

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
**The pioneer**  
 There are no Reddy names in Ande Sri's song. So Chief Minister Revanth Reddy might have removed the names of other castes from the song. Ande Sri has lost his image. If the CM thinks that the Kakatiyas killed Sammakka and Sarakka and that is why the Kakatiya Kalathoranam is being removed from the emblem, then what about the killings of tribals by the then Congress government  
 - Manda Krishna Madiga, MRPS founder president P4

**Uphold Constitution if results throw hung parliament**  
**SENSEX, NIFTY LOG BIGGEST SINGLE-DAY GAIN IN 3 YRS**  
**Rakul takes a trip down memory LANE**

# The judgement day

## Modi eyes record-equalling feat, Oppn hopes for rebound All set for counting of votes in AP

**DON'T MISS...**  
**Political landscape to be clear in...**  
 The 23-day wait for candidates from the ruling YSRCP, opposition TDP, BJP, Jana Sena Party, and INDIA bloc in the Krishna and NTR districts will end on Tuesday, June 4. As the general election results start coming in, the political landscape in these two districts will become clear. Since the general election polling day on May 13, candidates and their supporters in the former Krishna district have been anxiously awaiting the results. Vote counting will commence in the Krishna and NTR districts on June 4 at 8 am. Initially, postal...  
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**LS polls: 2,572 crorepati; 1,643...**  
 As India braces for Lok Sabha election results on Tuesday, there are 2,572 candidates who are crorepatis while 1,643 candidates have criminal cases registered against themselves, according to poll rights body ADR. An analysis by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and National Election Watch has shed light on the profiles of the candidates. Out of the 8,360 candidates contesting, 8,337 have been analysed, revealing significant insights into their backgrounds, including criminal records...  
 -PAGE: 5

**Coop Min reviews progress of pilot...**  
 The National Level Coordination Committee (NLCC) for India's ambitious grain storage project, chaired by Cooperation Secretary Ashish Kumar Bhutani, held its inaugural meeting here on Monday and reviewed the progress of the pilot project launched last year in 11 states. The initiative, spearheaded by the Ministry of Cooperation, aims to create a decentralised network of warehouses and other agricultural infrastructure at the Primary Agricultural Credit Society (PACS) level across the...  
 -PAGE: 8

**Rahane underlines importance of...**  
 Mumbai skipper Ajinkya Rahane on Monday underlined the importance of working on fitness and exhorted the players of his state side to utilise the off-season training camp for getting better. The Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) launched the three-month long camp on the theme titled 'Home of the Champions' for the upcoming season. Rahane, who led Mumbai to their record-extending win in the Ranji Trophy last season, said work behind the scenes is critical for players to deliver on the field...  
 -SPORTS

**PNS NEW DELHI**  
 Prime Minister Narendra Modi eyes a record-equalling third straight term in power amid the INDIA opposition bloc's hope of springing a surprise as the counting of votes for the Lok Sabha election is set for Tuesday, bringing an end to a marathon polling exercise stretching over 80 days.

**Overview of counting process**

- Under Rule 54 A of the Conduct of Elections Rules 1961, the counting of postal ballot papers shall be started first at the Returning Officer's (RO) table.
- The result of the control unit shall be noted in Part-II of Form 17C after showing it to counting supervisor, micro observer and counting agents of candidates.
- In case of non-display of results in the display panel of the control unit, VVPAT slips of the respective VVPAT shall be counted after completion of all CU's count.
- Counting of VVPAT slips shall start only after completion of counting of votes from CUs.

While most experts have long seen the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) as the favourite in the polls, a lot is at stake for the ruling combine in terms of the scale of victory it can pull off and new territories it can conquer. The opposition's stakes are higher still amid its reducing national footprint.

Exit polls have been, however, unanimous in their prediction that the NDA is closer to realising Modi's ambitious target of "400 paar" for his alliance than the INDIA bloc is to crossing even the 180 mark, one-third of the total number of seats.

Though electoral verdicts have historically been accepted, even though grudgingly, by all parties, there has been a sharper edge to the questions being raised by opposition parties this time over the polling process, including the Election Commission (EC).

In the run-up to the counting, the campaign acrimony between the two battling camps has spilled over into the

**SC dismisses YSRCP's plea over postal ballots**  
**PNS VIJAYAWADA**  
 In a setback to the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), the Supreme Court dismissed the petition filed by the YSRCP challenging the Election Commission's handling of postal ballot vote counting. The bench comprising Justice Arvind Kumar and Justice Sandeep Mehta stated they could not interfere in the matter.

The YSRCP had objected to an order from Andhra Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer Mukesh Kumar Meena concerning postal ballots. YSRCP leader Chevireddy Mohan Reddy had filed a petition against the Andhra Pradesh High Court's decision, seeking an urgent inquiry ahead of the vote counting scheduled for Tuesday.

In a big setback to YSRCP Macherla MLA Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy, the Supreme Court barred him from entering the counting station. The bench comprising Justice Arvind Kumar and Justice Sandeep Kumar, took note of the undertaking given by senior advocate Vikas Singh council of Pinnelli, that he would not enter the counting centre and its vicinity on Tuesday.

**DGP warns against provocative posts by social media users**  
**PNS VIJAYAWADA**  
 State DGP Harish Kumar Gupta has issued a stern warning to social media users and administrators to remain vigilant and avoid posting or allowing provocative content.

In a release on Monday, DGP Gupta said that with the general elections of 2024 concluding shortly, there has been a surge in online opinions, some of which have been inflammatory.

DGP Gupta highlighted that certain individuals are making provocative comments targeting the opposition, which could lead to serious consequences. The police have issued a warning that strict action will be taken against those engaging in such behavior. During the vote counting, social media platforms will be closely monitored by police.

**YSRCP heading for a big win, reiterates Sajjala**  
**PNS VIJAYAWADA**  
 Sajjala lashed out at the TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu for undermining the electoral process by "managing the systems." He expressed displeasure at the Election Commission of India's (ECI) memo on the validity of postal ballots, which says postal ballots should not be rejected if it was not stamped by the attesting officer.

YSRCP general secretary Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy has once again made it clear that the YSRCP is going to win with a huge majority and party president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is going to take oath as Chief Minister for the second time in a row in the port city of Visakhapatnam on June 9. Sajjala appealed to the party cadre and ranks to be ready across the State for the celebrations on Tuesday at 10.30 am.

Speaking to media persons at the party headquarters here on Monday, Sajjala said that though the apex court has struck down the SLP, the mistake remains a mistake. He said that the EC has made a rule for postal ballot vote that attesting officer details should be either in the form of a seal or written in pen. The EC has issued GuideLines in July, contrary to that, without changing it, a rule has been made that signature is sufficient only in AP but not in the entire nation.

**VOTE COUNTING BEGINS AT 8 AM ON TUESDAY**

- 33 counting locations across Andhra Pradesh with 401 halls.
- 2,443 EVM tables for parliamentary constituencies and 2,446 for Assembly constituencies.
- 443 postal ballot tables for Parliamentary constituencies and 557 for Assembly constituencies.
- 25,209 staff deployed for the counting process.
- 119 observers and micro-observers for each table, with additional micro-observers and counting supervisors.
- Extensive police presence in sensitive segments.
- Continuous CCTV coverage of VVPAT machines and counting processes.

454 candidates for Lok Sabha and 2,387 for the Legislative Assembly.

3.33 crore voters participated, including 26.4 lakh elderly and disabled voters, 26.7 lakh service electors, and 4.61 lakh voters on election duty.

Three-tier cordoning system and red zones around counting centres.

CrPC Section 144 imposed in and around EVM strongrooms and counting centres.

Deployment of significant police forces, including senior officers and numerous inspectors and sub-inspectors.

1,985 sensitive locations identified across 26 districts.

83 out of 175 Assembly segments identified as sensitive.

360-degree videography with date and time stamping for security.

**Andhra Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Mukesh Kumar Meena addressing a press conference at the Secretariat in Velagapudi on Monday.**

**Hema held in connection with rave party case**  
**PNS BENGALURU**  
 The Central Crime Branch probing the Bengaluru rave party case arrested Telugu film actress Hema following interrogation on Monday.

The rave party was organised on May 19 at a farmhouse near Electronic City. The Central Crime Branch (CCB) had summoned Hema to its office on Monday. Sources said she was deposited before her interrogators wearing a burqa to hide her identity. As her replies were not satisfactory, she was arrested.

The rave party was organised on the pretext of a birthday party where most of the people had come from neighbouring Andhra Pradesh and

# YSRCP, Oppn gear up for victory celebrations

**PNS VIJAYAWADA**  
 After a five-year hiatus. The General Administration Department (GAD) officials are in a frenzy, uncertain about the location of the impending swearing-in ceremony.

Jagan Mohan Reddy has preemptively announced his intention to take the oath in Visakhapatnam, which he has designated as his administrative capital. YSRCP leaders are debating the ideal venue, with suggestions including Kalavani Stadium and Andhra University Engineering College Grounds in Visakhapatnam.

Conversely, TDP leader and for-

mer Minister Ganta Srinivasa Rao has asserted their commitment to Amaravati as the capital. He insists that the swearing-in ceremony for Naidu, should he win, will occur near the former Praja Vedita, adjacent to Naidu's residence in Vundavalli.

Both parties have already made grand preparations to celebrate their anticipated victories. At the YSRCP central office in Tadepalli, a digital countdown clock has been ticking down to noon on June 4, symbolizing their confidence. Party state general secretary Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy has called on leaders and supporters to gather by 10 AM, ready to celebrate at their respective party offices, adhering to the Model Code of Conduct and Section 144 in force.

The TDP, not to be outdone, has planned a massive celebration. Sources reveal that a colossal cake awaits cutting by Chandrababu Naidu, with mountains of sweets and colorful fireworks ready to light up the evening sky. The party's headquarters is a hive of activity as they prepare for a jubilant declaration of victory.

On the ground, individual candidates are also prepping for celebrations. Bonda Uma Maheswara Rao, contesting from Vijayawada Central, has reportedly arranged a grand fete to mark his expected victory as soon as results are announced.

As Andhra Pradesh stands on the cusp of a new political chapter, the enthusiasm and preparations underscore the high stakes and intense competition.

Whether it's the YSRCP or the NDA bloc that emerges triumphant, one thing is certain: the celebrations will be as grand as the anticipation that preceded them.

# TDP urges EC to restrict govt's loans & payments

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) on Monday appealed to the Election Commission of India (ECI) to restrain the caretaker government from engaging in further borrowings and payments to favored contractors.

In a letter to the Chief Election Commissioner, TDP State president Atchannaidu sought the poll panel's intervention to uphold constitutional propriety and the sanctity of the people's mandate.

"It is shocking that the State government has already exhausted the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) limit set by the Centre for the State by June 1, 2024. Much of these borrowings occurred after the Model Code of



**"It is shocking that the State government has already exhausted the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) limit set by the Centre for the State by June 1, 2024. Much of these borrowings occurred after the Model Code of Conduct came into force. These funds are being used to make payments to their own firms and benami contractors, thus abusing power."**

Conduct came into force. These funds are being used to make payments to their own firms and benami contractors, thus abusing power," Atchannaidu stated.

He highlighted that, even on Monday, the State government raised a Rs 4,000 crore loan solely to make payments

to contractors, violating the First-In-First-Out (FIFO) rule in the Comprehensive Financial Management System (CFMS). Atchannaidu informed the poll panel that officials in the financial wing are complicit with the ruling party in these corrupt practices.

With the counting of votes scheduled for Tuesday, June 4, Atchannaidu argued that it is against constitutional propriety for the outgoing government to engage in indiscriminate borrowing to favor ruling party leaders and secure commissions at the expense of established systems.

# Distribution of seeds for Kharif crops to begin soon

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Chief Secretary Dr KS Jawahar Reddy has directed the officials of the Agriculture Department to take measures for the distribution of various types of seeds to the farmers in the state in this Kharif agriculture season. He said that the farmers are preparing for Kharif crop cultivation in the state and ordered the officials to take appropriate measures to provide the seeds of rice, groundnut, cotton etc. needed by the farmers in time. He said that the various seeds needed by the farmers should be made available in time at Rythu Bharosa Centers. Dr Jawahar Reddy has directed to take strict action against the responsible suppliers if there are any complaints that fake or ungerminated seeds are being distributed to the farmers.



Gopala Krishna Dwivedi, Special Principal Secretary of the State Department of Agriculture, said that as the Kharif season of 2024 is about to start, appropriate steps have been taken to make the various subsidized seeds available to the farmers. He explained regarding rice seeds, 2,24,154 quintals are needed, and beyond that, 2,35,000 quintals are available, and presently 67,617 quintals of seeds are ready

to distribute. Similarly, regarding cotton cultivation, Special CS Gopalakrishna Dwivedi stated that while there is a general area of 5,77,000 hectares in the state, it is estimated that cotton will be cultivated in 5,21,000 hectares for which 26,06,260 packets of cotton seeds are needed. Dwivedi explained that 13,69,428 packets belonging to famous companies such as Rasi, Kohinoor, etc and 4,58,300 packets of other types

of cotton seeds have been made available.

Gopalakrishna Dwivedi said that necessary measures are being taken to provide the required 100% quality seeds to the farmers in a timely manner. He further said that MoUs have been signed with 40 leading seed companies and appropriate measures have been taken to supply the necessary seeds on time. He said that in order to take strict action against them, the Department of Agriculture is constantly monitoring up to the village level. Gopalakrishna Dwivedi said that six criminal cases were registered in connection with such complaints last year.

AP State Seed Development Corporation MD Shiva Prasad, JD VDV Kripadas and other officials participated in this meeting.

# Rumours on driving licences from private schools debunked

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Deputy Transport Commissioner GC Raja Ratnam on Monday issued a clarification regarding recent rumours on social media suggesting that driving licences can be obtained from private driving schools starting June 1. The clarification revolves around the rules and regulations that govern accredited driver training centres (ADTCs) and other driving schools. Raja Ratnam emphasized that individuals must still visit Road Transport Authority (RTA) offices to obtain their driving licences.

Raja Ratnam explained that the rules pertaining to ADTCs were added to the Central Motor Vehicles Rules (CMVR) on June 7, 2021, and have been in effect since July 1, 2021. These rules, outlined in Rules 31B to 31J of CMVR, set the standards and procedures for ADTCs. These

guidelines ensure that ADTCs are well-equipped to provide high-quality driver training. The Centre specified the minimum infrastructure requirements for driver training centres to qualify as ADTCs.

To qualify as an ADTC, a driving school must meet specific infrastructure requirements. For two-wheelers, three-wheelers, and light motor vehicles, a minimum area of one acre is required. For medium and heavy vehicles, a minimum area of two acres is necessary.

Additionally, the facilities must include two classrooms equipped with computers and projector systems, simulators, broadband internet connectivity, and various driving tracks designed in S, H, 8, gradient, and reverse S shapes. Training vehicles must include at least one vehicle with dual controls, excluding two-wheelers.

Instructors must have at least 12th-grade qualifications and five years of experience with the respective vehicle type. All training provided must comply with the relevant provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act.

"Applications for driving schools meeting these criteria have been open since July 1, 2021, but no applications have been received for establishing such driving schools capable of issuing licences in the State. Therefore, individuals seeking to obtain a driving licence must continue to apply through the Saradhi portal and attend the Learner's Licence Registration (LLR) and driving tests at designated centres," the DTC clarified.

He urged the public not to believe or spread the false rumours circulating on social media about obtaining driving licences from private driving schools.

# DGP warns...

Continued from Page 1

"If anyone crosses the line and posts provocative content that incites unrest, they will face severe punishment," said DGP Gupta. "We will not spare anyone making insulting comments, threats, or other provocative statements against their opponents. Everyone is advised to be cautious, as serious action will be taken."

The DGP added that those making threats or provocative comments on social media will face significant repercussions. Group administrators are urged to be especially vigilant and control the content being posted. Failure to manage provocative posts will result in cases being registered under the IT Act, and rowdy sheets will be opened.

DGP Gupta also advised winning candidates to exercise restraint and avoid posting content that could incite trouble. He warned that the PD Act could be invoked for posts that violate regulations. Action will be taken against individuals encouraging provocative messages, following an investigation.

"Posts, photos, videos, and statuses that provoke opponents are dangerous. It is suggested that group settings be changed to allow only administrators to post," Gupta stated. "All group members should stay alert and avoid sharing such content under any circumstances."

He concluded by warning that constant police surveillance will be maintained on social media. "If anything goes wrong, individuals involved will find themselves entangled in legal issues, spending a significant amount of time dealing with police stations and courts."

# 1 more held in human trafficking racket

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

City police have made another arrest on Sunday in connection with an ongoing investigation into a human trafficking and cybercrime racket linked to agents in Cambodia.

The recent arrest brings the total count of individuals apprehended in the case to 11. The arrested individual, identified as Bongu Murali, resides in the Prasad Gardens area of Visakhapatnam's One Town area.

According to Visakhapatnam Cyber Crime Inspector Bhavani Prasad, Murali, allegedly operating an institute named 'Bhavani Fabricators and Engineering Works', is accused of facilitating the trafficking of unemployed youths to Cambodia under false pretenses of employment in computer data entry. Reports suggest that Murali allegedly took money from unsuspecting individuals, promising them lucrative job opportunities in Cambodia. However, upon

arrival, victims were coerced into participating in cyber scams against their home country.

One victim from Srikakulam reportedly endured mistreatment and coercion to engage in cyber scams after being promised a computer data entry job in Cambodia for a payment of Rs 1.6 lakh. The victim's plight came to light when his elder brother reported the situation to cybercrime police, leading to an investigation and Murali's detention.

Police investigations revealed that Murali orchestrated the trafficking scheme under the guise of providing legitimate employment opportunities. He allegedly arranged travel logistics through Akbar Travels in Mumbai and facilitated currency exchange for the victims. In some instances, Cambodian agents provided flight tickets and e-visas, enabling Murali to dispatch individuals to Cambodia for illicit activities.

Following his arrest, Bongu Murali has been remanded into custody as the investigation continues into the wider network of human trafficking and cybercrime. Murali is also under scanner in multiple cases, including four charges of cheating. The uncovering of this racket is credited to the efforts of Visakhapatnam Police Commissioner A Ravi Shankar, Joint CP K Fakirappa, and Visakhapatnam City Cyber Crime Inspector K Bhavani Prasad. Their collaborative efforts, including 'Operation Cambodia', have led to the rescue of numerous Indian nationals ensnared in the scheme.

The rescued individuals hail from various cities and states across India. Victims of such scams are urged to contact Cyber Crime Inspector K Bhavani Prasad at 9490617917, the control room at 0891-2565454, or the Commissioner of Police WhatsApp number at 9493336633.

# DELHI EXCISE CASE

## 'Over Rs 1,100 cr laundered'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has alleged in its supplementary charge sheet filed against BRS leader K Kavitha before a court here that more than Rs 1,100 crore was laundered in the alleged Delhi excise scam.

According to the ED, out of Rs 1,100 crore, Kavitha was involved in proceeds of crime (PoC) worth Rs 292.8 crore. The allegations were made in a supplementary prosecution complaint, ED's equivalent to a charge sheet, filed before Special Judge Kaveri Bewjea, who on Monday extended Kavitha's judicial custody till July 3.

The judge extended the custody after Kavitha was produced before the court in pursuance of its earlier order issuing a production warrant against her.

The court had issued the warrants after taking cognisance of a charge sheet against the BRS leader in the case on May 29.

# SC dismisses... Pinnelli barred from...

Continued from Page 1

While the Supreme Court agreed to hear the petition, it ultimately refused to intervene.

The YSRCP aimed to overturn the AP CEO's memo approving postal ballots validated by an official seal and specimen signature without designation. The Central Election Commission had upheld this decision. YSRCP's petition sought to challenge the Andhra Pradesh High Court's recent ruling on postal ballots.

During the hearing, YSRCP's counsel urged the Supreme Court to expedite the inquiry, arguing that uniform rules and regulations should be enforced by the Election Commission nationwide. They contended that issuing specific orders solely for Andhra Pradesh was unfair. Nevertheless, the Supreme Court bench affirmed it could not interfere with the Election Commission's decisions at this time.

Continued from Page 1

Further, the apex court asked the Andhra Pradesh High Court to decide the pleas for anticipatory bail on merits without being influenced by its earlier observations granting interim protection. In an interim order passed on May 23, the Andhra Pradesh High Court barred police from taking any action against him till June 5 in the case relating to the destruction of the EVM during polling.

