

QUOTE OF THE DAY
 The pioneer
It is not possible to save KCR from the phone tapping case. The BJP is demanding a CBI probe into the phone tapping case to protect its ally BRS's chief K. Chandrasekhar Rao. Everyone saw how the BRS supported the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections. In return, the BJP wants to save KCR. The BJP is trying to make BRS leaders join it by filing cases against them using the ED, the IT Department and the CBI.
 - Jeevan Reddy, Congress MLC P4

Published From: VIJAYAWADA HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN
 www.dailypioneer.com

Adani Group profit jumps 55% 8
'PERFORMING AT RAVINDRA BHARATHI IS MY FAVOURITE MEMORY OF HYD' 10
'My character in Gam Gam GANESHA' P12

DON'T MISS...
Malaria outbreak grips...
 The Parvathipuram district is grappling with a surge in malaria cases, with families being struck down one after another by the mosquito-borne disease. Hospitals in the region are struggling to cope with the influx of patients, particularly from rural areas, where sanitation conditions are deteriorating, creating breeding grounds for disease-carrying mosquitoes. The malaria outbreak is hitting hard in tribal villages like Neelakanthapuram, GNpet, Madalangi, Duddukallu, Tonamu, and Donubai, where cases have been rampant. Despite...
 -PAGE: 2

Prajwal Revanna arrested upon...
 Prajwal Revanna, the suspended JD(S) MP facing sexual abuse allegations, was arrested on Friday upon his return from Germany, a month after he left the country in the wake of explicit videos of his alleged actions doing the rounds in Karnataka's Hassan. A special court in the city remanded him to police custody till June 6. In a clear messaging early in the day, a team of women police personnel 'welcomed' Prajwal Revanna upon his arrival here, as they were deputed to execute a warrant and take him to the CID...
 -PAGE: 5

Country's talent pool in...
 Two innovators from India have won in two categories at the inaugural Global Prompt Engineering Championship in Dubai, collectively taking home two-thirds of the million-dollar prize pool, and spotlighting India's growing talent pool and global influence in the field of Artificial Intelligence. The competition, which attracted the brightest minds from around the world, saw Aditya Nair win in the 'Literature' category and Ajay Cyril win in the 'Coding' category, earning them international...
 -PAGE: 8

Rohit Sharma hopes for quick...
 Marvelling at the newly-constructed Nassau County International Cricket Stadium here, India skipper Rohit Sharma underlined the need for his team to get acclimatised to the pitch and conditions quickly ahead of their T20 World Cup opener against Ireland on June 5. However, Rohit and company will get a chance to check the nature of the pitch and overall conditions when they face Bangladesh in a warm-up match here on Saturday. It's also India's lone training game ahead of the ICC marquee...
 -SPORTS

POSTAL BALLOTS CASE
HC verdict today

YSRCP contends EC is biased against AP over counting

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 After numerous twists and turns in the counting of postal ballots, the Andhra Pradesh High Court concluded the arguments on Friday and reserved its judgment. The High Court will pronounce its verdict on the postal ballot issue at 6 pm tomorrow (June 1).
 YSRCP leaders filed a petition in the High Court challenging the directions issued by the Election Commission of India (ECI) regarding the postal ballot counting process. They questioned the validity of ECI's instructions, which they claimed treated Andhra Pradesh differently from other states.



The ECI upheld the directions given by the State Election Commission, stating that the counting of postal ballots is valid even without the Returning Officer's (RO) signature. However, YSRCP leaders contested this order. After hearing arguments from both parties, the High Court reserved its judgment to be delivered at 6 PM tomorrow.
 On Thursday, the ECI clarified that Andhra Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer MK Meena had not violated any rules by relaxing certain

norms in the counting of postal ballots, as alleged by YSR Congress Party leaders. Despite the YSRCP filing a lunch motion petition in the state high court, the ECI maintained that there was no issue with the CEO's circular, which stated that postal ballots are valid even without the name, designation, or seal of officers authorised by the Returning Officers.
 ECI Principal Secretary Avinash Kumar asserted, "The circular issued by the CEO is correct."



Sr IAS officer Dhananjay Reddy retires

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Senior Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer K Dhananjay Reddy, who is considered very close to YSRCP president and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, retired on Friday. A 2006-batch IAS officer, Dhananjay Reddy, hailing from Kadapa district, has been working as Additional Secretary to the Chief Minister since Jagan Mohan Reddy came to power in 2019.

The non-cadre state civil services officer made his way as an IAS in 2006 and with patronage from YS Rajasekhara Reddy when he was the chief minister. Subsequently, he rose as a powerful officer. Such was his clout that he even played a crucial role in the selection of YSRCP candidates in the just-concluded Assembly and Lok Sabha elections in the State, as he had the dossiers of each ticket aspirant.

Final phase of Lok Sabha polls today

PM Narendra Modi in fray

PNS ■ VARANASI

Fifty-seven seats across seven states and the Union territory of Chandigarh will go to polls in the seventh and final phase of Lok Sabha elections on Saturday that include Varanasi, from where Prime Minister Narendra Modi is seeking a third consecutive term.
 Polling is scheduled in all 13 seats of Punjab and four of Himachal Pradesh, 13 constituencies in Uttar Pradesh, nine in West Bengal, eight in Bihar, six in Odisha and three seats in Jharkhand besides Chandigarh. Polling for the remaining 42 assem-

bly constituencies of Odisha and bypolls to six assembly seats in Himachal Pradesh will also take place simultaneously.
 Other prominent candidates among the total 904 contestants in fray are Union minister Anurag Thakur, Mamata Banerjee's nephew Abhishek Banerjee, Lalu Prasad's daughter Misa Bharti and actor Kangana Ranaut. Over 10.06 crore citizens, including nearly 5.24 crore men, 4.82 crore women and 3,574 third gender electors are eligible to vote in this phase.
 Continued on Page 2

ABV reinstated just a few hours before his retirement

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Senior IPS officer and former intelligence chief of Andhra Pradesh, AB Venkateshwar Rao, was reinstated in service on Friday, just hours before his scheduled retirement. Chief Secretary Dr KS Jawahar Reddy issued orders for his reinstatement, appointing him as the Director General of Police in the Department of Printing and Stationery.

June 14, 2022, assuming charge on June 17. However, he was suspended again on June 28, 2022, leading him to challenge this decision in the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT). On May 8, 2024, the CAT ordered his reinstatement.
 "Thus, he was placed under suspension for nearly five years and is retiring from service on attaining the age of superannuation on May 31, 2024," the high court noted.



AB Venkateshwar Rao, commonly referred to as ABV was initially suspended on February 8, 2020, pending disciplinary proceedings.
 He challenged the suspension in the High Court, which quashed the order on May 5, 2020. Although the Supreme Court initially stayed the High Court's decision, it ultimately dismissed the State government's Special Leave Petition (SLP) on April 22, 2022, due to the completion of two years of suspension, and directed ABV's reinstatement. ABV was reinstated and posted as the Commissioner of Printing, Stationery, and Stores Purchase on

Considering ABV's lengthy service and imminent retirement, the High Court observed that any stay on the CAT's order would cause him significant hardship.
 "However, the reinstatement, if any, will not preclude the petitioner from proceeding with criminal action. Hence, we are of the view that appropriate orders will be passed in the interlocutory application after the filing of the counter affidavit by ABV," the High Court stated.
 The Chief Secretary clarified that AB Venkateshwar Rao's reinstatement is contingent upon the resolution of any pending criminal cases against him.

Indian economy grows at 8.2%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's economy grew by 8.2 per cent in the fiscal year that ended in March, cementing the country's position as the fastest-growing major economy in the world, boosting credentials of Prime Minister Narendra Modi government ahead of ending of mammoth, weeks-long general elections.



Gross domestic product (GDP) growth was 7 per cent in the previous 2022-23 (April 2022 to March 2023) fiscal, according to Statistics Ministry data.
 The Reserve Bank of India has forecast that the economy will expand by 7 per cent in the current fiscal year, outpacing global growth that's forecast to reach 3 per cent in 2024.

Prime Minister termed the FY24 growth rate as just a trailer of things to come. "The Q4 GDP growth data for 2023-24 shows robust momentum in our economy which is poised to further accelerate. Thanks

to the hardworking people of our country, 8.2% growth for the year 2023-24 exemplifies that India continues to be the fastest growing major economy globally."
 Continued on Page 2



MLC Raghu Raju skips hearing again; hospitalised

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Defected YSRCP MLC Indukuri Raghu Raju, who was scheduled to attend a disqualification hearing before Legislative Council Chairman Koyye Moshen Raju on Friday, has been admitted to the hospital.

MLC Raghu Raju defected from YSRCP to TDP, prompting YSRCP to file a complaint with the Legislative Council.
 Council Chairman Moshen Raju had issued notices for Raghu Raju to attend a hearing on May 27. However, Raghu Raju did not attend the hearing on that date, failing to inform the council. Consequently, the chairman adjourned the hearing to May 31 (today).
 On Friday, Raghu Raju was admitted to Narayana Hospital in Visakhapatnam, thus skipping the hearing again. His followers claim he was hospitalised due to a kidney problem. As a result, Chairman Moshen Raju had to postpone the hearing once more.
 Continued on Page 2

Heavy rain likely in AP

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Heavy rain is likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema on June 2.

The Southwest Monsoon has advanced into the remaining parts of the northeast Bay of Bengal and some parts of the northwest Bay of Bengal, as well as the remaining parts of Tripura, Meghalaya, and Assam, and most parts of Sub-Himalayan West Bengal & Sikkim, the Meteorological Centre, said on Friday.
 A daily weather report stated that conditions are favourable for the further advance of the Southwest Monsoon into additional parts of the central Arabian Sea, the remaining parts of the south Arabian Sea, the Lakshadweep area and Kerala, parts of Karnataka, more areas of Tamil Nadu, and the southwest Bay of Bengal over the next 2 to 3 days.
 Continued on Page 2



Amit Shah offers prayers at Tirumala



PNS ■ TIRUPATI
 An official said that Union Home Minister Amit Shah offered prayers at Lord Venkateswara temple here on Friday.
 Accompanied by his wife Sonal Shah, the BJP leader reached the temple at around 8 am and spent

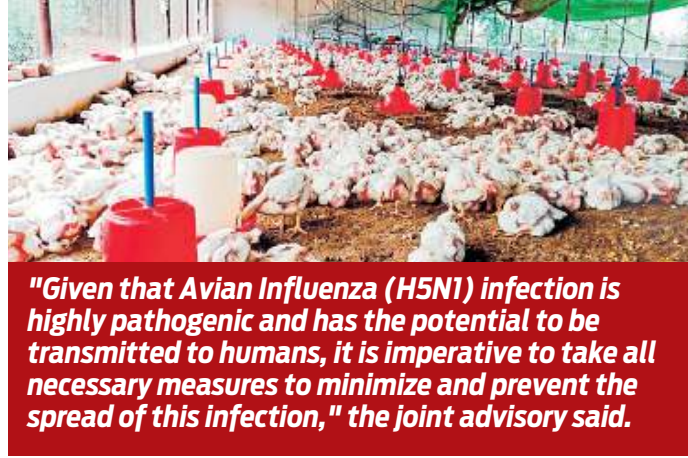
Avian influenza: Centre asks states to be vigilant

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has asked all states to be vigilant for any unusual deaths amongst the domestic birds and poultry, and share the information with the Animal Husbandry Department immediately so that public health action can be initiated as per the national action plan for Avian influenza.
 A joint advisory issued on May 25 by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying stated that in 2024, four states -- Andhra Pradesh (Nellore), Maharashtra (Nagpur), Kerala (Alappuzha, Kottayam, and Pathanamthitta districts), and Jharkhand (Ranchi) -- have already reported outbreaks of Avian influenza in poultry.

AP among four states to have reported outbreak of the virus in 2024

"Given that Avian Influenza (H5N1) infection is highly pathogenic and has the potential to be transmitted to humans, it is imperative to take all necessary measures to minimize and prevent the spread of this infection," the joint advisory said.
 The Avian Influenza virus (bird flu virus) is normally maintained in circulation in nature among mainly migratory birds and is known to cause outbreaks among domesticated poultry birds probably due to spill over events when migratory birds come in contact with poultry, it said.
 The H5N1 is the main Avian influenza virus that has caused mul-



"Given that Avian Influenza (H5N1) infection is highly pathogenic and has the potential to be transmitted to humans, it is imperative to take all necessary measures to minimize and prevent the spread of this infection," the joint advisory said.

multiple outbreaks among poultry globally. Both types of viruses (HPAI and LPAI) may occasionally affect other mammalian species, including humans. Human infections are primarily acquired through direct contact with infected poultry or contaminated environments, the joint advisory said.
 Although there have been sporadic reports in humans and outbreaks among domestic and wild birds, since March 2024, there is a global concern over Avian influenza outbreaks in cattle from multiple states in the US that have resulted in one reported human case of H5N1, the joint advisory stated.
 Continued on Page 2

Vizag fire incidents expose safety lapses in hospitals

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A recent surge in fire tragedies across India has exposed critical deficiencies in fire safety protocols, particularly in hospitals, schools, and public buildings. This alarming trend underscores the urgent need for stricter regulations and improved enforcement mechanisms.

The fire at Indus Hospital in Jagadamba junction in Vizag, though contained without casualties due to its accessible location, serves as a warning. In contrast, a fire at a Rajkot game zone with only one exit resulted in 35 deaths, including children, showing the deadly consequences of inadequate emergency exits. Another incident at Babycare Hospital in Delhi, where an electrical malfunction and exploding oxygen cylinders killed seven infants, revealed a critical oversight in fire safety permits.

These incidents reflect a broader pattern of frequent and severe fire accidents in various facilities, including hospitals, multi-storied business complexes, shopping centres, and cinemas. Contributing factors include negligence, lack of fire permits, and inadequate knowledge of fire safety equipment. Inspections have found many buildings lacking essential fire extinguishers. In



While fire safety measures have been made mandatory for 95 government and private hospitals under the Aarogyasri scheme, many other hospitals remain under-regulated. Despite having fire extinguishers, many Aarogyasri hospitals report that staff often lack the training to use them effectively

response, the central government has urged states to conduct rigorous safety inspections of hospitals, emphasizing the need for proactive measures rather than reactive responses. This call to action comes amid an increasing number of private hospitals in the Visakhapatnam district—estimated at over 200—alongside 8 teaching hospitals, one regional hospital, 3 CHCs, 63 UPHCs, and 6 PHCs.

While fire safety measures have been made mandatory for 95 government and private hospitals under the Aarogyasri

scheme, many other hospitals remain under-regulated. Despite having fire extinguishers, many Aarogyasri hospitals report that staff often lack the training to use them effectively. Even government hospitals face criticism for poorly arranged equipment. Regional Fire Officer of GVMC Y. Hanumantha Rao highlighted those aesthetic choices, such as covering hospital buildings with glass, can hinder smoke ventilation during fires, as demonstrated by the Indus Hospital incident. Additionally, the lack of adequate setback

space in most city hospitals prevents fire engines from accessing the buildings easily. The high cost of obtaining NAC (Fire Department approval) deters many hospitals from compliance, and a recent inspection revealed that two private hospitals lacked NOCs. Previously, fire officials conducted field inspections before granting permits, but this responsibility has shifted to the DG level in recent years, leading to uncertainty about the number of hospitals with valid fire safety permits, added Rao. Underscoring the importance of safety, Rao reiterated that fire extinguishers must be installed in all hospitals, and staff should be trained in their use. Additionally, steps should be taken to prevent the accumulation of garbage, cotton, and plastic waste. Buildings should have alternate stairways or ramps to ensure safe evacuation during emergencies. The GVMC regularly monitors and grants NOCs to buildings under 15 meters in height.

“We must create awareness and ensure that fire safety measures are strictly implemented across all facilities,” stated Rao. The recent spate of fire incidents serves as a stark reminder of the critical need for stringent fire safety protocols and proactive measures to protect lives and property.

Dr. Jagannathan Rao emphasizes the importance of promptly reporting confirmed cases to the district office for effective surveillance and intervention. Inspections and inquiries are being conducted to ensure proper diagnosis and treatment protocols are followed across healthcare facilities. As the malaria crisis deepens in Parvathipuram, urgent action is needed not only to treat existing cases but also to implement robust preventive measures to stem the spread of the disease. With concerted efforts from both authorities and communities, the district can hope to overcome this public health challenge.

Dr. Jagannathan Rao emphasizes the importance of promptly reporting confirmed cases to the district office for effective surveillance and intervention. Inspections and inquiries are being conducted to ensure proper diagnosis and treatment protocols are followed across healthcare facilities. As the malaria crisis deepens in Parvathipuram, urgent action is needed not only to treat existing cases but also to implement robust preventive measures to stem the spread of the disease. With concerted efforts from both authorities and communities, the district can hope to overcome this public health challenge.

Malaria outbreak grips Parvathipuram district

PNS ■ PARVATHIPURAM

The Parvathipuram district is grappling with a surge in malaria cases, with families being struck down one after another by the mosquito-borne disease. Hospitals in the region are struggling to cope with the influx of patients, particularly from rural areas, where sanitation conditions are deteriorating, creating breeding grounds for disease-carrying mosquitoes. The malaria outbreak is hitting hard in tribal villages like Neelakanthapuram, GNpet, Madalangi, Duddukallu, Tonamu, and Donubai, where cases have been rampant. Despite assurances from authorities of preventive measures, the impact of the disease continues to escalate. Criticisms are mounting against the perceived lack of proactive steps to curb the spread of malaria, particularly at the grassroots level.

According to data from the Government Malaria Department, the number of



The general ward of the district hospital is crowded with fever patients

confirmed cases is on the rise. In 2022, 502 cases were recorded out of 2,63,417 samples collected, followed by 482 cases in 2023 from 2,64,449 samples. As of this year, 213 cases have been reported from 1,07,984 samples, indicating a persistent challenge. Sanitation conditions in many villages and towns are dire, with clogged drains and stagnant sewage providing ideal breeding sites for mosquitoes. While sporadic efforts at cleanliness are seen, criticisms abound regarding the laxity of local administrative bodies, particularly the MPDOs, in addressing these issues effectively.

In response to mounting concerns, District Malaria Officer Dr. T. Jagannathan Rao, reassures the public of ongoing efforts to combat the outbreak. Mosquito spraying initiatives are underway in 401 villages as part of a comprehensive strategy, with medical services being provided to affected individuals.

Meanwhile, hospitals, such as the District Central Hospital in Parvathipuram, are witnessing a surge in patient admissions. Dr. Vagdevi, the Superintendent, acknowledges the strain on medical facilities, with a significant portion of patients suffering from toxic fever and malaria. Similar situations are reported in area hospitals like Sithampet, where dedicated wards are treating malaria patients, including children.

Dr. Jagannathan Rao emphasizes the importance of promptly reporting confirmed cases to the district office for effective surveillance and intervention. Inspections and inquiries are being conducted to ensure proper diagnosis and treatment protocols are followed across healthcare facilities. As the malaria crisis deepens in Parvathipuram, urgent action is needed not only to treat existing cases but also to implement robust preventive measures to stem the spread of the disease. With concerted efforts from both authorities and communities, the district can hope to overcome this public health challenge.

Dr. Jagannathan Rao emphasizes the importance of promptly reporting confirmed cases to the district office for effective surveillance and intervention. Inspections and inquiries are being conducted to ensure proper diagnosis and treatment protocols are followed across healthcare facilities. As the malaria crisis deepens in Parvathipuram, urgent action is needed not only to treat existing cases but also to implement robust preventive measures to stem the spread of the disease. With concerted efforts from both authorities and communities, the district can hope to overcome this public health challenge.

Dr. Jagannathan Rao emphasizes the importance of promptly reporting confirmed cases to the district office for effective surveillance and intervention. Inspections and inquiries are being conducted to ensure proper diagnosis and treatment protocols are followed across healthcare facilities. As the malaria crisis deepens in Parvathipuram, urgent action is needed not only to treat existing cases but also to implement robust preventive measures to stem the spread of the disease. With concerted efforts from both authorities and communities, the district can hope to overcome this public health challenge.

Dr. Jagannathan Rao emphasizes the importance of promptly reporting confirmed cases to the district office for effective surveillance and intervention. Inspections and inquiries are being conducted to ensure proper diagnosis and treatment protocols are followed across healthcare facilities. As the malaria crisis deepens in Parvathipuram, urgent action is needed not only to treat existing cases but also to implement robust preventive measures to stem the spread of the disease. With concerted efforts from both authorities and communities, the district can hope to overcome this public health challenge.

MLC Raghu Raju skips hearing ...

Continued from Page 1

The date for the next hearing has not yet been clarified. The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and the Chairman of the Council have been taking stringent actions against MLAs and MLCs who have defected from their parties. MLCs Janga Krishnamurthy, Vamsi Krishna Yadav, and C Ramachandraiah,

all elected on behalf of YSRCP, were disqualified after defecting to other parties; Vamsi Krishna joined Jana Sena, and C Ramachandraiah joined TDP. Earlier, Assembly Speaker Tammineni Sitaram disqualified eight rebel MLAs who defected from YSRCP to TDP and from TDP to YSRCP. These actions were taken against Anam Ramanarayana

Reddy, Kotam Reddy Sridhar Reddy, Mekapati Chandrasekhar Reddy, and Undavalli Sridevi, who declared their support for TDP after winning under YSRCP. Additionally, Karanam Balam, Vallabhaneni Vamsi, Vasupalli Ganesh, and Maddali Giri, who won as TDP candidates but supported YSRCP, were disqualified.

