However, farmers are asking for a particular brand, that is, Tulasi brand seeds.

The CM said the government has stored 10 per cent



**The Chief Minister said that he did not hold review meetings recently on any issue including phone tapping as the election code is in force and that he had ordered a probe into matters concerning the three barrages of the Kaleshwaram Project.**

more seeds and fertilizers than what is needed. "We are watching what the media is doing regarding this," he said.

The CM said the government will decide on Rythu Bharosa only after discussing it in the Assembly and that many changes have taken place

in land use. Many residential colonies have come up on agricultural lands and there are also farmhouses of Tatas and Birlas.

"Shall we give Rythu Bharosa to them? BRS leaders tried to create doubts among farmers by stating that the

government would give money only to farmers who own less than five acres. They kept mum when the government gave Rythu Bharosa funds to everyone," the CM said.

The CM said that BRS Working President KT Rama Rao opened social media houses with the help of some journalists thinking that he can topple the TG government using social media.

The Chief Minister said that he did not hold review meetings recently on any issue including phone tapping as the election code is in force and that he had ordered a probe into matters concerning the three barrages of the Kaleshwaram Project.

## Bhatti puts electricity staff on monsoon alert

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As the monsoon is likely to commence in a few days, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu has directed all electricity department officials and staff to be on alert.

A review meeting was held at the Secretariat on Saturday. During the monsoon, incidents like tree crashes, pole col-



**The Deputy CM asked field staff to be alert regarding this and to respond promptly to prevent any inconvenience to the public. He emphasised that steps should be taken to ensure uninterrupted power supply to the public and industries.**

lapses, and power line breaks due to strong winds are common.

The Deputy CM asked field staff to be alert regarding this and to respond promptly to

prevent any inconvenience to the public. He emphasised that steps should be taken to ensure uninterrupted power supply to the public and industries.

Caution is required concerning Line Clearances (LC). He advised against issuing LC simultaneously in multiple areas.

**Explosives worth Rs 8.75 lakh seized in Ranga Reddy dist**



P4

## AP's capital connections with Hyd city end today

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

The youngest state in the country, Telangana, is completing 10 years on June 2. Thus the 'capital' links of Andhra Pradesh with Hyderabad have come to an end.

The Andhra Pradesh State Reorganisation Act says that Hyderabad would be the joint capital of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh for only 10 years. But even after 10 years, issues regarding finance and the division of various government corporations between the two Telugu states are still pending.

The Centre recently settled the bifurcation of AP Bhavan in New Delhi between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. However, the dispute between the two Telugu states is continuing regarding the partition of the assets of corporations



**The dispute between the two Telugu states over RTC assets has not been resolved. While Andhra Pradesh is demanding a share in the RTC's assets located in Hyderabad city, Telangana has refused to accept that.**

based in Hyderabad and in other parts of Telangana. Both the Telugu states are not ready to compromise on this.

The dispute between the two Telugu states over RTC assets has not been resolved. While Andhra Pradesh is demanding a share in the RTC's assets located in Hyderabad city, Telangana has refused to accept

that. After 10 years both the Telugu states are unable to reach consensus over the division of institutions listed in the 9th and 10th Schedules of the State Reorganisation Act. The 9th Schedule lists around 89 institutions and the 10th Schedule lists 107 training institutions and other establishments.

During the last 10 years, the BRS was in power in Telangana and the Congress came to power four months ago. In Andhra Pradesh, the TDP was in power for the first five years after bifurcation and the YSR Congress came to power after that.

Assembly elections were held recently in Andhra Pradesh and results are awaited. In the last 10 years, governments changed in both the Telugu states but bifurcation issues between the two states remained unresolved.

The Centre has appointed several committees including the Sheela Bhide committee but their efforts were in vain. The distribution of employees between the two states and the payment of electricity dues too have not been resolved.

Telangana was formed on June 2, 2014.

### Lok Sabha 2024

Seats: 543	Target: 272		
	NDA	I.N.D.I.A	OTH
Dainik Bhaskar	281-350	145-201	33-49
India News-D-Dynamics	371	125	47
Jan Ki Baat	362-392	141-161	10-20
News Nation	342-378	153-169	21-23
Republic Bharat- Matrise	353-368	118-133	43-48
Republic TV - P MARQ	359	154	30
NDTV Poll of Polls	365	146	32

### Telangana

Total Lok Sabha Seats: 17			
	INC	BJP	BRS
India Today My Axis	4-6	11-12	1-0
AARAA	7-8	8-9	0
INDIA TV-CNX	6-8	8-10	0-1
PEOPLES PULSE	7-9	6-8	0-1
ABP -C VOTER	7-9	7-9	0
JANKI BATH	7-8	9-11	0-1
NEWS 18	5-8	7-10	2-5

### EXIT POLLS

## BJP on top in TG

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP is going to perform excellently in Telangana as per the exit poll results of the 2024 Lok Sabha election.

The 'India Today My Axis' exit poll says the BJP is likely to secure 11 to 12 LS seats, the Congress four to six seats and the BRS and the AIMIM will get one or none.

In Hyderabad, Pradeep Gupta said it would be a tight fight for AIMIM's Asaduddin Owaisi.

The News18 exit poll says that of the 17 LS seats in



Telangana, the BJP would secure seven to 10 seats, while the Congress may win five to eight seats and other parties are likely to win three to five seats. The NDA is expected to garner 37% of the votes, INDIA 34% and others 29%.

Continued on Page 2

## KCR to boycott TG decennial fete

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that Telangana was ruined during the last six months of Congress rule, former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao said the BRS will not attend the decennial celebrations of the state's formation organised by the government on Sunday.

In a letter addressed to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on Saturday, KCR hit out at the Congress and accused it of attempting to remove certain symbols considered the pride of the region from the state emblem.

KCR said that despite becoming the CM, Revanth has not even once said "Jai Telangana" and that people are watching the CM's plans to invite and then insult me.

"The way you sent the invitation, not giving me a place on the stage or allowing me to speak is demeaning," KCR said.

He pointed out that the CM has not even once visited or consoled a farmer. KCR pointed out that the BRS was not invited to the all-party

meeting which exposed the CM's anti-democratic stand.

He added that changing the state emblem is just a diversion tactic. "Your plans to remove the Charminar and the Kakatiya Thornam is dangerous and is nothing but

insulting Telangana," he said. "You are insulting Telangana by installing your party leader's (Rajiv Gandhi) statue instead of the Telangana Thalli at the secretariat," KCR said.

Continued on Page 2

## KCR pays tributes to TG martyrs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS chief KCR paid tributes to Telangana Martyrs at the Gun Park by offering floral tributes and lighting a candle marking 10 years after the formation of Telangana state.

KCR started a candlelight march from the Telangana Martyrs' Memorial to Amarajyoti near the Secretariat. BRS MLAs and activists participated in the event.

On Telangana Formation Day, BRS Working President KTR said, "10 years ago Telangana was formed and today we have completed 10



years. We are happy that our struggle for a separate state was successful. TG is one of the leading states of the country. We are celebrating the Telangana decade by paying our tributes to those who took part in the struggle and laid down their lives."

## Sonia will attend Formation Day fete if her health is okay: CM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said they expect Sonia Gandhi to attend Telangana Formation Day celebrations.

"We took permission from the ECI to allow Sonia Gandhi's participation. She will come if her health permits it. We will remember Sonia Gandhi in case she cannot come to Hyderabad due to medical reasons. She will send her message and we will register her presence through her message," the CM said.

During a chat with journalists on Saturday at his residence, the CM said his government will install a statue of the Telangana Thalli inside the Secretariat.

Continued on Page 2

### OBTUSE ANGLE





Film Nagar police nabs Nigerian for drug peddling

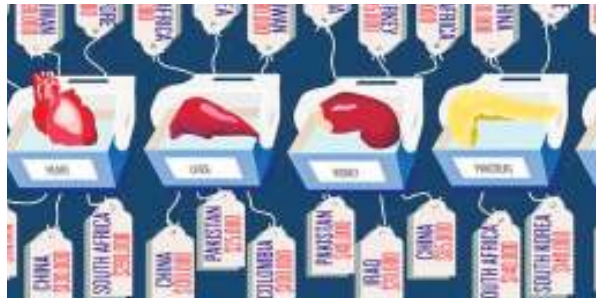
PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad Narcotics Enforcement Wing (HNEW) in coordination with the Film Nagar police on Saturday arrested a Nigerian national involved in drug peddling. The accused was identified as Okaro Cosmos Ramsey (38) who was residing at Shaikpet. The police seized 16 grams of cocaine, a car and two mobile phones totalling Rs 6,70,000 from the accused. Ramsey was previously booked by the Golconda police in 2016 and 2018 under the NDPS act. In 2014, the accused arrived in New Delhi on a business visa and later settled in Hyderabad for business and livelihood. Initially, Ramsey visited Tirupur in Tamil Nadu in connection with cloth export business. In 2016 Ramsey was arrested along with Abraham Jacob Ukoha, also a Nigerian, were arrested by the Golconda police for possessing cocaine. After being released from prison, Ramsey procured cocaine from another Nigerian identified as Obasi who was based in Bangalore, and began drug peddling in Hyderabad.

INTERNATIONAL ORGAN TRAFFICKING MAFIA  
Kerala Police arrest mastermind from Hyderabad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Kerala police on Saturday said it has arrested the alleged mastermind behind the international human trafficking network involved in organ harvesting. Ernakulam Rural SP Vaibhav Saxena said that 41-year-old Ballamkonda Ram Prasad also known as Pratapan was the alleged mastermind behind the mafia and was hiding out in a hotel in Hyderabad. A special investigation team of Kerala police arrested Pratapan, a native of Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh, police said. The police said that according to preliminary information received by it, many people have carried out kidney transplantation related transactions through the Andhra resident. The victims of the organ trafficking operation were from rural areas and the organs were allegedly removed in Iran, police said in a statement. Pratapan had first got in



touch with the organ trafficking mafia to donate his kidney, but as he suffered from some diseases, his organ could not be taken, it claimed. Later, he joined the group, became their main person and contacted organ recipients through social media, police further claimed. He would send the donors from India to Iran where they were received by one Sabith Nasar, who is already in police custody, the statement said. After the organs were donated, the donors were sent back to India by Nasar, it said. Besides Nasar and Pratapan, police have also

Keeravani urged to withdraw from Telangana song project

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana film journalists association (TFJA) requested Oscar winner MM Keeravani to withdraw from the project of composing of Telangana state's song. President of TFJA Masade Laxminarayana wrote an open letter to Keeravani in this regard. Keeravani is a great musician and every one shows respect for him. He said, "You are giving music to the Jaya Jayahe Telangana song, which is believed to be Telangana's state song". The people of the state believe that this is against their self-respect. "You have earned a reputation as a non-controversial one but you are being tarnished by the Jaya Jayahe song controversy. So please respectfully avoid this controversy," he mentioned. He wanted Keeravani to think more than twice and make a good decision. As this is a Telangana self-respect song, he requested Keeravani to give opportunity to the Telangana artistes to provide music for this song.

LS polls: 10,000 personnel to take part in counting of votes in Telangana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The counting of votes polled in the election to 17 Lok Sabha constituencies in Telangana will be taken up at 34 locations on June 4 with about 10,000 personnel taking part in the exercise, a senior official said on Saturday. The counting of postal ballots and votes cast in EVMs would start at 8 am in all constituencies. Postal ballots would be counted in separate halls. "Counting will be on June 4. It will start at 8 am. We have separate counting halls for EVMs. We have separate counting halls for postal ballots," state Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Vikas Raj said. There would be a three-layer security cordon put in place, he said. According to official data, there would be 18-21 rounds of counting for most of the segments. The counting of votes polled in the bypoll held for



"Counting will be on June 4. It will start at 8 am. We have separate counting halls for EVMs. We have separate counting halls for postal ballots," state Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Vikas Raj said

Secunderabad Cantonment Assembly constituency along with the Lok Sabha seats would also begin at 8 am on June 4 with postal ballots being counted first. However, the counting of EVM votes would be taken up at 8.30 am, official sources said. The bypoll for the Secunderabad Cantonment Assembly constituency was necessitated due to the death of sitting BRS MLA G Lasya Nanditha in a road accident earlier this year. Polling for the 17 Lok Sabha seats and the Secunderabad Cantonment Assembly bypoll was held on May 13.

IMD forecasts rainfall at few places in State

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana witnessed high temperatures of 45 to 47 C degrees with partly cloudy skies on Saturday, with only 1% of summer left for Hyderabad. The next five days are expected to see rainy weather at few places, with the Southwest monsoon entering South Telangana. According to the IMD, moderate rainfall with thunderstorms, lightning, and gusty winds of 30-40 kmph are very likely to occur at isolated places in Khammam, Nalgonda, Suryapet, Mahabubabad, Warangal, Hanamkonda, Jangaon, Mahabubnagar, Nagarkurnool, Wanaparthy, Narayanpet, and Jogulamba Gadwal districts of Telangana on Sunday. Heavy rain is very likely to occur at isolated



places on Monday. As per TSDPC, the highest maximum temperature of 47.1 degrees was recorded at Bheemaram, Mancherial. The state's daily maximum average temperature is 42.9 degrees, compared to the normal of 41.0 degrees. The highest maximum temperature of 43.6 degrees was recorded at Moosarambagh Ward Office (Medchal-Malkajgiri), according to the GHMC. According to the IMD, rainfall alert has been issued for Hyderabad for Sunday, predicting light to moderate rain and thundershowers, sometimes with intense spells and gusty winds with 40-50 kmph, expected in Charminar, Khairatabad, Kukatpally, LB Nagar, Secunderabad, and Serilingampally zones.

