

QUOTE OF THE DAY
 The pioneer
 It has been decided to charge everyone constructing buildings in Hyderabad Rs 75 per sq. ft. It is like the Right Royal Tax. It seems that the decision was made to pay three people. Revanth has collected the most money in the shortest period. KCR also did the same and he lost power.
 — Eatala Rajender, BJP leader P4

BJP sees AAP as challenge, launched 'Operation Jhadoo' to crush us:
Kejriwal
 5

GDP GROWTH
 LIKELY TO BE 6.7% IN Q4; 7% IN FY24: IND-RA
 8

'Over 200 girls had auditioned for the role in Usha Parinayam, and somehow the role landed UP TO ME'
 P11

DON'T MISS...
MATH inks pacts with 50 varsities..
 MATH, the pioneering hub for AI and ML technologies, and a collaborative effort between the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and T-Hub, India's premier startup incubator, has successfully concluded Mathademia 2024. The flagship event by MATH, brought together top educational institutions, corporations, government bodies and startups to fuel innovation through the exchange of ideas. This hackathon marks T-Hub's largest in Hyderabad. The event witnessed overwhelming participation, with 8,716
 -PAGE: 3

Audio books can stimulate a...
 Audio books can inculcate story listening habits in children and gradually attract them to reading books, says legendary author Ruskin Bond who turned 90 Sunday. To commemorate the day, audiobook platform Audible has brought out a keepsake edition with 25 of his popular stories. Titled 'All Time Favourites for Children', the stories have been curated and selected by the author himself. The narration is by Anuj Datta. Bond said audiobooks can be like oral storytelling and stimulate a child's...
 -PAGE: 5

Govt recovers Rs 852 cr under...
 The government has recovered about Rs 852 crore under the amnesty scheme for exporters for one-time settlement of default in export obligation by the holders of advance and EPCG authorisations, an official said. The figures are likely to increase further as the exercise is on for the compilation of the data, the official added. The government has fixed March 31 as the last date for payment of customs duty plus interest. "Under the scheme, 6,705 applications were filed and as per the provisional figures...
 -PAGE: 8

RCB's turnaround will inspire other..
 Royal Challengers Bengaluru's remarkable turnaround to win six games on the trot and barge into the Indian Premier League playoffs this year will inspire other teams in future, believes wicketkeeper-batter Dinesh Karthik. RCB, who lost seven of their first eight games including six defeats in a row, came back roaring from the brink of elimination in the 17th edition of IPL to make the final four. The Faf du Plessis-led side on Friday got the better of defending champions Chennai Super Kings
 -SPORTS

ECI allows Cabinet meeting with riders

CM REVANTH TO CHAIR CABINET MEETING AT 3 PM TODAY

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Election Commission of India (ECI) gave its nod to hold the Telangana Cabinet's meeting subject to certain conditions.

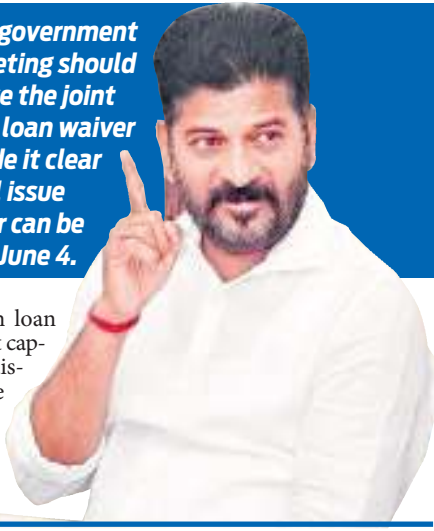
The government decided to convene the Cabinet meeting at 3 pm on Monday. The meeting would be chaired by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy.

However, the ECI asked the government to discuss only urgent issues that had to be done before June 4. The ECI directed the government that the Cabinet meeting should not discuss issues like the common capital and the farm loan waiver scheme. The ECI made it clear that the joint capital issue and farm loan waiver can be discussed only after June 4.

The Cabinet can discuss issues like natural calamities and other urgent matters. However, the ECI asked officials involved in election duties not to attend the Cabinet meetings. The ECI said that the state government had addressed a letter on May 16 to it seeking permission to hold a Cabinet meeting.

The ECI's Principal Secretary, Avinash Kumar, said in reply to the

The ECI directed the government that the Cabinet meeting should not discuss issues like the joint capital and the farm loan waiver scheme. The ECI made it clear that the joint capital issue and farm loan waiver can be discussed only after June 4.



government that the farm loan waiver scheme and the joint capital issue should not be discussed till the election code is lifted on June 4.

It may be recalled that the Chief Minister and Ministers waited in the secretariat till 7 pm on Sunday for ECI nod. However, the CM and the Ministers returned to their residences as there was no response from the Election Commission by postponing the Cabinet meeting.

The Chief Minister decided to discuss issues like the farm loan waiver scheme, paddy procurement, the kharif crop plan and other important issues connected to farmers besides

the conduct of the Telangana Formation Day celebrations on June 2, and all pending issues between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh mentioned in the State Reorganisation Act. However, after the ECI's instructions, the Cabinet will now discuss only urgent matters like paddy procurement and the problems caused by unseasonal rains.

SRH crushes Punjab Kings

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Sunrisers Hyderabad crushed Punjab Kings by four wickets to end the league phase of the Indian Premier League with 17 points here on Sunday.

Chasing 215, SRH overhauled the target with five balls to spare after opener Abhishek Sharma hammered a 28-ball 66 (6x6s, 5x4s). SRH were also bolstered by contributions from Rahul Tripathi (33), Nitish Reddy (37) and Heinrich Klaasen (42) along the way. Earlier in the contest, Punjab Kings were helped by Prabhsimran Singh's quick fire 71 as well as useful contributions from opener Atharva Taide (46) and Rilee Rossouw (49) to post 214/5 on board. Prabhsimran and Taide added 97 runs from just 55 balls. While Taide scored 46 from 27 balls with five fours and two sixes,



Prabhsimran hit seven sixes and four fours for his 45-ball 71.

Rossouw signed off with a 24-ball 49 with four sixes and three fours while stand-in skipper Jitesh Sharma produced late fireworks to make 32 not out. Brief scores: Punjab Kings 214/5 in 20 overs

(Atharva Taide 46, Prabhsimran Singh 71, Rilee Rossouw 49; T Natarajan 2/33) lost to Sunrisers Hyderabad 215/6 in 19.1 overs (Abhishek Sharma 66, Rahul Tripathi 33, Nitish Reddy 37, Heinrich Klaasen 42; Arshdeep Singh 2/37) by 4 wickets

Bhatti calls for green buildings in TG

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The construction of buildings in a way that would protect the environment should become a way of life in Telangana, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka said.

Bhatti who was the chief guest was addressing the closing meeting



of the Green Property Show held

at the Hitec on Sunday. "The green way of life should become a policy for us. We want to pass on our green legacy to future generations. There will be incentives and full support from the Telangana government for green buildings which would save 50% water and 40% electricity," Bhatti said.

BRS MLAs will join Cong soon, says Kishan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy said the BJP has a future in Telangana and that the BRS has lost its sheen. The BRS is now supporting the Congress and BRS MLAs are going to join the Congress soon, he added.

He said the BJP would be the opposition in the state and asked the youth to get ready to contest local body elections.



'I am ready to quit if my land documents are proved fake'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that he is ready to resign his MLA post if his land documents are proved fake, Medchal MLA Ch. Malla Reddy challenged Government Whip Dharmapuri MLA Adhuri Laxman Kumar to do the same if he failed to prove his (Malla Reddy's) documents were fake.

He said that he would meet Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and collectors on Monday and show the original documents he had.

Speaking to the media on Sunday about the dispute regarding a piece of land in Suchitra, Malla Reddy said that he would give up the land if it was proved that he was in the wrong.

He said the land documents Congress leaders are showing are forged ones and that the survey was over on Sunday and everyone has to wait till the report comes.

