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Published From: HYDERABAD, DELHI, LUCKNOW, BHOPAL, RAIPUR, CHANDIGARH, BHUBANESWAR, RANCHI, DEHRADUN, VILAYAWADA

Winning Confidence Quotes

Declaring that INDIA will form the government this time, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said the BJP will not even get 15 to 20 seats in South India.



Saying that the BJP received a favourable response in all constituencies, Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy said that rural people stood by Prime Minister Modi irrespective of political affiliations.



BRS president K Chandrasekhara Reddy claimed that regional parties would play a key role post the Lok Sabha elections.



Telangana voters eagerly casting their votes on Monday in Lok Sabha elections

TELANGANA STATE

Lok Sabha polling 61.54%

The response from voters was very good, CEO Vikas Raj

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A voter turnout of 61.54 per cent was registered in the election to 17 Lok Sabha constituencies in Telangana on Monday, which went off peacefully.

The polling was held from 7 AM to 6 PM, except Left Wing Extremism-affected constituencies where the process concluded by 4 PM.

The polling process in Telangana was peaceful, DGP Ravi Gupta said in a release. Notably, polling in Naxal-affected areas concluded without any incident by 4 pm, he said.

State Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Vikas Raj said the response from voters was good.

"We have got very good response right from morning. Weather was also supportive. So we had good turnout. There was no problem on law order side also," Vikas Raj told reporters.

Out of the total 35,809 polling stations, voting was going on in about 1,400 booths at 6 PM.

The final polling percentage would be known after tabulation on Tuesday, the CEO said.

The approximate voter turnout in the state was 62 per cent, according to an Election Commission app on voter turnout.

While Zahirabad Lok Sabha con-



While Zahirabad Lok Sabha constituency witnessed the highest poll percentage (as per provisional data) of 72.48 per cent, the lowest poll percentage of 39.17 was seen in Hyderabad parliamentary constituency. The CEO also said 38 FIRs were filed today for various reasons.

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today for various reasons.

However, the BJP is winning in the Hyderabad parliamentary seat, she asserted. Former Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya, his Tripura counterpart N Indrasena Reddy, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy,

Union Minister and Telangana BJP president G Kishan Reddy, former CM K Chandrasekhara Reddy and AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi were among senior leaders who cast their vote in Telangana.

Several film personalities, including Chiranjeevi, Mahesh Babu, Ram Charan, Allu Arjun, Junior NTR and ace director SS Rajamouli of 'RRR' fame, also exercised their franchise here.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, who cast his vote in his Assembly constituency of Kodangal in Vikarabad district, alleged that the BJP is trying to "polarise Muslim votes to make (AIMIM's) Asaduddin Owaisi win".

He also alleged that the BJP is mis-using central agencies for electoral benefit. On the case registered by Delhi police in connection with a doctored video of Union Home Minister Amit Shah on social media, he wondered how the Delhi police could issue notices to him when he was not aware of its content.

Telangana

Zahirabad Lok Sabha constituency witnessed the highest poll percentage

72.48 PER CENT

Hyderabad parliamentary constituency Records lowest poll percentage

39.17 PER CENT

Number of LS Seats: 17

Candidates in fray : 525

BJP will not get even 15 to 20 seats in South India: CM



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that INDIA will form the government this time, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said the BJP will not even get 15 to 20 seats in South India.

Addressing the media after voting in Kodangal on Monday, the CM said the Congress will get more votes than it got in the Assembly election. The Congress bagged 39.5 per cent votes in the Telangana

Assembly election. The CM said that the LS elections are a referendum on the 100-day rule of the Congress government in Telangana. The BJP has also been saying that the LS elections are a referendum on Modi's governance.

As Modi will cross 75 years on September 17, 2025, Revanth said the BJP should reveal who will be the Prime Minister if the BJP

Hyd constituency records lowest poll per cent again



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad parliamentary constituency has once again recorded a poor poll turnout in the elections at 39.17 per cent till 5.30 pm on Monday. The lowest turnout in Hyderabad was recorded in 1957 elections with 41.1%.

In the first elections after Independence, in 1952 the poll percentage of Hyderabad parliamentary constituency was 43 per cent. After that in 1957 it was 41.1%, in 1962 it was 55.6%, in 1967 it was 57.7%, in 1971 it was 49.4%, in 1977 it was 59.9%, in 1980 it was 63.4%, in 1984 it was 76.8%,

in 1991 with 77.1%. In that election, around 12,96,145 voters were there but 9,99,602 voters cast their vote. Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi of AIMIM party won with 45.5% of votes and Baddam Bal Reddy of the BJP got 41.5% votes in the 1991 election.

The polling percentage of Hyderabad recorded at 9 am was 5.6 per cent, at 11 am it was 10.70 per cent, at 1 pm it was 19.37 per cent, at 3 pm it was 29.47 per cent, at 5:31 pm it was 39.17 per cent. Among the 16 parliamentary elections in the Hyderabad constituency, the highest was recorded

KTR thinks Jagan likely to win in AP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS leader KT Rama Rao thinks that YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has the edge in Andhra Pradesh.

He thanked the Telangana Government for arranging generators to ensure that there are no power outages. He said he voted for a leader who won Telangana. After voting,

KTR said, "We are very confident and hopeful. Our best tally was 11 LS seats and this time we are hoping for more. The big man who cheated India 10 years ago has been completely routed. The small man here in Telangana who cheated us five months ago has also been routed. The Prime Minister has been campaigning across the country but

he has been dishing out step-motherly treatment to Telangana with no Central university, and no AIIMS." "Come out, vote and show that we are responsible citizens. In a democracy, when politics decides everything, I think we must understand and exercise our franchise so that we can have the kind of government we want. I hope you voted for progress.

My family works for Rae Bareilly, PM Modi for Adani, Ambani



AMIT SHAH FAKE VIDEO CASE Court grants bail to accused

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Monday granted bail to a Congress member arrested in connection with a fake video of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's speech, noting that he has cooperated in the probe and his further custodial interrogation is not

required. Arun Reddy, who was arrested on May 3, handles the 'Spirit of Congress' account on 'X', according to officials.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Nabeela Wali noted that the prime allegation against the accused on the basis of which he was arrested was being the 'Admin'

SC trashes plea for Kejriwal's removal as CM

SAYS IT IS UP TO DELHI LG TO ACT

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed a plea seeking removal of Arvind Kejriwal as the Delhi chief minister after his arrest in a money laundering case, holding that the petitioner had no legal right to seek his ouster.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta said resignation in such circumstances is a matter of propriety but there is no legal right to seek removal of Kejriwal as the chief minister following his arrest.

"What is the legal right? On propriety you may certainly have some-



thing to say, but there is no legal right. It's up to the LG (Lieutenant Governor) to take action if he wants to.

'Every vote costs Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000 in TG'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Elections continue to be costly in Telangana with each vote costing around Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000. For the first time in Secunderabad and Malkajgiri Rs 2,000 was given for a vote. Locals said that this is the highest ever paid in this constituency.

While a candidate paid Rs 1,000 his opponent paid Rs 1,500 and Rs 2,000 in some areas. In rural areas, it is Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,500 per vote along with a bottle of alcohol.

A voter said that they got Rs 1,000 and liquor in Karimnagar from a party. Rs 2,000 was also given for a vote in some other districts. Across the state, every party has kept a minimum of Rs 500 for a vote in all districts.

A leader said that people are also demanding money. "Electioneering

BJP files complaint against CM for violating MCC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP has filed a complaint against Chief Minister Revanth Reddy over Model Code of Conduct violations on polling day.

In the complaint filed with Chief Electoral Officer Vikas Raj, the State BJP General Secretary, Bangaru Shruthi, said that the CM after casting his vote in Kodangal in Mahbubnagar LS

constituency held a press conference regarding the elections which was telecasted live on Telugu TV news channels. This is strictly prohibited by the silent period rule of Section 126 of the Representation of Peoples Act and is a violation of the Model Code of Conduct.

The BJP said that Revanth Reddy made some comments which went against the MCC. The complaint said that the

CM said, "People have decided not to vote for the BJP." "I urge all voters to vote for the Congress in Mahbubnagar and that the magic figure is a dream for the BJP." "Modi, ED combination is not going to work in Telangana," and the "Graph of the BJP has fallen substantially."

"The above comments violate the Model Code of Conduct and warrant immediate action," the complaint said.

is going to be very costly after five years and only the rich can contest. These rates were never seen in the city earlier. It is almost four times more than the previous election. No

one wants to take Rs 500 now," said a local leader on condition of anonymity. During the campaign, Rs 500 was paid and a biryani was given for

each rally. "Even booth committee maintenance costs have gone up reportedly. It was around Rs 75,000 in 2019. Now it is very high," said another party activist.

EXCISE CASE Delhi Court to consider ED charge sheet against Kavitha today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court is likely to consider on Tuesday a fresh charge sheet filed by the Enforcement Directorate in the Delhi excise policy-linked money laundering case naming BRS leader K Kavitha and four others as accused.

