

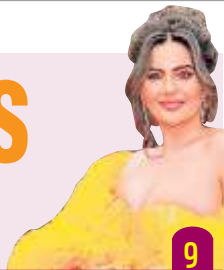
I have evidence. I will prove in which flight Harish Rao travelled and where he met Prabhakar Rao in the US. Will Harish take a vow that he did not meet Prabhakar Rao in the US? I am ready for anything if I cannot prove my allegations. Harish went to the US on May 26 and came back on June 1. KCR has been trying to ensure that Prabhakar does not return to India. KCR will have to go to jail if Prabhakar returns. KCR mocked democracy by using rowdies like Prabhakar Rao, Radha Kishan Rao, Praneeth Rao, Bhujanga Rao, Thirupathanna and others. We thought that KCR was engaged in farming in his farmhouse but he was tapping phones.

— Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, R&B Minister

**Modi urges officials to ensure fire drills in hospitals, public places**



**'MY DRESS GOT READY 2 HOURS BEFORE I HAD TO LEAVE'**



**Meera Jasmine as 'Uthphalaa Devi' IN SWAG**



**DON'T MISS...**

**Hyd student goes missing...**

A student from Hyderabad attending Cal State University San Bernardino has gone missing in the US since May 28. According to media reports, the 23-year-old girl, Nitheesha Kandula, went missing in Los Angeles, California. Police are asking the people's help in finding a 23-year-old Cal State University San Bernardino student who has been missing for several days. The student is from Hyderabad. Nitheesha Kandula was last seen in Los Angeles on Tuesday, May 28, though the exact area is unknown, according...

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**Sweltering heat, flash floods...**

Sweltering heatwave in north India that have caused scores of deaths, floods and landslides in the northeast that have affected lakhs of people, a spring season that suggests it could soon "disappear" from the calendar — extreme weather events in the first five months of 2024 have got everyone questioning: where is all this headed? Despite having made predictions to this effect, climate scientists acknowledge that the temperatures this summer, including the outlier 52.9 degrees Celsius in Delhi...

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**AC makers clock two-fold jump in...**

A blistering summer has led to an almost two-fold jump in sales of air-conditioners in May even as leading manufacturers have been grappling with delays in installation and replenishing inventories of hot-selling energy-efficient models. The mercury is hovering above 45 degrees at several places including the national capital, which has been under the grip of a severe heatwave for the past few days. At the same time, AC makers are navigating exceptional demand, recording their best-ever sales in a month so far...

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**Amit Panghal clinches Paris...**

Amit Panghal's comeback to the Indian team culminated in an Olympic quota as the world championships silver medalist boxer qualified for the Paris Games with a quarterfinal win in the 2nd World Qualification Tournament here on Sunday. Panghal, India's lone male world championship silver medalist, notched a hard-fought 5-0 win over China's Chuang Liu for a ticket to his second Olympic Games. He thus joins the quartet of Nishant Dev (71kg), Nikhat Zareen (50kg), Preeti...

-SPORTS

# TG loves freedom, won't tolerate slavery: Revanth

Says Congress government is working for the state's revival

“During its 10 year-rule, Telangana suffered 100 years of destruction. It was not just physical destruction but even fundamental freedoms were threatened. As long as Telangana exists, Sonia Gandhi will be respected as its "mother.”

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that Telangana's way of life is enjoying 'freedom' and that the people of Telangana cannot tolerate 'slavery'.

The CM said the nature of Telangana's people is that they share love but resist domination. The people of Telangana will not tolerate anyone who tries to trouble them in the name of welfare, he said.

The Chief Minister said that Telangana suffered "destruction of 100 years" during the 10-year BRS rule and that his government is working for the state's revival.

Addressing the 10th Telangana



Chief Minister Shri A. Revanth Reddy unfurled the national flag and received a salute from the police at the state formation ceremony held at Secunderabad Parade Ground. Later, the CM released the national anthem 'Jaya Jayaha Telangana'

Formation Day celebrations organised by the state government at the Parade Grounds, Revanth thanked Congress leader Sonia Gandhi and former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for fulfilling the decades-long demand for statehood for Telangana.

**Will implement six guarantees: Sonia**

Extending greetings to the people of Telangana on the occasion of the decennial celebrations of Telangana Formation Day on Sunday, former AICC President Sonia Gandhi said the Congress government headed by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy will implement all the six guarantees given to the people. Sonia did not attend the Telangana Formation Day celebrations held on Sunday at the Parade Grounds as expected due to medical reasons.

Continued on Page 2



BRS chief KCR addressing party leaders on the occasion TG Formation Day celebrations on Sunday

## Cong govt will fall soon, declares KCR

Slams exit polls as mere gambling

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Attacking the Telangana Congress government, BRS chief K. Chandrasekhar Rao said the admin has become unpopular in a short period, and that public anger is such that the discontent will "explode like a bomb" shortly.

He said that the Congress government's graph started falling in just six months and the days of the Congress government are numbered.

KCR said the BRS's defeat in the Assembly elections was a temporary setback that could occur to any

political party and added that he was confident that the BRS would come back to power again in the next Assembly elections.

"What will happen in Parliament elections? It can be any number. Somebody said we (BRS) would get 11 seats. Another said we would get only one seat. Somebody said two to four. This has become gambling. Let us see. There was a good response among the public during my bus yatra (poll campaigning). We can expect a good result."

**KCR said BRS's defeat in the Assembly elections was a temporary setback that could occur to any political party and added that he was confident that the BRS would come back to power again in the next Assembly elections.**

2

## Harish went to US to meet Prabhakar: Venkat

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Roads and Buildings (R&B) Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said that BRS MLA T. Harish Rao went to the US to meet former Intelligence Chief Prabhakar Rao, who is involved in a phone tapping case. He said that Harish asked Prabhakar Rao not to return to Telangana now.

"I have evidence. I will prove in which flight Harish travelled and where Harish met Prabhakar Rao in the US. Will Harish take a vow that he did not meet Prabhakar in the US? I am ready for anything if I cannot prove my allegations," Venkat said.

Addressing the media at the Minister's quarters on Sunday, Venkat said that KCR is a "monster" who engaged in phone tapping. He alleged that KCR behaved like Mohammed Ali Jinnah of Pakistan during State Formation Day celebrations.

He reiterated that no one will remain in the BRS after the results of the Lok Sabha elections and that KCR has no regard for the Telangana people.

KCR took up the Telangana movement as he did not get a Minister post and egged on the public. He said that KCR used to collect Rs 1 lakh if one wanted to have food with him during the Telangana movement in the name of donations.



**Harish denies charges, demands proof**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Refuting the allegations of Roads and Buildings (R&B) Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, BRS MLA T. Harish Rao said that he is ready to rub his nose to the ground at the Martyrs Statue if Venkat proves the allegations he had made against him. Reacting to the allegations of Venkat on Sunday that he had met former Intelligence chief Prabhakar Rao in the US, Harish said in his statement released on Sunday that Venkat's mental balance seems to be disturbed and that he should undergo a check-up.

Continued on Page 2

## BRS candidate Naveen wins Mahbubnagar MLC by-poll

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a shocker to the ruling Congress, the BRS won the by-poll to the Telangana Legislative Council from the Mahbubnagar Local Authorities' constituency on Sunday.

BRS candidate Naveen Kumar Reddy secured 762 votes, while the Congress nominee, M. Jeevan Reddy, got 653 votes. An Independent candidate won one

vote. The total number of valid votes polled in the by-election was 1,416.

The victory in the by-poll came as a morale booster to the BRS after its shock defeat in the Assembly polls last year. The by-poll outcome is seen as a setback for the Congress as Mahbubnagar is in the home district of the CM.

The polling for the by-election was held on March 28. Although

counting was supposed to be taken up on April 2, it was postponed to June 2 as the Model Code of Conduct was in force for the Lok Sabha polls.

The by-poll was necessitated due to the resignation of Kasireddy Narayana Reddy after he was elected as a Congress MLA in the Assembly elections.



## Kejriwal surrenders



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday surrendered at the Tihar jail here after his interim bail granted by the Supreme Court in the excise policy-linked money laundering case ended on June 1.

He was granted the relief for campaigning in the Lok Sabha elections. Before surrendering, Kejriwal paid homage to Mahatma Gandhi at the Raj Ghat, offered prayers at the Hanuman temple in Connaught Place and addressed AAP leaders and workers at the party office.

Continued on Page 2

## 'It's 'Modi media poll'

INDIA bloc will get 295 seats: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Terming the exit polls "bogus", the Congress on Sunday said they were a "deliberate attempt" to justify rigging of the elections and part of "psychological games" being played by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to lower the morale of the INDIA bloc workers. Former Congress president

Rahul Gandhi dubbed the exit polls as "Modi media poll". "This is not called an exit poll but its name is 'Modi media poll'. This is Modi ji's poll, it is his fantasy poll," Gandhi told reporters at the AICC headquarters after a meeting with

party's Lok Sabha MPs via video conference. Asked how many seats INDIA bloc will get, Gandhi said, "Have you heard Sidhu Moose Wala's song '295'? So 295 (seats)."

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh also hit out at Prime Minister Modi for holding several meetings, including a long brainstorming session to review the 100-day agenda of the "new government", saying these were "pressure tactics" to send out a signal to the bureaucracy and the administrative structure that he is coming back.

Continued on Page 2

## 'A crucial turning point'

KTR hails BRS victory



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao said the BRS victory in the Mahbubnagar MLC by-elections signals a crucial turning point in the political landscape of Telangana.

"This victory in the local bodies' Legislative Council seat in the Chief Minister's home districts indicates the shifting political winds in the state, he said."

2

## BJP sweeps elections in Arunachal, returns to power for third time

PNS ■ ITANAGAR

The BJP on Sunday returned to power in Arunachal Pradesh for the third time in a row, winning 46 seats in the 60-member assembly, and bagging four more seats compared to its 2019 tally.

In sweeping the assembly elections, the counting of which was held during the day, the BJP decimated the opposition parties, especially the Congress which was relegated to the fifth position with only one seat after NPP (5), NCP (3) and PPA (2). Three seats went to Independent candidates.

Chief Minister Pema Khandu asserted that the momentum of what happened in the 'Land of the rising sun', a sobriquet for Arunachal



Pradesh, will spread to other parts of the country on June 4 when votes for the Lok Sabha elections will be counted. "This is a historic occasion for the BJP and entire Arunachal Pradesh."

2

## SKM storms back to power in Sikkim

PNS ■ GANGTOK

The Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) on Sunday returned to power in the Himalayan state for the second consecutive term by a landslide victory, winning 31 seats in the 32-member assembly. The opposition Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF), which ruled the state for 25 years in a row till 2019, could manage only one seat, though its president Pawan Kumar Chamling lost in the two constituencies he contested.

Continued on Page 2

## State formation day fete touches the sky

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The decennial Telangana Formation Day celebrations on Tank Bund touched the sky on Sunday night. The Tank Bund looked like a sea of people as people came in huge numbers to watch the special programmes on the Tank Bund.

Governor CP Radhakrishnan attended the celebrations as chief guest. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Ministers and Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari visited the stalls arranged on the Tank Bund. Artists from all over the state performed 17 types of art forms reflecting Telangana's history and culture.

## Rain plays spoilsport, but programmes continued



A carnival was held displaying Telangana's art forms. 700 artistes participated in the carnival. Dance performances were held on the stage.

The flag walk by 5,000 police trainees to the tunes of 'Jayajayaha Telangana' attracted the public. Rain played spoilsport during the cultural programme but programmes continued in the heavy rain. Even though it was raining, the

Tank Bund area was crowded with people who had come to watch the celebrations. The government had made arrangements for the crowds. Cultural programmes started at 6:30 pm. Carnival, laser show, food and gaming stalls were arranged. The Governor, CP Radhakrishnan, the CM and Ministers watched the

cultural programmes in the rain. Handicrafts, special products and food stalls serving the Telangana cuisine were set up on the Tank Bund. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy visited the stalls at the Tank Bund. A carnival was held displaying Telangana's art forms. 700 artistes participated in the carnival.

# Monday Mirchi

## COMMISSIONER OF FOOD SAFETY CHEWS EATERIES AND WATERING HOLES

Among the great heroes of *The Mahabharata*, Karna occupies a pride of place for his fierce loyalty to Duryodhana as well as unostentatious and unstinted charitable acts. His namesake and Telangana's new Commissioner of Food Safety R V Karnan, however, seems to have a Bhimalike appetite for chewing errant pubs, hotels, and eateries that do not comply with prescribed safety and hygiene standards. He has them for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The food for thought that he and his team have been giving to raise awareness following a slew of raids on eateries and watering holes has nudged the Hyderabad chapter of the National Restaurateurs Association of India to form a Task Force and moot hygiene rating for these establishments. Thanks to these raids, even some media-shy bureaucrats have become vocal. That is not all. Netizens, having seen viral post-raid videos of their beloved adda, have gone gaga over Karnan's required recipe for wholesome food and hailed him as the new food blogger in Telangana. A little bird told us that Karnan wants only his work to speak and that he is working relentlessly to put the system on autopilot so that, regardless of the incumbent Commissioner, the good work continues. Interestingly, the distasteful bits of these raids have reached not just Tollywood but also Bollywood stars, some of whom own swanky hotels. For the likes of Karnan, even stardust is not OK in eateries.

## HOLES IN JAYESH'S PICK FOR CEO POSITIONS IN IT SHOWPIECES

There seems to be many holes in IT Secretary Jayesh Ranjan's pick for CEO positions in Telangana's IT showpieces. In particular, the CEOs he appointed for We-Hub and T-works, apparently based on their Andhra origin, has not gone down well. For bureaucratic and other circles, it is as plain as the nose on their faces, that these are his desperate attempts to scrub 'BRS' tag nagging him. Given the predictable consequences of his desperate pick, several officials are certain that he will be moved out. A little bird told us that, complicating matters for him, there are a dozen appointees in his own team who are on a shaky ground because they have been in the same positions for years despite the commencement of Praja palana.

## FROM PANCHAYAT RAJ TO MONEY SPINNING?

Granting the Revanth Reddy government has the will to fully implement the Congress party's Six guarantees, it needs money-spinners who can keep the wheels of the state economy running smoothly against odds without creaking or cracking. With Chief Minister Revanth Reddy confirming that there would be another round of transfers, and with the Finance Department due for an overhaul, there are whispers in the cor-

ridors of power that Sandeep Kumar Sultania, Principal Secretary Panchayat Raj & Rural Employment, could be elevated in the upcoming reshuffle for helming the Finance Department. Long-standing Finance Secretary Rama Krishna Rao, who does not have a magic wand to improve on the status quo, might be replaced. Let's hope the newcomer doesn't turn out to be 'Do din ka Sultan'.

## CM WATCHING COMMERCIAL TAXES DEPARTMENT

After shaking up the Mining Department from top to bottom, the Revanth Reddy government seems to have trained its eye on a clean-up of the Commercial Taxes Department. For, the Chief Minister is reportedly fed up with its functioning, though the CT department per se has potential to turn around the fortunes of the state by just plugging the tax loopholes. A little bird told us that complaints have gone to the Chief Minister about efficient and honest employees being troubled. This is too much for the Chief Minister at a time when dearth of revenues is getting on his nerves. The whispers in the corridors of power are whether lobbying would work this time. For, in the imminent reshuffle, nobody, even if he has somebody backing him, would be spared.

## POLICE BRASS UPTIGHT AMID WHIFF OF RESHUFFLE

Although Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had hand-picked the present Commissioners of Police immediately after forming the government, whiff in the corridors of power about impending replacement of Hyderabad and Cyberabad Commissioners have left the Police Department brass uptight. Khaki-clad bureaucratic circles are not able to figure out what went wrong. All they know is that currently some of the department wings are headless, including Hyderabad Traffic, Legal Metrology, Joint CP Crime, and Joint CP Special branch. At the state level, there are many more 'sarphira' wings with officiating incumbents leaving much to be desired.

## GINGER GROUP OF BABUS

Babus in Andhra Pradesh are currently 'pro-government' (hopeful of YSRCP's victory in polls), 'anti-government' (keen on TDP-led combine's win) or neutral (*bindaas*). Babus in the first two categories are extremely worked up over the eventual outcome of the polls, since both netas in the race for the Chief Minister *gaddi* - YS Jaganmohan Reddy and N Chandrababu Naidu -- know their true colours. Amidst all this, there is another ginger group of officials working on deputation. They are trying to go to their parent organisations just to stay clear of all controversies and be in reckoning for plum posts regardless of which party or combine comes to power

--Yours truly

# Everyone except BRS happy over results of exit polls

## SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

The much-awaited exit poll results came amid suspense over the election results in Telugu states. Whatever may be the actual results, exit poll results have made all political parties except the BRS happy. The fact that actual results could be different from the results of exit polls has been proved several times. After exit polls, now political parties are eagerly waiting to know the results of the actual polls which will be announced in the next 48 hours.

As expected in Telangana the Lok Sabha elections were a neck-to-neck battle by the Congress and the BJP. Exit polls also indicate this. The BRS is shocked at the outcome

of the exit polls. However, it is hopeful that things will change when the actual results come out.

The Congress and the BJP are likely to win an almost equal number of seats with a difference of one or two seats. Almost all exit polls revealed that the BRS will come third.

In Andhra Pradesh, the exit polls made the ruling YSR Congress and the main opposition TDP happy. Some exit polls said that the ruling YSRCP will retain power and some other exit polls said the TDP alliance will come to power. The exit polls for Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections have proved to be a feel-good factor for both the main contenders. Now, both the YSRCP and the TDP are waiting for the actual results.



Interestingly, after the announcement of exit polls also the confusion about which party is going to come to power is continuing in Andhra Pradesh.

Around 40 organisations conducted exit polls regarding the Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections. Going through these exit polls it seems that the organisations failed to catch the

exact public pulse as exit poll results are contradictory.

Another interesting factor in Andhra Pradesh is that simultaneous elections were held for the Lok Sabha and the AP Assembly. History says that in simultaneous elections to the Assembly and the Lok Sabha, the same party often wins both elections.

There are no past examples showing that Andhra Pradesh people voted for different parties during simultaneous elections. However, some exit polls revealed that people voted for the YSRCP in the Assembly polls and for the TDP alliance in the Lok Sabha polls.

Another reason casting doubt about the exit polls is that there is no chance for the YSR Congress to win even a single seat in the Lok Sabha.

## Congress won Mahbubnagar MLC by-polls morally: Jupally

### PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Stating that the Congress won morally in the Mahbubnagar Local Bodies MLC by-poll, Excise Minister Jupally Krishna Rao said the Congress would have won the MLC by-poll if the Congress government had murdered democracy like KCR did.

Speaking to the media on Sunday, Jupally said the BRS won the MLC by-poll only technically. However, the Congress won the election morally.

He said the BRS had got 920 votes, the Congress 350 and the BJP 100 votes earlier. However, now the BRS got 763 votes and the Congress 662 votes. It means the Congress got 300 more votes. Jupally said that even BRS activists voted for the Congress this time.

## Cong ex MPs remember their fight for TG

### PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress MPs of the year 2009 remembered their memories of the Telangana Movement on Sunday at Transport Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar Goud's residence on the occasion of Telangana Formation Day celebrations.

