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**Government lifts** onion exports





**Established 1864** 



to four lakh farmers. It is my responsibility to give it to all remaining farmers by May 9. If someone proves that there are still arrears, I will rub my nose on the ground and apologise at the Martyrs' Statue. If he cannot prove that there are dues then KCR should apologise. The loans of Telangana farmers will be waived by August 15 and the witness for that is Bhadrachalam Ram. I will waive the loans of farmers by August 15 and clear

- A. Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister

#### **Attracting voters** to polling...

To increase the poll percentage in the city for Lok Sabha, the Election Commission of India (ECI) will establish 180 thematic polling stations in Hyderabad and Secunderabad parliament constituencies including Secunderabad cantonment assembly segment. The polling stations will be set up to attract the voters.A total of 12 thematic polling stations will be set up in every Assembly constituencies in Hyderabad and Secunderabad. A total of 180 thematic polling stations will be set up.

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#### Malaria linked with genetic...

Malaria infection is linked with genetic changes, known to be brought about by ageing, according to a new study Researchers extracted genetic material from blood samples of more than 1,800 adults from the African countries of Tanzania Botswana, Ethiopia, and Cameroon, where malaria is known to be endemic, or constantly present. According to the 2023 World Health Organisation (WHO) Malaria report, published in 'The Lancet Microbe' journal, around 70 per cent of the global..

#### **'NCLT registers** 43% jump in debt...

Amid several bottlenecks, the Insolvency Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) declared 2023-24 as a landmark year, with the National Company Law Tribunal achieving a significant 43 per cent increase in cases last year to 270 this year. The IBBI is expected to submit a report to the government over the next 2-3 months for including "mediation" in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), which is currently under discussion and scrutiny. The regulator is also working on prepackaged insolvency for... -PAGE: 6



#### Yoga officially makes debut in...

After making global headlines, the ancient Indian physical, mental and spiritual practice of yoga has officially arrived in neighbouring Pakistan. According to the official Facebook page of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) which is responsible for the upkeep of Islamahad, the Metropolitan Corporation of Islamabad has launched "Free yoga classes in F-9 Park" in the capital. Recognising its universal appeal, the United Nations on 11 December 2014 proclaimed 21 June as the International Day of Yoga. A draft resolution establishing the International Day of Yoga was proposed by India and endorsed by a record 175 member states. Yoga is normally linked with India and there are not many formal.

OBTUSE ANGLI

-PAGE: 10

## I will apologise if Rythu Bharosa dues remain pending by May 9

BJP only option for KCR to ally with for Govt formation: CM Revanth reiterates his allegation

that BJP would scrap quotas

PNS HYDERABAD

Taking exception to BRS president K. Chandrasekhar Rao's statement that the farmers' investment scheme Rythu Bharosa has been scrapped after the BRS stepped down from office, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that he would apologise if any dues under the scheme are pending to any farmer by May 9. He said that KCR is spreading the

lie that the Rythu Bharosa scheme has been scrapped. The Chief Minister said that he will silence BRS MLA T. Harish Rao by waiving the loans of farmers by August 15.

Addressing the Kothagudem Jana Jatara public meeting for the Congress's Khammam Lok Sabha candidate, Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy, on Saturday, the CM said that



CM Revanth Reddy addressing Jana Jatara public meeting for the Congress's Khammam Lok Sabha candidate Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy, in Kothagudem on Saturday

pending to any farmer by May 9 and if not KCR should rub his nose on the ground.

"Rythu Bharosa has to be given to four lakh farmers more. It is my responsibility to give Rythu Bharosa to all the remaining farmers by May 9. If someone proves that there are still arrears, I will rub my nose on KCR should be ready to apologise if the ground and apologise at the

any dues under the scheme are Martyrs Statue. If he cannot prove that there are dues then KCR should apologise. The loans of Telangana farmers will be waived by August 15 and the witness for that is Bhadrachalam Ram. I will implement the loan waiver scheme by August 15 and clear my debt to farmers," the CM said.



#### Govt to take over farmers' loans through corporation

hief Minister Revanth Reddy is on a farm loan waiver promising spree and is making vows in the name of God wherever he goes. The CM is God fearing and so Congress workers are confident that he would waive farm loans up to Rs 2 lakh. This has become an issue in the Lok Sabha elections. The government is likely to float a corporation and transfer farm loans to itself. "From farmers, the loan will be transferred to the government. So farmers will have to pay nothing and the government will pay back the loan and interest. The loans in the names of farmers will be cleared and the government will stand surety for that The farmers' responsibility to repay their loans with interest will be taken over by the government

**Continued on Page 2** 

my debt to them.

## KCR again rakes up TG's self-respect issue

BRS chief K. Chandrasekhar Rao raked up Telangana's self-respect issue once again on Saturday during his Bus Yatra in Mancherial.

Today in Parliament there is a need to have BRS MPs to defend Telangana's self-respect and to gain its rightful share of water and funds. BRS MPs must win to ensure that SCCL is not privatised and welfare measures continue," he

KCR raised the district reorganisation issue and said that if you want Mancherial to continue as a district vote for the BRS or else vote for the Congress

"Which are the three districts the Chief Minister will cancel? Will you have to again go to Adilabad to get huge majority," he said.

PM Modi a

cut off from

'shahanshaah',

public: Priyanka

He said that rural forests are drying up and garbage is accumulating in municipalities.

"Why are integrated market yards left incomplete? All schemes implemented by the BRS government are being scrapped," KCR said. "Koppula Eshwar was a labourer in SCCL. If he wins he will save SCCL," he added.

He said the Congress is punishing the people of Telangana even though its rule reflects negligence. 'This Congress government does

not respect any caste. They stopped iftar tofa for Muslims and Dalit Bandhu for Dalits," KCR said.

"In Peddapalli, the competition is between the rich and the poor. Koppula Eshwar should win with a

## 'BRS facing survival threat, not SCCL'

#### Minister Uttam accuses KCR of spreading lies against Congress

PNS HYDERABAD

Irrigation Minister Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy criticised BRS chief K. Chandrasekhar Rao for spreading misinformation about the Godavari and Krishna River waters, SCCL and other issues.

He said that around 20 BRS MLAs would join the Congress after the Lok Sabha elections and that the BRS would disappear.

Speaking to the media while campaigning in Survapet district Commission for using offensive leading to its cancellation. Nalgonda, K. Raghuveera Reddy, on Saturday, Uttam dismissed KCR's recent charges against the Congress government.

KCR had levelled the allegations at a roadshow Ramagundam after a 48-hour ban imposed by the Election



behaviour during the ban, KCR resumed with more lies and continued to blame the Congress for actions taken during his government. As the saying goes, 'Old habits die hard," Uttam said.

He pointed out that the Congress

has repeatedly clarified that it was the KCR government and not the Congress that had agreed to hand over Telangana's irrigation projects to the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB). However, the Congress tried to stop it, he said.

By repeating lies, KCR is trying to mislead the public. Regarding the SCCL issue, Uttam said that KCR in collusion with the Modi government attempted to privatise SCCL, a move that the Congress opposed,

Instead of reflecting on his silent when the BJP government attempted to privatise four coal blocks in Telangana. "As an MP, I opposed the privatisation and demanded their allotment to the SCCL," he said.



#### says Modi **BRS** leaders separated me from public: Tamilisai

All those who indulged

in corruption will

face legal action,

PNS HYDERABAD



The former Governor of Tamilisai Sounderarajan, said that BRS leaders had created a gap between the

people and her. She said that she had tried to introduce the Ayushman Bharat Scheme in Telangana. However, the BRS government did not cooperate. She said that she had intended to make available Central schemes to



## KTR: BRS will oppose reorganisation of districts

**PNS** ■ HYDERABAD

KTR said the performance of the Telangana government is like a stone in the hands of a mad man. KTR was speaking to

the media at the BRS Bhavan in Rajanna Sircilla district centre. Currently, there are 33 districts in Telangana."If the Congress government is sincere the new districts created by KCR must be continued. We will launch protests against the Congress government if the districts are scrapped. We are warning that the BRS will take the lead," he said.

"The CM came to Sircilla for campaigning. As an MLA of this Opposing the reorganisation of region, I expected the government

> But the CM's attitude in the last four and a half months has been nothing but small talk. Revanth just wants to do the opposite of what KCR did. He says that the new districts created by the BRS govern-

ment will be scrapped. 23 new districts were created as per the aspirations of the people. Some districts have been named after great people. Similarly, there are districts for which local people fought.



#### **Shah to address** 3 meetings today

PNS HYDERABAD

Union Home Minister Amit Shah is coming to Telangana on May 5, that is, Śunday.

He will arrive at the Begumpet Airport at 1.50 pm on Sunday and will go to Kagaznagar in Adilabad district by helicopter. He will attend a public meeting at the SPM Cricket Grounds at 3.20 pm. Later, Amit Shah will fly to

Nizamabad, reach the Giriraj College Grounds by helicopter at 5 pm, and address the public meeting there. After that, Amit Shah will return

to Begumpet Airport by 6.30 pm. Later, he would attend a public meeting at the Parade Grounds. Amit Shah will leave for West Bengal by a special flight from Begumpet Airport at 7.55 pm.

PNS HYDERABAD The consumption of electricity is

increasing massively in the current summer season due to the rise in temperatures. The Chairman & MD of

Southern Telangana Electricity Transmission Company, Musharraf Farooqui, ordered officers to be alert to ensure that there is no disruption in power supply.

Till the end of summer, one engineer should be appointed for every 11 KV feeder on a shift basis. Around 300 engineers working in the company's head office, other circles and zonal offices have also been deployed for operational duties. In addition to this, the CMD also ordered accounting staff working in

One engineer to monitor every 11KV feeder circle offices to take up operational

Power demand is on rise

Speaking at a review meeting organised with Chief General Superintending Managers, Engineers and Divisional

Engineers, he said that Greater Hyderabad city has already recorded the highest demand of 4,214 MW this season on 30.04.2024.

The highest consumption of 89.71 million units was recorded on Friday (03.05.2024), which is 53.7 % higher than last year's consumption of 58.34 million units recorded on 03.05.2023.On Saturday a demand of 4,209 MW has been recorded and consumption is expected to cross 90 million units, he said.

**Continued on Page 2** 

## 'Anti-TG forces' want Hyd to continue as joint capital: Harish

PNS HYDERABAD

BRS MLA Harish Rao said that some anti-Telangana forces want Hyderabad to continue as the joint capital of TG and AP even though the arrangement ends in

During a 'meet and greet' with the media, he said, "Some people who opposed bifurcation want Hyderabad to continue as the joint capital for another 10 years. Revanth has AP roots. The people



of Telangana should be alert." He said that only the BRS can effectively handle this issue. Harish said that in the past, the Congress supported the BJP's decision to

merge seven mandals in AP and added that only the BRS had opposed this move.

He said that both parties have done injustice to the state on the joint capital issue and the rights of TG and so the BRS must win in the LS elections.

Harish said that in just five months a quiet revolution has started and people now want a change from the Congress.



## Heat intensity reduces in east, southern India

PNS NEW DELHI

The intensity of the heat wave prevailpeninsular India came down slightly on Saturday, with the weather office predicting relief from the scorching conditions in these regions after two

days. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said heatwave to severe heatwave conditions prevailed in parts of Gangetic West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Odisha and Telangana, with maximum temperatures settling 3-5 degrees Celsius above normal in

The mercury settled above 44

The IMD said the ongoing heatwave spell in east and south peninsular India will continue peninsular india will continue until May 5-6 and abate thereafter. Light to moderate rainfall and thunderstorms are predicted in Odisha, Gangetic West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand from May 5 to 9.

Nandyal in Andhra Pradesh sizzled at 46 degrees Celsius and was the hottest place in the country for the

degrees in West Bengal's Kalaikunda. The IMD said the ongoing heatwave spell in east and south peninsular India will continue until May 5-6 and abate thereafter. Light to moderate rainfall and thunderstorms are predicted in

Odisha, Gangetic West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand from May 5 to 9.

Scattered light to moderate rainfall is expected in east Uttar Pradesh. Haryana-Chandigarh-Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha and Chhattisgarh during this period.

Scattered light to moderate rainfall is also very likely in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and Karnataka from May 6 to

#### One IAF soldier killed, 4 injured

TERROR ATTACK IN J&K

PNS JAMMU

One soldier was killed and four were injured as terrorists ambushed an Indian Air Force (IAF) convoy in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district on Saturday, three weeks ahead of polling in Anantnag-

Rajouri Lok Sabha constituency. Poonch is part of Anantnag-Rajouri parliamentary constituency which goes to polls in the sixth phase on May 25.







ing in east and parts of southern

degrees Celsius in at least 10 places third consecutive day on Saturday.

in these states. According to IMD data, 13 places on Friday and 17 on Thursday recorded maximum temperatures above 44 degrees Celsius.

Maximum temperatures were recorded at 45.9 degrees Celsius in Kurnool (Andhra Pradesh), 45 degrees in Mahbubnagar (Telangana), 44 degrees in Odisha's Boudh, 43.5 degrees in Karur Paramathi (Tamil Nadu), 44.6 degrees in Nizamabad (Telangana), 45.4 in Andhra Pradesh's Cuddapah, and 43.5 May 9.





## TG CM not getting enough sleep

Torkaholics too need stimulants to keep going, though what keeps them refreshed while they are at work differs from person to person. Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy likes to mention in all his public meetings that he has been working 18 hours a day from the day he assumed office. Laying it on thick, he recently stated that he was becoming restless due to lack of sleep. One can understand his situation. For, unlike in his previous avatar self will jump in directly should anything as TPCC chief, Revanth Reddy, as Chief untoward happen to them. Minister, needs to work in

a focused manner. In his previous role, power naps were OK during travel. Now, with many leaders within the Congress and

in other parties eyeing his gaddi, he does not want to be caught napping. In a dicey situation, a 'power nap' can end in a 'power trip'. So, back-to-back meetings from 7:00 am to 12:00 am and more is never too much. Therefore, he is extremely tired; and, due to sheer exhaustion, does not get restful sleep. The 3-4 hours of shuteye he manages is not allowing him to cool down. They say, he is a tea addict.

#### **Bruised BRS still doesn't care** for its *karyakarta*s

The strength of a chain is limited to that of its weakest link. So, after strong leaders started quitting, Bharat Rashtra Samithi's leadership proclaimed that its leaders might go, "but karyakartas would remain with the party". In fact, karyakartas were instrumental in foreclosing at least one defection: that of Prakash Goud. BRS is no doubt bruised. And, karyakartas in the party are not without heartburn for other reasons. For, its leaders, sitting in the comforts of AC rooms, just make statements about karyakartas' arrests. Party big wigs don't go and meet them, but only post on social media. The latest on this front is that BRS karyakartas are sore that no one Rama Rao). They ask: "If he (Krishank) is

Bharatiya Janata Party or Congress cadres were arrested, the leaders of the respective parties used to visit them, and later speak to the media as well. The Congress used to keep the issue alive by making its leaders visit prison. In BJP, the amrit vani among karyakartas is that Amit Shah him-

KCR has changed, but not KTR

Rashtra Samithi blames the loss of the party

in the Assembly elections on Twitter and

Instagram influencers as well as curated interviews of party working president and

former minister KT Rama Rao. KTR, as is

his wont, did a podcast again recently, and,

except for his coterie known for unthinking obidence, nobody seemed to like it. "It

is very weird that KTR has not learnt any

lessons", remarked a person in a prominent position on BRS' heirarchy. As for KCR,

there is a visible change. Remarkably soon

after recovery from his hip fracture, he has

been on the move, mingling with people

at street-corner meetings, and, more impor-

tantly, doing marathon interviews. Going

by the impact of KCR's recent interview to

hindsight is that had he entertained press

conferences before the elections and spo-

ken his mind, BRS would not have been

Why Alleti's pressers are

few and far between

news channel, the buzz in party circles on

A typical karyakarta of the Bharat

his pressers with a rather suspenseful statement: "I will come with another 'blast' in a day or two against the Congress government". Yet, his conversations with media persons are few and far between. On May 2nd, when newshounds asked Maheshwar Reddy about the long gaps between his pressers, he said in a lighter vein that getting a time 'slot' to address the media at the State BJP office was the main impediment. A little bird told The Pioneer's correspondent that official spokesperson NV Subash determines the time 'slots' for

party leaders desirous of addressing the media, after obtaining permission from BJP Telangana unit president G Kishan Reddy. Maheshwar Reddy

often seeks time one or two hours before scheduling his press meet. There lies the

#### Down but not out

A Tamil proverb goes 'Kuppura vizhundhalum meesaiyil man ottavillai (transliteration); meaning, "I fell flat on my face, but there is no dust on my mustache Likewise, in Andhra Pradesh, Chief Minister and YSR Congress president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, while fighting the TDP-JSP-BJP alliance with his back to the wall, is making the most of his detractors' missteps. Soon after the release of the alliance's manifesto, which carried the photographs of only Chandrababu Naidu and Pawan Kalyan with that of Prime Minister Narendra Modi conspicuously missing, Jagan reasoned that it was so because the manifesto contained promises that cannot be implemented and hence disowned by alliance partner BJP. The manifesto of the alliance actually contained promises relating to schemes presently under implementation by the Jagan government but giftwrapped with assurances of vastly increased benefits. The missing Modi photo came in handy for Jagan to hit back at the alliance.