Special Judge for ED and CBI cases, Kaveri Baweja, who was likely to take up the charge sheet for cognisance on Monday, adjourned the matter for May 14. The ED on Friday filed the nearly 200-page prosecution complaint (charge sheet) along with annexures under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

INDIA CORNER

Odisha CEO directs police to arrest polling staff for 'dereliction of duty'

Odisha's Chief Electoral Officer Nikunja Bihari Dhal on Monday suspended three polling officials and directed the police to arrest two of them for 'serious dereliction of duty'.



Another NEET aspirant goes missing from Kota's coaching hub

Nearly a week after a NEET aspirant left his PG room here with Rs 8,000 in his pocket, another 19-year-old preparing for the medical entrance exam in Kota has gone missing.



Recklessly driven Delhi Police vehicle mows down man, cop held

A 58-year-old man was mowed down allegedly by a recklessly driven Delhi Police vehicle in Sarojini Nagar area here on Monday, police said.



FM: Is Cong aware of cost of Rahul's 'Khata Khat' schemes?

BJP leader and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday wondered whether the Congress is aware of the cost of implementing the social welfare schemes...



made in their manifesto? Have they calculated how much the 'Khata Khat' schemes will cost fiscally?

Here's a challenge to him to answer these questions for the people of India, she said. The truth is that the BJP government's fiscal management is much better than that of the UPA...

Don't play with self-respect of Bengal's women, Mamata to Modi

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi not to play with the self-respect and dignity of women of the state by making 'false claims' about atrocities.

'India looking for additional sites for Russian N-reactors'

India is looking for additional sites for Russian nuclear reactors, while the discussion with the French on the proposed Jaitapur nuclear power plant project is underway...



Plea in SC seeks review of EVM VVPAT verdict

A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking review of its April 26 judgement by which it had rejected the demand for reverting to the old paper ballot system...



issues as have been dealt with in judgment dated April 26, 2024: i) Feasibility of counting of all VVPAT paper slips...

sibility of counting of all VVPAT paper slips in terms of time to be taken and additional manpower and referred to the relevant portion of the judgement.

Balance to be struck to ensure vehicles comply with PUC: SC

The Supreme Court on Monday said prima facie a right balance will have to be struck for ensuring that vehicles remain compliant with pollution under control (PUC) norms...



meat with an accident, the victim do not get the compensation". He said PUC norms must be complied with and strictest possible norms should be put in...

Senior advocate Aparajita Singh, assisting the apex court as an amicus curiae in the pollution matter, said this issue can be referred to the Commission of Air Quality Management (CAQM), an expert body.

'Modi govt 'anti-MSME', small businesses shut down'

The Congress on Monday accused the Narendra Modi-led central government of being 'anti-MSME' and alleged that thousands of small businesses have shut down in the past 10 years.

only for his few chosen friends," he said in a series of posts on X. "As a result, MSMEs have contributed to the lowest fraction of GDP in decades...



conceived Income Tax 45-day payment rule", uncontrolled dumping of Chinese goods, and the MSME board being captured by 'BJP cronies'.

Elaborating further, the Congress leader claimed that eight years after demonetisation, "it has become clear that demonetisation did nothing to curb black money or counterfeit currency in India".

blunder shows the BJP's misplaced priorities and lack of concern for small businesses," he alleged. The implementation of GST was another instance where the BJP failed to consider how policy changes would impact MSMEs...

'Ab jaldi karni padegi,' Rahul Gandhi replies to question on marriage

Addressing a rally in Rae Bareilly constituency for the first time after his nomination, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday faced a familiar query. When is he getting married? Soon, he assured.



and my sister is spending time here, a big thanks to her for this," he said. Priyanka Gandhi then told him to answer the question somebody from the crowd had asked. He asked what the

question was. "Shaadi kab karoge (When will you marry)," somebody asked. Rahul, who will be 54 next month, assured it will have to be soon now. "Ab jaldi karni padegi," he said in Hindi.

Chhattisgarh: 14 Naxalites arrested in Bijapur district

Fourteen Naxalites, including 11 carrying a cumulative bounty of Rs 41 lakh on their heads, were arrested in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, a police official said on Monday.

were carrying cumulative reward of Rs 41 lakh. These include Renu Kovasi, a member of military company number 2, and Mangli Avlam of Ganganal area committee with reward of Rs 8 lakh each," the release said.

India-France military exercise Shakti begins

The seventh edition of the 'Exercise Shakti' between India and France began in Meghalaya on Monday with an aim to enhance joint military capability of both sides...



eral ties. Exercise Shakti, being held from May 13-26, will enable the two sides to share their best practices in tactics, techniques and procedures of conducting joint operations...

The joint military exercise also seeks to enhance the level of defence cooperation between the two friendly nations and boost their bilateral ties.

Exercise Shakti is a biennial training event conducted alternatively in India and France. The last edition was conducted in France in November 2021.

The seventh edition of the exercise commenced on Monday at Umroi, in a fully developed and modern foreign training node in Meghalaya.

This will also enhance the level of defence cooperation, further fostering bilateral relations between the two friendly nations," the statement said.

The joint exercise will facilitate developing inter-operability, bonhomie and camaraderie between armed forces personnel of the two countries.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Frenemies

India seeks to neutralise China's economic hold but it beats US to become India's biggest trading partner

In the realm of global economics, the dynamics of trade relationships often override geopolitics. India's growing trade affinity with China is a living example of that: China has become India's largest trading partner in 2023-24. This development brings little joy to the nation aspiring to become an alternative to China and striving to bolster its manufacturing sector, with the Prime Minister's 'Make in India' call. Despite the Indian Government's rhetoric urging caution in dealings with China, economic imperatives seem to be reshaping the contours of bilateral trade. Their trade relationship has long been characterised by a mix of competition and cooperation. Both nations are regional powerhouses with vast consumer markets and burgeoning manufacturing sectors, though China is much ahead of India in terms of economy and infrastructure size. Over the years, China has emerged as a crucial supplier of goods to the world, including India, ranging from electronics and machinery to pharmaceuticals and textiles. Concurrently, India



has also found a receptive market for its exports in China, particularly in sectors like raw materials, agricultural products and IT services. But the real problem is the lopsidedness of the trade. We are a net importer of Chinese goods, that too at the cost of our local industry.

Most traders take the easy import route, often substandard but cheap, and make decent profits. This leads to job losses and closure of several MSME manufacturing units. Besides, the nations are not the best of neighbours; relying on China in this scenario is indeed fraught with danger. But where wealth flows, interests follow and that explains India's rising trade ties with

China. The trajectory of bilateral trade has been influenced by several factors. One, the sheer size and harmony of their economies create natural synergies to drive trade volumes. Despite occasional border disputes and geopolitical issues, economic pragmatism often prevails, fostering trade ties. Two, China's manufacturing prowess and cost competitiveness have made it an attractive destination for Indian importers, especially in sectors where domestic production struggles to meet demand. Moreover, the persistent trade deficit with China underscores India's reliance on their goods and highlights the challenges in achieving more equitable trade ties. The geopolitical dimension of India-China trade cannot be overlooked either. The Indian Government must emphasise the need for strategic autonomy and self-reliance in key sectors. Initiatives such as 'Make in India' and Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) must be given further fillip. Additionally, efforts to diversify trade partnerships by nurturing ties with countries like the US, Japan and Australia must be accorded priority and a diversified trade portfolio maintained. Achieving a fundamental rebalancing of India-China trade dynamics is a multifaceted challenge that requires nuanced handling and necessitates a calibrated and pragmatic policy approach.

PICTALK



Flamingoes at the Thol Bird Sanctuary in Mehsana district

Regime change on cards in Nepal?



ASHOK K MEHTA

Amid strained India-Nepal relations, speculation swirls around a potential regime change in Nepal

Nepal's late Foreign Minister Rishikesh Shah would say that Kathmandu is the rumour capital of the world and also the fount of speculation. Our own Madhuri Dikshit once hailed Nepal as a beautiful country adding: "We're lucky it is part of India". This created a furore but the story appeared with tasteful embellishments in Nepal. Delhi's Chief Minister Madan Lal Khurana waxed eloquent about the sterling qualities of Nepalis working in India and what great servants they made. This led to fireworks in Nepal and bush telegraphy produced several ugly distortions. Hrithik Roshan never said he did not like Nepalese but Indian films were banned and other collateral damage followed. India is usually at the receiving end of Nepal's woes and wrath.