Indian economy grows...

Continued from Page 1

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the “remarkable” growth rate will continue in the third term of Modi. The growth is mainly driven by good showing by the manufacturing sector, though the farm sector recorded deceleration during the fiscal as well as fourth quarter (January-March 2024).

According to the NSO data, real GDP, or GDP at constant prices, is estimated to attain a level of Rs 173.82 lakh crore in 2023-24, against the first revised estimates (FRE) of GDP for 2022-23 of Rs 160.71 lakh crore.

According to the NSO data, real GDP, or GDP at constant prices, is estimated to attain a level of Rs 173.82 lakh crore in 2023-24, against the first revised estimates (FRE) of GDP for 2022-23 of Rs 160.71 lakh crore.

Transport Dept focuses on school bus fitness ahead of new academic year

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

With schools and colleges reopening on June 12, the Visakhapatnam Transport Department is ramping up efforts to ensure the safety of students by conducting mandatory fitness tests for all school buses. This initiative follows a recent accident involving a school bus that tragically claimed lives and highlighted the need for stricter regulations. The department's focus on safety comes after a school bus accident on Beach Road left a police officer's father and son dead, with the officer himself sustaining serious injuries. This incident serves as a stark reminder of the importance of ensuring school buses meet the necessary safety standards.

Approximately 1,500 school and college buses operate in the district. So far, only 918 have undergone the mandatory fitness test. The remaining 587 must obtain certification before June 12th to avoid being



impounded. The Motor Vehicles Act outlines specific requirements for school buses, including designated signage, driver qualifications, regular eye tests, staff uniforms, first-aid kits, complaint books, fire alarms, and comfortable seating for children. The government has implemented significant tax hikes on

private school buses. Previously, buses below seven tonnes incurred charges of Rs 725, while those above were taxed Rs 1420. However, since last year, a uniform charge of Rs 100 per seat has been introduced, payable every three months. This increased financial burden primarily affects parents, exacerbating existing

financial strains.

On Thursday, Transport Department officials met with administrators from various educational institutions and vehicle owners to discuss the urgent need for compliance. Deputy Transport Commissioner G C Rajaratnam issued a stern warning that any buses operating without the necessary fitness certification would be seized, and legal action would be taken against the owners.

“Every vehicle must undergo a fitness test by June 12,” stated Rajaratnam. He also announced a special drive to inspect school and college buses from June 12 to June 30. For this purpose, 20 special teams will be formed to ensure strict adherence to the rules. Legal action will be taken against those who fail to comply. This initiative underscores the department's commitment to student safety and the importance of maintaining high standards for school transportation.

Justice Seshasai's services commendable: AP HC CJ

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

AP High Court Chief Justice Dheeraj Singh Thakur praised the services rendered by Justice AV Seshasai. Justice Seshasai, who served as a judge in AP High Court retired on Friday and a grand farewell ceremony was organised in the first court hall on the occasion.

Speaking at the farewell function, Justice Dheeraj Singh Thakur, said that Justice Seshasai was promoted as a Judge in 2014. He said that Seshasai had disposed of about 23,000 cases in his career and worked in almost all departments of the judiciary. The Chief Justice praised the services of Seshasai as the Executive Vice Chairman of AP Legal Services Authority and for the skill training that has been provided to the staff of various national banks. He also said that training programmes were organised in Visakhapatnam and



Rajamahendravaram Central jails. He said that Justice Seshasai had worked hard to provide legal awareness to students in various law colleges and universities. Justice AV Seshasai thanked the former Chief Justices, judges, advocates, his fellow officers and staff, including the current Chief Justice, who had helped him throughout his career as a judge. Public Prosecutor Y Nagireddy, High Court Bar

Association president K Chidambaram, AP High Court Bar Council president Dwarakanath Reddy, State Law Secretary Satya Prabhakar Rao, High Court Registrar General Y Lakshmana Rao, other registrars, senior advocates, members of Bar Association, Bar Council, representatives of AP Legal Services Authority, AP Judicial Academy and others participated in the farewell programme.

Three Deputy Collectors transferred

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The government of Andhra Pradesh has affected transfers to three deputy collectors across the State. Chief Secretary KS Jawahar Reddy has issued orders to take action against the officials who have shown negligence in discharging their election duties. Orders were issued transferring them from their posts. Reports were sought from the superiors on their negligence. Deputy Collectors P Sreelekha, A Murali and O Rambhupal Reddy have been transferred.

Cong not to participate in Lok Sabha exit poll debates

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress has decided not to participate in any Lok Sabha exit poll debates on the television channels and said it does not want to indulge in speculation and slugfest for TRP. Congress spokesperson and media department chairperson Pawan Khera said the voters have cast their votes and their verdict has been secured. “The results will be out on 4th June. Prior to that, we do not see any reason to indulge in speculation and slugfest for TRP,” he said in a statement shared on X. “The Indian National Congress will not participate in the debates on Exit Polls. The purpose of any debate should be to inform the people. We will happily partake in debates from 4th June onwards,” Khera said in a statement.

Anxiety grips ...

Continued from Page 1

Supporters of YSRCP, TDP, and JSP have all expressed confidence in their respective parties' chances of victory. Predictions suggest that YSRCP could secure between 95 and 110 seats, while TDP and its allies are also seen as strong contenders, potentially forming the government with a significant number of seats.

Discussions have also highlighted the potential impact of BJP's involvement in the election outcome, underscoring a highly competitive and closely watched electoral scenario in Andhra Pradesh.

Exit polls are keenly awaited by the public as they provide a preliminary insight into voter behaviour and the likely election results, based on interviews conducted with voters immediately after they exit polling stations. These polls, along with other voter data calculations, help in forming an early picture of the election outcome.

Historically, people have relied on exit poll results as they often closely mirror the actual results announced later.

Exit polls are typically released on the last day of voting, as the Election Commission of India (ECI) mandates that agencies conducting such polls wait until polling is completed in all phases to avoid influencing voters who have yet to vote.

The issue of when exit polls should be published has been brought before the Supreme Court of India on three different occasions in various forms.

Final phase of Lok Sabha ...

Continued from Page 1

Saturday's voting will mark the end to the marathon polling process that began on April 19 month and has already covered 486 Lok Sabha seats in 28 states and Union territories. The assemblies of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim also went to polls. Counting of votes will be taken up on June 4.

According to Election Commission guidelines, television channels and news outlets will be able to run exit poll data and its results on June 1 after 6.30 pm.

The EC said polling parties have been dispatched along with machines and poll materials to their respective polling stations. At the 1.09 lakh polling stations, basic facilities including ample shade, drinking water, ramps, and toilets are being provided to ensure that polling takes place in a comfortable and secure environment, it said. The poll panel has also directed CEOs and state machineries to take adequate measures to manage the adverse impact of hot weather or rainfall wherever predicted.

The commission called upon voters to turn out in greater numbers and vote with responsibility and pride. The turnout in the first six phases was 66.14 per cent, 66.71, 65.68, 69.16, 62.2 and 63.36 per cent respectively.

The campaigning for the last phase which ended Thursday evening saw BJP leaders led by Modi accusing the Congress and the INDIA alliance of being corrupt, anti-Hindu and engaging in loot, appeasement and dynastic politics.

The Opposition parties have been claiming that the BJP is anti-farmer, anti-youth and will change and scrap the

Constitution if they win the elections.

On Thursday evening, Modi headed to Kanyakumari where he is meditating till June 1 at the site associated with Swami Vivekananda. Modi had 206 public outreach programmes, including rallies and roadshows, since the Election Commission announced the Lok Sabha election schedule on March 16.

The parliamentary seats where polling will take place in Uttar Pradesh are Maharajganj, Gorakhpur, Kushinagar, Deoria, Bangsao (SC), Ghosi, Salempur, Ballia, Ghazipur, Chandauli, Varanasi, Mirzapur and Robertsganj (SC), spread across 11 districts.

Uttar Pradesh is a seeing a direct contest between the BJP-led NDA and the coalition of INDIA bloc members Samajwadi Party and Congress. From Chandauli, Maharajganj and Mirzapur, Union ministers Mahendra Nath Pandey, Pankaj Chaudhary and Anupriya Patel respectively are contesting. Late Mukhtar Ansari's brother Afzal Ansari is in the fray from Ghazipur and former prime minister Chandrashekhar's son Neeraj Shekhar is contesting from Ballia.

In Varanasi, those contesting against Modi are Ajay Rai (Congress), Ather Jamal Lari (BSP), Kollisetty Shiva Kumar (Yuga Thulasi Party), Gagan Prakash Yadav, (Apna Dal, Kameravadi), and independents Dinesh Kumar Yadav and Sanjay Kumar Tiwari.

The polls in South Bengal, a traditional TMC stronghold, will test the party's dominance amid an 'old versus new' power struggle, with the national spotlight on Sandeshkhali in Basirhat due to allegations of atrocities on women and land grabs. The Opposition parties have been claiming that the BJP is anti-farmer, anti-youth and will change and scrap the

Heavy rain ...

Continued from Page 1

Under its influence, heavy rain is likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema on June 2. Thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty winds with speeds of 30-40 km/h are likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema over the next five days. Light to moderate rain or thundershowers are likely at one or two places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema over the next seven days. Rain occurred at one or two places in Rayalaseema, while dry weather prevailed in Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the last 24 hours. The highest maximum temperature of 44.7 degrees Celsius was recorded at Kavali in Coastal Andhra Pradesh, the report added.

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha
Doshi: Navami
May 31 09:38 AM to Jun 01 07:24 AM
Jun 01 07:24 AM to Jun 02 05:04 AM
Jun 02 05:04 AM to Jun 03 02:41 AM
Ekdashi:
Jun 03 02:41 AM to Jun 04 01:16 AM
Nakshatram:
Uttara Bhadrpadra: Jun 01 04:48 AM to Jun 02 03:16 AM
Revati: Jun 02 03:16 AM to Jun 03 01:40 AM
Rahukalam: 8:59 AM to 10:36 AM
Yamagandam: 1:51 PM to 3:28 PM
Varjyam: 02:28 PM to 03:57 PM
Gulika: 5:44 AM to 7:22 AM
Amritakalam: 10:46 PM to 12:16 AM
Ahhijay Muhurtham: 11:48 AM to 12:39 PM
VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Partly Cloudy
Temp: 41°C
Humidity: 55%
Sunrise: 5:34 AM
Sunset: 6:37 PM
Updated: May 31, 2024 5:00 PM

YSRCP scared of postal ballots: MLC Ashok Babu

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leader and MLC P Ashok Babu questioned why the ruling YSRCP was so scared of postal ballots.

Talking to the media in the state office in Mangalagiri on Friday, Ashok Babu said that the YSRCP filed a petition in the AP High Court on the postal ballots issue and they withdrew the case.

The TDP leader condemned the YSRCP's fallacious campaign that the Chief Electoral Officer is acting in favour of TDP.

The ECI issued a circular on July 18, 2023, making it clear that the postal ballot voter should give a 13A declaration when casting his or her vote. It also made it clear that a Gazetted officer should



The TDP MLC said that there were over 2.68 lakh postal ballots in the 2019 elections of which over 56,000 postal ballots were treated as invalid. Invalid votes are not good for democracy, he opined, stating that they urged the CEO to make some little changes to which he agreed.

sign on the ballot paper and seal it and that the responsibility lay on the government or election officials.

"If by mistake, the postal ballot is not sealed or stamped, the ballot should not be rejected and such ballots should be considered as valid. Referring to the circular issued on July 18, 2023, the ECI made it clear on May 27, 2024, that the ballots devoid of seal should not be rejected," Ashok Babu stated.

The TDP MLC said that there were over 2.68 lakh postal ballots in the 2019 elections of which over 56,000 postal ballots were treated as invalid. Invalid votes are not good for democracy, he opined, stating that they urged the CEO to make some little changes to which he agreed.

Concerns rise over safety of drinking water in Vizag

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The recent deaths due to contaminated water in Guntur and Vijayawada have sparked concerns about the safety of drinking water in Visakhapatnam. Less than two months ago, three people died and 200 fell ill in Guntur after consuming contaminated tap water. Similar incidents in Vijayawada have heightened fears among Visakhapatnam residents about their water supply.

Visakhapatnam's water supply infrastructure is showing signs of wear and vulnerability. The Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) oversees approximately 3.2 lakh tap connections, including 1.1 lakh connections for below-poverty line (BPL) households and 2.14 lakh regular connections. These services generate significant revenue, up to Rs 260 crores annually. However, substantial portions of this income are spent on maintenance, including Rs100 crores on electricity and staff wages,

and Rs.60 crores on pipeline repairs and new equipment.

Water for the city is sourced from multiple reservoirs—Eleru, Tatipudi, Raiwada, Mehadrigeeda, Mudasarlova, and Gambhiram—amounting to 65 million gallons daily. This water is processed at ten main reservoirs and then distributed to 291 mini reservoirs before reaching homes via a network of approximately 3,000 km of pipelines. Despite these measures, issues persist, particularly with ageing pipelines in areas such as Onetown, Kancharapalem, Daba Gardens, and Allipuram. These older pipelines are prone to contamination, especially where they intersect with underground drainage (UGD) systems.

GVMC officials claim to have addressed many of these risky UGD crossings, but concerns remain. In several neighbourhoods, including Maharanipeta, Kancharapalem, Malkapuram, Gajuwaka, Maddilapalem, and Akkayyapalem, freshwater

pipelines still run dangerously close to drains and gutters. This poses a significant risk of contamination, especially during the rainy season when overflow can occur.

Residents in affected areas, such as Vivekananda Veedhi and Nalanda Nagar in Kancharapalem, report freshwater pipelines being submerged in sewage, raising fears of health hazards. Similar situations are noted in Maddilapalem and Sagarnagar, where rusted and corroded pipes are common. In Gnanapuram, many pipelines are adjacent to sewers and drains, with visible rust and leaks indicating a high risk of water contamination.

Local officials ensure that regular testing is conducted to ensure water safety, with samples being analyzed in labs at three main reservoirs. However, the visible state of disrepair and the ongoing risks highlight the need for more comprehensive action to safeguard public health.

Child rights panel intervenes in illegal adoption issue

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In the wake of articles published about the illegal sale and adoption of children from Andhra Pradesh, Dr Kesali Apparao, Chairperson, AP State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, has issued instructions to the Director, Women's Development & Child Welfare Department, Guntur, requesting to take immediate measures to investigate the matter and take appropriate action.

The Commission said that action has been initiated by the police and the authorities, and 16 children have been identified out of 60 children rescued from illegal adoption and selling have been sent to Shishuvihar, Hyderabad. Sources have revealed that there are children from Andhra Pradesh among them.

APPSC invites applications for computer proficiency test

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission issued a notification on Friday, for applying online from June 3 to 14 for the computer proficiency test.

APPSC secretary J Pradeep Kumar said that for certain employees of Village/Ward Secretariat functionaries i.e., Panchayat Secretary Grade-V in PR and RD Department, Village Revenue Officer Grade-II and VRO Grade-I in Revenue Department, employees appointed on compassionate grounds in all HODs/Directorates/AP Secretariat after May 12, 2014, Senior Assistants who were promoted from the category of VRO Grade-I in Revenue Department and compassionate VROs/ in service VRAs are also allowed to appear for the test. The detailed notification is available on the Commission's website, www.psc.ap.gov.in.

Port City takes bold steps to combat tobacco menace

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a concerted effort to combat the menace of tobacco, the city of Visakhapatnam marked World No Tobacco Day with significant initiatives aimed at tobacco control. In a symbolic gesture, Police Commissioner Dr Ravi Shankar unveiled two posters designed by the Mahatma Gandhi Cancer Hospital and Research Institute (MGCH&CI) team to raise awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco and the significance of anti-tobacco programs. Additionally, the hospital launched a virtual Tobacco Cessation (De-Addiction) Clinic, providing essential support and resources for individuals seeking to quit tobacco addiction.

Responding to requests from various organizations, Dr. Ravi Shankar outlined several measures that have been implemented to curb tobacco use. These measures include a ban on smoking in public places, the sale of tobacco products to minors, the sale of e-cigarettes and oral tobacco, and the sale of tobacco prod-



ucts within 100 meters of educational institutions. To ensure strict enforcement of these regulations, a joint nodal officer has been appointed, with Joint Commissioner of Police (JCP) K. Fakkirappa entrusted with overseeing their implementation.

Representatives from MGCH&CI, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), and Shreya Cancer Foundation engaged in discussions with police officials about these initiatives. Dr. Murali Krishna Vunna from MGCH&CI and Harshanandan from the CII Young Indian Section, along with their teams, emphasised the importance of these measures in

reducing tobacco consumption and improving public health.

JCP Fakkirappa reiterated the police department's commitment to prioritising this crucial public health issue. He assured that a meeting with officers and staff would be convened soon to ensure the effective implementation and enforcement of these measures. In a significant move, Dr. Murali Krishna handed over documentation on the Tobacco Free Educational Institutions (ToFEI) initiative, undertaken by the Government of India, along with posters for display in all educational institutions in Visakhapatnam, to the District Education Officer, Chandrakala.

IIM-V propels public procurement excellence with innovative training camps

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Indian Institute of Management Visakhapatnam (IIMV) organised a curtain raiser event for a series of 5-day training programmes in Public Procurement. Aimed at enhancing the efficiency of procurement processes in Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs), the event convened top leadership from PSUs to highlight the benefits of the initiative.

Held at the India Habitat Centre in New Delhi on Friday, the event, conducted under the patronage of the Procurement Policy Division, Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, Government of India, attracted luminaries like Soma Mondal, Member of the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB), and Sanjay Aggarwal, Advisor (Procurement Policy Division), Ministry of Finance.



These eminent speakers accentuated the paramount importance of enhancing procurement methodologies as India surges towards a \$5 trillion economy, with government procurement comprising a significant 30% of the GDP. The meticulously crafted training programs aim to fortify the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of procure-

ment processes within Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs). With modules covering rules, red-flags, legal aspects, and more, participants are poised to gain profound insights into critical areas such as overseas procurement, anti-corruption measures, and dispute resolution. The objectives are ambitious, aiming to bolster the capacities

of officers and executives across various domains, elevate transparency, and cultivate advanced capabilities in supply chain mapping. These programs are envisioned to equip the workforce with the requisite skills to navigate the evolving landscape of procurement, ensuring sound and timely decision-making.

Professor M Chandrasekhar, Director of IIMV, underscored the cardinal principles of procurement during his address, emphasising the imperative of critical thinking and evidence-based analysis. Meanwhile, the event was expertly anchored by Prof. S Chatterjee, a renowned procurement specialist from IIM Visakhapatnam. With the stage set for a paradigm shift in procurement practices, these innovative training programs herald a new era of transparency, efficiency, and integrity in public procurement across India.



Retired AIG feted

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

DGP Harish Kumar Gupta felicitated AIG Ravindranath Babu (IPS) who retired on Friday from service as a senior IPS officer after serving as AIG L&O in the DGP office and rendering valuable services to the police department for a long time.

Many Additional DGs, IGs, DIGs and SPs participated in this programme.

Betting frenzy in State as counting day nears

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As the eagerly awaited Andhra Pradesh election results draw near, a peculiar trend has emerged in the realm of political betting, raising concerns about the manipulation of public sentiment and the potential for financial exploitation. With the stakes high and emotions running strong, many individuals are engaging in betting on the outcome of the elections. Interestingly, the return ratios for betting on the victory of different parties present a striking contrast. While betting on the Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) promises higher returns, it also carries greater risk, with a return ratio of 1:2.

On the other hand, betting on the alliance parties offers smaller returns but is perceived as less risky, with a ratio of 1:1.

Despite the apparent risk associated with betting on the YCP, a significant number of individuals who believe in its victory are being swayed by widespread propaganda to bet on the alliance instead. This phenomenon echoes past instances, such as the 2019 elections, where influential figures like Lagadapati Rajagopal's exit poll predictions led many to back the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), resulting in substantial losses as the YSRCP emerged victorious.

In the absence of figures like Lagadapati Rajagopal, numerous psephologists are now offering their predictions.

However, there are concerns that some betting organizers might be spreading misleading information to tilt the wagers in their favour. This tactic, similar to Goebbels-like propaganda, involves selectively promoting the idea of alliance victory, thereby drawing more bets towards this outcome and ensuring hefty profits for the organizers.

The dissemination of this propaganda extends beyond expert opinions, permeating through word of mouth at the grassroots level in villages and towns. Through a coordinated effort, certain individuals are actively promoting the narrative of an alliance win, further amplifying the concentration of bets on this outcome.

World Anti-Tobacco Day: Focus on protecting future generations

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Vijayawada Divisional Railway Hospital observed World Anti-Tobacco Day on Friday. As part of the observance, an awareness programme on the ill effects of tobacco was conducted at the new OPD block, Railway Hospital. Dr M Sowribala, Chief Medical Superintendent, was the chief guest. The theme of this year's observance is 'Protecting Children from Tobacco Industry Interference,' which emphasises protecting future generations and ensuring a constant decrease in tobacco consumption.