Against this, a plea was filed by a polling agent of Telugu Desam Party before the Supreme Court alleging that by using his influence, Ramakrishna Reddy made the VRO to lodge a report as if unknown persons damaged the EVMs in the polling booth. Ramakrishna Reddy, who is seeking re-election from Macherla as a YSRCP candidate for a fifth consecutive term, has been booked by the police under the relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Representation of the People Act, 1951, and Prevention of Damage to Public Property (PDPP) Act, 1984 after a video of him smashing the EVM went viral.

The incident occurred at a polling booth in Macherla on May 13 during the simultaneous polling for the Assembly and Lok Sabha in Andhra Pradesh.

# The judgement day

Continued from Page 1

In its counter-attack, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has accused its rivals of trying to undermine the integrity of India's electoral process and asked the EC to prevent any attempt of "violence and unrest" during the counting of votes.

Modi framed the BJP's campaign around the opposition's 'appeasement politics', accusing the Congress and its allies of handing over a chunk of the reservation meant for the Other Backward Classes (OBC) to Muslims and allegedly eying people's family assets to further its "redistribution of wealth" agenda.

The issues of national and cultural pride, the government's welfare schemes and the overall political stability and economic growth also figured prominently in the speeches of BJP leaders, even though they were accused by the opposition of running a divisive and communal campaign to polarise votes. The EC has dismissed the opposition's attack on its conduct of polls, with Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar daring it on Monday to share evidence of attempts to influence the polling process.

The results will show if the Congress has it in its organisation and leadership to challenge the BJP amid its reducing footprint across the country since 2014. It has failed to get even the main opposition party status in two consecutive Lok Sabha polls and has been reduced to a pale shadow of itself in a number of states, especially in the Hindi heartland.

Its leaders, including president Mallikarjun Kharge and principal campaigner Rahul Gandhi, have claimed that their alliance will get 295 seats in the 543-member Lok Sabha, marking an end of the Modi era.

INDIA bloc leaders believe that their alliance has been to shape the poll narrative around its planks of welfarism and an alleged threat to the Constitution from an all-powerful saffron onslaught, and will get popular support.

# Home-based dialysis gains traction amid rising kidney ailments

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Hemodialysis is a common treatment for individuals with kidney issues, typically requiring patients to visit the hospital two to three times a week. This frequent travel can be challenging, especially for those living far from medical facilities. However, Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis (CAPD) offers a valuable alternative, enabling patients to perform dialysis at home, thus reducing costs and travel burdens.

Despite being available at King George Hospital (KGH) for the past 18 years, awareness about CAPD has been limited. Recently, however, there has been a slight increase in patients opting for CAPD. Dr G Prasad, Head of the Department of Nephrology at KGH, notes that although only 150 patients have utilized CAPD over 18 years, around 90 have started in just the



last two or three years. Currently, 40 patients are receiving CAPD services at KGH.

"CAPD is suitable for anyone needing dialysis, given they have a dedicated room and a trained caregiver at home," says Dr. Prasad. This method involves a catheter inserted into the abdomen, enabling patients to administer dialysis fluids themselves. Maintaining a sterile environment is crucial to avoid infections.

Unlike hemodialysis, which relies on blood purification through a machine, CAPD uses fluids to cleanse the blood, allowing patients to remain active during the process.

At KGH, CAPD services, including the necessary fluids for 15 days, are provided free of charge, which would otherwise cost up to Rs. 25,000. Inserting the catheter, a procedure that private hospitals charge Rs. 30,000

to Rs. 40,000 for, is also free at KGH. However, despite these benefits, few patients opt for CAPD, largely due to the government providing pensions only to those undergoing hemodialysis. Extending pension benefits to CAPD patients could encourage more to adopt this home-based dialysis method. Dr Prasad highlights the increasing interest in CAPD, noting its benefits of home-based management and continuous monitoring.

He advises regular health check-ups for early detection of kidney issues, recommending BP, serum creatinine, and urine albumin tests for those over 40, and biannual tests for individuals over 50. Kidney disease incidence is rising, fueled by obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, and the overuse of painkillers. Unhealthy lifestyle choices, such as alcohol and tobacco use and insufficient water intake, further exacerbate the problem.

**TODAY ALMANAC**

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha  
 Tithi: Trayodashi: Jun 04 12:18 AM to Jun 04 10:01 PM  
 Chaturdashi: Jun 04 10:01 PM to Jun 05 07:55 PM

Nakshatram:  
 Bharani: Jun 04 12:05 AM to Jun 04 10:34 PM  
 Krithika: Jun 04 10:34 PM to Jun 05 09:16 PM

Rahukalam: 3:29 PM to 5:06 PM  
 Yamagandam: 8:59 AM to 10:37 AM  
 Varjyam: 09:55 AM to 11:26 AM  
 Gulika: 12:14 PM to 1:52 PM  
 Amritakalam: 06:04 PM to 07:34 PM  
 Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:48 AM to 12:40 PM

**VIJAYAWADA WEATHER**

Forecast: Partly Cloudy  
 Temp: 37°C  
 Humidity: 61%  
 Sunrise: 5:34 AM  
 Sunset: 6:38 PM

Updated: June 3, 2024 5:00 PM

# All set for counting of votes...

Continued from Page 1

In total, 25,209 staff have been deployed for the counting process. The CEO said that in 111 assembly constituencies there will be fewer than 20 rounds of EVM vote counting, in 61 constituencies between 21 and 24 rounds, and in three constituencies there will be over 25 rounds. Similarly, 102 assembly constituencies are expected to have up to two rounds of postal ballot counting, 48 constituencies up to three rounds and 25 constituencies four rounds.

The CEO observed that there will be uninterrupted CCTV coverage of the movement of VVPAT machines, control units and relevant documents from strongrooms to counting halls and back.

"Entire counting process in the counting halls will also have 360-degree CCTV coverage or videography with date and time stamping and stored in appropriate retrievable storage devices safely," said Meena.

Speaking about the seizure of cash, liquor, drugs, precious metals and other freebies during the election period, he said the value of the seizures amounted to Rs 483 crore from January 1 to June 2. For maintaining law and order during the counting procedure, the CEO said a three-tier cordoning system will be in place at all counting centres and the areas surrounding the premises have been declared as red zones.

Moreover, CrPC Section 144 has been promulgated in and around EVM strongrooms and counting centres, among other tight security measures. The poll body has identified 1,985 sensitive locations in 26 districts while 83 assembly segments out of 175 have also been identified as sensitive.

To ensure an incident-free election results day in these 83 segments, Meena said one ADGP, two IGP, two DIGs, 11 SPs, 26 ASPs, 79 DSPs, 206 inspectors and 228 sub-inspectors have been deployed.

# YSRCP heading...

Continued from Page 1

Sajjala said these changes were made after TDP's request which is a clear violation in it and this decision was taken after the polling was over in the state. Strangely it is implemented only in AP when the counting is nearing that raises suspicion and we raised the issue.

Sajjala lashed out at the TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu for undermining the electoral process by "managing the systems." He expressed displeasure at the Election Commission of India's (ECI) memo on the validity of postal ballots, which says postal ballots should not be rejected if it was not stamped by the attesting officer. The Andhra Pradesh CEO had clarified that the postal ballots having the signature of the attesting officer but not having seal should be considered valid. Sajjala said the poll panel has brought a new rule for counting of postal ballots in Andhra Pradesh while this is not the case in the rest of the country.

The YSRCP general secretary claimed that the Opposition Leader is trying to gain control over the authorities as he fears losing the elections. He said the party has asked the polling agents to remain alert as the opposition's agents may try to disrupt the vote counting on Tuesday.

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# Counting: Candidates and their supporters on edge

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The 23-day wait for candidates from the ruling YSRCP, opposition TDP, BJP, Jana Sena Party, and INDIA bloc in the Krishna and NTR districts will end on Tuesday, June 4. As the general election results start coming in, the political landscape in these two districts will become clear.

Since the general election polling day on May 13, candidates and their supporters in the former Krishna district have been anxiously awaiting the results. Vote counting will commence in the Krishna and NTR districts on June 4 at 8 am.

Initially, postal ballots and parliamentary constituency votes from the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) will be counted from 8 am. Assembly constituency vote counting will begin at 8:30 am.

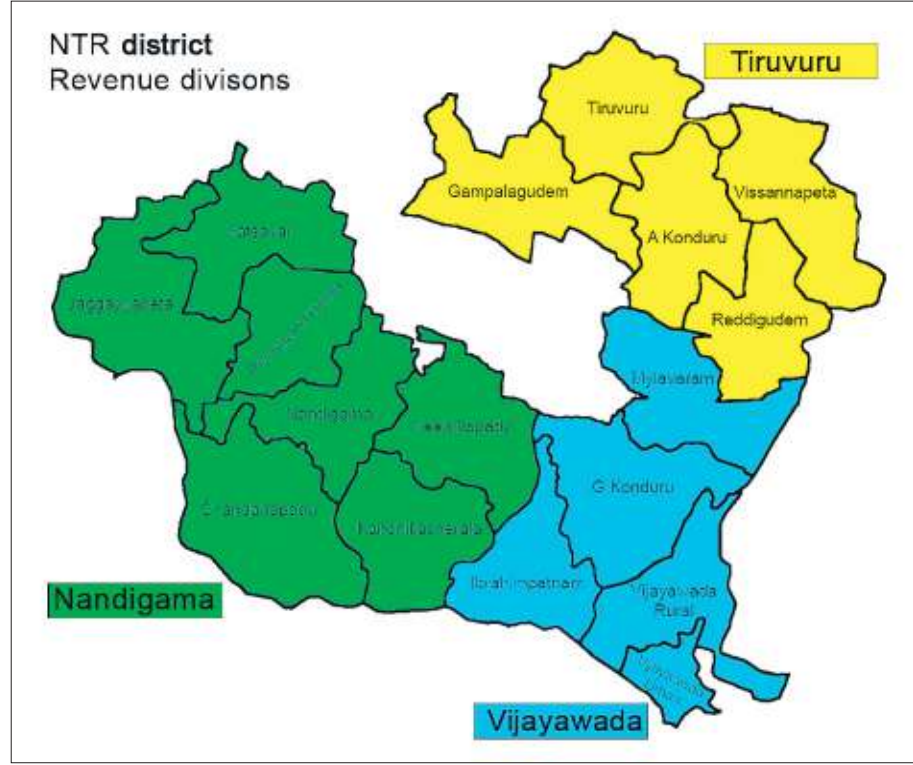
A total of 203 candidates are vying for the Vijayawada and Machilipatnam Lok Sabha seats, as well as 14 assembly constituencies in the combined Krishna district. The results are expected within a few hours of the counting process beginning.

To ensure smooth vote counting, the authorities in Krishna and NTR districts have made elaborate arrangements. Counting for the Machilipatnam LS segment and its seven Assembly constituencies will be held at Krishna University in Machilipatnam. For the Vijayawada LS seat and its seven Assembly constituencies, counting will take place at Nimra and Nova Engineering Colleges in Jupudi near Vijayawada.

## Intriguing contest in Vijayawada

In the Vijayawada Lok Sabha seat, a family rivalry is drawing significant attention. Three family members are contesting from different political parties, making it an intriguing battle. The entire Kesineni family is on edge awaiting the results.

Incumbent MP Kesineni Srinivasa Rao (Nani), who switched from TDP to YSRCP, is contesting as the YSRCP candidate. His brother, Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni), is running



Since the general election polling day on May 13, candidates and their supporters in the former Krishna district have been anxiously awaiting the results. Vote counting will commence in the Krishna and NTR districts on June 4 at 8 am.

on the TDP ticket against him, while their nephew, Valluru Bhargava, is contesting under the Congress party banner.

Additionally, all seven Assembly constituencies in the Vijayawada Lok Sabha segment are seeing fierce competition, especially in Vijayawada East, Central, West, and Mylavaram, with significant battles between the YSRCP and TDP and their allies.

Former central minister Yalamanchili Satyanarayana Chowdary (Sujana Chowdary) is contesting for the first time from Vijayawada West on a BJP ticket, a constituency with a



significant Muslim voter base.

Other notable contests include former minister Velamapalli Srinivasa Rao competing against sitting TDP MLA Gadde Rama Mohan Rao in Vijayawada East. Sitting MLAs Samineni Udaya Bhanu (YSRCP), Dr. M. Jagan Mohana Rao (YSRCP), and Vasantha Krishna Prasad (TDP) are also testing their

## Crucial contests in Machilipatnam and Pedana

The Machilipatnam and Pedana assembly constituencies are pivotal for both the ruling YSRCP and opposition TDP. Historically, the results from these segments have often determined the party

forming the government since 1983.

In Machilipatnam, former minister Permi Venktramaiah's son, Permi Krishna Murthy, is contesting against TDP's former minister Kollu Ravindra. In Pedana, former MLA Kagitha Venkata Rao's son, Kagitha Krishna Prasad (TDP), is facing ZP Chairperson Uppala Harika's husband, Uppala Ramesh (YSRCP).

The Machilipatnam Lok Sabha seat and its seven assembly constituencies are also crucial. Incumbent MP Vallabhaneni Balashowry, who defected from YSRCP to Jana Sena Party, is facing stiff competition. Tight contests are expected in the Gannavaram and Guduvada assembly segments, where sitting MLA Dr. Vallabhaneni Vamsi Mohan (YSRCP) is up against TDP's Yarlagadda Venkata Rao, and former Minister Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao (Nani) (YSRCP) faces TDP's Venigandla Ramu.

Similar fierce contests are taking place in Pamarru, Penamaluru (between TDP and YSRCP), and Avanigadda (between YSRCP and JSP).

# Hectic preparations for counting: Collector

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Dr A Mallikarjuna, District Election Officer and Collector, has announced that robust preparations have been made for the vote counting scheduled for June 4 at the Andhra University venue. Addressing counting observers, Dr Mallikarjuna detailed the extensive training provided to officers and staff to ensure a smooth and transparent process.

At a special meeting held at the Collectorate meeting hall, Dr Mallikarjuna gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining the meticulous arrangements for the counting process. The second round of randomisation was completed for 1,045 individuals, including reserves, with 857 allocated as necessary for the task.

Seven centres have been designated for counting votes in the Parliament constituency, and another seven for the Assembly segments. Six additional centres will handle postal ballots, while one centre is specifically set for ETPBS (Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System) votes. Postal ballots from Pendurthi and Gajuwaka will be counted at their respective EVM centres.



Emphasising stringent security, Dr Mallikarjuna confirmed adherence to three-tier security standards. To expedite the counting process, 14 tables will be set up per centre. The overall setup includes 21 centres spread across six buildings, equipped with necessary technical arrangements and staffed with adequately trained personnel. Both staff and counting agents have been thoroughly briefed on the procedures and rules, which include a strict ban on mobile phones. Agents are permitted to bring only white

paper, pens, and pencils. Closed-circuit cameras and proper seating arrangements have been installed within the counting centres to ensure transparency and order.

Police Commissioner Dr A Ravi Shankar confirmed the security measures in place, ensuring the integrity and safety of the counting process. The meeting was attended by counting observers Amit Sharma (Visakhapatnam East and South constituencies), Ajay Kumar Mishra (Bhimili), Abhishek Agarwal (North con-

stituency), and Amit Kumar Parnasi (West). Joint Collector K. Mayur Ashok, Joint Commissioner of Police K. Fakkirappa, MCC Nodal Officer CM Saikant Verma, District Revenue Officer K. Mohan Kumar, and RVOs of the respective Assembly constituencies attended the meeting. With these thorough preparations, Dr Mallikarjuna reassured that the counting process would be conducted efficiently and transparently, ensuring the integrity of the election results.



# Police take control of counting centres

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Stage is set for conducting the counting of votes in Vijayawada and Machilipatnam on June 4 at Nimra and Nova Engineering and Medical Colleges in Jupudi. The counting of votes in Vijayawada Lok Sabha seat and Tiruvuru, Mylavaram, Nandigama, Jaggayyapet, Vijayawada West, Central and East Assembly constituencies will be held there.

NTR and Krishna district police officials have taken control of all counting centres to prevent the untoward incidents. Elaborate security arrangements have been made. The Vijayawada police have arranged an iron mesh along the National Highway at Jupudi and on the premises of the Nimra and Nova Colleges.

NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao, Police Commissioner PHD Ramakrishna, Krishna District Collector DK Balaji and SP Adnan Nayeem Asmi have given clear instructions to the candidates and their counting agents regarding the Election Commission of India

(ECI) guidelines to be followed at the counting centres.

Counting of votes in Machilipatnam Lok Sabha segment and seven Assembly segments will be conducted at Krishna University in Machilipatnam. In addition to the CRPF, the Armed Forces and the civil police have been deployed at these counting centres.

Both district administrations have completed the arrangements for vote counting. The authorities have arranged separate tables for the postal ballots and EVMs. Three

tables have been set up for counting of postal ballots, and 14 tables each for the Assembly and Lok Sabha segments.

Meanwhile, the NTR District Collector, Police Commissioner and other officials visited the Nimra and Nova Engineering Colleges and reviewed the arrangements.

The Krishna Collector and SP visited Krishna University at Rudravaram and observed the arrangements. Collector Balaji said that sign boards were displayed on the premises of the university.



# Mannava donates Rs 2 cr to NTR Foundation

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Executive secretary of the State unit of the TDP, Mannava Mohan Krishna, has donated Rs 2 cr to the NTR Foundation which is a subsidiary of the NTR Trust.

Mannava Mohan Krishna called on the TDP chief Nara Chandrababu Naidu, at his Vandavalli residence and handed over the cheque to him. Later, Mannava Mohan Krishna

said that the NTR Trust has been extending various social welfare services besides providing free education to a number of poor students.

Chandrababu Naidu appreciated the efforts of Mannava Mohan Krishna in extending the donation to the Trust. The president of the NRI unit of the TDP, Vemuri Ravi, Gottiapati Sridhar and others were present on the occasion.

# RINL enhances pulverised coal injection to boost productivity

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a strategic move to reduce production costs and enhance productivity, the Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), the corporate entity of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP) has increased the Pulverised Coal Injection (PCI) rate in its blast furnaces. This initiative aims to replace high-cost coke with lower-cost coal, thereby decreasing the overall production cost and improving the efficiency of the blast furnaces.

The RINL team has successfully raised the PCI rate from 100 kg per ton of hot metal to approximately 180 kg per ton in Blast Furnaces 1, 2, and 3 at the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. On Monday, AK Bagchi, Director (Projects) and additional charge Director (Operations), inaugurated the Nitrogen Pressure Reducing Stations, a key component in enhancing PCI across all three blast furnaces.



Describing the event as a milestone, Bagchi commended the Projects team for their dedication in commissioning

the Nitrogen Pressure Reducing Stations. He emphasized the importance of cost reduction and expressed confidence that such initiatives would contribute to the swift turnaround of RINL. The program saw the participation of CGMs, heads of departments, and senior officials from the Projects and Works departments, marking a collective effort towards operational excellence.

# Heavy rain likely in AP over 24 hours

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Heavy rain is likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the next 24 hours and on June 6, Meteorological Centre said on Monday.

A Meteorological Centre weather report here, it said that thunderstorms accompanied with lightning and gusty winds with speed ranging from 30-40 Kmph is likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the next five days.

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers is likely to occur at many places or at a few places or at one or two places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the next 24 hours.

Very heavy rainfall occurred at Narsipatnam (Anakapalli District) in North Coastal

Andhra Pradesh and Banaganapalle (Nandyal District) in Rayalaseema.

During the last 24 hours, heavy Rainfall occurred at Balajipeta (Parvathipuram Manyam Dt), Tuni (Kakinada Dt), Yelamanchili (Anakapalli Dt), Palakonda (Parvathipuram Manyam Dt), Ranastalam (Srikakulam Dt) in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Atchampet (Palnadu Dt), Udayagiri (Spsr Nellore Dt), Seetharamapuram ( Spsr Nellore Dt), Karamchedu (Bapatla Dt), Nandigama (NTR District ), Nandigama (arg) (NTR District) in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh.

Heavy Rainfall occurred at Atmakur (Nandyal Dt), Nandikotkur (Nandyal Dt), Kanekal ( Anantapur Dt), Jupadu Bungalow (Nandyal Dt), Yemmiganur (Kurnool Dt), Owk (Nandyal Dt) in Rayalaseema. Rainfall occurred at most places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and in Rayalaseema.