China has begun to feature negatively only recently. India-bashing was at its peak following the economic blockade in 2015 and the rekindling of border dispute when Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura were incorporated into Nepal's map after India included Kalapani in a new map. Chinese Ambassador Hou Yanxi who made her mark rough-shodding Nepalese politicians was targeted by the Indian media. Yanxi became central to a duel between Indian and Nepalese media. How poorly informed political class, celebrities and even the media about Nepal were apparent. This longish backgrounder is a necessary prelude to describe last week's rumour and speculation about another attempt at regime change in Nepal. The report about the split in JSP (N) took place when its supremo, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health and Population Upendra Yadav was visiting the US. The story goes that NC leader Sher Bahadur Deuba attempted to topple the Left coalition led by Prachanda by drawing out Yadav (12 lawmakers) and Madhav Nepal of Unified Socialists (10 lawmakers). 20 plus lawmakers are necessary for the NC-led Democratic Alliance to make a comeback. The attempt failed as UML's KP Oli preempted the plan by splitting JSP(N) by



getting former colleague and lawmaker Ashok Rai to walk away from Yadav with seven of 12 lawmakers. The inside story is different: Yadav had plans to overwhelm numerically the Hill Nepalese with Madhesis in the approaching party national convention. This upset the Hill and Madhesis members unhappy with Yadav. Rai approached the Election Commission and registered a new party JSP sans N for Nepal. Yadav has decided to fight the Rai faction in court. Rai has pledged support for Prachanda. Reports about Deuba's deal vary: offering Yadav Premiership and/or a shared term with Madhav Nepal. This deal too fizzled out as Unified Socialists were already divided between two former PMs, Nepal and Jhalanath Khanal. India figured in the regime change as having backed Deuba. Operation Topple requires either RSP (21 lawmakers) or JSP(N) and Unified Socialists together to desert the ruling dispensation. The kingmaker for this great game is the CPN Maoists with 31 lawmakers that both NC and UML would need to stay in power. The threat to the Prachanda-led coalition will lurk in the nooks and corners of Parliament posed by parties with double-digit strength. NC, the single-largest party is



MIND GAMES ARE REGULARLY PLAYED IN BOTH COUNTRIES AS UNILATERALISM HAS CREPT INTO NEIGHBOURHOOD DIPLOMACY. WHILE NEPAL HAS DONE A TIT-FOR-TAT OVER THE MAP, CHINA HAS UNILATERALLY CHANGED THE LAC

licking its wounds but will not declare a truce to infuse a modicum of political stability. It has been blocking parliamentary proceedings for more than a month over the cooperative fund fraud in which Home Minister Rabi Lamichhane, RSP is involved. It has demanded a parliamentary probe into the alleged wrongdoings of Lamichhane. Prachanda has agreed to an enquiry in which others involved in the scam are also investigated. Parliament resumed after a short recess but NC is not allowing it to function. The budget has to be passed shortly and maybe the government will be forced to take the ordinance route. In India too it is time for regime change but through the world's longest election process. The BJP excels in toppling opposition governments with Operation Lotus. India has played a pivotal role in introducing democracy and its restoration in Nepal. Foreign Minister Jaishankar who has become a rock star in the election campaign is sharing pearls of wisdom on every conceivable subject, especially India's Neighbourhood First Policy. He said that politics may go up or down in the neighbourhood but India is regarded as a friend by the people. Later, he admitted that in diplomacy as in business there are setbacks

— it's part of the game. The latest setback in India-Nepal relations is the resurfacing of the festering border dispute. Having incorporated it in its state emblem the government has ordered the new map to be printed on Rs 100 bank notes about which Jaishankar observed that Nepal unilaterally took some measures but they can't change reality on the ground, adding discussions are ongoing through an established platform. As far as is known, no discussion has taken place. For Prachanda and Oli, nationalism is the magic mantra. When Prachanda came to India on an official visit last June during the joint press statement, PM Modi said that the border dispute would be resolved through a joint mechanism. Strangely this fact was not mentioned in the press release of the joint statement. Mind games are regularly played in both countries as unilateralism has crept into neighbourhood diplomacy. While Nepal has done a tit-for-tat over the map, China has unilaterally changed the LAC with India (The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ELECTION GUARANTEES

Madam — This election season in India is filled with a plethora of extended guarantees from different political parties and their renowned leaders. Initially, it was only PM Narendra Modi who extended oral guarantees termed as 'Modi ki Guarantee'. Now, to compete with him, recently released Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal has also presented his list of 10 guarantees to script a 'new India'. However, Mr. Arvind made it clear that he didn't want to be the Prime Minister of India. Nevertheless, his support for the INDIA bloc has grown stronger, especially after he was sentenced to Tihar Jail by the apex court.

Elections have a historic relationship with political guarantees and promises. But we all already know how many of these guarantees are actually fulfilled. The irony is that people don't need guarantees to survive and ensure their well-being; instead, we need commitment and actions for the actual general welfare of every section of our society. Since Mr. Kejriwal is on interim bail until June 1st, considering the short duration of time he is outside the jail, he is trying his best to reach out to the maximum public with his statements, social media posts, press conference conversations, and other personal interactions with the countrymen to challenge the BJP in general and PM Modi in particular for his arrest during this peculiar time of elections. Now that it is a fight between the guarantees of the two biggest political parties, it is up to the people to decide whom they will choose in the tough fight of the Lok Sabha elections.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

CONTROVERSIAL CONTEST

Madam — The Eurovision Western Music Contest has been held in various countries across Europe for the last 68 years. The youth there enjoy this competition, and spectators and music lovers are often seen in a dancing mood throughout the event. However, this year's event, which concluded late on Saturday night, can be termed as the most political, controversial, chaotic,

Every vote counts



Amidst the dynamic political landscape, where elections have been completed in some places and others are still pending, it's crucial to acknowledge that not all leaders hoist the banner of public welfare. Merely casting a ballot doesn't guarantee the orchestration of effective governance. Instead of succumbing to the illusion that voting alone resolves everything, let's dispel such notions. The real-

ity often reveals a different narrative, where power dynamics favour those with deep pockets and questionable tactics, leaving trust and resources in disarray. If you're still clinging to the belief that all politicians are solely motivated by altruism, it's a precarious innocence to maintain. However, rather than consigning voting to oblivion, let's approach it with discernment. Let's seek out candidates who sway to the tune of integrity and genuinely prioritize the welfare of the people. And let's not overlook the importance of advocating for electoral reforms, weaving a fabric of transparency, accountability, and fairness in the political sphere. Your vote, fellow citizens, carries weight, especially when interwoven with others who aspire to a more just and equitable society. Remember, in the intricate tapestry of democracy, every thread contributes to a brighter future for us all

Imdadullah | Hyderabad

KEJRIWAL'S ELECTIONEERING

Madam — This is with reference to your Editorial "Wild card" (May 13). The national convener of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Arvind Kejriwal will campaign in favour of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) candidates across the country, Sandeep Pathak, the party's national general secretary said in a statement on Sunday, 12 May. Kejriwal will campaign in Lucknow on May 15, in Jamshedpur on May 16 and in Mumbai on May 17, he added. Kejriwal, who came out of Tihar Jail earlier this week, said he will work tirelessly and campaign across the country to end the "dictatorship" of the Modi government at the Centre. All the INDIA bloc constituents want Kejriwal to visit their states and campaign for them.

The Supreme Court has granted interim bail to the AAP leader to participate in the Lok Sabha poll campaigning.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SC judgments have strengthened democracy

Democratic spectacle owes its strength and boldness to a series of landmark legal judgments that have fortified its foundations

Elections, serving as the cornerstone of democracy, offer a platform for citizens to voice their opinions, hold leaders accountable, and actively engage in shaping the future of their nation. In India, elections transcend mere political proceedings; they evolve into grand festivals, embodying the collective will and aspirations of over a billion people. India's electoral odyssey, marked by its vast scale, diversity, and intricacy, has been fortified by a series of seminal legal rulings. These decisions have been instrumental in shaping and reinforcing the democratic framework of India, ensuring fairness, transparency, and inclusivity in the electoral process. Among the plethora of cases that demonstrate the resilience of the legal system, five stand out as pillars that have fortified India's electoral journey.

Fundamental Right to Vote: At the core of India's electoral democracy lies the fundamental right to vote, enshrined in the Constitution. Over time, the judiciary has steadfastly upheld and safeguarded this right through



various legal pronouncements. In the landmark 1977 case of Mohinder Singh Gill v. The Chief Election Commissioner, the Supreme Court of India unequivocally affirmed that the right to vote is sacrosanct and any arbitrary deprivation of this right is unconstitutional. The crux of this case revolved around assessing the constitutional validity of electoral laws that might encroach upon the fundamental right to vote.

Electoral Reforms and Transparency: Ensuring transparency and accountability in the electoral process has been an ongoing endeavour, guided by judicial interventions aimed at curbing malpractices and fostering electoral integrity. The 2002 case of Association for Democratic Reforms v. Union of India marked a significant milestone in this journey. This case presented the chal-

lenge of reconciling the right to privacy of political candidates with the public's right to information, necessitating a delicate balance between transparency in electoral processes and individual privacy rights.

Inclusive Representation and Minority Rights: The diverse social fabric of India underscores the necessity for inclusive representation and safeguarding minority rights in the electoral arena. Legal judgments have played a pivotal role in upholding these principles and ensuring equitable participation for all segments of society. The 1991 case of Indra Sawhney v. Union of India, commonly known as the Mandal Commission case, stands as a testament to this commitment.

This case grappled with the challenge of affirmative action and reservation policies, striking a balance between equitable representation of marginalised communities and the principles of meritocracy enshrined in the Indian Constitution. The landmark judgment underscored the commitment to inclusive representation, empowering

marginalised communities and fostering social justice in the electoral process.