TG CID nab 3 more in fake passports case

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana CID has made three more arrests including two Sri Lankan nationals in the fake passports case, taking total number of arrested to 26. The accused Sri Lankans were identified as Varuniya Thiruvannavukkarasu (30) a private employee a resident of Thiruvallur in Chennai and Sanjika J a resident of Tiruchirappalli, Tamilnadu. They obtained Indian passports and tried to travel out of India. The other accused has been identified as Priya Dharmalingam (41) a resident of Tiruchirappalli. The three accused were presented before a court Dharmalingam acted as mediator and facilitated around (21) Srilankan nationals in obtaining Indian Passports in connivance with passport agents.

Cyber Police to youth: Do not fall prey to cyber crooks

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Cyber crime police on Saturday advised the youth not to blindly believe the advertisements offering jobs abroad by travel agents or the recruiting agents for overseas jobs especially to countries like Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos, and other countries and not be victims to the cyber criminals. On Saturday, the TG Cyber Security Bureau released a press release, where it mentioned that in a recent case, a young man from Sircilla district was trapped by a network of travel agents from Sircilla, UP and Pune and sent to Cambodia, wherein he was forced to work in a call centre being managed by Chinese Nationals. The victim was given a week's training in communication skills and later on was asked to make phone calls to Indian mobile numbers randomly and commit cyber-



employment opportunities. Once these victims reach these centres, they are made to commit Cyber Crimes. It has also come to light that some of the youth from India who are already into these jobs are working for the Chinese managers by becoming agents and establishing contacts with Travel Agents in India and who in turn are luring gullible youth from different parts of the country. In cases of job offerings abroad in any company or firm, they should approach the Protector General of Emigrants, under the Ministry of External Affairs to verify that the travel agent or the Recruiting Agents for overseas manpower in India is registered with them. Director, TG Cyber Security Bureau Shikha Goel requested the people to in case of any doubt, they may approach the TG CSB at email director-tscsb@tspolice.govin

Cyberabad EOW arrests two persons for embezzling Rs 4.15 crore

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) Police of Cyberabad arrested two persons on Saturday for allegedly embezzling Rs 4.15 crore. The complainant Mohammed Irshad Hussain complained that the authorised representative of Ishara Parks Private Limited, offered rental homes known as co-living properties in Hyderabad, along with 16 other cities across India. The complaint mentioned that the accused siphoned off the money from the company. The alleged accused were working in different locations and had placed a forged QR code of their own, instead of the Company's at the locations and obtained the money from our customer into their bank accounts instead of the company's bank account. By doing so, they diverted payments from company customers to



their personal bank accounts. As a result, the company incurred a loss of Rs 4,15,00,000. The suspects are Pullakanti Mallesh, Yesireddy Ramakrishna, Yesireddy Anilkumar, Mandala Rajkumar, Ellasagaram Sampath kumar, Nagavelli Prem kumar, Beenaveni Shekar, Korvi Haribabu, Vodela Shiva prasad, H R Gautam, Gummidelli Mahesh kumar, Jannu Rambabu, Sahida khatun, Samudharala Vamshi, Vallabhaneni Karthik, Sushma yearedi, Nagini, Bhoothala Lahari, Pullakanti Anita, Mandala Anitha and Beenaveni Rajeshwari.

KTR highlights power outage woes faced by citizens

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Many places in the city witnessed power outages for hours on Friday night and Saturday morning. Netizens posted on X about the power outage, tagging BRS MLA KT Rama Rao (KTR). Responding, KTR addressed concern about the power outage on X. KTR also re-posted postings by netizens that tagged Energy Minister Bhatti Vikramarka who had earlier declared that there were no power outages. "Unfortunately, after the Congress came to power, Telangana has plunged into darkness again with power outages becoming a daily



Hyderabad's development. However, the Congress government has brought back the old days of a decade ago inconveniencing both the public and industries with frequent power outages," he said. He said during KCR's rule the per capita power consumption increased from 1,110 units to 2,110 units and solar power capacity increased from 71 MW to over 5,000 MW. Installed power capacity in Telangana jumped from 7,778 MW to 18,000 MW (expected to reach 25,000 MW with the full operation of UMPP in Yadadri) and transmission capacity increased from 13,900 MW to 37,000 MW in 10 years.

Candidates can download TS CET exam hall tickets

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Candidates can now download TS CET Exam Hall Tickets from the official website lawcet.tsche.ac.in. The Osmania University is conducting TS LAW CET and PGLCET-2024 for admissions into LLB and LLM courses. The exams are scheduled to be held on Monday, June 3, in three sessions of TS LAW CET (3 Year) from 9 to 10.30 am, Session 2 from 12.30-02.00 pm, and TS LAW CET (5Year) and TS PGLCET from 4-5.30 pm. The exams will be conducted at 68 test centers (64 in Telangana and 4 in Andhra Pradesh) for Sessions 1 and 2, and at 50 test centers (46 in Telangana and 4 in Andhra Pradesh) for Session 3. A total

of 50,684 candidates have registered. Over 36,079 candidates registered for TS LAW CET 3-Year Degree Course with 18,042 in Session 1 and 18,037 in Session 2. Around 10,197 candidates were registered for the TS LAW CET 5-Year Integrated Degree Course along with 4,408 candidates for LLM. According to the University, the tests will be conducted in English-Telugu and English-Urdu for TS LAW CET-2024 (3-Year and 5-Year courses) and only in English for TS PGLCET-2024. Candidates are advised to visit their test centers in advance and report one hour before the examination along with strict advisory that even a one-minute delay will result in denial of entry.

Commissioner's Task force nabs five; foils murder plot

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Commissioner's TaskForce South East and South West Zones on Saturday arrested five persons and foiled a murder plot. The police seized five live rounds, a country made pistol, four knives and a two-wheeler from the suspects. The task force also foiled a robbery under Narsingi police limits and executed four Non Bailable Warrants. The accused were identified as Shaik Irfan Ahmed (27) a resident of Kismatpura, Rajendranagar; Mohammed Arif (27) a resident of kali Mandir; Mohammed Akbar Pasha (28) an automobile mechanic and resident of

Balapur; Syed Abdul Raheem Quizar Yaqoobi (23) a waiter and resident of Dabeerpura and Shaik Ismail (27) a resident of Langer Houz. Irfan is a rowdy-sheeter from Rajendranagar, involved in several bodily offences He planned to kill Ismail due to an enmity. Irfan purchased a country made pistol and five live rounds worth Rs 20,000 from Nanded for executing the murder. He contacted his friends Arif, Akbar and Yaqoobi and sought their help to execute a murder. They were apprehended by South East Task Force team from Shah Inayat Gunj area along with arms. Arif and Irfan recently committed a robbery under Narsingi

police limits and were absconding. Simultaneously, South West Task Force nabbed Ismail who was involved in 16 cases of robbery and murder across the tri commissionerate. In January this year Ismail murdered one of his associates identified as Mubarak Sagar. He was recently released from jail and possessed a knife with an intention to commit further offences. While Irfan and his associates were arrested by the Shah Inayat Gunj police under sections 120B r/w 34 IPC, 25(1)(B) of Arms Act; Ismail was arrested by the Narsingi police under sections 392 of the IPC and 25(1) of Arms Act.

Jubilee Hills police nab drug peddler; narcotics worth Rs 11.50 lakh seized

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad Narcotics Enforcement Wing in coordination with the Jubilee Hills police on Saturday arrested a drug peddler and seized LSD blots worth Rs 11,50,000 from him. The accused was identified as V Lakshmiipathi (28), a resident of Yadadri Bhongir and a native of Nalgonda. The police seized 43 blots of LSD, a car and a mobile phone from the accused. Lakshmiipathi was booked under six cases of NDPS across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Lakshmiipathi was a B.Tech student who discontinued studies as he got addicted to marijuana. The accused began procuring marijuana from

Araku in Andhra Pradesh and sold it to consumers. Later, he attended parties in Goa, Kasauli and other places, where he learnt that selling varieties of drugs could help him earn more money. Lakshmiipathi began procuring various drugs from Goa, Kasauli and Mumbai at a low price and sold the same to consumers at high rates. Lakshmiipathi procured LD blots via courier from Mumbai and paid the the supplier by depositing money into different accounts. He then sold the drugs to consumers through cash on delivery. The entire communication between the supplier and the consumer was being done through SnapChat App to ensure anonymity and avoid police surveillance.

Apollo Cancer Centres observe World Cancer Survivors' Day

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Apollo Cancer Centres and Curefoundation India on Saturday observed World Cancer Survivors' Day at Apollo Cancer Centres at Jubilee Hills here on Saturday. The courageous cancer survivors were felicitated for their valiant fight against the dreadful disease and inspiring the cancer patients undergoing treatment to be optimistic and persevere in their battle. A symbolic highlight of the event was the unveiling of the "Victory Bell" in the hospital lobby by caretakers and survivors, a gesture representing



and shared strength. Caretakers and survivors shared their poignant stories, underscoring the power of positivity and resilience in the face of cancer. Dr Vijay Anand Reddy, Director, Apollo Cancer Hospital highlighted his experiences, praising the indomitable spirit of his patients. "Throughout my journey with cancer patients, I have witnessed unparalleled resilience and bravery. They have consistently shown that a positive outlook can be a formidable ally in the battle against cancer," he remarked. The event featured inspiring interactions between cancer survivors and patients, fostering a sense of community

CID nabs fugitive, who evaded arrest for 6 years

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Crime Investigation Department (CID) on May 27 arrested a person who had been evading arrest for six years in a Rs 48 lakh cheating case in Nizamabad. The accused is a resident of Punjab district and he cheated people under the guise of providing employment in foreign countries. There were two cases registered against the accused in Bheemgal police stations and Armoor station of Nizamabad District in 2018. The 41-year-old accused named Vikas Khindar, who is resident of Punjab state and others were collected money from the com-

plainants under the guise of providing employment in Canada. Further, the cases were transferred to CID, Nizamabad for further investigation. In this case, A-3 Vikas Khindar was involved in both cases and absconding since the commission of offence. Under the direct supervision of B Ram Reddy, Superintendent of Police, CID, Special Execution Team consist of J Anjaneyulu, Inspector, M Naresh, SIP, Younus Khan, ASI, J Ratnaji Rao, ASI, and other officers of CID, Telangana, Hyderabad and apprehended the accused at Basti Dhanish Mandi, Jalandhar City of Punjab State.





# Chorus of *Humein Samvidhaanbachanahai*, while waving a copy



**"When the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh people attack it, they attack the country's history and its heart. The most important thing in this election is the mission to protect Ambedkar's Constitution"**

In the current electoral times, when the continued process of democracy is concluding, almost every political party is talking about the 'Constitution' of India, changing it or retaining it, etc. Next, a serious 'current' issue has been "400 seats in Lok Sabha". Some campaigners like All India Congress Committee leader Rahul Gandhi have symbolically waved a copy of the Constitution at rallies. They declared this election to be a battle for "saving the Constitution" and it is having resonance on the ground. But it is the duty of the voter, not of the Government or the Election Commission. It is a fashion to name Ambedkar and flash a copy of

the Constitution. Some leaders explained: "It is not just a book; Constitution reflects the thinking of great people". While making their point, they hold a copy of it, as if everybody is ready to use and implement it. Some others say, "When the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh people attack it, they attack the country's history and its heart. The most important thing in this election is the mission to protect Ambedkar's Constitution". One should remember what former Chief Justice of India Y.V. Chandrachud powerfully noted, in the *Minerva Mills* case, the Constitution provides us "the obligation of securing to the people *liberty of thought,*

*expression, belief, faith, and worship; equality of status and opportunity, and the assurance that the dignity of the individual will at all costs be preserved".* What happens to the constitutional values, if remembered, or forgotten in 'politics' especially during elections? "The voters should understand the important distinction between constitutional principles and ordinary laws. Constitutional principles frame fundamental rights and are of a 'higher order' that every citizen must obey. Ordinary laws, on the other hand, are rules, often guided by constitutional principles that govern society. Ordinary laws, in India, regu-

larly police our spaces. They discriminate and are used coercively by the state in ways that undermine freedoms and disempower citizens. Laws that police who you can marry, whether you can use the Internet, and what you can eat are some illustrations of this. However, these laws can also be challenged and changed. Constitutional values provide the basis for challenging discriminatory law," scholars Yamini Aiyar and Neelanjana Sircar stated in an article in a popular newspaper. The authors say that the fact that the ordinary Indian is worried about the Constitution is of far greater



**PROF MADABHUSHI SRIDHAR ACHARYULU**  
Dean, Mahindra University, Hyderabad

political significance than the question of who wins the election. Against the backdrop of total dominance that the BJP projected at the start of the electoral campaign, the concerns over the Constitution, expressed by ordinary voters, are constitutive of growing anxieties over democratic erosion. And it constrains the democratic legitimacy of the government

even if the BJP comes to power again, as projected.

**Ruling party's campaign**  
The Prime Minister recently said the Congress had been ranting that the Constitution was in danger, though the party had strangled it during the Emergency and ignored it when the Sikhs were killed in the 1984 riots. The PM quoted from Maharshi Valmiki, Guru Ravidas, BJP's campaign about the concept of '*virasatbhi and vikasbhi*' (heritage and development hand-in-hand). He attacked the INDIA bloc, accusing it of making the Army a "weapon of politics". The PM also said that the intentions of the Congress and INDIA bloc over the issue of reservation were "dangerous", while adding: "In the last 10 years, I have always protected reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs". Observing the trend in Uttar Pradesh, Yamini Aiyar said: "Dr. Ambedkar means everything to us. We don't think it is too easy to change the Constitution, but we believe

the BJP wants to change the Constitution." Quoting from historian Rohit De's book, *A People's Constitution*, they wrote: "... it offers a powerful account of how ordinary citizens have mobilized around constitutional principles throughout independent India's history to secure rights. Challenging social and economic deprivation and preserving equality of status is at the heart of India's constitutional project. The Constitution matters because it protects us... it gave us reservations. *Humein Samvidhaanbachanahai* (the Constitution must be protected)." The re-emergence of the grammar of the Constitution, rights, and reservations in the 2024 election must not be misread as harking back to the Mandal politics of yore. There is something far more significant at play here. The rhetoric of "changing the Constitution" challenges the very principles upon which this country was founded. And it is this that is causing dissonance among voters with the BJP's logic of cross-caste polit-

ical mobilization. Every voter, including Dalit voters, speaks of the Constitution and rights, the constitutional principle of "secularism" and religious equality was a concern expressed primarily by Muslim voters, who spoke repeatedly against "Hindu-Muslim" politics. Secularism, via the Constitution, found voice during the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in 2020, but only among Muslims.