Revenue officials conducted a survey on Sunday regarding the disputed land at Suchitra in the presence of both parties. The Revenue officials identified the



extent of the land in survey numbers 82 and 83. The officials are now preparing a report regarding this.

'BJP going to win only one seat in UP'



'Rahul's 'Maoist' language making companies think before investing'

KTR slams govt on timing of Rythu Bandhu funds

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao said that Rythu Bandhu money used to come when farmers were planting crops during BRS rule, however, the Congress government is depositing Rythu Bandhu funds when voting is going on.

Addressing a meeting of graduates in Bhongir on Sunday, KTR said there were two reasons for their defeat in the Assembly elections. One was not publicising what they did and the second

was distancing some sections of people.

KTR said the BRS had registered victories in all graduate elections held in Telangana. He appealed to all graduates to think about the character of candidates and



medical colleges.

He said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has been saying the lie that he gave jobs which were actually given by KCR. KTR said that now there is no need for people to speak in favour of the ruling party but we need those who can hear critics.

He said the BRS candidate did his education in BITS-Pilani and that the Congress candidate was a black-mailer and lobbyist.

"Prime Minister Modi is seeking votes stating by saying that they constructed a temple in Ayodhya, however, the BRS did not seek votes stating that it constructed the Yadadri Temple and the modern temple of Kaleshwaram," he said.

ECI orders action against KTR for violating MCC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Election Commission of India (ECI) directed District Election Officer (DEO) Ronald Rose on May 15 to take appropriate action against BRS Working President KT Rama Rao as per the ECI's guidelines.

On May 13, AICC Member G. Niranjan filed a complaint with the ECI against KTR regarding violation of the Model Code of Conduct.

Iran President's chopper makes a 'hard landing'

RESCUE OPERATIONS UNDERWAY



PNS ■ DUBAI

A helicopter carrying Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi suffered a "hard landing" on Sunday, Iranian state media reported, without elaborating. Some began urging the public to pray for Raisi and the others on board as rescue crews sped through a misty, rural forest where his helicopter was believed to be.

The likely crash comes as Iran under Raisi and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei launched an unprecedented drone-and-missile attack on Israel just last month and has enriched uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels.

Meanwhile, Iran has faced years of mass protests against its Shiite theocracy over an ailing economy and women's rights — making the moment that much more sensitive for Tehran and the future of the country as the Israel-Hamas war inflames the wider Middle East. Raisi was traveling in Iran's East Azerbaijan province. State TV said the incident happened near Jolfa, a city on the border with the nation of Azerbaijan, some 600 kilometers (375 miles) northwest of the Iranian

The likely crash comes as Iran under Raisi and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei launched an unprecedented drone-and-missile attack on Israel just last month and has enriched uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels.

capital, Tehran. Later, state TV put it further east near the village of Uzi, but details remained contradictory. Traveling with Raisi were Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, the governor of Iran's East Azerbaijan province and other officials and bodyguards, the state-run IRNA news agency reported. One local government official used the word "crash" to describe the incident, but he acknowledged to an Iranian newspaper that he had yet to reach the site himself.

Rains lash Hyd areas amid rising temperatures

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Rains lashed Hyderabad on Sunday evening although the temperature jumped to 37.1 degrees Celsius in the city. The Indian Meteorological Department -Hyderabad (IMD-H) predicted rains all over Telangana till May 26.

The IMD-H report said that on May 19 isolated light, moderate rains accompanied by lightning were seen across Telangana.

On May 20, the Bhadradi Kothagudem, Khammam, Nalgonda, Suryapet, Siddipet, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri, Hyderabad, Medchal- Malkajgiri, Vikarabad, Medak, Nagarkurnool and Wanaparthy districts would get rains. On May 21, isolated thunderstorms are likely in Telangana.

There will be respite from the rain on May 22. Thunderstorms will



resume on May 23 and will continue to prevail over Telangana.

Hyderabad areas like Kukatapally, Begumpet, Balanagar, Bowenpally, Nizampet, Miyapur, Jeedimetla and Alwal may get rains. Fresh rains are spreading across Rajendranagar.

Attapur received rains.

The Telangana State Planning and Development Society (TSDDS) said that Chennai is likely to experience light to moderate rains from May 19 to 22.

Unrelenting heat disrupts daily life in swathes of India

The unrelenting heat turned daily activities into an arduous task in large parts of India on Sunday, with Najafgarh in southwest Delhi reaching a sweltering 47.8 degrees Celsius -- the highest in the country so far this season.

The crippling heat strained low-income households, which often have poor access to water and cooling, and tested the endurance of outdoor workers toiling in the searing sun, forcing them to

take frequent breaks.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) reported a severe heat wave in parts of Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh.

Even the hill stations in Himachal Pradesh, safe havens for people escaping the punishing heat in the plains, reeled from the scorching conditions.



Monday Mirchi

**BUREAUCRAT SET TO BECOME CM IN
ONSCREEN DEBUT**

Bureaucrats dreaming of making a successful political plunge are dime a dozen. In Telangana, however, a seasoned bureaucrat, who had ruled the roost during the previous Bharat Rashtra Samithi regime, is likely to make onscreen debut and that too playing a chief minister in the movie. A famous Hindi filmmaker is going to direct the film. The producer of the film is reportedly being backed politically. As we await some BT's shots, we will also get to know answers to questions doing the rounds in informed circles like: Is the babu in question taking VRS of sorts? Will the flick, predictably with political overtones, be backed by BRS? Or, will the film itself be ultimately shelved before it hits the screen? People in the know, who are awaiting the determination of political fortunes on June 4, say: "Please remember that Sabar ka phal meeta hotha hai."

HEIGHTENED ANXIETY IN EAST GODAVARI

In the aftermath of the fiercely fought electoral battle in Andhra Pradesh, there is heightened anxiety among official circles in East Godavari. All eyes are on how the impending transfers will affect East Godavari and Konaseema Collectors. If there is a regime change, a bureaucratic reshuffle is inevitable. East Godavari Collector K Madhavi Lata was given this plum posting by the YSRCP regime, notwithstanding objections from the standpoint of community equations. The larger question now is: Will those equations come into play if the TDP-led combine comes to power? The buzz is that if East Godavari District Collector is moved, then there will be a change in the posting of Konaseema Collector too.

TWEAKING THE 80-20 RULE

With polling completed, at least some of the bureaucrats are getting time to pen their thoughts. Deputy DEO Hyderabad Anudeep Durishetty, who had topped the 2017 UPSC Civil Services Examination, has highlighted the importance of consistency in a blog post. Anudeep Durishetty shared that the idea he has been incorporating in his life is to evaluate consistency over months and years, not days. A realistic metric for being consistent is to give 80% effort on 80% of the days. The rest 20% is the buffer to account for life's improbabilities. His caveat is that this bit of advice is not a prescription for laziness or procrastination. Anudeep Durishetty's idea is an interesting tweak of the Pareto Principle, according to which 80% of our output comes from 20% of our efforts.

EC ACTS VISIBLY

One disturbing finding of the Lokniti-CSDS Pre Poll survey 2024, which involved 10,019 respondents across 19 States, was that the trust of the voter in the Election Commission has declined compared with the situation five years ago. While there is a marginal increase in those who have some trust in the EC, the percentage of those who don't have much trust or have no trust at all has

doubled compared to 2019 data. This being so, the widespread violence and riots across various places in Andhra Pradesh during and after the recent elections seem to have nudged the Election Commission of India to take drastic and visible corrective steps. The EC has suspended/transferred many officials and appointed new officers in trouble spots. The EC has issued orders appointing Latkar Srikesh Balaji as Palnadu District Collector. Besides, Mallika Garg has been appointed as Palnadu SP, Harshavardhan Raju as Tirupati SP, and Gautami Sali as Anantapur SP. More importantly, the ECI summoned Chief Secretary KS Jawahar Reddy and Director General of Police Harish Kumar Gupta to its headquarters in Delhi and sought an explanation from them on the unabated violence. The ECI is apparently dismayed by the failure of officials to act decisively despite prior intelligence tips about probable violence in Machera, Narasaraopet, Chandragiri, and Tadipatri constituencies.