At the outset, Dr M Jaideep, Additional Chief Medical Superintendent, Health & Family Welfare, welcomed the audience and briefed them about the ill effects of tobacco,



lung cancer and the 2024 theme. Dr. Ram Sunil, Chief Dental Surgeon, Nidhi Hospitals, Vijayawada, enlightened the audience regarding oral cancer symptoms, complications, and prevention measures. Dr Ram Sunil emphasised the importance of a tobacco-free lifestyle and encouraged everyone to quit tobacco. Dr Sindhu, the Physician, explained the effects

The theme of this year's observance is 'Protecting Children from Tobacco Industry Interference,' which emphasises protecting future generations and ensuring a constant decrease in tobacco consumption.

of tobacco on women, especially during pregnancy.

Addressing the gathering, Dr M Sowribala said that tobacco consumption has several severe ill effects on an individual's health, leading to cancer, heart diseases, respiratory problems, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) gum disease and tooth loss. She said that quitting tobacco consumption is the best way to prevent its ill effects and briefed on nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), and taking the help of support groups, which can help individuals quit smoking.

On the occasion, a team of doctors displayed placards depicting the ill effects of tobacco on the lungs, mouth and heart. As part of the awareness programme, doctors, patients, railway beneficiaries and nursing staff took the anti-tobacco pledge.



VMC Commissioner inspects Head Water Works

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner Swapnil Dinkar Pundkar inspected the Municipal Head Water Works at Mallikarjunapeta in the city on Friday morning.

Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner said that samples were taken from the Head Water Works that supply drinking water and drinking water samples were collected from different houses in the entire city. The tests showed negative results for contamina-

tion. However, in response to the colour changes observed in the drinking water, activated charcoal treatment is being implemented.

Authorities have been instructed to remain vigilant at all times regarding the purity of water from the supply to the tap water reaching people's homes. People have been advised to take proper health precautions and drink boiled water.

The Commissioner was accompanied by Executive Engineers Narayanamurthy, Srinivas, and others.

Multi-speciality health camp held at Burrripalem



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A total of 118 children and adults visited the health camp for consultation and treatment organised on the occasion of legendary actor Krishna's birth anniversary in Burrripalem on Friday. The health camp was organised by his son and actor Mahesh Babu in association with Andhra Hospitals.

The health camp was led by Dr Andhra Hospitals in all specialities including General Medicine, General Surgery, Paediatrics, Cardiac, Obstetrics and ENT. An

awareness session was also conducted and addressed common adults, paediatric health problems, heart diseases, viral infections during summer etc. All specialty consultations and investigations were done, and medicines were distributed to patients.

Dr PV Rama Rao, chief of Children's Services and Director, Andhra Hospitals, said 39 camps were held so far in Burrripalem village. Dr Mudassir, Dr Sujani, Dr Sai Kishore, Dr Amar, Dr Pavan Kumar, Dr Ramesh, nurses, lab technicians and pharmacists took part in the camp.

Parent-Teacher Home Visit Programme from new academic year

CLASS TEACHERS WILL VISIT EACH STUDENT'S HOME TWICE IN A YEAR

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The government of Andhra Pradesh, after careful examination, has ordered the implementation of the 'Parent-Teacher Home Visit Programme' in all government schools and colleges from the academic year 2024-25 to enhance the academic performance of the students of Classes 1 to 12.

The Principal Secretary to Government, Praveen Prakash, has issued key guidelines for the implementation of the Parent-Teacher Home Visit Programme. As per the guide-

lines, the class teachers will visit each student's home twice in a year. The first visit will be in June, and the second will be in January.

The Principal Secretary stated that recognising the critical role of parents in their children's education, the government, after careful examination, has decided to introduce the Parent-Teacher Home Visit Programme, in all schools and colleges from this academic year. The visits should be one-to-one and scheduled at the convenience of the parents. The purpose of these visits is to prepare a personalised aca-

demical progress plan for each student and revise the plan during the second visit. This initiative aims to actively involve parents in their children's education, thereby enhancing academic outcomes and fostering a collaborative educational environment. Visits will be scheduled at times convenient for the parents. Teachers will coordinate with parents to arrange visits during times that suit the parents' schedules, ensuring minimal disruption to their daily routines. Flexibility in scheduling will be a priority to accommodate parents' work

and personal commitments.

The Principal Secretary stated that the government is committed to enhancing the quality of education and ensuring that students in government schools and colleges are equipped with the skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing world. "It is imperative that quality consciousness starts in Class 1, which can only be achieved through the active involvement of teachers, parents, and students. Parental involvement in education has been shown to significantly enhance academic outcomes."

Revanth: Tapping into negotiables for maximising gain

Unlike democracy, totalitarianism features a total lack of privacy. In communist dictatorships and in countries ruled by tyrants and dictators, there is no expectation of privacy -- an essential element of human dignity. No judge, lawyer, politician, legislator, government official, leader of civil society, journalist, celebrity, business person, or private individual has been exempt from mass surveillance by the Orwellian Big Brothers ruling such countries.

leader' like Stalin, Saddam, or Kim Jong-il was ruling Telangana until a few months back. The BRS regime's brazen disregard of citizen's fundamental rights and the rule of law is beyond shocking. The fact that the KCR-led administration put even High Court judges under surveillance leaves no doubt that the former Chief Minister made a travesty of the Constitution and the independence of the Judiciary. Though the scale of the mass surveillance unleashed by the KCR government was unprecedented, reminding one of the Emergency days, the handling of the case by the current Congress government, led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, has raised serious questions. Instead of expanding the investigation and interrogating the former Chief Minister and former ministers named by the confiding offi-

The only plausible conclusion is that Congress and the BRS both understand that the outcomes of the investigations are negotiable. All that is needed is to finalise the terms and conditions, which could be political, financial, or both.

cers, the Revanth Reddy government limited itself to investigating mid-level police officers and creating a media sensation through selective leaks. Revanth Reddy's recent taunt aimed at KCR, his son Taraka Rama Rao, and nephew Harish Rao—both ministers in the earlier government—asking why they were not demanding a CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) probe into the mass phone tapping case exposes the Chief Minister's game plan to use the



KISHORE POREDDY

scandal purely for political leverage. Firstly, the Chief Minister's taunt emphasises that KCR and his family are more comfortable with the state government under Revanth Reddy probing the case, instead of letting the CBI do the job. It also highlights that Revanth Reddy knows the BRS leaders' preference for a state agency probe. It raises the question of how it matters for KCR and his family members, reportedly behind the illegal surveillance pro-

gram, whether the state or the central agencies investigate the matter. To answer this question, one has to examine the earlier behaviour of the Congress government towards alleged scams perpetrated by KCR and his government, be it the financial irregularities in the Kaleswaram Lift Irrigation Scheme (KLIS) or the TSPSC (Telangana State Public Service Commission) question paper leakages, to name a couple, reveal the same pattern. Heavy noise about massive corruption and illegalities by the previous government, followed by assertions of strenuous action that spares none, eventually ending up with dilatory tactics and limiting investigations to low-level bureaucrats. The only plausible conclusion is that the Congress and the BRS both understand that the outcomes of the investigations are negotiable. All that is needed is to finalise the terms and conditions, which could be political, financial, or both. Unlike the other alleged scams committed by the earlier government, the incentives for the Congress Chief Minister to arrive at a negotiated settlement on the phone-tapping scandal

are two-fold. Since multiple Congress leaders were under surveillance, pursuing the case to its logical conclusion may reveal illegalities committed by some of his own party's leaders. Also, during the note-for-vote scam, in which Revanth Reddy himself is an accused, there have been rumours that KCR used illegal phone tapping to snare him, and if records of those tapping, if they exist, come out, it could create problems for the Chief Minister himself. Additionally, the Chief Minister believes there is nothing to gain from taking any case of corruption or illegality by the earlier government to its logical conclusion to serve justice and reestablish the rule of law. It is much more advantageous to use the misdeeds of the earlier government and political opponents as negotiating chips

and to keep them in control. Given the Congress' slim majority in the Assembly coupled with multiple challengers Revanth Reddy faces from within the Congress to the Chief Minister seat, and KCR's track record of splitting the Congress in the state, it would be advantageous to keep BRS under control using these cases as leverage. The saddest aspect of the entire phone-tapping episode is that reportedly, the family members of the Chief Minister too were victims of the illegal surveillance. Even in such a case, if the CM prioritises political calculations over ensuring justice to the victims, can there be any hope of this government serving justice in cases where the commoner is a victim? (The author is BJP TS spokesperson.)

DC, SP review arrangements for counting of votes

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector Sumit Kumar has directed the officials concerned to take steps to ensure that the counting staff, officials concerned and the agents of political parties reach the counting centre easily and on time.



The Collector, along with Superintendent of Police Ajita Vejdndla, held a meeting with the Returning Officers and NDPOs here on Friday and reviewed the arrangements being made for the counting of votes.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Sumit Kumar directed the officials to evolve a route map to ensure that all the counting staff reach the counting hall in time without being cumbersome. All the counting officers and counting staff must reach the counting hall in time to start the counting process, he told the officials. The Collector ordered the

Returning Officers to make the counting staff fully aware of the parking places and ways to reach the counting centres. Special buses have been arranged for the counting staff and agents who have reached the Kovvada Annavaram centre to reach the main gate of Vishnu College. The media representatives can reach the media centre in the same vehicles, he said. The Collector stated that

buses would start at Nagaraju Mall and NTR Statue to reach the counting centres of SRKR Engineering College, adding that the Collector also directed the officials to inform people about the traffic diversions on the counting day. The candidates and Returning officers can reach the counting hall in their vehicles. "The presence of all counting officials and staff is necessary to begin the counting

process in the early hours of June 4. All those who enter the counting hall must be checked thoroughly and they should not be allowed to take mobile phones into the counting hall," the Collector instructed the security officials.

SP Ajita Vejdndla told the police officials to coordinate with the counting officials and ensure that the counting process would be completed without any interruptions. "No permission has been given to take out victory rallies or burst firecrackers to celebrate election victory by the followers of winning candidates. Efforts should be made to resolve the problem if it arises during the counting of votes," the SP told the police officials.

Additional SP V Bhimmaro, Joint Collector CV Praveen Aditya, DRO J Uday Bhaskar Rao and other officials were among those who attended the meeting.

Multi-speciality health camp held at Burripalem

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A total of 118 children and adults visited the health camp for consultation and treatment organised on the occasion of legendary actor Krishna's birth anniversary in Burripalem on Friday. The health camp was organised by his son and actor Mahesh Babu in association with Andhra Hospitals.

The health camp was led by Andhra Hospitals in all specialities including General Medicine, General Surgery, Paediatrics, Cardiac, Obstetrics and ENT. An awareness session was also conducted and addressed common adults, paediatric health problems, heart diseases, viral infections during summer etc. All speciality consultations and investigations were done, and medicines were distributed to patients.

Railway officials inspect 2 stations

PNS ■ ELURU

In a bid to enhance passenger experience and ensure optimal facilities, Vavilapalli Rambabu, Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, Vijayawada Division, accompanied by the Commercial Team conducted an extensive inspection of Eluru and Tadepalligudem Railway Stations on Friday.

The inspection aimed to identify areas for improvement, enhance passenger comfort and convenience, proper functioning of all passenger amenities and ensure compliance with safety and security protocols.

The DCM commenced the inspection along with the commercial team at Eluru Station meticulously examining cleanliness maintenance of platforms,

toilets, waiting halls, passenger amenities, Infrastructure and facilities, such as lighting, signage, and water supply at Rajahmundry railway Station. The DCM inspected all the catering stalls on the platforms including food quality, quantity, expiry dates on food items and availability of water bottles. He also inspected ongoing ABSS Station redevelopment works at Eluru.

Rambabu also interacted with passengers, railway staff, and vendors, soliciting feedback and suggestions to improve services and facilities and emphasising important amenities, like ticketing, enquiry services, and help desks to ensure smooth functioning & hassle-free travel for passengers. He also directed officials to

expedite ongoing works and initiate new projects to further enhance the amenities and services offered at the stations. In the aftermath, the DCM inspected Tadepalligudem Railway Station and saw the Passenger Amenities, Booking office, Parcel Office, Goods Shed, Lading platforms, traffic facilities and labour facilities at the good Shed.

He also inspected the ongoing Station Redevelopment works interacted with staff and exhorted them to strive for excellence in their duties and work towards enhancing customer satisfaction on all levels. The inspection was part of the Vijayawada Division, SCR's ongoing efforts to improve the quality of services and facilities provided to passengers.

Health staff get BCG vaccine

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Adult BCG TB vaccination session was conducted for the Health officials and staff at the office of the Commissioner of Health and Family Welfare on Friday. JD Dr T Ramesh, in a press statement, said that through the adult BCG vaccination special camp, 49 employees were vaccinated. Dr LBSH Devi, State Immunisation Officer, HWC centre, Dr Anusha and other Health staff were present at the special camp. On the occasion, Dr Ramesh said that the next adult BCG vaccination special campaign will be organised at AP SACS Building, Tadepalli, on June 7 for eligible employees and appealed to the APSACS employees to utilise the opportunity.



Dr Ramesh said that the national TB elimination programme is organised to achieve the goal of eliminating TB from the country by 2025. From various studies

enhanced rate of decrease in TB incidence. BCG vaccine for children has been a long-standing policy with its safety demonstrated. There is evidence that the BCG vaccination is safe and effective. As per the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

(MoHFW) guidance, the State of AP is implementing BCG vaccination in a phased manner. As per the instructions of Commissioner of Health and Family Welfare Dr S Venkateswar, the BCG TB vaccination is carried out in 12 districts in AP.



Two thieves arrested; Rs 47 L worth of booty recovered

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

The police arrested two inter-district notorious thieves in Tanuku and recovered gold and silver ornaments and two bikes worth Rs 47 lakh. A police team led by SIs K Chandrasekhar and D Adinarayana arrested them at Ajaram Road near Tanuku.

Circle Inspector GVV Nageswara Rao told the media at Tanuku rural police station on Friday that the police team arrested Pandiri Venkataramana and Nagarapu Eeshwara Rao who were

involved in many cases in West Godavari, Eluru and Konaseema districts. The police recovered gold jewellery weighing 600 grams, silver ornaments weighing 13 kg and two two-wheelers, altogether worth Rs 47 lakh.

One of the accused Pandiri Venkata Narayana was involved in a murder case and he was sent to jail in the case. After being freed from the prison bail, he befriended another accused Eeshwara Rao and started committing burglaries and thefts. Both the offenders have committed 15 offences.

2 killed as transport vehicle collides with tractor

PNS ■ AMALAPURAM

Two fishermen were killed and two others were injured when the Bolero transport vehicle in which they were travelling collided with a tractor at Gummileru village on Jonnada-Mandapeta road on Friday.

Police said that a group of fishermen, belonging to Alamuru village, were going to Tungapadu village in the Bolero transport vehicle for fishing. The transport vehicle collided with a tractor that was transporting civil supplies commodities. The deceased were identified as Lanke Suribabu (49) and Vanamdi Saibabu (62). Two persons were injured in the accident and they were admitted to the GGH in Amalapuram where the condi-



tion of one of them was said to be critical. Sub-inspector Srinu Naik visited the scene of the accident, registered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH for postmortem.

7 arrested in Seshadri murder

PNS ■ MADANAPALLI

The police arrested seven persons in connection with the murder of Bahujan Bhim Sena Sangh leader Seshadri. Informing this media here on Friday DSP Prasad Reddy said that the police arrested a seven-member gang who killed Seshadri.



The police seized an Innova car, an auto rickshaw and seven hunting sickles from them. The murder of Bahujan Bhim Sena Sangh leader took place on May 24.

The deceased Seshadri was indulging in land settlement using his Bahujana Bhim Sena Sangh. A dispute erupted between the accused Kondupalli Aanand and the deceased Seshadri in carrying out land settlements.

On May 24, Kondupalli Anand and his followers attacked the house of the deceased Seshadri barged into his house and hacked him to death. The DSP said that four special teams led by four CIs formed to crack the murder of Seshadri. The arrested persons were produced before the court which sent them to judicial remand.

AP financial position alarming: Purandeswari

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A BJP delegation, led by State president D Purandeswari, called on Governor S Abdul Nazeer at the Raj Bhavan on Friday. After the meeting, Purandeswari addressed the media, stating that the BJP leaders met the Governor to discuss the indiscriminate borrowing practices of the Andhra Pradesh government and the escalating debt crisis.



She highlighted that the delegation informed the Governor about the significant sums borrowed by the State government through various corporations. According to Purandeswari, the financial situation has reached alarming proportions due to the YSRCP-led State government's borrowing practices, which allegedly defy the norms and guidelines of the RBI and FRBM. "The government has created corporations

and borrowed substantial amounts through them. These funds, sourced from various institutions, have been diverted for different purposes. The government even borrowed money from the Breweries Corporation," she criticised. Purandeswari further alleged that the AP State government had appropriated funds meant for the provident fund of government employees. She mentioned that the government had not cleared the bills of contractors who had completed projects

worth thousands of crores of rupees. She lamented that some contractors had even committed suicide due to non-payment for their work.

"The State government has also misappropriated Panchayat Raj funds released by the Central government, using them for other purposes. The government is in such a dire state that it is unable to pay the salaries of its employees," she regretted. Before the election, the state government started uploading the dues to be

paid to contractors to the CMFS but has not disbursed the funds. The State Government is selectively paying contractors who are loyal to the ruling party leaders, Purandeswari criticised.

BJP State general secretary Bitra Shivannarayana, MLA Kapu Ramachandra Reddy, Nagabhusanam, and BJP spokespersons Lanka Dinakar and S Yamini Sharma were among those who accompanied Purandeswari to meet the Governor.

BJP wants CBI probe only to protect KCR: MLC Jeevan Reddy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congress MLC T. Jeevan Reddy said that the BJP is demanding a CBI probe into the phone tapping case only to protect BJP's friendly party BRS's chief K. Chandrasekhar Rao. Surprisingly, the BJP staged a dharna demanding that the state government hand over the phone tapping case to the CBI, he said.



"Everyone saw how the BRS extended its support to the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections. In return, the BJP wants to save KCR. We have been receiving reports on the Kaleswaram Project from Central teams during the last five months. The government has ordered a judicial commission to investigate the Kaleswaram scam. The BJP is trying to make BRS leaders join it by filing cases against them by the ED, the IT

said that it is surprising that the BJP is demanding a CBI probe instead of having faith in the state government. The Telangana police have a good image in the nation and it is not proper for the BJP to insult such an organisation, he said. He asked the BJP to order a CBI probe into the Apple company's message if they want to punish KCR.

He said the police are carrying out a comprehensive probe into the phone tapping case and the culprits will be caught soon.

The BJP may be fearing that the real culprits may get exposed. So the BJP is staging dharnas to protect KCR and KTR, he said. "Where is the need for the CBI when the state police are conducting a comprehensive inquiry into it? BJP leaders don't have faith in the police or

the BJP wants to blackmail in the name of the CBI inquiry," he said.

Why did the BJP fail to conduct a CBI inquiry into the phone tapping case as Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had filed complaints with the Centre earlier? But the Centre ignored Revanth Reddy's complaints, he said.

"The Congress filed several complaints on phone tapping, the Kaleswaram scam and many others but the BJP protected KCR all these days. BJP leaders JP Nadda, Amit Shah, Sanjay and many others said the BJP will send KCR to jail. But later they did not talk about it. There are allegations that the Modi government itself engages in phone tapping. Apple send a mail to the government stating that phones were being tapped," Rammohan said.

INDIA CORNER

Srinagar Airport operations halted for an hour after bomb threat

Flight operations at the Srinagar International Airport had to be halted for an hour on Friday after a bomb threat as the authorities took preventive measures, officials said. The Air Traffic Control (ATC) at the Srinagar Airport received a bomb threat on an Air Vistara flight from New Delhi, prompting a response from the authorities, including the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), which is responsible for the security at the airport, the officials said. They said a threat call was made to the airport around the noon about the flight, which had 178 passengers onboard. Immediately after the flight landed at the airport, it was directed towards an isolation bay and the passengers and the crew were evacuated, they added. A thorough search of the plane was carried out, and bomb disposal squads and sniffer dogs were also deployed to check any suspicious items, they said.



Five TMC workers injured after bombs hurled by ISF supporters

At least five Trinamool Congress workers were injured after bombs were hurled at them allegedly by ISF supporters at Bhongore in South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, police said on Friday. Bhongore's Indian Secular Front (ISF) MLA Nawsad Siddique, however, dismissed the allegations and said that the TMC workers hurled bombs at ISF supporters but their own party men were injured in the incident. Bhongore under Jadavpur Lok Sabha constituency will go to polls in the last phase on Saturday. The incident took place when the TMC workers were returning home on Thursday night. The injured TMC workers were admitted to a state-run hospital in Kolkata. State minister Aroop Biswas, Jadavpur's TMC candidate Saayoni Ghosh and party legislator Saikat Molla visited the injured persons at the medical establishment.