Effective Electoral Disputes Resolution: Efficient resolution of electoral disputes is indispensable for upholding the sanctity of elections and fostering public trust in the democratic process. This judgment bolstered the credibility of the electoral process, ensuring expeditious and impartial resolution of disputes.

Safeguarding Electoral Rights and Freedoms: Preserving electoral rights and freedoms is paramount for the integrity of the electoral process. Legal judgments have been instrumental in protecting these rights and holding authorities accountable for any infringements. The 2015 case of Mohd. Sattar v. State of Rajasthan serves as a poignant example. The judgment reaffirmed the principle of universal suffrage, ensuring that every citizen's voice is heard.

(The writer is corporate and legal advisor and founder of AU Corporate Advisory and Legal Services; views are personal)



AKSHAT KHETAN



FIRST COLUMN THE RISE OF ROBOTS

Robots are emerging as the next frontier, but can they replace humans?



SHAINY SHARMA

Various research and studies have shown that the next frontier in Artificial intelligence is the Robots. Much more added to it are the big names- Jeff Bezos, Microsoft and many others who are investing in human robots according to people with knowledge of the situation, as part of a scramble to find new applications for the so-called AI Technology. Undoubtedly, robots have increasingly become an integral part of our lives in this century, impacting various aspects of society, industry and everyday activities. The robots have revolutionized in many key sectors be it industrial, healthcare, agricultural, transportation or any other. The science of robots is revolutionizing day by day and scientists are making innovations in robots. Research studies show that by 2050, robots will overcome human beings as they will develop strong intellects.

Many developing nations are involving the use of robots. In the industrial sector robots are performing the tasks such as assembling, welding, painting and packaging in factories thereby increasing efficiency, precision and productivity. In the healthcare sector, robots can perform tasks such as surgery, patient care, rehabilitation and medication dispensing with great precision and even provide support and assistance to elderly or disabled individuals. Talking about the automobile industry, autonomous vehicles- including cars, drones and delivery robots, are transforming transportation and logistics while self-driven car makers are promising to make transportation safer, more efficient and accessible to people who are unable to drive. In the agricultural sector, agricultural robots such as drones



and automated harvesters can help optimise farming practices by monitoring crops, applying fertilizers and pesticides precisely and thereby harvesting crops efficiently which ultimately improves yields, reduces labour costs and minimizes environmental impact. Not only these but the robots are doing jobs and servings in restaurants too. The robots have taken down the responsibility of the pizza boy in pizza shops and even are performing tasks such as customer service, cleaning, and inventory management. They enhance operational efficiency and provide novel experiences for customers. Robots are indeed reshaping various aspects of everyone's lives, from how individuals work to how they interact with technology and each other. Today, educational robots are gaining an advantage in classrooms over teachers, engineering, and other STEM concepts in a hands-on manner.

Overall, robots are transforming the way we live, work and interact with the world around us. With advancements in robotics technology continuing to expand their capabilities and applications, the question of whether robots will replace humans in various tasks and roles is a complex one. While robots and automation have the potential to replace humans in some repetitive and routine tasks, they also create new opportunities and roles for humans in other areas. However, many tasks and roles require human creativity, empathy, and problem-solving skills, which are difficult for robots to replicate.

There is no denying the fact that the evolution of robots will profoundly impact society, offering new opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and improving quality of life. However, it will also raise the important ethical, social and economic considerations that must be carefully addressed with time. As robotics technology continues to advance, it will further transform society and open new possibilities for innovation and human-machine collaboration.

(The writer is an educator, views are personal)

The plight of unwed mothers of Kolam tribe



TV KATTIMANI

The stigmatisation of 'Kumari Matas' in the Kolam tribe highlights their struggle for social acceptance and economic empowerment



Kolam, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) of the Dravidian race is known for its unique culture, language, indigenous knowledge and matrilineal society. They reside predominantly in theYavatmal, Chandrapur, some parts of Amravati, Wardha and Nanded districts of Maharashtra and in some parts of Adilabad of Telangana. They have historical roots in Andhra Pradesh and later migrated to the regions of Vidarbha and Marathwada. This Proto- Australoid tribe is often highlighted for its unwed mothers. As per the reports of The Indian Express, there are at least 45 registered unwed mothers and over 450 unregistered unwed mothers only in the three blocks named Maregaon, Pandarkawada and JhariJamini of Yavatmal. Being a matriarchal society, the Kolams of Yavatmal have always celebrated womanhood. They celebrate the first menstruation of girls; they worship 'Gabhuri', the mother Goddess as their main deity to uphold their matriarchal societal roots.

However, the situation is changing. Though the unwed mothers have been renamed as the "KumariMaata" due to their assimilation with mainstream society yet due to their rising inclination towards the male-dominated society, patriarchal tenets are growing in these traditions. Therefore, the position of women is also declining consequently and those unwed mothers who used to live a normal life previously are now considered "Bad character women". There are various case studies and stories of women of the Kolam tribe where the elite in the society or financially stronger like contractors, outsiders visit the areas for work purposes, establish physical interactions with the women in their communities and refuse to marry them when they are expecting a child. Women are frequently conned by marriage promises because they are socially, emotionally and economically vulnerable. The woman is held liable for the premarital pregnancy, whereas the responsible males are excluded



THE KOLAM TRIBE, CLASSIFIED AS A PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUP (PVTG), IS GRAPPLING WITH A SIGNIFICANT ISSUE OF UNWED MOTHERS, EMPHASISING THE URGENCY FOR INTERVENTIONS TO TACKLE THEIR COMPLEX SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL STRUGGLES

ed from this process.

Most of these Kolam women work as agricultural labourers, construction labourers and other low-wage activities due to which it becomes very easy for the traders and other outsiders to abuse them physically. For example, according to Deshpande (2016) "border districts of Maharashtra, such as Chandrapur, Gadchiroli, Bhandara, Buldhana, Amravati, Nagpur and Gondia too have unwed mothers, the numbers in Yavatmal are higher because of its proximity to the chilli fields of Telangana, where work (for the poor) is available throughout the year. A number of unwed mothers say they were lured by neighbouring state's men who promise marriage but left when they became pregnant."

Some of them get pregnant while being a minor whereas others are due to their backwardness. Though in most tribal societies, giving birth to a child is a biological phenomenon and hence considered pious but yet due to the assimilation with the conventional societies they are also recognizing childbirth as a structural process where the consent of society, kin and kith is necessary. These structural changes are pushing unwed mothers toward various other socio-cultural and economic problems.

The most important among these is that unwed mothers are not accepted within the community nor do they find any other groom, as they are considered obscene. As a result, for the entire period of life, they serve as a single mother due to which the pressure of childbearing increases among them. The problems are more serious as being unwed mothers they often face disgrace in the newly constructed norms of patriarchal society. Sometimes they need to

leave the village and stay in the outskirts whereas in many cases the other women are not allowed to talk to them or join them for any occasion, as they are believed to be malignant due to their premarital physical relations. The consequences are economic and occupational also. As a daily wage labourer, their leisure time is very little but being single mothers they need breaks for breastfeeding and childcare due to which they face pay cuts. Sometimes they need to pay a fine to the panchayats also for their "misconduct". These unknown pregnancies among the women of Kolam are a crucial issue.

These indicate the lack of awareness about contraceptive measures, education, economic weakness and social vulnerability that often attract these women to fake marriage conversations and other luring proposals. As per the report of Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University (2018-2019) in Yavatmal, "28.84 per cent Kumari Matas are in the age range of 20 to 30 years. 36 per cent Kumari Matas having education up to Fourth standard, 67.30 per cent Kumari Matas are belonging to Kolam' caste, 82.69 per cent are homeless. 51.09 per cent are pregnant due to outsiders, 82.07 per cent children of Kumari Matas are admitted in the school by furnishing the name of mother only, 92.30 per cent had delivery at home, 61.63 per cent getting help from Government schemes".

The subject is more critical as many of them are uncounseled because most of them do not come forward to speak due to socio-cultural stigma and thus their stories remain untold. This has again a negative impact on them as their complete family details are not mentioned in the Government records like ration cards, Aadhar

cards, etc. which deprives them of getting the benefits of many Government schemes that can make their life easier.

As per the report of Pune Times Mirror, "a survey of such victims is conducted every year by a woman and child development (WCD) officer with the help of Anganwadi workers and a junior protection officer at the taluka level." Further, the Anganwadi workers help these unwed mothers by teaching them the methods of nutrition and hygiene. The Bombay High Court has already directed the state to the need for the rehabilitation of young unwed mothers among the Kolam tribe. The Government of Kerala is also running a similar kind of scheme called "Snehasparsham" which offers unwed mothers ₹1000/- per month to lessen the financial burden of these economically vulnerable unwed mothers. The need of the hour is to initiate some projects and schemes for them so the Kumari Matas of Yavatmal can be included in the parameters of Government benefits at a large scale.

The infrastructural facilities like schools and primary health care centres, are the basic needs of these regions. Endeavours should also be taken to open basic schools and training centres for vocational courses like sewing, beautician, etc. The awareness about Self-Self-help groups can make them financially independent through various micro-level businesses like horticulture, bee-keeping, jelly-making etc. Further, documentation of unwed mothers can give them a social identity and make them live a life of dignity and self-respect.