**EVEN IPS OFFICIAL A SITTING DUCK FOR
CYBER CRIMINALS**

Cyber criminals seem to be a law unto themselves. In AP, they have just targeted APSRTC Managing Director Ch D Tirumala Rao, an IPS officer. Tirumala Rao has lodged a complaint with the Vijayawada Cyber Crime Police regarding the fraudulent use of his photo as a WhatsApp DP and phone calls made from a WhatsApp number. He alerted people in his circles about fake WhatsApp calls from that number and urged them to block the caller.

SIT'S TASK CUT OUT

The Special Investigation Team (SIT), formed at the behest of the Election Commission of India to thoroughly probe the violence and riots in Anantapur, Palnadu and Tirupati districts of Andhra Pradesh during and after the recent elections, seems to have its task cut out. The 13-member team, headed by Inspector General of Police rank officer Vineet Brijlal, has fanned out as four wings to comb the places rocked by violence. The probe report is expected to be submitted to the Election Commission soon, given the shake-up of the entire administration in AP.

**IS AN ELECTION 'OBSERVER' NOT RESPONSIBLE
TO STOP VIOLENCE?**

"Is an election 'observer' not responsible to stop violence during or after polling?" This is the million-dollar question that is doing the rounds in Andhra Pradesh, where the ECI has incensed civil servants by targeting some of them for violence and riots during and after the elections, while letting off the hook the poll panel's 'election observers' meant for overseeing elections. The ECI has transferred/suspended several IAS and IPS officers, holding them responsible for the untoward incidents. The grouse of the IAS and IPS officers in the dock is how come election observers remain blameless. The IAS and IPS officers feel that even the election observers concerned should be held responsible, since they were appointed by the Election Commission.

-- Yours truly

'Rahul's 'Maoist' language making companies think before investing'

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR (JHARKHAND)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday lashed out at the Congress and its leader Rahul Gandhi, asserting that any industrialist will think 50 times before investing in states ruled by the party, owing to the "shehzada's use of Maoist language".

Modi, addressing a poll rally here, also accused the grand old party of patronising dynastic politics and considering Lok Sabha seats as "ancestral properties".

"The language used by the Congress 'shehzada' will make any industrialist think 50 times before investing in states ruled by the party... The 'shehzada' is using language spoken by Maoists and is extorting money



through innovative methods," the PM said, in an apparent reference to Gandhi.

Modi said like the Maoists, the language used by Gandhi was to extort money from industrialists. The prime minister's allegations came in the backdrop of the Congress leader's recent comments,

referring to a speech by Modi in which he had stated that the party received money from top industrialists.

Gandhi, a former Congress president, had on Saturday said in New Delhi: "I'm ready to debate with PM Modi whenever and wherever he wants, but I'm sure he won't come.



'BJP going to win only one seat in UP'

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said that the BJP is winning only one seat in Uttar Pradesh.

"Have you heard (Prime Minister) Narendra Modi is winning only one BJP seat of Kyoto (Varanasi) in Uttar Pradesh," said Gandhi while addressing a joint poll meeting with Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav in Prayagraj in support of INDIA bloc candidate Ujjawal Raman Singh.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had earlier said that he will turn Varanasi into Kyoto, a picturesque town in Japan. "The fight is to save the Constitution. The BJP and the RSS are attacking it, and I want to tell them that no power can tear and throw the Constitution away," Gandhi said while waiving a copy of the Indian Constitution. Gandhi reiterated the promises made by the Congress and appealed to vote for the party's candidate.

'International bodies must see human rights violations in PoK'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sambalpur/Keonjhar/Khurda (Odisha), May 19 (PTI) Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday said that international bodies should take cognisance of human rights violations in Pakistan occupied Kashmir.

Addressing an election rally in Odisha's Khurda, he said, "Human rights are being violated in PoK... international human rights agencies should take cognisance of the happenings in PoK."

He claimed that the people of PoK now desire to join India instead of remaining under the Pakistani administration.

"I had earlier said we need not attack anyone, they will come on their own. Two days ago, I saw a video in which people of PoK were seen uprooting a Pakistani flag-post," he said.

"PoK is and will remain an integral part of India," he asserted.

He said that barring a few stray incidents in Jammu and Kashmir, terrorism has been reduced to zero under the NDA rule, while several terror attacks took place under the previous UPA regime.

"In 2008, our IPS officers fell to bullets in Mumbai (26/11



attack)... what was the then Congress government doing? But now, nobody dares to attack India. People have understood India's capability of eliminating terrorism not only within the country but also across the border," he asserted.

"However, we have never attacked any country or tried to occupy an inch of any other country's land. But Pakistan has all along tried to create disturbances in our country," he said.

Singh also addressed two other rallies in Rairakhol in Sambalpur Lok Sabha seat and Patana in Keonjhar parliamentary constituency.

He alleged that Congress is misleading people by making promises of reservation on the basis of religion which is not permissible according to

the Constitution.

"Earlier, the Supreme Court had rejected such reservations accorded in two universities," he said.

Stating that the Modi government has ended 'triple talaq', he asserted that the BJP does not indulge in politics for votes but for building the nation.

Singh alleged that Odisha remained backward during the 50-year-rule of Congress and 24-year-rule of BJD.

"From Jawaharlal Nehru to Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and Manmohan Singh, all failed to eradicate poverty from the country. But PM Modi pulled 25 crore people out from poverty," he claimed.

Singh said Modi provided pucca houses, piped water to households, free cooking gas, foodgrains, toilets and many other facilities to the poor people of the country.

"With Ram Lalla coming to his temple, Ram Rajya will be established in India," he asserted.

He came down heavily on the BJD government for not implementing Ayushman Bharat health scheme in Odisha and promised that the initiative will be implemented if the BJP comes to power in the state.

Lengthy election code leading to criticism from all circles

**SNCN ACHARYULU
■ HYDERABAD**

The lengthy election code is attracting the criticism not only from political parties but also from the public. In Telangana the 'ruling' of the Election Commission is equalling the rule of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's government. After Congress winning in the recent Assembly elections, Revanth Reddy was sworn as the Chief Minister of Telangana on December 7, 2023. The Election Commission announced the election code on March 16, 2024. The election code came into immediate effect. That means after 99 days of Revanth Roddy's government the election code came into effect. The election code will be in force till the completion of election process, that means announcement of the results. The counting of votes will take place on June 4 and results will be declared the same day. So the election code will continue till June 5. Revanth Reddy's government rule began on December 7, 2023 and till March 15, 2024, that means 99 days. The election code came into effect from March 16, 2024 and it will continue till

June 5, that means 82 days. During the election code the government cannot take any decisions and for everything it has to take the permission from the Election Commission. Not giving nod by the Election Commission for holding the Cabinet meeting for the Telangana government after polling was over attracted the criticism and led to debate on the lengthy election code. Moreover, during the election code, the Election Commission is making the transfers of bureaucrats from DGP to sub-inspector and the Chief Secretary to MRO. The people and the political parties are feeling that the President's rule is better than the Election Commission 'rule'.

In Andhra Pradesh the actions of the Election Commission has become 'over action', according to political circles. The lengthy election code is hampering the administration and the interests of the people, the bureaucrats feel. They are questioning as to where is the need for code of conduct after the polling is over. There was a 20 days gap between the poll and the announcement of the results. In these 20 days also the State government cannot take any decision and the Election.

Rains lash..

Continued on Page 1

The maximum temperature in the state is expected to remain between 39 and 42 degrees Celsius and the minimum temperature is expected to remain between 24 and 27 degrees Celsius.

Areas under the GHMC are likely to experience showers till Monday. Dry weather is expected to prevail in the city in the following days. The maximum temperature is expected to remain between 36 and 38 degrees Celsius, while the minimum temperature is expected to stay between 24 and 26 degrees Celsius. In Telangana, Bhadradi Kothagudem recorded the highest maximum temperature.