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

## 'BJP saying quotas will be cancelled after jailing me'

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that the BJP candidate in Mahbubnagar Lok Sabha constituency, DK Aruna, made Union Home Minister Amit Shah file cases against him to topple the Congress govern-

The CM said that the BJP has been saying that it will scrap reservations after sending him to jail.

Criticising KCR and former Minister T. Harish Rao for

**BRS** leaders...

Continued from page 1

Addressing the 'Vishist Sampark Abhiyan' in

Sangareddy town on Saturday as

a BJP Star Campaigner, Dr

Tamilisai said former AICC President Rahul Gandhi does-

n't know that he is contesting elections. She asked Congress

leaders to seek votes only after

revealing their Prime Ministerial

candidate and that nobody has

the qualities of a Prime Minister

in the Congress. She said that the

Congress works for only its first

family. However, the BJP is the

party that looks after the inter-

ests of 140 crore Indians, she

speaking on Rythu Bharosa and the farm loan waiver scheme, the CM said that it is his responsibility to extend the Rs 7,500 Rythu Bharosa

scheme to 69 lakh farmers. He said that he will waive August 15 and will clear the debts of Palamuru farmers. "If I fail to clear the debts of farmers my life is a waste,"

Revanth said. He asked Harish to keep his resignation letter ready. "Î will free Siddipet from Shani (Harish Rao) by August 15 by implementing the loan waiver scheme," the CM said.

The CM said the BJP gave Telangana nothing except a 'donkey's egg' and appealed to the people of Palamuru to

bury the BJP and ensure the victory of Vamshichand Reddy with a majority of one lakh.

Addressing a corner meeting on Saturday at Kothakota in Mahbubnagar district, the CM said that he used to do wall writing for G. Chinna Reddy's victory when studying for Intermediate at the

Wanaparthy Junior College. "I became the second CM of the state with the blessings of the people of Palamuru. However, some people are asking me to resign," he said.

## All those who indulged in corruption will face legal action, says PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the NDA government has "unmasked" corrupt forces, and all those who indulged in corruption would face action under law in the next five

Hitting out at jailed former Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren without taking his name, Modi said leaders of the Congress and the opposi-



tion INDIA bloc take out rallies in support of the corrupt. "The former Jharkhand CM

Modi is committed to wipe out

the menace. In the next five years, all those who indulged in corruption will face legal action," he said at a poll rally in Gumla's Sisai to campaign for BJP candidate Samir Oraon from the Lohardaga Lok Sabha

"The INDIA bloc leaders, neck-deep in corruption, hold rallies, including in Delhi and Ranchi, voicing support for corrupt people, which reveals their true character," the PM

One IAF soldier ...

Continued from page 1

Officials said five securi-

ty personnel were injured,

two of them critically, when

four terrorists opened fire on

IAF vehicles moving towards

Sanai Top in Poonch's

Surankot area in the evening.

#### Power demand...

Continued from page 1

Around 4,353 additional distribution transformers have already been installed to take care of summer demand. In addition to these, another 250 distribution transformers have been made available at field-level offices. Where necessary, electricity personnel have been ordered to arrange and to ensure that there is no

inconvenience to consumers. In-charge Directors K. Ramulu, Yen Narsimhulu, Nanda Kumar, Sudha Madhuri, Chief General Managers, Superintending Engineers, Divisional Engineers and other officials attended the meeting.

'Anti-TG forces'

He also said that a change is

necessary as the Congress and

the BJP have struck a deal. The

Congress wants the BJP to win

eight LS seats in TG and the

Continued from page

#### 20% of LS candidates have criminal cases

PNS HYDERABAD

Nearly 20 per cent of the LS candidates, that is, 104 of the 524 contesting in Telangana have criminal cases against them. Sixteen per cent of the candidates, that is, 85 candidates, have serious criminal cases. Nearly 21 per cent of the candidates, that

As per an analysis of ÂDR, among major parties, three (100%) out of the three candidates of the AIMIM, 10 (59%) of the 17 candidates of the BRS, 35 (57%) of the 61 candidates of the INC, 40 (57%) of the 70 candidates of the BJP have declared criminal cases against

BJP wants the same for the

Congress, he added.He said

that the people want a BRS vic-

tory to protect Telangana's

interests and that Congress

should ask for votes only after

fulfilling its six guarantees.He

want Hyd to continue as...

The SC's directions have had no effect on political parties in selecting candidates for the Lok Sabha Elections 2024 (Phase IV) as they have again followed their old practice of giving tickets to candidates who are facing criminal cases. All major parties contesting the Lok Śabĥa elections (Phase 4) have given tickets to have declared criminal cases against themselves.

The Supreme Court in its directions dated February 13, 2020, had specifically asked political parties to give reasons for such a selection and why individuals without criminal antecedents could not be fielded as candidates.

showcase KCR's initiatives like

the Rythu Bandhu, Rythu Bima

and free electricity supply to

farmers and questioned the

Congress's promises to the

One of the critically injured soldiers later succumbed at a military hospital during treatment, they "Two Indian Air Force

vehicle convoy was attacked by militants in the Poonch district of I-K, near Shahsitar. Cordon and search oper-

ations are underway presently in the area by local military

"The convoy has been secured, and further investigation is under progress," the IAF said in a post on X.

"In the ensuing gunfight with terrorists, the Air Warriors fought back by returning fire. In the process, five IAF personnel received bullet injuries, and were evacuated to the nearest military hospital for immediate medical attention.

#### who counts in the party went to visit jailed Many scribes eagerly look forward to Krishank (believed to be close to former Bharatiya Janata Party Legislature Party minister and party working president KT (BJP LP) leader Alleti Maheshwar Reddy's press conferences because he often ends

ousted so decisively.

TG will reject both Congress & BJP: KTR PNS HYDERABAD

The people of India will not Congress in the Lok Sabha elections, BRS Working President KT Rama Rao said. He also said that the BRS will not join either the NDA or INDIA after the elections.

He predicted that 13 major political parties who are not part of both alliances will become crucial in forming the new Central Government. He said that these 13 political parties will have a significant role in the formation of the next government.

He accused the BJP and the Congress of not supporting Telangana while they were in power at the Centre. KTR expressed the hope that the people of Telangana will reject both parties in the current elections.KTR was speaking while

TODAY

Trayodash

Nakshatram:

Revati

Rahukalam

Varjyam:

Gulika:

Yamagandam:

**ALMANAC** 

Month & Paksham:

Tithi: Dwadashi:

Krishna Paksha

May 04 08:39 PM

to May 05 05:42 PM May 05 05:42 PM

to May 06 02:40 PM

to May 05 07:57 PM

to May 06 05:43 PM

4:58 PM to 6:34 PM

12:12 PM to 1:48 PM

06:50 AM to 08:17 AM

03:35 PM to 05:02 PM

3:23 PM to 4:58 PM

May 05 07:57 PM

Uttara Bhadrapada: May 04 10:07 PM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:47 AM to 12:38 PM

**Updated:** May 4 2024 5:00 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly sunny

Temp: 42°° Humidity: 31%

Sunrise: 5:48 AM

Sunset: 6:38 PM



addressing public meetings in Hyderabad during his roadshows in Quthbullapur, Secunderabad Cantonment and Medchal on Saturday.

He warned that voting for the BJP would completely 'destroy' the city's image and could lead to 'tensions' between religions. He urged the people to vote for the BRS if they want 'peace' and growth.

Continued from page 1

Reiterating his allegation

that the BJP would amend the

Constitution and scrap reser-

vations, he claimed that BJP

General Secretary Dushyant

Kumar Gautam spoke about

amending the Constitution

Revanth said that the BJP

and the BRS have an 'internal

understanding' and are con-

spiring to defeat the Congress in the Lok Sabha polls.

Revanth, who is also the

President

TPCC President, referred to

Chandrasekhar Rao's com-

ments that a coalition govern-

ment would take over at the

Centre and that the BRS can-

didate contesting in Khammam, Nama

Nageswara Rao, would

Pointing out that Congress

become a Union Minister.

and its preamble.

He reminded the people of Hyderabad that in the last 10 years, the BRS had contributed to the city's growth by providing substantial funds.

Congress is not in a position to challenge the BJP anywhere in India. Only regional parties can

defeat the BJP, he added.

He emphasised that the

He reminded people that in

I will apologise if Rythu...

workers would not allow any

truck between the Congress

and the BRS, he said that the

BJP is the only option left for

the BRS to ally with for form-

ing a government at the

"You (KCR) are going to

join hands with the BJP. That

is what we have been saying

and you have been doing," he

The BRS had supported the

BJP-led government at the

Centre on demonetisation,

GST, triple talaq, CAA,

Uniform Civil Code and

many other things, the CM

on in Telangana. The BJP and

the BRS are conspiring to

ensure that Congress does not

He said the Assembly elec-

tions held in 2023 were a

'semi-final," while the Lok

win," he said.

"Even now a conspiracy is

the last Assembly elections, it was the BRS and not the Congress which defeated all the BJP MPs who had contest-

KTR ridiculed Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for leaving Amethi and running away to Kerala instead of fighting the BJP in his stronghold. He accused Chief Minister

Revanth Reddy of colluding with the BJP by giving Congress tickets to 'weak' candidates as 'requested' by the BJP.KTR said the people of Telangana have realised the secret relationship between the BJP and Revanth Reddy and so they will vote for the

He said that voting for the BRS is voting for Telangana and if the people give more than 10 Lok Sabha seats the BRS will raise Telangana's demands in Parliament.

Sabha polls are the 'final.'

"In the finals, the contest is

between the 'Telangana team'

and the 'Gujarat team.' While

Modi is leading the 'Gujarat

team,' Rahul is leading the

He said that the BJP-led

government at the Centre

did not implement the assur-

ances given to Telangana in

Reorganisation Act like

establishing a steel plant,

rail coach factory and a trib-

All that the BJP govern-

ment gave to Telangana is a

donkey's egg,' he said and also

displayed the picture of a

'donkey's egg.' The 'donkey's egg' (indicat-

ing zero or something

insignificant as per a Telugu

saying) has been a routine fea-

ture in Revanth's rallies dur-

ing the LS poll campaign.

al university.

Andhra Pradesh

Telangana team," he said.

## Govt to take...

Continued from page 1

The government will repay the loans in instalments to banks using its income," sources said. A corporation may be set up and the income of the state will be transferred to the banks.

The government is likely to give bank guarantees to the corporation. Sources said the government is thinking on these lines and things will become clear after the LS elec-

Already off off-budget borrowings taken through corporations are being included in the debt itself. So the government is evaluating options to make sure that the state is within FRBM limits while creating the corporation and servicing debts. The government is estimating that farm loans amount to Rs 32,000 crore while the opposition says that it is around Rs 39,000

## KTR: BRS will oppose...

Continued from page 1

them," he said. Parliament constituency should have one district. Among the other 33 districts, it should be

includes Karimnagar and Rajanna Sirisilla is one of Rajanna Sirisilla district. Which of these two should be kept? "Congress leaders say that one Jagityala and Nizamabad are in Nizamabad Parliament seat. Clarity should be given in this matter as well. Peddapally and clarified which districts will be Manchiryala districts are in continued and which districts Peddapalli LS constituency. will be scrapped. Karimnagar Asifabad, Nirmal and Adilabad

districts are in Adilabad LS parliament constituency constituency. The government should clar-

ify which of the two districts will be scrapped. Decentralisation should be done according to public needs," KTR said.

He said that it was after the decentralisation of power that the government's welfare schemes reached the public.

## 'BRS facing survival threat...

Continued from page 1

Uttam said that within three months of coming to power, the Congress government streamlined SCCL's operations and launched a Rs 1 crore accident insurance scheme for SCCL employees.

He accused KCR of neglecting SCCL and its workers for nine-and-a-half years and

now with elections approaching he is attempting to frighten SCCL workers to bag their

"It is not SCCL but KCR's BRS that faces a survival threat. The BRS is unlikely to win even a single LS seat and could soon disappear in Telangana," he added.

He also warned people to be cautious of BJP leaders who make false promises and exploit 'hate' to win elections. He criticised the BJP gov-

ernment for not fulfilling any promises made in the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act and for denying Telangana its due share in Central schemes and funds. He accused the BJF and BRS governments of working together to harm Telangana's interests.

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## Attracting voters to polling stations with thematic booths

PNS HYDERABAD

To increase the poll percentage in the city for Lok Sabha, the Election Commission of India (ECI) will establish 180 thematic polling stations in Hyderabad and Secunderabad parliament constituencies including Secunderabad cantonment assembly segment. The polling stations will be set

up to attract the voters.

A total of 12 thematic polling stations will be set up in every Assembly constituen cies in Hyderabad and Secunderabad. A total of 180 thematic polling stations will be set up in 15 Assembly con-

These thematic establish-



Thematic polling station (file photo)

ments aim at motivating voters to exercise their franchise. According to the official information, there were 75 polling stations managed exclusively by women, 15 stations by persons with disabilities (PWDs), and 15 stations

by youngsters. Every single staff member was female in the 75 polling stations, which will be man-

aged by women. And the PWD polling booths will be managed by differently-abled persons. 15 polling stations will be managed by young people.
Only 46.68 per cent voting was recorded in the 15

Assembly segments of Hyderabad district in the 2023 Assembly elections. In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, 53.27 per cent voting was recorded in Hyderabad constituency and 53.06 per cent in Secunderabad constituency. While in the last 2019 parliamentary elections, only 39.49 per cent voting was recorded in the Hyderabad constituency and 44.99 percent in Secunderabad con-

#### Five GST officials held for Rs 46 cr refund scam

PNS HYDERABAD

Hyderabad police have arrested five Goods and Services Tax (GST) officials on charge of refund fraud scam involving over Rs 46 crore. A total of seven cases of fraud was detected, the officials said.

Hyderabad Central Crime Station, Detective Department, said on Saturday that it arrested the officials working in different circles in the state.

The arrests were made in connection with the seven cases registered by CCS against

cases registered by CCs against seven bogus electric bike manufacturing companies.

The arrested include Peetala Swarna Kumar, Deputy Commissioner, GST, Nalgonda Division, Kelam Venu Gopal, Assistant Commissioner (State Assistant Commissioner (State Taxes), Abids Circle, Podila Viswa Kiran, Assistant Commissioner (State Taxes), Circle, Vemavarapu Venkata Ramana,

Madhapur-II Circle and Marri Mahitha, Senior Assistant,

spired with their tax consultant Chiraag Sharma, created fake and fabricated invoices, e-way bills and inward supply bills in



According to police, the officials had conspired with the arrested persons who had started bogus electric bike manufacturing units. The arrest description of the control o facturing units. The accused started bogus firms by collecting electricity bills from the owners of the premises in Hyderabad. They later registered firms in the GST portal by submitting fake and fabri-

cated rental agreements. The accused criminally conthe name of fake and bogus firms, showing non-existent companies as existing and filed GST refunds by offering bribes to the state government GST officials and claimed the GST

Police said the accused caused wrongful loss to the government exchequer. The GST officials criminally conspired with other accused persons, accepted bribes, and misappropriated the public funds by using their official power deliberately disobeying the rules and procedures laid down in their department.