(The writer is Vice Chancellor, Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh; views are personal)

Kejriwal's bail: Unveiling political prophecies post-release

The Delhi CM's release sparks controversy with ominous predictions and bold political statements, fuelling nationwide debate on democracy's future

Persons accused of criminal cases getting arrested and the courts granting them bail is nothing new. Even if the person happens to be the reigning chief minister of a State or a former union minister of finance, the bail does not absolve the accused of the charges. The Supreme Court order that released the Delhi Chief Minister on bail from the custody of the Enforcement Directorate says it is a provisional arrangement so that he could participate in the election campaign as the Lok Sabha poll comes once in five years.

So far, so good. But what came after the Delhi Chief Minister was released on bail needs to be analyzed threadbare. On Saturday, he was shipped at Lord Anjaneya



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

Temple and addressed a press meeting. What he said during the press meeting is shocking and capable of causing fear in the minds of the people. He said if the BJP wins the 2024 Lok Sabha election and comes back to power, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will send all Opposition leaders to jail. Kejriwal also claimed that Amit Shah is being groomed as the next Prime Minister as Modi is likely to retire in 2025

when he turns 75. Yet another disclosure made by the Delhi Chief Minister was that Yogi Adityanath would be removed as chief minister of Uttar Pradesh within two months of the BJP coming back to power.

The national and international media are celebrating Kejriwal's bail and his prophecies. A major section of the media forgot the fact that they were the ones to give running commentaries of Live events without joining the game as players. The media in Kerala and Tamil Nadu are on Cloud Nine reporting that there is going to be a change of Government at the Centre after 4 June 2024. Well, let's leave it to the voters who are in the process of electing their representatives. It is good to see

that doubts about tampering the electronic voting machines have taken a stage and the Opposition leaders have started working on the modalities of Government formation.

Saturday's press meeting by the Delhi Chief Minister took one to 2019 when the same had claimed that if the BJP wins the General Election and returns to power, there would not be any more elections in India. "The 2019 General Election would be the last poll the country will see if Narendra Modi returns to power," these were the words of Kejriwal in 2019. After the 2019 general election, Narendra Modi returned to power with a larger majority and the country saw regular elections to all the State assemblies that completed their

mandatory five-year tenure. Though the claim fell flat on all fours, neither the media that flashed Kejriwal's warning about the "last" general elections nor our political pundits remembered the same.

Once the results were announced and the BJP was returned to power, that became the news, and everything else was forgotten (at least till 2024). Yet another battlefield has been opened by the Opposition and that is the One Nation, One Leader concept, the brand new slogan coined by Kejriwal. Wasn't it George Santayana, the Spanish-American philosopher who said in 1863 that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it"? Narendra Modi, I am sure

does know this adage quite well and hence there is no possibility of following the slogan coined by Kejriwal. The entire media in the country is unanimous in their opinion that elections are the festivals of democracy. But the festivals will certainly lose their charm if they are fueled by half-lies and full lies. One is at a loss to understand the logic behind the claim by certain leaders that the BJP government would subvert the Constitution! Who derailed the Constitution much against the order of the Supreme Court that the basic structure of the Constitution should never be tampered with. It was in 1976 that then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi altered the preamble of the Constitution by incorporating

the words secularism, socialism etc. India survived as a nation from 1947 to 1976 without the terms secularism and socialism in its Constitution. B R Ambedkar, the architect of the Constitution, was totally against the inclusion of these terms when it was drafted for the first time. It was after the introduction of these terms that communal riots and terrorism peaked in India. Accusations and allegations are fine because they add to the intensity of the campaigning. But baseless allegations rob the beauty of the election process. Interestingly, the leaders named by the Delhi chief minister as potential victims of the Modi regime are not saints or beatified ones. Reports from Delhi say that Kejriwal

was summoned eight or nine times by the ED for questioning in connection with money laundering. The Chief Minister chose to ignore the same with contempt. He might not know the truth that the reigning Prime Minister cooperated with the Supreme Court-appointed Special Investigation Team under the chairmanship of R K Raghavan, a former CBI director to grill him about the Gujarat riots. For 19 hours, the then Gujarat Chief Minister sat through the grilling and answered all the queries they asked. That is what we call honesty and integrity. People still hope that Kejriwal too is honest.

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

MONEY MATTERS

Gold falls Rs 100; silver slumps Rs 300 amid weak global cues

Gold prices fell Rs 100 to Rs 73,150 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid a decline in precious metal rates in the international markets...



Suzuki says will continue to expand SUV portfolio in India

Japanese car maker Suzuki Motor Corporation on Monday said it will continue to expand SUV portfolio in India to recover its overall market share in the passenger vehicle segment...



Piramal Group arm invests Rs 600 cr in microlender Annapurna Fin

Piramal Alternatives on Monday announced a Rs 600 crore investment for an undisclosed stake in microfinance company Annapurna Finance...



CHABAHAH PORT OPERATION

India, Iran sign long term bilateral contract

India and Iran on Monday signed a 10-year contract for the operation of a terminal at the strategically important Chabahar port in Iran...



signed by India Ports Global Ltd (IPGL) and Iran's Port & Maritime Organisation (PMO)...

Port will connect India to Central Asia: Jaishankar

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday said Chabahar Port will definitely see more investments and connectivity linkages...



GST REGISTRATION

Five states show interest in Aadhaar-based authentication

Five states, including Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Telangana, have shown interest in rolling out Aadhaar-based authentication for GST registration...



India extend US\$ 50 million budgetary support to Maldives as goodwill gesture

In a goodwill gesture, India has decided to extend vital budgetary support to the Maldives with the rollover of a US\$ 50 million Treasury Bill...



arrangement, SBI has been subscribing to these government treasury bills at zero cost to the Maldives government...

Ola CEO shuns Microsoft, says India needs its own tech platforms

Rebuking Microsoft and its subsidiary LinkedIn, Ola CEO Bhavish Aggarwal in a post said India needs to establish its own tech platforms...



Retail inflation eases to 4.83%

Retail inflation eased to 4.83 per cent in April as prices of some kitchen items declined, according to government data released on Monday...

Stock markets rebound on last-hour buying

Benchmark Sensex and Nifty staged a dramatic rebound on Monday to settle higher following buying in HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and Tata Consultancy Services...

Govt plans to make anti-fake review rules mandatory for e-commerce firms

The government is considering to make it mandatory for e-commerce companies to comply with quality norms for consumer reviews...



Coromandel to acquire additional 7% stake in Dhaksha

Coromandel International Ltd on Monday announced the acquisition of an additional 7 per cent stake in Chennai-based drone manufacturing firm Dhaksha Unmanned Systems...

51.40 cr person-years employment generated during 2014-24: SKOCH

A SKOCH report on Monday claimed that 51.40 crore person years of employment was generated between 2014 and 2024 during the Modi government regime...



ed. Out of which 19.79 crore employment has been generated by governance-led interventions...

'Skilled Indian nurses seek overseas opportunities despite domestic demand'

Demand for skilled nurses is projected to grow by 17-18 per cent by 2027 in the country but a large number of trained ones are seeking opportunities abroad...



(mid-senior level), and employers seek candidates with diverse skill sets including compassionate and competent care...

Saiyami could feel her character 'racked with pain' in 8 A.M. Metro

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Recent box-office success *Ghoomar's* renowned fame, Saiyami Kher, returns once again with *8 A.M. Metro*—the adaptation of *Andamaina Jeevitam* into a Hindi film that displays her dedication to pushing boundaries and delivering essential storylines to a larger audience. The film may have been released in 2023, but now is the moment for it to find its rightful place on a national stage, generating greater appreciation. So, in order to learn more about the popularity of this simple yet uplifting story, we had a call with the lead actress, and here's how it went.

Without hesitation, she dives right into her characterisation in the film, saying, "As everyone already knows, my character is dealing with mental health concerns. So, as soon as I noticed the phrase 'mental health' in my readings, I was determined to bring this essential topic back to the forefront. Not that others haven't talked about it; they have, but our plot was slightly slanted toward lyrical lines. I wouldn't call it a complex character, but my character is 'suffering' in the movie. The gravity of the character gradually became apparent to me, and I am not lying when I say that I could feel it."

Okay, let's not call it complex, as Saiyami stated! But may sensitive be the correct word? Taking note of this, we were curious about the preps that went into portraying this "sensitive" role on-screen. She added, "I had never had a panic attack, but I know some of my close friends and family members who had. Unfortunately, I have witnessed it. I got into the persona after meeting a few psychiatrists

Actress Saiyami Kher, currently basking on the love she's been receiving for her film *8 A.M. Metro*, being streamed on Zee 5, gets candid with *The Pioneer* exclusively speaking of her character "suffering" in the film, preps for the same, shooting in real locations, and more.

and therapists! It was critical for me to comprehend what occurs during a panic attack, even in a bodily sense. Even my co-star told me later on in the filming, 'Saiyami, do you know? When exposed to panic attack, some people appear to experience a heart attack.' That startled me!" So such professional data was useful to her, including, "The videos that I watched online to see what kinds of reactions they get. And they differed greatly! So I had to show on screen that I'm sweating and unable to breathe. The psychologist emphasised the significance of these minor details."