ECI orders ..

Continued on Page 1

After receiving the complaint, Additional Chief Electoral Officer Lokesh Kumar requested the DEO on May 15 to take action.

After voting on polling day at a polling station at Nandi Nagar in Jubilee Hills, KTR requested everyone to come out and vote for good leaders and their party. "I voted for a party which brought 'Telangana state,'" he had said.

Bhatti calls for green buildings in TG

Continued on Page 1

The Deputy CM asked builders to construct green buildings which commoners can afford. Bhatti described Hyderabad as a 'paradise' for investors from all over the world as the city had a good climate, adequate water, continuous power supply, enough land, peace and security, and a friendly government.

He said that once the construction of the regional ring road is completed, Telangana would become an urban state. The Regional Ring Road will help to connect rural areas and to bring their products to

Hyderabad city.

He said that it is a pleasure to attend an excellent programme which stresses social responsibility along with business. It is a matter of delight that the Government of Telangana has partnered with IGBC to organise India's only Green Property Show.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) commended the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) for spearheading the green building concept in the country from 2001 and achieving the construction target of 11.67 billion square feet.

"It is a good sign that India

is one of the top three countries in the world to follow this concept. As far as our state is concerned, the construction of 1.46 billion square feet and the conversion of 2.50 lakh residential units to green norms and receiving the IGBC green building certificate is a big step forward," Bhatti said.

He said the state government is working hard to provide incentives for green building projects. The government is focusing on building a strong infrastructure to improve electrification, sanitation, health-care and waste management in the municipal towns and rural areas of the state. "We request

CII-IGBC to help us in facilitating green and net zero concepts in all the villages of Telangana. Within a few years, half the state's population will be in urban areas. Everything is being done to make Hyderabad a cosmopolitan city. We are providing quality electricity without outages even for a second," Bhatti said. He said the Congress government will introduce a comprehensive energy policy in the next few days. As part of measures to protect the environment, he said a 10.5 MW solar power plant was built for Rs 56 crore in Kothagudem and it was recently commissioned.

BRS MLAs..

Continued on Page 1

Kishan said the Congress government did not implement a single promise except providing women with free bus travel facilities.

Addressing the BJP Yuva Morcha meeting held at the State BJP office on Sunday, Kishan said the BJP will get double-digit LS seats in TG as voters have dumped the Congress and the BRS.

He said the Congress had released a job calendar when it was out of power, but the party forgot to implement its

job calendar after coming to power.

He said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had levelled many false charges against the BJP during the LS election campaign. However, even Congress activists did not believe them, he said.

Kishan said that it took 10 years for the BRS to lose its power, but the Congress may not need even five years to lose power.

He asked BJYM activists to stage massive protests against the Congress government.

Unrelenting heat disrupts..

Continued on Page 1

Maximum temperatures reached 36 degrees Celsius in Dharamshala, 44.4 degrees in Una, 42.4 degrees in Bilaspur, 36.6 degrees in Solan and 40 degrees in Kangra.

The Met office has issued a red warning for Delhi, Chandigarh, Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan, stressing the need for 'extreme care for vulnerable people'. An orange alert was issued for Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Gujarat, emphasising "high health concern" for vulnerable people, including infants, the elderly, and those with chronic diseases.

The mercury reached or surpassed 47 degrees Celsius in at least eight places across India, with

Najafgarh logging a searing 47.8 degrees, making it the warmest place in the country for the second time in the last three days.

In the national capital, Pitampura recorded 47 degrees Celsius and Mungeshpur 47.7 degrees, at least seven notches above the usual temperature for these areas at this time of the year.

According to a new analysis of airport site weather data, Delhi reached or surpassed 40 degrees Celsius on 1,557 days (around 43 per cent) in the last 10 years.

The densely packed city recorded temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius on 1,254 days (around 34 per cent) during 2004-2013 and 1,180 days (around 32 per cent) during 1994-2003.

Iran President's chopper makes a 'hard landing'

Continued on Page 1

Neither IRNA nor state TV offered any information on Raisi's condition in the hours afterward. However, hard-liners urged the public to pray for him. State TV later aired images of the faithful praying at Imam Reza Shrine in the city of Mashhad, one of Shiite Islam's holiest sites, as well as in Qom and other locations across the country.

"The esteemed president and company were on their way back aboard some helicopters and one of the helicopters was forced to make a hard landing due to the bad weather and fog," Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi said in comments aired on state TV. "Various rescue teams are on their way to the region but because of the poor weather and fogginess it might take

time for them to reach the helicopter."

He added: "The region is a bit (rugged) and it's difficult to make contact. We are waiting for rescue teams to reach the landing site and give us more information."

Rescuers were attempting to reach the site, state TV said, but had been hampered by poor weather conditions. There had been heavy rain and fog reported with some wind. IRNA called the area a "forest" and the region is known to be mountainous as well. State TV aired images of SUVs racing through a wooded area.

A rescue helicopter tried to reach the area where authorities believe Raisi's helicopter was, but it couldn't land due to the heavy mist, emergency services spokesman Babak Yektaparast told IRNA.

Raisi had been on the bor-

der with Azerbaijan early Sunday to inaugurate a dam with Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev. The dam is the third one that the two nations built on the Aras River. The visit came despite chilly relations between the two nations, including over a gun attack on Azerbaijan's Embassy in Tehran in 2023, and Azerbaijan's diplomatic relations with Israel, which Iran's Shiite theocracy views as its main enemy in the region.

Iran flies a variety of helicopters in the country, but international sanctions make it difficult to obtain parts for them. Its military air fleet also largely dates back to before the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Raisi, 63, is a hard-liner who formerly led the country's judiciary. He is viewed as a protégé of Khamenei and some analysts have suggested he

could replace the 85-year-old leader after his death or resignation from the role.

Raisi won Iran's 2021 presidential election, a vote that saw the lowest turnout in the Islamic Republic's history. Raisi is sanctioned by the U.S. in part over his involvement in the mass execution of thousands of political prisoners in 1988 at the end of the bloody Iran-Iraq war.

Under Raisi, Iran now enriches uranium at nearly weapons-grade levels and hampers international inspections. Iran has armed Russia in its war on Ukraine, as well as launched a massive drone-and-missile attack on Israel amid its war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip. It also has continued arming proxy groups in the Mideast, like Yemen's Houthi rebels and Lebanon's

Hezbollah.

Meanwhile, mass protests in the country have raged for years. The most recent involved the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini, a woman who had been earlier detained over allegedly not wearing a hijab, or headscarf, to the liking of authorities. The monthslong security crackdown that followed the demonstrations killed more than 500 people and saw over 22,000 detained.

In March, a United Nations investigative panel found that Iran was responsible for the "physical violence" that led to Amini's death.

The U.S. State Department said it was "closely following reports of a possible hard landing of a helicopter in Iran carrying the Iranian president and foreign minister."

MATHADEMIA 2024

MATH inks pacts with 50 varsities, fuelling innovation in AI and ML

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



MATH, the pioneering hub for AI and ML technologies, and a collaborative effort between the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and T-Hub, India's premier startup incubator, has successfully concluded Mathademia 2024. The flagship event by MATH, brought together top educational institutions, corporations, government bodies and startups to fuel innovation through the exchange of ideas. This hackathon marks T-Hub's largest in Hyderabad.

The event witnessed overwhelming participation, with 8,716 participants engaging in various activities, including the hackathon, quiz, workshops and startup showcase. Notably, 50 universities and colleges across India signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with MATH, signaling a commitment to research, skill development and entrepreneurship in AI.

Dignitaries such as Jayesh Ranjan, Special Chief Secretary of the Industries & Commerce (I&C) and Information Technology (IT) Departments of the Telangana

government; Rama Devi Lanka, Director, Emerging Technologies, Telangana; BVR Mohan Reddy, Padma Shri awardee and Founding member of T-Hub; Shardul Rao, Scientist-C, Under Secretary, Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India; and Aakrit Vaish, CEO of Haptik, attended.