# First-ever nationwide bike ride advocates for 'Men's Welfare Commission'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a first-of-its-kind initiative, the Men Welfare Trust (MWT) and Save Indian Family (SIF) have launched a nationwide bike ride to raise awareness about men's issues and advocate for the establishment of a Men's Welfare Commission in India. The two riders, Dr Amjadkhan Nadim Shaikh and Sandeep Pawaria, began their journey on May 26th from Gurugram and are aiming to cover over 15,000 kilometers across the country. Their mission is to gather one lakh signatures in support of the commission and spark a conversation about rising male suicides,

misuse of gender-based laws, domestic violence against men, and parental alienation.

After traversing major cities like Delhi, Lucknow, Patna, Siliguri, Kolkata, and Bhubaneswar, the riders reached Visakhapatnam on Monday. Addressing the public, Dr. Amjadkhan Nadim Shaikh remarked, "This initiative is not just about raising awareness but also about driving tangible change. By signing and sharing the petition, we invite individuals from all walks of life to join us in our quest for gender equality and justice for all."

D. Srinivasa Rao, a founder of Save Family Harmony, the

Andhra Pradesh chapter of SIF, welcomed the bikers to Visakhapatnam and stressed the urgent need for a Men's Welfare Commission, alongside a dedicated Women and Child Welfare Commission for children's benefit. "Today, thousands of men in the country are suffering financially, physically, mentally, and morally due to gender-biased laws, which are broadly being misused by a section of women and some legal practitioners. This ride for Men's Commission initiative seeks to resolve the challenges confronting men," he shared.

As the riders continue their mission, they will travel

After traversing major cities like Delhi, Lucknow, Patna, Siliguri, Kolkata, and Bhubaneswar, the riders reached Visakhapatnam on Monday. As the riders continue their mission, they will travel through cities including Guntur, Chennai, Rameswaram, Kanyakumari, Thrissur, Goa, Kolhapur, Pune, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Chandigarh, Jammu, Kargil, Leh, Manali, Shimla, Dehradun, and Haridwar. Their journey is supported by a Change.org petition titled 'Support the Ride for Men's Commission initiative to address men's issues in India.'



through cities including Guntur, Chennai, Rameswaram, Kanyakumari, Thrissur, Goa, Kolhapur, Pune, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Chandigarh, Jammu, Kargil, Leh, Manali, Shimla, Dehradun, and Haridwar. Their journey is supported by a Change.org petition titled 'Support the Ride for Men's Commission initiative to address men's issues in India', which calls for the establishment of a commission dedicated to men's welfare. Alongside the members of the SIF AP chapter, the bikers have been actively gathering signatures from local communities.

# Why people want Modi to come to power again and again?

"We are on the verge of coming to power again for the third time in a row. The BJP is certain to get majority of the seats. I know the sentiments of the people of the nation. We are going to take several crucial decisions during the third term. The decisions will lay a strong foundation for the nation for at least 1,000 years. The country is going to become the third largest economy during the third term", remarked PM Narendra Modi during a discussion in Rajya Sabha in February this year.

There is no wonder almost all exit polls predicting triumphant majority for Narendra Modi bringing the BJP to the power for the third time in a row. Either PM Modi or the BJP did not have any qualms about the NDA coming to power for the third time on the strength of a huge majority. The people of the country have clearly told their views

to the representatives of the organisations that conducted the exit polls. Surprisingly, the Opposition parties have spun a concocted story and took the message of BJP not going to get the number of seats this time like it got earlier to the people rather forcefully.

The Opposition promised to deliver social justice and distribution of resources free of cost among the people. It also approached the people saying that democracy and the Indian Constitution are in peril. In each and every State, some pseudo-intelligentsia launched anti-BJP propaganda and intensified it. Hundreds of books have been written, articles have been published, but the people did not believe in them as evidenced by the BJP about to come to power with a huge majority of seats.

The Congress in its first page of the election manifesto released a dart aiming the

**There is no wonder almost all exit polls predicting triumphant majority for Narendra Modi bringing the BJP to the power for the third time in a row. Either PM Modi or the BJP did not have any qualms about the NDA coming to power for the third time on the strength of a huge majority.**

people. It questioned whether the lives of the people are far better now compared to their lives prior to 2014. The question prompted the people to ponder deeply. Atrocities perpetrated and several unsavoury incidents that had taken place prior to 2014 flashed across their minds. These include starvation deaths, spate of suicides by farmers, incidents of outraging modesty of women,

communal riots, lynching of the Sikhs, pulling the rug under the feet of the democratically-elected governments, lodging those who questioned the atrocities of government behind bars, honouring those who played the second fiddle to a single political family with plum posts, large-scale scams right from the Bofors scandal to 2G scam involving several lakhs of crores, appeasement politics and los-



Y SATYA KUMAR  
BJP National Secretary

ing the self-respect as Indians. The people recalled all these incidents.

If everything is right prior to 2014, why should Modi approach the people in 2014 like a tsunami? Why should the people set aside coalition governments and give full majority to the BJP and vote it to power? Why did the people give mandate to Modi with a huge majority in 2019 elections too? Finally, people

have elected blemish-free leader who is capable of honouring the self-respect of India and find it a suitable place on global map.

During the Corona pandemic situation, Modi did what the people wanted him to do to keep the nation united and to boost the morale of the people. As 140 crore people of the nation have reposed their faith in Modi's leadership, he took several bold decisions. He lent largescale support to the business and industrial organisations and to the MSME sector. He did away with the outdated laws and introduced digital economy and made people part of the banking system. At a time the economies of the global nations are showing recession, Indian economy developed as the fifth largest economy. Modi taught a bitter lesson to Pakistan as it encouraged

**TRULY SPEAKING**

sneaking of terrorists into the country through porous points on border. The Indian Army crossed into the Pakistan territory and taught a lesson to it. China also attempted to undertake a misadventure towards the nation, but at last it had to back track.

There were many instances of leaders of super powers like Putin, Biden have extended their hands of friendship to Modi and praised his foreign policy. He tightened his belt to integrate Jammu and Kashmir, a problem which has attained cancerous proportions since India became independent, with the rest of the nation. Abrogation of Article 370 applied brakes on the misdeeds of Pakistan in Kashmir. The building of Ram temple at Ayodhya ended the historic blunder committed 500 years ago. He rendered justice to Muslim

women, who have been rendered injustice for over several decades, by annulling triple talaq.

Modi, who knows the people's pulse approached them with the slogan of Modi's guarantee to exploit the regard the people have for him for the benefit of the party. In fact, Modi dedicated his life to serve the public desiring his spouse. Like Sankaracharya developed strong bond towards his mother, Modi also shared good bond with mother. But, he is always above the familial relations.

This is the objective behind Modi declaring that he is able to take bold decisions as the Almighty wants to use him as a medium to achieve major accomplishments. Showing the Opposition parties their right place is also the wish of the God. However, it would be the collective decision of the people.

## Liquor shops to remain shut in Krishna today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As per the directions given by the Election Commission of India (ECI), the Prohibition and Excise Department has ordered that all wine shops and bars and restaurants in the erstwhile Krishna district should remain closed on Tuesday. The EC has directed the Excise Department that June 4 should be observed as Dry Day.

Krishna District Collector DK Balaji and NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao have directed the Excise Superintendents of Machilipatnam and Vijayawada to follow Andhra Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Mukesh Kumar Meena's instructions. As per the orders, all government wine shops (A4) and bars and restaurants are to remain shut on Tuesday. If the situation is under control after the completion of counting, they can be opened on June 5. However, if there are any issues, liquor shops and bars should remain closed.

In some districts, wine shops and bars were closed on Monday evening. Also, the authorities said Dry Day will be observed up to June 5. However, news circulated that wine shops would remain closed for three days leading booze lovers to store liquor in their residences. As a result, the sale value has grown in the past few days, excise officials said.

According to the Excise Superintendent, Vijayawada, as per the instructions given by Collector Dilli Rao, all 121 wine shops and 131 bars will not be opened on June 4. The department will observe Dry Day on Tuesday only. If the situation is under control after the conclusion of vote counting, shops and bars will be allowed to open, he added.



## Dry day declared in Eluru

PNS ■ ELURU

The sale of liquor was banned in the district on June 4 in view of counting of votes. Official sources here on Monday said that there are 152 liquor shops, 16 bars, two tourism bars, 251 toddy shops and two distilleries and all will remain closed on June 4. There is one APBCL liquor depot in the district. The district authorities instructed the officials to take steps for the closure of all liquor shops and bars till the midnight of January 5. In Denduluru Assembly constituency, all the 23 liquor shops, 48 toddy shops and one distillery were ordered to close till midnight of January 6.

Superintendent of police D Mary Prashanthi inspected the counting centre, located on the campus of CR Reddy Engineering College and reviewed the security arrangements with the officials. The SP said that SP (NC) E Supraja, 28 CIs, 56 SI, 1225 police personnel and 450 Armed Police



have been deployed to the counting centre and surrounding areas to maintain law and order during the counting of votes. Mary Prashanthi said that five gas parties, two Vajra parties, 48 special striking forces and 130 pickets and 8 check posts and water cannons were deployed to various places to maintain law order during the counting of votes. She said that Section 144 has been clamped in the city and Police Act 30 enforced. The management of hotels and lodges were ordered not to provide accommodation to strangers and outsiders. A ruling party leader said that though their leadership exuded confidence of winning elections, they feel tension

about the election victory. The exit poll predictions embarrassed them and enhanced their tension, he added. There are seven Assembly constituencies and one Lok Sabha constituency in the district. Collector Prasanna Venkatesh said that the counting staff was imparted training in three phases on counting of votes. Over 1000 counting officials, staff and technical experts were deployed on the counting duties.

He directed the counting officials and staff to present by 6 am at the respective counting centres. The district Collector here on Monday inspected the arrangements and reviewed with the officials. Three tables were arranged to count the about 17,500 postal ballots in three rounds. The counting for Nuzvid Assembly constituency will be 21 rounds, Unguturu Assembly constituency 16 rounds, Kaikalur 17 rounds, Dendulu 18 rounds and the counting of votes of Chintalapudi constituency will be 20 rounds.

## Counting arrangements inspected



PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

All arrangements have been completed by the officials for the counting of votes here on Tuesday.

Counting Observer M Subramanyam, accompanied by District Collector K Madhavi Latha, inspected the arrangements at a counting centre here on Monday. Municipal Commissioner K

Dinesh Kumar explained to them the counting arrangements within the Rajahmundry City Assembly Constituency on the campus of Nannaya University on Monday.

On the occasion, Collector Madhavi Latha said that the votes cast by EVM in Rajahmundry Assembly Constituency, Rajahmundry City Assembly Constituency, Parliamentary constituency

EVM votes would be counted in the Room No 317 (14 Tables) and the Assembly Segment EVM Votes would be counted in Room No. 320, "En Block-East Wing".

The counting of postal ballots would take place in room number 319 for which six tables were arranged.

The staff training programmes were conducted in two phases for the counting

The counting of postal ballots would take place in room number 319 for which six tables were arranged. The staff training programmes were conducted in two phases for the counting officers. The counting officials and staff were selected by randomisation twice. The Collector said that the counting process would begin at 5.30 am and the respective staff were allocated their tables through randomisation

The counting officials and staff were selected by randomisation twice.

The Collector said that the counting process would begin at 5.30 am and the respective staff were allocated their tables through randomisation. Constituency Returning Officer K Dinesh Kumar and Sub Collector Ashutosh Srivatsav were among those who present.

## Traffic diversion in view of counting of votes

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Sub-divisional police officer K Hanumantha Rao announced traffic diversion through various routes, keeping the counting centre area in the city as a special zone tomorrow, in addition to promulgating prohibitory orders under Section 144.

Talking to the media here on Monday, he said that security was beefed up in the entire subdivision, keeping in view the possible law and order problems.

Any warned that anyone creating problems would be dealt with seriously, and lawlessness would be crushed with an iron hand.

The vehicular traffic from Pithapuram side would be diverted from Thimmapuram Y Junction via ADB road, Samalkot-Kakinada road, and Indrapalem bridge. Similarly, vehicles from Amalapuram side have to take a diversion to enter the city, he said.

The apartment residents at Bhanugudi and near the SP's office have to take the route via Ramcosa.

However, counting agents and candidates will have relaxation, but they have to park their vehicles at the places specified, he added.

The SDPO further made it clear that the counting agents had to reach the counting centres before 7 a.m. tomorrow, and latecomers would not be allowed.



## Two deer killed by stray dogs

PNS ■ NANDYALA

Two deer were killed by a pack of stray dogs at Mustapalli village in Atmakur division in the Nallamala forest area on Monday.

According to forest officials, a herd of deer strayed into the village. A pack of stray dogs attacked the deer. Some of them escaped

into the forest. However, two of them were mauled to death by the stray dogs. The villagers informed the matter to the forest officials. One of the deer died instantly while another died some time later.

Villagers told the media that a herd of deer strays into the village often, but this is the first time stray dogs have killed two deer.

## Five persons injured as car plunged into canal



PNS ■ ELURU

As many as five persons of a family suffered injuries as the car in which they were travelling veered off the road and plunged into an irrigation canal at Mudunuru village in Pentapadu mandal on Monday. Police said that five members of the family went to the hill shrine Dwaraka Tirumala. When they were going back to their native town Bhimavaram, their car veered off the road and plunged into an irrigation canal. All the five persons escaped with injuries. They were pulled out of the ill fated car and shifted to the GGH in an ambulance by the locals.

## Manda Krishna for all-party meet on 'Jayajayahe Telangana'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

MRPS founder President Manda Krishna Madiga said that he will meet all political parties including BRS chief K. Chandrasekhar Rao regarding the State Anthem 'Jayajayahe Telangana' to try to convene an all-party meeting.

Speaking to the media on Monday, Manda Krishna said the Ande Sri song 'Jayajayahe Telangana' has been changed and that Telangana will not accept the song released on June 2. He asked Panchayatiraj Minister Seethakka how she had accepted the song without the names of Sammakka, Sarakka and Kumaram Bheem. He asked why there were no names of poets like Kancherla Gopanna in the song. "Will Transport Minister



Ponnam Prabhakar accept the song without Kancherla Gopanna's name? Will IT Minister D. Sridhar Babu accept the song without the names of Brahman poets?" he said. "There are no Reddy names in Ande Sri's song and the CM might have removed the names of other castes from the song. Ande Sri lost his image by listening to the CM," Manda Krishna said. He said that Ande Sri's

original song is in the hearts of the people already. However, the new song goes against that. In this context, he said he would meet KCR, Manda Krishna said. He also asked the government why it removed the Kakatiya Kalathoranam from the Telangana State Emblem. "If you think that the Kakatiyas killed Sammakka and Sarakka and that is why you are removing Kakatiya Kalathoranam from the emblem then what about the killings of tribals by Congress governments," Manda Krishna asked. He said that Charminar is a hereditary asset.

He said the government should accept the full song of Ande Sri and that Revanth Reddy should change the name of the Kasu Brahmananda Reddy Park to Martyrs Park.

## Engineering student killed as van hits bike



PNS ■ ELURU

An engineering student was killed and two others were injured when a van hit their bike at Koya Madharam village in Velerupadu mandal on Monday.

Police said that the deceased Varsha Santosh (20) was studying B.Tech. He, along with two other boys including Kantipalli Pravin and Kanga Ramu, was going to Jangareddygudem.

A speeding van hit their motorcycle killing Santosh instantaneously. The others were shifted to the GGH in an ambulance. The deceased and the injured belonged to Nematipet village. SI Lakshminarayana visited the scene of the accident, registered a case and shifted the body to the GGH for postmortem.



## Woman killed, 19 injured as bus overturns

PNS ■ NARASARAOPET

A woman was killed and 19 others were injured when the private travel bus in which they were travelling overturned at Petlurivaripalem village in Narasaraopet mandal in the wee hours on Monday. Police said that the private travel bus was going to Yanam from Bangalore. While avoiding hitting an uprooted tree on the road, the driver lost control of the bus resulting in it overturning.

A bus passenger identified as Divya was killed in the mishap and she belonged to Vijayawada. As many as 19 bus passengers suffered various degrees of injuries and they were admitted to a private hospital in Narasaraopet. The body of the deceased passenger was shifted to the GGH in Narasaraopet for postmortem.

**INDIA CORNER**

## Four missing siblings from Mumbai traced, reunited with family

The Mumbai police have traced four siblings from Andheri who went missing in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior last week and reunited them with their family, an official said on Monday. The police on Sunday traced three girls and a boy, in the age group of eight to 18 years, to a children's home in Gwalior and returned them to their family, an official from the MIDC police station said. The children left their home in Andheri with their mother on May 26 and boarded the Punjab Mail train from Kalyan station. When the train halted at Khandwa station, the mother alighted and missed the train, he said. The official said the children got down at Gwalior station, and a local resident took them to a children's home, the official said. Based on a complaint lodged by the children's family, a case of kidnapping was registered at MIDC police station, and a search was launched, he said.



## J-K: LeT commander among 2 terrorists killed in Pulwama encounter

Two Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists, including a self-styled commander of the outfit, were killed in an encounter with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district on Monday, police said. Inspector General of Police, Kashmir, V K Birdhi said the ultras -- identified as Riyaz Dar and Rayees Dar -- were killed in the exchange of firing during a cordon and search operation in Nihama area of the south Kashmir district. Riyaz Dar was a "commander" of the banned LeT and was wanted in several terror cases. He had been evading security forces for many years. Security forces had launched the operation after receiving specific inputs about the presence of terrorists there, a police official said. The militants opened fire on members of a search party and the two terrorists were killed in the ensuing encounter, the official said.



## Badrinath pollution: NGT seeks fresh report from UKPCB

The National Green Tribunal has sought a fresh report from the Uttarakhand Pollution Control Board (UKPCB) regarding solid and liquid waste management in the pilgrim city of Badrinath, including the complete sewage network and its carrying capacity. The NGT was hearing a matter regarding the improper functioning of the sewage treatment plant (STP) in Badrinath and the discharge of untreated sewage in the Alakananda river. It had earlier directed the board to file a report. Noting the details of the report, a bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava said, "We have not got a satisfactory response on sitting and location of the STP which appears to be just on the bank of the river and (is) thereby discharging effluent directly (in)to the river along with other drains." Directing the UKPCB to file a new report, the bench asked it to disclose the figures relating to the carrying capacity of Badrinath and the number of visitors per day.



# CEC dares Oppn: Give proof of bid to influence poll process

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar on Monday dared the opposition to share evidence of allegations that returning officers and district magistrates were influenced to vitiate the poll process so the panel could take action against them.

The opposition should also tell the Commission about those trying to influence the poll process before the counting of votes begins, Kumar said at a press conference. He was flanked by Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and S S Sandhu.

"You cannot spread a rumour and bring everyone under a cloud of suspicion," Kumar said.

The Commission had made preparations to deal with any foreign attempt to influence the poll process but these allegations have come from within the country itself, he said in an



apparent dig at the opposition. Taking exception to allegations that district magistrates were being influenced, the CEC said, "Those levelling allegations should say which DM was influenced and we will punish them. They should tell us before the counting process begins."

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh had claimed that Home Minister Amit Shah had been calling district magistrates and collectors and indulging in "blatant and brazen" intimidation. District magistrates and col-

lectors are the returning officers of their respective districts during election. Ramesh claimed that Shah had already spoken with 150 district magistrates or collectors.

Kumar had accepted all the demands made by the multi-party delegation that met the panel on Sunday, and asserted that the issues raised by them

### Count of postal ballots will commence first

With the Conduct of Election Rules, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar on Monday said the count of postal ballots will start first across all counting centres and asserted that there was "no doubt about it". Responding to questions at a press conference here, he said after half-an-hour of the start of the postal ballot count, the counting of votes recorded in the electronic voting machines will commence. A delegation of the opposition parties had on Sunday met the Commission to demand that postal ballot count should start first and the results of postal ballots should be announced first. "Rules clearly state (Rule 54A) that postal ballot count will start first."

### India created world record with 64.2 cr people voting in LS polls

India created a world record with 64.2 crore voters, including 31.2 crore women, participating in the Lok Sabha elections this year, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said on Monday. Addressing a press briefing, he said over 68,000 monitoring teams and 1.5 crore polling and security personnel were involved in the world's largest electoral exercise. "India created a world record with 64.2 crore voters, including 31.2 crore women, participating in the Lok Sabha elections this year," said Kumar. On social media memes calling election commissioners 'Laapataa Gentlemen', Kumar said, "We were always here, never went missing."

## Indian embassy in Myanmar cautions against fake job offers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian embassy in Myanmar has called upon Indian nationals looking for jobs in that country to be careful so that they are not lured into fake or illegal employment.

In an advisory, the embassy said an international crime syndicate is active in the Myawaddy region on Myanmar-Thailand border and urged Indians to exercise caution before taking up job offers in the region.