Noida: Ola rider who fled with customer's belongings held after gunfight with cops

An Ola bike taxi rider was held following a gunfight with the police here a day after he allegedly fled with a woman's bag containing an iPhone and laptop among other valuables, officials said on Friday. The 34-year-old accused, identified as Pramod Singh, was shot in the leg during the gunfight with the cops on a service lane between metro stations of Sector 51 and Sector 76 near Spectrum Mall late Thursday night, they said. In her complaint, Adheera Saxena, who lives in a high-rise society in Noida Extension, alleged that the incident took place near the Sector 52 metro station when she got off the bike taxi and was in the middle of completing the payment of the trip on Wednesday evening. "Two days ago, a woman had booked an Ola bike to come to a location in the Sector 49 police station area but the bike rider had snatched and fled with her belongings," Additional DCP Manish Mishra said.



SEXUAL ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

Prajwal Revanna arrested upon return, remanded

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Prajwal Revanna, the suspended JD(S) MP facing sexual abuse allegations, was arrested on Friday upon his return from Germany, a month after he left the country in the wake of explicit videos of his alleged actions during the rounds in Karnataka's Hassan.



A special court in the city remanded him to police custody till June 6. In a clear messaging early in the day, a team of women police personnel 'welcomed' Prajwal Revanna upon his arrival here, as they were deputed to execute a warrant and take him to the CID office for interrogation. After evading summons and staying out of the country for a little over a month, the 33

year-old grandson of JD(S) supreme and former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda landed here past midnight from Germany's Munich, only to be arrested by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) minutes later and whisked away for questioning. He was later produced before the 42nd Additional

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate K N Shivakumar, who heard the remand application and objection argument from Prajwal's advocate. He later remanded Prajwal to police custody. The NDA Lok Sabha candidate from Hassan, facing allegations of sexually abusing several women, was arrested

after completing the due process, Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara said. Prajwal's advocate Arun G said the former was extending full cooperation to the SIT probe and cautioned against any media trial in the case. "Prajwal Revanna landed around 12.40-12.50 am from Germany's Munich. As there was an arrest warrant against him, SIT accordingly arrested him and took him into custody," Parameshwara said. Speaking to reporters here, he said, "...naturally he should have cooperated to the arrest. His immigration papers were cleared and he was brought out (of airport). As he had a diplomatic passport, things happened easily. After completing all the due process, he was arrested," he added.

DELHI HEAT WAVE

Arrangements made for water, grains for birds, small animals on SC premises

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As Delhi registers record-high temperatures amid the blistering heat wave sweeping the city, arrangements have been made on the Supreme Court premises for adequate water for birds and small animals. Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud directed that vessels with water and grains be placed on the premises for birds and small animals such as squirrels, an apex court official said. Chief Justice Chandrachud had earlier identified the places where such facilities were to be arranged, he said. The Chief Justice also directed the officials concerned to ensure constant supply of water and food at these places, he added.

AKHILESH TO SP WORKERS

Be 'vigilant' against BJP's 'lies' and 'exit polls'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW (UP)

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Friday asked his party workers, candidates and office-bearers to remain "vigilant" against the "lies" of the BJP and "its exit polls." In an appeal in Hindi on X, Yadav wrote, "Today I am making an extremely important appeal to you. All of you should remain fully alert, vigilant and cautious during the voting tomorrow and also in the days after the voting, till the counting of votes is over and you receive the certificate of victory. Do not get misled by the BJP." In the last phase of the Lok Sabha elections, polling will be held in 13 Lok Sabha seats of Uttar Pradesh on June 1 between 7 am and 6 pm. Yadav went on to allege that the BJP will start spreading lies once the polling is over on



Saturday. "Actually I am making this appeal because the BJP people have made a plan that as soon as the elections are over tomorrow evening, they will start getting their 'media group (media mandali)' to say on various channels that the BJP has got a lead of around 300 seats, which is completely false," Yadav wrote. He went on to caution the party workers to not believe any such claim and alleged that the BJP can "rig the counting".

"In such a situation, the question will arise in your mind that what will the BJP get by lying for two-three days when the INDIA alliance government is going to be formed. In answer to this, let me tell you that by spreading such lies, the BJP people want to demoralise all of you, so that your enthusiasm is reduced and you people do not remain alert and active on the day of counting," he said. Taking advantage of this, the BJP can rig the counting in connivance with some corrupt officials, he added. Yadav went on to remind the workers about the poll rigging in the Chandigarh mayor election. "Remember, those BJP members who can have the audacity to rig the Chandigarh mayor election in front of the cameras installed by the court, can resort to any kind of fraud to win the election.

Fate of 62 poll candidates in HP to be sealed today

PNS ■ SHIMLA

After a two-month-long campaign, the fate of 37 candidates for four Lok Sabha seats and 25 nominees in six Assembly bypolls in Himachal Pradesh would be sealed in voting machines on June 1. The high-pitched campaign in the hill state, filled with rancour and insinuations, ended with two rallies of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at Badnar and Mandi and a roadshow of Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra at Solan on Thursday. Leaders and workers of political parties swarmed across the state for door-to-door canvassing in a last-ditch attempt to woo the voters. Besides the elections to the four Lok Sabha seats of Hamirpur, Mandi, Kangra and Shimla, bypolls are being held in six Assembly segments -- Sujanpur, Dharamshala, Lahaul and Spiti, Barsar, Gagret and Kutlehar. The six Assembly seats fell vacant following the disqualification of Congress rebels for defying a party whip to vote in

favour of the government during the budget. These legislators voted for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the Rajya Sabha polls on February 29, later joined the saffron party and are contesting the bypolls on BJP tickets from their respective Assembly segments. Targeting the rebels, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu dubbed them as "bikau" (sold out) and "kale naag" (snakes) and called upon the voters to punish them. Besides holding big rallies, leaders of political parties also held "nukkar" (corner meetings, especially in the constituencies where Assembly bypolls are being held simultaneously with the Lok Sabha election. BJP's Lok Sabha candidate from Mandi and Bollywood actor Kangna Ranaut and Congress candidate and state Public Works Minister Vikramaditya Singh hogged the limelight due to controversial and pungent remarks made against each other.



Mumbai hoarding collapse: Structural engineer remanded

PNS ■ MUMBAI

A Mumbai court on Friday remanded in police custody till June 5 a structural engineer arrested in connection with the May 13 hoarding collapse that killed 17 persons in Ghatkopar. Structural engineer Manoj Sanghu was produced in the magistrate court after he was arrested by the Crime Branch on Thursday. Sanghu, who was empanelled by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), had given a stability certificate to the hoarding, which crashed onto a petrol pump after gusty winds and unseasonal rains lashed the city on May 13. Ego Media Private Limited had erected the hoarding on a plot in the possession of the Government Railway Police (GRP). Sanghu is the second person to be arrested in the case. Police had earlier arrested Ego Media Private Limited director Bhavesh Bhide, who is currently in judicial custody. Bhide and others were charged under Indian Penal Code sections 304-2 (when there is knowledge that death may be caused by one's act), 338 (endangering life or personal safety of other) and 34 (common intention). The police have now added IPC section 120B (criminal conspiracy) to the FIR.

Missing NEET aspirant traced, had travelled across India in 23 days

PNS ■ KOTA

A NEET aspirant, who went missing from Kota on May 6, was traced by his father at a railway station in Goa. With just Rs 11,000 in his pocket, the 19-year-old spent the days travelling on trains, often ticketless. Rajendra Prasad Meena had raised the money by selling his books, mobile phone and two bicycles, his uncle said. A day after taking the competitive medical exam, Meena on May 6 sent a text message to his parents saying that he did not want to study any further and was leaving home for five years, police had said. Meena said that he had Rs 8,000 with him and if need be, he would contact his family. The NEET aspirant's family has alleged that the Kota police



did not take any efforts into tracing the youth. Kota police did not even step out of the city to look for the boy and showed negligence in technically tracking him, Meena's uncle Mathura Lal told PTI on Friday. He said that the family formed four teams, each comprising three family members, in search of the youth since the day he had gone missing, he said. According to his family, after performing badly in his NEET exam, Meena sold his phone and left Kota on May 6. He boarded a train to Pune, where he stayed for two days. In Pune, he purchased a second-hand mobile phone for Rs 1,500, got a sim using his Aadhaar Card and then went to Amritsar where he visited Golden Temple. Thereafter he headed to Vaishno Devi in Jammu, Lal said. The uncle alleged that if Kota police made efforts, then they would have traced him in Pune when the boy got a sim, which was linked to his Aadhaar Card. From Jammu, Meena went to Agra and saw Taj Mahal, then boarded a train to Jagannath Puri Dham in Odisha.

Celebrity chef Shipra Khanna unveils her latest culinary masterpiece 'Sinfully yours - just desserts'

PNS ■ MUMBAI (MAHARASHTRA)

Renowned celebrity chef and Award-winning author, Shipra Khanna, launched her highly anticipated book 9th cookbook, "Sinfully Yours - Just Desserts" at a glittering event held at the prestigious Taj Lands End. The event was graced by culinary luminaries, including the esteemed Padm Shri Chef

Sanjeev Kapoor as the chief guest and celebrated food critic Rashmi Uday Singh as the moderator. Chef Rohit Sangwan also contributed his insights, adding to the evening's enriching discourse on culinary arts. "Who doesn't like homemade, healthy, and delicious desserts! From classics to gluten-free, vegan options, there's something for every sweet lover. 'Sinfully Yours - Just Desserts' is a tantalizing collection of dessert recipes that promises to take readers on a delightful journey through the world of sweet indulgences. With her signature style and flair, Shipra Khanna has curated a book that is both a feast for the eyes and the taste buds, perfect for dessert enthusiasts and home bakers alike who are sure you will love the book! Makes for a perfect gift as well! Happy cooking!"

Stage set for polling in Punjab's 13 Lok Sabha constituencies

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

are contesting on all the 13 seats in Punjab. Among the prominent faces, BJP nominee and four-time MP Preet Kaur is seeking reelection from the Patiala parliamentary constituency. Three-time MP and SAD's Harsimrat Kaur Badal and BJP's Pampal Kaur Sidhu, a former IAS officer, are trying their luck from Bathinda while former chief minister and Congress candidate Chhanni and BJP nominee Sushil Rinku are in the fray from the Jalandhar reserved constituency. Former deputy chief minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa and BJP candidate Dinesh Babbar are fighting from Gurdaspur. Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring is contesting against BJP's Raveen Singh Bittu from Ludhiana. Radical Sikh preacher Amritpal Singh, who is lodged in Assam's Dibrugarh jail under the National Security Act (NSA), is fighting from Khadro Sahib while former diplomat and BJP nominee Taranjit Singh Sandhu and Congress candidate Gurjeet Singh Aujla are locked in a contest from Amritsar. Polling will be held Saturday for 13 Lok Sabha constituencies in Punjab, where former chief minister Charanjit Singh Chhanni, three-time MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal and four-time MP Preet Kaur are in the fray. The Union Territory of Chandigarh will also go to polls on Saturday. Punjab is witnessing a multi-cornered contest in all the 13 Lok Sabha seats. The INDIA bloc allies -- the Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) -- are contesting the Lok Sabha polls separately while the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) are fighting on their own for the first time since 1996. The Sukhbir Badal-led SAD walked out of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in 2020 over the now-repealed three farm laws. Besides the Congress, AAP, SAD and the BJP, two other parties, SAD (Amritsar) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), have also fielded their candidates. The AAP, Congress, BJP, SAD, BSP and SAD (Amritsar)



As Patna heads to polls, migrant voters return

PNS ■ PATNA

"Every vote counts... this is a crucial election," asserts Sheema Fatima, an assistant professor in Mumbai, who like several others has come home to Patna to exercise their franchise in the Lok Sabha polls on June 1. Some planned their travel well in advance and landed in the city a few days ago while others arrived Friday morning or will be reaching during the day to participate in the "festival of democracy." The district of Patna has two parliamentary constituencies -- Patna Sahib and Pataliputra -- both of which will go to polls along with six other seats in the state in the seventh and final

phase of the general election. "They say it is a festival of democracy and in many ways, it is. But it is an important exercise that allows you to express your voice, in line with the values of citizenship and participatory democracy," the assistant professor at the Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS), Mumbai, said. "Every vote counts," Fatima, who arrived in Patna a few days ago, said. "This is a very crucial general election. And it is important to vote, so I am here... I have been out of Patna for a long time for higher education and then work. I had come to vote in the general election in 2019 and the 2020 Bihar Assembly polls as well," she told PTI here. Fatima will be exercising her franchise along with her mother in the Patna Sahib constituency on Saturday. The BJP's incumbent MP and former Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad is seeking a second term from the crucial Patna Sahib seat, while the INDIA bloc has fielded Anshul



architect who moved to Gurugram last year for work, arrived here on Friday morning. "I had booked train tickets in advance," he said, adding, "It's just one vote but I hope it will add to the collective effort to make my city better where development and heritage preservation will go hand-in-hand and not just blind concrete construction we are seeing today in Patna." For Sinha, education, health and sensitive urban planning are the key issues in this election. Several others who have also arrived in the city to take part in the election largely concurred that "if we don't vote, we have no right to crib about governance issues".

HC judge first in Goa to execute 'living will'

PNS ■ PANAJI

Justice M S Sonak of the Bombay High Court on Friday gave his consent for an 'End of Life Care (EOLC)' will at a function here as Goa became the first state in the country to operationalise the Advance Medical Directives (AMD) facility. The judge, who serves on the Goa bench of the Bombay High Court, became the first to execute what is commonly known as 'living will'. A person can give directions about his or her end-of-life treatment choices by executing

such a document. Dr Sandesh Chodankar and Dinesh Shetty served as witnesses and Dr Medha Salkar, Chief Medical Officer at the Directorate of Services Goa was present as a gazetted officer at the function held on the high court premises near Panaji. Speaking on the occasion, Justice Sonak congratulated all the stakeholders who made the implementation of AMD possible in the state. With this, Goa became the first state in the country to implement and operationalise the living will facility in the

true letter and spirit of the Supreme Court's directives, the judge noted. He also appealed people to understand the intricacies of living wills and make an informed decision. The function was organized by the Goa branch of the Indian Medical Association and Goa State Legal Services Authority. A booklet on Advance Medical Directives was released on this occasion. Justices Valmiki Menezes and Jitendra Jain were also present along with former IMA Goa chief Dr Shekhar Salkar.



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

High and dry

The Delhi Govt is out to fine people wasting water. But is it doing enough at its own end?

Summers in Delhi are particularly harsh due to the combination of extremely high temperatures, hovering around 50 degrees Celsius, and frequent heatwaves that exacerbate the already intense heat. Compounding these problems is the deficiency in civic services, which leaves the residents high and dry. The city's urban heat island effect, where concrete retains and radiates heat, makes the environment significantly hotter. The rural areas in the hinterland, particularly those towards the west, bear the brunt of hot westerlies coming in from the Rajasthan desert. During this season, water shortage becomes a critical issue as demand peaks while supply dwindles, making it difficult for the residents to stay hydrated. Additionally, the high demand for electricity to run air conditioners, coolers and fans often overwhelms the power grid, resulting in frequent power cuts, thus increasing health risks. Summer also brings poor air quality due to dust storms and increased vehicular emissions which, when combined with the



heat, can lead to respiratory problems and other health issues. There are several reasons for Delhi's woes. Though nothing much can be done about the fire raining from the skies, the management of resources such as electricity and water can be done in a better manner. Every year, the Delhi Government blames Haryana for not releasing its share of water, but no one wants to find a long-term solution. Besides, many parts of Delhi, especially East Delhi, lack sufficient green spaces, which are essential for providing shade and cooling the environment. It is a sad commentary on Delhi Government that more than 22 per cent water bodies of Delhi have been stolen.

Earlier records suggest that Delhi had over 1,000 water bodies which served as buffers and provided water and coolness. To address this issue, the Delhi Government has announced a fine of Rs 2,000 on those found guilty of wasting water. So, in a way, the city Government is putting the onus for water scarcity only on its people. Home to over 20 million people, Delhi is experiencing unprecedented water shortages. The rising temperatures have led to increased water consumption, putting immense pressure on the already strained water supply system. Residents are facing erratic water supplies, with many neighbourhoods receiving water only a few hours each day. The fine targets a range of activities considered wasteful, including washing cars with hosepipes, watering gardens excessively and leaving taps open. While the intention is commendable, several factors question its practicality and effectiveness. How will the Government find the culprits and who will define water wastage? Besides, the Government is being harsh on people who are already braving the heat despite electricity and water scarcity. Instead, the Government could have issued a warning for wasting water and arranged for water tankers in areas badly hit by water scarcity. For now, only the weather gods can save the Capital.

PICTALK



Children of a school offer prayers during a 'havan' for relief from the heatwave, in Jammu

India and Bangladesh: A tale of two books



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

Two recently published books provide in-depth examinations of pivotal South Asian political landscapes

I have just finished a book pertaining to election-related data in India and another to Bangladesh and its ties with this country. Chambers Book on Indian Election: Facts (Hachette, India) authored by Kingshuk Chatterjee and Surbek Biswas, an academic and a senior journalist respectively, goes beyond statistics. Figures are integrated into a narrative that encompasses the country's political and electoral journey since the time of the British Raj and the elections held during it. Post-Independence, it dwells on the functioning of institutions like the Parliament, State legislatures and the judiciary, placing figures in context of an unfolding account of electoral battles, their results and the underlying political currents running throughout the country. It is a heaven-sent for not only scribes but political party functionaries, activists, poll-forecasters, to name a few, who scramble for data with the advent of elections, and, of course, scholars and researchers, hunting for information at all times for doctoral theses or other projects. Interspersed with the narrative are interesting pieces of not generally remembered information, such as Gian Singh Rarewala being the first non-Congress chief minister of any state in India. He became chief minister of Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU) at the head of a United Front Government on April 22, 1952. It is a book worth keeping on the shelf.

Transformation, Emergence of Bangladesh and Evolution of India-Bangladesh Ties (Knowledge World and Indian Council of World Affairs), is by a distinguished former officer of the Indian Foreign Service, Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty. It traverses a long time-span from the pre-historic period to the present. While providing an illuminating account of the historical circumstances shaping Bangladesh's emergence and cultural, religious, social and political ethos, the narrative contains several avoidable errors. For example, Chakravarty says that Siraj-U-Doula (the last independent nawab of Bengal) was tortured and brutally killed in prison by



Mir Madan, Mir Jafar's son. Siraj was killed on July 2, 1757, under orders from Mir Miran, Mir Jafar's son. Mir Madan fought loyally for Siraj in the battle of Palashi and died in combat.

Again, Chakravarty writes, "The Hindu College in Calcutta came up in 1817 CE and the Serampore College in 1819 CE. The Serampore missionaries also introduced Bengali periodicals and newspapers like 'Deek Darshan' and 'Samachar Darpan', which were vehicles for campaigning against 'Sati'. The Bengali 'Bhadralok' class was created with such activities."

The emergence of the Bhadralok was a much more complex phenomenon. In Elite Conflict in a Plural Society: Twentieth Century Bengal, J.H. Broomfield has described the Bhadralok as "A socially privileged and consciously superior group, economically dependent on landed rents and professional and clerical employment." The factors contributing most to their rise were the Permanent Settlement (1793), which created a class of zamindars and rentiers, the spread of English education, the expansion of British administration which created opportunities for Indians in the bureaucracy and the establishment of a judicial system, networks of medical administration and engi-



ITS STUMBLES NOTWITHSTANDING, THE BOOK PROVIDES MUCH USEFUL INFORMATION AND INSIGHTS INTO THE EMERGENCE OF BANGLADESH AND THE EVOLUTION OF INDIA-BANGLADESH RELATIONS WITH THEIR STORMY AND SUNNY INTERLUDES

neering services, which led to the rise of the professions.

All this deserves mention because Muslim Bhadralok, emerging in the wake of their Hindu predecessors, played an important role in Bangladesh's liberation struggle and its post-independence politics. While the two leading political parties, Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), are led by Sheikh Hasina and Begum Khaleda Zia, both Bhadramahilas (women Bhadralok), the leaders of the organisational layers below them are mainly Muslim Bhadralok.

Its stumbles notwithstanding, the book provides much useful information and insights into the emergence of Bangladesh and the evolution of India-Bangladesh relations with their stormy and sunny interludes. It also provides an exhaustive account of Bangladesh's increasingly contentious internal politics. The book's narrative ends before elections to the country's National Parliament on January 7, 2024, which were boycotted by the BNP and which the AL won securing 224 out of the 300 seats in contest.

Sheikh Hasina, however, has to grapple with the adverse economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine War and the increasing spread

of fundamentalist Islam in Bangladesh. The first has led to discontent against her Government. The second, which threatens the secularism embedded in Bangladesh's constitution, led to the rise of terrorist outfits resorting to violent acts, the most outrageous of which was the attack on the Holy Artisan Bakery, a restaurant in a posh Dhaka neighbourhood, in which 20 persons, including an Indian, were killed, on July 1, 2016. Sheikh Hasina has squelched the terrorist outfits but has to deal with kid gloves organisations like Hefazat-e-Islam preaching fundamentalist Islam.

Her ascent to power for the second time as prime minister in 2009, initiated a continuing friendly chapter in India-Bangladesh relations. Nevertheless, pressures on both countries are many and neither can take things for granted. Chakravarty's narrative is enriched by his ringside view of events both as India's Deputy High Commissioner (1999-2002) and High Commissioner (2007-09) to Bangladesh. His book needs to be read, over and over again, by all those interested in India-Bangladesh ties which, in turn, have an important bearing on South Asian geo-politics.