Mahankali Srinivas Rao, CEO, T-Hub, said, "Mathademia 2024 exemplifies the power of collaborative innovation in AI and ML. This event highlights our commitment to driving technological progress and creating a vibrant ecosystem for AI and ML in India. The

hackathon underscores the scale and impact of our collaborative efforts."

Rahul Paith, CEO, MATH, said, "Mathademia 2024 stands as a testament to the power of collaboration and innovation in shaping the future of AI and ML. In bringing together diverse perspectives and groundbreaking ideas, we've ignited a spark that will illuminate the path towards transformative change. As we reflect on the success of this event, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to pushing the boundaries of technology, driving positive impact, and fostering a brighter, more inclusive future for all."

Probe into minor rape case delayed: Parent

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A parent from Ramanthapur wrote a letter to the Rachakonda Commissioner on Sunday stating that the Uppal Police officials have not taken any action after filing the FIR on the sexual assault on her daughter (minor) that happened on April 16, and appealed him to speed up the investigation by apprehending the accused.

Durga, the parent of the minor, stated in the letter that she had filed a complaint with Uppal Police informing about the sexual assault on her minor younger daughter by the accused Soheb and a case was registered in Crime No. 457 of 2024 on April 16, 2024, U/s. 376.506 IPC & 3, 4 POCSO Act. 2012. "It's have been one month since

the sexual assault on her minor younger daughter by the accused Soheb and a case was registered in Crime No. 457 of 2024 on April 16, 2024, U/s. 376.506 IPC & 3, 4 POCSO Act. 2012. "It's have been one month since

the accused person is not being traced and arrested by the police officials," she added.

In April, the accused had made friends with her elder daughter. "On the pretext of friendship, he came to my home and sexually molested

my younger daughter. The culprit also took away my elder daughter and since then the whereabouts of my elder daughter are unknown. I came to know about the crime when my younger daughter revealed the sexual assault on her by Soheb and I filed a complaint here," Durga added. Durga said, "Despite visiting the police station several times, no information is provided to me till date on the status of the investigation and about the arresting the accused. I have been running from pillar to post since last one month for justice to my daughter, and police officials haven't taken any action yet on the FIR. Therefore, I request you to look into the matter and take appropriate action to speed up the investigation and apprehend the accused."

ECI orders action against KTR over MCC violation

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Election Commission of India (ECI) directed District Election Officer (DEO) Ronald Rose to take necessary action against BRS working president K Taraka Rama Rao as per the ECI guidelines on May 15.

On May 13, AICC member G Niranjani filed a complaint against KTR over violation of Model Code of Conduct to the ECI. After receiving the complaint on May 15, Additional Chief Electoral Officer Lokesh Kumar directed the DEO to take action accordingly.

After voting at a polling station at Nandi Nagar in Jubilee Hills, KTR requested everyone to come out and exercise their vote to good leaders and party. "I voted for a party which brought Telangana State," he mentioned.

More than 80 % of street dogs in city sterilised

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

There are a number of complaints about street dogs or community dogs in the city that the GHMC has not been taking any action against, but the GHMC has sterilised over 80 per cent of the dogs in the GHMC area.

A GHMC official said, "More than 80 per cent of community dogs were sterilised in the city. In some areas it crossed 90 per cent. Except, the peripheral area of the GHMC and hill areas have not been covered as such but almost all areas in the city centres were touched with 90 per cent in the city."

According to the official information, the GHMC and animal welfare organisations have conducted sterilisations to 50,091 street dogs in 2020-21



year. Per every year, the GHMC is performing 50,000 sterilisations to the dogs. In 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24, the veterinary doctors conducted sterilisations to 73,601 dogs, 47,874 and 51,887, respectively.

An official said that the GHMC is carrying out the Animal Birth Control-cum-Anti Rabies programme to control the homeless dog population and their menace.

When the GHMC was incorporated in 2007, there were more than 8 lakh street dogs in the city but due to the

Animal Birth Control (ABC) centres and other initiatives the number of dogs was brought down to 3.7 lakh in the city.

To conduct sterilisation and anti rabies vaccination of homeless dogs, the GHMC, apart from the existing 30 dog catching vehicles, the corporation hired 20 vehicles to catch dogs. The GHMC organising special drives to catch 100 per cent homeless dogs on the banks of Musi River, military bases and forest areas to control their population.

Along with those, the GHMC was issued more than 1500 notices to hotels, function halls, meat shops and hostels to not throw their waste on public places. The corporation warned them that if they failed to do so, strict action would be taken against violators.

Minister Ponnam lauds BC Gurukuls for securing good ranks in EAMCET

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana BC Minister Ponnam Prabhakar commended the students of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule BC Gurukulam Educational Institutions who scored highest ranks in the EAMCET 2024 results that were announced by the Telangana State Education Department on Saturday.

In the agriculture category, Spoorthi has secured 369th rank. Most of the students secured ranks in the agriculture department in the EAMCET exam conducted for admission to engineering, medical and agriculture courses. A total of 145 girls took the exam in the agriculture department and 114 of them qualified. Spoorthi who secured 369th rank has proved the tal-



K Shireesha



E Vaishnavi

ent of BC Gurukulam girls. About 12 girls got ranks under 5,000 and 29 girls got ranks under 10,000.

B Nagalakshmi (2,021), A Shirisha (2,547), B Anusha (3,181), Divya (3,224), B Harshita (3,228), G Monika (3,685), A Pravalika (4,170), A Ramya (4,480), Satvika (4,732), Rishita (4,786) and Nikhitha (4,861) secured ranks under

5,000. Out of 25 boys who appeared in the agriculture section, four of them secured good ranks. G Kranti Kumar secured 3,735th rank. In the engineering department, 276 girls took the exam and two of them secured a rank below 10,000 while 191 qualified. Out of 135 boys who took the exam, five boys secured ranks below 10,000 while 107 qualified.

The Minister wished to provide education with high standards so that students can achieve more ranks from the next academic year. He revealed that the government will take measures to pay the mess charges through the green channel. The Telangana government is working hard to solve the problems of BC Gurukulam students and make them achieve more ranks.

Principal Secretary of BC Welfare Department Burra Venkatesham said that Gurukuls are working hard with the aim of providing higher education to BC students. Badugu Saidulu, Secretary of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule BC Gurukulam Educational Institutions congratulated the students who achieved the ranks.

New Metro route from Nagole to Chandrayangutta

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad L&T Metro Rail MD NVS Reddy announced on Sunday that as a part of the route to Shamshabad Airport, 14 km from Nagole to Chandrayangutta has been finalised

and will be laid soon. It has been mentioned that 13 stations will come up through the existing Nagole Metro station, Nagole Square, Alkapuri Square, Kamineni Hospital, LB Nagar Circle, Sagar Ring Road, Maitri Nagar and Chandrayangutta.

Retired defence officer duped of Rs 14.42 L in a trading fraud

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 60-year-old Jeedimetla retired Defence Officer (IAF) was cheated into a trading fraud of Rs 14,42,970, resulting in the loss of his lifetime investments, including the loan he had taken from various sources.

After seeing an advertisement on the Facebook, the victim joined on February 26, 2024, in a WhatsApp group named 'V2-Avinash bulls united'. This group was led by Avinash Agrawal and he was introduced to Anjana Kapoor to contact.

Anjana claimed to be an analyst assistant to Avinash Agrawal, helping individuals invest in the Indian stock market using a Goldman Sachs primary institutional account. She explained that she could assist in making money through trading activities such as block trading, upper circuit stocks, and IPO allotments.

She instructed him to download a trading app called 'ZOOSLI' and on March 20, 2024, he initially added a total of Rs 30,000 to the trading app. She guided him through the trading

process within the group, claiming substantial profits with no commission charges and the ability to withdraw funds daily.