AICC in-charge General Secretary for Telangana, Deepa Das Munshi, attended the get-together. Legislative Council Chairman and then MP Goutha Sukhender Reddy, Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar, TPCC Campaign Committee Chairman Madhu Yashiki Goud, MLAs Komatireddy Raj



Gopal Reddy, G. Vivek and Anjan Kumar Yadav, Suresh Shetkar and Sircilla Rajaiah also attended the programme. The then MPs recalled their memories of their fight for a

Telangana state in and outside Parliament. They recollected their attempts to convince the then UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi. Ponnamp Prabhakar honoured all the former MPs.

## CM roaming around Delhi with an empty bowl: Laxman

### PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Alleging that former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekar Rao gave an empty bowl to current Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the BJP's Rajya Sabha Member, Dr K. Laxman, said that Revanth is roaming around Delhi carrying that empty bowl.

Participating in State Formation Day celebrations at the BJP office on Sunday as chief guest, Laxman said that Revanth is compromising with the BRS due to pressure from the Congress high command and that the CM is not handling

over the phone tapping case to the CBI due to that. He said the KCR government had ignored poets, artists and Telangana activists and the Congress government failed to make the BJP a part of the celebrations. He said the CM is merely killing time by creating political disputes. Criticising the CM for stating that Sonia Gandhi gave Telangana state, Laxman said that people fought and achieved Telangana state. The people toppled KCR for not achieving the goals of the Telangana movement, that is, water, jobs and funds.

## 'It's 'Modi media...

### Continued from page 1

"These are mind games -- I am coming back, I am going to be the prime minister again". He is sending a signal to the bureaucracy, the administrative structure of the country and we hope that the civil servants who have been entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring a fair counting of votes will not be intimidated and not be frightened by these pressure tactics," Ramesh told PTI

at the AICC headquarters here. He also said that the exit polls that came out Saturday evening are "completely bogus" and have been "orchestrated and masterminded by the man whose exit is inevitable and guaranteed on June 4". These are all part of the psychological games being played by the outgoing prime minister (Narendra Modi) and the outgoing home minister (Amit Shah). The outgoing home minister called up 150 District Magistrates and collectors yesterday.

## Will implement six...

### Continued from page 1

However, she sent a video message and the government played it at the celebration venue.

In her message, Sonia said that remembering the sacrifices of TG martyrs for a Telangana state she had

assured at a public meeting held in Karimnagar in 2004 that the Congress would fulfil the dream of a Telangana state.

However, addressing the crowd at the Parade Grounds the CM there is no need for a 'mother' to attend a function held at her child's house.

"Does a child need permis-

sion to invite his mother? How do we remember Mahatma Gandhi as the Father of the Nation," he asked and said that Telangana will honour Sonia Gandhi as its 'mother' as long as it exists. Sonia's relationship with Telangana is not just political, the CM added.

## Harish went to US to...

### Continued from page 1

Venkat said that KCR once said that the people of Telangana would be eternally indebted to Sonia Gandhi and that KCR touched the feet of Sonia Gandhi along with his family members after the formation of the Telangana

state. He said that KCR looted thousands of crores in the name of fishlings and sheep distribution.

Venkat lashed out at KCR for describing the Kaleshwaram Project as a world wonder and for the sagging of the Medigadda

Barrage. He said the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) gave a report stating that there is no guarantee even if the Medigadda Barrage is repaired. He said the Congress government has been paying Rs 25,000 crore every year as interest.

## Harish denies...

### Continued from page 1

"The Chief Minister and his Ministers are running the government by speaking lies. It is a fact that I went to the US with my family. However, Venkat said that I met Prabhakar Rao in the US. I am ready to rub my nose at the Martyrs Statue if Venkat proves that I met Prabhakar in the US," Harish said.

He said that Venkat has to rub his nose at the Martyrs Statue and apologise publicly if he fails to prove his allegations. Harish said he is ready to provide details of which country he visited and in which hotel he stayed.

Harish said that he would come with his passport and other details for an open debate. The passport will have details of in and out-migration. It is cheap on the part of

Venkat to speak without minimum knowledge for publicity sake, he said. "I am demanding Venkat to come with details and the evidence he has to prove his allegations. If not, Venkat should publicly apologise and rub his nose on the ground at the Martyrs Statue. I will come to the Martyrs Statue at the time and date stated by Venkat. He should also come with evidence," Harish said.

He said that Venkat should stop issuing cheap statements for making it to the breaking news scrolled by TV channels and concentrate on governance. Harish suggested that Venkat should end his cheap attempts to destroy him (Harish) politically by making baseless allegations. People are watching everything, so Venkat should speak carefully, he said.

**TODAY**  
**ALMANAC**  
Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha  
Tithi: Dwadashi: Jun 03 02:41 AM to Jun 04 12:18 AM  
Trayodashi: Jun 04 12:18 AM to Jun 04 10:01 PM  
Nakshatram: Ashwini: Jun 03 01:40 AM to Jun 04 12:05 AM  
Bharani: Jun 04 12:05 AM to Jun 04 10:34 PM  
Rahukalam: 7:22 AM to 8:59 AM  
Yamagandam: 10:37 AM to 12:14 PM  
Varjyam: 09:05 AM to 10:35 AM  
Gulika: 1:51 PM to 3:29 PM  
Amritakalam: 05:21 PM to 06:51 PM  
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:48 AM to 12:40 PM  
**HYDERABAD WEATHER**  
Forecast: Partly Cloudy  
Temp: 35°  
Humidity: 57%  
Sunrise: 5:41 AM  
Sunset: 6:48 PM  
Updated: June 2, 2024 5:00 PM

## Kejriwal...

### Continued from page 1

During his address, Kejriwal said, "I am going back to jail not because I was involved in corruption but because I raised voice against dictatorship."

"I was given a 21-day (relief) by the Supreme Court. These 21 days were unforgettable. I did not waste even a minute. I campaigned for saving the country.

The AAP is not important, it is secondary. The country comes first," he said. Kejriwal also asserted that all exit polls predicting a third term for the BJP-led NDA at the Centre were "fake".

## TG loves freedom...

### Continued from page 1

He also defended his government's decision to invite Sonia Gandhi to the event although she did not attend. A video message of Sonia Gandhi was displayed at the event.

He recalled the crucial role played by Sonia Gandhi, former Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar and the late BJP leader Sushma Swaraj in the passage of the Bill for the formation of Telangana state in Parliament in 2014.

"We invited Sonia Gandhi, who fulfilled the Telangana people's aspirations, as a guest to the State Formation Day celebrations. Someone asked in what capacity she was invited. Does it require permission to invite a mother to her child's home?" he asked. As long as Telangana exists, Sonia

Gandhi will be respected as its "mother," he said.

Taking strong exception to the Congress government's decision to invite Sonia Gandhi to Telangana Formation Day celebrations, the BJP had said the government should inform people in what capacity Sonia Gandhi is being invited.

Recalling the role of Sonia Gandhi, Meira Kumar and Sushma Swaraj in the passage of the Telangana Bill in the Lok Sabha in 2014, Revanth thanked them on behalf of the state's people.

Sushma Swaraj, who was Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha then, had extended cooperation for the passage of the Bill, he said. He targeted the BRS government, without naming the party, for the alleged destruction of the state.

## BRS candidate Naveen...

### Continued from page 1

Expressing happiness over his party's victory, BRS Working President KT Rama Rao said, "Winning the MLC seat in the Chief Minister's home district is a moment of joy for us. This victory not only brings happiness but also increases our responsibilities.

Whatever the outcome, there is no need to worry. Whatever the outcome, BRS is the shield of Telangana," KCR said on Sunday addressing BRS activists on the tenth anniversary of the formation of Telangana state.

We are confident that this victory is just the beginning and will pave the way for many more successes in future." Although the BRS candidate won the by-poll, the Congress has achieved a moral victory, Excise Minister Jupally Krishna Rao said. The Congress will win most of the Lok Sabha seats in Telangana, he added.

## Cong govt will fall soon, declares...

### Continued from page 1

Exit poll predictions indicated that there would be a tough fight between the Congress and the BJP while the BRS would be marginalised in the Lok Sabha elections. Telangana has 17 Lok Sabha seats.

Alleging that some people are saying that they will finish the BRS, KCR said the 'pink

party' is "like an ocean," and no one can destroy it.

"There is a bright future for us, and don't get confused with political results. This decennial celebration should become an inspiration for us," the BRS supremo told party cadres. After six months of coming to power, the Congress

government has not announced even a single policy for sectors like industry, IT and agriculture, he said. Amid exit poll reports indicating a 'poor show' by the BRS in the Lok Sabha elections, KCR downplayed it saying whatever the outcome the party will work for the people.

STATE FORMATION DAY

# 'Address challenges and ensure equitable development'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Osmania University hosted a grand ceremony on Sunday to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Telangana's formation. In-charge Vice-Chancellor M Dana Kishore unfurled the national flag and addressed the gathering.

Dana Kishore highlighted the crucial role Osmania University played in realising the aspirations of Telangana statehood. He emphasised the immense opportunities created in various sectors, including education, healthcare and basic amenities since the State's formation after a long struggle.

Dana Kishore urged everyone's participation in ensuring the inclusive growth of Telangana. He stressed the importance of acknowledging remaining challenges and ensuring the fruits of development reach all corners of the State.

The Vice-Chancellor emphasised Osmania University's crucial role in the State's development. He



OU incharge Vice-Chancellor M Dana Kishore seen with the university faculty celebrating the Telangana Formation Day on the campus on Sunday

called for continued contribution to social and economic advancement by promoting

quality education, innovation and research. He also expressed the government's

commitment to resolving outstanding issues within the university.

Kishore acknowledged that some planned initiatives and announcements could not be made due to the election code. However, he assured his support in securing necessary assistance from government agencies like the Municipal department and the Water Board to enhance Osmania University's infrastructure.

Dana Kishore along with Prof. P Laxminarayana (Registrar, OU), Prof. B Reddiya Naik (OSD to Vice-Chancellor) and Prof. Arjun Rao (Principal, University College of Arts and Social Sciences), welcomed the gathering. Deans of faculties, directors of departments, principals, faculty members, students and representatives of employee unions attended the programme.

**Dana Kishore urged everyone's participation in ensuring the inclusive growth of Telangana. He stressed the importance of acknowledging remaining challenges and ensuring the fruits of development reach all corners of the State**



Director (FAC) & Curator of the Nehru Zoological Park Dr Sunil Hiremath giving certificates of appreciation to the staff

## Zoo Park staff remember agitation for Statehood

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Nehru Zoological Park celebrated a colourful Telangana Formation Day on Sunday. Dr Sunil Hiremath, Director (FAC) & Curator of the Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad, hoisted the national flag at the headquarters. Certificates of appreciation were awarded to officers and staff members for their meritorious services.

Several speakers at the event recalled the memories of agitations and rallies conducted for the formation of a separate Telangana State.

Dr Sunil Hiremath congratulated all the staff members on Telangana Formation Day. He shared his experiences of witnessing the Telangana agitation in Osmania University and other public places in 2006.

Dr Sunil highlighted that the Nehru Zoological Park is a pride of Telangana, attracting

visitors from India and around the world. Last Sunday, over 30,000 visitors packed the zoo. He said, "The management has taken adequate measures to ensure the well-being of every visitor. Most visitors appreciated the zoo's upkeep, cleanliness, hygiene and the exhibition of animals in their natural habitats. The zoo is likely to become a member of World Association of Zoos and Aquariums in a few months, positioning it as one of the top zoos in the world, he added."

A Nagamani, Deputy Curator, N.Z.P, Dr MA Hakeem, Deputy Director (Veterinary), N.Z.P, B Laxman, Assistant Curator-2, N.Z.P, MA Qudus, Superintendent, N.Z.P, along with staff from the animal, garden, security, veterinary, workshop, booking, safari, train section and office administration participated in the event.



## Cycle rally organised in Hyd ahead of World Bicycle Day

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A cycle rally was jointly organised by Star Hospitals, in collaboration with Hyderabad Cyclist Group and Samtha Yuva Sangha on the eve of World Bicycle Day to be observed on June 3.

The rally aimed at raising awareness regarding adverse

effects of tobacco and promoting cycling as a healthy lifestyle choice. "The event is aimed not only to highlight the dangers of tobacco use but also to inspire the community to embrace cycling for better health," said Dr Gopichand Mannam, MD, Star Group of Hospitals. Walking, cycling and run-

ning are the cheapest forms of exercises that are equitable and cost-effective. Regular physical activity of moderate intensity like walking, cycling or pursuing any other sport has significant benefits for health for all ages, Ravindra Reddy, president, Hyderabad Cyclist Group Association, said.

## CP emphasises peace with unified efforts of police depts

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Emphasising that the State's peace is due to the unified efforts of police departments, Rachakonda Commissioner of Police Tarun Joshi unveiled the national flag commemorating Telangana Formation Day at the Rachakonda office in Neredmet on Sunday.

Speaking at the event, the Commissioner highlighted that the formation of Telangana State was a result of the struggles and aspirations of its people. He shared that he had personally witnessed the struggle for a separate State.

Joshi stated that many new programmes have been undertaken in the police department over the past 10 years to maintain law and order. He noted that the crime rate has decreased due to the creation of infrastructure,



Rachakonda Commissioner Tarun Joshi interacting with the kids at the Rachakonda office on Sunday

recruitment of staff, training classes and effective procedures.

He commended the collective efforts of officers and staff across all police departments for maintaining peace in the State. Joshi appreciated the

police's role in ensuring that both the Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections were conducted peacefully.

DCP Admin Indira, ACP, other officers and office staff participated in the programme.

## Food safety officials find rat infestation in hotels

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The food safety officials of Telangana on Saturday conducted inspections in the Lakdikapul area where they found food safety violations in Hotel New Fishland, Hotel Ashoka and Hydrate-The Bar.

In the Hotel New Fishland, the food safety officers found rat infestation inside the kitchen premises with live rats roaming over floor and exhaust vents. No rat traps were arranged by the Food Business Operators (FBO). Synthetic food colours found in the

kitchen were discarded on the spot. Dustbins were found open without proper lids. Medical Fitness Certificates for food handlers and pest control records for the premises were not available with the FBO. The semi-prepared food articles stored inside the refrigerator were found without any covering and without any labels.

In the Hydrate-The Bar, the officials found expired food articles like chilled chicken wings of 10 kg, Amul Peanut Spread 0.9 kg, pasta of 5 kg in the kitchen. Four units of



Food safety officers collecting samples from hotels on Thursday in Lakdikapul area

BBQ sauce were found without importer label on it and hence seized. Dustbins were

found open without proper lids. Medical fitness certificates for food handlers were not

available with the FBO. The semi-prepared food articles stored inside the refrigerator were covered but not labelled properly. Pest control records and water analysis reports for RO water used for cooking were available with the FBO.

Food safety officials found expired food articles like chicken leg boneless of 5 kg, liquid caramel colour and green gram dal of 10 kg found infested with black beetle in Hotel Ashoka. Cashews were found without following FSSAI labelling regulations and hence seized. Cockroach

infestation was observed near the red meat storage area.

The semi-prepared food articles stored inside the refrigerator were not properly covered and labelled well. Dustbins were found closed with lids. Medical Fitness Certificates for food handlers and pest control records for the premises were not available with the FBO.

The officials said that all restaurants have not displayed FSSAI licence true copy at the premises. Notice has been issued as per the FSSAI Act to all the restaurants.

## Mixed reactions to anthem 'Jaya Jayahe Telangana'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government officially announced the State's official song on the occasion of the 10th Formation Day of the State on Sunday, June 2. There was mixed reactions to the song as many felt that the music did not suit it while others felt the tune is good.

Most people say that the music of this song is quite similar to a cinematic melody. Vallapu Lokesh from Mahabubabad district said, "The music has been arranged in a cinematic style. They should have sung in a Telangana way as rugged and

rustic. In the agitation time and before that Telangana people used to listen to folk songs. It would have been good if the composer used folk music for this song."

On the contrary, J Kiran Kumar said that when Jaya Jayahe song was released in the time of agitation, some sections of the people did not like it. In the same way they will be used to this song. "I personally liked the song. Also, some sections of the society persistently oppose the decision to make MM Keeravani to set the tune."

Shyamala Tulasi Reddy said, "The old version of the song was raw and rugged.

But this new version of the composition has not met with emotions of the old version."

Some sections of the people are expressing dismay towards changing the lyrics in the song. Pothuraju Venkanna said, "The soul of the song has been missed in the song. This way of composition may not reverberate with the agitation of Telangana and its culture. Also, some of the lyrics have been changed, which I did not like, particularly, replacing the word 'Bhagyanagari' instead of 'Nawabula' word in the song. I think this change is unnecessary for the song."

3,000 POSTS WILL BE FILLED

## TGSRTC to launch 2,900 buses in State soon: MD

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

To meet the passenger rush in the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) buses after the Mahalakshmi scheme was introduced, the corporation is going to procure 2,900 new buses soon. TGSRTC MD VC Sajjanar said that the corporation decided to bring another 2,000 new diesel buses and 900 electric buses in a phased manner.

On Sunday, Sajjanar unfurled the national flag on the occasion of 10th Formation Day of Telangana State at the Bus Bhavan in RTC X Roads. He said that the TGSRTC decided to recruit 3,000 people in line with the new buses. They would be recruited after the government approval.

He said that TGSRTC increased fitment to 21 per cent for the employees and nine pending DAs have been sanctioned.

The corporation implemented the Mahalakshmi scheme within two days of the government announcement. Before the implementation of the scheme, an average of 45 lakh people travelled every day, but the



Telangana State Road Transport Corporation Managing Director VC Sajjanar speaking at the Bus Bhavan on the occasion of Telangana State Formation Day on Sunday

number increased to 55 lakh per day.

Sajjanar said, "The RTC employees went on strike for 29 days in 2011, saying 'Memu Saitam (We too)' to the formation of the Telangana State. The Sakala Janula Samme was one of the biggest strikes in the country's history. A total of 56,604 RTC employees participated in this strike for the State formation."

TGSRTC Chief Operating Officer Dr Ravinder, Finance Adviser Vijaya Pushpa and others participated in State Formation Day celebrations.

## Youth found dead at Kachiguda lodge

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In an incident reported from Kachiguda on June 1, a man was found dead at a lodge.

The deceased was identified as Rahul (21), a resident of Uppuguda, who had checked into the lodge at 7 pm on Saturday evening and a little after midnight, he was found hanging in the room, said the police.

Based on a tip-off, the police reached the spot and shifted the body for post-mortem examination to a mortuary.

A case has been registered and investigation is going on. The police verified the footage of the closed circuit cameras and checked the victim's call record details.



## Two-day meet on coronary bypass surgery begins

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A two-day conference on advanced technique in coronary bypass surgery commenced in Hyderabad on Sunday.

This procedure is performed without any incisions on the legs or arms and offers the best long-term benefits following bypass surgery. "BIMA bypass surgery has demonstrated effectiveness in up to 90% of patients even after 20 years, whereas bypasses using leg veins typically last around 10 years. This technique involves only a single small incision in the chest, eliminating the need for open-heart surgery. Cosmetically, it is the best bypass surgery since there are no incisions on the legs or arms. Additionally, it has minimal morbidity, with reduced risks of leg swelling or infection. The risk of brain stroke, kidney damage and bleeding is also negligible because BIMA bypass surgery is performed without open-

heart surgery. Most patients are able to climb stairs just four days after undergoing BIMA bypass surgery. The widespread use of BIMA bypass surgery will not only alleviate patients' conditions but also reduce the financial burden on families and the government due to its long-lasting benefits," said Dr Prateek Bhatnagar, Chairman and Managing Director of the Dr Prateek Bhatnagar Heart Foundation.