The well-known actress from *Mirzya* told us how she brought out the nuances of the unlikely friendship on-screen, stating, "This script also reminded me of one of my most favourite films that I tend to watch on a loop. This movie isn't only about a romantic angle but also about the serendipity of the friendship that's coming alive. And this is a real possibility; it might happen in our lives at any time! In my personal life, I've had several similar experiences. That stranger made me a better person, but one must be open to that type of contact! Another example is filming with your co-stars; they are usually strangers to you if you are matched for the first time on screen, yet they bring out the chemistry in you." This dynamic has been very prevalent in the film industry for her. Fortunately, Gulshan is not one of them (she giggles). "We've worked together before. And I couldn't wait to continue working with him from where we left off! I was unprepared for our last collaboration; therefore, this was my turn to shine alongside Gulshan in this film. And I must say, it worked out really well."

Hammering deeper into the ongoing discussions on the film, she explains, "The best and worst reactions come to us through social media these days, so I've seen times when a few users were

way too brutal to me online. But by God's grace, I've had incredible reactions to my back-to-back releases. I am receiving DMs in which a few people are telling me about their real-life experiences. I believe I restarted the conversation about it! I recognise that my film is on a tiny scale, but if it reaches a huge number of people, I consider it successful." Another appealing aspect of this film is its use of poetry and literature, which piques our interest in the actress' personal relationship to it and how poetry enhances the plot. Oh, she had a personal story to share with us! "I'm a huge fan of poetry, owing to Gulzar Sahab, who wrote my debut movie. Since I met him, he has made me fall in love with poetry. Javed Akhtar Sahab could be another powerful influence in inspiring me to fall in love with poetry. I have looked up to him since I was a child! So I'm used to writing poetry at home for personal gratification, but this film provided me the opportunity to bring it into the spotlight. It's literally the central strand of our film! I could draw inspiration from Farhan Akhtar's portrayal in *ZNMD*, which made both my character and the film more artistic than commercial. What helped the movie even more was the fact that the makers did not use poetry for superfluous ends."

And how could we miss the lead actors filming a few important sequences in the metro, all through the lens of commuting while in it? She revealed interesting facts about it, saying, "It was a low-budget film, so all of the locations were real, including the scenes shot in the metro. It's Anurag Kashyap's way of shooting! This movie contained a lot of exterior scenes, which boosted my excitement. And my biggest takeaway from this film is the renewed public discourse about the importance of consulting psychologists for mental wellness. Because I've been advised by a few industry professionals not to choose roles that appear older or less glamorous—but to me, they're just noise because I do what my heart finds rewarding."



I've been advised by a few industry professionals not to choose roles that appear older or less glamorous—but to me, they're just noise because I do what my heart finds rewarding.

VIRTUAL SESSION



MAGIC OF

CELEBRATING THE CINEMA AT CANNES

SUBODHINI PUROHIT

For the second consecutive year, Walkers & Co. made its triumphant return to the Festival De Cannes, showcasing Indian filmmakers through collaborative efforts. In regards to this, an exclusive virtual round table discussion was organised featuring film critic Anupama Chopra, alongside emerging filmmakers Ambiecka Pandit and Akshay Parvatkar, mentored by Guneet Monga.

To begin with, Ruchira Jaitley, Diageo's CMO shared, "The essence is to foster progress through collective storytelling. In today's rapidly changing society, the celebration of individuals making a positive impact is paramount, and the film serves as a medium for proactive narratives. Cannes is the epitome of this creativity, offering a platform for learning and inspiration. *The Walkers Project* aims to support young filmmakers, expanding the Indian presence at Cannes and guiding emerging talents to experience the magic of the festival."

Ambiecka reflects on the incredible opportunity presented by the project, emphasising the challenging selection process and the chance to articulate the significance of cinema. For her and Akshay, being nominated is not just an honour but also a transformative journey, opening minds to new possibilities in filmmaking. Akshay said, "I am honoured to be part of the fellowship, and it gave me confidence in whatever I have made; short films and conversations

with film critics have already been fruitful."

The selection process for the project spanned four months, and explaining the same, Anupama explained, "It involved three curators who also doubled as film critics and companions. Sonia, from the Mumbai Film Festival, was among them. They deliberated and eventually presented six names for consideration in *The Walkers Project*. Deepti DCunha, the director of the Mumbai Film Festival, was impressed by the incredible short films, which sparked lengthy discussions. Eventually, it was agreed that two individuals stood out as the best fit for one of the projects."

The ethos is centered around expanding perspectives, amplifying voices, and fostering inclusion, progression, and community change. These guiding principles inspire young filmmakers to create impactful stories that resonate deeply with audiences. Ambiecka expresses her anticipation of further developing her voice and honour it through her work.

Akshay shared his excitement upon learning of his selection, feeling an immediate connection with the ethos, which aligns closely with his own beliefs. He spoke of his commitment to inclusion in his films and recognised the platform as a significant opportunity to authentically express his voice while making meaningful contributions to the film industry!

Anupama put a spotlight on the significance of seizing every opportunity, highlighting mentors like Guneet's invaluable support for young filmmakers. Reflecting on her experiences at Cannes,

she shares practical advice, underscoring the importance of comfortable shoes amidst the bustling environment. Anupama urges, "Filmmakers should prioritise comfort over fashion, considering the extensive walking and standing involved." With thousands of attendees immersed in cinema over ten days, she describes Cannes as both hectic and enchanting, emphasising the need for relentless energy, hydration, and seizing every chance to eat.

"These may seem mundane tips, but they're indispensable for navigating the festival's whirlwind atmosphere." She also encouraged filmmakers to be proactive in networking, shedding any shyness to make meaningful connections!

After absorbing Anupama's experiences, Ambiecka too acknowledged the demanding nature of festivals, recognising the mix of networking, standing, and walking involved. She appreciated the insights gained from Anupama, providing valuable expectations for the festival. Ambiecka found the workshops engaging, particularly in understanding the film ecosystem. Through discussions with curators, the young filmmakers learned invaluable tips on navigating the festival terrain, gaining new perspectives, and delving into topics like co-production. A session with Guneet addressed lingering doubts, offering clarity and guidance. Initial conversations about festival essentials such as food and attire proved instrumental, setting a practical tone for their festival journey.

Managing lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) in men

The term "lower urinary tract symptoms" (LUTS) refers to a group of symptoms that impact the lower urinary tract's ability to manage and produce high-quality micturition. Both men and women can be affected by LUTS, albeit males are more likely to present with them and their frequency increases with age. According to estimates, nearly 50% of males over 50 experience LUTS.

Lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) in men can be classified into two broad categories:

Storage symptoms: These include urgency, frequency, nocturia, and urgency incontinence. They indicate problems with storing urine in the bladder.

Voiding symptoms: These encompass hesitancy, weak stream, straining, and incomplete emptying. They suggest difficulties in evacuating urine from the bladder.

The management of lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) in men typically involves addressing both storage and voiding symptoms, as well as identifying and treating the underlying cause. Here's a general overview of management strategies:

- 1. Lifestyle modifications:** Encouraging lifestyle changes such as reducing fluid intake before bedtime, avoiding caffeine and alcohol, and maintaining a healthy weight can help improve symptoms.
- 2. Behavioural therapies:** Techniques such as bladder training, pelvic floor exercises (Kegel exercises), and timed voiding can help manage symptoms, particularly in cases of overactive bladder or urge incontinence.
- 3. Medications:**
 - **Alpha-blockers:** These relax the muscles in the prostate and bladder neck, improving urine flow and reducing symptoms of bladder outlet obstruction. Examples include tamsulosin, alfuzosin, and terazosin.
 - **5-alpha reductase inhibitors:** These medications

can reduce the size of the prostate gland, particularly in cases of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). Examples include finasteride and dutasteride.

- **Antimuscarinics:** Used primarily for overactive bladder symptoms to reduce urgency and frequency. Examples include oxybutynin, tolterodine, and solifenacin.

- **Beta-3 agonists:** Drugs like mirabegron can relax the bladder muscle, increasing bladder capacity and reducing symptoms of overactive bladder.

- **Phosphodiesterase-5 inhibitors:** Sometimes used to improve symptoms of BPH and erectile dysfunction, such as tadalafil.

- **Antibiotics:** If symptoms are due to a urinary tract infection or prostatitis.

- 4. Minimally invasive therapies:** For men who don't respond well to medications, minimally invasive procedures such as transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP), laser prostate surgery (such as HoLEP) or prostatic urethral lift (UroLift) may be considered.

- 5. Combination therapy:** Sometimes, a combination of medications or therapies may be more effective, especially in cases where symptoms are multifactorial.

- 6. Follow-up and monitoring:** Regular follow-up with the urologist is essential to monitor symptoms, adjust medications if necessary, and address any complications or changes in condition.

Ultimately, the choice of treatment depends on the individual patient's symptoms, underlying cause, overall health, and preferences, and should be decided in consultation with a healthcare provider. Additionally, considering age-related factors and potential comorbidities is important in tailoring the management approach.