The police had earlier arrested Chiraag Sharma, tax consultant from New Delhi, Vemireddy Raja Ramesh Reddy, and Mummagari Giridhar Reddy, both natives of Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh and Kondragunta Vineel Chowdary, native of Palnadu district of Andhra Pradesh.

The cases were registered against Vinardh Automobiles Pvt. Ltd., represented by Vemireddy Raja Ramesh Reddy, Yoko electric bikes rep-resented by Neeraj Sakhuja, Crox Electric Bikes of Inder Kumar, Growmore Electric Vehicles and Apex Electric Bikes of M. Giridhar Reddy and Vineel Chowdary, Supriya Electric Bikes of Supriya Pandey and Magnum Electric Bikes, represented by Gourav.

## Heatwave keeps Telangana sizzling

PNS HYDERABAD

Peaddpalli recorded the highest temperature of 46.7 degee Celsius and Hyderabad recorded 44

degree Celsius. Indian Meteorological D e p a r t m e n t Hyderabad predicted that the heatwave is likely to continue in Telangana as Peddpallii recorded the highest maximum temperature of 46.7degrees Celsius and Hyderabad record-

ed 44 degrees Celsius. As per the IMD-H there is a significant rise in temperatures across the city, forecasting that the ongoing heatwave conditions would persist for the next four days throughout

Throughout the State, maximum temperatures soared close to 47 degree C, with sev-

Peddapalli, Suryapet, Jagtial, Telangana continues to sizzle. and Khammam, registering a

tricts like Mancherial and

Nalgonda followed closely

in temperatures. However, temperatures are expected to scorching 46.70°C. Other disrise again towards the end of the month and persist until the

beginning of June. As the mercury climbed, 29 districts found themselves under a red alert due to the extreme temperatures, with readings surpassing 45°C. Adilabad, M e d a k , Sangareddy, and

Hyderabad recorded temperatures above 44°C, prompting an orange alert to be issued for these areas.

behind, recording temperatures of 46.50°C. According to data from the Officials from the IMD indi-Telangana State Development cated that Hyderabad's temand Planning Society (TSDPS), peratures were the highest the highest maximum temperrecorded this season, surpassature in Hyderabad reached ing those of the past two years. 44.20°C in Quthbullapur, marking a one-degree increase from Thursday's high of 43.20°C. They further warned that the heatwave conditions would

#### DCA seizes overpriced medicine in Bhadrachalam

PNS HYDERABAD

The Telangana Drug Control Administration (DCA) on Saturday seized overpriced medicines during a raid on a medical store Bhadrachalam town.

The DCA officials seized 'GRISOVEL-FP 250 Tablets' (Griseofulvin Tablets IP 250mg), during the raids carried out on May 3 and 4 at a medical shop located in Bhadrachalam. As per the Drugs Price control Order of 2013, the MRP of 10 tablets is fixed at Rs 80 and with 12% GST the additional amount is Rs 19.82. The shop increased the price excessively as it charged Rs 60.17 for one table, violating the stipulation.

Further investigation shall be carried out and action shall be taken as per the law against all the offenders.

## Officials told to provide key facilities at polling stations

**PNS** ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad District Electoral Officer (DEO) Ronald Rose on Sturday directed the officials to provide all necessary facilities to the polling staff and voters on the day of voting, scheduled on May 13.

In view of the elections, a meeting was organised with Parliament and Assembly Returning Officers (RO) and Assistant Returning Officers (ARO) on Saturday afternoon. The DEO instructed the officials to ensure that there are no deficiencies in the provision of tents for shade and drinking water at the polling

He ordered the officials to provide proper lighting and fans at the polling centres. In view of the high intensity of the sun, the officials were instructed to arrange juice and buttermilk for the staff of the election officials to give some amount to the sector officer for



District Electoral Officer Ronal Rose holding a meeting with Election officers at GHMC office in Hyderabad on Saturday

these arrangements. The RO and ARO have been directed to appoint an in-charge for setting up these facilities.

Meanwhile, the DEO has completed the second stage of supplementary randomisation EVMs. Hyderabad Parliament Constituency has 1,944 polling stations and each polling station requires two ballot units.

As the instructions of DEO Ronald Rose, GHMC officials are conducting awareness campaigns in the district and they are conveying the priority of vote. At every public toilet in the city, officials have put awareness banners which show, "I will vote for sure", "Check your vote again in the voter list, Polling date is May 13, 2024."

#### Telangana State Eligibility Test exam to be held in Aug

PNS HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Education Department on Saturday said that the application process for Telangana State Eligibility Test will begin on May 14. The examination will be held from August 28

The announcement was made by the Principal Secretary of the Higher Education Department Burra Venkatesham and Chairman of the Telangana State Council for Higher Education (TSCHE) Prof R Limbadri.

The application process will conclude on July 2 and with late fee applications will be accepted till July 26.

Hall tickets will be available for download from the website starting from August 20.

## Pregnant women to gain access to midwifery care

**PNS** HYDERABAD

Making pregnant women to gain access to midwifery care, Fernandez Foundation held a celebratory event at Fernandez Stork Home, Banjara Hills and Fernandez Hospital, Bogulkunta on Saturday on the occasion of international Day of the Midwife.. The Foundation has been working sinces 2017 in the Telugu states.

The main point of the celebration was the mesmerising 'Tree of Life,' symbolising growth, connection, and creating a tribute to the essence of midwifery. Attendees enjoyed a special Midwifery Open House, offering into the world of midwifery-led natural births. Experienced midwives provided expectant mothers with a detailed overview of midwifery care, sharing nto the tools, practices, and philosophies that shape a positive birth experience.

Expectant mothers had the opportunity to engage in featured exercises to nurture both body and spirit, fostering a serene birth Interactive sessions facilitated direct engagement with experienced midwives, who shared expertise on natural birthing methods. Attendees also explored relaxation techniques such as Aromatherapy and Water birth, aimed at easing labor pains.

Speaking at the event, Chairperson, and Managing Director of Fernandez Foundation, Dr Evita Fernandez, expressed her vision, stating, "I dream of a world where every pregnant woman can access a midwife, seeking obstetrician or other specialists only if necessary based on her situation."

The Chief Medical Director of Fernandez Hospital, Dr. Tarakeswari, emphasized the importance of collaborative work between obstetricians and professional midwives, stating, "When obstetricians and professional midwives work together, they can ensure better outcomes and a positive birthing experience for

## Goodeebag partners with school to promote sustainable practices

PNS HYDERABAD

Establishing a sustainable model benefiting both the environment and the school community, Meridian School, Banjara Hills, and Goodeebag unveiled the inaugural Goodeebag Awards at a press conference in Hyderabad.

The memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed between Nishi Rana, principal of Meridian School, Banjara Hills, and Abhishiek Agarwal, Founder and CEO of

This partnership signifies a step in reducing plastic waste pollution and craeting their active participation, the initiative aims to give a sense of responsibility and environmental consciousness among the younger generation.

Meridian School, Banjara Hills, will lead the way in innovation by introducing a unique initiative where students will wear school uniforms obtained through Goodeebag reward points, setting a global example for educational institutions. Students will earn reward points based on the weight of materials

and carbon footprints. By edu- they contribute, which can be significant impact on both the and benefits.

Goodeebag's role in this collaboration involves directly collecting plastic and recycled materials from students homes, eliminating the need for them to bring plastic to school premises. Additionally, Goodeebag will assess the carbon footprint and tree-saving impact of student contributions throughout the academic year, highlighting the school's ded-

ication to sustainability. The collaboration between Goodeebag and Meridian School is expected to have a

community, making Meridian School, Banjara Hills, the first school globally contributing to a better world and inspiring other educational institutions to follow suit.

In addition to this collaboration, Goodeebag hosted the inaugural Goodeebag Awards ceremony in Hyderabad, honoring individuals who have made notable contributions to environmental sustainability. Award categories included Best Plastic Collector, Wildlife Rescue Heroes, and Lake

#### Forest officials arrest four poachers, two helpers in Madhira

PNS HYDERABAD

The Madhira range forest offi-Friday. Out of these four poachers, three are from NTR district and another one is from Khammam district.

On Saturday the Forest Department released a press note on Saturday. where it mentioned that Madhira Forest Range Officer (FRO) Vijay Lakshmi said that Around midnight 2 am, forest officers arrested two poachers named Anumolu Srinivas Rao and Poola Krishna Rao along with a single barrel gun with nine live bullets, two used bullets and hunting arms.

"On further enquiry, we got to know that a local pernamed Parisee in doing business transactions and local support to the poachers. As per current information, Nageswara Rao has supplied them the gun and bullets",

press note mentioned. As per the instructions of the District Forest Officer, Khammam, and in the supervision of Forest Divisional Officer, Khammam, the Forest Range officer, Madhira and her team are investigating the case. The accused would be produced before a magistrate for further action.

## Rachakonda SHE teams arrested 133 stalkers in 15 days

PNS HYDERABAD

Rachakonda Commissionerate SHE teams caught 133 eve-teasers from April 16 to 30. Out of them 94 persons are majors and 39 are minors.

Rachakonda Women Safety Wing DCP T Usha Vishwanath said that 148 complaints were received in the last 15 days of April. Out of them, 17 complaints on harassing over phones, 38 on social media harassing, and 93 complainants faced directly. In those, 11 criminal cases and 92 petty cases POCSO and other criminal charges. 11 criminal cases and 92 petty cases have been filed against eve teasers.

One of the cases has been filed in Cherlapally police station. which states that while a seven years old girl was playing at her residence premises, a neighbour has misbehaved with her. After that she reached her home and told her mother about what happened. Later, her mother reached Kushaiguda SHE teams, then a case

In another case, a person downloaded the photos of a married woman from Instagram and uploaded the morphed pictures along with her phone number with a fake ID. Based on the woman's complaint, a criminal case was registered in Ibrahimpatnam police station. The Rachakonda Women Safety Wing conducted counseling to them at the LB Nagar CP Camp office (Women Safety Wing Office) in the presence of counselors

and their family members on Saturday.
A total of 42 awareness campaigns have been held between April 16 and 30, where around 6585 women were educated about women laws, their rights and crimes. SHE Teams conducted decoy operations in Rachakonda areas and arrested 126 and girls on the roads. After that, the area number is 8712662604.

police gave counseling to them. The police request the women to contact the SHE Teams immediately if any person is harassed through WhatsApp number 8712662111, or Bhongir area 8712662598, Choutuppal area 8712662599, IBrahimpatnam area 8712662600, Kushaiguda area 8712662601, LB Nagar area 8712662602, Malkajgiri area eve-teasers who were harassing women 8712662603, and Vanasthalipuram

## Traffic restrictions ahead of Amit Shah's visit

**PNS** ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad police has announced traffic restrictions ahead of Union Home Minister Amith Shah's visit to the city on Sunday. Shah is slated to address a rally at the Grounds in Secunderabad. The restrictions will remain in place from 5 pm- 9 pm.

Traffic coming from Alugaddabai and Sec'bad Railway Station will be diverted at Sangeeth X roads towards Clock tower - Patny -Paradise; commuters moving from Tukaramgate will be diverted at St.Johns Rotary towards Tivoli will be towards CTO - Ranigunj -

tower - Patny -Paradise; Traffic coming from Sangeeth X roads towards Begumpet will be diverted at YMCA towards Clock Tower - Patny - Paradise -CTO - Rasoolpura towards Begumpet; commuters moving from Begumpet towards Begumpet Sangeeth X roads will be diverted at CTO X roads towards Balamrai - Brooke Bond -SweekarUpkar - YMCA - St. Johns Rotary - towards

towards Sangeeth - Clock

Sangeeth x roads; Traffic coming from



Commuters moving from

Karkhana, JBS towards SBH-Patny will be diverted at Sweekar Upakar towards YMCA - Clock Tower -Patny or towards Tivoli-Brook bond - Balamrai-CTO; Commuters moving from Patny will not be allowed towards SBH-Sweekar Upakar, The same will be diverted towards Clock Tower-YMCA or Paradise-CTO.

Traffic Coming from RTA
Trimulgherry, Karkhana, Safilguda Malkajgiri, towards Plaza will be diverted at Tivoli towards Sweekar-upakar, YMCA or ground.

Brook bond, Balamrai, CTO. If the traffic is congested at Tivoli & Club-in the traffic will be diverted towards Bowenpally Market and

Traffic coming from Jubilee Hills Check Post towards Begumpet will be diverted at Panjagutta towards Khairtabad and at Green lands towards Raj Bahavan.

Parking arrangements for the programme have been made at Bison Polo Ground, Picket/Cantonment Park, Dobighat near Hockey Ground and Officers vehicles at Gymkahana Cricket

## BJP bent upon destroying peace in city: Owaisi

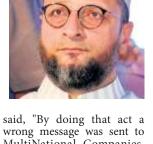
**PNS** ■ HYDERABAD

All Indi Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) president and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi on Saturday lashed out at the Bharatiya Janata Party's Lok Sabha candidate Madhavi Latha over her controversial videos in the build up to the General Elections.

"This candidate wanted to create a communal riot in Hyderabad, destroy the peace in Telangana. Telangana being landlocked State, investments which are coming in whether during the BRS government or the Congress government now, if any communal riot takes place in Hyderabad the development of Télangana gets stalled." Owaisi said during his election campaign.

Refrreing to the BJP candidate's antics during the cam-paign, the AIMIM President said, "By doing that act a wrong message was sent to multinational Companies. Many of them contacted me asking what is happening, how Hyderabad will react to it. This is what the BJP intends to do. To create a communal atmosphere in

Telangana and they ar Refrreing to the BJP candidate's antics during the cam-paign, the AIMIM President



wrong message was sent to MultiNational Companies. many of them contacted me asking what is happening, how will Hyderabad react to it. This is what the BJP intends to do. To create a communal atmosphere in Telangana and they are hell bent on doing it.

## Rohith Vemula's mother meets | KTR predicts BRS victory in Revanth, seeks 'justice'

PNS HYDERABAD

Rohith Vemula's mother Radhika Vemula met Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy here on Saturday and urged him to ensure that "justice" is done to the family.

Revanth Reddy assured her that an investigation would be conducted again into the University of Hyderabad student's suicide in 2016 and that justice would be done, an official release said.

The Chief Minister assured that a fair and transparent investigation would be conducted further, Rohith Vemula's brother Raja Vemula

He expressed confidence that justice would be done to them under the present

Congress government.
"We have opposed the closure report submitted by the police. We also raised concerns regarding the issues they have mentioned in the report," he said, adding that the competent authority to clarify on the caste status is the district Collector of Guntur in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh and not the police," he said.

Raja Vemula also said they sought cases filed against some other students be cancelled.

Talking to reporters Saturday evening at the



Rohith Vemula's mother Radhika Vemula submitting a memorandum to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy in Hyderabad on Saturday

University of Hyderabad, Rohith Vemula's mother Radhika Vemula took exception to the observation in the closure report that her son did not belong to SC.

"My son belongs to SC. I am a Dalit. How can police say that my son is not SC. Police don't enquire about caste (it is not their job). That is a false campaign," she said.

Šhe also found fault with an argument that Rohith Vemula died because he did not excel in studies. Her son excelled in

studies, she claimed. Radhika Vemula said the

Chief Minister assured of a fair probe into the case. "What we want is fair inquiry, the inquiry so far has been defective," she said, thanking the Chief Minister for his support.
The ABVP, RSS, BJP people

may be celebrating over the closure report, but they need not celebrate so much, she said. She also said she will contin-

ue her fight till all those responsible for the death of Rohith Vemula are punished.
Police have filed a closure

report before a local court in its probe into the death of Rohith Vemula, a student of the University of Hyderabad, claiming he was not a Dalit and died by suicide in 2016 as he feared that his "real caste" would be discovered.

#### Family to challenge police's closure report

The family of University of duct a further investigation. Hyderabad student Rohith Vemula on Friday said it will legally contest the Telangana Police's closure report in his 2016 suicide case.

His brother Raja Vemula he feared that his "real claimed the District caste" would be discov-Collector has to decide on ered. the family's Scheduled Caste status, prompting the police to say that they would con-

In its closure report on Rohith Vemula's death, the Telangana Police claimed he was not a Dalit and died by suicide in 2016 as

Citing the doubts expressed by Rohith Vemula's family, Telangana

Director General of Police Ravi Gupta said in a statement late on Friday that a petition will be filed in the court concerned, requesting the magistrate to permit further investigations.