**The 'silence' is unexplained**  
After all the phases of polling, no one knows what happened to the mind of the voter. It is silence, inexplicable until the results. If the 2024 election is indeed a battle for the Constitution, then the silence reflects the critical fault lines that our polity has to confront as well as the possibilities of a more substantive politics of rights and equality. But the voters understood, hopefully, that there is a great need for protecting the Constitution of India.

## Engineers urge CM not to extend services of retired employees

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Engineers Association wrote to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy requesting him not to extend services of retired employees. In a letter they wrote, "We now bring to your esteemed attention a matter of significant concern regarding the extension of services of retired engineers, which were taken place from March 2024 after lapsed period of three years of extension of superannuation. It is to submit that for last 10 years in previous government it was taken place large number of extensions unruly practices not considering any seniority. This practice poses a substantial impediment to the promotional opportunities' lower cadre engineers". The association said, "The retention of retired officers

not only stagnates the growth potential within the department but also creates a bottleneck in the promotion process and eventually it is become hindrance to the prospective other senior engineers who are also at the verge of retirement. We urge your immediate intervention in this matter by issuing the necessary directions for not considering

any kind of extensions further".

"We also humbly request that appropriate instructions be provided to facilitate the smooth progression of promotions within our department and function effectively and legitimate cause." Meanwhile, GO.Rt.No. 142 Irrigation & CAD (Ser.II) Dept., Dt.31.05.2024 is issued

by Government extension of ENC/O&M for period of six months duly breaching the associations representations given earlier, and assurances given by Chief Minister and Minister in response to the representation of association and assurance given in public meetings for not considering any kind of extension of services/reappointment etc.

### Revanth asks Irrigation Dept engineers to 'fast unto death'

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy defended the promotions and extensions given to engineers facing allegations in the construction of the Kaleshwaram project. He stated that their lawful rights cannot be withheld before the allegations are proven. He responded sharply to the engineers' associations' protests against the

extension of Irrigation Department ENC Nagendra Rao's tenure. He challenged them to go on an indefinite hunger strike and said, "Let's see." He made these remarks during a media chat at his residence on Saturday.

Hyderabad Engineers Association wrote to CM Revanth Reddy requesting

him not to extend services of retired employees. Association earlier in the day said, "Engineers Associations and Telangana Assistant Executive Engineers and all other group of Engineers are forced to go on Statewide agitation in view of the heart-burn of all members of working engineers.

## 'BRS will disappear after LS results'

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatreddy Venkat Reddy has predicted that the BRS will vanish into thin air after the counting of votes to take place in the state on June 4.

Talking to media here on Saturday, Venkat Reddy, quoting former Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao as saying

on the floor of the State legislative Assembly, said that the statehood of Telangana would not have materialised at all without the intervention of UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi.

Statehood of Telangana, which was considered impossible to attain, was achieved only with the intervention of Sonia Gandhi, he clarified.

However, the BRS cheated the people of Telangana for about 10 years.

Clarifying on sheep unit scam, he said that action would be taken against the guilty, K Kavitha has brought disrepute to the state with her involvement in liquor scam, he alleged and accused her of conducting liquor trade on the sidelines of celebrating the Batukamma

festival.

He found fault with KTR creating a furore over the Telangana song. He predicted that the BRS would not open its account in Lok Sabha elections. Further, he forecast that soon the BRS would be deserted by rank and file.

BRS taking stand against the new Telangana logo is shameful, he said.

## Two run over by train

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Two persons allegedly committed suicide by jumping before a moving train in Miryalaguda, reports reaching here said on Saturday.

The incident caused shock in the region. The locals reported the incident to the police. The police took steps to send bodies to the Government Hospital for an autopsy. The deceased were identified as residents of Durga Nagar in Venkatadripalem village of Miryalagudamandal. The cause of the duo committing the suicide was said to be extra-marital relations. The police are investigating the case.

## 4 killed in lorry-jeep collision

PNS ■ GADWAL

In a major road accident on the National Highway, a lorry and Scorpio jeep collided at Yerravalli X roads in JogulambaGadwal district on Saturday killed four persons, including a baby girl, on the spot causing serious injuries to others. Because of the road mishap, the movement of traffic has been disrupted on the national highway.

According to the locals, the jeep was travelling to Hyderabad from Allagadda in Karnool district. The jeep collided the lorry from behind with force killing four occupants of the jeep.

Besides the driver, three women, two girls and two boys were travelling by the jeep when it met with the accident. The injured have been admitted to government hospital. The police rushed to the accident spot and took steps to send bodies to post-mortem.

## Explosives worth Rs 8.75 lakh seized in Ranga Reddy dist

PNS ■ RANGA REDDY

In a crackdown, the Shadnagar and Shamshabad Special Operations Team (SOT) police on Saturday seized highly dangerous gelatin sticks worth Rs 8,74,950. Alongside the explosives, a compressor tractor, four smartphones and various other materials were also seized. This was disclosed by Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Ch Rangaswamy at a media conference at Shad Nagar Police Station on Saturday.

The arrested are Urusu Narasimha (60) from Kammadan village in Farooq Nagar Mandal, Ishwar (45) residing near the town's Montessori school, Vurusu Raju, and others from the same area. They were found in possession of 490 gelatin sticks, a violation of regulations. ACP Rangaswamy emphasized the severe risks posed by these explosives if stored in residential areas, highlighting the potential for significant loss of life and property in the event of an explosion.

Based on reliable information, a coordinated effort was led by Cyberabad Commissioner Avinash Mahanty, DCPs Narayana



Assistant Commissioner of Police Ch Rangaswamy addressing a media conference at Shad Nagar Police Station in Ranga Reddy district on Saturday.

Reddy and D. Srinivas, Shamshabad SOT DCP Ramkumar, and Additional DCP Shamshabad Srinivas Reddy. A police team under the supervision of Shadnagar ACP Ch Rangaswamy, carried out the operation. Circle Inspector Pratap Lingam and Shamshabad SOT CI Sanjay Kumar led the police team. The team acted strategically, seizing the 490 gelatin sticks along with other items such as a wire cutter, an electric tester, and supplies.

According to the ACP, the gelatin sticks were brought in illegally by Madhusudan Reddy, the owner of Building Blocks, without the necessary permits. Satish from Nalgonda district supplied these explosives, sourced from Ideal Industrial

Explosive Limited Company in Bhuvanagiri. Both Madhusudan Reddy and the manager of Ideal Industrial Explosive Limited, Narendar Reddy, are currently absconding.

A case has been registered under Section 4 and 5 of the Explosive Act 1908 at Shadnagar Police Station.

ACP Rangaswamy commended the police personnel, including S Srikanth, Tarun, Head Constables Venkataramana, Somla Naik, Prabhakar Reddy, and Constables Satyanarayana, Johnson, Vamsikrishna, Radhakrishna, Ravikumar, Rajasekhar, Anjaneyulu, and Vijaya Narsing for their diligent work in successfully apprehending the suspects and securing the explosives.

## High-alert continues in Agency villages in spite of dwindling cases of malaria

PNS ■ BHADRACHALAM

A high-alert is being continued in Agency villages of Bhadradi-Kothagudem district in spite of the malaria positive cases are dwindling.

In fact, Malaria epidemic is on the wane in Agency villages of the district. The department of malaria has reduced the number of malaria affected villages from 249 to 173 as the incident of number of malaria positive cases has gone down.

The department of malaria has submitted proposals for the allocation of funds to implement various anti-malaria measures in the affected villages.

In 2022, a total of 256 malaria positive cases have been

identified. In 2023, the cases have gone down to 185.

Meanwhile, the department of malaria has prepared an action plan to check the positive cases of malaria.

The high-alert is continuing in Bhadradi-Kothagudem district in spite of the reduction in the number of cases because of the presence of Odisha and Chattisgarh states close to the district's borders where the impact of malaria is comparatively very high.

The state malaria department additional director has sent proposals for release of budget to the department of malaria of the union government for spraying alpha-cypermethrin in the affected villages twice. At least Rs 13 lakh is

needed for the purpose. The action plan indicates spraying of the insecticide in the first week of June in 174 hostels in the district.

If the students visiting the hostels from different villages carry malaria parasite with them there is every chance of the students contracting the disease. The officials sent proposals requiring an additional Rs 7 lakh for spraying of the insecticide not only in the 173 villages but also in an additional 195 villages.

In 2019, 604 malaria positive cases were detected. In 2020, the number of cases shrunk to 364. In 2021, 355 cases were detected. In 2022, 256 cases were detected. In 2023, 185 cases were traced. However, in

2024, so far only 15 cases were detected in the district.

The authorities have focused on collecting information from private hospitals and private diagnostic laboratories on viral fevers. Accordingly, the spraying of the insecticide will take place in the villages of the affected persons. The main focus is on the village being inhabited by GottiKoya community.

Assistant malaria officer Gondi Venkateswarlu said that malaria is completely under control in Bhadradi-Kothagudem district. Preventive measures are being initiated from time to time in affected villages and rapid fever survey programme is being initiated in the district.

### GRADUATES' CONSTITUENCY POLLS

## Counting staff urged to adhere to guidelines

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Nalgonda Collector Dasari Hari Chandana on Saturday directed the Additional Collectors, Revenue Divisional Officers and Assistant

Returning Officers of 12 districts to monitor the counting process carefully for the W a r a n g a l - K h a m m a - N a l g o n d a Graduates' constituency by-elections to the Legislative Council. The count-

ing is to be held on June 5.

Inspecting the training programme held for them at Udayaditya Bhavan at the Collectorate here on Saturday, she said that the first round of counting is very important.

Whether opening of the seal of the ballot boxes in the presence of the contestants and agents of the political parties or the conduct all other activities should be done as per the rules, she told the officials.

## Lack of supervision leads to poor food safety compliance in eateries

PNS ■ RANGA REDDY

Food safety in the suburban restaurants of Hyderabad, particularly in the Ranga Reddy district, is causing concern due to the lack of consistent surveillance and enforcement by authorities. This has allowed many establishments to operate with profit-driven motives at the expense of food quality and consumer health.

A recent surge in the number of restaurants, fast food centers,

and tiffin centres in areas, such as Ibrahimpatnam, Shadnagar, Shamshabad, Narsingi, Chevella, and Maheswaram has become a source of concern. There is not supervision by the food inspectors over these eateries.

Despite warnings from food safety officials, the quality of food remains subpar. Instances of unsanitary cooking conditions, and improper food storage practices are rampant. For example, chicken and vegetarian dishes are often

prepared in the same area, and leftover food is stored improperly and reheated when ordered. Spoiled vegetables and other low-quality essentials are frequently used, raising the risk of foodborne illnesses.

Along the Sagar road, from Turkayamjal to Mala and within the Ibrahimpatnam constituency, many restaurants operate without proper licenses and fail to adhere to Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) regulations.

Consumers report being served substandard meals, particularly those containing preserved meat, which poses serious health risks. The use of spoiled vegetables and low-quality ingredients further exacerbates the situation. Food safety and municipal officials are urged to take stringent action against these establishments to protect public health.

Government regulations prohibit the use of testing salt in food preparation due to its detri-

mental health effects, including the potential to cause various diseases over prolonged consumption. Despite this, its use persists, alongside the excessive use of artificial food colors aimed at attracting customers. These practices not only compromise food quality but also pose significant health risks to consumers. Additionally, leftover food, including meat, is often stored improperly and served the next day, further endangering consumer health.





# GST collection rises 10% to Rs 1.73 L cr in May

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

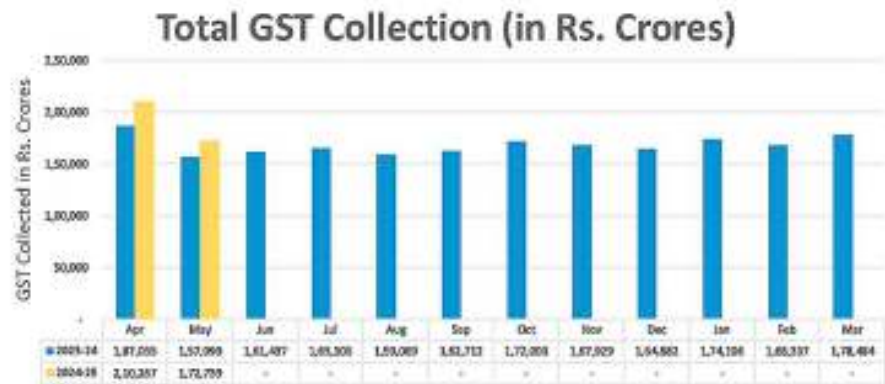
The country's gross GST collections rose to Rs 1.73 lakh crore in May, growing 10 per cent year on year driven by increased revenues from domestic transactions, the finance ministry said on Saturday.

GST collections had touched a record high of Rs 2.10 lakh crore last month.

"The gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue for the month of May 2024 stood at Rs 1.73 lakh crore," the ministry said in a statement.

The 10 per cent year-on-year growth in May collection is driven by a strong increase in revenues from domestic transactions (up 15.3 per cent) amid slowing of imports (down 4.3 per cent).