"There has been an increase in the incidents of Indian nationals falling victim to the international crime syndicates active in the Myawaddy region on the Myanmar-Thailand border," the embassy said.

"We would re-emphasise the importance of adhering to our advisories on the subject for not taking any such job offers without consulting the respective Indian embassies," it said. "A new location at Pha Lu area, South of Myawaddy town, is reported to have



emerged recently where most of the Indian victims are being trafficked into, via Thailand, after being recruited from India as well as from countries like Malaysia, the UAE, etc," it said.

The embassy urged Indians not to take up job offers made through social media.

"In view of the above, it is reiterated that Indian nationals should not accept such job offers floated through social media platforms or other unverified sources," it said. "Indian nationals are advised to check/verify credentials of foreign employers through the Indian embassy," it said.

The embassy said the antecedents of recruiting agents as well as companies should be checked before taking up any job offer abroad.

The advisory came days after 13 Indians, who were lured into illegal work in Laos, were rescued and sent back home.

### TO PROBE POST POLL VIOLENCE REPORTS

## NCW seeks approval from EC to visit Sandeshkhali

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

NCW chairperson Rekha Sharma has sought permission from the Election Commission to allow an investigative visit to West Bengal by its team following reports of post-poll violence. The request by the Chairperson of the National Commission for Women (NCW) was made in a letter addressed to Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar in view of the model code of conduct.

The letter highlights concerns about "high-handedness and police atrocities against women" in the aftermath of recent elections in Sandeshkhali and other



regions of West Bengal. Sharma emphasised the urgency of addressing these reports, noting the NCW's mandate to monitor and investigate issues related to the deprivation of women's rights and the non-implementation

of protective laws. In her communication, Sharma requested an exemption from the Election Commission of Code of Conduct to facilitate the NCW team's visit. The NCW team, led by Sharma, intends to conduct an on-the-ground investigation and take necessary actions to ensure the protection and rights of women in the affected areas, Sharma said. Allegations of intimidation and attacks were raised by the BJP on Monday in different parts of south Bengal, including in Sandeshkhali, against supporters of the TMC, following the seventh and final phase of the Lok Sabha elections.

## Battle of nerves on in HP as Sukhu govt gets lease of life

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The battle of nerves between the ruling Congress and the BJP continues in Himachal Pradesh with the Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu government getting another lease of life and stability after the acceptance of resignations of three Independent MLAs, who had cross-voted in the Rajya Sabha polls. The decision of Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania of accepting the resignations of Independent MLAs K L Thakur (Nalagarh), Hoshiyar Singh (Dehra) and Ashish Sharma (Hamirpur) comes a day ahead of results of the bye-elections to six assembly constituencies on June 4.

There has been a tussle for power in the hill state of Himachal Pradesh ever since the BJP won the Rajya Sabha election after six Congress and three Independent MLAs switched sides and cross-voted in favour of BJP candidate Harsh Mahajan.

Ever since its victory in Rajya Sabha election, the BJP has been sniffing an opportunity and a change of government after some Congress MLAs have switched sides.

The Congress currently has 34 MLAs in its favour and the BJP has 25 in the Himachal

Assembly whose strength has come down to 59 now. Six Congress MLAs were disqualified earlier and the resignations of three Independent MLAs were accepted on Monday creating three more vacancies in the 68-member House.

Once the results are out on Tuesday, the strength of the Himachal Assembly will rise to 65, but since its strength is 34 it will remain in majority irrespective of the outcome of the bypolls.

Two sitting MLAs Vikramaditya Singh and Vinod Sultanpuri are also contesting the Lok Sabha elections from Mandi and Shimla constituencies and their victory may usher in fresh bye-elections in their constituencies of Shimla Rural and Kasauli.

"By accepting the resignations of three independent MLAs, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has ensured that his government will survive for another few months. The decision comes as a reprieve for the Congress," a senior BJP leader said.

Himachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri, however, accused the BJP of making all out efforts to destabilise the state government, which has just emerged out of the crisis created by last year's heavy rains during the monsoons that caused widespread devastation and loss of lives.



### 7 EX-HC JUDGES WRITE TO PREZ

## Uphold Constitution if results throw hung parliament

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Seven former high court judges on Monday wrote an open letter to President Droupadi Murmu urging her to follow the "established democratic precedent" and invite the largest pre-poll alliance to form the government to preempt horse trading if the 2024 general elections lead to a hung Parliament.

The retired judges also urged Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud and the chief election commissioner to uphold the Constitution by ensuring a smooth transition of power, if the present ruling dis-

pensation loses people's mandate. The open letter is signed by six former Madras High Court judges G M Akbar Ali, Aruna Jagadeesan, D Hariparanthaman, P R Shivakumar, C T Selvam, S Vimala and former judge of Patna High Court Anjana Prakash.

They said there was "genuine concern" that if the present ruling dispensation loses people's mandate, the transition of power may not be smooth and there could be a constitutional crisis.

Concurring with the May 25 open statement of



Constitutional Conduct Group (CCG) of former civil servants, the former judges said, "We are constrained to agree with the scenario envisaged in the above statement: 'In the event of a hung parliament,

onerous responsibilities will be placed upon the shoulders of the President of India. "We are sure that she will follow the established democratic precedent of first inviting the pre-poll alliance that garnered the largest number of seats. Also, that she would endeavour to preempt the possibilities of horse-trading..."

It also urged the CJI and the CEC to uphold the Constitution in such an eventuality and ensure smooth transition of power.

"We, former high court judges, having no affiliation to any political party, but strongly committed to the ideals

enshrined in the Constitution, and to the values of electoral democracy, write this open letter from a deep anguish at the recent and present goings-on with regard to the parliamentary elections of 2024," the letter, issued to media on June 3, said.

"Several events over the past weeks are making for a very grim storyline; one that may possibly end in a violent conclusion. These are genuine apprehensions in the minds of the vast majority of our people. Reputed civil and human rights organisations and activists have also echoed the same apprehension," it said.

## SKM urges SDF leaders, workers not to flee Sikkim

PNS ■ GANGTOK

After social media posts claimed that demoralised SDF leaders and workers were fleeing Sikkim following assembly poll defeat, fearing attacks by ruling party cadre in post-poll violence, the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) on Monday urged them to stay back, promising peace and security for all.

The SKM bagged 31 of the 32 assembly seats, the results of which were declared on Sunday. The SDF managed to win only one seat and even its party supremo and five-term



former chief minister Pawan Kumar Chamling lost both the seats he contested. "Dear esteemed leaders and supporters of the SDF party, we have come to learn that many of you have left Sikkim fearing potential attacks. We wish to emphasise that the SKM, once

a victim of such violence, deeply understands the pain caused by these heinous acts. Our ethos strongly stands against indulging in any form of violence," SKM spokesperson Jacob Khaling said in a statement.

He said Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang has strictly instructed all party workers to abstain from any anti-social activities in Sikkim.

"We have vowed to maintain peace and harmony across our beloved state," Khaling said, urging those SDF workers and leaders who have fled the state to return.

## HP: Diarrhoea spreads to 12 villages of Hamirpur, over 200 affected

PNS ■ HAMIRPUR (HP)

Himachal Pradesh's Hamirpur is experiencing a resurgence of diarrhoea with over 200 people in 12 villages of the district falling ill in less than a week, officials said on Monday.

A similar outbreak that affected more than 400 people in the district was reported in March. It took the administration around 10 days to bring it under control. The state's health department has sent its team to the affected villages falling under the Lambloo, Chamned, Gasota, Bafrin and Pandher gram panchayats, they said.

Forty-four new cases of diarrhoea, a water-borne disease, were reported on Monday out of which four have been admitted to hospital while over 160 people are at home, Chief Medical Officer, Hamirpur Dr R K Agnihotri said. The first case was reported on Friday and the numbers have been rising since, officials said, adding that Lambloo and Chamned panchayats had 120 patients.



## LS polls: 2,572 crorepatris; 1,643 with criminal cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As India braces for Lok Sabha election results on Tuesday, there are 2,572 candidates who are crorepatris while 1,643 candidates have criminal cases registered against themselves, according to poll rights body ADR.

An analysis by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and National Election Watch has shed light on the profiles of the candidates.

Out of the 8,360 candidates

contesting, 8,337 have been analysed, revealing significant insights into their backgrounds, including criminal records, financial status, education, and gender representation.

The analysis revealed that 20 per cent of the candidates have declared criminal cases against themselves, marking an increase from 19 per cent in 2019, 17 per cent in 2014, and 15 per cent in 2009.

If the 8,337 candidates analysed, 1,643 had criminal cases, while 1,191 (14 per cent)



face serious criminal charges, including those related to rape, murder, and crimes against women.

The financial profiles of the candidates show a substantial number of wealthy individuals running for office.

Out of the total candidates, 31 per cent are crorepatris (millionaires), which translates to 2,572 candidates.

This is a notable increase from previous elections, indicating a trend towards more affluent candidates entering the political fray. The average assets per candidate amount to Rs 6.23 crores, reflecting significant wealth among the contesting candidates.

The elections were conducted in seven phases, with varying candidate statistics for each phase.

In the first phase, 16 per cent of the candidates had criminal cases, with 10 per cent facing serious charges. By the seventh phase, 22 per cent of the candidates had criminal cases, and 17 per cent had serious charges.

The percentage of crorepati candidates also varied across phases, ranging from 28 per cent in Phase 1 to 39 per cent in Phase 6.



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**PAPER WITH PASSION**

## Green thumbs

Unless reversed, the deforestation in Delhi will lead to its desertification, says HC

**M**ahatma Gandhi rightly said that what we do to forests is but a reflection of what we are doing unto ourselves. And this apathy to our environment is now causing us untold miseries. The Delhi High Court has issued a dire warning, observing that if the current deforestation trends continue, the city could become a barren desert. This alarming forecast highlights the urgent need for sustainable environmental policies and practices. As urbanisation, construction and pollution intensify, the green cover in Delhi and other metropolitan areas is rapidly depleting, leading to severe ecological and climatic consequences. Delhi's deforestation crisis is fuelled by several factors, including rampant construction, illegal logging and urban expansion. The city's green spaces are shrinking, leading to increased pollution levels, a rise in temperatures and a reduction in natural groundwater recharge areas. The adverse effects are already evident in the city's deteriorating air quality, with smog and particulate matter reaching hazardous



levels during winter months. The reduction in tree cover also exacerbates the urban heat island effect, making Delhi increasingly uninhabitable during summer.

The High Court's stark warning underscores the broader implications of this environmental degradation. Trees play a crucial role in carbon sequestration, temperature regulation and maintaining biodiversity. Their removal disrupts these natural processes, leading to soil erosion, loss of habitat for wildlife and a decline in the overall quality of life. If the current trajectory continues, Delhi could face rising temperatures, severe water shortages, loss of biodiversity and a significant decline in public health due to worsening air quality.

Unfortunately, the general tendency is that the Government should do something about it, but the people themselves can bring about a substantial change. In stark contrast to Delhi's environmental challenges, the village of Piplantri in Rajasthan offers a beacon of hope and a model for sustainable development. Located near Udaipur, Piplantri has gained international acclaim for its unique initiative of planting 111 saplings every time a girl is born in the village. This practice, started by former village head Shyam Sundar Paliwal in the memory of his deceased daughter, has transformed the village's landscape and socio-economic fabric. Since its inception, Piplantri has planted over 350,000 trees, turning the once arid region lush green. This has had multiple benefits of improving air quality, increasing groundwater levels and fostering a sense of community ownership over local resources. The initiative also challenges the deeply rooted gender biases in rural India. The environmental benefits in Piplantri are manifold. The increased green cover has helped combat soil erosion, improved agricultural productivity and provided habitat for various species, thus enhancing biodiversity. Delhi's situation and Piplantri's success highlight the critical need for proactive environmental policies and community engagement. Urban areas like Delhi can draw several lessons from Piplantri's example.

### PICTALK



Children travel via a boat to reach their school that reopened after the summer vacation, in Thiruvananthapuram PTI

## Is it possible to restore the lost vigour of our planet?

We have caused considerable damage to all our terrestrial as well as all aquatic ecosystems but some initiatives have shown promising results

**H**umans think about our planet only on two occasions: during celebrations of select days or when catastrophes happen. When everything is normal, we take our planet for granted. We exploit it to the core, and we forget that the resources on this planet are not only for us but for generations to come. At every stage in the history of Homo sapiens, we have caused considerable harm to the environment. But the quantum of destruction humans caused during the last two centuries has caused irreparable loss to the planet. This is mainly due to the advances in modern science and technology. We forgot the value of the Indian philosophy of living sustainably with nature, propagated by our forefathers for our greed. Today, we have fallen to the level that we don't even care about the future of our own children. We amass wealth and physical resources for our children, but what is the use if they don't have a clean and safe area to live? Can we restore the vigour of our planet? Restoring the lost vigour of our planet is essential for



ensuring our environment's long-term health and sustainability. While the challenges are substantial, numerous examples and strategies demonstrate that significant progress can be made with concerted effort, innovative solutions, and global cooperation. We have caused considerable damage to all our terrestrial as well as all aquatic ecosystems. To bring it back to normal is a challenging task. Initiatives such as reforestation, wetland restoration, and coral reef rehabilitation have shown promising results. For instance, reforestation projects in regions like the Amazon, Africa, and Southeast Asia are helping to restore vital forest ecosystems, sequester carbon, and provide habitats for diverse species. Wetland restoration efforts in places like the

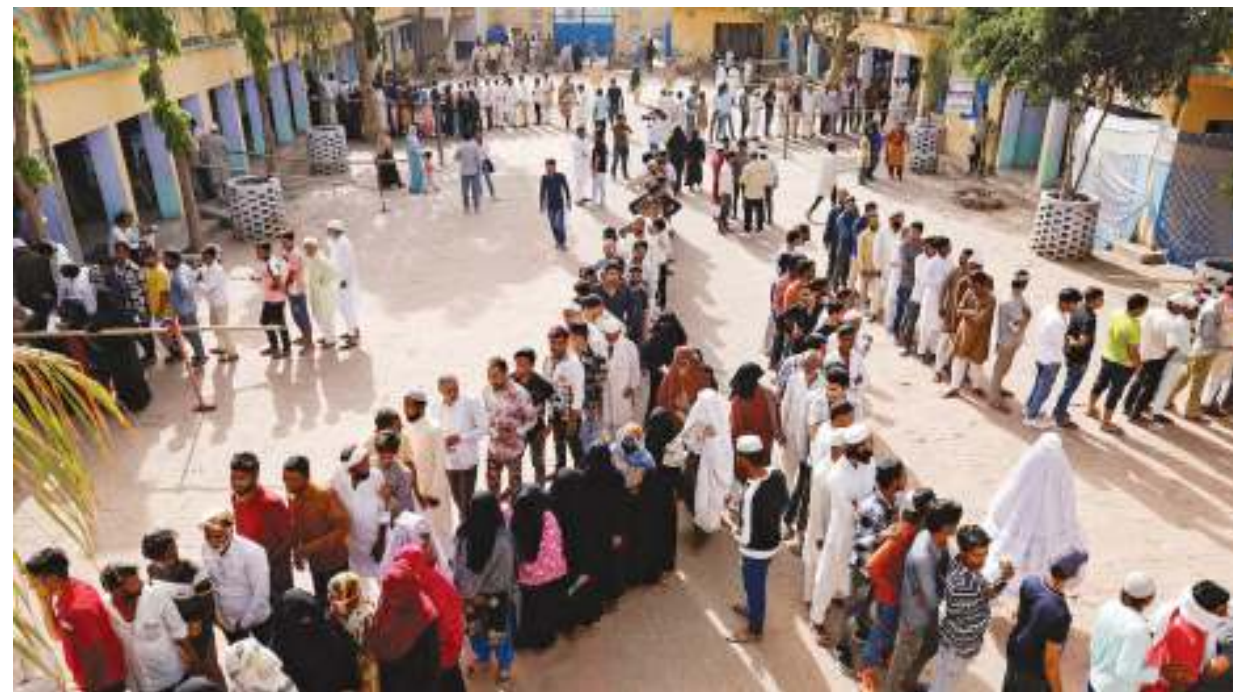
Mississippi River Delta and the Danube Delta are improving water quality, reducing flood risks, and supporting rich biodiversity. One successful example of land restoration is the Loess Plateau in China. Over several decades, intensive soil erosion had turned this once-fertile region into a barren landscape. The Loess Plateau has been transformed through large-scale interventions, including terracing, reforestation, and sustainable agricultural practices, resulting in increased agricultural productivity, reduced erosion, and improved local livelihoods. After nearly four decades of pollution and neglect, the Khushal Sar Lake in Srinagar has been restored to its former glory, providing a habitat for thousands of migratory birds. Thanks to a community effort supported by the local administration, the lake has been brought back to life. These examples showcase the potential of comprehensive land restoration strategies in reversing degradation and fostering sustainable development. Every year on June 5th, we Celebrate Environmental Day.

This year's World Environment Day campaign focuses on land restoration, desertification and drought resilience.

This year, we have realised the impact of climate change in India through scorching heat wave conditions and unprecedented rains and snowfalls. But when we feel the situation has become normal, we forget our environmental concerns and start harming it. The government must take stringent measures to safeguard the remaining tracts of agricultural lands, wetlands, forests, grasslands, coral reefs etc. No developmental activities should be allowed in these areas. We should carry out tourism-related activities within the region's carrying capacity. The government of Tamil Nadu's recent e-pass system to control tourist influx to Nilgiris is a commendable policy decision. We should implement a similar system in other ecologically sensitive regions of the country, especially those surrounding the Himalayas. *(The is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru; views are personal)*

**BIJU DHARMAPALAN**

unpardonable sins. Election speeches were a learning process for ordinary mortals. The national and State level leaders of various political outfits enlighten the voters about the failures committed by the parties that ruled the country in different times while the party that was born to rule India would shock the electorate with what they have done to make India what it is now. Though the eminent historian R C Majumdar has edited an XI volume series "The History and Culture of Indian People" which was published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan at the instance of Kulapati Dr K M Munshi, the same has been declared as an "untouchable product" by the Leftist historians of the country. The Leftists and the GOP have a lot to hide and we will come back to that on another occasion.



**W**ith the conclusion of the 7th phase of the voting on Saturday, the long drawn-out Great Election Festival has come to an end. The results of the polls would be announced on Tuesday and the winner would be asked by the President to form the new Government. If a party fails to cross the halfway mark on its own, we will see a coalition government consisting of parties with different ideologies but united in their hatred for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The electioneering of 2024 was nothing other than calling names and distortion statements made by Prime Minister Modi. The misrepresentation of facts by the media has fueled anger among various communities. When the bugle for the electoral battle was sounded by the Election Commission of India, there was no agenda in the BJP's game plan to amend the Constitution. But its rivals were unanimous in their aggressive campaign that if the BJP wins this time, there would not be any more elections in the country and the Constitution would be thrown to the dustbin. Rahul Gandhi, the Prime Minister in waiting, went one step further and declared that the BJP would cancel once and forever the reservation meant for scheduled caste/scheduled tribe and the OBC. Though this was refuted by the BJP camp, the notion in Kerala and Tamil Nadu was that Modi was against reservation of any kind. Meanwhile, leaders of Congress, CPI(M) and like-minded parties blamed Narendra Modi and the Sangh Parivar for the scorching summer as well as the draught that has struck South India. Then came the heavy downpour and upper-level cyclonic circulation in Kerala. The Congress and CPI(M) found Modi as the scapegoat for this too. The contents of the interview given by the Prime Minister to a TV channel too were distorted by the Opposition leaders who accused the former of claiming himself as God. But what he told in the interview was that he saw the 140 crore Indians as his Gods and he was worshipping them. These are

unpardonable sins. Election speeches were a learning process for ordinary mortals. The national and State level leaders of various political outfits enlighten the voters about the failures committed by the parties that ruled the country in different times while the party that was born to rule India would shock the electorate with what they have done to make India what it is now. Though the eminent historian R C Majumdar has edited an XI volume series "The History and Culture of Indian People" which was published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan at the instance of Kulapati Dr K M Munshi, the same has been declared as an "untouchable product" by the Leftist historians of the country. The Leftists and the GOP have a lot to hide and we will come back to that on another occasion.