(The author, Dr. Vikas Jain, is the HOD and Consultant - Urology, at Manipal Hospital.)





Sakshi Tanwar replaces Mallika Sherawat in *The Royals*

According to reports, Mallika Sherawat left *The Royals* owing to creative differences. She had been cast to play Ishaan Khatter's mother in Pritish Nandy's forthcoming production, *The Royals*. Since then, it has been verified that Mallika Sherawat has been replaced by actress Sakshi Tanwar.

Sakshi Tanwar is currently filming *The Royals*, which stars Bhumi Pednekar and Ishaan Khatter in the key roles, according to reports. However, neither the production crew nor the makers have released an official statement.

Zeenat Aman, Bhumi Pednekar, and Ishaan Khatter star in the upcoming series *The Royals*, which Netflix has reportedly accepted, according to reports. The show, which is produced by Rangita and Ishita Pritish Nandy, offers an engrossing look into the extravagant lifestyles of Indian nobility.



The Royals, according to the portal, combine invented and true tales from the vast history of numerous Rajasthani royal families rather than focusing on just one.

The narrative of the series will alternate between the present day and past decades, featuring Pednekar as a prominent entrepreneur. "Like *The Crown*, it is being made on a grand scale," a source shared. "The desert state has seen generations of royal families, from Jaipur to Mewar and Alisar. Bits and pieces have been taken from the lives of these families, marrying them with a generous dose of fiction," added the source.

The source elaborated, "At its core, *The Royals* is a romantic comedy that will delve into the style, politics, and fabulous lives of the aristocrats. *Four More Shots Please!*'s success showed that the producers have a finger on the audience's pulse, and this time, they are putting out a stylish and emotional drama."



L'Oréal Paris celebrated a spectacular convergence of women empowerment and art in partnership with Kommune, Art & Culture organisation at Spoken Evening at TATA Theatre. The evening was a vibrant showcase of the Power of Women's Stories with "Coping Hearts CHS", a theatrical showcase that featured a line-up of talented women like Sayani Gupta, Shikha Talsania, Sriti Jha, Dolly Singh and Sanjeeta Bhattacharya.

LISTINGS

Cutting-edge curriculum by NIIT

Established with a vision to bring about innovation in higher education and learning in emerging areas of the knowledge society, the University of the Future, NIIT University (NIU), announced the opening of admissions for the academic year 2024. As an institution, NIU is committed to nurturing future data experts. Recognising the demand, they have added the BTech programme in Artificial Intelligence and Data Science this year. This programme caters to the needs of the contemporary business landscape, offering interdisciplinary expertise to our students. Admissions are now open to new-age programmes such as BTech in Cyber Security, and BTech in Artificial Intelligence and Data Science that have been designed to provide students with skill sets aligned to the future world of work. Students can also opt for BTech in Computer Science & Engineering, BTech in Electronics & Communication Engineering, BTech in Biotechnology, 3-year BBA and 4-year integrated Masters in Business Administration (IMBA) programmes after class 12. For more information on admissions and placements please log on to: <https://niituniversity.in/admissions>

Driving progress

Apollo Tyres celebrates the ongoing success of its 'Apollo Virat' tyre, tailored to meet the evolving needs of contemporary farmers. Apollo Virat tyres promise unparalleled efficiency and durability, poised to redefine agricultural norms. Boasting advanced Double Grip Technology and a revolutionary Lug Design, Apollo Virat tyres offer unmatched traction, capable of withstanding diverse farming conditions. These innovative features not only elevate the tyre's longevity but also ensure optimal performance, empowering farmers to achieve superior yields and foster sustainable agricultural practices. Apollo Tyres presents a captivating television commercial showcasing Apollo Virat tyre as a trusted companion of today's progressive farmers. The narrative follows a spirited journalist embarking on a quest to uncover the secret behind 'Virat,' symbolising the pioneering essence of modern agriculture. As she traverses the landscape of modern farms, witnessing an array of cutting-edge techniques, from drone-assisted crop monitoring to state-of-the-art irrigation systems, her curiosity deepens.

Just Appetite's Summer Workshop Extravaganza

As summer vacations start and the sun casts its golden glow, Just Appetite—India's only vegetarian and egg-free culinary school—invites you to explore a vibrant array of workshops designed to ignite your passion for vegetarian cuisine and beyond. Whether you're a culinary enthusiast eager to expand your repertoire or a novice yearning to unleash your inner chef, our summer extravaganza promises an unforgettable blend of flavor, fun, and learning. From mastering the art of cooking to crafting delectable baked treats and refreshing mixology concoctions, let Just Appetite make your summer a season to savor and remember. Teen Baking and Cooking Extravaganza Date: Ongoing till May 17.

Celebrating 75 Saalon Ka Pyaar

TK Prestige, a pioneer in kitchen appliances, celebrates a remarkable milestone as it completes 75 years of its iconic Prestige Pressure Cooker. To commemorate this significant moment in the company's history, the brand has launched a heartwarming television commercial titled "Celebrating 75 Saalon Ka Pyaar." Through this TVC, the brand aims to highlight the legacy of the Prestige Pressure Cooker in Indian households, encapsulating 75 years of love, trust and the symbol of keeping family traditions alive.

Haldiram's expands its culinary legacy in Nallagandla

Haldiram's Nagpur has launched its new quick-service restaurant in Hyderabad, Telangana. Located at Survey No. 301, Sri Krishna Colony, Kanchi Gachibowli Road, next to Citizens Speciality Hospital, Nallagandla, Hyderabad, Telangana 500019, the new outlet is set to become a go-to destination for food enthusiasts in the area.

Suryoday Small Finance net profit soars 56%

Suryoday Small Finance Bank Limited reported a 56.4% year-on-year rise in March quarter net profit at Rs 61 crore against Rs 39 crore in the year-ago period, backed by 29% expansion of net interest income at Rs 271 crore. The growth is driven by continued focus on key businesses, i.e., Inclusive Finance, Commercial Vehicle, and LAP. The Vikas Loan portfolio has surpassed an AUM of Rs 2,600 crore, demonstrating a growth of over 118% over the previous financial year. Vikas Loan, which in effect is the individual loan product for graduating group loan customers, now constitutes over 53% of the Inclusive Finance portfolio. The Bank's disbursement increased from ₹5,083 crore in FY23 to ₹6,919 crore in FY24, a growth of 36.1% on a YoY basis, with Vikas Loan and Commercial Vehicle Loans contributing substantially to the growth.

GE Aerospace launches GE Aerospace Foundation

GE Aerospace announced the launch of the GE Aerospace Foundation, celebrating a new chapter that builds on the more than 100-year legacy of the previous GE Foundation. The GE Aerospace Foundation's philanthropic strategy and programs will help fulfill the company's purpose to "lift people up" in GE Aerospace communities, with a focus on workforce development, disaster relief and amplifying the efforts of GE Aerospace employees. In South Asia, GE Aerospace Foundation will continue to work with local partners to support disaster relief, education and healthcare for underprivileged communities. South Asia has received US \$ 1.2 million in total Foundation related giving over the past 10 years which includes grants and related programming. These have benefited affected communities in Bangalore, Pune and other parts of South Asia.

Crystal Crop Protection Ltd launches scholarship programme

Crystal Crop Protection Limited announced its commitment to support the advancement of agricultural education and increasing women's participation. In a collaboration with the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS), the brand has announced the launch of its progressive scholarship program tailored specifically for girl students who are pursuing higher studies in agriculture. NAAS, is a Delhi-based National Academy dedicated to Agricultural sciences. The initiative, launched in the honour of Mr Ankur Aggarwal's late mother Smt. Kanak Aggarwal, reflecting the commitment of Crystal Crop Protection Limited's MD, who was eager to extend the benefit of the scholarship to girl students pursuing agriculture courses. This special initiative promotes and encourages aspirations of next generation students by providing financial support and a plethora of opportunities to young women who are passionate about making a difference in the field of agriculture. The scholarship program will offer financial assistance to 21 girl students for pursuing graduation program in 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year and 4th year making a total of 84 scholarships every year.