The victim withdrew Rs 43,000 as per Anjana's guidance. He continued to engage in similar transactions as guided by Anjana on various dates, with all transactions occurring from his bank account to different accounts provided by them, but later, withdrawal requests were denied.

He was encouraged to raise more funds to fully subscribe to the IPO for better profits. Believing in this advice, he continued adding funds to the app. On May 15, when he attempted to withdraw Rs 24,05,486, he was informed of a 25 per cent commission charge by the company, prompting him to take a gold loan of Rs 2,91,840 to cover the commission.

At the same time the group became unresponsive and the victim concluded that he had been cheated of Rs 14,42,970. Later, he filed a complaint with the Cyber Crime police station on Sunday. The case was registered on Sunday under Sections of 420 IPC and 66-D of IT Act.



Nehru Zoo Park attracted 25,600 visitors on Sunday



A large number of visitors seen at the Zoo park on Sunday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Nehru Zoological Park in the city welcomed over 25,600 visitors on Sunday, marking it as a fun-filled day amidst the ending summer holidays. To accommodate the huge number of guests, the zoo management quickly opened addi-

tional booking counters and a smooth online ticket booking system via the website and mobile app. Increased security measures were implemented and all staff members were stationed at designated points for efficient management.

Deputy Curator of Nehru Zoological Park A Nagamani

expressed gratitude to all the visitors for choosing the zoo as their Sunday holiday destination. She said, "As part of an educational initiative, a short film highlighting wildlife conservation and breeding programmes was screened at the main entrance and various locations within the park."

Whitathon Run raises awareness on retinoblastoma

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A city-based hospital on Sunday conducted Whitathon Run for raising awareness regarding early detection of Retinoblastoma (eye cancer) in children and funds for its treatment. The event commemorates the World Retinoblastoma Awareness Week, observed for seven days starting on the second Sunday in May, every year.

The run was flagged off by Dr Vineeth G, Deputy Commissioner of Police - Madhapur Zone, at the University of Hyderabad, Gachibowli, today.

The funds raised from the Whitathon run are utilised to treat underprivileged children suffering from Retinoblastoma at no cost, and to support

future research. This year, over 2000 enthusiastic participants joined the cause, demonstrating strong community support for the event.

Speaking on the occasion Dr Vineeth G, said, heartening to see the huge participation in support of a noble cause of aiding patients of Retinoblastoma and the run is aptly called Whitathon. The money raised through this helps to render free treatment for patients who can't afford the treatment cost.

Dr Swathi Kaliki, Head - Operation Eyesight Universal Institute for Eye Cancer, LVPEI; addressing the gathering said, LV Prasad Eye Institute organised the run to raise awareness and early detection of eye cancer called Retinoblastoma. The white reflex seen in the eyes of the children can be a sign of eye



reflex should be taken for an eye screening immediately. The forming of a tumour in the retina leads to this white reflex. Detecting retinoblastoma in the early stages is critical, as it aids in preserving the sight, the eye and saving the life. Retinoblastoma can be hereditary, therefore the next generation in the family should also get screened for it. Over 2200 participants are supporting this run.

Dr Vijay Anand Reddy, Director, Apollo Cancer Hospital; said, eye cancer or retinoblastoma is a phenomenon seen in just born to six year old children. It is essential to detect this early and seek immediate treatment, as over 90% of the patients with this disease can be cured.

Man booked for brawl at liquor shop

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In an incident reported from Borabanda on May 17, a brawl broke out at a liquor shop following which the Madhuranagar police booked a man.

The incident occurred when Ramesh (47) went to the liquor shop to buy liquor. After purchasing liquor, he paid the amount through an e-wallet and due to some glitches, the money was not credited to the account of the shop owner.

An argument ensued

between Ramesh and the shop owner who hit the man with a liquor bottle leading to severe head injuries. On coming to know about it,

Ramesh's wife, along with some people, came to the liquor shop and attacked it. The police rushed to the spot to pacify the group but came under attack.

The police registered three cases, one against the management of the liquor shop, the woman for attacking the shop and one against the local people for attacking the police.



IGBC GREEN PROPERTY SHOW 2024 CONCLUDES

Priority to be given to Musi River cleansing project: Min

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The CII Indian Green Building Council's (IGBC) Green Property Show 2024, a premier exhibition showcasing eco-friendly residential projects and sustainable building technologies, concluded its successful second edition on Sunday at the HITEC Exhibition Centre in Hyderabad. The three-day event witnessed an exceptional response from developers, financial institutions, prospective homebuyers and environmentally-conscious citizens.



Deputy Chief Minister of Telangana Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and Minister for R&B and Cinematography Komatireddy Venkat Reddy seen at the IGBC property show valedictory

Chief Guest Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Deputy Chief Minister of Telangana, and Guest of Honour Komati Reddy Venkat Reddy, Minister for Roads, Buildings and Cinematography, attended the valedictory ceremony and felicitated the organisers and participants for their remarkable efforts in promoting sustain-

able living. Speaking on the occasion, Minister for R&B and Cinematography Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said, India consists 15 cities ranked among the most polluted. In this era, the IGBC green property show is making commendable efforts towards a sustainable environment.

He added, "We are also planning to introduce a 'reduce, reuse, and recycle' (RRR) road concept, which will be a world-class infrastructure on the global map. As a government, we are working unitedly as a team to commence the RRR project within three to four months. He said, "This is not like the

previous government; this is a CM Plus democratic government, where anyone can visit the Deputy CM's residence, Praja Bhavan, 365 days a year. He also said, "Give us two years, and we will fulfill our promises, including the Musi River cleaning and the RRR project, which are all set to commence. As the R&B Minister, he emphasised that funds have been allocated for roads and efforts are underway to provide excellent infrastructure.

Deputy Chief Minister of Telangana Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka expressed satisfaction that Telangana is a partner with the IGBC in hosting India's only Green Property Show. He mentioned that he had personally visited the entire property show showcasing green homes and products, believing that visitors gained much needed information on green sustainability.

Harish condemns attack on Peerzadiguda Mayor, corporators

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former minister and BRS MLA from Siddipet T Harish Rao on Sunday condemned the attack on Peerzadiguda Mayor and corporators. He alleged that the Congress leaders attempted to kidnap BRS Mayor Jakka Venkat Reddy and corporators to ensure that the motion of no-confidence is passed.

Harish Rao posted on 'X' on Sunday in this regard. He further said in his post that the Congress leaders chased BRS Mayor and corporators by deploying 20 cars on the outer ring road and terrorised them.

"On behalf of the BRS party, we strongly condemn this attack on BRS corporators. DGP and Rachakonda Police Commissioner should immediately provide security to Peerzadiguda Mayor and corporators. Attacking democratically elected representatives like this is unacceptable. If such attacks are committed, let's not stand by and watch.

Ponguleti promises to ensure welfare benefits to everyone eligible

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy has vowed to raise above narrow political considerations while discharging his duties and extend benefits of welfare scheme to every eligible family.

Taking part in a programme titled Ponguleti at the people's doorstep here on Sunday, he visited several areas in Khammam rural mandal.

Earlier, he performed special pujas, along with Bhadrachalam MLA Tella Venkat Rao, at the Maremma temple in Reddypalli. Later, he

addressed the residents of Reddypalli at a private function hall to gain knowledge of the long-pending problems in the village. Afterwards, he spoke with the noted environmentalist Vanajeevi Ramaiah. Subsequently, he met the vil-

lagers of Polepalli, Pallegudem, Gollapadu, Teertala, Polisettygudem, Mangalgudem, Tanagampadu, Gudurupadu, M Venkataraya Palem, Kachirajugudem, Arekodu Thanda, Arekodu, Chintapalli and Arempula and received memoranda from the people.

The Minister said that he was deeply indebted to people in the Palair Assembly constituency. He promised to ensure the welfare of people. He said that the applications have been flooding seeking allotment of INDIRAMMA houses.