Raja Vemula told news channels that Telangana High Court gave an option to file a 'protest petition' in the lower court.

SP Chandana Deepti

#### Social media misuse will be dealt sternly

PNS NALGONDA

District Superintendent of Police Chandana Deepti has maintained that the police have been constantly monitoring the social media posts through its monitoring cell as part of election code of con-

In a statement here on Saturday, she warned of action against anyone found posting unsavoury remarks against political parties and individuals, posting hate messages, spewing venom to foment communal trouble and vitiate the law-and-order situation.

If anyone violates the model code of conduct, as per the election guidelines and various provisions of the İnformation Technology Act and Indian Penal Code stern action would be taken against them, she warned.

## Revanth turns hero in Cong high command's eyes on quota issue

**SNCN ACHARYULU** ■ HYDERABAD

In politics logic and timing are important whatever the facts may be if one wants to corner rivals during elections.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is using this logic to corner the BJP on the reservations issue and has become a hero now in the eyes of the Congress high command.

He has also given a powerful weapon to the INDIA combine headed by the Congress to attack the BJP during the campaign for the Lok Sabha elec-

The BJP has declared during its election campaign in Telangana that if they are voted to power they will scrap the four per cent reservations the BJP government is not con-

Revanth linked this to not

conducting the 2021 census by the NDA government led by the BJP which has been in power for the last 10 years. The CM said that the BJP

has a 'hidden' agenda to scrap reservations and to convince the public about this he said that if a caste census is conducted the Centre will have to provide more than 50% reservation to SCs, STs and OBCs.

He said that any attempt to scrap reservations would require a two-thirds majority in Parliament and that for this the BJP is aiming to win 400 seats in the Lok Sabha elections.

The CM said that the BJP's 'hidden' agenda is to scrap all reservations by amending the Constitution after winning 400 seats in the Lok Sabha and that

ments on removing Muslim reservations, the CM said that if the BJP is voted to power it will abolish reservations for SCs and STs too.

The Congress high command liked the logic and the timing of Revanth in cornering the BJP on the quota issue. The Congress high command reportedly asked its leaders to campaign about this issue in other states to corner the BJP on the quota issue.

Revanth Reddy has now become a hero in the eyes of the Congress high command and AICC leaders have reportedly appreciated him on this

In these circumstances, if the Congress wins a majority of LS seats in Telangana, Revanth will emerge as a Quoting BJP leaders' state- party's high command too.

## Micro-observers asked to excel in their duties

PNS NALGONDA

Central Election observer Manoj Kumar Manik Rao Suryavamsi has directed the election micro-observers to ensure free and fair polls.

Taking part in the training programme held at Collectorate for them on Saturday morning, he said that the duties that micro-observers discharge in the conduct of the elections are very crucial and asked them to record each and every small inci-

He wanted them to have awareness

about 12 types of identity cards that the voters use to exercise their right to franchise at the polling booth. They should also know the revised timings of elections 7 am to pm in view of swelter-

In case they have any doubts while discharging their duties in polling booths, they should call him on 7337046757.

Additional Collector J Srinivas, Lok Sabha training nodal officer, District Agriculture officer Sravan, District Lead Bank manager Shramik, master trainer D Balu and others were present.

# Karimnagar LS constituency

#### BRS working president interacts with farmers and traders in Rythu Bazaar in Sircilla

PNS SIRCILLA

elections

BRS working president KT Rama Rao has appealed to farmers and traders in Rytu Bazar here to vote for the BRS candidate in the forthcoming Lok Sabha

Campaigning for Karimnagar Lok Sabha candidate B Vinod Kumar at the local Rytu Bazaar here on Saturday, he made

enquiries about problems being faced by farmers and traders. He had tea with the locals at a tea stall. Quoting the farmers as saying, he said sheds and drinking water should be provided at the rytu bazaar. He offered to provide temporary facility in

The people expressed concern over lack of water for irrigation in streams during the present regime. They also lamented

this regard in 24 hours.

that they are yet to receive pension for one month, he said. The people feel that the KCR regime was better than that of the Revanth government, he said.

They want KCR to return to power in

Telangana for their good, he said, feeling the pulse of the people.

The farmers expressed anguish over the new regime not paying attention to their woes, he said.

of Sircilla town from the early hours of Saturday as part of the Lok Sabha elections. He campaigned at BY Nagar Flag Post X

roads, Venkampeta and Hanuman X roads and addressed street-corner meetings seeking voter sup-

would win the seat with a good majority.

Earlier he undertook a whirlwind tour

port to Vinod Kumar. The Congress promised people the moon and won the elections. During the KCR regime, weavers found gainful employment for nine months a year and used to earn salaries from

Rs 10,000 to Rs 20,000. The people were able to get two square meals a day. The looms have been closed for over the past four months. The Congress regime did away with Bathukamma

Saris, X-mas kits, Ramzan Tofas. As the government did not place Batukamma Saris order with the power looms here, the weavers were driven onto the streets and to the point of committing suicides.

#### Krishank's wife worried, raises doubts over police custody

BRS working KT Rama Rao interacting with a vendor at Rythu

They complained that the loan waiver

He predicted that Boinapally Vinod

did not take place so far, Rytu Bandhu ben-

efits were not fully credited into bank

accounts of farmers, he said.

PNS HYDERABAD

BRS leader Krishank Manne has been remanded to police custody for a day in connection with the controversy surround-ing the fake letters from Osmania University.

The court rejected the request of Krishank to provide CCTV coverage or allow his lawyer to be present during custody. While Krishank's lawyer argued that the police may go beyond the rules, the

court reportedly said that they could bring it to the court's attention later.

Bazaar in Sircilla on Saturday

Meanwhile, Krishank's wife Suhasini Sarvey is worried about her husband's safety and has raised many doubts about the case.
"The court didn't permit

CCTV coverage while in police custody or the presence of a lawyer. We are worried about his safety as they can do anything. What is the need for police custody when the entire case is out in the open? This is not even a case. Why are they misleading the public? Why not wait until the bail hearing on Monday? What's the hurry for police custody on a Sunday which happens to be a court

holiday?" she said. "What is the need to seize a cell phone? The tweet could have been posted from any device. The Madhapur police seized a phone in an earlier case but did not produce it in court. Now they are asking

again," Suhasini said.

She also indicated that the Congress manifesto says that they would enact a law mandating "Bail is the rule, jail is the exception," if voted to power. "Looks like they will apply it only for Congress's social media warriors while Krishank is in police custody," Suhasini said pointing out the difference in the way Congress social media convenors were treated by the police vis-a-vis

## Need to ensure victory for Cong in LS polls

**PNS** RANGAREDDY

In a gathering organised by the leaders of Gouda Sangham on Saturday at Kuntla Ramreddy Garden at Shadnagar, MLA Veerlapalli Shankar and former MLA Choulapalli Pratap Reddy took part as chief guests. The assembly witnessed a significant turnout of Gouda leaders, including prominent figures like former ZPTC Shyam Sundar Reddy and former

Former MLA Choulapalli Pratap Reddy emphasised the importance of unity among Goudas and urged them to support the Congress Lok Sabha candidate Challa Vamsichand Reddy in the



upcoming Lok Sabha elections scheduled for May 13. He emphasised the need for securing a good majority for the candidate.

MLA Veerlapalli Shankar addressed the crowd, highlighting the progress made by the Gouda Sangham under the Congress party and call-

ing for support to defeat parties like BJP and BRS. He urged the Gouda community to rally behind the Congress party and its MP candidate, assuring them of the party's commitment to addressing their concerns and working for their welfare. The event saw the partici-

pation of several other leaders from the Gouda community, including MPTC Kumaraswamy Goud, for-mer Sarpanch's Raghavender Goud, Ramulu Ashanna Goud, former MPTC Shekhar Goud, Kumar Goud, Prabhu Lingam Goud, Ramulu Goud, Govardhan Goud and Mallesh Goud.

## Cybercriminal cheat businessman of Rs 1.03 lakh

PNS HYDERABAD

A 49-year-old Hyderabad businessman has been cheated of Rs 1.03 lakh on April 30 after clicking on a fake advertisement on Instagram platform, It related to 'D'Mart Combo Offer' for 4 kg dry fruits at Rs 399.

After seeing the advertisement on social media platform, he clicked on 'order now' and ordered for one combo offer and also gave his residence address and submit for payment, he entered his bank debit card number, date of expiry and CV num-



ber and his name. The d'mart app.

Download happened He clicked on the D'Mart app and it showed that it would take 26 minutes to download the application, so please wait, don't browse until the download completed. In that time, the money was debited from his account three times and OTP also came but without himself entering OTP also automatically money was debited from his account. A total Rs. 1,03,100

was credted to another account. After realising that he was cheated, he make a complaint to the police.

#### **JAGAN'S CHALLENGE TO NAIDU**

## Question BJP's decision to cancel 4% quota for backward Muslims

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has accused Chandrababu Naidu, and JSP, led by Pawan Kalyan, of aligning with the BJP, which promises to cancel the 4% reservation for Muslims.

In a bold stand to safeguard minority rights, CM Jagan challenged Naidu's sincerity, labelling his gestures toward the minority community as mere political posturing

Jagan Mohan Reddy said, "The 4% reservation for Muslims must remain this alliance? Why the cha-



untouched. This is my stance! Will Chandrababu Naidu have the audacity to confront Modi on this issue? Will he distance himself from the NDA coalition? What is the rationale behind

rade of empathy? Why align with the NDA, which opposes Muslim reservation, while perpetuating deceit in your public

addresses?' Asserting that the 4% gious grounds but rather on backwardness, CM Jagan clarified, "These reservations do not apply to the upper castes among Muslims. This 4% reservation is solely for backward Further addressing the

BJP and other opposition parties, CM Jagan criticised the politicisation of such reservations, emphasising the moral imperative to uphold constitutional provisions for Backward Classes across all religions. "We stand in solidarity with reservation for minority minorities on issues like 4%

any concerns pertinent to minority communities. Minority sentiments will find unwavering support from Jagan and his party," he affirmed, highlighting his party's allocation of seven Assembly seats to minorities out of 175.

In a rally in Hindupur, CM Jagan lambasted Opposition leader Chandrababu Naidu for spreading misinformation about the Land Titling Act. Dismissing Naidu's false-hoods, CM Jagan reassured the public of his commitment to protecting their land

## Land sharks opposing Act: Sajjala land dispute resolution.

PNS VIJAYAWADA

State general secretary of the YSRCP, Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy, has accused the TDP of disseminating false information about the Land Titling Act, potentially eroding public trust in the system.

Addressing the media on Saturday, Sajjala criticised the Opposition leader for resorting to derogatory language despite holding the position of Chief Minister for 14 years. He clarified that the Act, aimed at curbing irregularities, has yet to be enforced.

Sajjala said that the Act is intended to address land disputes and irregularities, heralding a revolutionary change. He lambasted the TDP for its history of land grabbing during its tenure, alleging that Chandrababu Naidu was involved in various land irregularities.



Sajjala accused Naidu of facilitating illegal land acquisitions and expressed confidence that the Land Titling Act would prevent such abus-

The party's general secretary highlighted Chandrababu Naidu's resistance to the Act, suggesting that individuals accustomed to land grabbing oppose the reform. Sajjala dismissed the opposition's allegations as baseless and pointed to the need for reform given India's low ranking in ing it to treason.

Referring to past scandals under the TDP regime, Sajjala mentioned the Stamp Paper scams and defended the digitisation of land records, including featuring CM Jagan's photo on passbooks. He called for accountability, stating that any attempt to revoke the Land Titling Act should be met with consequences. Sajjala clarified that the Act's implementation hinges on the completion of a comprehensive land survey, which may take several years.

Terming the TDP more perilous than the COVID-19 virus, Sajjala welcomed the Election Commission's actions against the party for spreading misinformation about the Land Titling Act. He urged the public to recognise the seriousness of obstructing the system, liken-



## CJI calls for global collaboration to combat juvenile cybercrimes

PNS KATHMANDU

Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud on Saturday said juvenile justice systems must adapt by enhancing international cooperation and sharing best practices to tackle growing transnational digital crimes involving minors, amidst the rapid evolution of technology.

Chandrachud is here on a three-day official visit to Nepal at the invitation of Chief Justice of Nepal Bishwombhar Prasad Shrestha.

Delivering a keynote address at the National Symposium on Juvenile Justice, the Chief Justice shed light on the intricate relationship between children and the complex societal systems they navigate.

Children enter the world with a clean slate, yet their fragility and vulnerability render them susceptible to a myr-

iad of factors that can lead them astray, such as economic hardship, parental negligence, and peer pressure, he pointed out.

"When discussing juvenile justice, we have to recognise the vulnerabilities and unique needs of children embroiled in legal conflicts and ensure that our justice systems respond with empathy, rehabilitation, and opportunities for reintegration into society, Chandrachud said.

It is crucial to grasp the multifaceted nature of juvenile justice and its intersections with various dimensions of the societies, he said.

Chandrachud said with technology evolving rapidly, juveniles are diving into cybercrimes like hacking, cyberbullying, online fraud, and digital harassment. The anonymity and accessibility of digital plat-



debunked.

"Its rapid dissemination

highlights the susceptibility

of juveniles to online dangers.

There is a need for proactive

measures to educate and safe-

guard young individuals in

the digital age, emphasising

digital literacy, responsible

online behaviour, and effective

parental guidance as crucial

forms lower barriers to entry, luring young individuals into illicit activities.

He cited the "Momo Challenge" as an example. The 'Momo Challenge' was a viral hoax that spread through social media platforms in 2019, targeting children and adolescents. This hoax purported a series of escalating dares, including self-harm or suicomponents in mitigating cyber-related risks," Ćhandrachud said.

The juvenile justice systems, he said, "must thus adapt by enhancing international cooperation mechanisms and sharing best practices to address the transnational nature of digital crimes involving juveniles".

This includes establishing protocols for extradition and repatriation, as well as facilitating information sharing and cooperation between law enforcement agencies," the Chief Justice said.

At the domestic level, he said, specific training in child protection rules is essential to ensure that all stakeholders involved in the juvenile justice system have the necessary knowledge and skills to safeguard the rights and wellbeing of children.

## 'Canada incidents mostly due to their internal politics'

**PNS** ■ BHUBANESWAR

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday said what is happening in pollbound Canada over the killing of Khalistan separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar is mostly due to their internal politics and nothing to do with India.

Jaishankar said this while replying to a question on why Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is criticizing

While interacting with senior journalists during a visit here, he also said the country needs a strong and active Prime Minister like Narendra Modi in order to bring further reforms in various sectors to make a "Viksit Bharat (developed India)".

"India's image globally is now actually much much higher than it had been ever... Canada is an exception. You see the different country heads are praising Bharat and its



Prime Minister," the external affairs minister said.

He said a section of pro-Khalistan people are using Canada's democracy, creating a lobby and have become a vote bank.

The ruling party in Canada has no majority in Parliament and some parties depend on pro-Khalistan leaders, he said.

"We have convinced them several times not to give visa, legitimacy or political space to such people which is causing problems for them (Canada), for us and also for our relationship," Jaishankar said.

But the Canadian government has not done anything,

Jaishankar said, adding that India sought the extradition of 25 people, most of whom are pro-Khalistan, but they did not pay any heed.

The ties between India and Canada came under severe strain following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in September last year of the "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Nijjar. India has dismissed Trudeau's charges as "absurd" and "motivated."

"Canada did not give any

proof. They do not share any evidence with us in certain cases, police agencies also do not cooperate with us. It is their political compulsion in Canada to blame India. As election is coming in Canada, they indulge in vote bank politics," the external affairs minister said.

He said the Indian Prime Minister is regarded highly by many country heads.



#### Modi a 'shahanshaah', cut off from public: Priyanka

PNS LAKHANI (GUJ)

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday called Prime Minister Narendra Modi a 'shahanshaah' (king of king) who lives in a palace but is cut off from the public, responding to the PM's 'shehza-da' jibe for her brother Rahul

Addressing a public rally at akhani in Gujarat's Gujarat's Lakhani Banaskantha Lok Sabha constituency to canvass for her party candidate Geniben Thakor, she also accused Modi of using the people of Gujarat for power and then forgetting

"He calls my brother 'shehzathis shehzada walked for 4,000 kilometres from Kanyakumari to Kashmir to listen to your (people's) problems, met my brothers and sisters, farmers and labourers and asked how we can resolve their problems," she said.