Kompella Madhava Latha, Chairperson of Lathama Foundation inaugurated the conference. Renowned surgeons from Australia, Canada and USA; Prof. Michael Valley, Prof. Piroze Davierwala, Prof. David Glineur and Prof. Mario Gaudino are also participating in this conference as international faculty. Dr Bhatnagar will demonstrate three cutting-edge BIMA bypass surgeries through live-in-box presentations to the attending heart surgeons.

## Monsoon to begin in Telangana on June 6

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Indian Meteorological Department -Hyderabad on Sunday predicted thunderstorms with occasional intense spells in the city.

For other districts of Telangana, the weather department has predicted heavy rainfall, thunderstorms, lightning and squalls. In view of the expected thunderstorms in all zones of Hyderabad-namely Charminar, Khairathabad, Kukatpally, LB Nagar, Secunderabad and Serilingampally-and other parts of the State, the department has issued a yellow alert.

Though the yellow alert in Hyderabad is for Sunday, June 4 and June 5, it is valid for other districts of Telangana until June 6. Hyderabad, which recently witnessed intense summer heat, is expected to start experienc-

ing the rainy season soon.

According to the IMD's forecast, the monsoon is likely to hit Hyderabad and other districts of Telangana after June 6. Usually, the rainy season in Hyderabad is from mid-June to October, bringing relief to the locals from the summer heat.

As the IMD forecasts that the monsoon will hit Hyderabad on time, the rainy season will provide much-needed relief to the residents of the city. K Nagarathna, Head of the IMD Hyderabad said, "Rain is likely to occur in districts including Hyderabad, Sangareddy, Rangareddy and other Telangana districts. Monsoon will set in from June 6 paving the way for rigorous monsoon."

Due to the expected rainfall, temperatures are predicted to drop by 2-3°C, offering a brief respite from the current heat. The yellow alert, indicating

light to moderate rains, will remain in effect in Hyderabad until June 6.

Advisories for restricted movement have been issued. Water accumulation on roads and in low-lying areas is expected in several locations, leading to traffic congestion at numerous points. Residents are advised to stay updated with weather advisories and take necessary precautions to stay safe during the anticipated heavy rains.

"Storms have moved from 3rd to 4th gear now with massive storms lashing across Bhupalpally, Karimnagar, Siddipet to cover Jangaon, Hanmakonda, Warangal, Mulugu. Hyderabad is now having scattered intense storms. Consider it as a trailer, get ready for the movie tonight," said Telangana weather expert T Balaji.

# Hyd student goes missing in US

Nitheesha Kandula is a student in California State University, San Bernardino

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A student from Hyderabad attending Cal State University San Bernardino has gone missing in the US since May 28.

According to media reports, the 23-year-old girl, Nitheesha Kandula, went missing in Los Angeles, California.

Police are asking the people's help in finding a 23-year-old Cal State University San Bernardino student who has been missing for several days. The student is from Hyderabad.

Nitheesha Kandula was last seen in Los Angeles on Tuesday, May 28, though the exact area is unknown, according to reports appeared in Los Angeles media.

California State University,



NITHEESHA KANDULA

with dark hair and dark eyes and weighs about 160 pounds or a little over 72 kg.

Anyone with information is urged to contact the Los Angeles Police Department's Southwest Division at 213-485-2582 or the CSUSB Police Department at 909-537-7777.

Meanwhile, it may be recalled that recently, a 25-year-old Telangana student went missing in Chicago. The student, identified as Rupesh Chandra Chintakindi, is pursuing a master's degree at Concordia University, Wisconsin.

Earlier, a 25-year-old Hyderabad student, Mohammad Abdul Arfath, went missing in the US city of Cleveland. Later, he was found dead.



The student, identified as Rupesh Chandra Chintakindi, is pursuing a master's degree at Concordia University, Wisconsin. Earlier, a 25-year-old Hyderabad student, Mohammad Abdul Arfath, went missing in the US city of Cleveland. Later, he was found dead.

A few weeks ago, an Indian student died in a bike accident in New York. He was identified as Belam Atchyuth.

## CIVIC BODY'S INITIATIVE TO CURB USE OF PLASTIC BAGS

### Officials advise customers to use steel boxes to carry meat

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

The municipal officials have been appealing to the customers buying meat not to use plastic carry bags and instead take it in steel boxes. The officials mandated the meat shopkeepers to display a notice at their shops appealing to the customers to bring their own steel boxes to carry the meat.

It has been asking the meat shops to give a discount of Rs 10 or Rs 20 per kg of chicken or mutton to those customers who come with steel boxes to

buy meat.

The town civic body embarked on novel experiment to implement the ban on plastic covers. It may be recalled that the State and Central governments have prohibited use of plastic covers less than 120 microns of thickness a year ago.

The State and Central governments have cautioned the manufacturers and commercial establishments using the plastic covers and consumers at large against manufacture or use of the plastic covers of

thickness less than 120 microns.

The town civic body enforcement department has been conducting raids on business establishments and shops and imposing fines on those traders who were found using the prohibited plastic covers.

To seriously enforce the ban on use of the plastic covers, the town municipality has been asking the hotels, meat shops to advise the customers bring steel boxes along with them and directed them to display banners in this regard.



## Two die, four injured as tanker rams into stationary cars

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In the early hours of Sunday morning, a tragic road accident at TSPA Junction under the Narsingi Police Station limits resulted in the death of two individuals and injuries to four others.

The accident happened around 2.30 am when a speeding water tanker from TSPA Junction towards Gachibowli collided with two stationary cars on the Outer Ring Road.

The deceased were identified as Manisha and Chandra, both passengers in the parked cars. The injured were promptly transported to a nearby hospital for medical treatment, while the bodies of the deceased were taken to Osmania Hospital for post-mortem examinations.

Narsingi Inspector G Hari Krishna Reddy confirmed that a case has been registered and the tanker driver Prashant Kumar, aged 33, has been detained. An investigation into the accident is underway.

# BRS will make a dramatic comeback: Naveen Kumar Reddy

PNS ■ RANGA REDDY

Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) will make a dramatic comeback in the State, said Naveen Kumar Reddy, who won from the Mahabubnagar Local Bodies constituency on Sunday. The BRS revival is on cards, he said after meeting the party leaders. He expressed the view that the people's support for former chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao remained undiminished.

Prominent leaders, including BRS working president KT Rama Rao, MLA Bandla Krishna Mohan Reddy, former minister V Srinivas Goud,



BRS working president KT Rama Rao congratulating Naveen Kumar Reddy in Hyderabad on Sunday

Lakshma Reddy, Niranjana

Reddy, and Anjaiah Yadav congratulated Naveen Kumar Reddy on his victory. Medak MP candidate Venkatarami Reddy and former SC/ST Commission chairman Srinivas also extended their congratulations.

Speaking to The Pioneer, Naveen Kumar Reddy dismissed claims that BRS would be destroyed. He argued that the 25-year-old party remained strong and that setbacks are temporary. He posed rhetorical questions about the potential demise of a party with such a long history, contrasting it with the Congress party, which has spent a decade in opposi-

tion.

Naveen Reddy recounted the struggle for Telangana, which took fifteen years to achieve statehood and defended the BRS's record. He criticised the previous Congress regime for neglecting Telangana, particularly regarding water issues. He praised KCR's efforts in ensuring water for irrigation.

Naveen Reddy dedicated his victory to the people of Palamuru, stating that KCR's influence and dedication to the movement made him an unbeatable force. He said that KCR, KTR, and others warmly congratulated him.

## BALA CHANAKYA PROGRAMME



The Vagdevi Vignana Kendra and School of Arts in association with BBN Chanakya conducting Bala Chanakya programme in Hyderabad on Sunday at the end of 25-day summer camp, held for children below the 15 years age. Children at the camp gathered to render traditional songs.

# Huge rush of devotees at Komuravelli, Yadadri temples

PNS ■ CHERIAL

Unprecedented number of devotees thronged the Komuravelli Mallikarjuna Swamy temple on Saturday evening. They stayed put at the pilgrimage centers lodging themselves in private hotels or the temple cottages. They had a dip in the temple pond in the early hours of Sunday and had darshan of the deity.

They performed special pujas like Abhishekam, archana, voidbiyyam, got their heads tonsured and paid their obsequies to the Gangareguchettu on the



Devotees at Komuravelli temple on Sunday

temple premises and prayed to the deity to fulfill their wishes.

Women prepared bonams with lot of dedication and

devotion and presented them to the Goddess Yellamma at Her temple atop the hill.

In Yadadri also, there was heavy rush of devotees who thronged Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple at Yadagirigutta on Sunday.

The number of footfalls of devotees in the temple has increased as the summer vacation is drawing to a close soon.

Devotees were seen standing in serpentine queues since morning to have darshan of the deity. As a result, it takes at least four hours for the devotees to have free darshan and two hours for special darshan.

## Collector hoists national flag, honour freedom fighters



Nalgonda Collector Dasari Hari Chandana hosting national flag in Nalgonda on Sunday

PNS ■ NALGONDA

District Collector Hari Chandana has extolled the sacrifice of Telangana martyrs. The people of Telangana should use their rights and should not forget their duties to the state and strive for the development of the nation.

She hoisted the national flag at the police parade grounds here on Sunday as part of the 10th Telangana State Formation Day celebrations and inspected a guard of honour presented by the police. Later, she felicitated the freedom fighters and distributed the Police medals and Seva Medals among the winners.

Earlier, she paid tributes to the martyrs at the martyrs' memorial held near the Clock-Tower.

SP Chandana Deepti, local bodies additional collector T Purna Chandra, revenue additional collector J Srinivas, Additional SP Ramulu Naik, DRO D Rajya Lakshmi, RDO Ravi, district officials and others were present.

# Medical negligence costs life of pregnant woman

PNS ■ NAGARKARNOOL

In an alleged case of medical negligence, a 28-week pregnant woman died on Sunday when nurses at a private hospital, in the absence of the duty medical officer, administered an injection to the woman in labour pains.

She was identified as Padma, 36, wife of Mahender of

Tadurmandal of the district. The couple has had a daughter. Padma became pregnant for the second time. The seven-month pregnant Padma started getting labour pains. The couple reached Priyanka Hospital in the town on Sunday morning. In the absence of the doctor, the nurses working there obtained a scan of the woman and

administered her an injection.

Soon, Padma's complications multiplied. At this juncture, the hospital nurses advised the family to take her to the district government hospital. Even as the family is preparing to take her to the government hospital, Padma died.

Angered at this, her relatives staged a sit-in at the hospital parading the body of Padma.

## Leopard kills buffalo calf

PNS ■ SIRGILLA

A leopard which is on the prowl in Konaraopetamandal killed a buffalo calf in Dharmaram village of the mandal on Sunday.

According to report, a farmer belonging to Dharmaram village Lakshmi Nars tied at his field in the village as was done by him daily. When he went to the field, he

found the calf dead due to an attack by leopard.

He immediately alerted the forest department personnel who immediately reached the village and inspected the area for the pug marks of the leopard.

The forest personnel have asked the villagers to not to go to the fields alone and take precautions and assured the villages to take steps to cage the wild cat.

# Yadadri temple nets Rs 18.49 cr revenue in May

PNS ■ BHONGIR

The Yadadri temple, described as Tirupati of Telangana, has earned Rs 18.49 crore through all sources of income in May.

The Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple at Yadadri has become immensely popular after the then BRS regime rebuilding the temple. Daily thousands of devotees throng the temple, putting the pressure

on temple authorities to make arrangements for the devotees. The authorities have been rising to the occasion to meet the demand.

According to the temple authorities, the temple earned Rs 18.49 crore through hundi earnings and through other resources.

Over 13 lakh devotees

thronged the temple in May.



The temple's free bus service

transported at least 11.42 lakh devotees to the shrine. Huge LED screen has been set up in the temple with the support of the charitable public to enable the devotees to watch the performing of Arjit Sevas. A permanent mantap has been built on the hill to conduct cultural programmes.

Toilets have been built for women near the VIP parking facility.

From June 1 onwards, the temple allows only those devotees inside those who wear only traditional dress. Males should wear a dhoti and kurta, while women are encouraged to wear sari or Punjabi dress or Lehanga and half sari.

The temple has banned use of plastic covers on the temple.

# YSRCP moves SC on postal ballots

Sajjala asks counting agents to be alert and not lose temper

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP State general secretary Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy has appealed to the party's counting agents to remain vigilant, emphasising the importance of maintaining composure throughout the process. He referred to the influence exerted by Opposition Leader Chandrababu Naidu in past elections, urging agents to be alert and not lose their temper.

Training sessions for YSRCP counting agents are currently being conducted in preparation for the vote counting. During a virtual meeting with the party's central office on Sunday, Sajjala stressed the need for strict adherence to election rules to ensure every valid vote is counted. He advised agents to stay calm and immediately report any irregularities to the authorities.

Sajjala specifically mentioned



Sajjala stressed the need for strict adherence to election rules to ensure every valid vote is counted. He advised agents to stay calm and immediately report any irregularities to the authorities.

the need to verify the official's signature on postal ballots, cautioning agents to be aware of any attempts by opponents to provoke or distract them.

Highlighting Naidu's tactics, Sajjala warned agents to be cautious of any disruptive activities and to report issues to the party's central office immediately.

Furthermore, Sajjala said that the YSRCP had challenged the Election Commission of India's (ECI) postal ballot orders in the Supreme Court. The party opposes the ECI's requirement for an official seal, designation, and specimen signature on postal ballots, arguing that existing conditions should remain unchanged.

# Heavy rain, gales throw life out of gear in Vizag

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Port City of Visakhapatnam was battered by strong winds clocking speeds of 30-40 kmph, accompanied by thunderstorms and heavy rainfall. Many trees were uprooted in the city, disrupting traffic operations. The thunderstorms led to a noticeable drop in temperatures by 3°C to 5°C. The rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning, began around 6:00 am, lasting for about two hours before recurring intermittently till afternoon.

According to meteorologists at the Cyclone Warning Centre (CWC), Visakhapatnam, the inclement weather was a consequence of a trough passing over the State, coupled with high levels of humidity persisting in the atmosphere for several days. Forecasters anticipate the thunderstorms to persist intermittently for the next few days. Areas such as



Poorna Market, Gnanapuram, Allipuram, Gajuwaka, Maddilapalem, NAD Junction, and Appu Ghar experienced water stagnation due to the heavy downpour. Traffic disruptions were widespread, with multiple trees uprooted and hoardings collapsing in the southeastern parts of the city.

The flooding resulted in the overflow of drainage systems, causing manholes to open in several locations. Motorists faced significant challenges navigating the inundated roads. Morning walkers, newspaper delivery personnel, and early commuters encountered obstacles posed by uprooted trees and branches across various areas of the city.

INDIA CORNER

## Mumbai serial blasts case convict fatally attacked

A convict in the 1993 Mumbai serial bomb blasts case was fatally attacked by five inmates in Kalamba Central Jail in Kolhapur on Sunday, police said. Prima facie, an argument with other inmates over taking a bath in the bathroom area of the jail resulted in the attack on 59-year-old Munna alias Mohammad Ali Khan alias Manoj Kumar Bhawaralal Gupta. Khan was serving life imprisonment in the serial blasts case. "Amid the argument, some under-trial inmates removed the iron cover from drainage and smashed Khan's head, following which he collapsed on the ground. He was rushed to hospital where he was declared dead," the police official said. The attackers are identified as Prateek alias Piliya Suresh Patil, Deepak Netaji Khot, Sandeep Shankar Chavan, Rituraj Vinayak Inamdar, and Saurabh Vikas. Kolhapur Police has registered a case of murder against the five men. They will be arrested soon, the official added.



## Eight Naxalites surrender before security forces in Chhattisgarh

Eight Naxalites, four of them carrying a cumulative bounty of Rs 5 lakh, surrendered before security forces in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district on Sunday, police said. The Naxalites turned themselves in before senior officials of the police and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), citing disappointment with atrocities committed by Maoists on tribals and 'inhuman' and 'hollow' Maoist ideology, an official said. They were also impressed by the state government's Naxal elimination policy and the Sukma police's rehabilitation drive 'Puna Narkom' (a term coined in the local Gondi dialect, which means new dawn, new beginning), he said. Three women are among eight surrendered cadres, who were allegedly tasked with cutting roads, putting up Maoist pamphlets and posters, conducting reconnaissance on security personnel and collecting illegal levy for Maoists, he said.



## Over three dozen scrapped cars gutted in fire at abandoned plot

Around three dozen scrapped cars were gutted in a fire that broke out in an abandoned plot here on Sunday afternoon amid heatwave conditions in the region, officials said. No casualties were reported in the fire incident, Chief Fire Officer Pradeep Kumar Choubey said. "The fire service unit was alerted at 3.10 pm about the fire that broke out in a plot which had been lying abandoned for the last several years and had scrapped Skoda cars parked here," Choubey said. "We had rushed six water tenders to the site immediately and managed to douse the fire completely. Almost 35 vehicles have been gutted in the fire although no person suffered any injury," the CFO, who supervised the relief operation, said. In light of the continuing heatwave and the potential for fire accidents, the Gautam Buddha Nagar Police had on Saturday issued essential guidelines to authorities and emphasized the need for operational equipment management in critical facilities.



PM CHAIRS HOST OF MEETINGS

# Modi urges officials to ensure fire drills in hospitals, public places

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday stressed the need to ensure regular fire and electrical safety audits in hospitals and other public places as he reviewed the heatwave situation in the country amid fire incidents which have claimed many lives.

He chaired a host of meetings, including one on the post-Cyclone Remal situation, especially in the northeast region, and another to review the 100-day agenda of the new government to be sworn in after the Lok Sabha results are announced on June 4.

Exit polls broadcast on Saturday predicted a massive win for the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), with Modi set to retain power for a third straight term.

In the meeting to review the heatwave conditions in parts of the country, Modi instructed officials that proper drills for preventing and handling incidents of fire must be undertaken on a regular basis, according to an official statement.

He also said that regular drills for the maintenance of fire lines in forests and productive



In the meeting to review the heatwave conditions in parts of the country, Modi instructed officials that proper drills for preventing and handling incidents of fire must be undertaken on a regular basis, according to an official statement.

utilisation of biomass must be planned.

Modi was briefed that as per forecasts, the heatwave is likely to continue in parts of

Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. Monsoon this year is likely to be normal and above normal in most parts of the country and below normal in

parts of peninsular India, the statement said.

In the meeting to review the post-Cyclone Remal situation, another official statement said,

Modi was briefed about its impact in the affected states, including the loss of lives and damage to houses and other properties due to landslides and floods in Mizoram, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura.

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams have carried out evacuation, airlifting and road clearance operations, it said, adding the Union home ministry is in regular touch with state governments.

PM Modi said the Union government will continue to extend full support to the states affected by the cyclone, according to the statement.