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TRAGIC BUS ACCIDENT IN JAMMU

Madam — Apropos the news story "21 killed, 47 injured as bus falls into gorge in Jammu," published on May 30, this is my response. Reading about the tragic bus accident in Jammu, where 21 lives were lost and 47 people were injured, is truly heartbreaking. The accident occurred when a bus carrying pilgrims skidded off the road and plunged into a gorge, highlighting once again the perils of road travel in treacherous terrains. The grief expressed by Jammu and Kashmir's Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha resonates with the deep sorrow felt by all.

The details are chilling: a failed negotiation of a blind curve, an oncoming speeding car and a catastrophic fall of 150 feet into the gorge. The prompt response by the rescue teams and the efforts to provide immediate medical assistance to the injured are commendable, yet the loss remains profound. This incident underscores the urgent need for enhanced road safety measures and stricter regulations to prevent such heartbreaking occurrences in the future. My thoughts and prayers go out to the affected families.

Arjun Desai | Chandigarh

RBI DIVIDEND BOOSTS GDP

Madam — Apropos the news story "Record RBI dividend at 0.6 per cent of GDP may not be sustained Fitch," published on May 28, this is my response. The above alluring cum enticing and burning news from the stable of RBI that the same has declared record-high supernormal dividend growth by the central bank is simply a win-win situation for both duo viz. Apex Bank of India and the Government of India. Furthermore, the same news by the US (United States) credit rating agency cum giant Fitch Ratings Inc. will give a nitro boost to the economic growth GDP (gross domestic product) of our country. Furthermore, the above-mentioned spectacular news is a source of pride for the RBI, a bourse country Government and its citizens.

Delhi's water crisis worsens



Apropos the news story "Mad scramble for water in several areas as Delhi grapples with a severe shortage," published on May 30, this is my response. The water crisis in Delhi has reached alarming levels, with residents in areas like Chanakyapuri struggling to secure necessities. Despite Government measures to curb water use, such as banning potable water

for car washing, the situation remains dire. The sight of people scrambling with empty buckets and climbing atop water tankers underscores the desperation.

Deepak Srivastava and Janki, long-term residents, express frustration over the lack of consistent water supply, blaming political parties for neglecting basic needs in favour of electoral gains. The severe heatwave exacerbates the issue, with temperatures nearing 50 degrees Celsius. The Delhi Government's emergency actions, including inspections at car service centres, offer some hope, but the fundamental problem persists. Videos of the crisis shared on social media highlight the stark reality: in 2024, in India's capital, access to water will remain a daily battle for many. This calls for urgent, sustainable solutions from both local and national authorities.

Vihaan Verma | Jaipur

Additionally, the above awesome cum uber-cool news has become a burning topic among both the masses and classes. Moreover, from now on, after enjoying the windfall dividend of the central bank, the Government of India will keep a close tab on RBI stock. Additionally, after giving oh-so-uber cum oh-so-uber supernormal dividend growth, the RBI will again work day and night to deliver more and more windfall dividends to the Government of India. Additionally, the above news has received a red-carpet welcome from both print media and electronic media.

Harminder | Lucknow

PRAGGNANANDHAA'S TRIUMPH

Madam — Apropos the news story "Norway chess: Praggnanandhaa claims maiden classical win over Carlsen, takes sole lead," published on May 30, this is my response. Reading about Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa's remarkable victory over world number one Magnus Carlsen in the Classical format is truly thrilling.

This win is particularly significant because it marks the first time Praggnanandhaa has defeated Carlsen in this format, after several previous encounters in faster game versions. At just 18 years old, his achievement underscores his incredible talent and positions him as a leading contender in the Norway chess tournament, ahead of seasoned players like Fabiano Caruana and reigning world champion Ding Liren.

Praggnanandhaa's strategic play, especially using the less-favoured Sicilian Kann opening, demonstrates his deep understanding and innovative approach to the game. Meanwhile, the women's section also showcases the prowess of Praggnanandhaa's sister, R Vaishali, who leads her group. This family of chess prodigies is making significant waves in the chess world, promising an exciting future for Indian chess.

Arnav Patel | Ahmedabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Economic growth raises sustainability concerns

As Indians embrace a culture of 'wants' over 'needs,' there's a growing urgency to address the unsustainable patterns of consumption

Over time, India has shown remarkable progress in GDP growth rates. It currently ranks fifth surpassing the United Kingdom in 2022 and with its promising performance, is expected to overtake Japan by 2025. Amidst the celebration of becoming the fourth largest economy, a worrisome aspect is the rising consumption level of the huge population and its alarming impact on sustainability. Consumption is the driving force behind prospering economic growth. It has a multiplier effect as investors respond to positive consumption by increasing production and hiring more workers, who in turn, spend more, further boosting economic activity.

Consumerism is dominating the world and India is no exception indeed. The estimates of average Monthly per capita consumer expenditure (MPCE) according to the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey, 2022-23 reveal a 33.5 per cent increase by urban households since 2011-12, reaching ₹3,510, while rural India's MPCE increased by 40.42



per cent to ₹2,008. India's consumption story reminds us of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, a psychological theory proposed by Abraham Maslow (1943), wherein there is a transition from psychological needs comprising necessities to security to esteem and self-actualisation needs. A noteworthy phenomenon of this shift from 'needs to wants' is the unlimited nature of the latter and the subsequent and alarming wastage of resources.

High consumption can have alarming repercussions on sustainability and long-term economic and social welfare. Foremost, it leads to resource depletion, which may be non-renewable and therefore irreversible, causing scarcity, higher costs and potential financial instability. Environmental degradation is another externality of excessive consumption which includes pollution, deforesta-

tion, biodiversity loss and waste production. According to the Central Pollution Control Board, 2020-21 Annual Report, the total quantity of Solid waste generated in the country is 160038.9 tonnes per day (TPD), out of which 79956.3 TPD (50 per cent) of waste is treated and 29427.2 (18.4 per cent) TPD is landfilled. 50655.4 TPD which is 31.7 per cent of the total waste generated remains ironically unaccounted for. Besides, high consumption also leads to increasing use of fossil fuels and products with large carbon footprints, significantly contributing to climate change.

Given large income disparities in India, even the benefits of high consumption are not evenly distributed. While some people and regions may experience significant economic growth, others may be left behind, exacerbating further economic inequality. While at one end consumption is essential for economic growth, at the same time it is threatening long-term sustainability. To ensure that high consumption contributes to sustainable eco-

nomical growth, we need to encourage consumption patterns that are environmentally friendly and socially responsible. This can be achieved through rampant education, incentives and regulations.

We need to radically work towards investing in renewable resources to reduce the environmental impact of high consumption. The Government needs to implement policies and regulations that encourage sustainable practices and mitigate the negative impacts of high consumption. This includes environmental regulations, carbon pricing and incentives for green technologies. We also need to develop diverse economic activities that do not solely rely on high consumption levels.

By sensibly managing consumption and prioritizing sustainability, it is possible to achieve economic growth that benefits society while preserving the environment for future generations.

(The author is assistant professor at Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, University of Delhi; views are personal)



KAJLEEN KAUR



FIRST COLUMN WITNESSING THE DIVINE PRESENCE

There are multiple instances where the Supreme manifests itself



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

I was watching 'pran pratistha' of Lord Rama's Deity in the new temple constructed at the birthplace of the Lord. As the ceremony progressed, I began to notice subtle changes in the Lord's expression; He was coming alive. I was amazed, but I couldn't fail to notice the change as it happened. My experience was corroborated by the sculptor, who made this idol. He admitted that what he had sculpted was a lot different, meaning that the expression he had given was quite sober. By the way, pran pratistha is a transformative act of bringing the idol to life. This manifestation is nothing amazing. God appears even in person. The following five true life stories will exemplify this. The first one chosen is when Lord Krishna appeared as Draupadi was being attempted to be disrobed in the royal court of Dhritarashtra. Draupadi in desperation prayed for help by chanting — "Krishna, Krishna, Krishna". The Lord appeared and provided endless sarees to save Draupadi from humiliation. The second incident chosen is when Surdasa falls into a ditch, him being blind. He attempted to get out but failed. He called for help, but no one came. The place was deserted. His worshipable Lord knew that His true devotee needed help. He came and saw Surdasa sitting down and singing bhajan completely oblivious of the sorry situation he was in. Lord asked him, "Why are you not trying to get out?" Surdasa replied, "I did and failed. I realised that only you could help me." The Lord gave Surdasa His hand and helped him to come out. There is a famous bhajan when Surdasa implores the Lord not to leave him.



The third incident happened a few years back. A close relative of mine was sitting in a temple near her home deeply engrossed in thought. A babaji appeared in front of her. He spoke to her, "You are greatly troubled by the behaviour of your in-laws. Don't worry. You will suffer a certain disease, he named it, due to the stress caused by it. But it will be cured; will not make you suffer much. Before this relative could react, this person had gone away. That disease did trouble her but came under control soon. This relative is a sincere devotee of God. The fourth example is related to a friend of mine. He is a staunch devotee of God. Over the last five decades, he has made enormous spiritual progress. He is in his late nineties and still going strong. His wife passed away recently after a brief illness. He tried to prevent it by chanting a mantra. He also hoped that she would get an excellent birth next time. As he was overdoing it, God arranged for an aged lady to come to his house. She informed him that his wife would pass away on the fifteenth day. He was shocked. By the time he gathered his wits, she was gone. Was she God Himself or a person chosen by God? The last example is of an American. He had become very rich, but he was neither peaceful nor happy. Intrigued, he had to find the reason. Was material wealth not the solution to all our problems and he had plenty of it? He started visiting various churches but got no satisfactory answer. Disappointed, he decided to come to India - the spiritual capital of the world. Same result here also with bogus gurus trying to manipulate him. Highly frustrated, he was sitting down on a bench on the bank of the Ganges in Haridwar. He was in deep thought when someone tapped him on his shoulder. He opened his eyes and saw a saintly person standing in front of him. He said, "Don't be so sad. Take shelter of God. And the best way is to follow God's instructions as detailed in the bona fide scriptures. Buy a copy of the Bhagavad-Geeta." When he opened his eyes, the saintly person was not to be seen. Can we have similar experiences with God? Yes, we can. God is always quite forthcoming. We just have to qualify for it. How do you do that? It is simpler than what you can imagine. Do spiritual practices, which suit your nature. For example, I do 'darshan' and 'naman', chanting, thanking and praying regularly. Once a certain amount of spiritual credits has been accumulated, God gets active in our lives. (The writer is a spiritual guide; views are personal)

Recycle nutrients to mitigate fertiliser crisis



NANDULA RAGHURAM

Many elements crucial for life on Earth are depleting rapidly due to disrupted biogeochemical cycles caused by human activities

If you think carbon is bad enough, other essential elements that sustain life on Earth are also crossing the planetary boundaries of sustainability, as their natural 'biogeochemical' cycles are broken by human activities. For about ten thousand years before the 'green' revolution, farmers grew crops without fertilisers by combining legume-based crop rotations and livestock farming. Legume crops and some soil microbes fixed atmospheric nitrogen, while livestock manure and urine enriched the soil with nutrients such as compounds of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), potassium (K), sulfur (S), carbon (C) and even micronutrients. But modern cropping in India shifted away from legume-based crop rotations and relies heavily on NPK fertilisers rather than manures, costing the Indian govt over Rs. 2 lakh crores per year in subsidy.

As livestock farming moved away from crops and intensified as peri-urban dairies, manure and urine mostly find their way to our ground and surface water bodies. The release of untreated dairy or domestic and other wastes has reduced the Sahibi River in New Delhi to a wastewater drain (Nazafgarh drain), which along with the Shahdara drain heavily pollutes the river Yamuna, apart from releasing noxious gases into the air.

The nutrient cycles have thus become cascades causing nutrient pollution, but the good news is that some pollutants are nutrients in the wrong place and can be brought back. Unfortunately, less than 30 per cent of the fertiliser nutrients supplied as fertilizers are harvested as crop yield and the remaining add to the growing pollution. In water bodies, the accumulation of these nutrients supports unwanted algal growth causing eutrophication and death of fish and other useful aquatic and marine species. This destroys the ecosystem and the livelihoods of people who depend on fishing, tourism and other ecosystem services. In our coastal areas, algal eutrophication progressively causes green tides, brown and eventually red tides and even the accumulation of poisonous species. The reversal of these trends can rebuild water economies and support the livelihoods of millions. Nitrogenous compounds from fertilisers, manures, urine and sewage also cause air pollution as ammonia or nitrous oxide. Ammonia contributes heavily to particulate matter pollution (PM2.5 and PM10) by combining with NOx gases (nitrogen dioxide and nitric oxide) emitted from fuel or residue burning for power, transport industry, or waste disposal. Over a million deaths per year are attributed to PM2.5 alone in India, while some attribute up to 7 per cent of all deaths to PM2.5, as India has the largest number of the world's most polluted cities in terms of PM2.5. These figures call for drastic measures to control air pollution in general and PM2.5 in particular, but it needs not only curbing pollution from fuel burning but also restoring the nutrient cycles in agriculture and waste management.

While a fraction of livestock manure is recycled for cropping in India, urine recycling is nearly nonexistent. If we recycled all the 15 kg per animal per day of manure produced by 200 million cattle, its 5 per cent NPK nutrients amount to 1,50,000 metric tons. This is much more than our average daily fertiliser consumption, which is about 1,37,000 metric tons. Add to this about 3 per cent of nutrients lost from 15-20 litres of cattle urine per animal per day totalling



WE ALREADY KNOW THAT AT LEAST HALF OF THE CURRENTLY RECOMMENDED FERTILISER DOSES CAN BE REPLACED WITH FARMYARD MANURE WITHOUT ANY LOSS OF CROP YIELD

1,20,000 metric tons. Technologies and best practices are available from Europe and elsewhere to maximise nutrient retention and recycling from manure and urine. We already know that at least half of the currently recommended fertiliser doses can be replaced with farmyard manure without any loss of crop yield. It not only saves a lakh crores but also reduces the environmental footprint of fertilisers, manures and agriculture itself. Similarly, over 55,000 metric tonnes of nutrients equivalent to 40 per cent of our fertiliser consumption are lost daily from over 150 billion litres of wastewater produced per day in India. This is because of our abysmally low wastewater treatment capacity of about 27 per cent. Most sewage treatment plants (STPs) exist only in the cities and only a few of them work. Fortunately, some metropolitan cities like Delhi and Hyderabad are rapidly expanding their STP capacity to become 100 per cent wastewater treatment capable in a year or two and some other big cities in India are following suit. However, they vary in their efficiency of nutrient removal, which must be addressed immediately to ensure that the purpose of treatment is fully realised and that the treatment plants become resource plants by selling the recovered nutrients. There is a growing emphasis worldwide on preventing the wastage of nutrients and recycling them. The most notable among them is Target 7 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity at its 15th Conference of Parties in 2022: It seeks to "Reduce pollution risks and the negative impact of pollution from all sources by 2030, to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services considering cumulative effects, including (a) by reducing excess nutrients lost to the environment by at least half, including through more efficient nutrient cycling and use". In Europe, where extensive recycling

of livestock manure and urine is already in practice, the new buzzword is the so-called RENURE (recovery of nitrogen from manure) policy of the European Commission (2024). As such proposals are debated to ensure that they contribute to overall sustainability objectives in the European context, it is important to note the policy attention that the recovery and recycling of nutrients has garnered. In the meantime, a Swedish fertiliser company, Ragn-Sells, has patented a process to recover nutrients from wastewater and convert them into industry-grade fertilisers and spun off a company easyming.se to launch it in Europe within a year. If India can set up such units attached to our STPs, they can hugely reduce the economic and environmental costs of earlier fertiliser technologies, generate green jobs.

Delhi alone produces about 3330 Million Litres per Day (MLD) of wastewater, far over the installed and operational treatment capacities of the city's 38 STPs (CPCB, 2021). The Delhi Government has set its target to achieve 100 per cent wastewater treatment by 2025 and increase the reuse of treated wastewater from 12.5 per cent to 60 per cent with the proposed utilisation of 197 MGD, 112 MGD and 10 MGD treated sewage for drinking purposes, irrigation and rejuvenation of water bodies respectively (CPCB, 2021). We conducted some studies on the wastewater nutrients and their recovery/recycling potential in several STPs of the national capital, aided by the University's memorandum of understanding with the Delhi Jal Board.

They were funded by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) under the Global Wastewater Initiative and the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management. Our studies found that the current level of removal of phosphatic nutrients in various STPs of Delhi varies between 35-74 per cent and 14-93 per cent for nitrogenous nutrients. Except for the Akshardham STP, which oper-

ated at the higher end of the range, most of the other STPs we studied were closer to the lower end of the range, indicating the huge scope to improve nutrient recovery. A similar study will be undertaken in Hyderabad soon, in association with agricultural scientists who will also test the crop performance and estimate the amount of commercial fertiliser that can be saved by recycling nutrients recovered from wastewater.

Such efforts will hugely improve the quality of treated water for various uses and also relieve the water crisis looming over India's metropolitan cities. In Delhi, the nutrient-depleted water is also critical to expediting the rejuvenation of the water bodies of Delhi, as the quality of treated water currently used is not good enough to revive the heavily eutrophicated water bodies.

As for the recycling of nutrients removed from wastewater, currently, there are huge piles of nutrient-rich sludge in the backyard of every working STP. They need to be developed and marketed as alternatives to fertiliser by building necessary market linkages and supply chains as needed.

This is already happening to some extent in Hyderabad but needs to be scaled up further to clear the inventory. An important task is to find ways to pre-process the sludge to minimise the heavy metals, plastics and other undesirables we found coexisting with nutrients in the sludge in Delhi. Overall, on a national scale, if we recover and recycle the 84 per cent of nutrients lost in wastewater for agriculture, up to forty per cent of our national fertiliser consumption can be saved. In economic terms, these savings are equivalent to the entire R&D budget of the Government of India.

(The writer is a Professor and Head of, the Centre for Sustainable Nitrogen and Nutrient Management School of Biotechnology, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi; views are personal)

Haryana is driving towards progress and prosperity

Haryana is emerging as a beacon of economic prosperity and social development, embodying the vision of 'Viksit Haryana for Viksit Bharat'

Haryana embodies courage and strength. 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. Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently said at the major rallies in Ambala and Sonapat, highlighting the opposition's deceitful intentions and reaffirming the BJP's dedication to Haryana's development. In his second mega rally in Sonapat, Modi shed light on the Congress party's past misdeeds and their desperate attempts to regain power. In another incident earlier this month, Haryana stood on the cusp of an emotional milestone. In a display of unprecedented support and



KIRIT P SOLANKI

enthusiasm, former Chief Minister of Haryana, Manohar Lal Khattar, led a mega rally at Ganaur, Sonapat, endorsing Lok Sabha candidate Mohan Lal Badoli. The event, attended by over 15,000 fervent supporters, marked a significant moment in Haryana's political landscape. Manohar, renowned for his progressive policies and transformative governance, was warmly received by the crowd,

underscoring the deep-rooted admiration and trust he commands among the populace. His rally served as a testament to the enduring popularity of Manohar's leadership and the impactful strides taken by the 'double engine Government' in the State. The Modi-Manohar effect has been instrumental in spearheading numerous initiatives aimed at propelling Haryana towards economic prosperity and social development. Under their stewardship, Haryana has emerged as a magnet for investments and a hub of opportunities, embodying the vision of 'Viksit Haryana for Viksit Bharat'. The rally, infused with patriotic fervour and untiring support, emphasised the staunch resolve of

Haryana's electorate to chart a path towards progress and prosperity. As the political landscape evolves, Manohar's rally stands as a testament to the enduring legacy of visionary leadership and the collective determination to realise a brighter future for Haryana and the nation at large. From bolstering transparency in Government job recruitments to empowering the youth through the Haryana Kausal Rozgar Nigam, the State has witnessed a paradigm shift under the astute leadership of Manohar Lal Khattar. The establishment of all-women police stations, initiatives like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and a surge in infrastructure projects underscore the Government's untiring commitment to holistic

development. Haryana's rise as an investment destination is nothing short of spectacular, with exports soaring and MSMEs mushrooming across the State. In the textile and apparel sector, Haryana's prowess shines through, with a significant contribution to India's exports. With over 35 per cent of carpets and 20 per cent of garments manufactured in the State, Haryana is cementing its position as a textile powerhouse. The strategic alignment with national initiatives like the PM Gati Shakti Yojana and the establishment of industrial parks exemplify Haryana's proactive approach towards economic prosperity. The State's healthcare infrastructure has received a significant boost, with the establishment

of medical universities and skill development centres catering to the evolving needs of the populace. The number of medical colleges has surged from 6 in 2014 to 15 and the number of MBBS seats has increased from 700 to 2185. Moreover, the number of PG seats in medical colleges has grown from 289 to 1006. The State has further enhanced nutritional outcomes for children, adolescents, pregnant women and lactating mothers through the POSHAN Abhiyan. In agriculture, schemes like PM-KISAN and PM Fasal Bima Yojana have provided a safety net for farmers, ensuring their livelihood security. Today, PM-KISAN has benefited over 20 lakh farmers in

the State with assistance of over Rs. 5,000 crore. Haryana plays a pivotal role in India's journey towards becoming a global nutrition hub. There are ambitious plans that include promoting the State's coarse grains like jowar and millet on the international stage, the implementation of the world's largest warehouse project and the creation of specialised clusters over the next 5 years. Also, there are plans for a revolutionary drone initiative in farming, empowering mothers and sisters with drone pilot training to harness the latest technology in agriculture.