Addressing a rally in Gujarat on Thursday, PM Modi had targeted Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, saying Pakistan was eager to make the 'shehzada' of the grand old party India's next PM as the country's enemies want a weak government at the

"On the other hand is your 'shahanshah', Narendra Modiji. He lives in a palace. Have you ever seen him on TV? Clean clothes with not a single speck of dust, not a single stray hair strand. How will he ever understand your hard work, your farming? How will he understand your problems, that you are overburdened with inflation?" she said.

She said several BJP leaders have said on record that their government will change the

"When they say they want to change the Constitution, it means they want to reduce and weaken all the rights given to you in the Constitution. If you understand politics today, the biggest thing that Modi has done in the last 10 years is to weaken the rights of the public," she said

## UNGA President invokes Gandhi to call for protection of journalists

PNS UNITED NATIONS

Invoking global peace icon Mahatma Gandhi's message on freedom of the press, UN General Assembly President Dennis Francis called on member states to reaffirm their commitment to protecting journalists and media workers worldwide.

In a post on X on World Press Freedom Day, marked on May 3, Francis said attacks on press freedom

undermine democracy. In the face of misinformation, disinformation, and the environmental crisis, society needs the independence, expertise, and integrity of a free media more than ever.

"In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, 'freedom of the press is a precious privilege that no country can forego.' On #WorldPressFreedomDay, let's reaffirm our commitment to protecting journalists and media workers worldwide," he said. In his message, Francis, the

President of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, said press freedom – a core component of the right to freedom of expression - recognises the right of journalists and media organisations to operate independently and to report the news impartially without censorship or intimidation. He noted with concern that journalists and media workers across the

globe are increasingly under threat from kidnapping and torture to arbitrary detention, and losing their lives at alarming rates, whether as casualities of war or or as deliberate targets of state authority.

"As we honour those who are members of the fifth estate who have fallen in our service on this day, let us all recommit to protecting journalists and media workers – as a paramount obligation for promoting inclusive

media coverage, to inform and educate society including on current environmental issues," he said.

Francis called upon member states to prioritise upholding and honouring freedom of expression, protecting journalists as well as media workers - and ending impunity. "Ensuring accountability for attacks against and harassment of journalists and media workers is crucial to upholding democratic values, globally," he said.

accused of killing her

newborn child and throwing

judicial custody. Ernakulam

it on a street to 14 days

Additional Chief Judicial

undergoing treatment and

Magistrate went to the

hospital where she is

## K'taka govt sat on evidence against Revanna: Nirmala Sitharaman

**PNS** ■ PUNE

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday claimed that the Congress government in Karnataka did not take action against JD(S) leader Prajwal Revanna, accused of sexually abusing women, for about a year despite being aware of the

The Congress was afraid that it might lose Vokkaliga votes and therefore stayed silent until the first phase of the Lok Sabha elections got over, she said, speaking at a meeting with

"The Union home minister (Amit Shah) has made it very clear that we will not tolerate the matters that go against women and on that we stand united. Though the (BJP's) alliance partner has this issue, we have made it clear that it was not acceptable, and let it be investigated," Sitharaman said,



when asked if the scandal will have an impact on her party's performance in Karnataka in the ongoing elections.

driver gave a pen drive (allegedly containing evidence of Revanna's acts) to the Congress party and state home minister but they were sitting on this evidence for about a year, and "now the BJP is made to answer because the JD(S) is in alliance with us," she said.

The ministers of the

Congress government knew what was in the pen drive but they did not think that safety of women should be their priority, Sitharaman alleged.

They thought the Vokkaliga votes might go from their hands and decided to remain silent till the time the first phase of Lok Sabha got over. Now they are making it a big issue and pushing it which is typical of Congress and it shows their hypocrisy," the BJP leader fur-ther said, asking why probe was delayed for one year.

The Karnataka government was now writing to the prime minister about t him to issue look-out notices against Prajwal Revanna and bring him back from abroad, but the Union home minister had clearly said that the Karnataka government can take all the action it wants to take, she said.

Asked about BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh's son Karan Singh getting ticket from the party for Kaiserganj constituency in Uttar Pradesh, Sitharaman said the allegations against the MP had not been proved yet.

Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh is accused of sexually harassing women wrestlers.

"Nothing is proven against Brij Bhushan....even if he is convicted, I would say you want to carry the blame to the son. Even convicted people's children have been entertained by so many parties," the Union minister said

The BJP was still confident Sabha elections of winning 370 seats on its own and 400 seats along with its NDA allies, she

Asked if the BJP was in defence mode and responding to the opposition's narrative instead of setting its own, Sitharaman said this was not

#### Syamsundar said the arrest of the 23-year-old woman was recorded on Friday and police were verifying her statements regarding a **Kareena appointed UNICEF**

remanded her to judicial custody till May 18, police said. They added

that the custody application will be moved only after considering the

medical report from the doctors. Earlier in the day, the police had

said that as per the post-mortem report, the newborn, found dead

on a street in Kochi after being allegedly thrown there by its mother

City police Commis

INDIA CORNER

**Death of newborn child: Court** 

remands mother to custody



nost delivery was strangulated

NICEF India on Saturday star Kareena Kapoor Khan as its new National Ambassador. The "Crew" star, who has been associated with UNICEF India since 2014, will support the notfor-profit organisation in furthering every child's right to early childhood

development, health education and gender equality, a press release said. Kareena had earlier served as a Celebrity Advocate for UNICEF India. "There are few things as important as the rights of children, the future generation of this world. I am honoured to continue my association with UNICEF now as India's National Ambassador," the 43-year-old actor said in a statement. "I will strive to use my voice and influence for vulnerable children and their rights, especially around early childhood, education and gender equality. For every child deserves a childhood, a fair chance, a future," she added. Besides Kareena, UNICEF India has also appointed its first-ever Youth Advocates, who are peer leaders and champions on issues like climate action, mental health, innovations and Girls in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). The four advocates are Gauranshi Sharma from Madhya Pradesh on

right to play and disability inclusion; Kartik Verma from Uttar Pradesh on climate action and child rights advocacy; singer Nahid Afrin from Assam on mental health and early childhood development; and Vinisha Umashankar from Tamil Nadu is a budding innovator and STEM pioneer.

#### **Woman throws acid on** boyfriend in Nagpur; booked



case has been registered against a woman for Allegedly throwing acid on her 29-year-old boyfriend and injuring him after a fight in Maharashtra's Nagpur city, police said on Saturday. Based on a complaint, the police on Friday registered a case against the accused

woman and two others involved in the attack that took place on April 25, an official from Kalamna police station said. The victim, Ganesh Laxman Bhoyer (29), sustained severe injuries and is undergoing treatment at a hospital, he said. Bhoyer was in a live-in relationship with the accused woman. But the relationship turned sour due to the victim's alcohol addiction and disagreements about the woman's friends visiting their place, the official said.

## Shah calls AAP an 'urban Naxal party'

Says win for candidate backed by it will bring Maoist menace

PNS ■ VANSDA (GUJ)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday called AAP an "urban Naxal party" and said Maoist menace would raise its head in the region if the opposition candidate wins from Valsad Lok Sabha seat. The Aam Aadmi Party is

fighting the Gujarat polls in alliance with the Congress, which has fielded its Vansda (ST) MLA Anant Patel from Valsad. Addressing a rally in sup-

port of BJP candidate Dhaval Patel in Vansda, Shah said, "The Congress and urban Naxal party AAP have come together to disturb the peace alism will begin here if their tion spread by Rahul lost their in the past.



of this tribal region. Do you want extortion to start in Valsad? Will you allow Naxalism to raise its head in our forest areas?"

"Naxalism and urban nax-

candidate wins," Shah assert-

Shah claimed Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's "misinformation" about the vaccination drive during the coronavirus pandemic led to the death of many tribals.

"Rahul asked tribals not to take the vaccine and termed it as Modi vaccine. However, both brother and sister (Priyanka Gandhi) secretly took the vaccine in the night. They were not ashamed of playing politics during the times of COVID-19," he alleged.

Several tribal youths who believed in the misinformalives (as they did not take the vaccine)," claimed Shah.

He said the Congress-led INDI alliance wanted to snatch quotas of SC, STs and OBCs and give it to Muslims, like it did in Telangana and Karnataka.

The BJP will end this Muslim quota and give back its benefits to Dalits, STs and OBCs, he asserted.

Taking a jibe at the Congress leader for contesting from Wayanad and Raebareli Lok Sabha seats, Shah said, unlike Chandrayaan that landed successfully on the south pole of the moon, 'Rahul Yaan' had failed to launch 20 times

#### Oppn parties spreading lies, shedding crocodile tears: Patnaik

KORAPUT/NABARANGPUR

Odisha Chief Minister and BJD president Naveen Patnaik on Saturday alleged that the opposition parties are spreading lies and shedding crocodile

Addressing election rallies in tribal dominated Koraput and Nabarangpur Lok Sabha constituencies Patnaik asked the people whether they are happy with

his government. Patnaik also asked the people whether Naveen Patnaik is a good person and whether welfare schemes beneficial for the poor and tribal people of the region are reaching them. The people responded by saying 'Yes' and shouted Naveen Patnaik Zindabad slo-"If Naveen Patnaik is good, then bless him and vote in conch symbol,'

> The opposition parties are spreading lies and shedding crocodile tears for the people," Patnaik said.

Patnaik told the gath-

Patnaik's close aide V K Pandian, BJD's Nabarngpur Lok Sabha candidate Pradeep Majhi, Koraput LS candidate Kausalya Hikaka and nominees of different assembly seats were present at the meet-

#### Malaria linked with genetic changes: Study telomere length in leukocytes malaria endemicity.

PNS NEW DELHI

Malaria infection is linked with genetic changes, known to be brought about by ageing, according to a new study.

Researchers extracted genetic material from blood samples of more than 1,800 adults from the African countries of Tanzania, Botswana, Ethiopia, and Cameroon, where malaria is known to be endemic, or

constantly present. According to the 2023 World Health Organisation (WHO) Malaria report, published in 'The Lancet Microbe' journal,

around 70 per cent of the global burden of the mosquito-borne disease is concentrated in 11 countries, including India and 10 African coun-

team, including The researchers from the University of Pennsylvania, US, analysed the DNA in white blood cells crucial to immunity and fighting infections - and measured the lengths of telomeres present at the ends of chromo-

somes, which carry the genes. Telomeres protect the chromosome ends from sticking to each other or getting frayed.



They are known to shorten with age and can also help predict an individual's risk of getting affected by ageing-related

diseases and death. "We highlight the contributions of genetic and environmental factors influencing (white blood cells), and we have uncovered a potential role of malaria in shortening of telomere length across sub-Saharan Africa," said Sarah Tishkoff of the University of Pennsylvania, a co-senior author on the study published in The American Journal of Human Genetics.

The researchers found shorter telomere lengths in the white blood cells of adults indigenous to regions where malaria is highly endemic, compared to those in adults indigenous to regions with low

Malarial infection is known to cause massive destruction of white blood cells. The authors said that this process, coupled with that making new cells to restore this loss, could be a possible mechanism through which the disease shortens the length of telomeres.

They also found that the extent to which malaria was endemic to a region had a greater impact on telomere lengths, compared to environmental factors previously identified and known to impact telomere lengths.

## **Government lifts ban** on onion exports

Imposes minimum export price of US\$ 550/tonne

PNS NEW DELHI

The government on Saturday lifted the ban on onion exports subject to a minimum export price of US\$ 550 per tonne, a decision that can help boost income of a large section of farmers and comes ahead of the Lok Sabha polls in key producing regions including Maharashtra.

The government has imposed a minimum export price (MEP) of US\$ 550 per tonne (around Rs 46 per kg) as well as 40 per cent export duty. Taking duty into account, the shipments will not be allowed below US\$ 770 per tonne (around Rs 64 per kg).

On December 8 last year, the Centre had banned onion exports in early December to control retail prices amid concerns over likely fall in production. During the last 4-5 years, the country annually exported between 17 lakh and 25 lakh tonnes of onions.

Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare said the lifting of the ban would not lead to any

Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare said the lifting of the ban would not lead to any price rise in retail markets. "Prices will remain stable. If at all there is any increase, it should be very marginal," she said, while asserting that the government is committed to protect the interests of both consumers and farmers.

torate general of foreign trade price rise in retail markets. "Prices will remain stable. If at (DGFT) said in a notification all there is any increase, it that "the export policy of onions is amended from proshould be very marginal," she said, while asserting that the hibited to free subject to MEP government is committed to of US\$ 550 per metric tonne protect the interests of both with immediate effect and



Earlier in the day, the direc-Last night, the finance min-

tance as it comes before the cru-

istry imposed a 40 per cent

export duty. The decision assumes imporcial Lok Sabha polls in key onion belts like Nashik, Ahmednagar and Solapur in Maharashtra. Farmers of this region have been demanding a lifting of the ban so that they can get a better price for their produce.

Explaining the rationale behind the decision, Khare said the "ban on onion exports has been removed from today (Saturday) because the supply situation is comfortable and prices are stable in both mandies as well as retail markets." The modal price at Lasalgaon mandi in Nashik was Rs 15 per kg in April.

## India raises issue of pharma pricing control in Australia

PNS NEW DELHI

countries.

India has raised the issue of pharmaceutical pricing control in Australia, particularly on generic medicines, during a recent bilateral meeting between the officials of the two

The two sides have decided to work closely on timely resolution of market access issues, deepen people-to-people contacts, and create an institutional mechanism for sharing of istry said. preferential import data, the commerce ministry said

The bilateral trade between the countries declined 7.7 per cent to USD 24 billion in 2023-24 as against USD 26 billion in 2022-23.

These issues among others were discussed during the first Joint Committee Meeting (JCM) in Canberra under Îndia-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (Ind-Aus ECTA).

"Both the sides while acknowledging the smooth implementation of the ECTA, briefly elaborated on ECTA implementation issues including MRAs (mutual recognition agreements) on organic products, market access issues related to products like okra,

pomegranate, grapes, cottage cheese...pharmaceutical pricing control in Australia particularly on generics, progress made by the working group whisky and wine," the min-

> to address regulatory challenges and promote trade of these products, it said

The aim was

adding setting up of diseasefree zones for shrimps and prawns in India was also dis-

It added that the JCM meeting addressed certain critical services issues, including the consideration of India's request for facilitation of cross border e-payments and MRAs in professions like nursing and dentistry.

#### **MONEY MATTERS**

#### **JK Bank reports highest-ever** annual profit of Rs 1,767 cr



Ureported its highestever annual profit at Rs 1,767 crore for 2023-24 Its Managing Director and CEO Baldev Prakash said the net profit surged 48 per cent compared to the previous fiscal. "Beating its own highestever record of profits achieved only last year, the net profit surged in

fiscal 2023-24 by 48 per cent to achieve its record profit figure of Rs 1,767 crore," Prakash told PTI after the bank's annual results for FY 2023-24 were released bank here. He said the bank will be sharing the historic profits with its shareholders by making the highest dividend payment of around Rs 236.75 crore this year. The bank witnessed a 10 per cent increase in its total income to Rs 6,029.17 crore from Rs 5,502.09 crore. It had posted a profit of Rs 1,197 crore last fiscal, which was the highest profit till last year. Prakash said the bank's asset quality has improved by bringing the gross non-performing assets to a decadal low of 4.08 per cent, while the net non-performing assets to 0.79 per cent.

#### **Volkswagen strengthens** retail footprint in TN



erman automaker Volkswagen has inaugurated a new store in the city under its expansion drive in the state, strengthening its retail presence in the country. With the setting up of a new outlet at Ambattur in the city, the total network for the automobile major stands at 26 sales and 20 service facilities in Tamil Nadu. "The Chennai

Metropolitan area is one of the key markets for Volkswagen in India. In 2023, our Virtus was one of the highest-selling sedans in this market. With this inauguration of our newest touchpoint in Chennai, we are emphasising our commitment to the rising need for premium, safe, and reliable vehicles throughout India... Volkswagen Passenger Cars India Brand Director Ashish Gupta said in a company statement on Saturday. The new store 'KUN Capital Motors' is headed by Director Arun Uppuswami and has a five-car display and 25 service bays, among others. "Our longstanding partnership with Volkswagen has driven a highly successful mobility revolution in Tamil Nadu. With class-leading products on offer, we are once again glad to make the safest portfolio of Volkswagen Taigun, Tiguan, and Virtus, even more accessible to customers through the new city store," Uppuswami said. With the latest facility, Volkswagen has 208 sales and 142 service touchpoints across 155 cities in India.