Top bureaucrats were part of the meetings the prime minister chaired.

He is also chairing a meeting to review the preparations to celebrate the World Environment Day, which falls on June 5.

Much before the Lok Sabha polling exercise began, Modi had set in motion the exercise for different government ministries to prepare the 100-day agenda for the new government.

He had asked his Council of Ministers to prioritise programmes and initiatives for the first 100 days



## Violence erupts in Sandeshkhali, women scuffle with police

PNS ■ KOLKATA

In less than 24 hours after the election was over, trouble-torn Sandeshkhali witnessed another round of skirmishes between women and the police on Sunday when the personnel went there and detained one person in connection with attacks on policemen.

Local women in Agarhati village in Sandeshkhali area got involved in a scuffle with the Rapid Action Force (RAF) personnel, fell tree trunks, and blocked roads when the police personnel reached there in search of a few persons accused of attacking them on Saturday night, a senior police officer said.

"We have not arrested anyone, but local women have started protesting. Some of our female colleagues are injured. We are trying to talk to them and

remove the barricades from the roads," the officer in Basirhat Police District told.

There was an attempt by local women to snatch the detained person, but the move was foiled, he said. "We are trying to bring the situation under control. A huge number of RAF, Quick Response Team (QRT) and policemen are present here," the officer said.

Sandeshkhali -- a riverine delta bordering the Sundarbans -- has been on the spot since January 5, when a team of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) was attacked when it had gone to raid the premises of TMC strongman Shajahan Sheikh in connection with an alleged ration scam. Sheikh and his accomplices were arrested by the West Bengal Police on February 29 in connection with the attack on the ED officers.

## Central govt approves IIM near Guwahati



PNS ■ GUWAHATI

The Centre has approved an Indian Institute of Management (IIM) for Assam, and it would come up near Guwahati, making it among the few cities in the country housing top educational institutions, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Sunday.

He said the state government had been pursuing the matter with the Centre for last 18 months, and the new institute will be a "game changer" for higher education in the state.

"Sharing a BIG NEWS! Following our request in 2023, Hon PM Shri @narendramodi ji has given a special gift to the people of Assam by approving an Indian Institute of Management near Guwahati, making it among the few cities to house an IIT, AIIMS, Na'I Law Univ & now IIM," Sarma posted on X.

He said the state government had presented its case before Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and his ministry, besides writing to PM Modi.

## US media has good & bad terrorist bias, says NRI-led study

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

The United States media differentiate between 'good terrorists' and 'bad terrorists' depending on the country's foreign policy towards terror groups, research led by a Non-Resident Indian has concluded. The research titled "US Foreign Policy and Indexing Theory: A Study of US Press Coverage of the Taliban and ISIS" was published in the latest issue of the International Communication Research Journal.

"We perused hundreds of New York Times and Washington Post articles on ISIS and Taliban over a five-year period from 2014 to 2019," said lead author Abhijit Mazumdar, an assistant professor of journalism at Park University in the US.

Asserting that the results were startling, Mazumdar said the US newspapers would play down atrocities perpetrated by the Taliban while the same media would report regularly on ISIS-inflicted atrocities. Both terror groups had the same goal, which was to establish a theocratic Islamic regime in their area of control, he said.

However, the US press would seldom associate religion with the Taliban even as it sought to associate Islam with ISIS, he added. "We concluded that the US press was supporting the US government's foreign policy on Taliban and ISIS where the US authorities were negotiating a smooth handover of Afghanistan to Taliban while they were fighting to eliminate ISIS in the Middle East," Mazumdar said.

# INDIA bloc leaders to EC: Ensure guidelines are followed during counting

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A delegation of leaders from the INDIA opposition bloc met the full bench of the Election Commission on Sunday and urged it to ensure that all the guidelines are followed on June 4, when the votes polled in the Lok Sabha election will be counted, including declaring the postal-ballot results before the outcome of the EVMs is announced.

Briefing the media after the meeting, Congress leader Abhishek Singhvi said this was the third time that a delegation of opposition leaders visited the poll panel during the general election and, among other things, urged the officials to ensure that the postal ballots are counted and their results declared before the results of the



electronic voting machines (EVMs) are announced.

"This is the third multi-party delegation visiting the EC during this process... We spent time with the EC on two-three major issues. Most important was counting the postal ballots and declaring the results first.

This is a very clearly stated statutory rule, which specifically says that you should take up the postal ballots first," Singhvi said.

"Our complaint is that this guideline has been given a go-by. They have repealed the practice," he added.

The leaders of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) requested the EC to instruct its officials that they should follow the guidelines.

Communist Party of India (Marxist) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said they have urged the poll panel to ensure that its own guidelines are implemented, which includes ensuring that the control units of the EVMs are moved through CCTV-monitored corridors and a verification of the current date-and-time display of the control units is done.

"This verification is important because unless it is done, there is no authenticity that it is the same control unit that came from the polling booth, that it has not been changed," he said.

INDIA'S WEATHER STORY SO FAR IN 2024

# Sweltering heat, flash floods, 'disappearing' spring season

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sweltering heatwave in north India that has caused scores of deaths, floods and landslides in the northeast that have affected lakhs of people, a spring season that suggests it could soon "disappear" from the calendar — extreme weather events in the first five months of 2024 have got everyone questioning: where is all this headed?

Despite having made predictions to this effect, climate scientists acknowledge that the temperatures this summer, including the outlier 52.9 degrees Celsius in Delhi, are "alarming, though not surprising".

"This could be the worst summer in the last 120 years, at least for north India. Never have temperatures gone so high — more than 45-47 degrees Celsius — for such a



vast region, which is also densely populated. This is a record in itself," Vimal Mishra, Vikram Sarabhai Chair Professor, Civil Engineering and Earth Sciences, IIT Gandhinagar, said.

The temperatures, "similar to those in Africa's Sahara desert," are "far beyond expectations" by at least three or four degrees, according to Mishra. Earth system scientist Raghu

Murtugudde, professor at IIT-Bombay, said this was due to the combined effect of multiple phenomena - climate change, El Nino and the water vapour released by Tonga's Hunga Tonga volcanic eruption in January 2022.

El Nino causes a warming of the sea surface temperatures, affecting the world's weather. "The Middle East is getting hotter very fast because the

desert traps the heat during global warming — warmer atmosphere is more humid and water vapour is a greenhouse gas," Murtugudde said.

"This warming is causing winds over the Arabian Sea to shift northward during summer itself and also during the monsoon. These winds are also warming the Arabian Sea very fast and bringing more humid air to Delhi, thereby

This could be the worst summer in the last 120 years, at least for north India. Never have temperatures gone so high — more than 45-47 degrees Celsius — for such a vast region, which is also densely populated. This is a record in itself," Vimal Mishra, Vikram Sarabhai Chair Professor, Civil Engineering and Earth Sciences, IIT Gandhinagar, said.

raising the heat index. "However, adding fuel to fire is Delhi's killer urban heat island effect, which amplifies the misery," said Murtugudde. The effect is caused by built-up surfaces in cities, made of concrete and asphalt, that store

heat during the day and release it when the temperature cools in the evening. This heat doesn't escape to space but bounces around between buildings and inhibits nighttime cooling.

Mishra said such extreme heat has wide-ranging consequences on public health, electricity, water and the economy.

Studies have linked longer, intense heatwaves to a rise in hospitalisations, premature births and also adverse outcomes such as miscarriages in pregnant women. Research has also projected a rise in inflation and a decline in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) across the world due to climate change.

On May 29, the day Delhi's Mungeshpur station recorded the exceptional maximum temperature of 52.9 degrees Celsius, the city's power demands peaked to an all-time high of 8,302 megawatts.

## Cong's state leaders confident of much better returns for party



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leaders from some politically crucial states on Sunday exuded confidence that the party will do much better than what was projected in the exit polls and asserted the INDIA bloc is going to form the next government.

Leaders from states such as Karnataka, Maharashtra, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Jharkhand, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Gujarat stressed that the Congress' performance would be very good, belying all the predictions in the exit polls.

The assertion was made at an online interaction Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh had before the media with key state leaders, Pradesh Congress Committee presidents and legislature party leaders of various states.

During his Zoom call with Ramesh, Assam Congress chief Bhupen Borah said his party would win at least seven Lok Sabha seats in the state. He said that alleged internal squabbling in the

The assertion was made at an online interaction Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh had before the media with key state leaders, Pradesh Congress Committee presidents and legislature party leaders of various states.

BJP and the impact of the INDIA bloc's unity would ensure a good performance of the Congress in Assam.

The state sends 14 members to the Lower House of Parliament.

Leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly Partap Singh Bajwa said all the surveys have given seven to nine seats to the Congress.

"We are ahead on nine seats, one seat will go to the AAP and three seats will be won by the candidates who will not in any way help the NDA or the PM. The INDIA bloc will get a minimum of 10 seats...In Punjab, the NDA is not going to get even a single seat," he said. There are 13 parliamentary constituency in the state.

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said the Congress has an edge on two parliamentary seats and is in a tight contest on the two other seats in the hill state. He exuded confidence that the Congress was also winning the six assembly seats where the bypolls have taken place.

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said the Congress would win at least two-third of the 28 seats on the back of the popularity of the guarantees the party fulfilled after coming to power in the state.

Bihar Congress chief Akhilesh Prasad Singh said his party would definitely win six to seven seats out of the nine seats it contested in the state.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## An encore?

### Exit polls predict an easy win for NDA, though INDIA says it is confident of 295+ seats

If what the exit polls say holds true, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is going to form its third successive Government at the Centre. The seventh and final phase of polling has concluded and the nation eagerly awaits on June 4 a formal announcement of the results. The exit poll predictions notwithstanding, the Opposition Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) coalition remains optimistic of securing over 295 seats. This juxtaposition of predictions raises intriguing questions about the electorate's intentions as well as the efficacy of exit polls itself. These polls, often seen as a barometer of public sentiment, do give a sense of the electorate's mood though it may or may not be accurate. If the predictions ring true, we can confidently say that it reflects a continued endorsement of the NDA's policies and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. We can conclude that the BJP's focus on economic development, national security and social welfare schemes seems to have struck a chord



with a substantial number of voters. Initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) and various infrastructure projects have likely contributed to this favourable outlook. On the other hand, INDIA has been claiming, based on its own assessment, a clear majority for itself. Despite the exit polls, the INDIA alliance, comprising 28 major Opposition parties, remains confident of winning over 295 seats.

This coalition, which includes the Congress too, believes that their emphasis on inclusive growth, social justice and a more decentralised governance model has resonated with a significant segment of the population. INDIA's campaign has centred on addressing econom-

ic disparities, improving education and healthcare and promoting secular values. Their optimism suggests a belief that there is a substantial undercurrent of support not fully captured by the exit polls. As far as exit polls are concerned, it would be too early for the NDA to start celebrating and for INDIA to sulk. There have been instances when exit polls have been wide of the mark and actual results have been at total variance with the predictions. Experts say the sample size must be at least five per cent (which is rarely the case) and it should be spread across demographics. Besides, predicting the number of seats based on exit votes is always subjective. What is important right now is a smooth transition/retention of power by whichever alliance takes Delhi. As the nation waits for the final results, the exit polls and INDIA's confidence set the stage for a potentially transformative election. The voters' message appears to be multifaceted, reflecting a balance between a desire for stability and development on the one hand and a push for inclusive growth and accountable governance on the other. Ultimately, regardless of the outcome, the next Government will need to respect the mandate and address the aspirations of the populace without discrimination and bias. So, till the actual verdict comes, keep your fingers crossed!

# Dawn of a new era in Indian politics

## Beyond the immediate winners and losers, the aftermath promises to be marked by potential new alliances, power shifts and the rise of emerging political forces



KALYANI SHANKAR

The 2024 Lok Sabha elections are closing and the results will be on June 4. The aftermath of the election is not simply about winners and losers. It is about more than just the anticipated outcomes. It includes the potential for unforeseen alliances, dramatic shifts in power dynamics and the emergence of new political forces, all of which are yet to be unveiled. The BJP's potential win in the election is a significant event that could reshape the political landscape. However, the outcome is uncertain, with two possible scenarios, each with implications. One scenario predicts a massive victory for the BJP, possibly even exceeding 400 seats. The other scenario suggests a more modest result for the BJP with fewer seats.

**A landslide victory for the BJP could have far-reaching consequences.**

In a worst-case scenario, if the BJP wins fewer seats, the party could still secure support from other parties. If the party emerges as the single largest, albeit with fewer seats than in the 2019 poll, it has a plan B to form the Government with the help of some neutral parties.

The strategic decisions made by the Congress party, such as reducing the number of contested constituencies, highlight the depth and complexity of Indian politics. Each move is a calculated step towards a larger goal. As the sixth phase of the Lok Sabha polls concluded on Saturday, the Congress claimed the BJP's fate is "all but sealed," with the INDIA bloc having already crossed the halfway mark of 272 seats and is on course for a total of over 350 seats.

The INDIA Alliance, a significant player in Indian politics, was formed by 26 Opposition parties last year to fight Modi unitedly. However, if the BJP returns to power, the alliance may face a significant challenge. Some partners, such as the Trinamool Congress and the AAP, have decided to refrain from forming partnerships for the Lok Sabha polls, weakening the Congress's position. A BJP victory could lead to reevaluating the INDIA



Alliance's strategy, with some partners choosing to align with the BJP and others seeking new partnerships or independent paths.

If the BJP wins more seats, smaller parties may rush to join the alliance. This rush may be fueled by their desire to align with the winning side, which could impact the post-election scenario. However, this rush to join the coalition may be more than just motivated by political interests. Some parties want to oppose Modi, while others see alliances as a failed attempt. Others, like the Trinamool Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Punjab, have chosen to refrain from engaging in partnerships. They, along with the Congress and the Left Parties, would challenge the NDA.

This could result in the collapse of the newly formed India coalition, as this alliance has many fair-weather friends who may ally with any party based solely on their self-interest. The BJP's ability to secure more seats or gain support from other parties will not be a surprise. This could impact the political landscape, potentially leading



THE UDDHAV THACKERAY FACTION OF THE SHIV SENA AND THE SHARAD PAWAR-LED NCP WERE PREVIOUSLY WITH THE BJP AND IT WOULDN'T BE SURPRISING IF THEY HELPED THE NDA

to a realignment of political forces, including the INDIA Alliance.

The BJP has lost some crucial allies, such as SAD, Shiv Sena and JD(U). However, JD(U) and the TDP have now rejoined. In Tamil Nadu, the AIADMK, a former NDA ally, may also rejoin the NDA depending on its performance in the polls. Even the ruling DMK is considering its options after the election. The party understands the importance of maintaining a solid working relationship with the NDA and PM Modi. These potential alliances and shifts in power dynamics could significantly impact the political landscape after the elections.

The BJP could seek support from parties led by influential leaders such as Naveen Patnaik, Jagan Mohan Reddy, K Chandrashekhar Rao, Mayawati and others. Though not aligned with any coalition, these leaders have significant political influence and have helped the BJP in the past when the ruling party needed them. Their potential role in the post-election scenario could significantly shape the political landscape.

The Uddhav Thackeray faction of the Shiv Sena and the Sharad Pawar-led NCP were previously with the BJP and it wouldn't be surprising if they helped the NDA.

Delhi Chief Minister Kejriwal is ambitious and eyeing the prime ministership. He will remain in opposition. Kejriwal predicted that if Modi wins again on June 4, he will put Uddhav Thackeray, Sharad Pawar, Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge in jail. He would also be sent back to jail. However, it's important to note that these are potential scenarios and not confirmed outcomes. Various factors, including the election outcome, can influence it.

The June 4 election results will show how politics will shape the Indian alliance, splintering or strengthening it. They will also indicate whether the BJP will become more arrogant with a hat trick under its belt. A third consecutive BJP win could embolden the party, leading to a more assertive political landscape.

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

### PICTALK



People take a boat ride on the Ganga at Assi Ghat, in Varanasi

PTI

## Tobacco addiction grows steadily among the youth

### With 24 per cent of children under 16 already using tobacco, the urgency for immediate intervention and education cannot be overstated

The escalating trend of addiction among the youth in India is a serious challenge to public health. Each year, tobacco consumption claims the lives of 1.2 million people in the country. The theme of World No Tobacco Day 2024, 'Protecting Children from Tobacco Industry Interference', underscores the urgent need to shield the younger generation from the harmful influence of the tobacco industry. Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable deaths and diseases worldwide. It significantly contributes to heart disease, cardiovascular issues and brain strokes. The Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2016-17 revealed that approximately 29 per cent (270 million) of Indian adults use tobacco products, including cigarettes, gutkha, supari tobacco, jarda, bidi and hookah. Alarmingly, about 24 per cent of children under 16 years old in India consume tobacco in some form, leading to devastating health outcomes. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) indicates that about 38 per cent of Indian men are addicted to



tobacco. Notably, tobacco consumption is higher in rural areas (42.7 per cent) compared to urban regions (28.8 per cent). Among women, tobacco use stands at approximately 8.9 per cent, with rural women showing higher consumption rates than their urban counterparts. These statistics are a cause for significant concern. World No Tobacco Day, celebrated by the World Health Organization and global partners, aims to raise awareness about the detrimental effects of tobacco use and promote cessation. The 2024 theme focuses on protecting children, as the majority of regular smokers start before the age of 18. This highlights the necessity of safeguarding adolescents from the perils of tobacco. Smoking damages the alveoli in the lungs, leading to lung diseases, with most lung cancer cases linked to cigarette

smoking. Tobacco increases the risk of cancers such as oral, throat, oesophageal, bladder, kidney and lung cancer. It also leads to chronic diseases like COPD, heart attacks and strokes. Smoking is responsible for approximately 90 per cent of cancer deaths. The risk of death from heart disease and strokes rises significantly among tobacco users. Smokers are prone to numerous diseases, with a general decline in overall health. Additionally, tobacco use reduces fertility in both men and women and can cause severe complications during pregnancy. Smoking and use of tobacco can lead to severe lung diseases, including COPD, Asthma, TB and Lung Cancer causing significant suffering. Smokers are significantly more likely to die from COPD and are at a higher risk of developing TB. People should avoid tobacco products and seek medical help if addicted. Various resources, including nicotine replacement therapy, prescription medications, counselling services, support groups and smartphone apps, are available to help individ-

uals quit tobacco. Among youth, smoking is often wrongly perceived as a sign of masculinity. Additionally, tobacco use is not universally seen as a vice. The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) 2003 aims to protect consumers, reduce tobacco use and prevent related diseases. It includes measures such as banning smoking in public places, regulating sales near educational institutions and issuing health warnings to inform the public. The Telangana Government in May 2024 has recently banned all tobacco products for one year, realising the grave consequences of tobacco usage. The rising addiction among youth threatens their future health. Young people must resist industry influences that target youth and promote e-cigarettes and flavoured nicotine pouches and candy which are also harmful and lay the foundation for tobacco use later on.

*(The author is a public health expert working as an Assistant Professor at MLB Medical College, Jhansi UP; views are personal)*



SUDHA SHARMA

### OPPOSITION ASSURED OF VICTORY

Madam — Apropos the news story "Cong assured of 295+ seats for INDIA bloc," published on June 1, this is my response. As a daily newspaper reader, I find the recent claims by Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge quite significant. The assertion that the INDIA Bloc will secure over 295 Lok Sabha seats in the 2024 elections reflects a strong confidence in their coalition's appeal. The strategic meeting, attended by prominent opposition leaders like Sonia Gandhi, Arvind Kejriwal and Akhilesh Yadav, underscores their united front and meticulous planning for vote counting on June 4.