**NOW THAT THE LAST VOTE HAS BEEN CAST, THE ONLY OPTION IS TO WAIT TILL JUNE 4 TO KNOW WHICH WAY THE WIND HAS BLOWN. NEWSPAPERS AND NEWS CHANNELS SHOULD NOT TAKE SIDES IN THIS CONTEST OF DEMOCRACY**

was "facts are sacred but opinions are free". But in present-day journalism, this law has degenerated and it has become facts and opinions are free. If one is to go by the news and opinions of most newspapers, the INDI Alliance has already won the election and it is a matter of time before the new government is sworn in. The opinion polls and surveys have become a butt of jokes. Now that the last vote has been cast, the only option is to wait till 4 June 2024 to know which way the wind has blown. Newspapers and News Channels should not take sides in this contest of democracy. No doubt, the claim "my kurta is whiter than his" extends to politics. But it should not lead to an exercise of abusing and belittling the rivals. The speeches delivered by some of the leading lights of the main political parties were deplorable and despicable. The portrayal of Mukhtar Ansari, a dreaded criminal and mafia don, as Shaheed by Asaduddin Owaisi, the president of AIMM was a shocking incident. We address Bhagat Singh and Chandrasekhar Azad as shaheeds but this is the first

time a mafia don has been accorded the status of Shaheed. Some of the leaders who constitute the INDI Alliance applaud a person convicted to life imprisonment in the fodder scam as the most honest politician in the country even though the latter is out on bail claiming serious medical ailments. The Porsche car mishap that claimed two lives in Pune is further proof that the BJP cannot escape from the allegations of favouritism. The Hindutva brigade is the alliance partner of the government in Maharashtra in which the NCP has a major stake. Only people with knowledge, wisdom and a clean image should win the election and assume power at the Centre. Convicts and mafia dons should not have any place in this electoral battle. Above all, it is for the Election Commission to elevate the quality of the electoral game to that of a royal event. There is no space for anti-social and anti-national elements in this jamboree where people are the masters. Let the electorate have the last word. *(The writer is a special correspondent with the Pioneer; views are personal)*

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN**

## Epic election festival concludes smoothly

The 2024 general election campaign has been marked by intense mudslinging, media misrepresentations and sharp ideological battles

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### DELHI FIGHTS VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES

**Madam** — Regarding the news story "MCD intensifies efforts to control vector-borne diseases," published on June 2, here is my response. As a daily reader of the newspaper, I find the Municipal Corporation of Delhi's (MCD) intensified efforts to control vector-borne diseases commendable. The deployment of Domestic Breeding Checkers (DBC) has been notably effective, with over 1.35 crore inspections and on-the-spot treatments for more than 25,000 mosquito-breeding sites. The strategic approach, including intersectoral meetings and community awareness campaigns, underscores the importance of collective action. MCD's consistent anti-larval spraying and fogging are critical in curbing the spread of diseases like dengue. However, the real challenge lies in sustaining these efforts and ensuring public cooperation. The civic body's appeal to residents to maintain cleanliness and manage water storage responsibly is vital. With Aedes mosquitoes breeding in stagnant clean water, community involvement in eliminating potential breeding sites is crucial. It's heartening to see such proactive measures, but continuous vigilance and public engagement are essential to prevent future outbreaks.

Jiya Patel | Ahmedabad

#### ELECTION DYNAMICS IN INDIA

**Madam** — Apropos the news story "Now, count your blessings on June 4," published on June 2, this is my response. As a regular newspaper reader, witnessing the culmination of the largest festival of democracy in India is a remarkable experience. The recent Lok Sabha elections, with a voter turnout of 60 per cent, underscore the vibrancy and resilience of Indian democracy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking a third consecutive term, campaigned vigorously, reflecting the intense political landscape. West Bengal's impressive 70 per cent turnout contrasted starkly with Bihar's 49.12 per cent, highlighting regional

#### INDIA bloc optimistic despite exit polls



**R**egarding the news story "Cong Assured of 295+ Seats for INDIA Bloc," published on June 2, here are my thoughts. As a daily reader of The Pioneer, I am deeply impressed by Deepak Kumar Jha's coverage of the INDIA

Bloc's confidence in the 2024 general elections. The detailed account of Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge's assertive claims of winning over 295 Lok Sabha seats highlights the coalition's robust strategy and optimism. It's particularly notable how Jha captures the strategic planning and unity among diverse opposition leaders, including Sonia Gandhi, Arvind Kejriwal, and Akhilesh Yadav. This article sheds light on their collaborative efforts and preparation for the vote-counting process, reflecting a significant political moment. Jha's thorough reporting provides readers with an insightful glimpse into the political landscape, emphasising the Bloc's readiness to challenge the BJP and form a stable government. His articulate narration is both informative and engaging, making it a commendable piece of journalism.

Shaker Kumar | Delhi

differences in electoral engagement. Despite incidents of violence and complaints about EVM glitches, the overall peaceful conduct of the elections is commendable.

Modi's call for robust voter participation resonates deeply, emphasising the importance of every vote. The predicted return of the Modi-led NDA, according to exit polls, suggests continuity but also invites reflection on the opposition's strategies. This election underscores the dynamism of Indian politics, where every voter, regardless of background, plays a pivotal role in shaping the nation's future. The real victory, as the Election Commission aptly put it, belongs to the Indian voter.

Dhruv Gupta | Mumbai

#### LEGACY OF SONAL MANSINGH

**Madam** — Apropos the news story "The Living Legend of Sonal Mansingh," published on June 2, this is my response. Reading about Sonal Mansingh's remarkable journey is truly inspiring. Her story is one of dedication and resilience, breaking barriers in a male-dominated

field and promoting Indian classical dance on a global stage. Starting her dance education in Bharatanatyam and later mastering Odissi under Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, she has become a luminary in the arts. Despite societal challenges, her unwavering commitment has not only preserved India's cultural heritage but also brought it to the forefront internationally. Mansingh's involvement in politics as a Rajya Sabha member further emphasises the importance of integrating cultural advocacy within governance. Her efforts to use dance as a medium for social commentary and her work with the Centre for Indian Classical Dances highlight her multifaceted contributions. Sonal Mansingh's life and work remind us of the enduring relevance of our cultural roots and the transformative power of art in bridging divides and fostering dialogue.

Ishika Verma | Jaipur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN CRIME AND CONSCIENCE

Spiritual resilience through meditation can help reform criminal behaviour



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJJI

The whole nation was jolted by a recent hit-and-run tragedy, where in a teenager, reportedly intoxicated behind the wheel of a luxury car, collided with a motorbike, claiming the lives of two promising young IT professionals. As per criminal psychologists, before a crime can be said to have occurred, it has to be committed. So, without action, there can be no crime. Hence, they say that in most of the cases, a person commits a crime in a moment of high tension, irresistible temptation, uncontrollable passion, deep infatuation, extreme provocation or utter frustration or in answer to an undying call of conviction or conscience. So, according to them if he/she could withstand the pressure of these conditions of restlessness for even a couple of minutes or perhaps, even for a few seconds, he/she would have, perhaps, been out of the crime zone and be free at least from any charge of a cognisable offence. Considering it from another perspective, it could be said that, if a man's rational sense, his self-respect, his control over the emotions, his sober judgement, his noble sentiments and his spiritual or ethical sense had not forsaken him, then, perhaps, the blinding storm of negative forces would have subsided and subdued and he would have refrained from the actual committal of crime and would thus have been saved from the traumatic experience that generally follows the crime. Once a gory crime has been committed, the gentle spirit in man has to go through a humiliating and excruciating experience even before he is jailed for a criminal offence or has to pay a heavy amount as punishment, under the relevant act for his civil offence, or has to suffer both. Not only does he feel depressed and carry a heavy burden on his chest but also, he is unable to face his conscience, stand before a mirror and



see his face as before. We have to consider does the law cover all acts that may cause injury to public welfare? Hence one can say that there is no objective, simple definition of crime. Because the meaning of crime is affected by the particular society in which we live.

Like, there are crimes that occur within strict legal definitions and those that relate to codes or conventions known as normative definitions. They are usually formal moral codes such as religions, or informal codes such as socially acceptable behaviour. The acts of crime and the punishment by the court go on as usual. However, one important question to which no government or judiciary has seriously and assiduously addressed itself lingers on. The question relates to the state of mind of a person before he commits the crime and after he has done the act. It is common knowledge that the forces that goad a person to committal of crime are none other than the maddening feelings of anger, consuming fires of hatred, jealousy, rivalry, vengeance or enmity, expanded greed, aroused strong passion, inflated or injured ego, surge of emotional attachment or grave fear of the unknown. We cannot reduce crime or have a crimeless society unless and until we have greatly reduced or fully removed these negative traits from the minds of the citizens.

It is unfortunate that pre-natal and post-natal aspects of crime have never been adequately dealt with by our society. It is hardly realised that what is required, in fact, are such measures that increase the psychological and spiritual immunity of the citizens to situations of stress and strain or to tempests of greed, ego and passions. This cannot be done except by spiritual education and guidance in Meditation. Because it is meditation which can burn the hidden roots of anger, hatred and other negative and criminal tendencies in a person. The over-all expenditure and the manpower and effort required for this will be "far far less" than is involved to keep the cogged wheels of law oiled and moving.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher and a popular columnist; views are personal)

# Uncertainties dwindle investors' confidence



SHIVAJI SARKAR

Global uncertainties over rising interest rates, jittery noises of LS elections surpass the RBI's ₹2.10 lakh crore dividend boons, pushing down the Sensex



From its highest 76,010 in the beginning of the week it plunged to 73,866 as the BSE and Nifty indices close in the last six sessions. The RBI forecast of 7 percent growth too has not boosted the spirits as the equity market has been pining for a higher growth. However, RBI claims that even at 7 percent the country would be one of the fastest growing economies in the financial year 2025. The Asian Development Bank and Fitch also concur. But IMF, S&P and Morgan Stanley put it at 6.8 percent and World Bank, Moody's and Deloitte put it at 6.6 percent.

The RBI has set a target of inflation at 4.5 percent though the central bank repeatedly has said that for the last ten years average inflation hovered over 5.5 percent. The central bank also notes a slowdown in the last quarter of 2023-24. Global markets remained under pressure due to rising bond yields and denting hopes of a rate cut. A major concern is the spike in US bond yields pushing the 10-year yield above 4.6 per cent. Some of the top companies that raised dollar bonds include India Bulls HF-\$ 350 million; IRB Infra - \$ 540 million; Adani Green Energy - \$ 409 million and Sriram Finance - \$ 750 million, as per Bloomberg. The bond market can trigger continuation of the FII selling which will depress the prices of large stocks further. Volatility is likely to continue the next week as well due to the political uncertainty and global developments. This has been a phenomenon since the elections began in April and now it is spiking to 24.8 - a more than two-year high on the benchmark for volatility India VIX. Except for occasional rises, the stocks remained stagnant.

In different phases the losses to investors have been heavy. In the present melee, foreign funds were major sellers at Rs



A PROLONGED ELECTION HAS SEEN INVESTOR CONFIDENCE BEING HIT. FOREIGN PORTFOLIO INVESTORS PREFERRED TO UNLOAD MORE THAN BUYING. ELECTION IS A DEMOCRATIC NECESSITY. THE RULERS, HOWEVER, NEED TO SEE IT BEYOND POLITICAL COMPULSIONS

3,050 crore. In earlier, trading also the FPIs sold stocks worth Rs 27,500 crore. The domestic funds were net buyers at Rs 53,600 crore. It means largely the PSU funds were the buyers. This has a risk to mutual fund investors. During the weekend the BSE sensex had a minor rise of 0.18 percent or 132.44 points and the NSE Nifty 50 closed 61.75 points or 0.27% higher. These minor movements are not capable of recovering the losses.

It is found that some of the major corporates like the Tata Steel's profit slides 65 percent to Rs 555 crore down from Rs 1566 crore. It suffered a loss of Rs 594 crore. Of the 12 startups looking to launch IPOs in 2024, eight have incurred a cumulative loss of Rs 8,000 crore, including Swiggy, and Ola Electric.

A prolonged election has seen investor confidence being hit. Foreign portfolio investors preferred to unload more than buying. Election is a democratic necessity. The rulers, however, need to see it beyond political compulsions. Ideally, an election could be held in far fewer phases stretched to not more than a fortnight. Most of the southern states had a one-day poll schedule. Only in states of northern and eastern India had multi-phase polls. Even Tripura, one of the tiniest states with two seats, witnessed polls being held in two phases.

Longer an election stretches, the administrative cost multiplies. All political parties should sit together with the Election Commission of India (ECI) to

discuss how the modalities could be simplified to hold elections in the shortest possible time to take care of administrative, economic and trading activities. Apart, it also needs to decide whether announcing dividends by organisations like RBI or other PSUs could be announced during the elections. Such moves tilt the balance.

Profit booking at higher levels in the stock market has been a synonym to political or economic uncertainties. This needs to be avoided to the maximum. Polls must not come in the way of policy decisions either at the government level or corporate and other institutional functioning. Election schedules are not a matter of mere political management. Polls are held to improve systems. If these affect any aspect of the governance, this must be corrected for all times and should be part of the standard operating procedures of the ECI.

Overall, there are risks to the economy, RBI says in its annual report. It has asked banks to address trading norms, banking book risks, and diversify deposit sources to mitigate risks associated with interest rate fluctuations. This variation has also its impact on the stock markets. Its decision to review priority sector lending guidelines and work towards formulating norms for the National Strategy for Financial Inclusion up to 2030 could have wider impact on trading and businesses.

The RBI functioning is also being discussed. Its dividend payment of Rs 2.10 lakh crore is linked to

17 percent rise in income, 56 percent drop in expenses due to a much lower transfer to contingency provisions during 2023-24. As against Rs 1.3 lakh crore in 2022-23, only Rs 42,819 crore was transferred to the contingency fund in 2023-24.

Another matter that has drawn attention is the domestic assets made up 23.3 percent against 76.7 percent in foreign currency assets, including gold deposits and gold held in the country as also loans and advances to financial institutions outside India. The RBI holds, its annual reports says, 822.1 metric tonnes of gold. The value of gold held as asset increased by 16.9 percent to Rs 1,64,604.9 crore on March 31, 2023. It also mentions heavy liabilities other than deposits and notes issued at 92.57 percent.

The recent trend in US inflation data could make an interest rate cut this year. This could cause further flight of capital from India even as rupee continues to fall against the dollar and further fall in the equities are not ruled out. The market awaits new policy formulations. Till such time the volatility is likely to continue. It would require innovative approach to the financial and budgetary policies to boost the overall market so that investors from across the globe are tempted to put their funds in Indian scrip and other instruments. The new government has to tread cautiously and intelligently to rev up the contours of the market and economy.

(The author is a senior journalist; views are personal)

# Total knee replacement is a quantum leap towards pain relief

TKR is a transformative solution for those with knee pain. By tackling the root cause of pain, it not only restores mobility but also improves overall health

A 46-year-old woman faced the challenges of bilateral knee degeneration due to a rare congenital condition. Her knees had deteriorated significantly, causing chronic pain and limited mobility. After careful evaluation of her condition and medical history, she was recommended bilateral total knee replacement surgery (TKR) as the most suitable option. Following the surgery, she experienced a remarkable transformation. Today, she enjoys a newfound sense of freedom and vitality. Whether it's walking, hiking, or pursuing her passions, she does so with confidence and ease. Knee pain affects millions of individuals in India, hinder-



VIPUL KUMAR GUPTA

ing basic activities like walking and stair climbing. However, TKR is a breakthrough revolution in this direction, and a study published in the Journal of Arthroplasty reports that over 90% of TKR patients experience significant pain relief and improved mobility post-surgery.

TKR, also known as knee arthroplasty, is considered a quantum leap towards pain relief for patients suffering from severe knee pain, often due to arthritis or injuries. This surgical procedure involves replacing the affected parts of the knee joint with artificial components to normalcy. Women often face knee problems because of their body structure and changes

like menopause hormones. This can make everyday tasks harder due to joint weakness and extra knee pressure. That's why doctors suggest knee replacement surgery. It's a way to fix the knee for improved and painless functionality. Unlike conventional treatments, surgery tackles the root cause and enables the person to enjoy a normal and painless life.

TKR isn't just for seniors anymore; it's also a lifeline for younger adults, addressing various conditions beyond sports injuries. It's also beneficial for patients with traumatic injuries or fractures leading to irreparable knee damage. TKR addresses these issues, provides long-term relief, and



restores knee function. Eventually, it empowers younger individuals to lead active lives. Factors such as activity level and implant durability are carefully evaluated to ensure optimal outcomes.

TKR is a transformative solution for those with knee pain and coexisting health

issues like diabetes or obesity. By tackling the root cause of pain, TKR not only restores mobility but also improves overall health. Reduced pain and enhanced mobility support, increased physical activity, aiding in weight management and blood sugar control. Total Knee Replacement

involves replacing the whole knee joint with artificial parts, which is useful for widespread arthritis or severe damage. On the other side, Partial Knee Replacement (PKR) targets only the damaged part of the knee, keeping healthy tissue and bone intact. Both surgeries aim to reduce pain and improve movement, but they differ in how much of the knee they address. TKR is a comprehensive solution for serious knee issues, while PKR focuses on specific areas of damage. The choice between the two depends on the severity of the injury and the patient's overall health. Physical therapy is crucial before and after TKR. Before surgery, it strengthens muscles and improves flexibility,

preparing patients for the procedure. After surgery, therapy helps reduce swelling, regain mobility, and rebuild muscle strength. Continued therapy ensures optimal knee function, prevents stiffness, and enhances the quality of life.

TKR offers hope to people regardless of age, gender, or health challenges. With advancements in medicine, TKR has become a game-changer in treating knee problems as a reliable solution for improving knee function and reducing pain. It's a choice that can truly change their lives for the better!

(The writer is a senior Joint Replacement Surgeon at Shalby Hospital, Lucknow; views are personal)

## MONEY MATTERS Lupin gets USFDA nod to market generic drugs in US

Drug maker Lupin on Monday said it has launched a generic medication used to treat or prevent bacterial infections in the US market. The company has launched Doxycycline for Injection USP (100 single-dose vial) in the US post approvals from the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), the Mumbai-based drug maker said in a statement. The company's product is a generic equivalent of Pfizer Inc's Vibramycin for Injection which is indicated to reduce the development of drug-resistant bacteria. As per the IQVIA MAT April 2024 data, Doxycycline for Injection USP had an estimated annual sale of US\$ 48 million in the US. Lupin said it has also received tentative approval from the USFDA for its abbreviated new drug application for Letemrovir Tablets, 240 mg and 480 mg. The product is the generic equivalent of Merck Sharp & Dohme LLC's Prevymis tablets (240 mg and 480 mg).



## Icra revises domestic steel demand growth rate to 10%

Icra on Monday revised its outlook growth target for domestic steel demand to 9-10 per cent for the current fiscal on healthy government spending and demand from steel-consuming sectors. The domestic steel consumption registered a growth of 11.3 per cent between February to April 2024, the agency said in a report. It further said that government capex spending was also healthy until February 2024, and other steel-consuming sectors like housing and real estate contributed to the resilient demand thereafter. "Given these leading trends, the rating agency has revised its FY25 steel demand growth target to 9-10 per cent...compared to the earlier estimate of 7-8 per cent, leading to the sector's FY2025 earnings being revised upwards," the report said. Girishkumar Kadam, Senior Vice-President & Group Head, Corporate Sector Ratings, ICRA, said for the last three years, the steel industry has witnessed its fastest period of growth since the global financial crisis.



## Punjab National Bank, IIFCL sign pact for financing infra projects

Punjab National Bank (PNB) and India Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd (IIFCL) on Monday signed an agreement to offer long-term financial assistance to viable infrastructure projects. With this, both the institutions will collaborate to fund the infrastructure projects wherein the parties can mutually participate under consortium/multiple lending arrangements to provide financial support to the prospective borrowers subject to due diligence and on a case-to-case basis, a joint statement said. A signing ceremony for the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) took place in the presence of Atul Kumar Goel, MD & CEO of PNB, and Padmanabhan Raja Jaishankar, MD of IIFCL, it said. This MoU would be a milestone in finding new avenues of lending to the infrastructure projects of the country and they assured full participation from both sides in this endeavour, it said.