After accounting for refunds, the net GST revenue for May 2024 stood at Rs 1.44 lakh crore, reflecting a growth



The 10 per cent year-on-year growth in May collection is driven by a strong increase in revenues from domestic transactions (up 15.3 per cent) amid slowing of imports (down 4.3 per cent).

of 6.9 per cent compared to the same period last year.

The gross GST collections in

FY25 till May 2024 stood at Rs 3.83 lakh crore, which is a 11.3 per cent year-on-year growth,

driven by a strong increase in domestic transactions (up 14.2 per cent) and marginal increase in imports (up 1.4 per cent).

After accounting for refunds, the net GST revenue in the FY 2024-25 till May 2024 stood at Rs 3.36 lakh crore, reflecting a growth of 11.6 per cent compared to the same period last year.

## DELHI-SFO FLIGHT DELAY

# Air India apologises, offers US\$ 350 travel voucher to passengers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Air India has apologised and offered a travel voucher of US\$ 350 each to the passengers of the San Francisco flight that took off from the national capital after a delay of more than 30 hours. There were 199 passengers in the flight, according to a source.

After a delay of over 30 hours, the flight took off from the national capital at 2155 hours on Friday and landed at San Francisco at 1245 hours (IST) on Saturday. The flight duration was around 16 hours.

"Please allow me to sincerely apologise, on behalf of Air India, for the extended delay in bringing you to San Francisco, which was caused by several technical delays and other operational constraints," Air India Executive

Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Klaus Goersch said in a letter to the flight's passengers. As a gesture of apology, Air India has offered a "travel voucher worth US\$ 350" for future travel with the airline, the letter dated May 31 said. The passengers will also have the option to credit the amount instead of using it for travel.

"We are very sorry for this lapse in our service and the inconvenience caused to you," Goersch said in the letter. The Delhi-San Francisco flight that was originally scheduled to take off at around 1530 hours on Thursday faced an inordinate delay due to various factors, including technical glitch, non-functional air-conditioning system and payload issues.

## MONEY MATTERS

# Maruti Suzuki sales drop 2% to 1,74,551 units in May



Maruti Suzuki India on Saturday reported a 2 per cent year-on-year dip in total wholesales at 1,74,551 units in May 2024. The company had dispatched a total of 1,78,083 units to its dealers in the same month last year, Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) said in a statement.

Total domestic passenger vehicle sales rose marginally to 1,44,002 units last month from 1,43,708 units in the year-ago period, it added. Sales of mini segment cars, comprising Alto and S-Presso, declined to 9,902 units from 12,236 units in May 2023. Sales of compact cars, including Baleno, Celerio, Dzire, Ignis, Swift, Tour S and WagonR, also fell to 68,206 units from 71,419 units in the year-ago month. Utility vehicles, including Brezza, Grand Vitara, Ertiga, S-Cross and XL6, clocked sales of 54,204 units last month as against 46,243 units earlier. Sales of vans were at 10,960 units in May 2024 as against 12,818 units a year ago, while that of light commercial vehicle Super Carry stood at 2,692 units as against 2,888 units in May 2023. MSI said its exports last month declined to 17,367 units from 26,477 units in the same period last year.

# WhatsApp, trading fraud: Businessman duped of Rs 9 cr



A businessman has been allegedly duped of over Rs 9 crore by cyber thugs here, police said on Saturday. According to the police, the fraud took place over a period of one month after Rajat Bothra, resident of sector 40, got added to a WhatsApp group about stock market trading on May 1. An FIR was lodged at the Cyber

Crime police station in sector 36 on Friday and Rs 1.62 crore transacted funds have been frozen in the businessman's account, they said, adding further investigations are underway. Bothra informed police that he was added to the WhatsApp group on May 1. The group had information about profit from share market trading and since then he started small amounts of investments. By May 27, he had invested Rs 9.09 crore in share trading. However, after this, his (trading) account was closed. Assistant Commissioner of Police (Cyber Crime police station) Vivek Ranjan Rai said. "When we got the complaint, we immediately started an investigation and so far we have managed to get Rs 1.62 crore in his bank account frozen," Rai said.

# IIFL Samasta Finance to raise up to Rs 1,000 cr via bonds



IIFL Samasta Finance, a non-banking microfinance company (NBFC-MFI), plans to raise up to Rs 1,000 crore through public issue of secured bonds for

the purpose of capital augmentation and business growth. The bond issue opens on June 3 and closes on June 14. IIFL Samasta Finance said in a statement. IIFL Samasta Finance plans to issue bonds, aggregating to Rs 200 crore, with a green-shoe option to retain over-subscription of up to Rs 800 crore, it said. The IIFL Samasta bonds offer the highest coupon rate of 10.50 per cent per annum for a tenor of 60 months, it claimed. The NCD is available in tenors of 24 months, 36 months and 60 months, it said, adding, the frequency of interest payment is available on monthly and annual basis for each of the series. The company has a strong physical presence through about 1,500 branches and caters to the credit needs of underserved and unbanked population, primarily women entrepreneurs from underprivileged background, IIFL Samasta Finance MD and CEO Venkatesh N said.

# Inflation ticked up in Europe; that likely won't stop rate cut

PNS ■ FRANKFURT

Inflation ticked up to an annual 2.6% in Europe in May, according to official figures on Friday. That's more than expected as a painful spike in consumer prices takes its time to fade away.

Yet that's unlikely to stop the European Central Bank from making a first interest rate cut next week — and moving ahead of the US Federal Reserve in lowering borrowing costs for businesses and consumers.

The official figure for the 20 countries that use the euro currency compares to 2.4% in April, according to European Union statistics agency Eurostat. Markets had expected 2.5% for May.

The ECB would be out in front of the US Federal Reserve, which has held off on cutting rates because of more persistent inflation in the US.



That would be a switch from the hiking cycle, when the ECB lagged the Fed in raising rates as inflation broke out across the world's developed economies. US consumer inflation ran at a seasonally unadjusted annual rate of 3.4% in April. In this case the ECB is fac-

ing a different economic situation, since it was hit harder by an energy price spike, which has now faded. Inflation in the US has been fed by higher stimulus spending during and after the coronavirus pandemic and by more robust growth, putting the Fed in a different situation.

# Mumbai city sees 12,000 property registrations in May, up 22% annually

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Registration of properties in Mumbai municipal region increased 22 per cent during May to 12,000 units driven by strong housing demand, according to real estate consultant Knight Frank.

Citing Maharashtra government data, Knight Frank India said Mumbai city (area under BMC jurisdiction) recorded around 12,000 property registrations last month as against 9,823 units in May last year.

State exchequer garnered Rs 1,034 crore in May 2024, up 24 per cent from the same month last year.

Of the overall registered properties in May 2024, residential units constituted 80 per cent.

"The continuous year-on-year growth in property sales and registrations provides a continuum to the growth story that propelled on the back of



state government incentive and since then, despite a rise in average prices across the city, sales and registrations of properties have maintained the momentum," Shishir Bajjal, Chairman & Managing Director, Knight Frank India, said.

This reflects the appetite of the market as well as the confidence buyers have in the economic fundamentals of the country, he added.

"This positive trend is expected to persist, bolstered by strong economic growth and a favourable interest rate environment, creating an encouraging atmosphere for potential buyers," Bajjal said.

In the first five months of this year, the total number of properties registered was 60,820, up 17 per cent from 52,173 units in January-May 2023.

# Passenger vehicle wholesales in slow lane due to high base effect

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Passenger vehicle wholesales in India witnessed a marginal growth in May on account of high base effect and muted demand due to general elections.

The overall passenger vehicle dispatches from companies to dealers stood at 3,50,257 lakh units last month as compared to 3,35,436 in the same month a year ago, registering a growth of 4 per cent.

Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) said its total domestic passenger vehicle sales rose marginally to 1,44,002 units last month from 1,43,708 units in the year-ago period.

The company saw year-on-

year dip in sales of entry level and compact cars last month as against May 2023.

Utility vehicle sales, including that of Brezza, Grand Vitara, Ertiga, S-Cross and XL6, however, rose to 54,204 units last month as against 46,243 units a year earlier.

"It has been discussed that growth this year will not be very high. It will be in single digit because of the high base effect. Secondly, there were elections and the scorching temperatures also had an impact on the overall sales in May," MSI Senior Executive Officer (Marketing & Sales) Partho Banerjee told reporters.

He further said: "We are



"It has been discussed that growth this year will not be very high. It will be in single digit because of the high base effect. Secondly, there were elections and the scorching temperatures also had an impact on the overall sales in May."

very hopeful that we will start seeing the green shoots coming with the election results coming in. I think things will turn around."

Banerjee noted that the company is going to introduce a limited edition trims of its entry level cars -- Alto K10, S-

Presso and Celerio -- in order to rejuvenate the small car segment.

The Dream Series edition trims of the three models will be launched at a price point of Rs 4.99 lakh (ex-showroom), he said.

"Based on the feedback of

our target customers we have come up with an edition in which we are mostly focusing on the utilities and convenience features," Banerjee said.

Sales of Maruti Suzuki's mini segment cars, comprising Alto and S-Presso, declined to 9,902 units last

month from 12,236 units in May 2023.

Rival Hyundai Motor India reported a 1 per cent year-on-year increase in domestic dispatch of vehicles to dealers last month.

The company's wholesales rose to 49,151 units in May as compared to 48,601 units in May 2023.

Hyundai Motor India COO Tarun Garg said that the sales growth this financial year is anticipated to remain in low single digit range.

"In April also the industry grew by around 1.5 per cent...so April plus May the industry growth should be around 2-2.5 per cent over same period last year," he noted.

# Top 100 cos to verify market rumours promptly

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The top 100 listed companies by market capitalization will have to confirm or deny any market rumour reported in the mainstream media from this Saturday.

The rule will be applicable for top 250 companies from December 1.

Under the Sebi's rule, these companies will have to confirm, deny, or clarify any reported event or information in the mainstream media that is not general in nature and that indicates that rumours of an impending specific material event are circulating amongst the investing public within 24 hours from the reporting of the information.

Sebi through its newly introduced rumour verification framework has excluded the price volatility in arriving at average market price for the purpose of corporate actions in a bid to make it fair for all investors at large.

"The move would dissuade

leaking of information that would affect the valuation in the given corporation action. This initiative of Sebi would help strengthen the rumour verification framework. It would help in achieving a fair market thereby making it a preferred market for investors



all over the world," Makarand M Joshi, founder, MMJC and Associates, a corporate compliance firm, said.

While calculating the price for various corporate actions such as buyback through book building, buyback through stock exchange, qualified institutional placement, preferential allotment, takeovers, effect on shares price due to material price movement and confir-

mation of reported event or information can be excluded. It means that while calculating price for corporate actions the period during which material price movement was seen in the stock due to confirmed rumours would be excluded.

Market rumours pertaining to a company's business can create significant volatility in stock prices, often leading to transactions that don't reflect a company's true value. This market rumours could be related to anything, including exiting of top management, cancellation of an order and financial health.

"Sebi's framework addresses this issue by establishing a mechanism to determine the unaffected price -- the price of a stock before the rumour surfaced. This price would be used for transactions unless the rumour itself caused price fluctuations in subsequent trading days," Trivesh, Chief Operating Officer of Tradejini, had said.

# BSE completes acquisition of S&P Dow Jones Indices' entire stake in Asia Index

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leading stock exchange BSE Ltd on Friday said it has completed the acquisition of S&P Dow Jones Indices' entire equity stake in Asia Index Private Limited (AIPL), making it a wholly-owned subsidiary of the bourse.

AIPL was a joint venture between S&P DJI and BSE and is best known for calculating and maintaining the popular



index Sensex. In a statement, BSE said AIPL will continue to provide

its services to clients who are subscribed to AIPL's indices or data products.

"AIPL is committed to improving and expanding its product offerings by working closely with the financial market ecosystem and other relevant stakeholders," it added.

In April, index provider S&P Dow Jones Indices announced that it was targeting to sell its entire equity stake in Asia Index by May 31.

# Sunder Foods and Dairy launches milk product brand Samooh; eyes state-wide presence in MP

PNS ■ BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh-based Sunder Foods and Dairy (SUFODA) on Saturday announced the launch of its new milk product brand 'Samooh' and said it aims to expand its presence across the state.

The 'Samooh' brand was launched on the World Milk Day in Bhopal. "Samooh is a high-quality

dairy product that will inspire people across the city," said Kartikey Singh Chouhan, founder and promoter of Sunder Dairy.

Chouhan, son of state's former chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, said the company has created a number of women-centric village collection centres to procure milk, which are being facilitated through Women Farmer Producer

Organisations (FPOs), and the delivery of products is "entirely handled by women".

The fresh brand includes fresh milk packs named Samooh Gold Milk, Samooh Standard Milk, Samooh Toned Milk, and Samooh Tea Special Milk, as well as other products like curd, buttermilk and lassi.

Besides, it offers products like Ghee, Shrikhand, Sweets, and Paneer.

# 'ARC route being misused by "tainted" promoters'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Deputy Governor M Rajeshwar Rao has expressed concerns over "tainted" promoters misusing the asset reconstruction companies (ARC) route to enter the bankruptcy proceedings and stressed for improving governance practices such firms.

The credit life cycle involves four distinct stages -- sourcing of credit proposal; appraisal and underwriting; disbursement and monitoring; and, repayment,

which then starts off the next iteration of the credit cycle.

"If, however, for some reason, the borrower does not pay the dues on time and a loan does not enter the fourth stage, there could be a problem. ARCs have been institutionalised to play a crucial role at this juncture," Rao said. Speaking at a conference on 'Governance in ARCs -- Towards Effective Resolutions' earlier this month, he said ARCs are the institutions to enable loan originators to focus on their core function of lending by taking over stressed financial assets.

# RBI imposes monetary penalty on SBM Bank (India)

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday said it has imposed a penalty of Rs 88.70 lakh on SBM Bank (India) for non-compliance with certain regulatory norms.