Kharge's emphasis on staying vigilant during the vote count, particularly concerning EVMs and Form 17C, highlights the coalition's commitment to ensuring a fair process. The involvement of various party leaders, including Sharad Pawar and Tejashwi Yadav, signals a robust alliance to overcome the BJP's influence. The INDIA Bloc's confidence, bolstered by their internal survey, suggests a significant shift in Indian politics. If their predictions hold, we could witness a transformative phase in the country's governance.

Tisha Reddy | Hyderabad

### SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Madam — Apropos the news story "Economic growth raises sustainability concerns," published on June 1, this is my response. India's economic ascent is remarkable, with its GDP growth rates positioning it as the fifth largest economy, surpassing the UK in 2022 and poised to overtake Japan by 2025. This growth is fueled by increased consumption, driving production and employment. However, this surge in consumerism raises significant sustainability concerns. The Household Consumption Expenditure Survey, 2022-23, shows a notable rise in average Monthly per capita consumer expenditure (MPCE), with urban and rural households increasing their spending by 33.5 per cent and 40.42 per cent respectively since 2011-12. This shift from 'needs to

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Haryana thrives under current Govt



This is my response to the news story "Haryana is driving towards progress and prosperity," published on June 1. Haryana embodies courage and strength. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has savoured Haryana's spirit, has led with vigour for ten years. Seeing Rafale jets soar in Ambala skies today is a proud moment

for all of us. Modi recently highlighted the opposition's deceitful intentions and reaffirmed the BJP's dedication to Haryana's development. Earlier this month, former Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar led a mega rally endorsing Lok Sabha candidate Mohan Lal Badoli, marking a significant moment in Haryana's political landscape. The rally, attended by over 15,000 supporters, showcased the deep-rooted admiration for Khattar's leadership. The Modi-Manohar effect has propelled Haryana towards economic prosperity and social development. Initiatives like *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* and PM-KISAN have brought transformative changes. Haryana's rise as an investment hub, with significant contributions in textiles and agriculture, underscores its progressive vision and commitment to holistic development.

Rishabh Khanna | Chandigarh

wants' echoes Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs but also underscores the unsustainable wastage of resources.

High consumption depletes non-renewable resources, leading to scarcity and environmental degradation, including pollution, deforestation and climate change. Income disparities exacerbate these issues, as benefits are unevenly distributed, increasing economic inequality. To balance economic growth with sustainability, India must promote environmentally friendly consumption through education, incentives and regulations, investing in renewable resources and green technologies and implementing policies that encourage sustainable practices. Prioritising sustainability can ensure growth benefits society while preserving the environment for future generations.

Yashika Mehta | Mumbai

### REVIVE FARMING, SAVE ENVIRONMENT

Madam — Apropos the news story "Recycle nutrients to mitigate fertiliser crisis," published on June 1, this is my response. As someone who follows environmental issues closely, the growing concerns about the disruption of natural

nutrient cycles due to human activities are alarming. Historically, sustainable farming practices effectively maintained the balance of essential nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium.

The staggering Rs. 2 lakh crore annual subsidy on fertilisers in India underscores the scale of this problem. Compounded by the separation of livestock farming from crop production, vast amounts of nutrients now pollute water bodies, causing eutrophication and damaging ecosystems. It's encouraging to see advancements in wastewater treatment and nutrient recovery. Cities like Delhi and Hyderabad are expanding their treatment capacities and exploring nutrient recycling. However, the challenge remains immense. Implementing efficient nutrient recovery systems and adopting best practices from Europe could significantly reduce environmental pollution and support sustainable agriculture, potentially transforming India's agricultural landscape and mitigating the ongoing nutrient crisis.

Aarav Singhania | Jaipur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN MIND MANAGEMENT IS CRUCIAL FOR HAPPINESS

We can truly celebrate only if we are able to silence our mind



RAVI VALLURI

What is the difference between PK and PIKU? Two letters, 'I' and 'U'; I is us and U are them (an extra-terrestrial Aamir Khan). Their CPU is cerebral and our CPU is at the level of abdomen. Or say for vast multitudes the focus is at the abdomen. It would be quite captivating watching the main protagonists PK (of the eponymous movie) and Bhaskor (of Piku fame) sharing their thoughts and respective metabolisms in a spaceship. Food has a tremendous impact on our system, which we do not quite comprehend. Improper diet first takes a toll on the metabolism and then attacks other organs of the body. Simply put, intake of toxic foods generates repugnant thoughts and results in a weak mind and body.

The human mind is an enigma and a reservoir of potential. But the moot question is how do we tap this potential? The mind is a movie theatre where we script and enact innumerable movies and soap operas.

Technology alone cannot be a substitute for the enormous potential of the mind. It needs to be cultured, harnessed, and harmonized with needs and wants.

We need to distinguish brain from the mind. The brain is an organ that serves as the center of the nervous system in all vertebrate and most invertebrate animals. Only a few invertebrates such as sponges, do not have a brain, diffuse or localized nerve nets are



present instead. Mind on the other hand is the faculty of consciousness and thoughts. It is an individual's intellect or memory or his attention span or will. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has captured it very succinctly. He says mind is like the sky and thoughts are like clouds. Your thoughts make or mar the progress and development of the mind.

To be happy in life humans need to calm the obdurate and recalcitrant mind. Further keep reminding ourselves that we are blessed, grateful and have abundance in our lives. Life is full of valleys and peaks. It can never be a rising curve or a straight line permanently.

The human mind vacillates between the past and the future. In the past, the mind is regretful and if it is in the future, it is anxious. In either situation the mind is not at peace nor in the present moment and thus remains unhappy.

Incidentally there is a deep connect between the stomach and mind. That is why it is called the gut feeling or the sixth sense. Our solar plexus keeps sending us signals. It depends as to whether we are conscious and wakeful enough to grasp those signals.

We humans can truly celebrate only if we are able to silence our mind. There are techniques to do it and develop a relaxation room or space in our minds and harness the energy so that it does not get enervated. By practicing Suryanamaskars and Padmasadhana as crafted by Gurudev we can enhance our Prana, (chi) or energy levels substantially.

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

# New sankalps from the sadhana in Kanyakumari



NARENDRA MODI

Kanyakumari has always been close to Modi's heart; on his recent visit to India's southernmost part, he gets into a pensive mood to reflect on Bharat's future

My dear fellow Indians, the biggest festival of democracy, the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections, are concluding today in our nation, the Mother of Democracy. After a three-day spiritual journey in Kanyakumari, I have just boarded the plane for Delhi. Through the day, Kashi and numerous other seats have been in the midst of voting. My mind is filled with so many experiences and emotions... I feel a boundless flow of energy within myself. The 2024 Lok Sabha elections are the first in the Amrit Kaal. I began my campaign a few months ago from Meerut, the land of the First War of Independence of 1857. Since then, I have traversed across the length and breadth of our great nation. The final rally of these elections took me to Hoshiarpur in Punjab, the land of the great Gurus and a land associated with Sant Ravidas ji. After that, I came to Kanyakumari, at the feet of Maa Bharti. It is natural that the fervour of the elections was echoing in my heart and mind. The multitude of faces seen in rallies and road shows came in front of my eyes. The blessings from our Nari Shakti... the trust, the affection, all of this was a very humbling experience. My eyes were getting moist... I entered into a sadhana (meditative state). And then, the heated political debates, the attacks and counter-attacks, the voices and words of accusations which are so characteristic of an election... they all vanished into a void. A sense of detachment came to grow within me... my mind became completely detached from the external world. Meditation becomes challenging amidst such huge responsibilities, but the land of Kanyakumari and the inspiration of Swami Vivekananda made it effortless. As a candidate myself, I left my campaign in the hands of my beloved people of Kashi and came here.



I am also grateful God for instilling me with these values from birth which I have cherished and tried to live up to. I was also thinking about what Swami Vivekananda must have experienced during his meditation at this very place in Kanyakumari! A part of my meditation was spent in a similar stream of thoughts.

Amidst this detachment, amidst the peace and silence, my mind was constantly thinking about the bright future of Bharat, the goals of Bharat. The rising sun at Kanyakumari gave new heights to my thoughts, the vastness of the ocean expanded my ideas, and the expanse of the horizon continuously made me realize the unity, the Oneness, embedded in the depths of the universe. It seemed as if the observations and experiences undertaken in the lap of the Himalayas decades ago were being revived.

Kanyakumari has always been very close to my heart. The Vivekananda Rock Memorial in Kanyakumari was built under the leadership of Shri Eknath Ranade ji. I had the opportunity to travel extensively with Eknath ji. During the construction of this Memorial, I had the opportunity to spend some time in Kanyakumari as well.

From Kashmir to Kanyakumari... this is a common identity that is deeply ingrained in the heart of every citizen of the country. This is the 'Shakti Peeth' (seat of Shakti) where Maa Shakti incarnated as Kanya Kumari. At this Southern tip, Maa Shakti performed penance and waited for Bhagwan Shiva, who was residing in the Himalayas at the northernmost parts of Bharat.

Kanyakumari is the land of confluences.



THE RISING SUN AT KANYAKUMARI GAVE NEW HEIGHTS TO MY THOUGHTS, THE VASTNESS OF THE OCEAN EXPANDED MY IDEAS, AND THE EXPANSE OF THE HORIZON CONTINUOUSLY MADE ME REALISE THE UNITY, THE ONENESS, EMBEDDED IN THE DEPTHS OF THE UNIVERSE

The sacred rivers of our country flow into different seas, and here, those very seas converge. And here, we witness another great confluence—the ideological confluence of Bharat! Here, we find the Vivekananda Rock Memorial, a grand statue of Saint Thiruvalluvar, Gandhi Mandapam, and Kamarajar Mani Mandapam. These streams of thought from these stalwarts converge here to form a confluence of national thought. This gives rise to great inspirations for nation-building. This land of Kanyakumari gives an indelible message of unity, especially to any person who doubts Bharat's nationhood and the sense of unity.

For thousands of years, Bharat has been moving forward with this sense of meaningful purpose. Bharat has been a cradle of ideas for thousands of years. We have never considered what we have acquired as our personal wealth or measured it purely by economic or material parameters. Therefore, 'Idam-na-mama' (this is not mine) has become an inherent and natural part of the character of Bharat.

Bharat's welfare benefits our planet's journey to progress as well. Take the freedom movement as an example. Bharat gained independence on August 15, 1947. At that time, many countries around the world were under colonial rule. Bharat's independence journey inspired and empowered many of those countries to achieve their own freedom. That same spirit was seen decades later when the world came face to face with the once in a century COVID-19 pandemic. When concerns were raised about the poor and developing countries, Bharat's successful efforts provided courage and assistance to many nations.

Today, Bharat's governance model has become an example for many countries around the world. Empowering 25 crore people to rise above poverty in just 10 years is unprecedented. Innovative practices such as Pro-People Good

Governance, aspirational districts, and aspirational blocks are being discussed globally today. Our efforts, from empowering the poor to last-mile delivery, have inspired the world by prioritising individuals standing at the last rung of society. Bharat's Digital India campaign is now an example for the entire world, showing how we can use technology to empower the poor, bring transparency, and ensure their rights.

Inexpensive data in Bharat is becoming a means of social equality by ensuring the reach of information and services to the poor. The whole world is witnessing and studying the democratization of technology, and major global institutions are advising many countries to adopt elements from our model.

Since the success of the G-20, the world has been increasingly envisioning a bigger role for Bharat. Today, Bharat is being acknowledged as a strong and important voice of the Global South. The African Union has become a part of the G-20 group at the initiative of Bharat. This is going to be a crucial turning point for the future of African countries.

The development trajectory of Bharat fills us with pride and glory, but at the same time, it also reminds the 140 crore citizens of their responsibilities. Now, without wasting a single moment, we must step forward towards greater duties and larger goals. We need to dream new dreams, convert them into reality and begin living those dreams.

We must see Bharat's development in a global context, and for this, it is essential that we understand Bharat's internal capabilities. We must acknowledge Bharat's strengths, nurture them, and utilize them for the benefit of the world. In today's global scenario, Bharat's strength as a youthful nation is an opportunity from which we must not look back.

The world of the 21st century is looking towards Bharat with many

hopes. And we will need to make several changes to move forward in the global scenario. We also need to change our traditional thinking regarding reform. Bharat cannot limit reform to just economic reforms. We must move forward in every aspect of life towards the direction of reform. Our reforms should also align with the aspirations of a 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India) by 2047.

We should take pride in every moment that God has blessed us with birth in the land of Bharat. God has chosen us to serve Bharat and fulfill our role in our country's journey towards excellence.

We must redefine our heritage in a modern way while embracing ancient values in a modern context. As a nation, we also need to reassess outdated thinking and beliefs. We need to free our society from the pressure of professional pessimists. We must remember that freedom from negativity is the first step towards achieving success. Success blossoms in the lap of positivity.

My faith, devotion, and belief in the infinite and eternal power of Bharat are growing day by day. Over the past 10 years, I have seen this capability of Bharat grow even more and have experienced it firsthand.

Just as we utilized the fourth and fifth decades of the 20th century to impart a new momentum to the freedom movement, we must lay the foundation for a 'Viksit Bharat' in these 25 years of the 21st century. Today, we have the same golden opportunity. Let's dedicate the next 25 years solely for the nation. Our efforts will create a strong foundation for the coming generations and the coming centuries, taking Bharat to new heights. Looking at the energy and enthusiasm of the country, I can say that the goal is not far away now. Let us take swift steps... let us come together and create a Viksit Bharat.

*(These thoughts were penned by PM Modi on 1st June during his return flight from Kanyakumari to Delhi)*

# Kerala Govt faces backlash over flawed liquor policy

Criticism has arisen over the demand for bar owners to pay ₹2.5 lakh each to circumvent a Government-mandated monthly closure

The demand that all bar owners in the State should pay Rs 2.5 lakh per establishment instead of cancelling a Government order that makes it mandatory for all watering holes to down shutters on the first of every month and restrictions on opening more bar hotels underscore the opinion that it is time for the Kerala Government to come out of liquor business.

The latest controversy about the demand made by the powers that be to the bar owners to pay exorbitant money as a bribe for altering the excise department's laws establishes that the CPI(M)-led LDF and Congress-led UDF are swindling the State alternately, a charge made time and again by Prime Minister Narendra



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

Modi during his campaign speeches in the State. The Government has no business to be in business and is more so in the case of the liquor business. Unlike other States, Kerala and Tamil Nadu follow liquor policies that promote high-level corruption. The Governments in these two States are the monopolies in the liquor trade. The Beverages Corporation of Kerala (BEVCO) and Tamil

Nadu State Marketing Corporation (TASMAC), the State-owned entities are the only bodies that can buy and sell liquor. Bar restaurants owned by the private sector should procure the liquor supplied by these two bodies. Long back there were private liquor outlets in these States doing roaring business.

After the "nationalisation" of the liquor business in Kerala, the tippers face severe hardship in getting their daily quota of spirits and they are also forced to consume what the brands that BEVCO 'impose' on them.

Earlier, the tippers had the choice of getting their favourite brands and drinking too. After the taking over of the liquor business by the Government, the brands to be

sold in the States are decided by the party in power and there is no transparency in the selection of liquor to be traded through the outlets or restaurants (bars). The liquor manufacturers who pay the ruling parties get the contract and laugh at the banks.

The Government claims that the nationalization is the prelude to the introduction of total prohibition in Kerala. This is a dream that will never materialise unless other States bring in legislation banning liquor. Neighboring Karnataka is a tippler's paradise as the private outlets sell all popular brands patronized by the consumers.

While arrack, the country spirit is banned in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the same is available in the rest of the country

much to the delight of the working class. Those who toil in farmlands from morning to evening need a bit of relaxation after a hard day's work and hence it is not proper on the part of the Government to ban the stuff.

Pinarayi Vijayan, chief minister of Kerala, is on record stating that toddy is a most nutritious drink and not alcohol. Tamil Nadu has banned toddy tapping forcing the poor workers to rush to TASMAC with their hard-earned wages to buy the spirit for the evening. If arrack is not banned in these States (where spurious arrack is available from bootleggers) the workers need not have spent the day's earnings in State-owned liquor outlets.

The notion that liquor would

imperil health has to go. Many findings have been confirmed through scientific research that a moderate quantity of liquor is good for health. There is a Chinese adage about liquor: "A man takes a drink. The drink takes more drinks. Finally, the drinks take the man". If the authorities could make the man consume fewer drinks, that would be the best solution to alcoholism. But it should not be by killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. We live in an era when Indian-made scotches have beaten the spirits brewed in Scotland and the USA to emerge as their rivals in the global market.

Colombo and suburbs, hardly an hour of air journey from Kochi is a study in contrast. Though there are many liquor

outlets in Sri Lanka, one cannot come across long queues of tippers in front of these shops. Devan Ramachandran, a judge of the Kerala High Court, said recently that the drinkers need much better treatment from the BEVCO outlets. He was drawing the attention of the Government to the plight of tippers who have to wait for hours in the queue braving the scorching sun and heavy downpours to get their daily evening quota. Sunil Kumar, a fellow journalist, said that the Government's stringent and outdated regulations alone are responsible for making people consume more and more liquor. He says that the decision to down the shutters of liquor outlets on the first day of every month is a regressive

measure as it forces the drinkers to buy an additional bottle in the previous evening to stock for the next day. But what happens is that they consume that extra bottle on the same evening leaving them "high and dry" on the day of shutdown. Let the tippers have the freedom to gulp down their quota. It is impossible to have total prohibition in the country. Piloos Modi, the veteran parliamentarian said during a debate on prohibition that he could stay away from alcohol for any number of years. But I cannot live even for a minute without the right to consume liquor," Piloos Modi had said. Let better sense prevail.

*(The writer is a special correspondent with the Pioneer; views are personal)*

MONEY MATTERS

## Income tax dept imposes penalty of Rs 4.68 cr on L&T

The income tax department has imposed a penalty of over Rs 4.68 crore on Larsen & Toubro Ltd, according to a regulatory filing. The department levied a penalty of Rs 4,68,91,352 in connection to the tax proceedings of erstwhile L&T Hydrocarbon Engineering Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary, which was merged with the company on April 1, 2021. L&T said in the filing on Saturday. "Pursuant to the income tax assessment of the company and consequent adjustment in the returned income for the Assessment Year 2020-21, a penalty is levied on such adjustment to the returned income," it said. However, the conglomerate said it will file an appeal against this order as it "does not agree with this levy" and expects a favourable outcome at the higher forum. L&T is a US\$ 27 billion Indian multinational enterprise engaged in engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) projects, hi-tech manufacturing and services, operating across multiple geographies.