Eatala accuses govt of collecting 'RR tax'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP senior leader and Malkajgiri Lok Sabha constituency BJP candidate Eatala Rajender on Sunday alleged that the Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy is charging Rs 75 per SFT for building permission.

Rajender alleged that the assurances given by the Chief Minister are unimplementable. He warned that the people would teach a lesson if the Congress government fulfilled promises given to people ahead of the Assembly elections. He expressed the opinion that the idea of revision of land value was not right.

While addressing the media at Nalgonda on Sunday as part of Graduate MLC by-poll on behalf of BJP candidate G Premender Reddy, Rajender alleged that there is growing disenchantment with the government within a short time.

He alleged that the Congress leaders were thinking as to how to accumulate more wealth instead of focusing on boosting the government's revenue.

Rajender said, "It has been fixed to charge Rs 75 per SFT for building permission in Hyderabad. It is like Right Royal Tax... It seems that the decision was made to pay money to three people. KCR



BJP leader Eatala Rajender speaking to the media in Nalgonda on Sunday

also did the same and lost power. Revanth Reddy is what you do. The time will be like this for the losers. Revanth Reddy has collected most of the money in the shortest period of time."

Rajender said that the Prime Minister and the Home Minister came here and said that RR tax is being collected in Telangana. "PM and HM have already warned them to be careful that they are looking at it in 360 degrees", he said.

Rajender alleged that the Congress party has been showing its true colours. There is no mention of promise of Rs 2,500 monthly aid for women. There is no mention of Rs.4000 pension. He said Revanth Reddy is

swearing by gods as he thinks that people may not believe him.

Bills are not being paid for the works done by the sarpanches and those who have done the contract work. There is a situation where bills would not be sanctioned unless 10% bribes are paid. There is no work without money. It has been decided to charge every-one constructing buildings in Hyderabad Rs 75 per sq. ft. It is like the Right Royal Tax. It seems that the decision was made to pay three people. KCR also did the same and he

lost power. The time will be like this for losers. Revanth has collected the most money in the shortest period. They seem to be competing to fill ten years of drought at once.

He alleged that the crops withered away, motors and transformers are burning out, but they are not paying attention to them. Bonus at the rate of Rs 500 for paddy was not paid.

There is confidence that the youth and educated people would fully support the BJP candidate the MLC elections, he added.

Intelligentsia urged to support BJP in MLC polls

PNS ■ NALGONDA

BJP leader Eatala Rajender has expressed the opinion that the BRS would become an irrelevant political outfit and people stop talking about it. Therefore, he asked the graduates of the Nalgonda, Khammam and Warangal districts to give their vote to BJP nominee Premender Reddy, who is working to implement party's ideology for the past 40 years, dedicated his life to the party and the public.

Campaigning for the Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal graduates' constituency of the Legislative Council at Nalgonda and Miryalaguda on Sunday, Rajender said that people sent KCR home as it is not good for the state to allow him in the chief minister's post. The Congress stepped into the shoes of the BRS as "snakes find their way into the anthills", he said.

The people of the nation rejected the Congress, which he charged with committing

various scams and corrupt activities. For over 40 years, the Congress made average Indian to hang his head out of shame. The people brought it back to power as there was no alternative, he said.

The Congress is as usual arrogating to itself all powers and started the operation extortion, he alleged.

The economists warn of the economy going backward with the Congress coming to power, he said claiming himself to know the true colours of the Congress.

Malla Reddy synonymous with land grabs, says Laxman

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Pointing out that Medchal MLA Ch. Malla Reddy is synonymous with land encroachments, Dharmapuri MLA Adhuri Laxman Kumar said that he had approached the media as Malla Reddy had referred to him in the Suchitra land dispute.

Speaking to the media on Sunday, Laxman said that Malla Reddy had grabbed the land when he was a BRS Minister.

"Malla Reddy has been saying that our land documents

are fake. However, Malla Reddy failed to vacate the injunction order given by the court. The police and the Municipal Commissioner did not respond to our complaints filed earlier. We will obey the decision of revenue officials after their survey report. It is not right on the part of Malla Reddy to throw mud at the Congress government," he said.

Laxman said that he would appeal to the government to order a probe into Malla Reddy's land grabs by a sitting judge. He said that the BRS government and Malla Reddy

engaged in goondaism during BRS rule.

He said that he has only 600 square yards of land in the disputed area and added that nobody will get frightened by Malla Reddy's shouting.

Laxman said that Malla Reddy entered the disputed land ignoring the court's injunction order which had asked him not to enter the land.

He said that he is expecting that the land will come to him as per the survey report and that they need only 4,000 square yards.

He said that Malla Reddy

had blocked a survey in 2015 stating that there was no need for one and that they would give up the land if their documents were proved fake.

He asked Malla Reddy to explain why he did not respond when the court issued notices regarding the matter and that Malla Reddy's true face would soon be revealed.

Declaring that the Congress government will go as per law, Laxman said that Malla Reddy is still behaving as if he is still a Minister.

Laxman said that he had purchased the land in survey

number 82/E in 2015 along with six others from a person named Sudhama. The others are BRS activists including Bethi Subhash Reddy.

He said that Sudhama purchased the land in the year 2000 and that they sold their land to Srinivas Reddy in 2021. Laxman said that they had an injunction order from 2016.

He said that he had met Malla Reddy and his son-in-law Rajashekar Reddy regarding the land and that Malla Reddy had grabbed the land. Malla Reddy had no land in that area, he added.

Three die in lightning strikes in Vikarabad district

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Three persons lost their lives in separate incidents when lightning struck them in Vikarabad district of Telangana on Sunday, police said.

The incidents took place in two villages in Yalal mandal of Vikarabad district when it was raining, they said.

Two persons died after being struck by lightning in an agricultural field while another man, who was standing under a tree, died in another lightning strike.

The deceased were aged between 26 to 40, police said. The Met Centre of IMD here has forecast that thunderstorms accompanied by light-

ning and gusty winds (30-40 KMPH) are very likely to occur at isolated places in the districts of Bhadradi Kothagudem, Khammam, Nalgonda, Suryapet, Siddipet, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri, Rangareddy, Hyderabad, Medchal Malkajgiri, Vikarabad, Medak, Nagarkurnool, Wanaparthy in Telangana on Sunday

NEWS FROM ANDHRA PRADESH

SIT may submit report today

Violence before and after elections in Palnadu and Rayalaseema districts under investigation

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) going into post-poll violence in the State has intensified its efforts. SIT chief Vineet Brijlal is expected to submit a report to the Election Commission (EC) on Monday.

A 13-member SIT has been formed to probe the violence in the Palnadu and Rayalaseema districts. The team has already begun its work in the affected areas, focusing on incidents in Macherala, Gurazala, Narasaraopet, Tadipatri, and Chandragiri constituencies. Some suspects have report-



edly gone into hiding or fled to other locations, including Hyderabad.

The SIT is reviewing registered FIRs in the riot-

affected areas and plans to file additional FIRs if necessary. The investigation has revealed attempts by some police personnel to alter sev-

eral FIR sections. The SIT is also examining all available evidence, including CCTV footage. Following the violence during and after the polls, the EC summoned State Chief Secretary Dr KS Jawahar Reddy and DGP Harish Kumar Gupta to Delhi for an explanation regarding the law and order situation. The officials assured the EC that the situation would be brought under control.

DGP Harish Kumar Gupta subsequently established the SIT under senior IPS officer Vineet Brijlal to investigate the statewide arson. The 13-member team is collaborat-

ing with clues teams and checking the FIRs from the affected areas, with additional FIRs being filed as

YSRCP agent's father killed in TDP attack

SRİKAKULAM: The father of a YSRCP polling agent succumbed to injuries sustained in an attack allegedly orchestrated by TDP activists at Nimmada in Kotabommali mandal of the district on Sunday. According to reports, Thota Malleswara Rao fell victim to the violence while performing a religious ritual at a temple in the

needed. Brijlal expressed confidence that significant progress would be made by Sunday. He died undergoing treatment at KGH in Visakhapatnam after initially being treated at RIMS in Srikakulam. The grieving family has accused followers of TDP leader Kinjarapu Atchannaidu of perpetrating the attack. Demanding justice, the son of the deceased man, Madhavrao, demanded severe punishment for the culprits.