## **IDBI Bank net profit jumps** 44 pc to Rs 1,628 cr



Dlender IDBI Bank reported a 44 per cent jump in net profit at Rs 1,628 crore in the March quarter of financial year 2023-24. In comparison, the bank had posted a net profit of Rs 1,133 crore in the year-ago period. Total income

rivate sector

crore in the period under review, from Rs 7,014 crore in the January-March period of fiscal year 2022-23. For the 2023-24 fiscal, net profit grew 55 per cent to an all-time high of Rs 5,634 crore. In 2022-23, the profit was at Rs 3,645 crore. Total income for fiscal year 2023-24 was at Rs 30,037 crore, up from Rs 24,942 crore in financial year 2022-23. Net Interest Income improved by 12 per cent in the March quarter to Rs 3,688 crore, as against Rs 3,280 crore in the fourth quarter of 2022-23. Net non-performing assets (NPA) ratio improved to 0.34 per cent as on March 31, 2024, as against 0.92 per cent as on March 31, 2023. The board of IDBI Bank has proposed a dividend of 15 per cent subject to shareholders' approval

## Air India reduces cabin baggage allowance to 15 kg

of benefits and fare restrictions

at various price points, an airline

spokesperson said on Saturday.

free cabin baggage allowance

for the 'Comfort' and 'Comfort

With effect from May 2, the

PNS NEW DELHI

Loss-making Air India has reduced the free cabin baggage allowance to 15 kilogram from 20 kilogram for the lowest economy fare segment on domestic

The changes have been made in the menu-based pricing model fare families that were introduced by the Tata Group-owned Air

India last August, with the airline saying that a one-size-fits-all

approach is no longer ideal. There are three fare families -- Comfort, Comfort Plus and Flex -- that offer different levels

Plus' categories has been reduced to 15 kg from 20 kg

and 25 kg, respectively. Prior to the introduction of the fare families concept, pas-

sengers on Air India's domestic flights were allowed to carry 25 kilograms of cabin baggage free of any additional charge. "On domestic routes in

Economy Class, both 'Comfort' and 'Comfort Plus' fare families

now provide 15 kg baggage allowance, while 'Flex' provides 25 kg allowance.

The Business Class baggage allowance on domestic routes ranges from 25 kg to 35 kg. The free baggage

allowance on international flights varies from market to market," the spokesperson

#### PAPER INDUSTRY TO GOVT

## Allot degraded land for pulpwood plantation

PNS NEW DELHI

The Indian paper industry has urged the government to provide degraded land on a longterm lease to paper mills for pulpwood plantation to address raw material shortage and boost rural employment.

The industry has highlighted that a large chunk of degraded land is available in the country, and even if a small fraction of that is allotted on lease to paper mills for pulpwood plantation, it can be a game changer for industry growth and greening of India. The paper industry has faced shortage of wood, the key raw

material, and it is the biggest concern for mills in India, the Indian Paper Manufacturers Association (IPMA) said in a statement on Saturday.

While the paper industry is continuing with agro forestry efforts, pulpwood plantations need to be enhanced rapidly to meet the requirements of domestic industry, the IPMA stated.

degraded land available in the country is provided on lease to the industry for pulpwood plantation, the same can be a game changer for growth of domestic manufacturing, rural empowerment and greening of India," it said.

"Even if a fraction of the

"We have been trying to convince the government that this land can be given to the paper industry on long-term lease. It will provide the desired quantity of wood not only to paper mills, but to several woodbased industries while generating a huge amount of rural employment," IPMA President Pawan Agarwal said.

## Avenue Supermarts net | RBI action to have limited fin impact: Kotak profit rises to Rs 563 cr

PNS NEW DELHI

Avenue Supermarts Ltd, which owns and operates D-Mart stores, on Saturday reported a 22.39 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 563 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2024. The company had posted a

consolidated net profit of Rs 460 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal, Avenue Supermarts said in a regulatory filing.
Its consolidated total revenue for the quarter stood at

Rs 12,727 crore compared to Rs 10,594 crore a year ago, it added. For the fiscal ended March 2024, the company said its

consolidated net profit stood at Rs 2,536 crore against Rs 2,378 crore in FY23. The company's consolidated total revenue for FY24 was Rs 50,789 crore compared to

Rs 42,840 crore in FY23. Avenue Supermart CEO & Managing Director Neville Noronha said DMart, the brickand-mortar business, ended



the year with growth across key financial parameters of revenue, EBITDA and PAT.

The company opened 41 new stores during the year, and its total store count stands at

"Q4 FY2024 saw a continued uptick in the contribution from general merchandise and apparel," Noronha said.

DMart Ready, the e-commerce business, commenced operations in one new city(Gurugram) during the year while continuing to deepen its presence in existing

"We are now present across 23 cities in India," Noronha

#### Says more worried about reputational damage

PNS NEW DELHI

Kotak Mahindra Bank is expecting business restrictions imposed by the Reserve Bank to have a "relatively small" financial impact but is more concerned about the reputational damage, a top official said on Saturday.

Hinting that it expects the restrictions to last for a "couple of months", its managing director and chief executive Ashok Vaswani told reporters that it will have a limited impact on liability growth.

Late last month, the RBI

Tata Power Renewable Energy

Ltd (TPREL) on Saturday said

it has signed an agreement

with state-owned SJVN Ltd to

set up a 460 MW Firm and

Dispatchable Renewable

An FDRE plant enables

round-the-clock power supply,

Energy (FDRE) project.

PNS NEW DELHI

barred Kotak Mahindra Bank from onboarding new customers through its online and mobile banking channels and issuing fresh credit cards with immediate effect as the lender was found deficient in its IT risk management.

Vaswani, who took over office only in January this year, said it is redoubling its efforts on the tech front, and winning back trust is the "top priority" for the lender now. He admitted that the order

will have an impact on the credit card business and its digital banking-focused 811 busi-

TPRE signs pact with SJVN for clean energy project

assisting power distribution companies (discoms) in fulfilling their Renewable Purchase

Obligations (RPOs) and Energy

"The plant, designed to meet

Storage Obligations (ESOs).

the 460 MW FDRE require-

ment, integrates solar, wind,

and battery storage technologies

to ensure efficient energy dis-

patch during peak hours, there-

nesses as they are unable to do their work. "I am more worried about

the reputational impact than the financial impact. The financial impact will be relatively small," Vaswani told reporters.

Its deputy managing director Shanti Ekambaram said the bank will focus on doing more business with its existing customers and deepening relationships through more cross-selling.

She also added that the order does not prohibit the bank from adding new cus-

by stabilizing the grid," it said.

The plant is expected to gen-

erate nearly 3,000 million units

(MUs) of power and offset 2,200 million kgs of CO2 emissions annually, TPREL said in

"This partnership with SJVN

Ltd will witness the deploy-

ment of sustainable energy

Speaking about the demand

for mediation and prepacks for

insolvency for large accounts,

Shukla said it was currently

under scrutiny and in the next

solutions from TPREL.

a statement.



tomers at the branches or in

digitally-assisted journeys. Its group chief financial officer Devang Gheewalla said the bank spent 10 per cent of its operating expenses on the tech front in FY24, and added that the order may lead to an acceleration of the spending.

## Japan insists Lanka should sign MoUs early for debt restructuring

Japan on Saturday said it expected cash-strapped Sri Lanka to sign early MoUs with the official creditors to reach a "transparent and comparable" debt restructuring agreement with all the creditors as Colombo said it expects the debt restructuring process to conclude in time for the next tranche of the IMF process.

Japan is leading the international discussions on Sri Lanka's debt restructuring as co-chair of the Official Creditors' Committee after the island nation, in April 2022, declared its first-ever sovereign default since gaining independence from Britain in 1948. The unprecedented financial crisis led President Ranil Wickremesinghe's predecessor Gotabaya Rajapaksa to quit office in 2022.

In March, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said it has reached a staff-level agreement with Sri Lanka for the

next phase that would enable it access to US\$ 337 million from the nearly US\$ 3 billion bailout approved in 2023 for the country.

Two tranches of US\$ 330 million each were released in March and December 2023 even as the global lender has praised Colombo for its



macroeconomic policy reforms, which it said, "are starting to bear fruit."

On Saturday, according to news portal NewsFirst.lk, visiting Japan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Yoko Kamikawa while conveying her country's expectation for the early signing of the MOU between the official creditors

committee and Sri Lanka said, "This stressed the importance of reaching a debt restructuring agreement with all the creditors in a transparent and comparable manner."

"The restoration of stability and economic development of Sri Lanka, which is at the strategic location in the Indian Ocean, is essential for the stability and prosperity of the entire Indo-Pacific region. Japan, as a friend, continues to support Sri Lanka. This is exactly what I came to Sri Lanka today to convey," Kamikawa told a media briefing alongside her Sri Lankan

counterpart, Ali Sabry here. Further, conveying Japan's intention to further support Sri Lanka's development by swiftly resuming existing yen loan projects, Kamikawa said, Once the MOU on debt restructuring is signed and Sri Lanka's government's intention to swiftly conclude it, a bilateral agreement is con-

#### 'NCLT registers 43% jump in debt resolution cases' in a sectoral approach," Shukla

PNS KOLKATA

Amid several bottlenecks, the Insolvency Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) declared 2023-24 as a landmark year, with the National Company Law Tribunal achieving a significant 43 per cent increase in resolutions, jumping from 189 cases last year to 270 this year.

The IBBI is expected to submit a report to the government over the next 2-3 months for including "mediation" in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), which is currently under discussion and scruti-

The regulator is also working on prepackaged insolvency for large corporate cases, which is only allowed in MSME cases as of now.

For the first time in a year, the number of outputs has increased from the number of inputs, reducing the pendency across India, said Sudhaker Shukla, an IBBI whole-time member, while addressing the CII organised 7th Insolvency and Bankruptcy

Code conclave. He said that despite bottlenecks in the last seven years, resolution of 3.5 lakh crore was achieved, and 27,000 applications worth Rs 10 lakh crore



were withdrawn, making the IBC a powerful tool for debt resolution in the country.

Shukla stated that the law has evolved over time and that the interventions to improve it

"In 2023-24, around 12 amendments and 86 interventions have been made in the IBBI within a single year. This portrays that we are responding to market requirements to bridge the gaps," he said. He further added that a sectoral approach has been adopted to address unique problems for a speedy resolution, like in real estate.

have been remarkable.

2-3 months, it will be submitted to the government. He further said prepacks for large accounts were also under consideration as they "We are trying to follow the aim for speedy resolution. sandbox approach. The recent

Prepackaged insolvency amendments were made on involves negotiating and agreereal estate where project-wise ing on a resolution plan resolution was made, keeping between the debtor and its the allotted houses from liquicreditors before going into fordation was a big step forward mal bankruptcy.

HYDERABAD, May 5, 2024

# the pioneer

"Disease is an experience of a so-called mortal mind. It is the body" - Mary Baker Eddy



Amid mounting concerns regarding Covishield's safety and the acknowledgment of potential adverse effects by its maker UK giant AstraZeneca, public unease is on the rise, with calls for accountability, says ARCHANA JYOTI

# CUVISHIELD'S SHIELD IN QUESTION

y CT scan result showed that they (doctors) had never seen anything like this before. Numerous blood clots were removed through surgery from my legs and lower abdomen, Alex Mitchell, a key litigant in the legal proceedings in the UK against British pharma giant AstraZeneca told a news channel in India about the side effects that he suffered after receiving the COVID

Mitchell is not the only one who has been reeling under the side effects due to the COVID jab and taken up a legal battle against ÁstraZeneca over allegations linking its vaccine to fatalities and severe adverse

The firm is facing at least 51 such cases and has recently conceded that its vaccine could, albeit exceedingly rarely, induce Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS), a medical condition characterized by abnormally low levels of platelets and the formation of blood clots.

With this admission by the UK pharma giant in India the Serum Institute of Indi (SII), headquartered in Pune, which was a licensee to AstraZeneca's vaccine formula may too find itself mired in potential legal ramifications with the parents of a young woman who died purportedly due to complications arising ten days post her inoculation with the vaccine in 2021 said that they are contemplating legal action against both SII and AstraZeneca. Though a section of legal experts say that

#### **Symptoms of TTS**

A rare condition associated with Covishield, include severe headaches, abdominal pain, leg swelling, or shortness of breath, usually appearing two weeks



post-vaccination. Timely identification and intervention are crucial in mitigating severe consequences.

SII may get clean chit in the case given it was a mere manufacturer of the jab, Venugopalan Govindan, bereaved father of the deceased Karunya has expressed profound dissatisfaction with AstraZeneca's belated admission, lamenting its timing visà-vis the lives already lost. He also castigated SII for its failure to suspend vaccine distribution following the restriction imposed by 15 European nations due to reported incidents of blood clot-related fatalities in March 2021.

Govindan has also implicated governmental agencies, regulatory bodies, and other stakeholders in the unfortunate demise of his daughter and numerous others postvaccination. His sentiments have reverberated across social media platforms following AstraZeneca's acknowledgment of its COVID jab's potential to precipitate

blood clotting. Govindan spearheaded a petition titled 'Post-vaccination side effects - Blood clots, MIS-A, etc. Awareness was required' shortly after his daughter's tragic demise in 2021. As the petition gained traction, it served as a platform for individuals to share their own experiences, concerns, and opinions

regarding COVID-19 vaccines. For instance, one Shikha Bhalla, a netizen, has given her account of losing vision in her left eve due to a rare side effect underscoring the importance of thorough



#### **BIG NUMBER**

ndia's vaccination campaign began on January 13, 2021, administering Covaxin and Covishield. Covishield received approval for use in 49 other countries. As of April 29, 2024, India has administered 1,749,417,978 doses of Covishield, making it the world's largest vaccination program. India's vaccine arsenal during the pandemic included Covaxin, Covishield, Sputnik-V, Covovax, Corbevax, and ZyCoV-D, among others. Worldwide, 13.5 billion COVID-19 vaccines have been administered since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to science research 71% of the world's population has received at least one dose of a Covid

#### **GLOBAL INSIGHT**

According to global data on TTS available in the public domain, as of January 5, 2024, Canada had reported 89 cases of TTS, of which 56 cases were reported following vaccination with AstraZeneca's Vaxzevria/Covishield COVID-19 vaccine, and 24 cases were reported following vaccination with Pfizer-BioNTech's Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine. Eight cases were also reported following vaccination with Moderna's Spikevax COVID-19 vaccine. In the U.K., 122 instances of TTS following the administration of the AstraZeneca vaccine have been reported as of November 2023.

#### **OPP MAKES A GIBE**

Where is the Thank You Modi ji banner now? Why are the PM and Health Ministry silent? Is this the reason why deaths due to heart attack at young age occur? Was this the reason why BJP took electoral bonds worth Rs 50 crore from Serum Institute? This issue is not a matter of politics but of safeguarding people's lives," Srinivas Bhadravathi Venkata, the National President of the Indian Youth Congress in a post on X.

monitoring and reporting of adverse events. Another netizen Parikshit Suri has emphasized on the rigorous testing and transparency in vaccine development and echoed widespread calls for accountability and scrutiny in the

approval process. Dr. A Rajkumar Sreenivasan's plea for informed consent highlighted the ethical dimensions of healthcare decision-making, emphasizing the need for individuals to have agency and autonomy in vaccination choices. Michelle Zeh's skepticism about vaccine necessity and safety shed light on broader concerns surrounding pharmaceutical influence and the importance of evidence-based decision-

Manish Kumar's observation of increased heart attacks post-vaccination prompted calls for comprehensive investigation and surveillance to ensure the ongoing safety and efficacy of vaccination programs. While many doctors have said that benefits outweighs the downsides Dr Sankha Shubhra Chakrabarti, Head-Geriatrics, IMS-BHU posted on X, @these genius Indian doctors who are self consoling by saying it occurs within few weeks and cannot after 3 years probably do not know how the AdenoV delivery system is

designed to work.@ Amidst these concerns and controversy over the safety aspects of the Covishield vaccine, the matter has now reached the Supreme Court on May 1, 2024, with a petition led by advocate Vishal Tiwari adding a layer of complexity and urgency to the discourse. Tiwari has sought the constitution of an expert medical panel to study the risk factors.