## NMDC's iron ore output falls 37% in May; sales down 22%

Country's largest iron ore miner NMDC has reported a 37 per cent fall in its production at 2.34 million tonnes (MnT) in May 2024. It had produced 3.71 MnT of iron ore in the same month last year, the company said in an exchange filing on Saturday. NMDC's monthly sales also declined by 22 per cent to 2.82 MnT in May this year from 3.62 MnT in May 2023. The company's cumulative iron ore output fell to 5.82 MnT in April-May 2024 from 7.22 MnT in the year-ago period. Sales during the said period were at 6.35 MnT, down from 7.05 MnT in April-May 2023. On Tuesday, NMDC had increased the prices of lump ore by Rs 250 a tonne and fines by Rs 350 per tonne with immediate effect. The miner revised the cost of lump ore to Rs 6,450/tonne and fines to Rs 5,610 per tonne. Under the Ministry of Steel, Hyderabad-based NMDC caters to India's around 20 per cent demand for the key steel-making raw material



## CBIC issues instructions for initiating early GST recovery

The CBIC has said the Principal Commissioner or commissioner level officers can issue directions to recover GST dues before the stipulated three months of serving of demand order. Under the GST law, if a taxable person does not pay the amount specified in an order passed under the CGST Act within three months from the date of service of such order, the tax officer can initiate recovery proceedings only after the expiry of this period. However, in exceptional cases where it is necessary in the interest of revenue, the proper officer, after recording the reasons in writing, may ask a taxable person to pay the amount within a period shorter than three months. The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) said it has been brought to its notice that some of the field formations are initiating recovery before the specified period of three months from the date of service of the order, even in the cases where the taxable person has not been specifically required by the proper officer, for reasons to be recorded in writing, for payment of such amount within a lesser period.



## Classplus expects biz to grow by 65% to over Rs 250 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

B2B edtech firm Classplus expects its business to grow by 65 per cent to over Rs 250 crore in the financial year 2024, a senior company official said. The Tiger Global and Peak XV Partners (formerly Sequoia Capital)-backed firm claims to be on the brink of profitability and continue to maintain the growth by improving operational efficiency. "Classplus achieved remarkable growth in FY24. We expect revenues to soar upwards of Rs 250 crore (unaudited), marking a 65 per cent increase from Rs 149 crore in FY23. Additionally, we made strong strides towards profitability, bringing down losses by 70 per cent to about Rs 80 crore in FY24," Classplus co-founder and CEO Mukul Rustagi said. Classplus helps content creators and educators launch and scale their online coaching businesses by monetising their social media.

## RBI unlikely to cut interest rate on June 7: experts

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is unlikely to cut the benchmark interest rate at its upcoming monetary policy review meeting, taking place soon after the announcement of the Lok Sabha election results, amid inflation challenges, said experts. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) may also refrain from rate cut as economic growth is picking up, notwithstanding the elevated interest rate of 6.5 per cent (repo) prevailing since February 2023. The meeting of the Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das headed MPC is scheduled for June 5 to 7. The decision will be announced on June 7 (Friday). Results of the Lok Sabha elections will be announced on June 4. The central bank last hiked the repo rate to 6.5 per cent in



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February 2023 and since then it has held the rate at same level in its previous six bi-monthly policies. If the interest rate remains untouched again on June 7, it would be the eighth time for the RBI to maintain the status quo

on the benchmark repo rate. On expectations from the June policy, Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist, Bank of Baroda, said economic conditions have largely remained unchanged since the last policy. High-frequency indicators

like PMI and GST collections do show that growth is on course. He further said concerns on inflation remain even though the last couple of numbers have come at less than 5 per cent. The ongoing heat wave has affected prices of vegetables in particular and while the IMD has predicted a normal monsoon, it would be prudent to wait and monitor how it progresses. "Under these conditions, a status quo on policy rate and stance may be expected. It would be interesting to see, however, if RBI changes forecasts of GDP and inflation for FY25," Sabnavis opined. Sanjay Nayar, President of industry body Assocham, too said the central bank is expected to keep the repo rate unchanged in the ensuing MPC meeting as retail inflation remains above the target of 4 per cent.

## Deep tech startup policy likely in forthcoming Budget

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The commerce and industry ministry may propose a dedicated policy for deep tech startups to promote innovation, for the forthcoming Budget to be announced by the new government, an official said. Voting for the Lok Sabha polls is over and the counting is scheduled for June 4. The new government is likely to take oath this month. The new government may announce the full Budget for 2024-25 in July. The official said that startups have to convert their innovation into intellectual property rights and for that extensive R&D is required. The policy is in the final stages and the ministry may forward this proposal for the full Budget announcement, the official said. In July last year, a draft National Deep Tech Startup Policy (NDTSP) was released for stakeholders' comments.



It is aimed at addressing the challenges confronting deep tech startups through definitive policy interventions to create a conducive ecosystem. It also aims to harness the transformative potential of technological advancement across diverse sectors, serving as a catalyst to stimulate ripple effects throughout the economy and laying the groundwork for new industry creation. Deep technology refers to innovations founded on advanced scientific and technological breakthroughs. Due to their disruptive nature, they

have the potential to solve India's most pressing societal issues. According to the draft, the priority is to strengthen the research and innovation ecosystem leading to scientific breakthroughs and technological advancements, boosting India's knowledge-driven economy. The main elements which are required to promote R&D and innovation include the creation of intellectual property rights, funding, infrastructure, standards and certification, and capacity building.

## Mcap of 8 of 10 most valued firms erodes by Rs 2.08 L cr

Reliance, TCS biggest laggards

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The combined market valuation of eight of the top-10 most valued firms declined by Rs 2,08,207.93 crore last week, with bellwether Reliance Industries, TCS and Infosys taking the biggest hit. While these three firms along with ITC, Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), Hindustan Unilever Ltd, Bharti Airtel and ICICI Bank were the laggards, HDFC Bank and State Bank of India (SBI) emerged as gainers. Last week, the 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 1,449

points or 1.92 per cent. It rose by 75.71 points or 0.10 per cent to settle at 73,961.31 on Friday, snapping a five-day losing streak. The market capitalisation (mcap) of index heavyweight Reliance Industries plunged by Rs 67,792.23 crore to Rs 19,34,717.12 crore, while TCS mcap declined by Rs 65,577.84 crore to Rs 13,27,657.21 crore. The valuation of Infosys slumped by Rs 24,338.1 crore to Rs 5,83,860.28 crore, and that of ITC went lower by Rs 12,422.29 crore to Rs 5,32,036.41 crore.

Mcap of LIC dropped by Rs 10,815.74 crore to Rs 6,40,532.52 crore, while HUL's valuation eroded by Rs 9,680.31 crore to Rs 5,47,149.32 crore. Bharti Airtel's mcap fell by Rs 9,503.31 crore to Rs 7,78,335.40 crore, and that of ICICI Bank dipped by Rs 8,078.11 crore to Rs 7,87,229.71 crore. However, mcap of HDFC Bank climbed Rs 10,954.49 crore to Rs 11,64,083.85 crore. SBI added Rs 1,338.7 crore, taking the market valuation to Rs 7,40,832.04 crore.

## Mkt Outlook: LS election result, RBI interest rate decision key events to watch

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Trading in the equity market will largely depend on two major events this week - general elections result and the RBI interest rate decision - analysts said, adding that the benchmark indices may rally on Monday on exit polls' prediction of a massive win for the BJP-led NDA and strong GDP data. Exit polls on Saturday predicted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will retain power for a third straight term, with the NDA expected to win a big majority in the polls. Counting of votes will take place on June 4. "All eyes are now on the



most significant event of the past five years — the outcome of the Lok Sabha elections, scheduled for Tuesday. Before that, market participants will react to the exit polls on

Monday. "The market is approaching the event with caution, and the positive surprise from exit polls can lead to a rally as majority of the exit polls are

giving 350+ seats to the NDA. Conversely, a negative surprise from actual results might trigger a knee-jerk reaction in the market," said Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investment Ltd. Following the election outcome, the next major trigger will be the RBI policy announcement scheduled for June 7, he added. "A key aspect to monitor will be the behaviour of foreign investors in the aftermath of the election results. On the global front, macroeconomic data from the US and China will also play a significant role in shaping market sentiments," Meena said.

## Major 18 listed builders sell Rs 1.17 L cr worth properties

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Eighteen major listed real estate developers sold properties worth Rs 1.17 lakh crore during the last fiscal with Godrej Properties becoming the largest player posting Rs 22,527 crore of sales bookings. Except for a few realty players, all major developers have achieved higher sales bookings in 2023-24 compared to the preceding financial year. This was largely driven by strong demand for residential properties, especially luxury homes, across major cities. Many developers clocked record pre-sales in the 2023-24 fiscal, riding on a surge in consumer demand.

## 'Meganet set to log Rs 1,000 cr revenue in next two years'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Computing hardware manufacturing firm Mega Networks (Meganet) is en route to entering the Rs 1,000 crore club in terms of revenue in the next two years, founder and CEO Amrith Pipada said. During an interaction with PTI, Pipada extensively discussed the firm's expansion

plans, its strategy to encash India's burgeoning AI server market, and the role of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme in its growth. The CEO exuded confidence in the company's capabilities and said the homegrown firm is set to achieve a 30-40 per cent revenue growth in FY25. Meganet recorded a revenue of Rs 300 crore in FY24.

## Legacy issues behind us, PNB on right path to outperform its competition: MD Goel

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With legacy issues behind, Punjab National Bank (PNB) is on the right path to outpace the competition and achieve greater heights in terms of profitability during the current fiscal and subsequent years, the bank's managing director Atul Kumar Goel said. PNB topped the chart recording the highest profit growth of 229 per cent among

the 12 public sector banks during the fiscal ended in March 2024. The bank's net profit increased over three-fold to Rs 8,245 crore compared to Rs 2,507 crore in the previous fiscal. Recalling the position of PNB three years ago, Goel said it was a laggard on many counts with one of the highest gross and net non-performing assets (NPAs) numbers among PSBs and Provision Coverage



Ratio (PCR) was low. "Today you see my net NPA reduced to 0.7 per cent and even the PCR is more than 95 per

cent. I am better than my peers," he said in an interview. Going forward, he said, the net NPA would come down below 0.5 per cent and the net interest margin of around 3 per cent during the current financial year. "We are on the right path because we have taken a lot of initiatives like improving underwriting, collections, digital and HR transformation. "Whatever efforts we put in

the last two years, results will be visible during this year and subsequent years. Definitely, our profitability would be better than our peers in the coming years," he said. Talking about the strategy to improve profitability, he said, the focus would be on expanding retail, agriculture, MSME portfolio, extending good corporate loans, controlling slippages and improving recovery.

## AC makers clock two-fold jump in sales in May amid scorching summer

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A blistering summer has led to an almost two-fold jump in sales of air-conditioners in May even as leading manufacturers have been grappling with delays in installation and replenishing inventories of hot-selling energy-efficient models. The mercury is hovering above 45 degrees at several places including the national capital, which has been under the grip of a severe heatwave for the past few days. At the same time, AC makers are navigating exceptional demand, recording their best-ever sales in a month so far. Leading brands like Voltas, LG, Daikin, Panasonic, and Blue Star witnessed robust sales

in May and the industry expects an overall growth of 30 to 35 per cent in 2024 compared to their sales of last year.



Voltas recorded a two-fold jump in the sales of residential AC in May and expects the positive momentum to continue in the remaining period of

the April-June quarter, said its MD & CEO Pradeep Bakshi. "As we reflect on May 2024, Voltas has a remarkable surge in sales, showcasing a stupendous volume growth of 100 per cent compared to the same period last year. This milestone is particularly significant as

May historically stands as one of the highest contributing month in the AC and cooling products industry," Bakshi said. The Tata Group firm is optimistic to achieve 2 million units of AC sales mark within the first six months of this calendar year. Similarly, LG Electronics India said it is witnessing an "exponential growth" in room AC business and has "surpassed the last 5 years' records with a multi-fold surge in demand". "This year created many sales records starting from the south region and now North India. We are expecting a minimum 100 per cent growth in north India. Similar growth trends are expected to be seen in eastern states also," said LG Electronics India Senior VP Sanjay Chitkara.

## Agnikul eyes launching satellites by 2025: CEO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After the successful test flight of its AgniBaan rocket, Chennai-based space start-up Agnikul Cosmos is hoping to start launching satellites early next year. In an interview with Agnikul co-founder and Chief Executive Officer Srinath Ravichandran said the 3D-printed semi-cryogenic engines and the rocket will offer quick turnaround for customers who will be able to have customised launch vehicles for their satellites. "Nine to twelve months I would say. Probably by the end of this financial year or the early part of the next financial year is what we are targeting," Ravichandran said.

## Job cuts in Tata Steel's UK operations inevitable, says CEO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Loss of jobs for around 2,500 workers at Tata Steel's operations in the UK, which are in a transition phase, is "inevitable", the company's CEO T V Narendran said. Fear of job losses has attracted criticism of the workers' unions and they are continuously protesting against the company in the UK. India-based Tata Steel owns the UK's largest steelworks of 3 million tonne per annum (MTPA) at Port Talbot in South Wales and employs around 8,000 people across all its operations in that country. As part of its decarbonisation plan, the company is shifting to low-emission elec-



tric arc furnace (EAF) process from the blast furnace (BF) route which is nearing its end of life cycle. Speaking to PTI, Narendran said the transition to EAF with the UK government aid will make the company competitive in terms of reduced production cost, and also help in reduction of 5 million tonnes of Co2 per year. "But all this involves 2,500 job losses and that is what the unions obviously are not happy with. And that's a conversation

going on with the unions to how can we do it in a smooth as possible way. It is inevitable," he said. In September 2023, Tata Steel and the UK government agreed on a joint investment plan of 1.25 billion pounds to execute decarbonisation plans at Port Talbot steel making facility in Britain. Of the 1.25 billion pounds, 500 million pounds was provided by the UK government. Sharing the updates on the UK operations, Narendran further said the coke ovens were already closed in March. One blast furnace will close in June because it is operationally struggling, and the second blast furnace will close in September for reasons of asset quality as well as for reasons of financial bleed.



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Actress Alankrita Sahai, who has received much praise for her performance in *Tippsy*, opens up with *The Pioneer* about the dissimilarities of her character and Alankrita in real life, and shooting in the serenity of Goa, among the rest.

SUBODHINI PUROHIT

Alankrita Sahai, the all-round actress who has played explosive characters, notably in the film *Tippsy*, was seen portraying a character named 'Pony' and has received much praise for shattering stereotypes!

Initially, she was invited to play a different character named 'Tanya', but she says, "I no longer wanted to play the conventionally affluent, beautiful woman. I was keen to break free from being typecast and try new roles. My job is to experiment and progress my career through different genres! That's when I discovered another character named 'Pony'. When I read about her role, I thought she was hilarious and naive, unlike any other character I'd played before."

This film highlighted women's camaraderie. She explains the same: "You don't need a man for a bachelorette trip, but a man's bachelor vacation is never without women. *Tippsy's* idealised premise is that it's acceptable for women to celebrate their bachelorette party, have fun, and not experience prejudice simply because they are women. It's like a *Hangover* movie of girls, and Kainaat and Nazia, who are my good friends, were *Charlie's Angels* for Deepak Tijori, and the myth that Bollywood actors can't become friends is entirely wrong because we can be friends and boosted each other and built beautiful memories during the shoot."

She did this movie since her father died in a horrifying incident in 2022, and she says, "This film came as a saving grace for me because losing a parent so suddenly at a young age is traumatic and depressing. I did not want to do anything in my life. I left Mumbai and travelled to Chandigarh. When I received this movie offer, I assumed that my father would have expected me to work hard and regularly because he wanted my aspirations to come true. So I thought, let's do this for real." Within two months of her father's death, she had to begin shooting. She met several lovely and friendly people, and it was great to be back in Mumbai!



**'I NO LONGER WANTED TO PLAY THE CONVENTIONALLY AFFLUENT, BEAUTIFUL WOMAN'**

Pony's character is amusing and a little naive, but unlike Alankrita, she is quite subservient; she explains, "In real life, I am the leader of my group, whereas Pony is a follower in her gang. Pony is a top student at her college, something I can connect to. She is, nevertheless, a glamorous middle-class girl attempting to fit into society while dealing with hurdles from both her family and society. Unlike Pony, I am a strong and courageous individual, but she is fearful, scared, and vulnerable. To prepare for the role, I needed to play a submissive, sensitive, and emotionally motivated character."

Also, Pony's voice was slow and charming, so the actress needed to adjust her tone of speech and modulate her body language! This role represented the various types of girls we may encounter in a friend circle.

When they were shooting in Goa, they realised they were away from home because of the beach and the scenery, which she appreciated. She says, "The most important thing about shooting there was that we had great food and an environment. Even though we were working in Goa, it felt like we were partying, despite the long hours. Surprisingly, when we completed shooting late, we could always relax at a restaurant, where the women could sit and get to know each other before going for a walk on the beach. Working for me is like a party, and I like it. It was a pleasure to shoot with these gals. Goa is a safe area for women to enjoy themselves, but exercise caution at all times."

She believes *Tippsy* resonated more with a female audience, and that people struggled to accept women partying, being powerful and opinionated, and having independence. Gen Z and millennials will accept it, and the film focused on camaraderie, various people coming together, and harmony. Despite the severe accident she has been involved in lately, she is already working on two projects, and the announcements will be made soon. She remarked, "I feel that regardless of whether movies are successful or not, one should continue working. We have received positive media coverage, which I am quite happy for. A movie is something that some individuals may enjoy while others may not. We cannot please everyone, but we must ensure that we do credit to the role."

Deepti Sadhwani reveals her Cannes look

'My dress got ready 2 hours before I had to leave'

SHRADDHA NEWARE

This year's Cannes Film Festival has left many people talking about fashion taking center stage on the red carpet. From celebrities to influencers, we've seen a diversity of colour combinations and innovation on the part of designers. Actress Deepti Sadhwani's stunning performance at the event astounded many people. The one-of-a-kind appearance was stunning and seemed to evoke a message. Let's find out more as the stunning actress reveals her red carpet look. Excerpts from the interview:

How did you learn the ropes of your profession?

Beauty pageants began at a very young age, at the city level. I was Miss Lucknow, and then I competed in some small beauty pageants with names you wouldn't recognise. Then I competed in Miss North India and won the contest. I opted for Femina, Miss India. I was among the top regionals. The entire process of whether or not a contender wins the crown consists of hard training, discipline, personality development, how to get up, how to sit down, how much you should smile in front of the camera, what your etiquette is, and how you walk. During these pageants, I learned all about ladylike manners. After winning Miss North India, my confidence skyrocketed, and I began conducting several interviews. I was all over the media when I was barely 18! Beauty pageants provided valuable training for me as a young and eager learner. So that was my training experience, and I believe it made a significant difference in shaping who I am today. And it has actually influenced my career.

What is your go-to fashion look?

When it comes to fashion, I strive to be versatile and avoid being the type of person who just wears one type of hairstyle, makeup, or clothes. I constantly look for what looks good on my body and makes me feel comfortable. Where I'm going determines my choice of dress, footwear, hair, and makeup. Most of the time, I prefer to go without makeup because we do so much of it during events. I believe that if I can look good in a pantsuit, short dress, or gown, I can do the same in Indian attire.

Can you tell us more about your red carpet look for Cannes?