In a statement, the central banks said the penalty has been imposed for non-compliance with licensing conditions imposed by the RBI, and specific directions to stop undertaking Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) transactions with immediate effect.

Two separate notices were issued to the bank advising it to show cause as to why

penalty should not be imposed on it for its failure to comply with the said directions/conditions.

After considering the bank's reply to the notices, additional submissions made by it, and oral submissions made during the personal hearing, the RBI said it found, inter alia, that the charges against the SBM Bank (India) were sustained warranting imposition of monetary penalty.

The RBI said the bank was engaged business correspondents for establishing account-based relationship with customers from certain regions, despite its request being not acceded to by RBI.





Explore the artistic brilliance and cultural legacy of Sonal Mansingh through the fascinating world of classical dance with **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

# THE LIVING LEGEND OF SONAL MANSINGH

In the realm of Indian classical dance, few names carry as much weight and reverence as that of Sonal Mansingh. Her life's journey is not just a tale of individual accomplishment but a testament to the power of art in transcending boundaries and enriching lives. Sonal Mansingh's relationship with dance began at an early age. Raised in a family that valued both tradition and modernity, she was exposed to various forms of art and culture from childhood. Her initial training in Bharatanatyam began under the tutelage of renowned Guru Shri Chandralekha. However, it was her encounter with the legendary Odissi guru, Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, that shaped her destiny. Under his guidance, Sonal delved deep into the intricate nuances of Odissi, a classical dance form from the eastern state of Odisha, India. She mastered the art with such finesse that she became one of its foremost exponents, earning acclaim both nationally and internationally. Sonal Mansingh's journey has not been without its share of challenges. As a woman navigating the patriarchal landscape of Indian society, she faced skepticism and resistance from traditional quarters. Yet, with unwavering determination and resilience, she shattered stereotypes and carved a niche for herself in a male-dominated field. Her artistic integrity and commitment to her craft have been unwavering, even in the face of adversity. Through her performances, workshops, and lectures, she has tirelessly worked towards preserving and promoting India's rich cultural heritage, inspiring generations of artists to follow in her footsteps. As a cultural icon, Sonal Mansingh's legacy transcends boundaries of time and geography. She has not only enriched the world of dance with her unparalleled talent but has also left an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of millions

SONAL MANSINGH'S JOURNEY HAS NOT BEEN WITHOUT ITS SHARE OF CHALLENGES. AS A WOMAN NAVIGATING THE PATRIARCHAL LANDSCAPE OF INDIAN SOCIETY, SHE FACED SKEPTICISM AND RESISTANCE FROM TRADITIONAL QUARTERS. YET, WITH UNWAVERING DETERMINATION AND RESILIENCE, SHE SHATTERED STEREOTYPES AND CARVED A NICHE FOR HERSELF IN A MALE-DOMINATED FIELD. HER ARTISTIC INTEGRITY AND COMMITMENT TO HER CRAFT HAVE BEEN UNWAVERING, EVEN IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

around the world. Her life's journey is a testament to the transformative power of art and its ability to bridge divides, foster dialogue, and celebrate the beauty of human expression. In an ever-changing world, where the allure of tradition often clashes with the forces of modernity, Sonal Mansingh stands as a beacon of a vibrant tradition, innovation, and timeless grace, reminding us of the enduring relevance of our cultural roots. As she continues to inspire and enchant audiences with her artistry, her legacy remains etched in the annals of Indian classical dance, a shining testament to the enduring power of the human spirit. Sonal Mansingh's dance themes often encompass a rich tapestry of mythological narratives, cultural traditions, and social issues. Through her performances, she weaves together stories from Indian history and legends, ancient and contemporary texts exploring the tales of gods and goddesses with intricate choreography and expressive movements. Her interpretations of classical dance are imbued with deep spiritual and philosophical elements, reflecting her profound understanding of Indian culture and traditions. Additionally, she often addresses contemporary social issues through her choreography, using dance as a medium for commentary and reflection. Whether addressing themes of gender equality, environmental consciousness, or the human experience, Mansingh infuses her performances with relevance and meaning, engaging audiences on both artistic and intellectual levels. Overall, Sonal Mansingh's dance themes transcend mere entertainment, serving as a platform for storytelling, cultural preservation,

and social advocacy. Through her artistry, she continues to captivate and inspire audiences around the world, leaving a lasting impression with each graceful movement. Sonal Mansingh, a prominent figure in the world of Indian classical dance, also had a notable involvement in politics. While she is primarily celebrated for her contributions to dance, her engagement in political discourse arose when she was nominated to the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian Parliament, in 2018. Her nomination was a recognition of her achievements and contributions to Indian culture and arts, acknowledging the importance of promoting and preserving India's rich cultural heritage within the political sphere. As a member of the Rajya Sabha, Mansingh has used the platform to advocate for the arts, cultural preservation, and the promotion of Indian dance forms. She actively participated in debates and discussions concerning cultural policies, education, sociology of culture and the role of the arts in society. Mansingh's foray into politics highlighted the intersection of culture, arts, and governance in India. Her journey serves as a reminder of the importance of recognizing and supporting cultural icons within the political landscape, ensuring that the nation's rich artistic heritage continues to thrive and flourish. Sonal Mansingh, a luminary in the realm of Indian classical dance, has left an indelible mark through her illustrious career. Honored with the Padma Bhushan in 1992, and the Padma Vibhushan in 2003, she has been lauded for her exceptional contributions to the performing arts.

As the founder of the Centre for Indian Classical Dances (CICD) in New Delhi, Mansingh established a bastion for the promotion and preservation of various classical dance forms, nurturing young talent and disseminating awareness of India's rich cultural heritage. Her mesmerizing performances have graced prestigious stages worldwide, serving as a cultural ambassador and fostering appreciation for Indian art and heritage. Appointed as a UNESCO Artist for Peace in 2003, Mansingh's efforts in promoting intercultural dialogue through dance have been globally recognized. Beyond tradition, her artistic vision fearlessly explores new themes, narratives, and choreographic styles, breathing fresh life into age-old traditions and inspiring generations of artists. Sonal Mansingh's life is a tapestry of devotion to Indian classical dance, and a commitment to preserving and promoting India's cultural heritage. Born in 1944 in Bombay, she began her dance training at a young age, later becoming a trailblazer in the field. With a career spanning over six decades, Mansingh has dazzled audiences worldwide with her performances, lectures & interviews earning numerous accolades and honors along the way. Beyond her contributions to dance, Mansingh has been a cultural ambassador for India, spreading awareness of its rich artistic traditions.

## “As in life, so in dance, character is essential”

SONAL MANSINGH talks about her art, life and life philosophy that went into making the person she is. She opened up to THE PIONEER. Excerpts

**What are some memorable performances or collaborations that have shaped your artistic journey?**  
Well, memorable performances and collaborations are different. From the very beginning in 1961, when I gave my maiden solo performance, to this day, every performance has been memorable for one reason or another. Whether it was in Venezuela or China, Mongolia or Mandi, in a big opera house of a megapolis or on a small-town stage, each one was memorable. Choosing the best among them all is rather difficult. However, the performance in Delhi after my car accident in Germany in 1975 stands out. Many dancers told me they were inspired by it, saying that at times they didn't see me but saw sparks. The performance for the Dalai Lama in McLeod Ganj in 1994 was also significant for its content, which moved him to tears. Performing in front of Mount Kailash was a once-in-a-lifetime divine experience.

**Tell us something about your collaborations.**  
Regarding collaborations, I haven't had many. My performances in Bharatanatyam, Odissi, or Chhau are



collaborations with musicians, my guide and Guru Shri Jeevan Pani Ji, researchers, gurus, yoga gurus, and anyone from whom I learned something. Life itself is a great collaboration. Learning is an effort unto itself. Things keep happening, and one must become aware of them. Life is a jigsaw puzzle from which one picks little nuggets of wisdom.

**What values are essential in classical dance?**  
As in life, so in dance, character is essential. Character building starts in mother's womb or even from previous births (poorva janma) and karma samskara. It then grows with upbringing, nurturing, travel, and learning. Due diligence is essential. Even slight lethargy or negativity can creep in if you leave the door of consciousness ajar, so one must always be aware. What must be

done should be done in a timely manner, and every detail must be worked out. Humility is important. Remember, reevaluate, reassess, and move on (manan chintan). Reading is essential, especially in times of dependence on social media: read, discuss, understand, and carve your own path.

**How do you approach interpreting classical dance forms to suit contemporary audiences?**  
I always did what I wanted to do, and this tendency was further encouraged by my Bharatanatyam guru, U.S. Krishna Rao. We are different from Western classical dancers, where brochures are distributed at the beginning, and ballerinas dance with 50 other dancers. Audience should read the brochure before the performance begins because

later there are no commentaries or announcements. That stuck with me. You cannot give a rundown of every performance you give. Every sanchari (to convey a story or series of events through body language, hand gestures, and facial expressions) must be spontaneous. If it is pre-decided, it doesn't stay spontaneous. But I leave it to each dancer, as it depends on her training, way of thinking, and approach to dance.

**Tell us something about the themes and content of your choreographic works.**  
I have always chosen themes of women empowerment, such as Devi, Draupadi, Panchkanya, river pollution (Krishna-Kaliya) atmospheric pollution, and thought pollution. I always say the three Vs-vichar (thought), vaani (speech), and vyavhaar

(behavior)-need to be cleansed from time to time to ward off negativity. Today, people are stressed, tired, and emotionally burdened. Our dances address these issues and uplift emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

**What advice do you have for aspiring classical dancers regarding training and technique?**  
Many things have changed over the years, but some things remain the same. Ekagrachitta (एकाग्रचित्त), or focus and commitment, is one such tenet all students must observe. When you go to a Guru to learn, you must be well-prepared for the next class. You must have respect for the teacher, the traditions, the place you perform, the iconography, the messages contained in the Puranas, the temples, their

architecture, and so on.

**What do you have to say about the mythology of the Puranas from where you draw your themes?**  
I would say mythology is the wrong word. Mythology comes from 'mythos' (in Greek) which is akin to fairy tales. Our stories are not fairy tales; they are actual events that took place long ago. They have messages and inspirations that transcend time. We must honor, respect, and work according to these stories.

**What are some of the challenges you've faced in your career, and how have you overcome them?**  
Life is a journey full of challenges, and these challenges shape who you are and how you deal with them. They help you grow, evolve, and become a

better person. I took two vows with my grandfather: I will never commercialize dance, so I give all the money from my performances to my institute, Shri Kamakhya Kalapeeth (Centre for Indian Classical Dances). I have lived in rented accommodations and will continue to do so, after my term as Member of Parliament is over.

**Could you share a particularly rewarding or transformative experience you've had?**  
There are not just one but many. If one allows oneself to be like a lotus and opens up to Sun, every moment is transformative and rewarding. One needs to open up to accept beauty with one's eyes, ears, mind, and heart-Satyam Shivam Sundaram. There is a beautiful prayer, "Asatoma Sadgamaya" (Lead me from ignorance to truth), "Tamasoma Jyotir Gamaya" (Lead me from darkness to light), "Mrityorma Amritam Gamaya" (Lead me from time-bound consciousness to the timeless state of Being). May we all have that rewarding journey. Through my dance, learning, and friends, I have lived a fulfilling and rewarding life. The human avatar is very rare; let's make the most of it.



# WHERE FOOD MEETS ART IN PLATING

It is not just about cooking the dish well but also plating them right is the idea is to engage all the senses for an overall dining experience, says **SHARMILA CHAND**



**S**culpt, layer, paint, drizzle. Splash, a squiggle, dots, the jus, the sauce... there is an artist at work, bent, eyes fixed at his plate, in front of you at your table in the restaurant. He is undeterred till he finishes his task. Another few minutes, he finally looks up and tells you, your dish is ready. The artist is none other than the chef who has been busy meticulously plating the dish you ordered. The plate is his canvas and he is creating a visual masterpiece.

It's not just about cooking the dish right but the idea is to engage all the senses for an overall dining experience. "I find the process of plating to be as crucial as the preparation of the dish itself," says Chef Amandeep Singh, Executive Sous Chef at The Westin Mumbai Garden City. For him, "Plating is an art form cherished by food connoisseurs worldwide, where every element on the plate serves as a canvas for creativity and expression."



Colour and Shape Chef Amandeep's preference leans towards minimalist, neutral-coloured plates that allow the vibrant hues of the dish to shine. "The shape of the plate is equally significant; I favour plates with clean lines and ample space for artistic arrangement. Each dish has its personality, and the shape of the plate can either accentuate or detract from its essence. For instance, a circular plate complements dishes with symmetrical components, while elongated plates are ideal for showcasing linear arrangements," he says.

"The colour of the dish and its ingredients wield immense influence over the plating process. Take, for example, my signature dish, Tandoori Salmon with Mango Salsa. The vibrant hues of the succulent salmon and the vibrant mango salsa pop against a pristine white plate, creating a visually captivating presentation that entices the palate even before the first bite," adds Chef Amandeep.

According to Chef Sandeep Kalra, Director of Culinary, Pullman Novotel, New Delhi, Aerocity, "The colour of the plate totally depends on the colour and textures of the dish. Both have to complement each other. The colour of the plate one chooses can make a big difference in how the dish looks. If you want your food to really stand out, pick a plate colour that is different from the colours of the food. White plates are a good choice for colourful dishes because they make the colours pop. On the other hand, if you want the colours

to blend well together, choose a plate colour that goes well with the food colours. Earthy tones like beige or light brown can make green vegetables look even better. Also, consider the theme of your meal. If you're going for a modern look, white or black plates are often a good choice. Dark plates can also help keep food warm longer. Ultimately, the plate colour should match the style of your meal to create a beautiful and cohesive presentation."