"More than 175 crore doses of Covishield have been administered in India. After Covid 19 there has been an increase in deaths due to heart attacks and sudden collapse of persons. There have been several cases of heart attack even in youngsters. Now after the document filed in UK court by the developer of Covishield, we are compelled to think on the risk and hazardous consequences of Covishield vaccine which have been administered to the citizens at a large number," the petition filed by advocate Tiwari says.

The plea points out that AstraZeneca, the company that developed the vaccine, has said that its AZD1222 vaccine against Covid-19, which was made under license in India as Covishield, could cause low platelet counts and the formation of blood clots in rare cases.

The petition says the medical panel should

be headed by an expert from AIIMS and supervised by a retired Supreme Court judge. Tiwari has further sought directions to the Centre to establish a 'Vaccine Damage Payment System' for citizens or families who have suffered debilitating health setbacks or even deaths after taking the

The plea has also called for strict action against the circulation of spurious Covishield, an offshoot of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, which underwent extensive administration across India. However, SII, conspicuously headquartered in Pune, has remained reticent in response to the looming specter of legal action. Equally intriguing is the silence maintained by the Union Health notwithstanding mounting apprehensions and criticisms voiced by recipients of Covishield on various social media platforms.

Delhi Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj has already raised the Centre's attention to these links, saying that it should work to urgently address the alleged side-effects of the Covidshield vaccine as millions of people in India were administered the shit during the Covid pandemic. Bharadwaj expressed concern over the alleged link between the vaccine's side effects and a series of sudden deaths in India, claiming that Covidshield was banned in several European countries, including Germany, France, Spain, Finland, Norway, and Denmark.

Despite the government's formation of a national committee to probe such occurrences, the determination of insufficient evidence linking her demise to the vaccine underscores the intricate challenge of establishing causality in rare adverse events. However, the narrative shared by individuals such as Govindan underscores the exigency for robust surveillance, reporting mechanisms, and support infrastructure to address postvaccination complications

comprehensively. Against the backdrop of Covishield's legal conundrum, SII's competitor Hyderabadbased Bharat Biotech, has underscored the efficacy of its jab, Covaxin, saying that it was meticulously evaluated and efficacyefficacy rials were held within

#### Study confirms higher risk of very rare clot with **AstraZeneca Jab**

**◄**he Global Covid Vaccine Safety Project conducted an extensive analysis of COVID-19 vaccines across multiple regions, including Argentina, Australia (New South Wales and Victoria), Canada (British Columbia and Ontario), Denmark, Finland, France, New Zealand, and Scotland. They employed a method called observed versus expected (OE) ratios to compare the number of adverse events reported with the expected baseline rates. In simple words, this means first healthcare providers have a baseline 'expectation' of how many adverse events are likely given a certain number of vaccinated people, and compare it with the number of events reported to health systems. Expectations are formed based on experience with the rates of vaccination, and reactions observed historically. However, COVID-19 vaccination was an outlier event that saw billions of vaccines administered over a relatively short span. OE ratios greater than 1.5, indicating 50% more adverse reactions than expected, were identified as potential safety signals requiring thorough investigation. Notable findings included elevated OE ratios for Guillain-Barré syndrome and cerebral venous sinus thrombosis following the first dose of the ChAdOx1 vaccine. Additionally, acute disseminated encephalomyelitis showed a high OE ratio following the first dose of the mRNA-1273 vaccine. Increased OE ratios for myocarditis and pericarditis were also observed following vaccination with BNT162b2 (Pfizer/BioNTech), mRNA-1273 (Moderna), and ChAdOx1 (AstraZeneca/Serum Institute of India) vaccines. In India, as of December 6, 2022, a total of 92,003 Adverse **Events Following Immunisation** (AEFI) were reported, accounting for approximately 0.009% of the population vaccinated against COVID-19. However, it's essential to note

that the strength of adverse

event reporting systems can vary



states (adverse events related to COVID-19 vaccines) is higher than Asia. This is a combination of both a better

in one country may not easily —CHANDRAKANT LAHARIYA

physiological factors. Studies done

reporting system as well as

Physician and health policy expert

significantly between countries, influencing reported incidence

The study also highlighted differences in adverse event reporting rates between regions. For example, the affidavit submitted by the Indian government to the Supreme Court cited higher AEFI rates in the United States (0.2%) and the United Kingdom (0.7%) compared to India. These variations may be influenced by reporting system robustness and physiological factors. Despite confirming previously identified rare safety signals associated with COVID-19 vaccination, the study emphasized the need for further investigation to confirm associations and evaluate clinical significance. An affidavit by the government to the Supreme Court claimed that compared with India, nearly 0.2% of the people in the United States who received COVID-19 vaccines showed AEFI, as did 0.7% in the U.K.

These ratios are, however, significantly influenced by the strength of the adverse event reporting system in countries. This can significantly vary among countries.

"While our study confirmed previously identified rare safety signals following COVID-19 vaccination and contributed evidence on several other important outcomes, further investigation is warranted to confirm associations and assess clinical significance," the study by the Global Covid Vaccine Safety Project said.

## DOCTORS SPEAK

condition resulting from an abnormal immune response. While it has several causes, it has also been linked with adenovirus vector vaccines. The WHO has deemed the vaccine safe and effective for all individuals aged 18 and above. ... We are yet to fully understand the impact of coronavirus on people, also called long Covid. The

TTS is a very rare

difficulty is to distinguish between the complications that are caused by Covid itself or the vaccine. That remains debatable. People who are

vaccinated have an overall lower risk of complications such as post-Covid heart attacks and strokes among

- DR RAVI WANKEDEKAR, Former

national president of the IMA

things in medicine, the exact mechanism for this is also unknown. It is an unusual immune reaction to a particular vaccine genre which is called as

"Like many

adenovirus vector vaccine. Adenovirus vectors are not disease-causing viruses but these are artificially fitted with the spike of the virus that our immune system

needs to fight. In the case of AstraZeneca's adenovirus vector vaccine, a chimpanzee adenovirus -

ChAdOx1 - has been modified to enable it to carry the Covid-19 (SARS-CoV-2) spike protein injected into the muscles of humans? - DR RAJEEV JAYADEVAN, Co-Chairman, IMA Covid-19 task force

The Japanese celebrate the Hanami, the festival of Spring, with as much gusto as we Indians do. SHOBORI GANGULI participates in the gastronomical delights accompanying this ancient ritual at Guppy right here in Delhi

the <u>pi</u>oneer

## **CHEER AND** CAMARADERIE

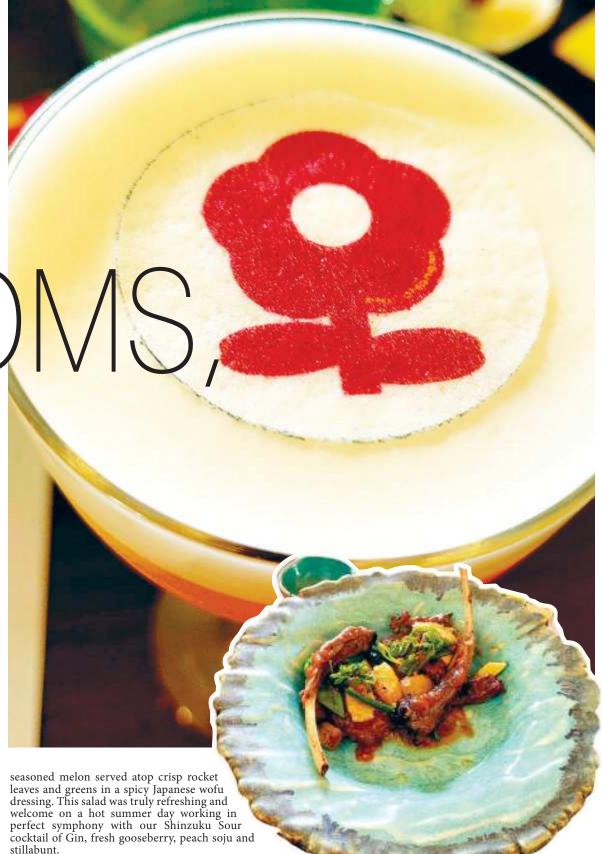
his week I had the great fortune to partake of the Hanami festival at one of Delhi's finest Japanese restaurants Guppy (part of the Olive Chain). This is cherry blossom season of spring in Japan, a time to mark the Hanami festival — a unique cultural tradition of viewing flowers in full bloom, an ancient ritual which serves as a Japanese reminder of the transcience of nature, the blossoms a metaphor for life, draped in the immortal philosophy of hope and renewal. And no festival in the world is complete without its attendant share of feasts and festivities. Guppy, in an earnest attempt to keep this old Japanese heritage alive and robust in a faraway land from Japan, in the very

heart of India in Delhi, laid out a

sumptuous fare of what would typically be

a part of a Hanami dining spread.

Among the salads on offer — Artichoke & Melon, Acvocado, Beet & Edamame and Chicken, Avocado & Greens - my friend and I settled for the first one which was a refreshing mix of marinated artichoke, grapes, and



quite familiar with, we opted for the translucent Tobanjan-spiced Chicken Steamed Dumplings, the filling a burst of minced chicken in a Japanese spicy tobanjan chili paste served with a ponzu dip.
Perhaps it is me and my changed taste

buds over the years or a conscious attempt by Japanese kitchens based out of India, the element of spiciness has notched up a bit from what was often termed as a "bland" taste emanating from traditional kitchens, which may suit the Japanese palate even today, in Japan and elsewhere in the world, but were not embraced with the same degree of enthusiasm one has watched with Italian, Spanish, Chinese, West Asian and Mediterranean spreads across continents.

The fact that Guppy was brimming with people, almost all tables occupied, on a busy working week day, is perhaps testimony to the fact that Japanese cuisine has certainly found an innovative way to work around the Indian palate and its natural inclination for well-spiced

From their Small Plates offering we went past the vegetarian Stuffed Tofu Katsu to the Crisp Chicken Parcel, an oven-baked phyllo parcel with ginger flavoured chicken accompanied by soy apple salsa and a yuzu miso sauce.

For the Mains, while my friend settled for the undoubtedly healthy and delicious Grilled Yuzu Khoso Fish, marinated in Jaanese yuzu khoso and herb salsa, grilled and served with lemon butter soy, I ventured into the now universally forbidden territory of red meat. The Grilled Marinated Lamb Chop came with seasonal vegetables and was served with red wine miso. I must admit that while the flavours of the grill settled rather smoothly on my palate, the meat itself was on the rare side and a tad stringy. Red meat requires adequate time to be rested in its marination for it to step delicately away from the bone. In my opinion, the Lamb Chop needed some more attention.

That said, the experience was a rather cheerful one, given that the Japanese dedicate as much time to the aesthetics of the inanimate as to the animate. Guppy is that cheerful, pretty, comfortable Japanese place one would like to hang around at, with friends or family. Here's wishing everyone a happy Hanami, the Japanese spring festival so similar to our own spring festival of Basant Panchami.

## Gurugram's latest Culinary Contender

Skipping the Sushi selection, which we Indians are now















#### BY PAWAN SONI

estled between two established dining spots at Two Horizon, Marieta emerges as Gurgaon's newest culinary contender, overtaking the space vacated by well-regarded Italian eatery Artusi. Although the name "Marieta" which is a popular female name hails from Greece, the restaurant's global menu lacks prominent Greek offerings.
The start was a bit of a let down. Not

being served a hard copy of the menu and asking diner to scan a barcode for the digital menu at a finedine restaurant with an excuse that they are new doesn't go well with me. May be I am an old timer who doesn't like reading the menu on mobile's small screen. The manager quickly improvised and offered to share a b&w printed menu with which I was okay but it never came. However he later shared his laptop with me to read the menu. For a classy looking restaurant they can easily do with few Ipads if even after a month of their opening they are finding it difficult to get the printed menu.

I am here with my wife and like most men opt for 'The Second Date'. Don't get me wrong. It is a tequila and sake based cocktail with a bit of lychee and Jasmine tea. Its delightful aroma and soothing taste set a pleasant tone for the evening. As I perused the drinks menu, I noticed a variety of tequila and mezcal cocktails, signaling an interesting trend. Just as gin has surpassed vodka in popularity for cocktails, it seems tequila-based cocktails might be the next big trend.

While the food initially took some time to arrive, once it did, the dishes came out in quick succession. Most of the dishes we ordered

were impressive. The Mushroom and Cream Cheese (Rs495), encased in crispy kataifi on a cauliflower sauce base, was particularly exciting. Similarly, the Habanero Butter Shrimp (Rs750), served with airy sourdough bread, was noteworthy, although I expected a bit more heat from the habanero, making the dish's name somewhat misleading.

The Avocado Cream Cheese Uramaki (Rs750) sushi roll was

Sector 43, Gurgaon Phone: 8800186953 Cuisine: Global with focus on Mexican **RATINGS** 

**Food:** 3.5/5 **Drinks**: 4.0/5 **Service**: 3.75/5 Ambience: 3.5/5 **Overall:** 3.5/5

the potato. Adding a bit of spicy sauce on the side made it more enjoyable for me.
The only disappointment was the
Neapolitan Margherita pizza, which fell short on the dough, kneading, and rolling. The edges didn't rise

enjoyable, with the added crunch of

fried sweet potato crisps on top. However, the Spicy Sweet Potato Soft Shell Taco lacked the necessary

spiciness to balance the sweetness of

properly, the center wasn't thin enough, and the sauce was mediocre. However, the chef acknowledged the issue without making excuses, which in my view was commendable. Since we had no room for a main course, we opted for desserts directly. The Vanilla Bean Panna Cotta (Rs595) was exceptional, perfectly set and delicious. Topped with figs and caramel sauce, this dessert, an Artusi recipe, is reason enough to visit Marieta.

We arrived early for a Monday dinner and found the music to be too loud for an empty restaurant. However, as more guests arrived, the sound was absorbed, creating a more enjoyable ambiance. The tables in alfresco settings are a bit small for four people; fitting more than two people would be a challenge. Despite minor initial hiccups, the service was good and well-informed. Overall, Marieta is worth a try, especially for the panna cotta.

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

## NIGHT IN OSTELLO BELL SHARED STORIES, SHARED SPACES



the pioneer

#### BY **PAWAN SONI**

fter watching Kangana Ranaut's film, Queen which includes a scene where she stays in a hostel, I was intrigued and mentally noted to experience it at least once. This opportunity arose when I was traveling alone for work in Milan for a few days. Since my wife is not keen on such experiences, I could only do it while traveling solo. I myself was a bit hesitant and booked the hostel room for only one night post which I booked a luxury hotel room.

Staying in a hostel room with bunk beds shared by eight tourists from different countries and continents was an eye-opening continents was an eye-opening experience. As someone accustomed to the privacy of hotels, the idea of sharing a room with strangers was initially daunting. However, the warmth and friendliness of my fellow travelers quickly put me at ease. Additionally, in India, we would never think of sharing a room with both think of sharing a room with both guys and girls. Here, we were six guys and two girls sharing the dormitory

One of the most memorable aspects of my stay was the interactions with my roommates. Despite our diverse backgrounds, we found common ground in our love for travel and adventure. Each person had a unique story to share, from their reasons for travelling to their favourite destinations. I learned about different



the phone charging, individual reading lights provided convenience without disturbing others. The common bathroom, although shared, was always clean and well-maintained, a testament to the hostel staff's commitment to guest comfort and roommates ensuring to leave the washroom with the same hygiene level they expected from others.

The common kitchen was a hub of activity, with guests preparing meals and sharing recipes from their home countries. It was a delightful experience to taste dishes from around the world, each one infused with the flavours and spices of a different culture. The complimentary

fruits and groceries added a thoughtful touch, making us feel at home in this foreign environment.