So, basically, I didn't have a stylist for my red carpet look and didn't hire anyone because I wanted to design looks that reflected my individualism, personality, and the

Actress Deepti Sadhwani, who very well aced her frills at the Cannes Film Festival this season, speaks to *The Pioneer* about her modelling days, and red carpet look for Cannes.

message I wanted to convey. Three months before Cannes, my friend and I, who is a designer, met together to discuss how and what to do. There was a lot of back and forth about things, whether it was design or colour. I knew my red carpet would be in the afternoon, so I decided to do something daytime with a literal touch of neon. After a lot of fabric selections, we settled on this colour, which was orangey with a tinge of neon, and we got about 100 meters, which ran out when we started stitching, and another 100 meters, which also ran out, so we had to go again for 50 meters. So around 250 meters of fabric were used. We were just doing frills and frills on the dress. We expected it to take a month, but this dress was ready barely two hours before I left for the airport, and I'm not exaggerating.

What are your thoughts on the evolution of women in cinema?

Women's roles have always evolved over time, and we see women-centric films, documentaries, and web series being produced now that are performing quite well. You no longer need a hero to do justice, bring in numbers at the box office, or entice audiences to the cinema. For example, Sanjay Leela Bhansali embodies women's sensuality in the web series *Heeramandi*. It was exclusively about ladies. And I believe that this should improve over time. I would like to see changes that ensure women receive equal pay. That is the only area where we are falling behind in the movie right now. Actors are paid approximately ten times more than actresses. There should be no gender discrimination in salaries.

Do you believe Indian cinema is being noticed these days?

The good news is that Indian cinema is receiving recognition on such large and prominent forums. Indian films are being exhibited at the Cannes Film Festival. Many Indian films are being presented in both main and short film categories.

People acknowledge and appreciate you when you claim, 'I am from India'. When the international press and media interview you, they say, 'Oh, you're from India? It's nice to have Indian films being played here.' People recognise Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and other Indian actresses who visit there. They give you adequate prominence; you feel wanted, involved, and like you belong there because you are from India and represent Indian culture. That was the best part. When you're on the red carpet, people hoot for you and make sure you smile, saying things like 'I love your gown', 'You're so amazing', 'This side, that side', and 'Give us a flying kiss'. So they say stuff like that, which makes you grin and take the best photos on the red carpet. It is very essential to me to reflect Indian culture. I wore a saree at Cannes, but not on the red carpet. But it was one of the looks we created during the day. More power to Indian cinema and culture, which are represented not only at Cannes but also at other film festivals!



Deadly truth behind reverse smoking

Reverse smoking is an unconventional and hazardous form of tobacco consumption that has significant health implications. Unlike traditional smoking, where the lit end of the cigarette is placed in the smoker's mouth, reverse smoking involves placing the lit end inside the mouth. This practice, although less common globally, is particularly prevalent in certain regions such as parts of India, the Philippines, and the Caribbean. Despite its relative obscurity, reverse smoking poses severe health risks, often overlooked in public health discussions.

Prevalence

Reverse smoking is deeply rooted in cultural practices and is often seen among older women in rural communities. In regions where it is practiced, reverse smoking is typically associated with traditional beliefs and social norms. For example, in some areas of Andhra Pradesh, it is believed that reverse smoking helps keep the tobacco from drying out and enhances its flavour! Additionally, some communities view this practice as a way to avoid drawing unnecessary attention or as a method of using tobacco leaves that are not suitable for regular smoking.

Health risks of reverse smoking

The health risks associated with reverse smoking are profound and far-reaching. One of the most alarming consequences is the increased risk of developing oral cancers. Since the lit end of the cigarette is placed inside the mouth, the mucous membranes of the oral cavity are directly exposed to extremely high temperatures. This direct heat exposure, combined with the harmful chemicals in tobacco smoke, significantly damages the oral tissues and increases the likelihood of malignant transformation.

Studies have shown that individuals who practice reverse smoking are at a higher risk of developing cancer of the palate. The constant exposure to heat and carcinogens leads to chronic irritation and inflammation of the palate, creating an environment conducive to cancer development. Additionally, reverse smokers are also at risk of developing other oral health issues such as leukoplakia, gum disease, and dental caries.

Moreover, reverse smoking is not limited to affecting the oral cavity. The inhalation of tobacco smoke through the mouth still exposes the respiratory system to harmful toxins, leading to an elevated risk of lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and other respiratory conditions. The practice can also contribute to cardiovascular diseases, as the harmful chemicals in tobacco smoke are absorbed into the bloodstream, causing damage to the heart and blood vessels.

Social and economic implications

The health consequences of reverse smoking extend beyond the individual, impacting families and communities. In areas where reverse smoking is common, the burden of disease places a significant strain on local healthcare systems. Treating conditions such as oral and lung cancer, as well as chronic respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, requires substantial medical resources and expenditures. This can be particularly challenging in low-resource settings, where healthcare infrastructure may already be limited.

Furthermore, the social implications of reverse smoking are notable. The practice often perpetuates a cycle of poverty and poor health, as individuals suffering from smoking-related diseases may be unable to work and support their families. This loss of productivity can have ripple effects throughout the community and exacerbating economic hardships.

Addressing smoking: A public health priority

Given the severe health risks and socio-economic implications associated with reverse smoking, it is crucial to address this practice as a public health priority. Raising awareness about the dangers of smoking and reverse smoking is essential in communities where the habit is prevalent. Public health campaigns should aim to educate individuals about the risks of oral and respiratory cancers, as well as other smoking-related diseases.

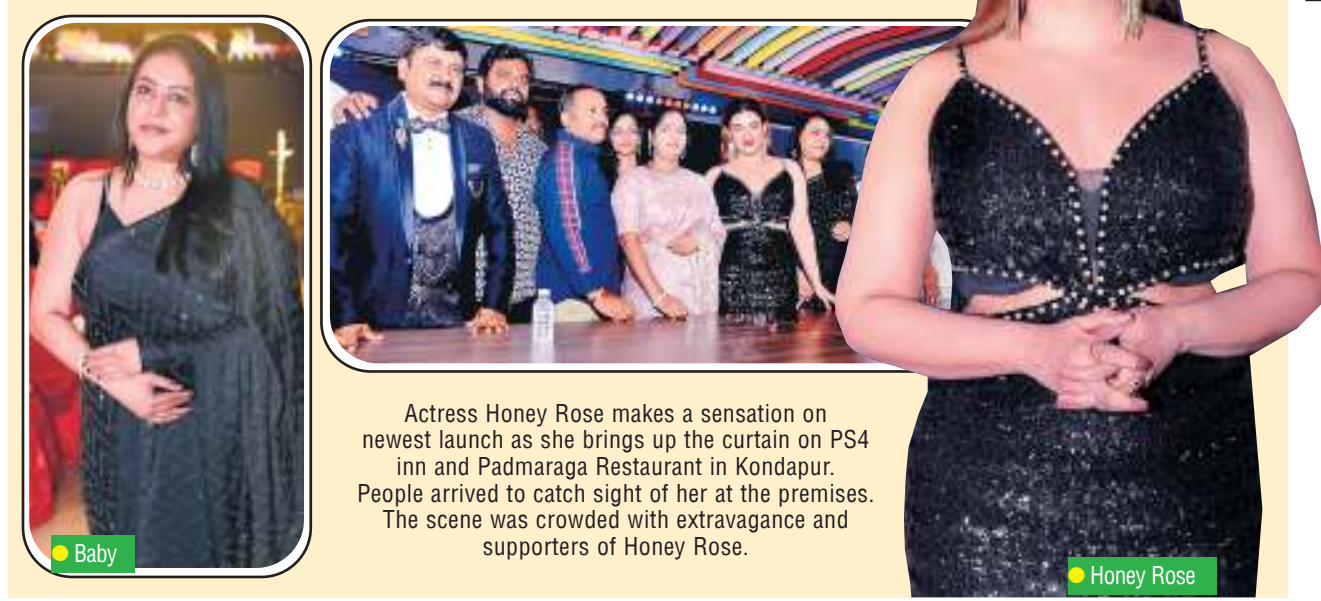
Efforts to reduce the prevalence of reverse smoking should also focus on providing support for smoking cessation. Access to cessation programs, counseling, and nicotine replacement therapies can help individuals quit smoking and reduce their risk of developing serious health conditions. Additionally, community-based interventions that involve local leaders and influencers can be effective in changing social norms and reducing the acceptance of reverse smoking.

Policy measures can also play a critical role in addressing reverse smoking. Implementing and enforcing regulations that restrict tobacco sales and advertising, increase taxes on tobacco products, and provide resources for tobacco control programs can help reduce the overall prevalence of smoking, including reverse smoking.

Reverse smoking is a dangerous and often overlooked habit with serious health consequences. The increased risk of oral cancers, respiratory diseases, and cardiovascular conditions highlights the urgent need for public health interventions to address this practice. By raising awareness, providing support for smoking cessation, and implementing effective policy measures, we can reduce the prevalence of reverse smoking and improve health outcomes for affected communities.

(The author, Dr K V Krishnamani, is a Medical Oncologist, at American Oncology Institute, Hyderabad.)

# what's brewing?



Actress Honey Rose makes a sensation on newest launch as she brings up the curtain on PS4 inn and Padmaraga Restaurant in Kondapur. People arrived to catch sight of her at the premises. The scene was crowded with extravagance and supporters of Honey Rose.

Baby

Honey Rose



A multicultural evening was celebrated in the House of Commons at the British Parliament, United Kingdom with the release of *The Works of Adi Shankaracharya*, a music series of the scriptures by the great teacher, master, and philosopher of Sanatan Dharma, presented by Anuradha Paudwal Ji. The event also witnessed the release of a cross-border music collaboration between India and Bangladesh.



EcoRatings, in collaboration with the PHD Chamber of Commerce organised a seminar on the topic "Introducing Transparency in Sustainability" held at PHD House. The seminar witnessed over 200 participants from diverse backgrounds, including scientists, environmentalists, sustainability enthusiasts, small and medium business owners, and representatives from NGOs focused on sustainability.

PARTY



Thermo Fisher Scientific, the world leader in serving science, has announced the commencement of manufacturing of Air Quality Monitoring System (AQMS) analyzers in India. The analyzers will be engineered, manufactured and validated at Thermo Fisher's facility.

Photos by - SV Chary



The Sri Lankan Food Festival promoted the tropical island nation's rich and unique cuisines. This gastronomic spectacular, hosted at Radisson Blu Plaza in Banjara Hills, featured guest chef Wijeratne from Radisson Kandy in Sri Lanka. Chef Wijeratne presented traditional Sri Lankan cuisine at our Chill restaurant's supper buffet, taking visitors on a delicious trip through the country's culinary heritage.



The 15th edition of the IIID-HRC Design Excellence Awards 2024, the annual flagship event of the Indian Institute of Interior Designers Hyderabad Regional Chapter (IIID-HRC), took place with tremendous excitement on May 31st, 2024, at the Park Hyatt. The event acknowledged and recognised exceptional talent and achievements in the fields of interior design in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

Pallavi Anchuri

Meghana

Supraja Rao

Amulya

Prasanthi

Aparna Bidarkar

## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



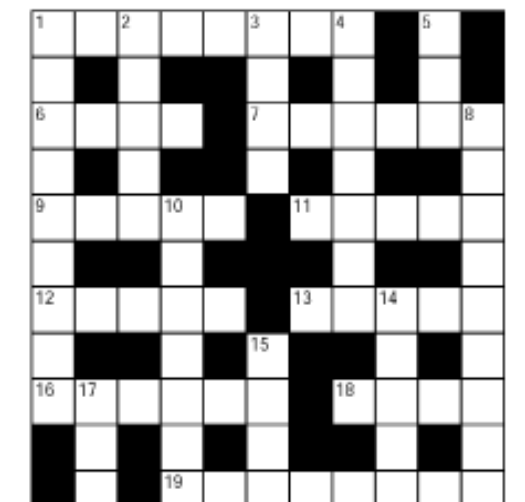
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### NANCY



### SUDOKU



**Yesterday's solution**

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

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

### ACROSS

- Small towns
- Overdue
- Changed direction
- In the lead
- A smelly vegetable
- Unlocks
- A measure of length
- Remained in the same place
- Nought
- Illnesses
- Something worn around the neck
- Likely to kill or harm you
- Cross and upset
- Paper is made from these
- Counts up
- Black stuff on roads

### DOWN

- Mountains that erupt
- A measure for liquid
- A type of door in a fence
- Very unusual



### GINGER MEGGS



# 'Sricharan Pakala's music will be a major attraction in *Satyabhama*'

K. RAMYA SREE



Kajal Aggarwal starrer *Satyabhama* marks the official debut of Suman Chikkala as a director. As the film nears its release, the director shares getting onboard for the project and more insights about the film.

With anticipation mounting for the upcoming release of *Satyabhama*, director Suman Chikkala opens up about the film's journey from concept to completion, promising audiences a thrilling blend of emotion and action. Suman, a newcomer to Tollywood's directorial scene, credits his friend and mentor, Sashi Kiran Tikka, for entrusting him with the directorial reins. "Sashi's vision of nurturing young talent through motivated me to take on this project," he explains, adding, "I have a passion for movies and an interest in writing. While working a job, I sought opportunities in the film industry. I participated in story discussions for some hit movies. Sashi Kiran is my best friend, and I have done script work for his films. Sashi entrusted me with the responsibility of directing this film, marking my directorial debut in Tollywood. Sashi worked hard to become a director and founded Aarum Arts to start the journey of young talent with his success. His idea is to give opportunities to new talents." In short, he said, "I owe my directorial debut to him." *Satyabhama* stars Kajal Aggarwal in the titular role, with Naveen Chandra portraying her partner, Amarendra. The director emphasises the importance of crafting a story that transcends gender stereotypes. "We wrote *Satyabhama* for a person, not a specific gender. Since the girl is the victim in the story, I thought it would be more impactful if it

were a female lead. We believe that both emotion and action can resonate with the audience. Kajal Aggarwal immediately agreed to the role after hearing the story. Kajal's commitment to performing her own stunts adds authenticity to the action sequences and elevates the emotional depth of the story," expressed the director. He also shed light on the film's relevance to real-world issues, particularly women's safety. "We integrated elements from the AP Disha and Telangana She Safe apps into the narrative," he reveals. "If our film encourages even one person to utilise these safety measures, it will have made a meaningful impact." Drawing inspiration from police diaries and real-life incidents, Suman assures viewers that *Satyabhama* remains grounded in fiction while incorporating elements of mythology for added depth. "The name *Satyabhama* carries a sense of power and familiarity, making it the perfect fit for our narrative. It is purely fictional. I read police diaries and listened to their interviews, drawing inspiration from real-life incidents. Initially, our movie didn't have this name, but *Satyabhama* is a powerful name in our mythology, so we chose it for its instant recognition. We want all the movies released this week to do well. If these films succeed, audiences will get used to coming to theatres. The movie will hit theatres next week, and Sricharan Pakala's music will be a major attraction. He elevated the film with his background score," he explains. Despite its local roots, the director believes *Satyabhama* has the potential to resonate with audiences nationwide. "While the film is set in Hyderabad, its themes are universal," he says. "We aim to release it in Telugu initially, with plans for multi-language availability on OTT platforms." As the film's release date draws near, he expresses gratitude for the support of composer Sricharan Pakala, whose music promises to enhance the cinematic experience. Looking ahead, the director hints at future projects, buoyed by the evolving landscape of digital platforms and audience appreciation for fresh content.



## Kubera major action schedules begin in Hyd

The much-anticipated action-packed schedule of Sekhar Kammula's mythological epic, *Kubera*, featuring Superstar Dhanush and King Nagarjuna, has officially kicked off in Hyderabad. Erected on specially crafted sets, this major shoot involves the entire cast, promising audiences a spectacle of breathtaking stunts. In this magnum opus, both Dhanush and Nagarjuna will dazzle audiences with their contrasting roles, as teased in their captivating first-look posters. While a significant portion of the film's dialogue scenes have already been wrapped up, post-production efforts are running concurrently to ensure a seamless cinematic experience. Joining the stellar cast are Rashmika Mandanna and Jim Sarbh, who are set to portray pivotal characters in this high-budget social drama. Backed by prominent production houses and under the expert direction of Sekhar Kammula, *Kubera* has been generating considerable buzz nationwide. Produced jointly by Suniel Narang and Puskur Ram Mohan Rao under the Sri Venkateswara Cinemas LLP and Amigos Creations Pvt Ltd banner, Sekhar Kammula's *Kubera* is a pan-Indian endeavour, simultaneously filmed in Tamil, Telugu, and Hindi languages. With such a formidable combination of talent and resources, the stage is set for *Kubera* to captivate audiences across the country.

## Passion enters second schedule

Following the successful completion of its first schedule, the *Passion* team is gearing up for the next phase of production. Sudheesh Venkat, Ankita Saha, and Sreyasi Shah take the lead roles in this romantic tale set in a fashion design college. Dr. Arun Kumar Monditoka, Narasimha Yele, and Umesh Chikku produce the film under the banners of BLN Cinema and Red Ant Creations, while renowned fashion designer Arvind Joshua makes his directorial debut in Telugu cinema with *Passion*, having previously honed his craft under the guidance of acclaimed directors like Shekhar Kammula, Madan, and Mohana Krishna Indraganti. With the first schedule wrapped after 20 days of shooting across various fashion colleges in Hyderabad, the team is now poised for its second leg of filming. Director Arvind Joshua expressed his excitement, stating, "We've captured some pivotal moments of the movie during our extensive shoot in Hyderabad's fashion colleges. As we prepare for the upcoming schedule, we're delving into uncharted territory, infusing our film with a blend of comprehensive technical knowledge and artistic flair that's unprecedented in the world of fashion. *Passion* aims to break new ground, addressing the myriad questions and complexities surrounding love and attraction that resonate deeply with today's youth."



### 'Indrani' is like Marvel: Director Stephen Pallam

Yaaneya, Ankith, and Ajay play the lead roles in Stephen Pallam's self-directed Indian super airplane movie *Indrani- Episode 1: Dharma vs. Karma*. This is being bankrolled by the Shreyas Motion Pictures banner. This movie, which has already been released, has created a good buzz with its promotional content. This movie will hit theatres on June 14. The movie's trailer was launched at a grand event. Director Stephen Pallam has created a futuristic world for this movie. Graphics and visual effects are at the Hollywood level, with the highest technical standards. Yaaneya, Ankith, Ajay, and Kabir Singh—all these main characters have impressed with their superpowers... Speaking at the trailer launch event, director Stephen Pallam said, "Indrani is a movie like an epic. It has amazing content. It entertains all classes of viewers. It features a big lead role and even a robot. The journey of these two characters is amazing. The time travel concept is also there. It shows how technology will be in the future. It presents India in a completely new way to the world. It will definitely impress everyone. Yaaneya played the role of the Indian Super Airplane amazingly. After this movie, people will fall in love with her. Indrani is a mass marvel. Complete entertainer for all classes of audiences."