Simran Singh Thapar, Executive Chef, The Leela Palace Bengaluru echoes the sentiment: "Play with complementary hues and remember, a pop of colour can make all the difference. Adding a variety of textures can make your dish visually interesting and enticing. Combine crunchy elements with smooth components, as I like to do in my dish 'Truffled Russet Mille Feuille with Butternut Squash Quasar -e- Pukhtan, Golden Almonds and Charcoal touille'. A crisp potato Mille Feuille is paired with a velvety smooth and rich sauce. Layering ingredients not only adds depth but also adds a sense of complexity to your presentation. I have used green microgreens to pop up the otherwise warm hues of orange and brown. An almond charcoal touille creates a visual and texture impact on my plate."

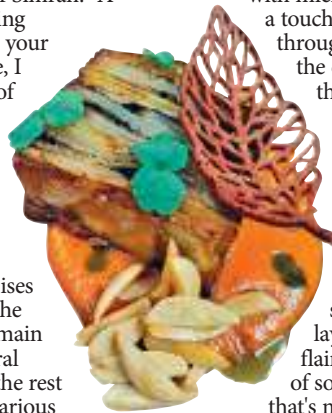
"Creating a theme or a story with your plating can make your dish more memorable," adds chef Simran. "A theme can tie everything together and captivate your audience. On my plate, I have created a theme of classics from two cuisines pairing together to create magic -- Classic French and Classic Indian."

Ingredient is the Key Chef Sandeep emphasises on the 'ingredient' as the key focus. "Using the main ingredient as the central focus and organising the rest of the ingredients in various forms of purees, gels, mousse or whole forms works the best. There is no specific style that I incorporate but looking at the ingredients I adapt to plating techniques and style that complements the textures and enhances the look of the dish. One favourite dish that I love to plate often is the grilled chicken breast with sweet potato mash and sautéed green beans. The dish features a perfectly grilled chicken breast placed slightly off-centre on the

plate. Alongside, a generous serving of creamy sweet potato mash, flavored with cinnamon and nutmeg, provides contrast. Crisp green beans are delicately piled next to the mash, adding a fresh touch. A sprinkle of finely chopped parsley garnishes the plate, adding a pop of green. Presented on a square, off-white plate, this dish is not just delicious but also visually appealing, designed to delight both the eye and the palate." Garnishing Lends visual Allure "When it comes to garnishes, I believe in the power of simplicity," tells Chef Amandeep. "Fresh herbs like cilantro and microgreens add a burst of colour and flavour without overwhelming the dish. A delicate sprinkle of sea salt or a drizzle of high-quality olive oil can elevate even the simplest of presentations," he says.

Likewise for Chef Sandeep, it is important to give vitality to the dish with microgreens or herbs and add a touch of elegance and beauty through edible flowers. "Show off the dish and keep room for theatrics," is his mantra. Gerwin D'souza, Pastry Sous Chef, The St Regis Goa Resort feels, "Perhaps a swirl of sauce, a fine scattering of berries to enhance. At our Italian restaurant, Oliveto, we serve tiramisu in a glass to show off the varied layering. To add that extra flair, we place a spoon made of solid chocolate on it. Now that's my style of garnishing. That expression of my diners at the first look of tiramisu says it all."

Chefs Are Artists Too Who says we deck up our plates just because we are going through an era of social media, ask chefs. Plating as an art satisfies the aesthetic sense of creativity within us, they say. "The artist in me likes the Free Form or keeping the plating abstract," opines Chef Anshul Dhyani, Executive Chef ITC Grand Central, adding that "Not giving a



Chef Simran Singh Thapar



Chef Amandeep Singh



Gerwin D'souza



Executive Chef Anshul Dhyani



Chef Subhankar Chitrakar



Sandeep Kalra

particular structure to it, I like to keep it simple and let the ingredients be as natural. I would like the ingredients and flavour to do the talking. Prefer to treat the plate as a canvas where every ingredient can show its own colours. For example in my dish, Seared Scallops with slow braised pork belly, granny smith puree and macerated golden raisins, Scallops and Pork belly are the main ingredients of the dish

complemented by the raisins and apple puree. The dish has been plated in a free flow manner. All the ingredients are plated in a way that they all stand out and no single ingredient overshadows the other one. All the colours and textures are preserved and no ingredient loses its individuality but together bring about a complete culinary harmony."

"Indeed I am an artist," says Chef Aashutosh Shende, Executive Sous Chef of Paper Moon, Taj Fort Aguada Resort Spa. "For instance in my dish Tagliolini with Pesto Sauce and Pine Nuts, I treat the white plate as my blank canvas, the green pesto sauce is my vibrant paint. The green pesto sauce offers a colour palette to create a visually stunning composition on a white plate.

Composition of the dish is the king and arrangement is the key. Swirling the pesto in an artistic flourish and strategically placing the elements for balance and contrast. I build height with rolling the pasta around a large fork and then slide it on the plate. This gives not only clean lines but also height to the dish, techniques used by both chefs and artists. I express my personality and my expressions through my plating. I am not a fan of bold or dramatic swirls and many colours on my plate; I prefer a simple bed for a wild abstract masterpiece for my Tagliolini."

He has more to add: "I like to sign every dish that goes out of my kitchen and, as such, a final flourish on food plating has my signature. It could be a sprinkle of fresh herbs, in this case in particular a drizzle of balsamic reduction and a scattering of toasted pine nuts. These finishing touches showcase my creation from a meal to a work of art."

"I work in a bakery which can be at times devoid of human interaction and through my bakery items I express myself," says Chef Subhankar Chitrakar from Bakery of Taj Holiday Village Resort Spa, Goa. Citing an example of his dish, Caramel Porto, he tells, "This rich, decadent dessert - Caramel Porto - presents a fantastic opportunity every time to pique my inner artist."

Considering the portion size -- if it is a single serving I prefer a small dessert plate with a rim, for four portions I choose a shallow bowl or couple glass which allows for beautiful layering. Choosing whether to keep the same colour or play a colour contrast game, I prefer a white plate to enhance the various hues of caramel. Sometimes I do use a dark plate to create a dramatic backdrop for a glistering sauce. Considering the overall mood of the diner a classic white plate offers timeless elegance and on the other hand a more colourful bowl would add a touch of casual charm. I am not afraid to add a delicate web like swirl for a touch of whimsy.

Or for a bolder statement, a thicker controlled pour creates a dramatic centre piece. Go ahead and experiment with what's at hand, add a spring of fresh mint or a sprinkle of chopped nuts or a dusting cocoa powder to add pops of colour and flavour like a bold brushstroke. I am an artist and this is my soul that I bare through my Caramel Porto."

Author Intro: Sharmila Chand is an Author and Freelance Journalist who writes on Food, Travel, Lifestyle, Art and Wellness. She can be reached at chand.sharmila@gmail.com.

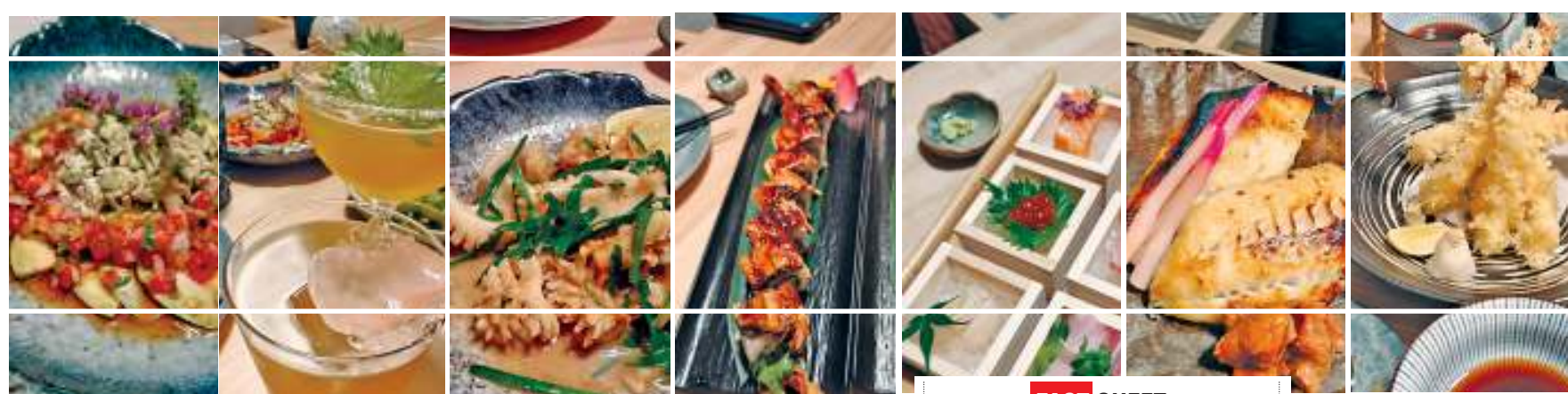


## FOOD TRENDS

# Falling in Love with Japanese cuisine

At Shin'ya, an Izakaya-inspired resto-bar at Hyatt Regency Gurugram, is drawing crowds because of the evident attention to detail and its commitment to source the best and freshest ingredients possible for a hearty Japanese meal, says **PAWAN SONI**

**J**apanese cuisine is winning hearts across the Indian community, and it is no surprise why. The dishes are light, nutritious, and packed with flavoUrs, thanks to ingredients like seaweed, soy, and seafood. The freshness of these ingredients is crucial, leading to high prices for premium seafood and fruits in Japan and sold in auctions. In India, particularly in the North, seafood is not as accessible due to the lack of coastline. However, logistics can ensure a steady, fresh supply. During my recent visit to Shin'ya, the new Japanese restaurant at Hyatt Regency Gurugram, I was impressed by the quality of the ingredients used. At Shin'ya, attention to detail is evident from the freshly grated wasabi to the sashimi made from yellowfin tuna, a step above the commonly used bluefin tuna. Sonale Zagade, Hyatt Regency's dynamic General Manager,



emphasised their commitment to sourcing the best ingredients, recalling her personal involvement in tasting each one before finalising. With seating for around 45 guests, this Izakaya-inspired resto-bar, with its light and minimalistic

decor, is perfect for small gatherings. On the recommendation of Shashwat Prasad, Shin'ya's mixologist, I started with a gari-infused bourbon mixed with yuzu juice and honey water. This mild drink perfectly set the tone for the

evening. The avocado carpaccio, chosen for my wife's vegetarian preference, was appreciated by both of us. The buttery avocado with caramelized onions, ponzu, and tomato salsa made a delightful start, while I enjoyed one of the lightest and crunchiest

**FACT SHEET**  
Food: 4.5/5 | Drinks: 4.5/5 | Service: 4.5/5  
Ambience: 4.0/5 | Overall: 4.5/5  
Address: Shin'ya, Hyatt Regency, NH48, Sector 83, Gurugram  
Phone: 9355816517  
Meal for Two: INR 4000 + Taxes  
Timing: 6:00 PM to 3:00 AM (Monday to Saturday), 12 Noon to 9: 00 PM (Sundays)

prawn tempuras. Coated with a bit of potato starch and accompanied by a miso daikon dip, these were among the best prawn tempuras I've ever tasted. Each dish, from the selection of sashimi to sushi, was special. Apart from the Japanese fare,

Shin'ya also offers a small mix of Korean and Asian dishes. I tried the Korean-style sautéed garlic butter squids and prawn gyoza dumplings, each dish telling a unique story. Another cocktail, the Houji tea-infused tequila with agave nectar topped with fresh shiso leaf, further demonstrated the mixologist's expertise. Both food and drinks at Shin'ya are crafted to ensure guest delight. My meal concluded with the robata-grilled miso black cod. The silky pieces of fish, with slight charred edges, contrasted beautifully with the buttery flavours and pickled plum. Shin'ya stands out for its high-quality ingredients and expertly prepared classic dishes. This restaurant is definitely one to watch in 2024.

— Author is a food critic and founder of the Big F Awards. He can be reached at Pawan.Soni@indianfoodfreak.com



The Niazi brothers have not only preserved the traditional essence of Qawwali but have also managed to infuse it with contemporary relevance, writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

# KEEPERS OF QAWWALI'S SOUL IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD

Immersed in the mysticism of Sufi music, the Niazi Brothers stand as luminaries in the realm of Qawwali, weaving a tapestry of tradition and innovation Sufi music, with its ethereal melodies and profound lyrics, transcends the boundaries of time and culture, reaching deep into the human soul. Rooted in the mystical traditions of Sufism, this genre resonates with listeners by invoking a sense of spiritual awakening and emotional connection. The timeless appeal of Sufi music lies in its ability to convey universal themes of love, devotion, and the quest for divine union, making it a poignant and enduring form of artistic expression that continues to captivate audiences across generations.

**A JOURNEY THROUGH SUFI MUSIC**  
The Niazi Brothers, hailing from Pakistan, are renowned for their powerful and evocative performances

that capture the very essence of Qawwali. The group's roots can be traced back to the renowned Patiala Gharana, known for its distinctive style and musical prowess. Growing up in a family where music was as essential as air, the brothers were immersed in the world of Qawwali from a young age, learning the intricacies and subtleties of the genre from their forebears. Their father, Ustad Allah Rakha, was a renowned Qawwali singer who instilled in them a deep respect for the traditional forms and the spiritual messages conveyed through their music. This early education laid a strong foundation, allowing the Niazi Brothers to develop a profound understanding of both the technical and emotional aspects of Qawwali. However, the Niazi Brothers' rise to prominence was not an overnight success but a journey of relentless dedication and passion. Their performances are characterised by a deep emotional connection, powerful vocals, and a mastery of the harmonium and tabla, all of which are central to the Qawwali experience. The brothers have performed on numerous prestigious stages around the world, captivating audiences with their dynamic energy and spiritual depth. Their repertoire includes classical Qawwalis that date back centuries, as well as more contemporary pieces that reflect current social and spiritual themes. This blend of old and new has helped them reach a diverse audience,

from traditionalists who appreciate the purity of their classical renditions to younger listeners who find resonance in their modern interpretations.