Cultural preservation and promotion have been integral to Haryana's development narrative, with initiatives like the PM Vishwakarma Yojana

fostering artisanal traditions and 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' fostering cultural exchange. The State's rich heritage is being showcased through initiatives like the Anubhav Kendra Jyotisar and the development of archaeological sites like Rakhi Garhi. The 'double engine Government' has proven instrumental in leveraging resources for comprehensive growth, be it in agriculture, infrastructure, or education. Prime Minister Modi emphasised, The dawn of a new era, led by visionary leadership and fueled by the aspirations of its people, promises a brighter tomorrow for the State and the nation at large.

(The writer is a Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

Key infra sectors growth rises to 6.2 per cent in April

Eight key infrastructure sectors' growth rose to 6.2 per cent in April on healthy expansion in the production of natural gas, refinery products and electricity, according to official data released on Friday. The production of eight sectors grew by 6 per cent in March. The growth of these core sectors -- coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity -- was 4.6 per cent in April 2023. The official data showed that fertiliser output recorded negative growth in April. The production growth of coal, steel and cement slowed down to 7.5 per cent, 7.1 per cent and 0.6 per cent, respectively against 9.1 per cent, 16.6 per cent and 12.4 per cent in April 2023, respectively. The eight core sectors contribute 40.27 per cent to the country's Index of Industrial Production (IIP).



Tesla recalling more than 125,000 vehicles to fix seat belt system

Tesla is recalling more than 125,000 vehicles to fix a seat belt warning system that may increase the risk of an injury in a collision. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said that the recall includes certain 2012-2024 Model S, 2015-2024 Model X, 2017-2023 Model 3, and 2020-2023 Model Y vehicles. The seat belt warning system is supposed to provide audible and visual seat belt reminder signals to drivers to alert them that their seat belt isn't fastened. The NHTSA said that on certain vehicles, the audible and visual seat belt reminder signals were not going off at the time they were supposed to, which doesn't comply with federal safety requirements. The NHTSA said that as of Tuesday, Tesla had identified 104 warranty claims that may be related to the condition. The company isn't aware of any collisions, fatalities or injuries that may be related to the condition.



Gold rises Rs 50; silver declines Rs 500

Gold prices gained Rs 50 to Rs 72,900 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday in line with firm trends in the international markets, according to HDFC Securities. The precious metal had closed at Rs 72,850 per 10 grams in the previous session. However, silver prices plunged Rs 500 to Rs 95,500 per kg. It had settled at Rs 96,000 per kg on Thursday. "Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 72,900 per 10 grams, up Rs 50 against the previous close," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In the overseas markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at US\$ 2,341 per ounce, up US\$ 2 from the previous close. Gold rose slightly on Friday, aided by disappointing US first-quarter GDP data that suggested a downturn in the US economy, Gandhi said. However, silver were quoting lower at US\$ 31.20 per ounce. In the previous session, it had finished at US\$ 31.65 per ounce.



Adani Group profit jumps 55%

Eyes US\$ 90 bn investment over next decade

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Adani group saw a 55 per cent profit surge in the fiscal year ended March 2024 as the apples-to-airport conglomerate is back on an expansion spree and eyeing a US\$ 90 billion capex over the next decade.

Emerging from a damning report of a US short seller, which hit market value of its listed companies, Adani group in 2023-24 (April 2023 to March 2024) fiscal focused on containing debt, reducing founder share pledge and consolidating business in core competencies.

This helped net profit surge to Rs 30,767 crore for the group's listed companies in the fiscal from Rs 19,833 crore a year ago, according to exchange data and analysts.

The 5-year CAGR (compound annual growth rate) for profit growth was 54 per cent.

EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization) rose 40 per

cent to Rs 66,244 crore despite a 6 per cent fall in the revenue. "Total group EBITDA grew 40 per cent year-on-year in FY24 (5-year CAGR of over 27 per cent), group raised fresh funds from equity/debt/strategic investors, promoter increased stake in group companies and group Mcap rebounded," Jefferies said in a note. "The group is back on an expansion spree and eyeing US\$ 90 billion capex over next decade."



Group leverage was at a multi-year low, the US-based brokerage said. "Net debt at the group level (8 companies plus debt related to cement business acquisition) remained stable at Rs 2.2 lakh crore in FY24 vs Rs 2.3 lakh crore. Net debt/EBITDA improved materially to 3.3x FY24 EBITDA vs 5x year-on-year," it said.

Adani Ports and Adani Power saw a drop in net debt in FY24. Increase in leverage for Adani Enterprises and Adani Green was on the back

of new capex projects undertaken by companies. In FY24, the group's flagship Adani Enterprises commissioned an ingot wafer unit as part of solar module manufacturing, wind turbine facility and copper smelter. Adani Cement completed the Sanghi Cement acquisition while promoters infused more funds in the company.

Adani Ports acquired Gopalpur port, Adani Power commissioned 1.6 GW Godda power plant, Adani Green added 2.8GW renewable energy capacity and commenced operations of solar power project in Khavda, Gujarat, and Adani Energy Solutions put up 1,244 circuit kilometers of transmission lines.

On the way forward, Jefferies said, "Adani Enterprises is amid scaling its captive manufacturing capacity towards starting green hydrogen production by FY27; Navi Mumbai Airport appears likely to commission by 4QFY25; data centre projects are scaling up."

State-owned Canara Bank on Friday said the board of the bank has given approval for raising Rs 8,500 crore through bonds to fund business growth in 2024-25. The decision in this respect was taken in a meeting held on Friday. The board of the bank has approved raising Capital through Basel III Compliant Additional Tier I Bonds to the extent of Rs 4,000 crore subject to market conditions and necessary approvals, Canara Bank said in a regulatory filing. Besides, it approved raising funds through Basel III Compliant Tier II Bonds to the extent of Rs 4,500 crore, it said.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Canara Bank board approves fund raising of Rs 8,500 cr

State-owned Canara Bank on Friday said the board of the bank has given approval for raising Rs 8,500 crore through bonds to fund business growth in 2024-25. The decision in this respect was taken in a meeting held on Friday. The board of the bank has approved raising Capital through Basel III Compliant Additional Tier I Bonds to the extent of Rs 4,000 crore subject to market conditions and necessary approvals, Canara Bank said in a regulatory filing. Besides, it approved raising funds through Basel III Compliant Tier II Bonds to the extent of Rs 4,500 crore, it said.

'Maharashtra attracted highest FDI for second consecutive year'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday said the state has attracted the highest foreign direct investment (FDI) in the country for the second consecutive year.

Quoting a latest report from Department for Promotion of Investment and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Fadnavis said that after becoming number one in attracting FDI in 2022-23, Maharashtra repeated the feat in 2023-24.

As per the data released by DPIIT on May 30, he said, Maharashtra has received more FDI this time than last year. "It takes courage to walk the talk, act and prove yourself; but mere jabbering

State	FDI Inflow (USD Billion)	FDI Inflow (USD Million)	FDI Inflow (USD Crore)
Maharashtra	12.1	12,100	12,100
Gujarat	11.5	11,500	11,500
Tamil Nadu	10.8	10,800	10,800
Karnataka	9.2	9,200	9,200
West Bengal	8.5	8,500	8,500
Andhra Pradesh	7.8	7,800	7,800
Kerala	7.1	7,100	7,100
Odisha	6.4	6,400	6,400
Uttar Pradesh	5.7	5,700	5,700
Rajasthan	5.0	5,000	5,000
Haryana	4.3	4,300	4,300
Madhya Pradesh	3.6	3,600	3,600
Chhattisgarh	2.9	2,900	2,900
Assam	2.2	2,200	2,200
Goa	1.5	1,500	1,500
Uttarakhand	0.8	800	800
Jharkhand	0.1	100	100
Chandigarh	0.0	0	0
Delhi	0.0	0	0
NCT of Jammu and Kashmir	0.0	0	0
NCT of Ladakh	0.0	0	0
NCT of Sikkim	0.0	0	0
NCT of Tripura	0.0	0	0
NCT of Puducherry	0.0	0	0

takes no courage," he said in a post on X. The deputy CM said in the financial year 2022-23, the state received FDI worth Rs 1,18,422 crore, while it jumped to Rs 1,25,101 crore in 2023-24.

The investment in this financial year is more than double the total investment received by Gujarat, and more than the combined sum of second-ranked Gujarat and third-ranked Karnataka, he claimed. Maharashtra, which lagged behind in attracting investment during MVA (Maha Vikas Aghadi) tenure, has once again risen to top position for two consecutive years, he said. The DPIIT report, shared by Fadnavis on X, says Maharashtra received Rs 1,14,964 crore foreign investment in 2021-22, while Karnataka got Rs 1,63,795 crore.

Sebi slaps Rs 2.5 cr fine on TIL, former officials over misdeeds

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi has imposed a penalty of Rs 2.5 crore on TIL Ltd and three former officials for indulging in fictitious purchase and sales leading to over-statement of sales and revenue for 2019-20 and 2020-21.

The fine needs to be paid within 45 days, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in its order.

Individually, the regulator has levied a fine of Rs 1 crore each on TIL and Sumit Mazumder, who was the chairman and managing director at the time of the violation. He is also one of the promoters of the company.

Besides, a penalty of Rs 25 lakh each has been imposed on then CEO Ramesh Aggarwal and former CFO Shibaditya Ghosh.

In its order, Sebi noted

that the modus operandi followed by TIL was that it had issued fictitious invoices in the past financial years, which were subsequently cancelled in the next financial years by the issuance of credit notes and re-invoiced on the same day without proper documents to increase the sales turnover or trade receivables so as to maintain the credit facilities availed from the banks.

CCPA fines coaching institute Maluka IAS for misleading ads

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed a penalty of Rs 3 lakh on coaching institute Maluka IAS for making misleading advertisements, the government body said on Friday.

The CCPA found that Maluka IAS concealed important information about the courses taken by students it claimed had cleared the prestigious Indian Civil Services exams in its advertisements.

The institute's ads claimed "120+ selections in UPSC CSE 2022" and "Guaranteed Prelims & Mains", but did not disclose that only two of the 136 successful candidates had taken paid courses, while the remaining 134 students had enrolled in a free interview guidance programme, an official statement said.

The consumer regulator said the advertisements violated provisions of the Consumer Protection Act of 2019 related to misleading advertisements by "deliberately concealing important information".

Govt urges over 100 corporates, unicorns to set up incubation centres for mfg sector startups

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has urged over 100 corporates, including Tata, Hyundai, and Apple, as well as unicorns to set up incubation centres for manufacturing sector startups, an official said on Friday. The Department for Promotion of Investment and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has shared a handbook with the companies on corporate incubation and acceleration.

"We have requested over 100 corporates to have their manufacturing incubators. We have requested companies such as Tata, Hyundai, and Apple as well as unicorns. As we are lacking

in this space and we have taken internal goal of creating 50 such entities in near future," the official said. The National Council for Cement and Building Materials has already set up the centre. Developing a strong manufacturing base is an essential activity for any nation as it promotes innovation and competitiveness, boosts employment, livelihoods and standards of living, and strengthens self-reliance and economic stability.

Startups and entrepreneurs in the nation have been playing a significant role in shifting global value chains to India by creating and innovating domestically.

Dvara Kshetriya Gramin Financial posts over 200% rise in FY'24 net profits

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Dvara Kshetriya Gramin Financial Services Pvt Ltd (Dvara KGFS) has reported a 230 per cent rise in its net profit after tax for the year ending March 31, 2024, at Rs 47.53 crore.

The city-based firm registered a profit after tax of Rs 14.36 crore in the corresponding period of the last financial year.

The total income during the year ending March 31, 2024, grew by 47.93 per cent to Rs 565.11 crore, from Rs 382.01 crore registered in the same

period of last year.

Commenting on the financial performance, Dvara KGFS Managing Director and CEO LVLN Murty said, "We are delighted with the strong financial results achieved in FY'24 and stay ever committed to bettering our operational efficiency and customer-centricity."

"The remarkable growth in our Gross Loan Portfolio and profitability metrics underscores our dedication to financial inclusion and creating sustainable impact.

India's GDP expands 7.8% in Q4, 8.2% in FY24

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's economy growth slowed to a four-quarter low of 7.8 per cent in the January-March period, but pushed the annual growth rate for FY24 to 8.2 per cent, mainly on account of good showing by manufacturing, official data showed on Friday.

The growth propelled the Indian economy to US\$ 3.5 trillion and set the stage for

achieving the US\$ 5-trillion target in the next few years. In the previous 2022-23 fiscal year, the economy grew 7 per cent.

China has registered an economic growth of 5.3 per cent in the first three months of 2024.

The economic expansion was recorded at 7.8 per cent during the January-March 2024, while it was 8.6 per cent in October-December 2023

and 8.1 per cent in July-September 2023.

The growth was 8.2 per cent in April-June 2023, as per data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO).

The GDP grew 6.2 per cent in the January-March quarter of 2022-23.

The NSO, in its second advance estimate released in February, had projected the GDP growth for 2022-23 at 7.7 per cent.

'Kotak Bank's credit profile will improve over next 12 months'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Kotak Mahindra Bank will be able to improve its credit and funding profile over the next 12 months despite some impact on growth and profitability because of the RBI's restriction on onboarding new customers online, S&P Global Ratings credit analyst Nikita Anand said on Friday.

In April, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had barred Kotak Mahindra Bank from issuing fresh credit cards and boarding new customers online. Anand said S&P's base case assumption is that the bank should be able to manage the impact on its credit profile and the lender has made significant progress on tech enhancement in last 18

months, which includes the hiring of senior level executive like the Chief Technology Officer. However, it will take time for the bank to implement the changes highlighted by the RBI and conduct a comprehensive external audit to address the RBI's concerns, she said.

"Nonetheless, it remains an overhang on the bank's credit profile over the next 12 months or so... We believe the next 12 months or so, we should be able to remove the negative adjustments and the bank should be able to manage the credit profile in general and funding profile in particular, notwithstanding some impact on growth and profitability," Anand said in a webinar.

Country's talent pool in spotlight

Victory of Indian innovators at AI championship in Dubai

PNS ■ DUBAI

Two innovators from India have won in two categories at the inaugural Global Prompt Engineering Championship in Dubai, collectively taking home two-thirds of the million-dirham prize pool, and spotlighting India's growing talent pool and global influence in the field of Artificial Intelligence.

The competition, which attracted the brightest minds from around the world, saw Aditya Nair win in the 'Literature' category and Ajay Cyril win in the 'Coding' category, earning them international praise.

Nair produced a compelling short story in record time using AI, winning the literature category at the Global Prompt

Engineering Championship. "Putting a 10-minute timer on each round definitely was the most challenging aspect of



the competition. In addition, we had to get an output that was of a very high quality, which has made me a faster prompter as a result of the championship," Nair, who currently works in AI innovation, said. "I was very happy to participate in the competition. This experience opened my eyes to the real

potential of this innovative technology. I urge everyone to work on upskilling themselves through continuous learning

level playing field in AI. Cyril, a product leader at Etisalat (e& enterprise, a telecommunication company), won the coding category at the Global Prompt Engineering Championship. Although primarily a product and business strategist rather than a developer, Cyril's passion for new technologies and proactive engagement with AI contributed to his success. Cyril has led the development of innovative products in IoT, Smart Homes, Cloud Platforms, and AI at major global companies, such as Tata Communications, Airtel, and Etisalat. Since relocating to Dubai in 2019, he has been committed to driving forward the frontiers of technological innovation in the region.

Vedanta posts 2nd highest ever consolidated EBITDA

PNS ■ LONDON

Vedanta Resources, the parent company of India-listed mining group, posted its second highest ever consolidated EBITDA of US\$ 4.7 billion for FY24, a year which its chairman Anil Agarwal described as 'pivotal year' that will result in "a strong Vedanta."

Revenue (before special items) for the year at US\$ 17.1 billion was 6 per cent lower than US\$ 18.1 billion of the previous year "primarily driven by lower output commodity prices primarily of aluminium, zinc and brent, partially offset by higher volume at aluminium, copper

and iron ore business," the conglomerate said in a statement on its website.

It posted the second highest ever consolidated EBITDA of US\$ 4.7 billion, 2 per cent higher year-on-year (FY 2022-23: US\$ 4.6 billion). "This was mainly due to softening of input commodity prices coupled with strategic cost savings, one time arbitration award in oil and gas business which is partially offset by slip in commodity prices primarily of aluminium, zinc and brent and strategic hedging gain recognised in previous year."

The group posted an adjusted EBITDA margin of 32 per cent, up 315 basis points.



Jean Smart's Hacks renewed for season four

American streamer HBO Max has renewed comedy series *Hacks* for season four. Created by Paul W. Downs, Lucia Aniello, and Jen Statsky, the show centers on the professional relationship between Ava, a young comedy writer, and legendary stand-up comedian Deborah, played by veteran actor Jean Smart.

"We congratulate *Hack's* brilliant cast and crew and our partners at Universal Television." *Hacks* is a masterfully crafted comedy, delivering laughs and sharp insights about the vulnerability and joy of sharing a dream. "The creative team behind this singular show is not only brilliant but also a joy to work with. We couldn't be happier to give viewers another season with Deborah, Ava, and the rest of the *Hacks* family," Sarah Aubrey, Head of Max Original Programming, said in a statement posted on the official website.

Season four renewal comes on the day *Hacks* concludes its nine-episode third season. The show's first season was released in 2021, followed by the sophomore chapter in 2022. *Hacks* also stars Hannah Einbinder, Carl Clemons-Hopkins, Megan Stalter, Downs, Rose Abdo, and Mark Indelicato. It is executive produced by Downs and Aniello via their Paulilu banner, Statsky via First Thought Productions, as well as Michael Schur, David Miner, and Morgan Sackett.

'TOP PRODUCERS FEEL THAT I HAVE IT IN ME TO BE PART OF SOME OF THE BIGGEST IP'S'

The rising star of Bollywood, Sharvari, is the only actor from her generation to be a part of two of the biggest franchises in Hindi cinema: Dinesh Vijan's horror comedy verse and Aditya Chopra's YRF Spy Universe, in which she is sharing screen space with superstar Alia Bhatt!

Sharvari, who will first be seen in Dinesh Vijan's *Munjya*, a new installment from his hit horror-comedy franchise that releases on June 7, says, "It has been a lot of hard work for me to reach this point where top producers and directors of the Hindi film fraternity feel that I have it in me to be a part of some of the biggest

IP's of our industry. Being part of Dinesh Vijan's horror comedy universe in Aditya Chopra's YRF spy universe is a dream come true for any actor."

She further adds, "I'm just thrilled that, despite me being one film old, my work has gotten noticed by the best minds in the industry. Such big franchises usually have the biggest and best superstars in our country helming these projects. So, this is a huge validation of the effort I have put in."

Sharvari aspires to become one of the best actors of her generation, and the fact that she is being chosen by the country's top directors and

filmmakers is proof that she is a talent to watch out for! Apart from *Munjya* and the untitled YRF spy universe film, Sharvari has been handpicked by another master filmmaker, Nikhil Advani, for his directorial *Vedaa*.

She says, "I aspire to be one of the best actors of my time because I have idolised the best actors from across generations. I'm aware that just by being a part of these massive franchises, I'm getting a massive platform that helps me connect to so many people across the country. That motivates me to do well, to act well, and to get better with each film."

Kendall Jenner & Bad Bunny rekindle



Kendall Jenner and Bad Bunny dominated social media last year, but a few weeks ago, certain sources stated that the couple had split up. According to a source, the couple has reconciled and is doing well for the time being. The Puerto Rican musician and the supermodel first became acquainted after being spotted at a luxury club. They even went to the Met Gala, but did not appear as a pair on the

red carpet. They were also photographed while horseback riding, since we all know Kendall loves horses. A source close to the couple has told that things are going well between Bad Bunny and Kendall Jenner. The insider said, "It's going well, and they're prioritising spending time together as they figure it out. There wasn't ever any drama in their breakup, and they missed each other."

The insider explained, "It's like they needed the break to miss each other enough to figure things out. They always had this crazy attraction to each other. Things are great again." The report also revealed that Kendall Jenner was "re-visiting things" with Devin Booker, her ex, but Bad Bunny was unhappy about it. The insider said, "Kendall is happy, Bunny is very charming and is always sweet to her."



Ryan joins Blake for Taylor Swift's second Madrid show

Actor and producer Ryan Reynolds attended superstar friend Taylor Swift's performance in Madrid, as per reports. Reynolds, 47, joined his wife Blake Lively in the crowd at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium to watch the Grammy winner, 34, perform the Eras Tour for a second night in Madrid. She watched the performance from the floor with her children. The *Adeline* actress was seen jumping up and down and dancing along as Swift belted out *Shake It Off*. Swift's other celebrity friends were seen alongside her in the crowd. During an appearance with Hoda and Jenna earlier this month, the *If Star* said that he intended to attend Swift's show in Madrid. "This will be my first because this past year and a half I've been trapped in a non-stop work bubble, and it's a problem," he lightheartedly told the co-hosts.