# Sensex, Nifty log biggest single-day gain in 3 yrs

PNS ■ MUMBAI

After the exit polls predicted the return of the Modi government for the third straight term, benchmark Sensex and Nifty zoomed more than 3 per cent on Monday, recording their biggest single-day gain in three years and closing at lifetime highs. The 30-share BSE Sensex soared by 2,507.47 points or 3.39 per cent to settle at a new closing peak of 76,468.78 points with 25 of its constituents ending in the green and five in the red. During the day, the barometer jumped 2,777.58 points or 3.75 per cent to hit a record intra-day peak of 76,738.89. The NSE Nifty climbed

733.20 points or 3.25 per cent to finish at 23,263.90. During the day, it soared 808 points or 3.58 per cent to hit a fresh intraday all-time high of 23,338.70. Sensex and Nifty logged their biggest single-day gains since February 1, 2021, when indices had jumped nearly 5% after the budget presentation. Interestingly, Sensex and Nifty had spurred more than 3 per cent on May 20, 2019, after the exit polls predicted a major win BJP-led NDA in the 2019 general elections. Among sectors, PSUs, Power, Utilities, Oil, Energy, Capital Goods, and Realty indices soared up to 8 per cent. A sharp rally in blue-chip



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stocks Reliance Industries, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank and State Bank of India propelled the indices to lifetime high levels. Strong GDP data also added to the buoyancy in equity markets. Shares of all Adani Group companies continued their

rally on Monday, taking their combined market valuation to Rs 19.42 lakh crore. Adani Power surged nearly 16 per cent, Adani Ports by 10 per cent and flagship Adani Enterprises by over 6 per cent. Exit polls on Saturday pre-

dicted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will retain power for the third straight term, with the BJP-led NDA expected to win a big majority in the Lok Sabha polls. The counting of votes will take place on June 4.

## 'Strong growth, lower fiscal deficit may lead to India rating upgrade'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Strong growth and a narrower fiscal deficit can lead to a sovereign rating upgrade for India, a German brokerage said on Monday.

The government's commitments on fiscal deficit to 5.1 per cent in FY25 and further down to 4.5 per cent in FY26 "look more credible now", analysts at Deutsche Bank said, pointing out that the number came in at 5.6 per cent in FY24 as against the budgeted 5.8 per cent.

Courtesy the higher than expected dividend announcement by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) at Rs 2.1 lakh crore, the fiscal deficit for FY25 can come down to 5 per

cent as against the budgeted 5.1 per cent.

On growth, the note said it expects real GDP expansion to come at 6.9 per cent in FY25 and go down further to 6.5 per



cent in FY26.

"Strong growth, lower fiscal deficit opens up room for ratings upgrade," the note said. "A faster-than-anticipated pace of fiscal consolidation could pave the way for a sooner-rather-than-later sovereign

rating upgrade for India," the analysts said.

It can be noted that global rating agency S&P had last week revised up the outlook on its sovereign rating for India to "positive" from "stable" earlier.

On Friday, official data suggested that the economy grew at a faster clip of 8.2 per cent in the March quarter, which takes the FY24 real GDP growth to 7.6 per cent.

The note said the Indian economy has exhibited "remarkable resilience" despite higher rates for longer, the Russia-Ukraine war and Covid prior to that, though a strong pickup in real GDP growth during FY24 can also attributed materially to a very low GDP deflator.

## NHAI's revised toll rates come to effect across highways

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The revised toll charges for motorists on national highways across the country have come to effect from Monday, an official said.

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has hiked the toll charges by an average of 5 per cent.

The hike is part of NHAI's annual exercise where the state-owned body calculates new rates factoring in several parameters, the senior NHAI official said. Every year, it is implemented from April 1 but this year the implementation was deferred due to gen-

eral elections. The average hike this time was 5 per cent. The revised user fee has been implemented from today, the official said. From Monday, motorists using national highways/expressways will have to shell out more money for their road journeys.

"The fuel costs were already high. The increased toll rates will make road journeys costlier for people," said Ankur Saxena, an advertising professional who frequently travels through Delhi-Lucknow route.

The toll fee is revised annually, taking into accounts the changes in the wholesale price index (CPI)-based inflation.

## RS 2000 BANKNOTES 97.82% returned; Rs 7,755 crore worth notes still with public

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday said 97.82 per cent of the Rs 2000 denomination banknotes have returned to the banking system, and only Rs 7,755 crore worth of the withdrawn notes are still with the public. On May 19, 2023, the RBI announced the withdrawal of Rs 2000 denomination banknotes from circulation.

The total value of Rs 2000 banknotes in circulation, which was Rs 3.56 lakh crore at the close of business on May 19, 2023, has declined to Rs 7,755 crore at the close of business on May 31, 2024.

"Thus, 97.82 per cent of the Rs 2000 banknotes in circula-



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tion as on May 19, 2023, has since been returned," the central bank said in a statement. The facility for deposit

and/or exchange of the Rs 2000 banknotes was available at all bank branches in the country till October 7, 2023.

The facility for the exchange of the Rs 2000 banknotes has been available at the 19 issue offices of the Reserve Bank since May 19, 2023.

From October 9, 2023, RBI issue offices are also accepting Rs 2000 banknotes from individuals and entities for deposit

into their bank accounts. Further, members of the public are sending Rs 2000 banknotes through India Post from any post office within the country to any of the RBI issue offices for credit to their bank accounts.

The 19 RBI offices depositing/exchanging the banknotes are in Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Belapur, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Chennai, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Jammu, Kanpur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Nagpur, New Delhi, Patna and Thiruvananthapuram.

The Rs 2000 banknotes were introduced in November 2016, following the demonetisation of the then-prevailing Rs 1000 and Rs 500 banknotes.

## Interest rates have peaked, moderation expected towards year-end, says PNB MD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days before RBI's monetary policy, Punjab National Bank (PNB) managing director Atul Kumar Goel said interest rates have peaked and are expected to see a reversal by the end of this year.

The Monetary Policy Committee, which is expected to keep the policy rate unchanged for the eighth time in a row, is scheduled to begin its meeting on June 5. The decision of the rate-setting panel

will be announced on June 7. "Interest rates are contingent upon so many factors like growth, inflation, monetary policy stance of other countries. I think rates have reached the peak. I think after some time maybe by the end of this year, we can see some reduction in the rate of interest," he said.

There should not be an increase in the deposit rate as 95 per cent of deposits have already been repriced, he said. Goel said the Retail, Agriculture and MSME (RAM)

segment is going to be the focus area for the bank but would not shy away from financing good corporate loans.

"RAM is about 55 per cent of total credit. We want to increase this number by around 60 per cent in the next four to five years. For this year, we have set a target to achieve 57 per cent. As I told you we are one of the largest banks in the country, although the focus is on the RAM but if an opportunity comes, we will not allow it to go out," he said.

## Sebi launches Saaṛthi 2.0 mobile app on personal finance for investors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Monday launched a mobile app 'Saaṛthi 2.0' on personal finance for investors with comprehensive tools aimed at simplifying complex financial concepts.

"The updated 'Saaṛthi' app introduces a user-friendly interface with comprehensive tools aimed at simplifying complex financial concepts," Sebi said in a statement.

The app includes financial calculators and has modules that introduce and explain



KYC procedures, mutual funds, ETFs, buying and selling shares on stock exchanges, investor grievances redressal mechanism, and the Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform.

Additionally, the app features a range of videos designed to assist investors in their personal finance planning.

"In today's era, where social media sometimes provides biased or misleading information, there is a significant need for an unbiased, objective, and trusted source of investment information," Ananth Narayan G, Whole Time Member, said during the launch. "The Saaṛthi app serves this purpose by empowering investors with reliable and essential insights into the securities market."

## Adani ventures into fin sector, launches co-branded credit card with ICICI Bank

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Adani Group on Monday announced a venture into the financial sector, launching with ICICI Bank a co-branded credit card with airport-linked benefits as it looks to leverage customer touchpoints across businesses.

The group's Adani One, an app to help users book tickets, check flight status, access lounges, shop duty-free products, get cabs and avail parking, and ICICI Bank launched India's first co-branded credit cards with airport-linked benefits in collaboration with Visa.

"The cards come with a plethora of benefits designed to enhance the cardholders' lifestyle and elevate their airport and trav-

el experience. They offer up to 7 per cent Adani Reward Points on spends across the Adani Group consumer ecosystem like the Adani One app, where one can book flights, hotels, trains, buses, and cabs; Adani-managed airports; Adani CNG pumps; Adani Electricity bills, and Trainman, an online train booking platform," a company statement said. In December 2022, Adani Group launched the Adani One app as a step forward in the company's digital journey.

The co-branded card would also offer an array of benefits, including welcome benefits like free air tickets and airport privileges like premium lounge access, Pranaam Meet & Greet Service, porter, valet and premium car parking.

## Coop Min reviews progress of pilot grain storage projects launched in 11 states

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Level Coordination Committee (NLCC) for India's ambitious grain storage project, chaired by Cooperation Secretary Ashish Kumar Bhutani, held its inaugural meeting here on Monday and reviewed the progress of the pilot project launched last year in 11 states.

The initiative, spearheaded by the Ministry of Cooperation, aims to create a decentralised network of warehouses and other agricultural infrastructure at the Primary Agricultural Credit Society (PACS) level across the country.

Speaking on the occasion, the Cooperation Secretary said



this is one of most ambitious projects undertaken by the government, envisaging creation of warehouses at a decentralised level for nationwide rollout, an official statement said.

Implemented by the National Cooperative

Development Corporation (NCDC), with support from NABARD and FCI, the pilot project is now being extended to an additional 500 PACS.

The plan leverages existing government schemes such as the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) and Agricultural

Marketing Infrastructure Scheme (AMI) to establish facilities including warehouses, custom hiring centres, processing units and fair price shops. States, Union Territories, and national cooperatives like NCCF and NAFED have identified more PACS for storage capacity creation under the project, the statement said.

The committee also discussed strategies for nationwide expansion and potential godown linkages with stakeholders, it added. Secretaries from key ministries, including Agriculture, Food and Public Distribution, and Food Processing Industries, along with heads of FCI, NABARD, and WDRA, were present.

## Gold down Rs 200; silver tumbles Rs 800

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices slumped Rs 200 to Rs 72,450 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid fall in precious metal rates in the global markets, according to H D F C Securities.

The yellow metal had ended at Rs 72,650 per 10 grams in the previous session.

Silver prices also tumbled Rs 800 to Rs 92,900 per kg. In the previous session, it had closed at Rs 93,700 per kg.

"Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 72,450 per 10 grams, down by Rs 200 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\$ 2,320 per ounce, down US\$ 6 from the previous close.

Gold resumed trading on a negative note due to a shift in market sentiment and a decrease in demand for safe haven assets following the possibility of a ceasefire in Gaza, Gandhi said.

In addition, silver also went lower at US\$ 30.19 per ounce. It had settled at US\$ 30.37 per ounce in the previous session. "Gold continues to consolidate in a range after the US Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) inflation data, last week failed to give any clear direction on the Fed's policy path."





## HEERAMANDI CONFIRMED FOR SEASON 2

Season 2, leaving everyone in awe. Sanjay Leela Bhansali expresses his gratitude for the success of *Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar*, saying, "I'm blessed by the love and appreciation for *Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar*. It's been a joy to see the show resonate with audiences worldwide, and I couldn't have asked for a better partner than Netflix. I'm happy to announce that we'll be back with season 2!"

Meanwhile, one cannot ignore the fact that Sharmin Segal has to date been criticised for her performance in the series. After a while now, Sharmin has opened up on the same and recognised that, while there has been tremendous critical reaction, there have also been many nice responses that have gone unnoticed. "I gave everything to Alamzeb's character. We have a tendency to focus on the issues, but there have also been numerous positive developments that we have not discussed. It may not be engaging enough to discuss the advantages, and we tend to overlook them to some extent." She also revealed that initially, she had no other option but to disable the comment section.

## Ananya Panday becomes the voice of Riley in *Inside Out 2*

From the blockbuster cinematic legacy of Disney and Pixar comes *Inside Out 2*, releasing on June 14 in English and Hindi—a relatable fun story for young adults and Gen Z set in a new imaginative world of adventure, comedy, and humour! With fans eagerly anticipating the release of the much-awaited sequel to 2015's Oscar-winning *Inside Out*, here's some great news for Indian audiences: Youth icon and Gen-Z favourite Ananya Panday has given her voice to the lively teenager 'Riley' for the Hindi-dubbed version of *Inside Out 2*! Voicing for 'Riley', the actress took to social media to announce the exciting association with a fun video!

An ecstatic Ananya Pandey shares, "I have always been such a huge fan of Disney and Pixar animated films; these stories transport you to a world that is so entertaining and yet relatable at the same time. I remember being a teenager myself when I saw *Inside Out* a few years ago and being so mesmerised by this wonderful world of colourful emotions, never imagining in my wildest dreams that one day I would be an integral part of such a novel story! Voicing Riley made me relive so many of my childhood moments, and this is definitely the most fun I've had at work!"



## STANDALONE

Chitrangada Singh walks for designer Archana Kochhar at Grand Finale of Delhi Times Fashion Week.



## Megan Thee Stallion announces self-titled third album *Megan*

Megan Thee Stallion has announced that her self-titled third album, *Megan*, will be released on June 28. This huge reveal occurred during her Hot Girl Summer tour and follows Eminem's recent playful roast, according to reports. Megan has been bringing the heat this summer, and this announcement has increased the heat even more. She also shocked her fans by revealing a QR code at the show, which would allow them to preorder her future album.

Megan Thee Stallion previewed her new album, *Megan*, with a series of snake-themed singles such as *Cobra*, *Boa*, and the chart-topping *Hiss*. Megan has had quite the trip, especially since *Hiss* topped the Billboard Hot 100 earlier this year. Megan recently spoke with L'Official on the underlying meanings of these singles. She explained that the snake pattern represents more than just superficial imagery. For her, it implies renewal and rebirth, which are major themes in her upcoming album. Megan's admiration for snakes goes beyond the surface; she regards them as misunderstood creatures who represent spirituality and the possibility of transformation.

### Kunal Kapoor turns vigilante with his next

Actor Kunal Kapoor has always had the image of the poetic, romantic hero since his *Pang de Basanti* days. Now the actor seems to be changing gears. He is stepping into the action space with his next web series, which will be shot extensively in Lucknow later this year.

This upcoming series will be directed by UP-based director Jay Sheela Bansal, who in the past has written shows like *Undekhi*, *Rudra: The Edge Of Darkness*, and *Bhaukaal*. The actor is not only starring in it but is also co-developing this action-packed show.

On being asked why he is collaborating with Kunal on an action show, Jay said, "I've always been very impressed with the professional choices he has made. Also, I am surprised he hasn't been cast in an out-and-out action role. He has the looks, physicality, and persona to be a very convincing action hero. A combination of strength and a certain innocence."

The actor was recently spotted in Lucknow for a recce of the show along with the director and producer, Sarvesh Goel. On why they chose Lucknow, Kunal says, "Lucknow is the perfect combination of tradition and modernity. That's exactly what the show needs. Plus, as an added bonus, the food is amazing," he laughs. When asked about the character, the actor said, "It's too early to talk about the character. But he is a vigilante. A very unique character, the kind of which, I believe, hasn't been seen."

### Jessica Lange on being a young grandmother: 'It's like raising another set of kids'

Jessica Lange, an American actress and *Feud* movie star, is adjusting to life as a young grandmother, and she has started to appreciate the journey thus far.

In a special interview, Tony Award-winning actress Jessica Lange, who is now starring in the Broadway production *Mother—A Play in Five Evictions*, discussed becoming a grandmother in her fifties.

The 75-year-old *Feud* actress has three children, Shura, Hannah, and Walker. Her granddaughters, Adah and Ilse Bryan, are currently at college. Lange stated that when her daughter Shura made her a grandmother at an early age, it was like experiencing motherhood. "Having grandchildren at such a young age was special for me because my first granddaughter was born when I was in my early fifties. You grow up with them," Jessica Lange says.

"It's like raising another set of kids," Jessica Lange said, reflecting on her experience. We spent a lot of time together exploring and having adventures. It was quite special. "She seemed to enjoy chatting about her grandchildren." Jessica Lange considers herself blessed and extremely fortunate. Parenthood moved her emphasis away from herself and onto others. When reflecting on her path since 1981, she admits to being incredibly willful prior to becoming a mother, something she regrets.

## FUN

### ARCHIE

WON'T VERONICA BE MAD THAT YOU EXCHANGED THE SCARF SHE GAVE YOU?  
I DIDN'T LIKE THE COLOR! I DON'T CARE IF SHE SEES IT! I'M NOT SCARED OF HER!

THAT'S GOOD, 'CAUSE HERE SHE COMES!

I KNOW THAT'S YOU, ARCHIE!

### CALVIN AND HOBBS

DING DONG I'LL GET IT.

HOBBS, QUICK! CLOSE THE CURTAINS AND HELP ME PROP FURNITURE AGAINST THE DOOR!

IT'S READIN'!

### GARFIELD

SOMETIMES I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I'M DOING

WHOA

I ALWAYS KNOW WHAT I'M DOING

HE'S LUCKY

### REALITY CHECK

DAD MOTIVATIONAL POSTERS

DON'T SCREW IT UP, SON!

I THINK THAT GUY IS MISSING THE POINT.

### SPEED BUMP

I THINK THAT GUY IS MISSING THE POINT.

### CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4		
5					6
7			8		
9				10	
12	13		14		15
17				18	
19					

### NANCY

BACK ON JANUARY 24, 1938, ERNIE BUSHMILLER ADDED A NEW "STREET ORPHAN" TO THE COMIC STRIP—HERE IS THE REBOOTED VERSION OF THAT STORY—TOLD BY FRITZI!

NOW, I WASN'T THERE, BUT AS NANCY TELLS IT— THE TEEN-AGE BULLY HIT NANCY IN THE BACK OF THE HEAD WITH A HUGE SNOWBALL.

HA

THE BULLY HAD SOME BULLYING BUDDIES—AND THEY SURROUNDED NANCY.

NOW—YOU'RE REALLY GOING TO GET IT, KID!

MY LITTLE GIRL WAS IN TROUBLE—

### SUDOKU

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

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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

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

- Using your brain
- A neck-warmer
- A roll of tobacco leaves that is smoked
- Taking part in a play
- Come to a halt
- A curved support under a bridge
- A type of chimney on a ship
- A small oily green or black fruit from a tree
- Big
- A hot breakfast food
- Strike with the foot
- Time of darkness
- Moving stairway
- Spinning aeroplane part
- Tugged
- The capital of Egypt
- A health worker
- Close by

SOLUTION

V	I	L	L	A	G	E	S													
O	I	L	L	A	G	E	S													
L	I	L	L	A	G	E	S													
G	E	A	A																	
A	N	C	A	D	O	R	I	O	N											
O	P	E	N	S	M	E	T	R	E											
E	O	A	R	R																
S	T	A	Y	E	D	Z	E	R	O											
A	E	D	E	D																
R	D	I	S	E	A	S	E	S												

DOWN

- Bread cooked brown
- A young child

Real-life IPS officer Simala Prasad, who gracefully follows her passion for acting, will be seen in *The Narmada Story*. *The Pioneer* quickly made a call to her over an exclusive chat as she opened up about portraying an investigative officer in the film and also spoke of the portrayal of the police force in cinemas.



## ‘PEOPLE SHOULD SEE POLICE IN A POSITIVE LIGHT & NOT AS A PUNCHING BAG’

TEJAL SINHA

Whether it's cult classic cop dramas or new-age cop flicks with comic dialogue, Bollywood has successfully made the most of the demographic's preference for cop dramas. But how many have uncovered the veracity of the struggles of the cops, especially the women in the force?

Unlike the other cop dramas dominated by superstars, a true supercop has now made her mark on the world. Simala Prasad, a real-life IPS officer from MP, portrays the investigating officer in the newly completed thriller film, *The Narmada Story*.

According to the makers, the film is based on true life incidents, defying the pattern of Bollywood's larger-than-life masala movies. This distinct technique lays the groundwork for a picture that will have viewers on the edge of their seats.

So without further ado, *The Pioneer* rang a call to the police officer to gather more insights about the films and get onboard. She is also the daughter of Padmashri awardee Mehrunnisa Parvez and Dr. Bhagirath Prasad, a IAS officer from the 1975 batch. She was never forced to take up any of the fields that her parents were in. “We are here serving people and making the place we are a better place to live,” begins the real-life IPS officer on an exclusive note.

“However, there are certain aspects we feel as a civil servant; there are limitations. Our society has a stereotypical mindset that encourages a person to indulge in criminal activity. I feel cinema is a big medium because even an illiterate person can watch it without being restricted to a particular audience. The message a film wants to give is taken in a big way.”

Well, moving ahead, as we talk of *The Narmada Story*, initially, as she got to know that she was going to play the lead role in the film alongside Raghuraj Yadav and Mukesh Tiwari, among the rest, she was certainly a little nervous and was not sure if she'd be able to deliver it or not. “Of course in real life, I'm a police officer, but in the film, I'm playing a sub-inspector, a different rank of an officer, which is low from my real-life rank. We are portraying all the traumas that the person goes through and what all the mental baggage is carrying when anyone joins the service. She has to prove herself; she has to come out of it,” she says.