## 'INDIAN 2 HAPPENED BECAUSE OF SUBHASKARAN SIR'



Universal Star Kamal Haasan, along with sensational director Shankar, collaborated with leading production houses like Lyca Productions and Red Giant Movies to create the high-budget film *Indian 2*. Releasing worldwide in Telugu, Tamil, and Hindi languages on July 12, this movie is set to be a grand spectacle. The film's audio launch event was held grandly on the night of Saturday, which saw the presence of Kamal Haasan, Simbu, and Shankar. Lokesh Kanagaraj, Nelson, A.M. Rathnam, Asian Cinemas Sunil Narang, and Bharat Narang, among many others. Celebrities like Shruti



long time. I discussed this topic with Shivaji Ganeshan. 'Make a film with Shankar, he has already made a film with me. We have already collaborated on many films,' he said to me. With his belief and Shankar's vision, I made *Indian*. I did not talk about the sequel with Shankar back then. If this project has come so far, it's all because of Subhaskaran, Sir. He faced many challenges. But he stood firm in front of us. Until now, he has supported us. This picture is a reflection of the belief he had in us. We are making this film for his beliefs. Thanks to Udayanidhi Stalin, Tamil Kumar, and Semba Murthy for supporting our film. Anirudh's music always has energy. He sang wonderful songs. I know Ravi Varman from my assistant cameraman days. He provided excellent visuals. Working again with Hollywood technicians who worked as makeup artists for Indian cinema is a joy. Thanks to all team members who supported me."

## Meera Jasmine as 'Uthphalaa Devi' in *Swag*



Following the buzz generated by the Title Story Glimpse and Queen Gari Swag Glimpse, the latest addition to the *Swag* universe introduces Meera Jasmine as Uthphalaa Devi. Destined for royalty yet denied the throne due to her compassionate nature, Meera's portrayal adds an intriguing layer to the storyline, promising an enthralling cinematic experience. In the character introduction poster, Meera Jasmine embodies regality, adorned in designer attire and opulent jewelry, perfectly capturing the essence of her role. Returning to the screen after a hiatus, Meera's involvement in this project marks a significant comeback, showcasing her versatility in a pivotal role. Under the adept direction of Sree Vishnu and Hasith Goli and backed by TG Vishwa Prasad's production prowess, *Swag* promises to be a one-of-a-kind entertainment extravaganza. With Ritu Varma portraying the lead character, Queen Rukmini Devi, from Vinjamaru Vamsham, the film is poised to deliver a blend of drama and excitement.

Behind the scenes, Vedaraman Sankaran handles cinematography, Vivek Sagar lends his musical genius, and Viprav Nysadham shapes the narrative as the editor. Other key contributors include GM Shekar in the art department and Nandu master choreographing stunts, ensuring every aspect of the film's production is top-notch.



## Excitement brews as *Villa 369* nears completion of censorship

As anticipation mounts in the cinephile community, *Villa 369* gears up to undergo the final scrutiny of the censor board. With its riveting storyline and promising cast, this film is poised to captivate audiences with its suspenseful narrative. Produced by Vidya Ganesh and helmed by director Suresh Prabhu, *Villa 369* promises to be a cinematic delight. The film stars Vijay and Sheetal Bhat as the lead couple, bringing their talent to the forefront under the banner of Vigan Creation. Adding to the production prowess is line producer Seelam Pranali K. Reddy, who ensures every aspect of the film is meticulously crafted. Under the guidance of executive producers Srinu and Laxman Babu, the movie has smoothly transitioned through its production phases. Director Teja recently unveiled the first look poster, signaling the imminent completion of shooting and the initiation of the censorship process. With principal photography wrapped up and post-production efforts finalised, *Villa 369* stands ready to enthrall viewers with its intriguing premise set within the confines of a villa. As the team prepares to unveil teasers, trailers, and the much-anticipated release date, enthusiasts eagerly await embarking on this cinematic journey.



## BUMPER TAMBOLA HELD AT FNCC



FN.C.C. members, family members, guests, and ladies participated in this bumper tambola in large numbers. If they won in this bumper tambola, they were given five rounds of five cars: the Alto, Celerio, Tata Tiago, Toyota Glanza, and the bumper prize of the Mercedes-Benz A Class. Winners who won Benz are Salnam Kaur and D. Sai Kiran. Bumper Tambola winners were given prizes by Secretary Mullaipudi Mohan, Vice President Tummala Ranga Rao, and Nandamuri Vasundhara. Members Kaja Suryanarayana, Shailaja Jujala, Balaraju, Gopala Rao, Edida Raja, Mohan Vadlapatla, Sama Indrapal Reddy, and Tambola committee members Swaroopa, Chelana, Rohini, Shailaja, and Hakeem participated in this program. Sponsors Navanaami: Megaleio, DSR Builders and Developers, Sunshine Developers, Mercedes Benz Silver Star, Sree Mitra Townships, KIMS Hospitals, Pragnya Hospitals, NSL Infratech, Harsha Auto, Mandir, Prakriti Avenues, and Vamseeram Builders participated in this event.

# USA THUMP CANADA BY SEVEN WICKETS

## BEGIN TRYST WITH TOP FLIGHT CRICKET IN STYLE

PTI ■ DALLAS

USA announced their arrival in top-flight cricket in spectacular fashion as Aaron Jones introduced himself with a 40-ball 94 in a seven-wicket hammering of Canada in the opening match of the T20 World Cup here. Batting first, Canada posted 194 for five, but USA turned what could have been a tricky chase into a cruise, completing the task with as many as 14 balls to spare. America's very own Jones, who was born in Queens, a New York City borough, smashed 10 sixes and four boundaries to make a statement on behalf of the team full of expatriates. While Jones was without an iota of doubt the star batter of the match, Andries Gous too made an impression with his 65 off 46 balls. Gous hit seven fours and three sixes during his stay in the middle, after USA lost two wickets with just 42 runs on the board. It was fitting that Jones finished the chase with a pair of sixes. Before that, left-arm seamer Kaleem Sana gave Canada the perfect start, dismissing the dangerous Steve Taylor for a duck. Gous joined skipper Monank



Patel, and the duo tried to up the scoring rate with a flurry of boundaries. Canada, however,

maintained discipline with the ball and soon struck again with Monank's wicket. The batter fell a run-a-ball

16 while trying to take on Dillon Heyliger. A 19-run over against Nikhil Dutta, featuring a six each

for Gous and Aaron Jones, helped pick the USA rate up. Jones continued to attack, hitting Canada skipper Saad

Bin Zafar for a six and a four in the 10th over. The duo continued going for their shots, and pumped up

the USA scoring rate. From 81/2, USA added 45 runs over the next three overs. Jones hit three sixes off Saad in the 13th over, reaching the fastest T20I fifty for his side in the same over, from merely 22 balls. Gous reached a fifty off his own in the next over, and survived a scare after he hit one straight to Dilpreet off Gordon, but the pacer had bowled a no-ball. His partner, Jones took advantage of the free hit and hit his eighth six off the next ball. The duo brought up their 100-run stand off merely 45 balls. Earlier, Canada were off to a decent start with the opening duo of Navneet Dhaliwal and Aaron Johnson (23) putting on 43 runs in just over five overs at the Grand Prairie Stadium. Mumbai-born left-arm spinner Harmmeet Singh effected the first breakthrough of the tournament proper when he dismissed Johnson in the sixth over. Pargat Singh, another player Canadian player of Indian origin, fell cheaply for five runs when he was run out in the eighth over. However, Dhaliwal found an able ally in Nicholas Kirton, who got his runs at a brisk pace while hitting three

boundaries and two sixes. Dhaliwal found the fence thrice and cleared it six times during his 66-run partnership with the left-handed Kirton. After the others have failed, it took former New Zealand player Corey Anderson to break the partnership between Dhaliwal and Kirton as he had the former caught by Jessy Singh at the start of the 15th over. The dismissal of Dhaliwal did not have any bearing on Canada's game plan thanks to wicketkeeper Shreyas Movva's enterprise. The right-handed batter blazed away to 32 off 16 balls, striking two sixes and as many fours during his cameo to lift Canada's scoring rate. Dilpreet Bajwa chipped in with a five-ball 11 after Kirton's departure, as Canada posted a challenging total on the board. The USA however, after a wobble initially, completed the task to open their account in their very first match in the World Cup. The third-wicket stand between Jones and Gous produced 131 runs, laying the foundation of a fine victory on their home turf. The USA and the West Indies are jointly hosting the T20 showpiece.

## Amit Panghal clinches Paris Olympics spot



PTI ■ BANGKOK

Amit Panghal's comeback to the Indian team culminated in an Olympic quota as the world championships silver medalist boxer qualified for the Paris Games with a quarterfinal win in the 2nd World Qualification Tournament here on Sunday. Panghal, India's lone male world championship silver medalist, notched a hard-fought 5-0 win over China's Chuang Liu for a ticket to his second Olympic Games. He thus joins the quartet of Nishant Dev (71kg), Nikhat Zareen (50kg), Preeti Pawar (54kg) and Lovlina Borgohain (75kg). All of them have booked Olympic berths. Panghal had only one shot at making the Paris Olympics and the 2018 Asian Games champion made the most of his opportunity. The going has been tough for Panghal as he lost his place in the national team on the basis of BFI's evaluation system to world

championship bronze medalist Deepak Bhoria, who competed at the earlier two qualifying events. Since the Tokyo Olympics, the only big-ticket event that the Haryana boxer has competed in was the Commonwealth Games in 2022, where he won the gold medal. He also emerged victorious at the prestigious Strandja Memorial tournament earlier this year. The quarterfinal bout began on a rather sedate note with both boxers trying to assess each other. One minute into the bout, Liu went after Panghal. At an height disadvantage, the Indian struggled to find his range, and he did manage to land a couple of scoring shots but didn't engage much. Trailing 1-4, Panghal, a three-time Asian Championship medalist, changed his strategy. He went on the offensive, beginning the second round on a positive note. The Chinese boxer retaliated by launching some counterattacking blows but Panghal continued with his punches and ended the round on a high, forcing all five judges to rule in his favour. In the last three minutes, Liu changed his game and moved closer to Panghal. It was an energy sapping affair as both fighters traded punches, going hammer and tongs at each other. In the end, the former world number one prevailed. Later in the day, Jaismine Lamboria (57kg) and Sachin Siwach (57kg) will also look to secure Olympic quotas.

## Sri Lanka look to muffle big guns in South Africa batting

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Sri Lanka will rely on their exceptionally varied bowling attack to tame the unrestrained batting power of South Africa in their Group D T20 World Cup opener here on Monday. They will be eager to get onto the points table at the earliest too as some tricky teams like Netherlands, Bangladesh and Nepal are clubbed with them in the group. South Africa have spread all their cards on the table as the team selection indicated the most likely route they would take in this ICC showpiece. A batting line-up consisting of captain Aiden Markram, wicketkeeper batter Heinrich Klaasen, Quinton de Kock, David Miller and Tristan Stubbs could be a nightmare for any bowling attack. Klaasen and Stubbs have been in roaring form of late. In this World Cup cycle, the right-hander has averaged 41 and struck runs at 182. In the IPL 2024 too, Klaasen made 471 runs from 16 matches at a strike rate of 171 for the Sunrisers Hyderabad. Stubbs has been equally impressive for the Delhi Capitals, amassing 378 runs from 14 matches and he made them at a strike-rate of 190. Both these gifted power-strikers come in the middle-order when the spinners will be in operation, and to add to Lanka's worries, they are phenomenal against the tweakers, especially Klaasen. In the run-up to the World Cup, the 32-year-old from Transvaal has averaged 59 against spin and made runs at an eye-watering strike-rate of 191. It will certainly worry a set of



Lankan spinners such as captain Wanindu Hasaranga (economy 7.42) and Maheesh Theekshana (6.71), both of whom had to battle injuries in the recent past. So, Sri Lanka, who have not reached the knockouts of a T20 WC after their triumph in 2014, will be eager to try a couple of overs from pacers Matheesha Pathirana and Dilshan Madhushanka in that phase when Klaasen and Stubbs are looking for acceleration. However, Lanka might take heart from the fact that the Proteas went down 0-3 to the West Indies in a recent T20I series at Kingston. Lanka will also hope that the New York pitch will continue to offer some help to the bowlers as it had happened in Saturday's warm-up match between India and Bangladesh, where a few deliveries did not rise above the ankle and knee level. Beyond that, the Lankans are also one of the teams that have played a good number of T20Is this year. In 2024, they have series wins over Zimbabwe and Afghanistan at home and Bangladesh away. In fact, they have won six of the last nine T20Is. But those external factors will

not have much bearing on a fresh day and Lanka know that their batters too will have to come good against the African rival. They have the experienced Angelo Mathews, the explosive Kusal Mendis and the rock-solid Dhananjaya de Silva to bank on while the former captain Dasun Shanaka can make a few quick runs down the order. The SA attack does not have that much variety in their bowling unit as it largely revolves around Kagiso Rabada and left-arm wrist-spinner Tabraiz Shamsi. Anrich Nortje is still finding his range after coming back from an injury and had an underwhelming IPL where he conceded more than 11 runs an over. The SA management will hope that the pacer will regain his rhythm in the biggest stage and that will have a major say in avoiding another below-par outing in a World Cup. **SQUAD: South Africa:** Aiden Markram (c), Ott Niel Baartman, Gerald Coetzee, Quinton de Kock, Bjorn Fortuin, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Maharaj, David Miller, Anrich Nortje, Kagiso Rabada, Ryan

Rickelton, Tabraiz Shamsi, Tristan Stubbs. Sri Lanka: Wanindu Hasaranga (c), Charith Asalanka, Kusal Mendis, Pathum Nissanka, Kamindu Mendis, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Angelo Mathews, Dasun Shanaka, Dhananjaya De Silva, Maheesh Theekshana, Dunith Wellalage, Dushmantha Chameera, Nuwan Thushara, Matheesha Pathirana, Dilshan Madushanka. Travelling Reserves: Asitha Fernando, Vijayakanth Vijayakanth, Bhanuka Rajapaksa, Janith Liyanage. Match starts at 8 PM IST. **Oman face Namibia** In a Group B clash at Bridgetown, Namibia, a dominant force in the African Qualifiers, will be hoping for a winning start against Oman. However, it would not be that easy for Namibia as Oman had run them close in April, before conceding the five-match series 2-1. Hence, Oman, who are making their third appearance in a T20 WC, will be hoping for a better outcome this time. **SQUAD: Oman:** Aqib Ilyas (c), Zeeshan Maqsood, Kashyap Prajapati, Pratik Athavale, Ayaan Khan, Shoaib Khan, Mohammad Nadeem, Naseem Khushi, Mehran Khan, Bilal Khan, Rafiqullah, Kaleemullah, Fayyaz Butt, Shakeel Ahmad, Khalid Kail. Reserves: Jatinder Singh, Samay Shrivastava, Sufyan Mehmood, Jay Odedra. Namibia: Gerhard Erasmus (c), Zane Green, Michael Van Lingen, Dylan Leicher, Ruben Trimpelmann, Jack Brassell, Ben Shikongo, Tangeni Lungameni, Niko Davin, JJ Smit, Jan Frylinck, JP Kotze, David Wiese, Bernard Scholtz, Malan Kruger, PD Blignaut.

## We have not really nailed down our batting unit: Rohit Sharma

PTI ■ NEW YORK

The Indian team is yet to "nail" its batting line-up for the T20 World Cup and much shouldn't be read into the think tank's decision to send Rishabh Pant at number three in the warm-match against Bangladesh, said skipper Rohit Sharma. India emerged winners by 60 runs at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium, restricting Bangladesh to 122 for nine after posting 182 for five in the allotted 20 overs on Saturday. On Pant batting at No.3, Rohit said, "Just to give him an opportunity. We have not really nailed down what the batting unit will look like. Even the bowlers did pretty well. All in all happy with how things went." Pant struck a fluent 53 off 32 balls, while Hardik Pandya smashed 40 in 23 deliveries after Suryakumar Yadav helped himself to an 18-ball 31. "Quite happy with how things went. Pretty much got what we wanted from the game. Like I said at the toss, it was important to get used to the conditions. "New venue, new ground, drop-in pitch - important to get used to it and we managed pretty well," Rohit said after the match. Left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh shone with the ball, picking 2/12 in three overs while all-rounder Shivam Dube grabbed 2/13 in three overs. Asked about Arshdeep, Rohit said, "He has shown us, in whatever games he has played, he has the skills up-front. He



has got a very good skill-set (at the death too). "We saw it today. He bowled pretty well, swung the ball up front, and then bowled one at the backend. We have got 15 good players here. We have to see what the conditions are and then see what combination is best for us." A little spongy at times: David Head coach Rahul Dravid said the pitch was a bit soft and spongy, while lauding the performance of his players. "It's great to get a good hit-out. Obviously, it looks like a good facility in terms of as quickly as they have put up. The ground is a bit soft and the guys could feel that on the hamstring and the calves. "So, that's the area we need to ensure that we are working around and ensuring that the guys are looking after does feel a little bit heavy underneath," Dravid said in a video posted by the BCCI. India ticked multiple boxes during their comfortable win over Bangladesh in the warm-up match, but none bolder than the fifty by Pant which has all but sealed his place as the first-choice wicketkeeper batter in the ICC showpiece.

## Dortmund rues missed chances in Champions League final loss

AP ■ LONDON

The scrappy German team missed a slew of big chances against Real Madrid in the Champions League final before losing 2-0 at Wembley Stadium on Saturday. "You have to use your chances in the final," midfielder Emre Can said. "Unfortunately we didn't." The loss comes a year after Dortmund failed to clinch the Bundesliga title on the last day of the season, and 11 years after losing to Bayern Munich 2-1 the last time they reached the Champions League title game, also at Wembley. In 2013, Dortmund coach

Edin Terzic was in the stands as a fan of the black-and-yellow. Last year, Terzic had tears in his eyes after Dortmund missed the chance to win the Bundesliga when it was held by Mainz to 2-2. On Saturday night, more heartbreak. "I'm proud but disappointed and empty," Terzic said. "After a Champions League final that we lost, it is quite hard to find the right words." Karim Adeyemi was in alone on goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois in the 21st minute with Dortmund's yellow-clad, flag-waving fans poised to erupt. But the winger pushed the ball too far to his left as the

6-foot-6 Courtois used all of his length to get down and reach for the ball at the top of the area. Adeyemi got a left-footed shot off, but Dani Carvajal was there to block it. Two minutes later, Niclas Fullkrug poked a shot past Courtois but it bounced off the right post and across the goalmouth. Dortmund had another chance just before the half-hour mark when Adeyema's shot was saved by Courtois. Fullkrug wasn't able to get a clean header on the rebound. Marcel Sabitzer forced another save from Courtois in the 41st. "We managed to escape from the first half, when we could have been losing 2-0 easily,"

Courtois said. "We never stop and found a way to put it in." Carvajal's header broke the deadlock in the 74th and Vinicius Junior sealed it seven minutes from time. Madrid star Jude Bellingham summed it up nicely: "Dortmund had the better of the game, the better chances, but if you don't kill us then we will come back." Fullkrug had another good chance in the 63rd but his header was straight at Courtois, who punched it away. The Germany forward finally did put the ball in the net with a bullet header but he was well offside and the score remained 2-0. Fullkrug faulted himself for

not converting his opportunities and said he feels particularly bad for Marco Reus, who played his final game for Dortmund. Reus is leaving Dortmund after 12 years at the club. Reus and Mats Hummels were members of the last Dortmund team to make it this far. They lost the 2013 Champions League final to Bayern Munich. "They told us about the game and how it felt," Fullkrug said. "I'm very sad for them." Still, he's optimistic for the future. "We can go on very confident. We played against the biggest team - a lot of the biggest teams in Europ