During his appearance, he revealed that his children had already been to "five or six" Eras Tour shows. "They love it; they're obsessed," he said. The couple shares four children. During the May 29 event, Swift mentioned the couple's three kids. She addressed Lively's children while strumming her guitar onstage and said, "I have to say that in folklore, some of my favourite characters are named James, Inez and Betty." The singer was referring to her album *Folklore*, featuring the song *Betty*, which includes all three of Lively's older kids' names.

The *Wolverine* star has said that he and Lively kept their girls' names in *Betty* a secret from them until the track was finished, saying in a SiriusXM Town Hall interview back in August 2021. "We surprised them with it." "They didn't know," he added. "They had no idea," reported People.

British rapper Mumzy pays tribute to actress Rekha in her new single

British-Bangladeshi singer, songwriter, rapper, composer, and record producer, Mumzy Stranger unveils a captivating new single titled *Rekha*, a heartfelt homage to the iconic Indian actress Rekha. *Rekha* is a sonic love letter, a mesmerising exploration of pure, exquisite love. Accompanied by stunning visuals featuring Mumzy alongside his muse, the song evokes the essence of Rekha's screen presence, crafting a contemporary love story imbued with timeless elegance. Mumzy masterfully blends captivating music with captivating visuals, creating a love song that transcends generations. *Rekha* epitomises the enduring beauty of cinematic romance while paying tribute to a legendary figure in Indian film history.



Malaika Arora & Arjun Kapoor respectfully part ways

Malaika Arora and Arjun Kapoor were in a long and beautiful relationship for many years, which won everyone's respect and love. He became an example of how love can stand against all odds and win people's hearts! However, now news is coming that both of them have ended their relationship respectfully. According to media reports, the couple has decided to

separate. If reports are to be believed, their relationship has run its course, and they will deal with this situation in a very respectful manner. Malaika and Arjun's relationship was very special, and both will always hold a special place in each other's hearts. They have decided to separate and will maintain silence in this matter. They do not want to give anyone a chance to publicise their relationship.

If reports are to be believed, there is no bitterness between Malaika and Arjun. They respect each other a lot and have stood like strong pillars for each other. Despite deciding to separate, they will continue to show respect to each other. They have given a lot of respect to their relationship over the last few years. Both of them were in a serious relationship for years, and they hope that people will give them space in this emotional time.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



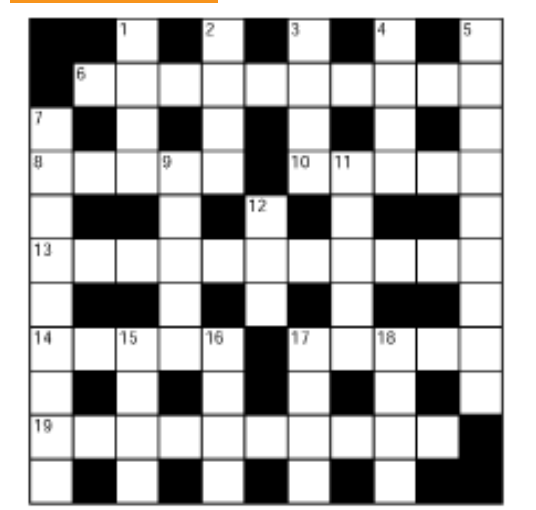
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



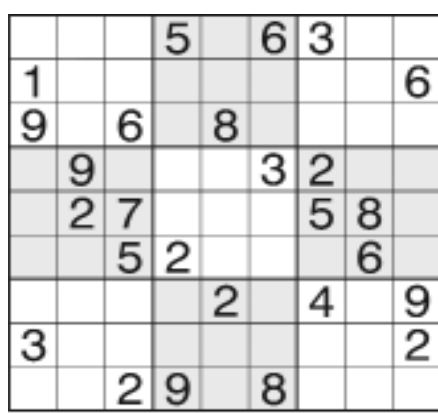
CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

- 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

- 6 Transport for someone who cannot walk
- 8 With nothing in it
- 10 The outside ends of something
- 13 Vanished
- 14 Opposite of outer
- 17 The country with Tokyo
- 19 In all places

DOWN

- 1 A large boat
- 2 Extremely
- 3 A throbbing pain
- 4 The sound of an explosion
- 5 The leader of the USA
- 7 Large-lettered words above items in a newspaper



GINGER MEGGS



‘Performing at Ravindra Bharathi is my favourite memory of Hyd’



SUBODHINI PUROHIT

Meet Priya Gazdar—after 35 years in Hyderabad, she firmly considers herself a true Hyderabadi. While not a resident of the city, she is from Kothagudem, the headquarters of The Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL). Her journey to Hyderabad began with her post-graduate studies, which led to her career and marriage, firmly establishing her in the city she now considers home. When she thinks about Hyderabad, she envisions a warm home.

The new chairperson of the FICCI FLO Hyderabad Chapter enjoys this city, and to her, it has given her a sense of freedom and security, which she values. She has always been picky about who she spends time with, so she has never been a fan of huge groups. She has always felt comfortable going to study or dance courses on her own. Even now, living in the city, she has never felt threatened. With many of her family members living in Bangalore, she is well aware of the traffic difficulties there. In comparison, traffic congestion in Hyderabad is far more bearable.

She begins, “Growing up in my little community was a fantastic experience, particularly in the early 1990s. We had outstanding educational institutions, but chances were restricted. This prompted all of us to travel to the neighbouring city, Hyderabad. Although my hometown will always have a special place in my heart, I’ve now made Hyderabad my home, and the energy of city life is incredibly energising.”

City has benefited her in a variety of ways; she studied to be a chartered accountant but didn’t like it from both sides of the table. She says, “I resigned and began to consider what to do since I didn’t want to go back to one more day of numbers. When I first expressed an interest in advertising, everyone assumed I was qualified or overqualified. But I was able to open my door, and after several years, it is now a leading brand management company in the city, and I am grateful to Hyderabad for providing me with all of these possibilities.”



Back with another story of Hyderabad being home, *The Pioneer* interacts with Priya Gazdar, who hails from Kothagudem, as she speaks of her fondest memories in the city, how she considers herself a true Hyderabadi, and more.

She didn’t want to leave Hyderabad because her family was in Delhi and Mumbai, and she didn’t want to miss out on opportunities, but it took her six months of work to get her foot in the door, and the Hyd city was very nice to her. She had her dance guru here for bharatanatyam classes, which she would practice until 9 p.m. and drive back on her small scooter.

“I like everything about Hyderabad’s greenery. There is no need to find a location to walk, swim, or cycle because they are all nearby. The kindness of the people here makes you feel right at home; whether you speak Telugu, Hindi, or English, communication is never a problem. Hyderabad, with its overall development, is a wonderfully balanced city to live in.”

Her family lived in Hyderabad, and so she never preferred to relocate to Delhi or Mumbai. She has many fond recollections of visiting Hyderabad with her father throughout the vacations. She recalls the long road trip that took them around four and a half hours to reach the city. They would remain for two days, and every time they drove by Ravindra Bharathi, she adds, “My father would point to it and tell me that if I was really talented at dancing, one day I’d give a solo performance there. That became my little fantasy, and I’m glad to report that I made

it happen. Performing at Ravindra Bharathi is my favourite memory of Hyderabad, and it has a special place in my heart.”

She is now the Chairperson of the FLO Hyderabad Chapter, and it gives her immense delight to contribute back to society and provide chances for others. She got married and had her kid in Hyderabad, so it actually feels like she has built a family here. She says, “These moments are invaluable to me, and they have shaped my life in the most beautiful ways.”

As a tourist to Hyderabad, she describes the city as “a magical place.” “I enjoyed shopping, buying clothes, and going to Ravindra Bharathi. However, after starting my articleship and working for various companies, I chose to shift my career path. Hyderabad is a city of opportunities where you can follow your ambitions and be who you desire. It’s like having the finest of both worlds in one location.” There are numerous locations, and she believes it has a strong culture, both classical and old, as well as contemporary and future. These two features converge in Hyderabad!

Alternatively, she dislikes the fact that the pipeline was dug up again after only a month of being laid. Sometimes rubbish is not picked up, and when it rains, traffic is high, resulting in extended travel times. However, they are infrequent occurrences. The drainage system, like any other city, might be improved.

HOUSE OF LIES

A mystery that leaves you guessing

TANISHA SAXENA

Plot: Albert Pinto is dead, and that too on his birthday. Investigators Rajveer Singh Choudhary (played by Sanjay Kapoor) and Abhay (played by Rituraj K Singh), along with officer Sashi (played by Ssmilly Suri) from the Enforcement Directorate (ED), interrogate the guests—Albert’s wife Ragini, brother Anthony, sister-in-law Aastha, lawyer Karan Sinha, doctor Fernandis, friend Col. Verma, and house help Zaid—and try to uncover the many layers of complexities.

The plus: There are some intriguing real-life references to cryptocurrency, the Enforcement Directorate, and homosexuality in the film. These elements could have been significant strengths of the story. However, amidst the film’s shortcomings, their potential remains unexplored.

The minus: *House Of Lies* fails to deliver on its promising premise, stumbling through a convoluted plot and underwhelming performances. The cast, despite their efforts, struggles to breathe life into their characters. Sanjay Kapoor’s portrayal feels disjointed, while Rituraj K. Singh’s Abhay lacks depth. Ssmilly Suri’s officer Sashi fails to make a lasting impact, contributing to the film’s overall lack of engagement.

In recent times, whodunits have become a go-to genre for filmmakers, particularly on streaming platforms. The formula often involves setting up a murder investigation amidst a web of suspects to craft an engaging murder mystery. While some films succeed in this, others fall short. Unfortunately, *House Of Lies* falls victim to this trope! While the screenplay avoids clichés and predictable twists, it fails to sustain interest. The film’s attempt to explore complex relationships and motives falls flat, leaving viewers indifferent to the outcome.

Technical aspects: The film’s technical execution mirrors its narrative shortcomings. The cinematography, though visually appealing in certain segments, lacks consistency, which detracts from the immersive experience. The editing feels choppy, disrupting the narrative flow. The background score, which could have been used to build tension, fails to leave a lasting impression. The one-hour and seventeen-minute runtime feels overly lengthy. There’s no chase scene to maintain the excitement. The geographical setting of the film is unclear, with only a few scattered scenes showing the sea or hills. It’s bizarre. If the plot falters, at least the technical aspects like the background score, geographical setting, or precise editing could serve as a cohesive element. However, in *House Of Lies*, nothing works.

Verdict: *House Of Lies* had the potential to be a gripping whodunit, but it falls short due to its convoluted plot and underwhelming performances. The film’s attempt to delve into complex themes remains underdeveloped, leaving it unable to engage its audience fully. Despite its promising premise, the film ultimately feels like a missed opportunity in the crowded landscape of streaming whodunits.



Director: Saumitra Singh
Creator: Simran Kaur Suri

Produced by: Kali Movies Private Limited and Sebhariya Pictures

Starring: Sanjay Kapoor, Rituraj K. Singh, Ssmilly Suri, Hiten Paintal, and Ajitesh Gupta

Streaming on: Zee5

Rating: 1.5

THE CULINARY TREASURES OF TELANGANA

Telangana cuisine is a symphony of flavours, textures, and aromas. Beyond the vibrant ingredients lies a hidden world of traditional utensils, each playing a vital role in crafting these culinary masterpieces. Let’s delve into the enduring legacy of Telangana’s heritage!

such as *Sil Batta* and *Kal Batta* across India, this humble grinding stone transforms whole spices, grains, and dals into fragrant pastes and powders. Grinding chutneys on *Attukal* gives it a rustic charm and creates fond memories of home cooking.

1. Rathi Chippa: This stone vessel, also called *Kal Chatti*, is a true multi-tasker in Telangana kitchens. Its exceptional ability for slow cooking makes it ideal for delicious *dals* and *sambar*, allowing flavours to develop deeply. These hand-carved utensils are also used to store food.

5. Matthi Patra: This traditional pot, crafted from natural clay, is perfect to make Andhra style chicken curry. The clay’s unique properties help retain moisture for flavourful dishes with an explosion of flavours. These pots also retain essential nutrients, making the meal wholesome and nutritious.

2. Uruli: A round vessel, crafted from food-grade bronze by skilled artisans in Kerala, blends the beauty of a handi with the functionality of a *kadhai*. Perfect for a variety of dishes, the *uruli* adds a touch of authenticity to Telangana favourites including the delectable fried okra cooked with mustard, cumin, onions, and tomato.

6. The magic of cast iron: Telangana cuisine celebrates cast iron cookware. These sturdy pots and pans are the reason for their, soft, crisp-edged *dosas*, melt-in-your-mouth *halwa*, and *gunta pongadalu*.

3. Murukku mould: This is a simple must-have implement for crispy *murukku* or *janthikalu*. The secret lies in the small *jalis* that the batter gets pressed through.

These unique utensils allow home cooks to create delicious, authentic flavours with a distinct cultural identity, elevating cooking to a different level and telling stories of Telangana heritage.

(The author, Mitesh Lohiya, is the director, sales and marketing, of Gold Drop.)



ROHIT SHARMA HOPES FOR QUICK ACCLIMATISATION OF NY PITCH AHEAD OF T20 WC

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Marvelling at the newly-constructed Nassau County International Cricket Stadium here, India skipper Rohit Sharma underlined the need for his team to get acclimatised to the pitch and conditions quickly ahead of their T20 World Cup opener against Ireland on June 5.

However, Rohit and company will get a chance to check the nature of the pitch and overall conditions when they face Bangladesh in a warm-up match here on Saturday. It's also India's lone training game ahead of the ICC marquee event.

The warm-up match is important from India's perspective because their matches will start at 10.30 AM local time and the players need to get used to day-time matches after playing under lights in the IPL for the last two months.

"We're looking to understand the conditions more importantly (before the tournament proper) as we haven't been here before," Rohit told ICC.

The Mumbai-based skipper emphasised the need for his side to get into a "rhythm" before the real action starts, and he wanted to use this side game as a



springboard. "We will try and make the most of the conditions, get used to what it's going to be like on June 5 when we play our first game," he added. The challenge for the Indians will be to adapt to the drop-in turf here, something they don't come across very often in international cricket. "It's just about getting into that

rhythm of getting the feel of the ground, pitch and stuff like that," he said. Rohit was part of the first batch of India cricketers to arrive here on May 26, along with Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant, Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel. Moving beyond the match

routines, Rohit also found time to take in the beauty of the venue. "It looks beautiful. It's quite an open ground. When we come here and play our first game, I just can't wait to feel the atmosphere in the stadium," he said. "It's a decent capacity as well. Hopefully it's gonna be a good one." Rohit hoped that fans will

through the venue for their matches. "People in New York will be very interested in coming and watching the World Cup, as it is happening for the first time here. "I'm pretty sure all the fans across various teams are quite excited and looking forward to this tournament. And also as players (we) can't wait to get

started," he noted.

WORRY FOR BANGLADESH: Skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto too appreciated the excellent construction here, but he would not have forgotten Bangladesh's shocking series defeat against the USA a few days back.

The United States, largely constituted by expat players, scored a stunning 2-1 win over Bangladesh in a three-match T20I series at home last week, signalling that they are no mere pushovers.

Hence, Shanto might be hoping for a quick turnaround against formidable India, even though it's a warm-up match at this scenic stadium. "To be very honest I wasn't expecting anything like this but we all followed on social media how the wicket looks like, how the ground would be, and we are very excited as to what is going to happen here," said Shanto.

The 25-year-old top-order batter then gushed over the venue.

"It's unbelievable. I think it's crazy. I mean we all saw on the internet there was nothing (three months ago). Now, it looks like a proper stadium and feels great," he said. The Eastern grandstand (in particular), I didn't expect it to be like this," he added.



India eye redemption as big ticket cricket touches base in America

PTI ■ NEW YORK

There will be the usual favourites, the mavericks, the chokers and also the unpredictable minnows — the script is familiar for a World Cup but the scale would be unprecedented when the T20 showpiece, featuring a record 20 teams, spearheads cricket's audacious charge into the American market starting here on Saturday.

While India would be eager to shed the baggage of near-misses, Australia would like to add another chapter to their tale of domination. For the likes of Pakistan and West Indies, the primary target would be to keep in check their tendency to implode at the most inopportune time.

Defending champions England and South Africa too will be a force to reckon with, especially the latter. Given the presence of match-winners like Heinrich Klaasen, David Miller, Quinton de Kock and Kagiso Rabada, the Proteas seem primed to get rid of the chokers' tag.

It will be a ground-breaking event not just because of the sheer size of the draw but also for the fact that it officially marks cricket's big-ticket entry into the USA, which will host 16 of the 55 matches to be played across 29 days.

The remaining 39 games will be held in the West Indies, including the Super 8 stage, the semifinals and the final on June 29. Besides the obvious favourites on paper, the likes of Afghanistan can also never be counted out to upset the apple cart at the most unexpected time.

There are plots within plots that will unfold in the course of next one month. And perhaps one of the most intriguing would be the one involving India, a team that looks so

destined for an ICC trophy but has somehow managed to fall short after the 2013 Champions Trophy triumph. Rohit Sharma's reputation as captain will definitely be on the line this time. Considering the unparalleled resources and depth that the sport's powerhouse has, most experts find it difficult to pinpoint India's trophy drought at the word stage over the past decade.

Rohit's predecessor Virat Kohli ended his tenure as the most successful Test captain but a global trophy eluded him.

Now Rohit is carrying that baggage of not winning a world title with India finishing runner-up in two ICC events over the past 12 months, including the juggernaut-ending loss to Australia in the ODI World Cup final at home. Their outdated approach in the previous two T20 World Cups cost them dearly but they are unlikely to repeat those mistakes in the Americas. The recently-concluded IPL showed how the batters are pushing boundaries and India's high-profile line-up needs to follow that risky path.

India may not have the same batting firepower as compared to some of the rival teams but as pitches in the Caribbean are expected to be spin-friendly, they surely have all bases covered.

Rohit and Co. are scheduled to play three games at the makeshift facility here including the blockbuster clash against Pakistan on June 9.

Drop-in pitches will be used at the brand new facility with all teams entering unfamiliar territory. India, however, will have the advantage of playing a warm-up game against Bangladesh at the same venue on June 1 before they take on Ireland in their opening league game on June 5.

Pooran, Powell make fifties as WI hammer nine-man Australia by 35 runs

PTI ■ PORT OF SPAIN (TRINIDAD)

Effort by Nicholas Pooran and Rovman Powell helped West Indies outpunch a nine-man Australia by 35 runs in their warm-up match ahead of the T20 World Cup here.

As it happened in their first training match against Namibia, the Aussies fielded only nine players against the Windies. Selector George Bailey and head coach Andrew McDonald filled the remaining two spots while fielding.

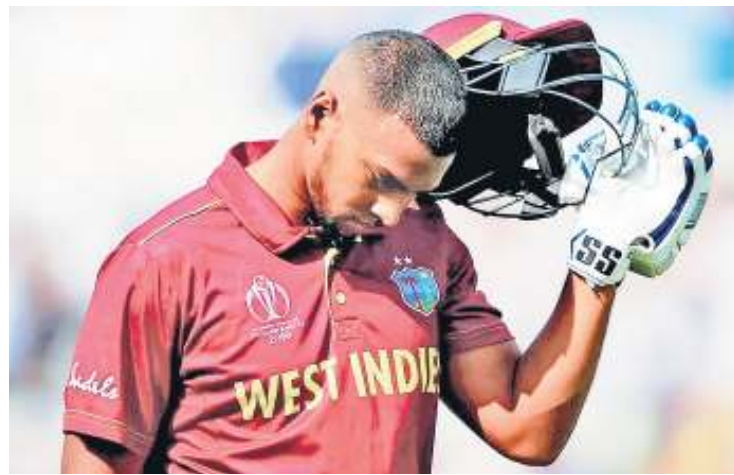
Batting first, West Indies rode on fifties by Pooran (75, 25b, 5x4, 8x6), skipper Powell (52, 25b, 4x4, 4x6) and an unbeaten 47 off 18 balls by Sherfane Rutherford (4x4, 4x6) to raise 257 for 4 in 20 overs. In reply, Josh Inglis (55, 30b, 3x4, 4x6) led Australia's reply and there were a

39 (22b, 4x4, 2x6) by Ellis and numerous 20s as Australia finished at 222 for seven.

Earlier, Australia had Tim David, Josh Hazlewood, Adam Zampa, Nathan Ellis and Ashton Agar as bowlers, and all went for plenty.

All-rounder Mitchell Marsh, recuperating from an injury, refrained from bowling, though he later batted. West Indies innings was built around fine partnerships between Pooran and Johnson Charles (40), who milked 90 runs for the second wicket and a 63 for the unbroken fifth wicket between Rutherford and Shimron Hetmyer (18).

The absence of skipper Pat Cummins, Glenn Maxwell, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, Cameron Green and Travis Head was felt as they are yet to join the squad. They are spending a few extra days at



home after a taxing campaign in the recently concluded IPL. **NAMIBIA BEAT PNG:** Namibia

109 for seven in 20 overs, and Namibia were 93 for six in 16.5 overs when the skies opened up in Tarouba. But they were three runs ahead in the DLS calculations at that stage.

At Dallas, the match between the Netherlands and Canada was abandoned without a ball being bowled.

BRIEF SCORES

West Indies: 257/4 in 20 overs (Nicholas Pooran 75, Rovman Powell 52; Sherfane Rutherford 47 not out; Adam Zampa 2/62) beat Australia: 222/7 in 20 overs (Josh Inglis 55, Nathan Ellis 39; Gudakesh Motie 2/31) by 35 runs.