Stahl offers innovative cooking solutions

The range features triply stainless steel cookware with a HexaRidge technology making it non-stick, easy-to-handle, 100% toxin-free, and PFOA-free. Stahl, India's fastest growing cookware brand, is revolutionising cooking experiences with its contemporary range of products called the Artisan Hybrid series, featuring the fusion of two key cookware materials: triply stainless steel and non-stick coating. With this product range, Stahl is yet again striving to offer robust, versatile, easy-to-use, and easy-to-clean cookware with its stylish designs that are must-haves in the modern kitchen. The product range includes cookware for a versatile range of functions including a tawa, roti tawa, kadhai, tasla, wok and fry pan.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



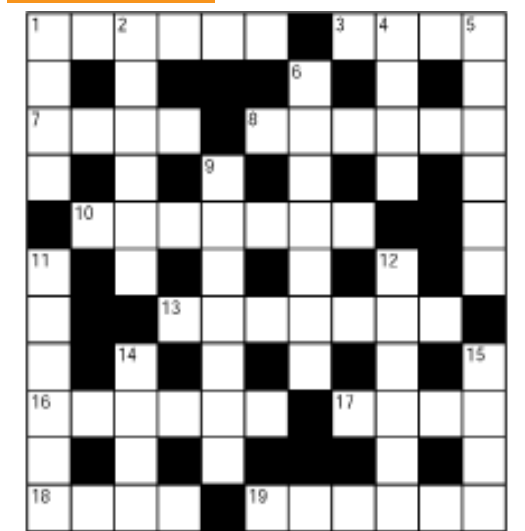
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 A season
- 3 Strike with an open hand
- 7 Jump over
- 8 Having a sharp sour taste
- 10 Applauded
- 13 Bumped
- 16 Sleepy
- 17 A biting, jumping insect
- 18 Require
- 19 Something built over a river

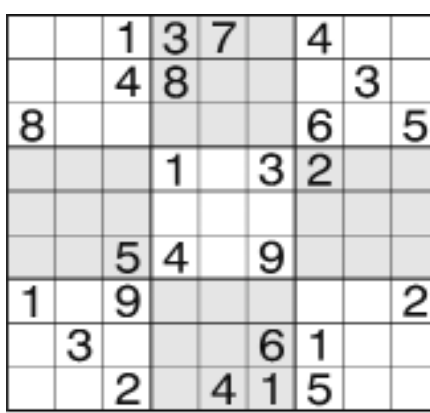
DOWN

- 6 A permit to drive
- 9 The language of Spain
- 11 Concealed from view
- 12 Shouted
- 14 Gown
- 15 A strong box for storing valuables

SOLUTION



SUDOKU



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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

VISHNU MANCHU'S KANNAPPA TO DEBUT AT THE CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

In a historic stride for Telugu cinema, Vishnu Manchu is all set to unveil *The World Of Kannappa* at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival on May 20, 2024. This momentous occasion marks a significant leap onto the global stage for Telugu cinema.

More than just a film, *The World Of Kannappa* represents a cinematic journey that aims to redefine storytelling and captivate audiences worldwide.

As the Cannes red carpet eagerly anticipates the arrival of this cinematic marvel, excitement reaches a fever pitch. Vishnu Manchu's meticulous craftsmanship, combined with the stellar performances of the ensemble cast, sets the scene for a landmark moment in Telugu cinema.

"We are thrilled to showcase the teaser of *Kannappa* at the esteemed Cannes Film Festival," expressed Vishnu Manchu with enthusiasm. "Cannes provides the perfect platform to introduce our production to a global audience. By bringing our rich Indian heritage to the world stage, we hope to enlighten audiences worldwide about the timeless tales and cultural richness encapsulated in our film."

As the world awaits the Cannes debut of *The World Of Kannappa*, it stands poised to make an unforgettable impact on the global cinematic landscape. With its compelling narrative, stellar performances, and a cast of legendary talents, this promises to be an extraordinary cinematic experience like no other.



'Only 20 days of shooting left for Suriya's Vaadivaasal,' reveals director

For the village action drama *Vaadivaasal*, which was announced several months ago, actor Suriya and director Vetrimaaran have paired up. The film has regained attention while still in pre-production. Vetrimaaran revealed in a recent interview that he only has 20 days left to finish filming *Viduthala: Part 2*, his next production that stars Vijay Sethupathi and Soori in pivotal parts. He added that he will start filming *Vaadivaasal* within the next three months. More updates are highly anticipated by fans!

The music for this film, which Kalajipuli S Thanu produced under the V Creations banner, will be composed by Prakash Kumar. In this movie, Andrea Jeremiah is probably going to be paired opposite Suriya.



Jr NTR wraps up War 2's first schedule

Actor Jr NTR has wrapped up the first schedule of his upcoming film *War 2* starring Hrithik Roshan.

A source revealed that the actor wrapped up the first schedule on May 12.

"Jr NTR wrapped the first schedule of *War 2* on May 12. He shot for some extensive action sequences over a schedule of 30 days in Mumbai before heading back to Hyderabad," said the source. Jr NTR was pictured casting his vote in Hyderabad on Monday. The *RRR* star was joined by his wife Lakshmi Pranathi and mother Shalini to cast their votes at the polling center at Obul Reddy School in Jubilee Hills.

Talking about *War 2*, the film is the sequel to the 2019 film *War* directed by Siddharth Anand. The film marks the return of Hrithik as Major Kabir. The second installment also stars Kiara Advani and is directed by Ayan Mukerji.



Kalki 2898 AD: Deepika dubs in her mother tongue, Kannada, for the first time

Kalki 2898 AD has been one of the much-anticipated films, which is all set to hit cinemas on June 27, 2024. Helmed by Nag Ashwin, the film has created immense buzz ever since its announcement, making fans eager to witness the utopian-themed world unravel on the big screens.

According to the latest updates, the film's leading lady, Deepika Padukone, has herself dubbed in Hindi and her mother tongue, Kannada, for the film. This latest update comes as a promising move from the actress, making it obvious to draw the Kannada-speaking fans to witness the film in cinemas. Meanwhile, the actress is expecting her first child with Ranveer Singh and has been busy with the shooting of her upcoming films.



Ranveer Singh, Prasanth Varma's mega collaboration soon to be made official

In a highly anticipated collaboration, Bollywood powerhouse Ranveer Singh and acclaimed director Prasanth Varma seem to be official soon. The news, initially hinted at a few weeks ago, is being confirmed by sources, sparking excitement among fans and cinephiles alike.

Renowned for his dynamic performances and bold film choices, Ranveer Singh's admiration for Prasanth Varma's work, particularly the Telugu hit *HanuMan*, starring Teja Sajja, served as the catalyst for this collaboration. While official details were initially shrouded in secrecy, recent reports shed light on the project's development.

According to a report, Ranveer Singh and Prasanth Varma have formally launched their ambitious project, signaling the beginning of an epic cinematic journey.

With a staggering budget of Rs 300 crore, the film promises to be a cinematic spectacle of grand proportions.

Described as a period drama with a pan-India appeal, the project has been shrouded in anticipation. After meticulous deliberation, the duo has reportedly settled on the title *Brahma Rakshasa*, signifying a blend of mythological intrigue and contemporary storytelling.

Set for a multi-lingual release, *Brahma Rakshasa* is poised to captivate audiences across the nation with its compelling narrative and visual splendour. While the official announcement from the actor and director is eagerly awaited, the unveiling of the film's title has already ignited fervent anticipation among fans, setting the stage for a cinematic event of epic proportions.

Dhanush donates ₹1 crore to Actor Sangam building construction



Renowned actor Dhanush K. Raja has once again demonstrated his philanthropic spirit by generously donating Rs 1 crore towards the

construction of the Actor Sangam building. The contribution comes as a significant boost to the ongoing efforts to establish a dedicated space for the

welfare and development of actors within the industry.

Dhanush, known for his versatile performances and compassionate nature, made the generous donation from his personal funds, reaffirming his commitment to supporting initiatives aimed at the betterment of the entertainment community.

The Actor Sangam, also known as the South Indian Artists' Association, plays a crucial role in advocating for the rights and welfare of actors across various film industries in South India. The construction of a dedicated building serves as a testament to the

organisation's mission to provide a conducive environment for actors to thrive professionally and personally.

Dhanush's contribution underscores the importance of solidarity and mutual support within the entertainment fraternity, setting a commendable example for fellow actors and industry stakeholders to follow.

As the construction of the Actor Sangam building progresses with the support of individuals like Dhanush, it symbolises not only a physical structure but also a beacon of hope and unity for actors across South India.

Trisha winds up shooting for Identity

Actress Trisha Krishnan has a strong filmography that includes both Tamil and Telugu releases. The much-awaited Malayalam film *Identity*, starring Tovino Thomas in the pivotal role, is another addition to her repertoire. Under the direction of

directors Akhil Paul and Anas Khan, the production is expected to enthrall viewers with its captivating plot. According to the most recent update, Trisha has successfully finished filming her portion of the project. All that needs to be done is the dubbing,

which will be finished later. Vinay Rai, Mandira Bedi, Shammy Thilakan, Aju Varghese, Arjun Radhakrishnan, and Archana Kavi are among the film's impressive cast members. The film is produced by Ragam Movies and Century Films.



T-TOWN COMES IN FULL SWING TO EXERCISE THEIR RIGHT!



Tollywood celebrities, much like citizens across the nation, exercised their democratic rights by casting their votes during elections. Beyond the glitz and glamour of the silver screen, these stars actively participate in shaping the political landscape of their state and country.

When election season arrives, Tollywood's finest, from actors to directors and producers, step out of their reel personas to fulfill their civic duty. With their influence and popularity, they often serve as role models, encouraging their fans and followers to participate in the democratic process.

Their presence at polling booths not only underscores the importance of voting but also sends a powerful message about civic responsibility. It's a reminder that, irrespective of their celebrity status, they are first and foremost citizens committed to contributing to the democratic fabric of society.

From Chiranjeevi to Allu Arjun to Rajamouli, here are some pictures of celebrities casting their votes.