## THE FUTURE OF QAWWALI IN A FAST-PACED WORLD

As the world hurtles forward with technological advancements and shifting cultural landscapes, the future of Qawwali faces both challenges and opportunities. The Niazi Brothers are acutely aware of this dynamic and have been proactive in adapting to the changing times while preserving the core essence of their music. One significant avenue they have explored is the digital realm. Through social media platforms, streaming services, and online concerts, the Niazi Brothers have reached a global audience that transcends geographical boundaries. These platforms have allowed them to share their music with fans who might never have had the opportunity to experience a live Qawwali performance, thereby expanding the genre's reach and relevance. Moreover, collaborations with artists from different musical backgrounds have also played a crucial role in keeping Qawwali vibrant and relevant. By blending traditional Qawwali with contemporary music styles, the Niazi Brothers have created a unique fusion that appeals to a broader audience. This fusion not only keeps the tradition alive but also introduces its profound

spiritual and emotional depth to new listeners.

## PRESERVING TRADITION WHILE EMBRACING INNOVATION

The Niazi Brothers' approach to the future of Qawwali is a delicate balance of preservation and innovation. They remain deeply committed to the traditional aspects of Qawwali, understanding that its true power lies in its authenticity and spiritual roots. At the same time, they are not afraid to experiment and incorporate new elements that resonate with today's audiences. Education and mentorship also form a significant part of their vision for the future. By teaching young musicians the art of Qawwali, the Niazi Brothers are ensuring that this ancient tradition is passed down to future generations. They conduct workshops and training sessions, sharing their knowledge and passion with aspiring Qawwalis, thus creating a new generation of musicians who can carry the torch forward. The journey of the Niazi Brothers is a testament to the enduring power of Qawwali. Through their dedication, talent, and willingness to innovate, they have kept this ancient form of spiritual music alive and thriving. As the world continues to change at a rapid pace, the Niazi Brothers stand as guardians of a rich musical heritage, ensuring that the soul-stirring strains of Qawwali continue to resonate across the globe for generations to come.



## NIAZI BROTHERS ENTHRAL AT JASHN-E-QAWWALI CONCERT

Wishes & Blessings, a Delhi-based NGO committed to aiding those in need, organised the third edition of the fundraising concert, Jashn-E-Qawwali at Kamani Auditorium, Delhi. The event showcased mesmerizing performances by the internationally acclaimed Qawwali group, Niazi Brothers. Their soulful melodies captivated the audience, who swayed to power-packed performances ranging from traditional Qawwali tunes to popular Bollywood hits and original compositions by the Niazi Brothers. Standout renditions included timeless classics such as 'Kun Faya Kun,' 'Chaap Tilak,' 'Bhar De Jholi,' and 'Dama Dam Mast Qalandar'. The event attracted a wide audience, including beneficiaries of various Wishes & Blessings programmes like Sahas (an upskilling programme for women), the street-to-school initiative, and the community overwhelmed by the turnout and the resounding success of Jashn-E-Qawwali," said Dr Geetanjali Chopra, Founder and President of Wishes & Blessings, adding that,

"This marks the third edition of the fundraiser, with the previous two being immensely successful. The funds raised this year will directly contribute to our WB Raso program, addressing the fundamental need for food among those in need. We are grateful to Niazi Brothers for their continued support and to everyone who attended and contributed for the cause."

The funds raised will support the expansion of WB Raso, a new initiative aimed at providing nutritious meals to individuals in need. The NGO recently launched its first WB Raso in NOIDA, NCR. Shahid Niazi of the Niazi Brothers shared, "It was an honour to perform for such a noble cause. When we needed help, they were there for us. This was our time to give back. We are proud to be associated with Wishes & Blessings NGO for the past three years and look forward to contributing more in the future." The triumphant culmination of Jashn-E-Qawwali underscores Wishes & Blessings' commitment to making a meaningful difference in marginalised communities and lives and exemplifies music's power in fostering social change.



Photos: Pankaj Kumar

# Theatre of Enchantment

Gulzar's captivating adaptation of Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* took centrestage last week with director Salim Arif's masterful vision bringing this timeless comedy to life, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

Delhi was recently treated to an evening of theatrical enchantment at the prestigious Shri Ram Centre Auditorium. Amidst the city's vibrant energy, laughter and thunderous applause emerged as the renowned Shri Ram Centre for Performing Arts (SRCPA) Repertory unveiled Gulzar's spellbinding adaptation of Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*, titled *2 BY 2*. The auditorium was transformed into a realm of lighthearted gaiety, captivating the audience with the timeless magic of a live performance. Every artist was wholeheartedly appreciated, showcasing the audience's love for exceptional work. In a world where appreciation is often fleeting, this play, masterfully directed by the renowned Mohammed Salim Arif, stood as a testament to the enduring power of art. An acclaimed visionary in the realms of film, television and theatre, Salim's directorial prowess in *2 BY 2* can only be described as a masterpiece of the highest calibre. The play is a comedic masterpiece that tickles the funny bone with its hilarious depiction of mistaken identities and coincidental mix-ups involving identical twins with identical names. Designed and directed by Salim Arif and performed by ace artists, the play is a delightful experience. The audience was particularly impressed with the fact the actors performed and delivered on a script like Gulzar's script and Arif's direction. Resemblance with the adaptation of Shakespeare's classic drama in the film *Angoor* was quite obvious but the theatrical adaptation was indeed a beautiful execution of the masterpiece.

*2 BY 2*, like Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*, centres on two pairs of identical twins with identical names. Raj Tilak, a wealthy merchant, has identical twins named Ashok. During a journey, Raj Tilak discovers another pair of identical twins and adopts them, calling them Bahadur. An unfortunate accident separates the family, with each parent ending up with one child from each pair. One set of twins grows up married while the other remains single and mischievous. The comedy unfolds when the unmarried Ashok and Bahadur duo arrive in the city where the married Ashok and Bahadur reside. The ensuing confusion, involving their families, a jeweller, a taxi driver, and an inspector, leads to a series of hilarious misunderstandings that has the audience in stitches. The play masterfully blends humour, acting, and a classic script to create an entertaining experience. Gulzar's script, known for its poetic and situational brilliance, adds depth and flavour to the play, enthralling the audience all along. Director Salim Arif commented, "Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* is a classic that centres on the notion of 'mistaken identity'. In Gulzar Saab's adaptation *2 BY 2*, the arrival of the unmarried Ashok and Bahadur in the city where the married Ashok and Bahadur reside creates a confusion that involves more than their families, to extend to a jeweller, a police inspector, and the town." The performances by the cast was exceptional, their expressions, delivery

and timing impeccable. The sets, lighting, costumes and props were meticulously crafted, adding to the play's charm. The success of *2 BY 2* is an indication to the enduring appeal of high-quality, engaging theatre. The combination of Salim Arif's direction and Gulzar Saab's writing created an unforgettable experience, proving that great work continues to receive the appreciation it deserves. *2 BY 2* is more than just a simple tale of confusion. The script, penned by the legendary Gulzar, is a masterpiece of situational comedy. Each dialogue adds a layer of humour to the chaos, keeping the audience perpetually on the edge of their seats in anticipation of what comes next. Director Salim Arif masterfully brings the script to life, ensuring the comedic timing is tight. The talented cast deserves credit for its captivating performances. From subtle inflections to dramatic gestures, every aspect of the actors' performance is a testament to their dedication to the craft. The play does not just rely on the actors. The set's design, perfect lighting, costumes and props, all contribute in transporting the audience into the world of *2 BY 2*. *2 BY 2* is indeed a celebration of theatre at its finest. As the curtains came down on the play, a thunderous applause filled the auditorium, showcasing the profound impact on the audience. The seamless blend of Gulzar's storytelling, Salim Arif's direction and the exceptional performances created an unforgettable evening of laughter and delight. With this play, the SRCPA further underlined its commitment to bringing exceptional theatre to Delhi, reminding us of power of art to unite, entertain and inspire. As one left the theatre, one was reminded of the fact that amidst life's complexities, the gift of shared joy through a live performance is an eternal treasure.

# TRAILBLAZING JOURNEY THROUGH BHARATANATYAM

Apeksha Niranjana Mundargi, a pioneer in the field of Bharatanatyam, has ushered in a new dawn for this ancient art form with her passion and innovative spirit, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

In the vibrant tapestry of classical Indian dance forms, Bharatanatyam is a captivating expression of grace, rhythm and storytelling. At the forefront of this ancient art's contemporary renaissance is Apeksha Niranjana Mundargi, a celebrated dancer, choreographer, and teacher from Mumbai. With a journey that began in the culturally rich city of Kolhapur, Apeksha's unwavering passion and dedication have elevated her to the ranks of the most accomplished Bharatanatyam artists of our time. Through her exceptional talent, innovative choreography and profound understanding of the art form's rich heritage, she has captivated audiences across the globe, ushering in a new era of appreciation for this timeless dance tradition. Apeksha's journey in mastering Bharatanatyam has been one of dedication, discipline and learning. She describes how her love for the dance form is rooted in its profound ability to tell stories through rhythm, expression and grace. From a young age, she was captivated by the intricate footwork, eloquent gestures and expressive use of the eyes. Her journey, guided by her gurus, has deepened her appreciation for the rich cultural heritage and intricate techniques of Bharatanatyam. One of Apeksha's notable productions, *Nayanam*, which means eyes in Sanskrit, explores the myriad emotions conveyed through the eyes. This thematic performance highlights the eyes as windows to the soul, capable of portraying joy, love, sorrow and longing. Apeksha recounts a memorable moment during her Poland Spring Tour 2024 when a girl in the audience was moved to tears by *Nayanam*, underscoring the power of dance to push barriers.

Apeksha's training in the *Nritya-Ganga* dance style, introduced by her Guru Dr Sucheta Chapekar, has significantly influenced her interpretation and performance of Bharatanatyam. This style blends tradition with innovation, enhancing her performances while staying true to the essence of the art form. She emphasises that dance is a form of visual poetry, where the essence lies in dancing to the music rather than treating it as a mathematical exercise. Reflecting on her performance at a festival in Italy in 2022, Apeksha shared how she traversed a kilometre on the road while performing Bharatanatyam, ending at the 'Gate of Peace'. She portrayed the story of *Yamuna Gatha*, addressing the pollution and pain of the Yamuna River. This contemporary theme demonstrated the relevance and power of Bharatanatyam in addressing contemporary issues

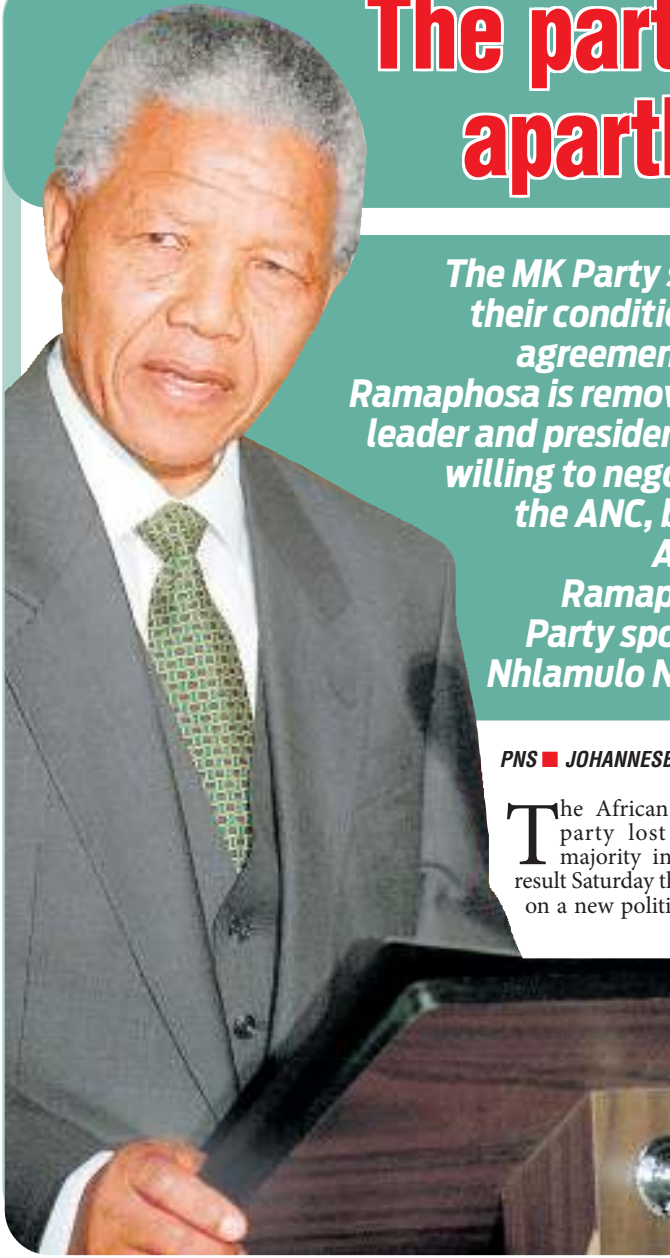
and left a lasting impact on the international audience. Apeksha also highlighted the unique aspects of the Tanjavur school of Bharatanatyam, which prioritises fluidity and musicality. She incorporates these elements into her performances, creating a harmonious and synchronised expression. Her choreography balances traditional elements with her unique artistic expression, ensuring that the soul of Bharatanatyam remains intact while infusing it with innovation. Addressing the challenges faced by classical dancers today, Apeksha emphasises the importance of finding platforms to present her art and balance multiple roles while managing family life. She credits her supportive family and dedicated team for helping her navigate these challenges. She sees Bharatanatyam evolving in the modern era by making it more accessible and relatable. She aims to showcase stories that resonate with the audiences and connect through local music and folk stories. By incorporating elements such as the poetry of saints from Maharashtra and performing Bharatanatyam based on local folk stories and Gregorian chants, she hopes to bridge cultural divides and ensure that the art form remains relevant. For young dancers aspiring to pursue Bharatanatyam professionally, Apeksha advises prioritising dedicated practice, seeking guidance from knowledgeable gurus and embracing innovation within the framework of tradition. She encourages dancers to focus on expressing emotions authentically and maintaining physical and mental fitness.