Papua New Guinea: 109/7 in 20 overs (See Bau 29; David Wiese 2/8, Ruben Trumblemann 2/15) lost to Namibia: 93/6 in 16.5 overs (Jan Frylinck 36, JP Kotze 30; Alei Nao 2/9, Assad Vala 2/14) by 3 runs (DLS)



Lamichhane to miss T20 World Cup after US denies visa to Nepalese leg spinner

AP ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal's ace leg-spinner Sandeep Lamichhane was ruled out of the Twenty20 World Cup on Friday after his US visa application was rejected for a second time. The Nepalese government and its cricket authorities took up Lamichhane's case after his visa was first rejected last week. The Cricket Association of Nepal said in a statement that "despite taking necessary initiatives ... The US Embassy has expressed its inability to give travel permission (visa) to national player Lamichhane to play the World Cup."

The Nepalese cricket association suspended Lamichhane after he was arrested in 2022 over an accusation of the rape of an 18-year-old woman. He was found guilty in January this year but was acquitted on appeal because of "lack of evidence" and the cricket association allowed him to resume playing cricket. Nepal, placed in Group D, opens its T20 World Cup campaign against the Netherlands on June 7 in Dallas before taking on Sri Lanka at Lauderhill, Florida on June 11.

Warm up game opportunity to check Indian players' rhythm

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Yashasvi Jaiswal will aim to add his bit to the combination conundrum with a handy contribution while Arshdeep Singh and Mohammed Siraj need to put their best foot forward during India's only T20 World Cup warm-up game against Bangladesh ahead of their tournament opener on June 5.

With all 15 cricketers being regular playing XI members of their respective IPL franchises, the team is certainly not short on game time but an assortment of 15 high-calibre players and finding that perfect combination will be key to ending India's 13-year global trophy drought.

In the warm-up game, it is expected that save for Virat Kohli, who is expected to touch down some time before the practice game, all other 14 players will be given a go as it doesn't

have an official status. It will be an opportunity to check everyone's rhythm after most of the core team members enjoyed a two-week break.

There will be two areas where skipper Rohit Sharma and outgoing head coach Rahul Dravid need to take a judicious call. Even if Jaiswal is in good nick, how to fit him in the side will be an issue as it would mean keeping a power-hitter like Shivam Dube out of the playing XI.

It is a foregone conclusion that Jaiswal might have to sit out as it would not only allow Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma to open but could also open the door for Dube at the back end of the tournament.

"Shivam Dube is a six-hitting machine. He can be the 'x-factor' in the T20 World Cup. But if Shivam has to be in the XI, then you can't play Yashasvi. Rohit has to take that



call and I prefer both pace-bowling all-rounders in the XI. If Shivam plays, he can take on the opposition wrist spinners in the latter half," Suresh Raina, one of India's premier T20 batters of his time, said on Friday when asked about a possible combination.

The second teething problem for India would be to find Jasprit Bumrah's opening pace-bowling partner. Both Arshdeep Singh and Mohammed Siraj have blown hot and cold in the IPL and their form has left a lot to be desired.

RP Singh, one of the heroes of India's inaugural edition victory, feels that Hardik Pandya's four overs will be very important. Besides, he feels that Arshdeep should be the second frontline pacer on the newly-laid drop-in track.

Talking about the length to be bowled on the tracks in the US during an early morning start, he felt

variations will be important, which make Arshdeep a better bet compared to Siraj.

"As per my understanding, there should be a bit of slowness in the wicket. So, the ideal length will be somewhere around just short of good length. There will not be a lot of swing for the bowlers but the bowlers with variations, not only yorkers but also slower ones, leg and off cutters..." RP replied to a PTI query during a promotional event in Delhi.

"These deliveries will be utilised a bit more by Arshdeep, so the success rate will be automatically higher for him and that's what I understand the wickets in the US," he explained.

Against Bangladesh on a slowish track, it would also be a challenge for the middle-order as to how they deal with Shakib Al Hasan and Mahedi Hasan apart from questions asked by cutter master Mustafizur Rahaman.

Mitchell Marsh will not bowl in T20 WC opener against Oman: Coach McDonald

PTI ■ BARBADOS

Australia skipper Mitchell Marsh will not bowl in their T20 World Cup opener against Oman on June 6 and will play only as a batter as he continues his recovery from a hamstring injury sustained during the IPL, said head coach Andrew McDonald on Friday. Marsh played both the World Cup warm-up games against Namibia and co-hosts West Indies in Trinidad, scoring 18 and 4 respectively.

But the pace-bowling all-rounder did not field for the full bowling innings in either games, with Matthew Wade taking over captaincy duties in his absence. "For Mitch, (the warm-up games) was

about ticking off where his body was at," McDonald told cricket.Com.Au.

"He fielded more overs tonight (in the warm-up against Oman) than he was able to move more freely, so he's building a little bit of confidence there. It looks as though he's all set for the first game," he added.

Marsh played just four matches for Delhi Capitals in the recently concluded IPL following a right hamstring niggle and he flew back to Australia in the last week of April to continue his recuperation.

"The second part is just when the bowling comes back online... It won't be the first game," said McDonald. During the second warm-up



game against the West Indies, nine-man Australia lost by 35 runs, with the absence of skipper Pat Cummins, Glenn Maxwell, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, Cameron Green and Travis Head, who are yet to join the squad, being felt by the Kangaroos.

The Australian players who took part in the IPL flew back home to be with their families and were exempted from the warm-up fixtures.

"It was by design, in terms of when we were getting people back after the IPL; we were well aware we weren't going to get the squad together until the first of next month," said McDonald. "We've got some things in place where we'll bring the

group together, we'll work through our plans leading into Oman and there's a bit of space between that game and (playing) England."

Australia will play arch-rivals and defending T20 World Cup champions England here on June 9. "We feel as though we have plenty of time to bring that group together. It's a familiar group, they've played a lot together. If they hadn't played a lot together then the prep might have looked different," the coach added.

"We feel comfortable though as they know how to play with each other. It will just be finalising the XIs for the games, and the balances that we want. We've got plenty of options."

'My character in *Gam Gam Ganesha* is a departure from my usual 'boy next door' image'

RAMYA SREE

The three much-anticipated movies, *Gangs of Godavari*, *Bhaje Vaayu Vegam*, and *Gam Gam Ganesha*, have been released in theatres on Friday. Amongst the buzz around all three, Anand Deverakonda starrer *Gam Gam Ganesha* has got even more hype because the actor's last release, *Baby*, gained an unexpected response at the box office, giving him the biggest hit of his career.

Anand, known for his diverse roles, plays the lead role in this movie, co-starring Pragathi Srivastava and Nayan Sarika. This comedy-action thriller, produced by Kedar Selagamshetty and Vamsi Karumanchi under the banner Hy-Life Entertainment, marks the directorial debut of Uday Shetty, who promises an entertaining cinematic experience with *Gam Gam Ganesha*.

Anand Deverakonda shared insights into the movie and its making in a quick interview with us, where he shared, "After *Middle Class Melodies*, during the lockdown, I began planning my next venture. That's when I came across the script for *Gam Gam Ganesha* by director Uday Shetty. The script's premise, revolving around greed, fear, and conspiracy, intrigued me, reminiscent of the crime comedies I enjoy watching."

Speaking about the challenges, and the film's journey, Anand explains, "The shooting faced delays due to various factors, including the second wave of COVID-19 and logistical issues. Despite setbacks like the collapse of our set due

to heavy rains, we persevered and completed filming."

Known for his relatable characters, Anand embraces a new dimension with *Gam Gam Ganesha*. He shares, "Unlike my previous roles, this character is energetic, hyper, and comedic. It's a departure from my usual 'boy next door' image, and I'm excited for audiences to see this different side of me."

Director Uday Shetty's vision brings the story to life; as Anand affirms, "Uday has crafted an engaging screenplay featuring fifteen main characters, ensuring a captivating narrative. His direction brings out the best performances from the cast, making *Gam Gam Ganesha* a promising venture."

Anticipation for *Gam Gam Ganesha* is high, fuelled by positive reactions from test screenings. Anand expresses confidence in the film's appeal, particularly in a theatrical setting, where the genre thrives.

Beyond *Gam Gam Ganesha*, Anand reveals his passion for diverse roles and action-packed projects. With an exciting lineup ahead, including collaborations with esteemed banners and directors, Anand's journey in Telugu cinema continues to evolve.

Gam Gam Ganesha promises to be a roller-coaster ride of laughter, action, and intrigue, offering audiences a much-needed dose of entertainment this summer.



is a departure from my usual 'boy next door' image'

WITH THE HYPE AROUND HIS LATEST FLICK, *GAM GAM GANESHA*, ACTOR ANAND DEVERAKONDA, WHO PLAYS THE LEAD ROLE IN THE FILM, SHARES SOME INTERESTING INSIGHTS INTO THE MOVIE, AND SOME BTS OF THE MAKING.

Jai Bolo Krishna song from Ashok Galla's next out now

As part of musical promotions, the makers of Superstar Krishna's grandson and superstar Mahesh Babu's nephew Ashok Galla's second movie, *Devaki Nandana Vasudeva*, have come up with the second single, *Jai Bolo Krishna*. This song with divine vibes was released on the occasion of Superstar Krishna's birth anniversary.

As the title suggests and the visuals indicate, *Jai Bolo Krishna* is a Janmashtami special song where the protagonist, along with his batch, is seen celebrating the festival. Bheems Ceciroleo scored a captivating foot-tapping number with energetic beats. As the lyrics penned by Raghuram advocate, the protagonist is an adamant youngster.

Swarag Keerthan lent vocals, and he brought extra energy to the song with his superb singing. Yash Master has done the choreography, and Ashok Galla's dances are cool and elegant. The visuals looked vibrant. The grandness was witnessed all through. This is going to be another chartbuster song from the film's album.

The film directed by Arjun Jandayala of *Guna 369* fame is a family and action entertainer laced with spiritual elements. Creative director



Prasanth Varma of *HanuMan* fame provided the story for the movie, while popular writer Sai Madhav Burra penned the dialogue. Somineni Balakrishna, an NRI (film distributor), is producing the movie as *Production No. 1* of Lalithambika Productions. Nallapaneni Yamini presents it.

Alongside Rasool Ellore, Prasad Murella is the lensman for the movie, which is mounted on a large scale with a grand production design. Tammiraju is the editor of the movie. The makers will soon announce the film's release date.

'You don't need to depend on male counterpart to have a successful film these days'

Actor-politician Khusbu Sundar, who has produced Tamil horror comedy *Aranmanai 4*, wants to explore stories like *Darlings*, *Badhaai Ho*, and *Crew* as a producer. *Aranmanai 4*, starring Tamannah Bhatia and Raashii Khanna in the lead, has earned around Rs 100 crore at the box office. Sundar believes such movies still lack the multiplex audience in the South, but those are the stories she wants to explore in the future.

"I am not the kind of producer who would say that I am making only women centric films. I would love to do something like *Darlings*, *Badhaai Ho*, or *Crew*. But unfortunately, we still don't have that kind of multiplex audience in south India as yet. That's going to take some time. When *Badhaai Ho* was made in Tamil, it bombed. It didn't

do well," Sundar told PTI in an interview. *Aranmanai 4* is directed by her filmmaker husband, Sunder C, a noted name in Tamil cinema, who also directed the previous installments of the film.

Sunder, who debuted as a child artist with the Hindi film *The Burning Train* and featured in movies such as *Meri Jung* and *Deewana Mujhsa Nah*, shifted base to the south and found widespread fame by starring in *Dharmathin Thalaivan*, *Vetri Vizhaa*, *Chinna Thambi*, *Pandithurai*, and *Annaattha*. As a producer, she said, her sensibilities are "very commercial," but she is careful about the way women are represented in these stories.

"You don't have to show a woman in a bad light. You don't need to do something on screen that says, 'Okay, it's fine for a woman to be in an abusive relationship and say it's part of your life'. No, I'm not going to advocate that. But otherwise, I love making commercial films. I'm not here to make a very preachy film," she said. Having spent close to four decades in the film industry, Sunder is happy to note the shift that's taking place when it comes to women coming forward and backing commercially viable projects.

"There is a huge shift in the kind of films being made. Yes, we still do have heroes, where you think that the films are being sold only on a hero's name, and a heroine can play a very minuscule role in the film. But it's brilliant to see that women can carry the film entirely on their shoulders and still give it a hit. You don't need to depend on a male counterpart to have a successful film. The content is the basic hero of the film. And I think that shift is brilliant," she added. *Aranmanai 4* also stars Ramachandra Raju, Sarthosh Prathap, Kovai Sarala, Yogi Babu, VTV Ganesh, Delhi Ganesha, and K S Ravikumar in pivotal roles.

The franchise revolves around a large family, who return to an ancestral property (a palace) to sell it off, only to discover some supernatural elements in the palace. It started with *Aranmanai*, which was released in 2014, and was followed by two sequels: *Aranmanai 2* (2016) and *Aranmanai 3* (2021).

Produced by Sunder's production house, Avni Cinemax, and A C S Arun Kumar's Benz Media, the Hindi version is slated to release in theatres on May 31.

MAHESH BABU'S HEARTFELT MESSAGE TO HIS 'NANNA' ON LATE ACTOR'S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

Telugu actor Mahesh Babu shared a heartfelt note on Friday as he remembered his late father and legendary actor Krishna on his 81st birth anniversary. Mahesh shared a throwback picture of his father when he was young, along with an emotional note.

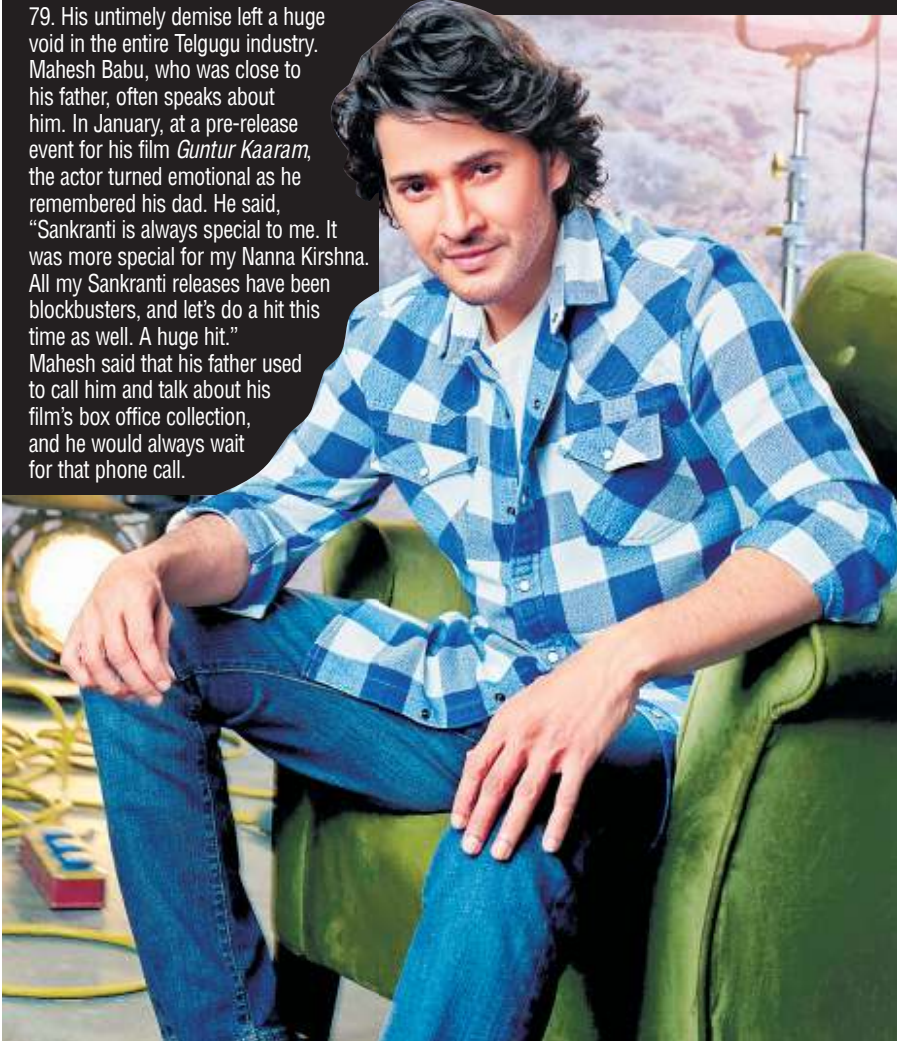
Taking to his Instagram handle, Mahesh Babu shared a note that read, "Happy birthday Nanna... you are deeply missed, and will always live on in every memory of mine! (sic)." Have a look at Mahesh Babu's post here.

Ghattamaneni Siva Rama Krishna Murthy, aka Krishna, passed away on November 15, 2022, after he suffered a cardiac arrest. He was 79. His untimely demise left a huge void in the entire Telugu industry.

Mahesh Babu, who was close to his father, often speaks about him. In January, at a pre-release event for his film *Guntur Kaaram*, the actor turned emotional as he remembered his dad. He said, "Sankranti is always special to me. It was more special for my Nanna Kirshna. All my Sankranti releases have been blockbusters, and let's do a hit this time as well. A huge hit." Mahesh said that his father used to call him and talk about his film's box office collection, and he would always wait for that phone call.

In remembrance of his late father, Mahesh has founded the Superstar Krishna Educational Fund. This initiative is a tribute to his father and will provide scholarships to 40 needy students. The education will range from school to a post-graduate degree.

On the work front, Mahesh Babu's last release was *Guntur Kaaram* co-starring Sreelaleela. It is currently streaming on Netflix. He will be seen in *SSMB 29* by SS Rajamouli. It is one of the most-anticipated films. The project is currently in the pre-production stage. The writing has also been completed, and except for Mahesh Babu, the rest of the cast is yet to be finalised.



Trailer of *Music Shop Murthy* captures the right nuances

The team is excitedly anticipating *Music Shop Murthy*, directed by Ajay Ghosh, to open in theatres on June 14. The enthusiasm surrounding the film, which is written and directed by Siva Paladugu and produced by Harsha and Ranga Rao Garapati under the Fly High Cinemas brand, has only grown as a result of the theatrical trailer was released on Friday.

The trailer begins with *Music Shop Murthy*, played by Ajay Ghosh, taking center stage as an alternative DJ for a function. This sets the tone for an engaging story that explores Murthy's transformation from a modest music store owner in his village to an aspirant DJ. The main plot revolves around Murthy's battle to follow his

love of music in spite of obstacles from his own family. His youthful friend Chandini Chowdary is by his side, providing vital assistance in his pursuit of achievement. With its glimpse into Murthy's inspirational journey, the trailer makes viewers feel a connection to his character and eager to see his victories on screen.

With an exceptional performance, Ajay Ghosh demonstrates his versatility in capturing the nuanced emotional nuances of Murthy's character. Chandini Chowdary's representation lends complexity to the narrative, while seasoned performers like Amani, Amit Sharma, Bhanu Chandar, and Dayanandh Reddy contribute significantly in their various roles.

Dhruva Sarja's action venture *Martin* all set to release on Oct 11

The time has come to touch your heart with this movie of dreams. On the occasion of action prince Dhruva Sarja's 36th birthday, the makers have announced that *Martin* is scheduled to be released on October 11, 2024.

"*Martin* is not just a movie for us; this is the dream project. We have made this movie with the great passion of giving the biggest action venture at Pan India level from Kannada, but the time to reach the goal is approaching," said the makers. Uday Mehta and Suraj Uday Mehta have invested in the production of *Martin* at a cost of Rs 200 crore under Vasavi Enterprises and Uday K Mehta Production.

The film *Martin*, which the entire Indian film industry is looking forward to, has been made by director AP Arjun, with a story and screenplay by action king Arjun Sarja. Cinematographer Satya Hegde is the eye of Uday Mehta's dream project. Tollywood legend music director Mani Sharma has composed the wonderful songs, and the background score is by *KGF* and *Salaar* fame Ravi Basrur.

With the hard work of hundreds of technicians, the movie *Martin* is ready to celebrate.



RAGHU THATHA, STARRING KEERTY SURESH, WILL HIT CINEMAS ON AUG 15

The release date for the Keerthy Suresh film has finally been announced. On August 15, *Raghu Thatha* will release on large screens.

The makers revealed on Friday that the film is planned to hit large screens on August 15, in time for India's Independence Day. Hombale Films, the production company behind the popular Kannada series *KGF* and *Salaar*, is supporting the movie. Their entry into Tamil cinema will come with *Raghu Thatha*.

Raghu Thatha is written and directed by Suman Kumar in his directorial debut. He is known for his work in

Farzi and *Guns & Gulaabs*, among others. *Raghu Thatha* is touted to be a comedy entertainer, and the makers of *Raghu Thatha* released a new poster.

"#*RaghuThatha*, Kayalvizhi's heartwarming adventure is coming to theatres near you. Get ready for a hilarious, emotional, and empowering rollercoaster ride! #*RaghuThatha* releases on August 15, 2024! I can't wait for you guys to watch this!" Keerthy Suresh wrote while sharing it. The poster shows Keerthy decked up in a silk saree and adorned with jewellery, with supporting characters posing behind.