Her character is a small-town girl who is of the mindset that being in the police force is a very powerful position and that it's very important to be in uniform. Irrespective of her family constraints, like her father not being willing to send her into the police force, she has a negative mindset about the police, but she wants to be in the police. “As she gets into the forces, she faces a lot of issues, and with the day-to-day work that she tries to manage, the story unfolds. She overcomes the obstacles, and I feel the film shows solutions to certain things

that the police are facing,” further shares the IPS officer and actor.

*The Narmada Story* marks her third collaboration with the director. Both her previous films also highlighted some important messages. Her mother and director, both of them writers, led her to her passion for acting. “I wanted to be a part of this project highlighting a very important aspect of police, and as a police person, we want people to see police in a positive light. For the public, the police are like a punching bag! So far, how police have been portrayed in maybe the cop universe in Bollywood is very larger-than-life, and the issues they show are one person fighting with 20 people or criminals. It is like a superhero in a uniform. This film aims to highlight the real issues the police are facing that even the public needs to be aware of.”

Speaking of managing her passion and her duty, she highlights, “I don't indulge in recreational activities like going on vacation, and so for me, acting is just like a hobby that I pursue. It's less management on my part and more management on Zaigham Ji's part in this case. I was not called for any reading sessions or any look tests. It was the team that came over, and we had discussions over the script and my role. The schedule was also such that I could easily manage.”

When the shooting began, she revealed that she did not feel as if she was working with them for the first time. However, there were certain limitations for her due to her job, and she couldn't afford to be present in the reading session. So, it was on the sets that she got to interact with the NSD grads and people who are polished in their work. It was all about having a learning experience for her.

The film beautifully portrays all the hardships a person has to go through, especially in a rural police station. Moreover, she shares that as a woman in the force, she goes through constraints, be it the infrastructure or the stereotypical mindset of the colleague, because though many women are joining the forces, she feels there's still a long journey ahead.

“The film is thus beautifully portraying these small issues. I feel it was an eye-opener for me also because one of the things the film highlights is about times when washrooms were not available for women in the police stations. On the other hand, she has family issues and attends regular phone calls. Like I said, I am playing a sub-inspector, and there's another constable also in the police station. I haven't seen any of the films highlighting these issues because police are either portrayed in a negative light in Bollywood or portrayed as a superhero who can give solutions to each and every problem, who can jump from anywhere or appear anytime when anyone is in distress.”

Though there's a long way for women police officers to go, these films, she shares, are going to change the stereotypical mindsets of the people that have been formed over the years.

## Creating a distinct genre by combining inspiration from South Asian music

SHIKHA DUGGAL

British DJ, producer, and singer born and raised in East London, Lyan is a multi-faceted, contemporary musician who combines inspirations from South Asian and Western music to create his own distinct genre.

Juss Nandhra and Khushi K, two of the UK's most exciting and upcoming Punjabi stars, have collaborated on a massive, garage-infused single, which we learn all about in this exclusive interview. However, let us start at the beginning, because it can be exciting to discover where everything started!

The DJ discloses, “Growing up in a multicultural environment, I was exposed to a diverse range of musical traditions from a young age. My family loved classical and modern South Asian music at home, but I grew up listening to Western genres like hip-hop outside. I was inspired to establish this own genre by a desire to honour my heritage while also embracing the numerous musical influences I encountered. I understood that music has a great ability to link individuals from different cultures, and I wanted to create a sound that expressed my dual identity.”

The instantly recognisable instrumental pays tribute to the UK Garage classic *Body Groove*, skillfully reinvented by the DJ as a modern-day mega-hit. It finds the ideal mix between preserving the oldies that many people grew up with and embracing the new sounds and abilities that appeal to the younger generation.

“When composing a track, I never adhere to a set procedure. Inspiration comes from everywhere. I might hear a cool tune on the radio, hear an outstanding soundtrack or instrument in a Bollywood film, or even notice a distinct rhythm in common sounds such as glass clinking or city traffic. These moments create ideas, which I enjoy playing with in the studio. This method of working keeps things new and allows me to naturally merge different musical influences, resulting in a unique sound that combines both traditions.”

A mesmerising music video filmed in the heart of London immerses viewers in the contagious energy of the single as Juss, Khushi, and Lyan groove to the rhythm. The music producer continues, “East London is a great cultural hotspot, and the different noises that surround me influenced my work. You have neighbourhoods with a large South Asian population where the stores and streets are alive with the tunes and rhythms of my origin.” At the same time, he was engrossed in the UK music scene, particularly UK grime and UK Garage, as well as any American music he came across, which all had a significant impact on his track. You can hear that in his music, especially in the percussions and bass lines, which are heavily influenced by gritty, intense vibes!

What else has this vocalist got in store for us? Well, “Working with both Juss and Khushi was incredibly essential to me since I believe in their potential so much, and all three of us are at the beginning of our musical careers. Khushi and I met at a friend's wedding, along with her team, and we instantly clicked. When I came up with the original idea, she was the first person that sprang to mind. She has the perfect tone that cuts through and is almost nostalgic for UKG. Juss, I met him at one of my film sessions and have been following

him since. He has a ridiculous voice that sounds like a traditional Punjabi vocalist, which lends an authentic sound to the record. I filmed them in various studios on different days, and they met for the first time during the video shoot. But, honestly, the connection is incredible, and it seems like we've been working on music together for years.”

When it comes to paying homage to legendary music, he makes it a point to say, “If you grew up in the 2000s like I did, *Body Groove* is one of those tracks that instantly brings back memories. South Asians have a strong affinity for UK Garage, so it seemed like the ideal opportunity to create a song that reflects my heritage while also appealing to a new generation that may be unfamiliar with the original. I consider myself fortunate to be alive at a time when society and worldwide music are fast expanding, and UK Garage is regaining popularity. All of this contributes to the record's feeling of freshness and excitement, connecting the past and present in a way that everyone can enjoy.”

When working with director Sameer on the video, their objective was to capture the essence of three budding UK artists having fun while doing what they love. They both agreed on the significance of creating a true feeling in the video. For Lyan, a music video should elicit a specific sensation, and in this case, it was all about authenticity and making viewers feel as if they were right there with them on the shoot.

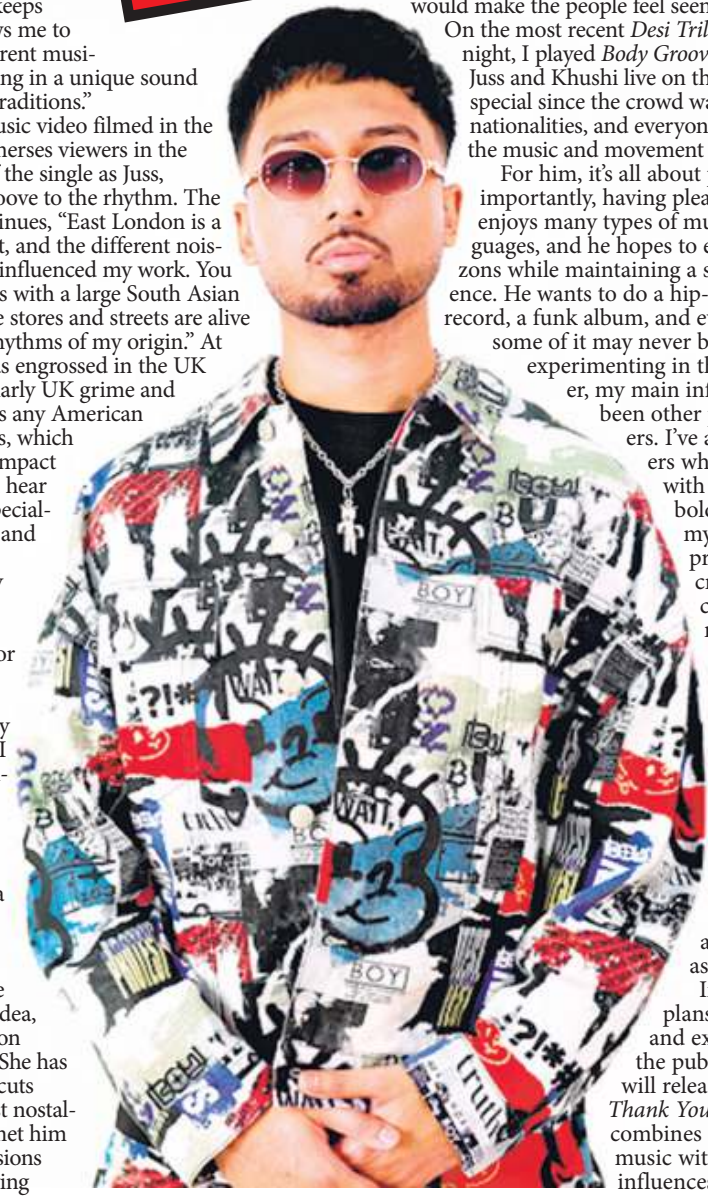
Furthermore, in the interview, he tells us, “For individuals who aren't South Asian and have never heard these sounds, I want to bring them to a whole new universe of tones, melodies, and rhythms that will make them feel something new while also feeling relatable. Dance music is fantastic because everyone loves to dance, and incorporating these ethnic elements may create a whole new palette of sound. For South Asians, I want to bring an expensive feel to our music; the globe is constantly looking to the West for inspiration, and being able to

reflect our culture with a western sound would make the people feel seen, heard, and represented. On the most recent *Desi Thrill Brown Is Everywhere* night, I played *Body Groove* into Kokka with both Juss and Khushi live on the mic; that moment felt special since the crowd was a diverse mix of nationalities, and everyone felt connected to what the music and movement represented.”

For him, it's all about progress and, most importantly, having pleasure while creating. He enjoys many types of music, genres, and languages, and he hopes to expand his musical horizons while maintaining a strong South Asian influence. He wants to do a hip-hop album, a pop record, a funk album, and everything. And while some of it may never be released, he is now experimenting in the studio. “As a producer, my main influences have always been other producers and songwriters. I've always respected producers who have experimented with their sound and made bold decisions. Throughout my work, I've faced several problems, ranging from creative blocks and financial constraints to the necessity of continuously delivering material. It's important to remember to pick yourself up and keep going. Overcoming these challenges necessitates perseverance and always giving your all, even while confronting mental blockages. These trials have taught me significant lessons and helped me improve as an artist.”

In the coming years, he plans to focus on consistency and exposing his creativity to the public. This summer, he will release his new project, *Thank You Come Again*, which combines dance and electronic music with South Asian influences!

British DJ and musician DJ Lyan, who has collaborated with Khushi K on a massive garage-infused single, speaks to *The Pioneer* about honouring his heritage, his method of working, insights of his music among more.



## Thriving fashion scene among Gen-Z

In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer*, the CEO and co-founder of Newme, Sumit Jisoria, spills some beans about the intriguing idea of Girl Dome, including vivid and imaginative interiors that resonate with a youthful and dynamic audience.



SUBODHINI PUROHIT

Newme can make anyone appear lovely by glamorising whatever it chooses! Even though we know this to be true, being reminded of it on a regular basis might be beneficial. Because the good news for Hyderabadis is that a fashion-tech line targeting Gen Z (born between 1997 and 2012) women has announced its move into Telangana. It recently acquired substantial recognition after their sleek collection was featured on *MTV Splitsvilla*, a show popular with Gen Z fans. This exposure has strengthened its appeal to its target demographic!

In an exclusive conversation with us, the CEO & co-founder, Sumit Jisoria, spills all the beans about the intriguing idea of Girl Dome, including vivid and imaginative interiors that resonate with a youthful and dynamic audience, and much more. They began their journey online because they believed it was the simplest way to understand the market, but they soon realised that customers want to touch and feel. Sumit, on the launch day, said, “We don't call it offline; we call

it a phygital experience setup, which is a mix of offline and physical setups plus online, and the entire technology of merging the online and offline in this manner is what makes us unique. I believe the south Indian markets are evolving.”

The Hyderabad store stands out because it depicts a girl's hostel life. It is designed to give an aesthetic feel to college life, catering to the cosmopolitan crowd and the many students who study in Hyderabad. “The theme and layout are all designed to reflect the hostel setup, making it a unique experience. Hyderabad location is no different, with its individual style features, lighting, and overall design.” He believes that their approach to creating things is extremely unique. Their manufacturing technique reduces waste and maintains a low-inventory approach by releasing new collections every week. When it comes to design, they have a trend technology team that monitors global trends. Next, their design team generates designs based on these trends, which are

then put into production. When they originally decided to create a store, they thought about what makes them distinctive. The CEO says, “We discovered that the uniqueness lies in the design and aesthetic. The trial room, particularly in India, receives insufficient attention. We can improve young girls' lives by empowering them to picture how our products look in an artistic setting, possibly even allowing them to post content on Instagram. That's why we designed the store to be visually appealing while being minimalist.” They are always learning and are really thrilled about the positive impact they can have on the lives of young women. “The feedback we get about our designs is amazing, as buyers frequently mention feeling comfortable wearing our outfits to college parties and even to work.”

The Gen Z is still evolving in India, and no one knows how they will evolve, shape, and pattern in this country. Newme has no boundaries, and fashion has no boundaries! So, in today's fast-paced fashion market, Gen Z fashion is redefining it. From varied streetwear to bold statements that turn heads, this generation's fashion craze and infatuation are hard to ignore. If you don't keep up with the latest trends, you can miss out on what's going on in the world right now, especially in Hyderabad.



# ENGLAND HOPE TO SET TONE AGAINST SCOTLAND

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS)

Deprived of ideal preparation by rain, defending champions England will hope to get their act right straightaway when they face Scotland in their T20 World Cup opener here on Tuesday.

Phil Salt will look to continue his red-hot form of the Indian Premier League in the T20 showpiece, even as pacer Jofra Archer's return adds firepower to the English bowling attack. Rain played spoilsport in the preceding four-match T20I series at home against Pakistan, but England will still enter the tournament as one of the strong contenders to lift the title for an unprecedented third time.

In what will be their first ever meeting against the Scots in the shortest format, the Jos Buttler-led England will be the overwhelming favourites to emerge winners at the Kensington Oval, which offered a two-paced wicket for the game between Namibia and Oman on Sunday evening. Placed in Group B, England have traditional rivals

Australia, Namibia and Oman for company besides Scotland. To reach the Super Eight stage, teams will have to finish in the top two of a group.

In white-ball cricket, it hasn't been smooth sailing for England since their five-wicket-victory over Pakistan in the final of the last T20 World Cup in Melbourne in 2022.

A year after their success in Australia, Buttler's men endured a disastrous campaign at the ODI World Cup in India, finishing seventh after winning three and losing six of their nine matches including a painful defeat to Afghanistan. Their poor run in the white-ball game continued with a series of defeats to West Indies in both the 50-over and 20-over format.

In the rain-marred rubber against Pakistan recently, England regained some of their lost ground with a 2-0 series win.

Now focused on their opener against Scotland, England have fond memories of playing at the Kensington Oval as it is at this very venue the team won its first-ever T20 World Cup title back in 2010 under Paul



Collingwood's captaincy, beating Australia by seven wickets in the summit showdown.

In the last 14 years since that triumph, England have become a dominant force in limited overs cricket, winning the 2019 ODI World Cup before their glory Down Under two years ago.

Playing in their third consecutive T20 World Cup,

Scotland are no match to their fancied opponents on paper but they will nonetheless look to make an impression after having breezed through the European qualifiers.

Scotland won all six of their matches in the qualifiers to finish top of the standings, which guaranteed them a ticket to the West Indies and the USA for the marquee tournament.

**TEAMS (FROM):**  
**England:** Jos Buttler (c), Moeen Ali, Jofra Archer, Jonathan Bairstow, Harry Brook, Sam Curran, Ben Duckett, Tom Hartley, Will Jacks, Chris Jordan, Liam Livingstone, Adil Rashid, Phil Salt, Reece Topley, Mark Wood  
**Scotland:** Richie Berrington (c), Matthew Cross, Brad Currie, Chris Greaves, Oli Hairs, Jack Jarvis, Michael

AFGHANS FAVOURITES IN FACE OFF WITH UGANDA



Jones, Michael Leask, Brandon McMullen, George Munsey, Safyaan Sharif, Chris Sole, Charlie Tear, Mark Watt, Brad Wheal.  
**Match starts at 8pm IST.**

**AFGHANISTAN EYE WINNING START:** In the day's other match, Afghanistan will be the overwhelming favourites against Uganda at the Providence in Guyana. The

Africans are making their maiden appearance in the tournament.

Afghanistan did extremely well in the last ICC tournament, beating the likes of England, South Africa and Pakistan in the ODI World Cup in India last year, and they will certainly take heart from that showing in this tournament.

**TEAMS:**  
**Afghanistan:** Rahmanullah Gurbaz (wk), Ibrahim Zadran, Azmatullah Omarzai, Najibullah Zadran, Mohammad Ishaq, Mohammad Nabi, Gulbadin Naib, Karim Janat, Rashid Khan (c), Nangyal Kharoti, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Noor Ahmad, Naveen-ul-Haq, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Fareed Ahmad Malik.  
**Uganda:** Brian Masaba (c), Simon Ssesazi, Roger Mukasa, Cosmas Kyewuta, Dinesh Nakrani, Fred Achelam, Kenneth Waiswa, Alpesh Ramjani, Frank Nsubuga, Henry Ssenyondo, Bilal Hassun, Robinson Obuya, Riazat Ali Shah (vc), Juma Miyaji, Ronak Patel.  
**Match starts at 8pm IST.**



## Trumpelmann, Wiese shine as Namibia win in Super Over

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS)

Namibia's Ruben Trumpelmann became the first player to take wickets in the first two deliveries of a T20 international as his team beat Oman via the Super Over in a thrilling T20 World Cup match here.

David Wiese and skipper Gerhard Erasmus smashed 21 runs for Namibia in the one-over eliminator with Oman managing 10 from the allotted six deliveries bowled brilliantly by the seasoned Wiese.

Asked to bat first, Oman were earlier bowled out for 109 in 19.4 overs at the Kensington Oval. In reply, Namibia were also stopped at the same team score with Jan Frylinck making 45 in 48 balls and Mehran Khan taking 3/7 to force a Super Over.

This was after Namibia's South Africa-born left-arm fast bowler Trumpelmann created history.

The 26-year-old achieved the feat when he dismissed opener Kashyap Prajapati and Oman skipper Aqib Ilyas for golden ducks on the first two balls of the match.

Khalid Kail top-scored for

Oman with 34 in 39 balls. Trumpelmann took another wicket in his second over and returned with the career-best figures of 4-21.

He trapped Kashyap Prajapati leg before wicket with an inswinging yorker on the first ball of the match and then dismissed Ilyas with one that crushed onto the batter's toes.

In the process, Trumpelmann also registered the best figures for the team in T20 World Cup history. He beat the previous record of 3/17 set by him against Scotland in the 2021 edition of the T20 World Cup held in the UAE.

After sending back Prajapati and Ilyas off successive balls, Trumpelmann dismissed opener Naseem Khushi and then returned to pick up the wicket of Kaleemullah at the death for his fourth scalp.

Wiese too was among wickets, returning fine figures of 3/28 in 3.4 overs as Oman found it hard to tackle the Namibia bowlers.

However, defending a small total, Oman bowlers showed a lot of discipline and refused to go down without a fight, eventually managing to tie the

game. But, on the day, Namibia had the last laugh.

While many thought Namibia captain Erasmus would hand the ball to Trumpelmann to bowl the Super Over, he chose the 39-year-old Wiese for his years of experience and it paid dividends.

After the nervy win, Player of the Match Wiese, who was also born in South Africa, said, "Aged a couple of years tonight. Don't have a lot of years left in me (laughs). It was emotionally draining evening."

Speaking about batting and bowling in Super over, "It helped that I had a feel of the game and knew if I get a few hits out in the Super Over .... Then with the ball, felt like taking the ball and executing. "Pitch was difficult, didn't play the way we thought. But we adapted well. It was two-paced, it was a difficult wicket to get yourself in. Definitely one you needed to spend a bit of time before capitalising."

Namibia were on course to chase down the target of 110 until Mehran Khan (3/7) brought Oman back into the contest with his two wickets in the final over.

PTI ■ GEORGETOWN (GUYANA)

Afghanistan batters have developed skills and confidence of chasing down big totals and the team has ceased to rely on their bowlers for pulling off favourable results, captain Rashid Khan expressed on Monday.