Apeksha prepares for her performances through a holistic process that begins months in advance. This involves choreography, music creation, refining movements and mental rehearsal. She emphasises the importance of being adaptable and maintaining a calm demeanour, acknowledging that uncertainties may arise on a given day. She recalls her moment of connection with her audience during a performance in Poland, where she danced to Polish folk music. The fusion of Bharatanatyam with traditional Polish music created a unique and captivating experience, highlighting the universal language of dance. She aspires to spread the beauty and richness of Bharatanatyam worldwide, ensuring it remains accessible and appreciated by diverse audiences. Through innovative choreography and engaging performances, she continues to contribute to the global recognition of Bharatanatyam as a profound and timeless art form. Apeksha Niranjana Mundargi's journey through Bharatanatyam is a testament to the transformative power of dance. Her dedication, innovative spirit and profound connection to the art form have not only elevated her performances but also enriched the cultural landscape. As she continues to spread the beauty and richness of Bharatanatyam worldwide, Apeksha inspires us to embrace tradition while welcoming innovation to deepen our appreciation for this timeless art form. In this, Apeksha Niranjana is truly a beacon of light, illuminating the path for future generations, ensuring that the rich tapestry of Bharatanatyam continues to captivate and inspire audiences for times to come.





# The party that freed South Africa from apartheid loses its 30-year majority



**The MK Party said one of their conditions for any agreement was that Ramaphosa is removed as ANC leader and president. "We are willing to negotiate with the ANC, but not the ANC of Cyril Ramaphosa," MK Party spokesperson Nhlamulo Ndlela said.**

PNS ■ JOHANNESBURG

The African National Congress party lost its parliamentary majority in a historic election result Saturday that puts South Africa on a new political path for the first time since the end of the apartheid system of white minority rule 30 years ago.

With nearly 99% of votes counted, the once-dominant ANC had received just over 40% in the election on

Wednesday, well short of the majority it had held since the famed all-race vote of 1994 that ended apartheid and brought it to power under Nelson Mandela. The final results are still to be formally declared by the independent electoral commission that ran the election.

While opposition parties hailed it as a momentous breakthrough for a country struggling with deep poverty and inequality, the ANC remained the biggest party in some way but will now need to look for a coalition partner or partners to stay in the government and reelect President Cyril Ramaphosa for a second and final term. Parliament elects the South African president after national elections.

The result ended the ANC's dominance three-decade dominance of South Africa's young democracy. Still, the way forward promises to be complicated for Africa's most advanced economy, and there's no coalition yet.

The main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance, was on around 21%. The new MK Party of former President Jacob Zuma, who has turned against the ANC he once led, came third with just over 14% of the vote in the first election it has contested.

Which parties the ANC might approach to co-govern with is the urgent focus now, given Parliament needs to sit and elect a president within 14 days of the final election results being officially declared. A flurry of negotiations was set to take place and they will likely be complicated.

The MK Party said one of their conditions for any agreement was that Ramaphosa is removed as ANC leader and president.

"We are willing to negotiate with the ANC, but not the ANC of Cyril Ramaphosa," MK Party spokesperson Nhlamulo Ndlela said.

More than 50 parties contested the national election, but given how far off a majority the ANC appears to be, it is likely that it will have to approach one of the three main opposition parties.

MK and the far-left Economic Freedom Fighters have called for parts of the economy to be nationalised. The centrist Democratic Alliance is viewed as a business-friendly party and analysts say an ANC-DA coalition would be more welcomed by foreign investors.

Despite the uncertainty, South African opposition parties were hailing the new political picture as a much-needed change for the country of 62 million, which is Africa's most developed but also one of the most unequal in the world.

South Africa has widespread poverty and extremely high levels of unemployment and the ANC has struggled to raise the standard of living for millions. The official unemployment rate is 32%, one of the highest in the world, and the poverty disproportionately affects Black people, who make up 80% of the population and have been the core of the ANC's support for years.

The ANC has also been blamed - and apparently punished by voters - for a failure in basic government services that impacts millions and leaves many without water, electricity or proper housing.

"We have said for the last 30 years that the way to rescue South Africa is to break the ANC's majority and we have done that," Democratic Alliance leader John Steenhuisen said. Nearly 28 million South Africans were registered to vote and turnout is expected to be around 60%, according to figures from the independent electoral commission that runs the election.



## North Korea is sending more trash-carrying balloons to South Korea

PNS ■ SEOUL

North Korea launched more trash-carrying balloons toward the South after a similar campaign earlier in the week, according to South Korea's military, in what Pyongyang calls retaliation for activists flying anti-North Korean leaflets across the border.

South Korea's Defence Ministry did not immediately comment on the number of balloons it had detected or how many have landed in South Korea. The military advised people to beware of falling objects and not to touch objects suspected to be from North Korea, but report them to military or police offices instead.

In Seoul, the capital, the city government sent text alerts saying that unidentified

objects suspected to be flown from North Korea were being detected in skies near the city and that the military was responding to them.

The North's balloon launches added to a recent series of provocative steps, which include its failed spy satellite launch and test-firings of about 10 suspected short-range missiles this week.

South Korea's military dispatched chemical rapid response and explosive clearance teams to recover the debris from some 260 North Korean balloons that were found in various parts of the country from Tuesday night to Wednesday. The military said the balloons carried various types of trash and manure but no dangerous substances like chemical, biological or radioactive materials.

## Engineering cells can help scientists study their inner workings

PNS ■ MADISON

Waves are ubiquitous in nature and technology. Whether it's the rise and fall of ocean tides or the swinging of a clock's pendulum, the predictable rhythms of waves create a signal that is easy to track and distinguish from other types of signals.

Electronic devices use radio waves to send and receive data, like your laptop and Wi-Fi router or cellphone and cell tower. Similarly, scientists can use a different type of wave to transmit a different type of data: signals from the invisible processes and dynamics underlying how cells make decisions. Waves are a powerful engineering tool.

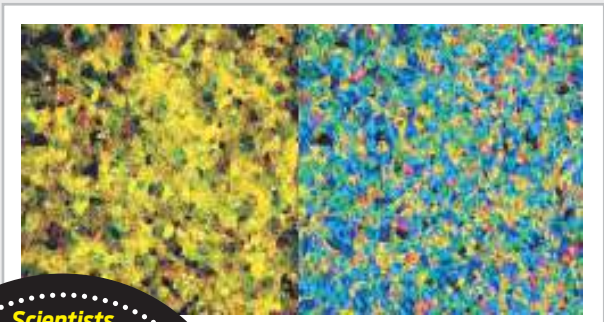
The oscillating behaviour of waves is one reason they're powerful patterns in engineering.

For example, controlled and predictable changes to wave oscillations can be used to encode data, such as voice or video information. In the case of radio, each station is assigned a unique electromagnetic wave that oscillates at its own frequency.

Scientists can extend this strategy to living cells. My team used waves of proteins to turn a cell into a microscopic radio station, broadcasting data about its activity in real time to study its behaviour.

Turning cells into radio stations Studying the inside of cells requires a kind of wave that can specifically connect to and interact with the machinery and components of a cell.

While electronic devices are built from wires and transistors, cells are built from and controlled by



**Scientists can extend this strategy to living cells. My team used waves of proteins to turn a cell into a microscopic radio station, broadcasting data about its activity in real time to study its behaviour**

a diverse collection of chemical building blocks called proteins. Proteins perform an array of functions within the cell, from extracting energy from sugar to deciding whether the cell should grow.

Protein waves are generally rare in nature, but some bacteria naturally generate waves of two proteins called MinD and MinE - typically referred to together as MinDE - to help them divide. My team discovered that putting MinDE into human cells causes waves and patterns.

On their own, MinDE protein waves do not interact with other proteins in human cells. However, we found that MinDE could be readily engineered to react to the activity of specific human proteins responsible for making decisions about whether to grow, send signals to neighboring cells, move around and divide.

The protein dynamics driving these cellular functions are typically difficult to detect and study in living cells because the activity of proteins is generally invisible to even high-power microscopes. The disruption of these protein patterns is at the core of many cancers and developmental disorders.

We engineered connections between MinDE protein waves and the activity of proteins responsible for key cellular processes. Now, the activity of these proteins trigger changes in the frequency or amplitude of the protein wave, just like an AM/FM radio. Using microscopes, we can detect and record the unique signals individual cells are broadcasting and then decode them to recover the dynamics of these cellular processes.

### UNCERTAINTY OVER SPACEX ROCKET

## Japan billionaire cancels moon trip due to development

PNS ■ TOKYO

Japanese billionaire Yusaku Maezawa on Saturday canceled his planned flight around the moon on a SpaceX vehicle because of uncertainty about when it may be possible. The tycoon in 2018 launched plans for the lunar flyby voyage. He bought seats for eight traveling companions in 2022 for what would be his second space journey after his 12-day trip to the International Space Station (ISS) on a Russian Soyuz spacecraft in 2021. Maezawa was aiming the moon trip for 2023, a target seen by most space observers as overly optimistic given the progress of SpaceX's Spaceship mega-rocket project. The project would have been the first private flight around the moon. That project became "unfeasible," said the mission organizer on Saturday in a statement posted on its website. "Without clear schedule certainty in the near-term, it is with a heavy heart that Maezawa made the unavoidable decision to cancel the project." "To all who have supported this project and looked forward to this endeavor, we sincerely appreciate it and apologize for this outcome," it said. Maezawa had selected eight people for his "dearMoon" project from 1 million applicants. They included a lead rapper for the K-pop group Big Bang, and Americans DJ Steve Aoki and filmmaker Brendan Hall. Separately on Saturday, Maezawa said in his message on X: "I can't plan my future in this situation and I feel terrible making the crew members wait longer, hence (I made) the difficult decision to cancel at this point in time." "I apologize to those who were excited for this project to happen," he said. He said he signed the contract with SpaceX in 2018 assuming the launch would be possible by the end of 2023. "It's a developmental project so it is what it is, but it is still uncertain as to when Starship can launch." "SpaceX's two test flights of its mega-rocket last year ended in explosions minutes after liftoff. In a third test in March, its spacecraft was lost as it descended back to Earth. Maezawa and his producer in December 2021 became the first self-paying tourists to visit the space station since 2009.

Maezawa made his fortune in retail fashion, launching Japan's major online fashion mall, Zozotown.

The venue of the event, George Everest Peak is a major tourist attraction in Mussoorie which offers spectacular views of the snow-clad Himalayan peaks and the Doon Valley.

### India's first astro tourism campaign begins in Mussoorie

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

India's first astro tourism campaign "Nakshatra Sabha" was inaugurated at the George Everest peak in Mussoorie on Saturday. The venue of the event, George Everest Peak is a major tourist attraction in Mussoorie which offers spectacular views of the snow-clad Himalayan peaks and the Doon Valley.

Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board in association with

Starscapes - India's leading Astro tourism company, is jointly organising the event which will go on till June 2.

After this, astro tourism events will also be organized in places like Harsil-Jadung, Benital, Rishikesh, Jageshwar and Ramnagar.

Various activities like star gazing through special instruments, solar observation through solar glasses and H-Alpha filter are being organised as part of the event.



## Braving icy heights: Election at world's highest polling station

PNS ■ TASHINGANG (HP)

Prem Lal arrived early at the subdivisional magistrate's office on Thursday, the icy cold and crisp morning air hinting at the challenges ahead.

As one of the 29 booth-level officers deployed from Kaza to polling stations in Lahaul-Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh, Lal knew that the next few days would be demanding.

Wearing sunglasses to shield his eyes from the glaring sun, the trained graduate teacher joined others in a semi-circle. The SDM, carrying a bunch of papers clipped together, called out the names of the booth officers and their assignments.

It is Tashingang for Lal and his team of five others. Tashingang is a tiny village perched high in the icy Himalayas at a staggering altitude of

15,256 feet. The village holds the distinction of hosting the highest polling station in the world.

Located near the India-China border, the Spiti valley is part of the Mandi Lok Sabha seat, one of the four parliamentary constituencies in Himachal Pradesh and the second largest in India. Bollywood actor Kangana Ranaut of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is up against the Congress's Vikramaditya Singh from the seat.

The polling station at Tashingang, serving 62 voters from Tashingang and Gete, has been made a model polling booth. The hour-and-a-half-long journey to Tashingang, located on the other side of a mountain facing the SDM's office in Kaza, is as formidable as the landscape itself - rugged terrain, narrow winding dirt roads and unpredictable weather.

Yet, for Lal and his team, the assignment carries a sense of pur-

**As one of the 29 booth-level officers deployed from Kaza to polling stations in Lahaul-Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh, Lal knew that the next few days would be demanding**



pose. In a place where the harsh environment shapes every aspect of life, facilitating the democratic process is both a "duty and an honour".

"I have been part of a team that conducted elections at Hikki (also in the Spiti valley), the second-highest polling station in the country, in the past. So I have some experience," Lal said, laughing as he walked to board a white Bolero car with an electronic voting machine (EVM) in his hands.

After a brief pause, he added, "Thoda dikkat to hoga (there will be

some difficulties)," acknowledging the challenges ahead, especially for those unaccustomed to such a difficult terrain with no mobile connectivity and limited power supply.

But the polling preparations are meticulous.

"The team will get a satellite phone and runners will be deployed to relay polling data to the headquarters," Additional District Commissioner Rahul Jain told PTI. "The terrain is tough, but our teams are committed and we have made all the preparations," he added.