Beyond the practical amenities, the hostel's vibrant atmosphere made it a memorable stay. It served as a meeting point for young travellers, where friendships were formed over shared meals and late-night conversations. The hostel also organised social events, such as pub crawls and city tours, allowing guests to explore the city together and create

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

# **EXPERIENCING CULTURE ONE COURSE AT A TIME**

*The industry's evolving nature* is fostering a culture of shared knowledge, with chefs and restaurants collaborating more than ever. While the permanence of specific formats, like pop-ups, remains uncertain, the spirit of collaboration is undoubtedly a mainstay. It's a dynamic era where working together isn't just a trend; it's a fundamental shift shaping the future of the culinary landscape.



#### BY RUPALI DEAN

broadening my perspective and

igniting my curiosity about the world.

The hostel's facilities played a

significant role in fostering a sense of

community among guests. The small

that our belongings were safe, while

locked storage below the beds ensured

the charging points were necessary for

Pop-up restaurants are like culinary jazz performances, where chefs create impromptu meals in unconventional settings, such as dining rooms or even courtyards. These temporary dining nces allow chefs to ext freely with their cooking skills within a confined timeframe and for a select audience. For example, Chef Vladimir Mukhin recently hosted famous Chef Joan Roca from El Celler De Can Roca at Krasota restaurant in Dubai. They worked together to create a They worked together to create a unique culinary experience, exploring the deep stories behind well-known dishes. By combining different textures, ingredients, and flavours, they presented a special event in Dubai that highlighted the perfect blend of artistry in both appearance and taste. Roca's 'Memories of a Neighbourhood Bar' paired with Neighbourhood Bar' paired with Deyneka's 'The Light of The Past' set the scene. This dish, from El Celler de Can Roca's cookbook, honours the Can Roca's cookbook, honours the family's legacy. The three brothers learned cooking early at Can Roca, perfecting their skills. Inspired by Roerich's 'Himalayas,' Mukhin's Artichoke Curry and Coconut Rice reflect the painting's colours. The Black Cod with Plum and Fig drew from Aivazovsky's art, symbolizing a shipwreck survival. Five Senses Bon Bons by Jordi Roca at Casa Cacao concluded the feast magically, blurring reality and fantasy.



THE WORLD IS GETTING SMALLER AND MORE INCLUSIVE Engaging in pop-up events presents chefs with a valuable chance to acquire new skills and engage in the exchange of culinary knowledge amongst peers in the industry. "Popups are a great platform of exchanging ideas and sharing our cooking philosophies and techniques. It's a true example of how the world is getting smaller and more inclusive. It's a sense of pride when I get an opportunity to cook Indian food for an audience that may not be well educated about Indian Cuisine, or when Chefs of the most renowned restaurants around the world join us at Trèsind Studio to share their cooking philosophy with our guests. in the end it's a celebration of culture and creating friendships. new The ideas and brainstorming during pop ups sometimes create dishes

that eventually become



CHEF JOAN ROCA WITH CHEF VLADIMIR MUKHIN AND HIS TEAM AT KRASOTA, DUBAI

CHEF HIMANSHU SAINI AND CHEF JITIN JOSHI



unique style of food philosophy with another chef in the same kitchen. It's not only a great showcase of talent, but also a great learning for the team. I don't think this trend will pass soon and personally would like to see more chefs collaborating and coming together", adds Jitin Joshi Director of Culinary, Lemon Butter, Dubai,

#### THE LEARNING MUST NEVER STOP

These gatherings often feel like a blend of educational sessions and personal memoirs, weaving intimate tales through cherished recipes and unique ingredients. "As a chef it's impact chef, it's important to never stop learning. We love inviting chefs from various backgrounds into our



CHEF JOAN ROCA AND VLADIMIR AT A POP UP COLLABORATION IN KRASOTA, DUBAI

spaces for 4-Hands collaboration

events. It's an excellent way for us to learn from each other and discover new possibilities. We've been fortunate to have the opportunity to travel overseas and meet fantastic people, learning and experiencing entirely new cultures, cuisines and

ingredients. I always try to bring a few of my team with me on these trips, I believe that travel helps to widen one's perspective and encourage accelerated growth. It's fulfilling for me to groom and provide opportunities for my team to learn", says Julien Royer Chef Owner- Odette (3

Michelin stars), Singapore. These modern chefs charge for their dinners, yet none are earning vast fortunes from them. They often promote their events on Instagram and sell tickets digitally. Regardless of the practical details, pop-up dining enables them to innovate and test ideas with a small group of guests, fostering a fleeting sense of community. In a time where personal narratives hold greater significance in art and conversations, pop-ups provide chefs with a platform to express, through cuisine, "This is my heritage. This is my identity."







"Carbon dioxide removal (CDR) methods have a small but vital role to play in achieving net zero (target) and limiting the impacts of climate change," said Naomi Vaughan of the University of East Anglia, UK, and coauthor of the study published in the journal Nature Climate

## Current carbon removal plans will fall short of meeting Paris goals: study

removal plans of countries around the world will fall short in limiting the warming of the planet to 1.5 degrees Celsius, set out under the Paris Agreement, new research has suggested.

The researchers pointed out that climate policy regarding removal of carbon dioxide (CO2), the most important greenhouse gas, from the atmosphere "needs more ambition".

However, if the global energy demand could "significantly" reduce, the current carbon

Orone ruins as arm of the substance of t

👤 nian village of Ocheretyne has been battered by fighting, drone footage obtained by The Associated Press shows. The village has been a target for Russian forces in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine.

Russian troops have been advancing in the area, pounding Kyiv's depleted, ammunition-deprived

he current carbon Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change (MCC), Germany, analysed reports of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) taking yearly measurements since 2010 of the emissions gap -- the difference between what countries pledge versus what is needed to limit global warming to 1.5

degrees Celsius. The researchers found that if national targets were fully implemented, the yearly amount of carbon removed by humans could increase by 0.5 gigatonnes (a gigatonne is a billion tonnes) of CO2 by 2030, and by 1.9 giga-

the village, among them a 98-yearold womanwho walked almost 10 km (6 miles) alone last week, wearing a pair of slippers and supported by a cane, until she reached

Ukrainian front lines. Not a single person is seen in the footage, and no building in Ocheretyne appears to have been left untouched by the fighting. temperature targets of arresting global warming to within 1.5 degrees Celsius, as laid out in the Paris Agreement, or at least below 2 degrees Celsius.

Therefore, the emissions gap for the year 2050 is at least 3.2 gigatonnes of CO2, according to They also assessed an alterna-

tive 'focus scenario' which assumes a significant reduction in global energy demand. Also derived from the IPCC, the reduced demand is considered to be driven by politically-initiated behavioural changes as the core

terrorise its 1.3 million residents.

Four people were wounded and a two-story civilian building was damaged and set ablaze overnight after Russian forces struck Kharkiv, in northeastern Ukraine, with exploding drones, regional governor Oleh Syniehubov said Saturday.

The four, including a 13-year-old, were hurt by falling debris, he said on the Telegram messag-

> Russian state agency RIA reported Saturday that Moscow's forces struck a drone warehouse in Kharkiv that had been used by Ukrainian troops overnight, citing Sergei Lebedev, described as a coordinator of local pro-Moscow guerrillas. His comments could not be independently verified.

> Syniehubov said Russia also bombed Kharkiv on Friday, damaging residential buildings and sparking a fire. An 82-year-old woman died and two men

mentation of the current carbon removal plans of countries would be almost sufficient, with a gap of 0.4 gigatonnes in 2050, the authors found.

"The most ambitious proposals for carbon dioxide removal (CDR) are close to levels in a low-energy demand scenario with the most-limited CDR scaling and aggressive near-term emissions reductions," the authors wrote.

The team acknowledged that sustainability issues, such

forces overnight shot down four long-range US-provided ATACMS missiles over the Crimean Peninsula, which Moscow illegally annexed from Ukraine in 2014. The ministry did

not provide further details. Ukraine has recently begun using the missiles, provided secretly by the United States, to hit Russian-held areas, including a military airfield in Crimea and in another area east of the occupied city of Berdyansk, US officials said last week.

Long sought by Ukrainian leaders, the new missiles give Ukraine nearly double the striking distance - up to 300 km (190 miles) - than it had with the mid-range version of the weapons it received from the US last October.

A Ukrainian drone also damaged telecommunications infrastructure on the outskirts of Belgorod, a Russian city some 50 km (31 miles) from the Ukrainian border, accord ing to the local governor.

#### **NEWEST ENTRY TO SPACE TRAVEL**

## Boeing is on the verge of launching astronauts aboard new capsule

fter years of delays and stumbles, Boeing is finally poised to launch astronauts to the International Space Station for NASA. It's the first flight of Boeing's Starliner capsule with a crew on board, a pair of NASA pilots who will check out the spacecraft during the test drive and a weeklong stay at the space sta-tion. NASA turned to US

companies for astronaut rides after the space shuttles were retired. Musk's SpaceX has made nine taxi trips

increased land demand limit the scaling up of carbon removals.

Nevertheless, there is still plenty of room for designing fair and sustainable land management poli-

> since 2020, while Boeing has managed only a pair of unoccupied test flights.

Boeing program manager Mark Nappi wishes Starliner was further along. "There's no doubt about that, but we're here now." The company's long-awaited astronaut demo is slated for liftoff Monday night. Provided this tryout goes well, NASA will alternate between Boeing and SpaceX to get astronauts to and from the space station.

A look at the newest ride and its shakedown cruise:

#### THE CAPSULE

White with black and blue trim, Boeing's Starliner capsule is about 10 feet (3 metres) tall and 15 feet (4.5 metres) in diameter. It can fit up to seven people, though NASA crews typically will number four. The company settled on the name Starliner nearly a decade ago, a twist on the name of Boeing's early Stratoliner and the current Dreamliner.

No one was aboard Boeing's two previous Starliner test flights. The first, in 2019, was hit with software trouble so severe that its empty capsule couldn't reach the station until the second try in 2022. Then last summer, weak parachutes and flammable tape cropped up that needed to be fixed or removed.

THE CREW

#### Veteran NASA astronauts Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams are retired Navy captains who spent months aboard the space station

years ago. They joined the test flight after the original crew bowed out as the delays piled up. Wilmore, 61, is a former combat pilot from Mount Juliet, Tennessee, and Williams, 58, is a helicopter pilot from Needham, Massachusetts. The duo have been

involved in the cap-



ment and insist Starliner is

ready for prime time, otherwise they would not strap in for the launch. "We're not putting our heads in

the sand," Williams told The Associated Press. "Sure, Boeing has had its problems. But we are the QA (quality assurance). Our eyes are on the spacecraft."

#### THE TEST FLIGHT

Starliner will blast off on United Launch Alliance's Atlas V rocket from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station. It will be the first time astronauts ride an Atlas since NASA's Project Mercury, starting with John Glenn when he became the first American to orbit the Earth in 1962. Sixty-two years later, this will be the 100th launch of the Atlas V, which is used to hoist satellites as well as spacecraft."We're super careful with every mission. We're super, duper, duper careful" with human missions, said Tory Bruno, CEO of ULA, a joint venture of Boeing and Lockheed Martin.

Starliner should reach the space station in roughly 26 hours. The seven station residents will have their eyes peeled on the approaching capsule. The arrival of a new vehicle is "a really big deal. You leave nothing to chance," NASA astronaut Michael Barratt told the AP from orbit. Starliner will remain docked for eight days, undergoing checkouts before landing in New Mexico or elsewhere in the American West.

#### **STARLINER VS DRAGON**

Both companies' capsules are designed to be autonomous and reusable. This Starliner is the same one that made the first test flight in 2019. Unlike the SpaceX Dragons, Starliner has traditional hand controls and switches alongside touchscreens and, according to the

astronauts, is more like NASA's Orion

capsules for

moon missions. Wilmore and Williams briefly will take manual control to wring out the systems on their way to the space station. NASA gave Boeing, a

longtime space contractor, more than \$4 billion to develop the capsule, while SpaceX got \$2.6 billion.

SpaceX already was in the station delivery business and merely refashioned its cargo capsule for crew. While SpaceX uses the boss' Teslas to get astronauts to the launch pad, Boeing will use a more tradi-tional "astrovan" equipped with a video screen that Wilmore said will be playing "Top Gun: Maverick." One big difference at flight's end: Starliner lands on the ground with cushioning airbags, while Dragon splashes into the sea.

#### THE FUTURE

Boeing is committed to six Starliner trips for NASA after this one, which will take the company to the station's planned end in 2030. Boeing's Nappi is reluctant to discuss other potential customers until this inaugural crew flight is over. But the company has said a fifth seat will be available to private clients. SpaceX periodically sells seats to tycoons and even countries eager to get their citizens to the station for a couple weeks.

#### Coming soon:

Sierra Space's mini shuttle, Dream Chaser, which will deliver cargo to the station later this year or next, before accepting passengers

## Houston braces for flooding to worsen in wake of storms



in murky water.

was still to come.

7.6 centimeters) of water to

## Yoga officially makes debut in Pakistan

fter making global headlines, ancient Indian phys-⊾ical, mental and spiritual practice of yoga has officially arrived in neigh-

bouring Pakistan. According to the official Facebook page of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), which is responsible for the upkeep of Islamabad, the Metropolitan Corporation of Islamabad has launched "Free yoga classes in F-9 Park" in the capital.

"Many people have already joined in to kickstart their journey towards health and wellness," the CDA said.

It also posted pictures of people taking part in the yoga exercises.

Recognising its universal



appeal, the United Nations on 11 December 2014 proclaimed 21 June as the International Day of Yoga. A draft resolution establishing the International Day of Yoga was proposed by India and

endorsed by a record 175

member states. Yoga is normally linked with India and there are not many formal institutions in Pakistan to teach yoga. Though privately people like the physical part of yoga exer-

Many residents appreciated the move to organise Yoga classes with several people inquiring about the programme.

A step at the official level to organise yoga at the most prominent park of the capital

is a welcome move and may send a positive message across the border amidst a chill in bilateral ties over the Kashmir issue and cross-border terror-

"Good job I really appreciate your work CDA pls send the timing," Shahid Iqbal, a resident, commented.

the soaked region and the likelihood of major flooding. However, some criticised the CDA for failing to provide Friday's fierce storms forced decent residential facilities to numerous high-water resthe people of Islamabad and cues, including some from the rooftops of flooded homes. Officials redoubled instead resorting to showcasing sideshows. urgent instructions for resi-

Ghulam Mustafa said in his comments that CDA failed to develop new sectors.

"For God's sake concentrate on your core functions and develop the residential sectors you failed to develop during the last 35 years," he said

High waters flooded neigh-Harris County Judge Lina bourhoods around Houston Hidalgo, the top elected offion Saturday following heavy cial in the nation's thirdrains that have already resultlargest county. She described the predicted ed in crews rescuing hundreds of people from homes, surge of water as "catastrophrooftops and roads engulfed

ic." Schools in the path of the flooding cancelled classes A flood watch remained in and roads jammed as authoreffect through Sunday afterities closed highways taking noon as forecasters predicted additional rainfall Saturday night, bringing another 1 to 3 inches (2.5 to

For weeks, drenching rains in Texas and parts of Louisiana have filled reservoirs and saturated the ground. Floodwaters partially submerged cars and roads this week across parts of southeastern Texas, north of Houston, where high waters reached the roofs of some homes.

More than 21 inches (53.34 dents in low-lying areas to centimeters) of rain fell during the five-day period that evacuate, warning the worst ended Friday in Liberty "This threat is ongoing and County near the city of it's going to get worse. It is not your typical river flood," said Splendora, about 30 miles (48

kilometres) northeast of

National Weather Service. In the rural community of Shepherd, Gilroy Fernandes said he and his spouse had about an hour to evacuate after a mandatory order. Their home is on stilts near the Trinity River, and they felt relief when the water began to recede on Thursday. Then the danger grew while

they slept.
"Next thing you know, overnight they started releasing more water from the dam at Livingston. And so that caused the level of the river to shoot up by almost 5 or 6 feet overnight," Fernandes said. Neighbours who left an hour later got stuck in traffic because of flooding.

The Harris County Joint Information Center told KPRC-TV that 196 people and 108 animals have been rescued by emergency response agencies in Harris County.

Elsewhere, in neighbouring Montgomery County, Judge Mark Keough said there had been more high-water rescues than he was able to

'We estimate we've had a couple hundred rescues from homes, from houses, from vehicles," Keough said.

In Polk County, located about 100 miles (160 kilometers) northeast of Houston, officials have done over 100 water rescues in the past few days, said Polk County Emergency Management Coordinator Courtney Comstock.