Afghanistan, who have relied on their world-class spinners more often than not, have been bolstered with the rise of the explosive Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Ibrahim Zadran and Azmatullah Omarzai.

"That is something in the past. We were struggling a little bit in the batting area. Earlier, the bowlers would do a lot more and help us win the games," Rashid said on the eve of Afghanistan's T20 World Cup opener here against Uganda.

"Later on, we got those youngsters — especially from Under-19 — the way they came up to the national side, the way they have worked hard and got the opportunity to play for Afghanistan at a very young age, and then start

## Afghanistan confident of chasing big totals, not over-reliant on bowlers: Rashid Khan

exploring all around the world (while) playing the leagues, where they get better and better," he added.

Rashid feels with a mix of talent, skills and the right mindset, anything is possible. "We have that kind of batting line-up where we can say, 'it's fine if there is 200 as well on the mindset," he said.

"We have that kind of ability, skills and talent where we can express (all) that on the ground and chase. T20 cricket is all about the mindset. As long as you have the right mindset and belief in there that we can do, anything is possible."

Afghanistan had their best-ever outing at the ODI World Cup in India last year when they trumped former champions Pakistan, England and Sri Lanka while running close eventual champions



Australia. "We're just focusing on one game at a time and making sure we do the right things and take the right decisions at the right time. That's something I think is going to help us, and

(we) don't (need to) think about the next round a lot. That's something which is an extra pressure I feel like to be as a player."

With slow pitches expected in the West Indies, many have picked Afghanistan to make the semifinal given their arsenal of high-class spinners. Rashid is delighted that Afghanistan are not considered minnows anymore. "They have mentioned Afghanistan is going to be there for semis. We take that as a very positive sign. Before, it used to be hard for us to qualify. Now, to be (in) the nomination, to be there in the top four, it's big for us. But for us, we don't look to those things a lot. It's all about how we're going to be there in the ground, delivering. "We were very near in the last

World Cup as well (that we wanted) to be in the semis," he added.

Several Afghans feature in the Caribbean Premier League and have an idea of how the pitches would behave but Rashid tends to look at it differently. "We have those players who played recently here in the CPL, they (have) got that experience. We share that experience with the boys. But I think in ICC (events), you always expect something different."

"You never know what's going to be the behaviour of the wicket. You have to react to that. You shouldn't be someone (who is) already having in the mind, this is how it's going to be (or) this is how it's going to swing, spin, things like that. But for us, it's like we're well prepared."

## Luggage woes, delayed flight, gusty winds and then cruise to make it alright

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS)

Lost luggage, flight delays and gusty winds on landing here summed up the Australian cricket team's rather tumultuous arrival here for the T20 World Cup but all-rounder Ashton Agar said a cruise along the city's stunning coastline was all it needed to calm the players.

Australia will open their campaign against Oman on June 5 (June 6 at 6am IST).

Pace spearhead Pat Cummins and fellow fast bowler Mitchell Starc had come back to Australia after the IPL for a short break and while heading to the West Indies, the former lost his luggage which eventually did reach him, according to a report in 'cricket.Com.Au'.

"Flight delays also affected Starc and Maxwell, as the pair had to spend a night in Los Angeles and then another night in Miami en route to Barbados after their own brief trips back to Australia following the IPL," the website reported.

Marcus Stonis also had to miss a practice match after his kit was delivered late to him.

However, Agar said a cruise on Saturday has managed to bring in a sense of calm for the side, which had to put support staff on ground during its practice games due to lack of first-choice players at that time.

"A lot of the boys are coming off a long time in India in the IPL, maybe 48 hours at home for a couple of them, so to do something like that is so refreshing," Agar



told reporters.

"I think mentally once you've done that, you go into the sessions ready to go, because you've already enjoyed what the Caribbean has to offer."

"We were sitting on the roof of the catamaran as we were coming back last night and 'Stoin' (Stonis) actually mentioned that, 'I don't know if many other teams would be like this,'" he added.

Agar said one of the memorable moments was watching the sunset.

"You've got all the boys sitting on the roof watching the sun go down, having a

drink together, having a genuinely good time and enjoying each other's company.

"It was pretty easy to forget you're here for a World Cup," he quipped.

Agar did show up for an optional training session though.

"Before a tournament where you're not going to train too much when the matches come thick and fast, you want to get all your drills in," said Agar.

"You want to make sure you're good to go, your mechanics are working well, nailing that four-to-six metre length, getting my shoulder on the right path," he asserted.

## India batter Kedar Jadhav announces retirement

PTI ■ PUNE

India and Maharashtra batter Kedar Jadhav on Monday announced his retirement from international cricket, four years since his last appearance for the national team.

The 39-year-old, who made his international debut for India in November 2014 during an ODI against Sri Lanka at Ranchi, went on to play 73 one-dayers as well as nine T20Is.

Perceived close to former India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Jadhav borrowed from the iconic wicketkeeper-batter's style to announce his retirement with a similar play

of words.

"Thank you all For your love and support throughout my Career from 1500 hrs. Consider me as retired from all forms of cricket," (sic) wrote Jadhav on X.

Interestingly, Jadhav is currently captaining Kolhapur Tuskers in the Maharashtra Premier League which got underway in Pune on Sunday and his post does not specify whether the announcement covers this engagement.

Jadhav scored 1,389 runs at an average of 42.09 with two centuries and six fifties for India in 73 ODIs. He also made 122 runs in the six innings of the nine T20 Internationals



that he played. Arguably, Jadhav's biggest moment under the sun came during the Pune ODI against

England in January 2017, when he got his second ODI ton. He smacked a brutal 76-ball 120 with 12 fours and four sixes to

fire India to a three-wicket win in a high-scoring contest. Jadhav teamed up with Virat Kohli (122) to put on 200 from a mere 147 balls for the fifth wicket after India were reduced to 63/4 at one stage, chasing 351.

Having developed his off-spin skills, Jadhav also emerged as a potent option with the ball with his slingy action that fetched him 27 ODI wickets.

In the Indian Premier League, the right-handed batter played for Chennai Super Kings, (formerly) Delhi Daredevils, now-defunct Kochi Tuskers Kerala, (formerly) Royal Challengers Bangalore and Sunrisers Hyderabad.

## Rahane underlines importance of fitness, game plan as Mumbai begin off season camp

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mumbai skipper Ajinkya Rahane on Monday underlined the importance of working on fitness and exhorted the players of his state side to utilise the off-season training camp for getting better.

The Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) launched the three-month long camp on the theme titled 'Home of the Champions' for the upcoming season.

Rahane, who led Mumbai to their record-extending win in the Ranji Trophy last season, said work behind the scenes is critical for players to deliver on the field. "It will inspire many youngsters to do well for Mumbai and carry the legacy forward and do well for Mumbai in all age groups (teams)," Rahane told media.

"Working on fitness and on your own game plan, because this is the time when you can actually focus on what areas you want to improve as an individual," Rahane said when asked about what kind of work he would want the players to focus on.

"Once the season starts, it is all about what the team requires from you. These 2-3 months is all about getting better as individuals in terms of fitness and skills," he added.

Rahane praised the governing body's decision to appoint former bowler Dhawal Kulkarni as the bowling mentor for all teams across age groups (both men and women).

"It is a very good gesture from MCA. He has played Mumbai for so many years, he has represented India and I am sure that will be of help," he said.



"He has the ability of spotting the talent from various age groups and develop them. I am sure he will find good bowlers for Mumbai and India," Rahane added.

The India batter will also be playing County cricket in England to give himself match-time during this period.

"For me, it's very important to keep playing and that is what I was looking for," Rahane said, confirming that he is set for a stint with Leicestershire.

"Playing matches at this stage is important. I will work on my fitness for a month and will go to Leicester for County matches," he said.

"For me it is all about having those matches under my belt before our

domestic season starts otherwise it becomes too long a gap and you hardly get anytime to (address) whatever areas you want to improve," Rahane added.

Meanwhile, addressing various age group players during the inauguration of the camp, India batter Sarfaraz Khan highlighted the importance of being focused and not give in to frustrations.

"I would get frustrated in between thinking I was not getting that opportunity (to play for India), but my father would tell me to focus on performing — to think as if I am playing for India even if I am playing Ranji Trophy and thus I would only focus on performing," he said.

## 'KAJAL'S DEDICATION TO SATYABHAMA INSPIRED ME TO CREATE COMPELLING MUSIC'

K. RAMYA SREE

As the countdown to the much-awaited release of *Satyabhama* intensifies, fans of Kajal Aggarwal are looking forward to the release of this movie, especially with the tantalising promise of a gripping soundtrack composed by the maestro, Sricharan Pakala. The expectations for the movie are even higher.

With Kajal Aggarwal reigning supreme in the lead role and an ensemble cast including Naveen Chandra adding to the intrigue, this crime thriller, produced by Bobby Tikka and Srinivasa Rao Takkalapalli, under the banner of Aurum Arts and directed by Suman Chikkala, is poised to captivate audiences when it hits theatres on June 7. In an exclusive interview, Sricharan Pakala opened up about his experience crafting the music for this adrenaline-fuelled saga.

Expressing excitement about being part of *Satyabhama*, Sricharan emphasised the thrill of working alongside Kajal Aggarwal, whom he regards as the epitome of cinematic excellence. With this film marking his third collaboration with Sashi Kiran Tikka and the opportunity to work with familiar faces, Sricharan savoured every moment of the creative process, believing that *Satyabhama* serves as the perfect platform for Kajal's triumphant return to the silver screen. Drawing parallels between his musical compositions and the pulse-pounding narrative of *Satyabhama*, Sricharan also highlighted the film's allure for thriller enthusiasts. He lauded Kajal's dedication in executing her own stunts, even post-childbirth, saying, "*Satyabhama* will resonate with those who love thrillers due to its

superb twists and emotional journey as a police officer. Kajal performed all the action scenes herself, an impressive feat post-childbirth, which inspired me to create compelling music."

Delving into the musical tapestry of *Satyabhama*, Sricharan revealed the presence of five captivating songs, each intricately woven into the fabric of the storyline. "The film features five songs, starting with two: *Kallara*, a love song between Kajal and Naveen Chandra, and *Vethuku Vethuku*, sung by Keeravaani, which ties into Kajal's case investigation. An English song is also included, and the rest of the lyrical songs will be released soon. Collaborating with Keeravaani and Chandra Bose on the song *Vethuku Vethuku* was a memorable experience for me."

While Sricharan's oeuvre is synonymous with thrillers, he expressed a keen desire to explore diverse genres, ranging from love stories to commercial blockbusters. Undeterred by his current image, Sricharan remains committed to pushing the boundaries of his musical repertoire, eager to embrace new opportunities and challenges.

Reflecting on his musical journey, Sricharan reminisced about his childhood influences and eclectic musical tastes, which have shaped his distinctive style. "I listened to *ghazals* as a child, I also created rock music. I never worked as an assistant to any music director, and my career began when the audience appreciated my music for a film. I will continue to create music and aspire to deliver new and unique compositions to the audience."



**Music composer Sricharan Pakala, whose gripping soundtracks for the upcoming film *Satyabhama* have already created waves, shares some interesting tidbits in this exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*.**

## 'Shooting in London gave *Manamey* fairytale-like aesthetics'

K. RAMYA SREE

The anticipation is high as Tollywood gears up for the grand release of Sharwanand's much-awaited 35th film, *Manamey*. Starring Kriti Shetty and Sharwanand in lead roles, the film promises to deliver a riveting performance in this family-centric flick directed by the visionary Sriram Aditya. Produced under the banner of Ramsay Studios in collaboration with People Media Factory, *Manamey* has already stirred a frenzy with its captivating songs, teaser, and promotional content, leaving fans eagerly awaiting its theatrical release on June 7. Ahead of the film's release, director Sriram Aditya shed light on the film's unique features and the challenges encountered during its making with us.

If you have watched the trailer, you might already have an idea of what this film is all about. Addressing the genesis of the storyline, Sriram Aditya expressed his long-standing desire to explore the theme of parenting in a refreshing manner. He remarked, "There has always been an idea to talk about the parenting emotion in a slightly different way. My intention is to portray it with fun and energy, tapping into the unknown innocence associated with children."

Reflecting on his personal connection to the narrative, Aditya revealed, "I am very attached to my parents. After the birth of my son, that attachment increased even more." He also admitted that several dialogues in the trailer were inspired by real-life experiences, adding a layer of authenticity to the storytelling process. Undoubtedly, filming in London presented its own set of challenges, with unpredictable weather conditions testing the resilience of the crew. Aditya elaborated, "Shooting in London with a crew of sixty people is a tough task. The climate there is unpredictable, often disrupting our shooting schedules."

The decision to shoot in London was driven by the desire to infuse the film with a fairytale-like aesthetic. Aditya credited the unwavering

With *Manamey* nearing its release, director Sriram Aditya shed light on the film's unique features and the challenges encountered during its making with us.



support of People Media Factory and producer Vishwa Prasad for ensuring a smooth production process despite logistical challenges. Sharing insights into Sharwanand's involvement, Aditya recalled the actor's enthusiastic response upon hearing the script. "As soon as he heard the story, he said, 'Let's do it properly.'" Aditya revealed. However, he remained tight-lipped about the specifics of Sharwanand's character, teasing the audience with hints of an electrifying performance.

Breaking away from his usual crime thriller repertoire, Aditya expressed his fondness for humor and the joy of exploring a different genre. With *Manamey* boasting a total of 16 songs, Aditya assured fans that each musical piece would seamlessly integrate into the narrative, enhancing the overall cinematic experience.

While remaining coy about certain plot details, Aditya hinted at the dynamic chemistry between Sharwanand and Kriti Shetty, likening their on-screen relationship to the playful banter of Tom and Jerry. Looking ahead, Aditya teased an upcoming action-comedy project, promising another exciting cinematic venture for audiences to anticipate.



## Delving into Rashmika Mandanna's hectic routine

Currently, Rashmika Mandanna finds herself immersed in a whirlwind of activity, shuttling between Hyderabad and Mumbai to tackle three eagerly anticipated projects: *Pushpa 2 - The Rule*, *The Girlfriend*, and *Kubera*.

In Hyderabad, Rashmika is deeply engrossed in filming *The Girlfriend* and *Pushpa 2 - The Rule*, the hotly awaited sequel to the blockbuster *Pushpa*. Her on-screen chemistry with the pan-India star Allu Arjun and her recent stunning sari-clad appearance have sparked immense excitement among fans and industry insiders alike. The rigorous shooting schedule and intense scenes demand her undivided attention, pushing her to deliver top-notch performances with every take.

Simultaneously, in Mumbai, Rashmika dedicates her time to *Kubera*, where she shares the screen with the versatile actor Dhanush. This project, with its unique challenges and expectations, presents Rashmika in a completely different light, showcasing her versatility as an actress. Her constant travel between the two cities under-

scores her unwavering commitment and passion for her craft.

A reliable source discloses, "Rashmika is incredibly busy juggling between Hyderabad and Mumbai for three projects: *Pushpa 2 - The Rule* and *The Girlfriend* in Hyderabad, and *Kubera* with Dhanush in Mumbai. It's undoubtedly demanding, but Rashmika relishes every moment of it. The travel and long hours are all part of her journey, and she is fully dedicated to delivering her best for all three films."

Rashmika's ability to manage such a demanding schedule with zest and vigour is truly commendable. Her relentless hard work and dedication are sure to bear fruit, with fans eagerly anticipating the release of these three exciting ventures.

In addition to *Pushpa 2 - The Rule*, *Kubera*, and *The Girlfriend*, Rashmika has an intriguing lineup of films, including *Chhaava*, *Sikandar*, and *Rainbow*.

## Rakul takes a trip down memory lane

Recalling her experience of learning to ride a bicycle, Rakul Preet Singh shares her nostalgic moments on World Bicycle Day. From cautious beginnings to becoming a confident cyclist, her journey resonates with many who have embarked on a similar path of challenges and triumphs.

Rakul's cycling adventure commenced like that of many others, with the aid of supporting side wheels. "I used to ride my bicycle with the supporting side wheels," she fondly remembers. "I was hesitant to take them off due to the fear of losing my balance."

The turning point in her cycling expedition arrived with a gentle push from her father. "One day, my dad loosened the supporting wheels so much that they came off while I was riding the cycle," she reminisces. "He exclaimed, 'Look, you are cycling without the side supporters!' While I was managing fine until then, the moment my dad pointed it out, I lost my balance and took a tumble. I still bear the bruise on my leg from that fall."

Rakul expresses her hope for Mumbai to become more cyclist-friendly, continuing to inspire her fans to embrace a healthier lifestyle.

On the professional front, Rakul has commenced shooting for *De De Pyaar De 2*, alongside Ajay Devgn.



## PRABHUTVA JUNIOR KALASALA RELEASING ON JUNE 21

Amidst the flurry of films seeking to engage youth audiences, there's a palpable buzz surrounding a unique cinematic endeavor. Spearheading this venture is director Sreenath Pulakuram, who has intricately woven a tale of reality and intrigue with the film *Prabhutva Junior Kalasala*. With post-production efforts completed, this film is now poised for release. This project, a culmination of Black Ant Pictures' efforts, is produced by Bhuvan Reddy Kovvuri, with captivating performances by Pranav Preetham, Shajin Sri Venu, Ram Patas, Tej Gaud, Bambe Padma, Shrimunichandrar, and Mandapeta Mallik Jagul. As promotions roll out, the official release date for *Prabhutva Junior Kalasala* has

been confirmed for June 21, promising an enthralling cinematic experience. Speaking about the film's impending release, the director expressed immense satisfaction, stating that the censor board has cleared the film, praising its visuals and engaging storyline. Early audience reactions from promotional events have sparked excitement, with viewers eagerly awaiting its theatrical debut. Noted distribution company Shankar Pictures is ensuring a global theatrical release for the film. With teasers and two songs already trending, the film's youthful appeal is drawing anticipation, raising hopes for a successful run at the box office.



## PIC TALK

Allari Nareish, the popular actor known for his versatile roles, has unveiled the first look and title of his upcoming horror thriller, *Raa Raja*. The announcement has sparked excitement among fans eagerly awaiting the actor's next project. Produced under the banner of SP Cinemas, *Raa Raja* promises to be an intriguing addition to the horror genre. The film is written and directed by the talented filmmaker BS Prasad. Starring Sugi Vijay and Mounika Helen in lead roles, the film is set to captivate audiences with its spine-chilling narrative.

## 'The prelude world is similar to the film, although more light-hearted'

*Buji & Bhairava* has received enthusiastic approval from fans, and director Nag Ashwin reacts to its success.

Now, opening up about the prelude, Nag Ashwin said: "I always felt that it's more fun to go to films whose characters you already know and are invested in... that's why Marvel works so well... I wanted to see if we could pull that off, even in a small way. When we started this, we didn't know how hard it would be... we started with 4 episodes... but in almost 2 years, we could only finish 2."

The story of this two-episode prelude is set in the year 2896 AD, in the futuristic, albeit dystopian, city of Kasi. Bhairava is a bounty hunter, and *Buji* is an AI pilot of a cargo ship. Both suffer setbacks in their journeys, and an unlikely partnership

blooms, setting the stage for adventure.

While spin-off animation series often attempt to cash in on successful films, the team behind *Kalki* has introduced a series as a prelude. The two episodes, each a little over 14 minutes long, establish the world of *Kalki* and are available in English, Telugu, Hindi, and Spanish, catering to a wider audience.

Adding more about working on the prelude, Nag Ashwin said, "We found a new style, didn't compromise on anything: the writing, the lighting, the detailing. We would have seen these 2 episodes over 200 times, at least to get it right... It's a lot of hard work to make things look easy. The prelude world is similar to the film, although a little more lighthearted. It helps get people used to the characters and the world."



## Suriya begins his next with Kartik Subbaraj

Actor Suriya has begun shooting for his 44th film, directed by Kartik Subbaraj of *Jigarthanda DoubleX* fame.

Also starring Pooja Hegde, the film, which was in the news for quite some time, went on floors now. Suriya shared the update on his official X page.

"Lights! Camera!! Action!!! #LoveLaughterWar #AKarthikSubbarajPadam Shoot in progress... #Suriya44," he captioned a video from the film set.

Jayaram, Karunakaran and Joju Geroje also round out the cast.

The film will have music composed by Santhosh Narayanan, cinematography handled by Shreyas Krishna and editing by Shafique Mohamed Ali. The upcoming project is produced by Suriya's 2D Entertainment and Stone Bench Films.