Naidu leaves for US on week-long trip

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Days after Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy went on a foreign trip, TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu has embarked on his own overseas journey following the conclusion of polling for the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections in the State.

While Jagan Mohan Reddy embarked on a two-week-long tour abroad on Friday, Naidu will leave for a six-day trip on Sunday. With two weeks remaining until the votes from last week's simultaneous elections are counted, these key political figures are taking time off with their families.

Following several weeks of intense campaigning for YSR

Congress Party (YSRCP) candidates, the Chief Minister and YSRCP president flew to London by a special flight on Friday night. Jagan, along with his wife YS Bharathi and their daughters Harsha and Varsha, who reside in London, will also visit France and Switzerland during their trip. A special court for CBI cases granted Jagan Mohan Reddy permission for his foreign tour. He is expected to return to Andhra Pradesh on June 1, three days before the vote counting on June 4. N Chandrababu Naidu left for the US late on Sunday. He was accompanied by his wife Bhuvaneshwari, son Nara Lokesh, daughter-in-law Brahmani, and grandson Devansh.

INDIA CORNER

Newlywed couple dies by jumping in front of train

A newly married couple died here allegedly by jumping in front of a train as their families objected to their marriage, police said on Sunday. Laldhar Prasad, in-charge of Government Railway Police (GRP) post at the Bhadohi Railway Station said information was received this morning that the bodies of a young man and woman were found on the tracks. The deceased were identified by their family members as Jitendra Kumar Gautam (25) and Lalita Gautam (22), Prasad said. The couple's family members told the police that Jitendra and Lalita were neighbours in the Dalit Colony of the city's Jalalpur area. The duo were in a relationship for a year before they eloped from their homes about two months ago and got married in Delhi, the officer said. About fifteen days ago, Jitendra had returned home with Lalita and they started living with his family. However, both their families were not ready to accept the marriage.



Three terror associates detained under PSA in J-K

Three men alleged to be overground workers (OGWs) of terrorists were detained under the Public Safety Act (PSA) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday. Terming the action necessary to maintain public order, police said the three men were assessed to be posing a significant threat to the safety and security of the state. Poonch and adjoining Rajouri district have witnessed some deadly terror attacks over the past two years, resulting in the killing of a number of security personnel and civilians. Poonch and Rajouri are part of the Anantnag parliamentary constituency which is going to polls in the sixth phase on May 25. The detainees were identified as Iftar Ahmed alias "Kaka", Khurshid Ahmed and Ghulam Abass, all residents of Gursai village of Mendhar, a police spokesperson said. "All three notorious criminals have demonstrated a pattern of behaviour, characterised by the adoption of various tactics, to spread terror and fear within the peace loving community."



Over 1,000 Mizoram policemen could not vote in LS polls

More than 1,000 policemen in Mizoram were unable to cast their votes in the Lok Sabha polls held on April 19, officials of the state election department said. These personnel were deployed in other states for poll duty several days before April 19, the day when the northeastern state voted, they added. Although arrangements were supposed to be made for the police personnel to vote at facilitation centres, no such provision was made as they had to leave the state before candidates could be finalised, officials said. Despite requests made to the Election Commission on two occasions to allow the police personnel to cast their votes, the appeals were allegedly rejected by the central poll panel, officials added. In response to this, the People's Conference (PC) party wrote to Election Commission principal secretary SB Joshi urging the poll panel to permit 1,047 policemen from Mizoram to exercise their franchise before the counting of votes.



BJP sees AAP as challenge, launched 'Operation Jhadoo' to crush us: Kejriwal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday claimed the BJP has launched a campaign to crush AAP as the saffron party sees it as a challenge.

He also urged party workers and leaders to be braced for even bigger challenges.

AAP's march towards the BJP headquarters in the national capital was stopped midway as party leaders and workers raised slogans against the saffron party and hailed Kejriwal.

Kejriwal had on Saturday said that he and other AAP leaders would march to the BJP headquarters "so that the prime minister can send anyone he wishes to jail".

The BJP is saying it will send AAP MP Raghav Chadha and Delhi ministers Atishi and Saurabh Bharadwaj to jail, he had claimed, hours after his aide Bibhav Kumar was arrested in connection with the "assault" on party MP Swati Maliwal.

AAP later said in a statement, "We waited for half an hour on the road for the police to come and arrest us. But the BJP accepted its defeat."

Addressing party workers and leaders ahead of the march, Kejriwal said there will be bigger challenges ahead and asked the cadre to be prepared.

"The prime minister has made up his mind to completely destroy and crush the Aam Aadmi Party, for which he has



"The prime minister has made up his mind to completely destroy and crush the Aam Aadmi Party, for which he has started an operation called 'Operation Jhadoo', " Kejriwal said.

Kejriwal should stop theatrics, break silence on Maliwal assault case: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Sunday said Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal should not indulge in theatrics and instead break his "silence" on the alleged assault on AAP MP Swati Maliwal by his aide Bibhav Kumar.

The reaction came after Kejriwal and his party workers and leaders held a massive protest near the BJP headquarters against Kumar's arrest in connection with the case. "Kejriwal should break his

silence instead of his 'dramebazi (theatrics)' and answer specific questions," Shehzad Poonawalla, the BJP's national spokesperson, said in a post on X.

The BJP leader asked Kejriwal if he had ordered the "attack" on Maliwal at the chief minister's residence and gave patronage to Kumar because he knows his "dark secrets".

"Why is the CCTV (camera) footage missing? Did Kejriwal help Bibhav to destroy/tamper evidence, including CCTV

(camera) footage from Shoshan Mahal (Kejriwal's residence)? Why release small clips and not full CCTV (camera) footage?" he said in the post.

"Why U turn from what Sanjay Singh said 96 hours ago and why victim-shaming now by AAP?" the BJP leader asked.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters, party MP Manoj Tiwari, who is seeking reelection from North East Delhi, alleged that Kejriwal held the protest to save Kumar.

challenge for the BJP in the future. Aam Aadmi Party should be crushed here itself. Under this operation, big leaders of the Aam Aadmi Party will be arrested, they are being arrested," the Delhi chief minister claimed.

He also claimed that AAP's bank accounts would be frozen in the coming days. The Enforcement Directorate's (ED) lawyer has already given a statement in the court that AAP's bank accounts will be frozen immediately after the elections, he charged.

Kejriwal, who is out on interim bail in the excise policy case, claimed that AAP will be brought "to the road" by getting it to vacate its office.

The Delhi chief minister, however, asserted that AAP is "not a party of a few people, it is a party of the dreams of 140-crore people". People of this country have never seen such work in 75 years, he said while highlighting AAP governments' work in Delhi and Punjab.

"This ideology, a government of this kind that works, can also run with such honesty. This ideology is spreading very fast in the country.

And the dreams that the common man used to have about the government in this country, those dreams are now being realised," he said.

Kejriwal said AAP is now an idea and asked, "You can arrest its leaders but how will you arrest this idea?"

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Launching a blistering attack on the Congress, Union Home minister Amit Shah accused the opposition party on Sunday of "preserving" Article 370 of the Constitution, due to which terrorism increased in the country.

He also asserted that the BJP will never allow another division of the country.

Addressing a Lok Sabha poll rally in Jaunpur district of Uttar Pradesh, Shah said, "The Congress and the Samajwadi Party preserved (sambhal ke rakhna) Article 370 for 70 years, due to which terrorism increased across the country.

"You made Modi the prime minister for the second time and he abrogated Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir on August 5, 2019. In Kashmir, where the Army had to be taken along for hoisting the tricolour, at that same Lal Chowk (in Srinagar) now, the 'shobhayatra' of Lord Krishna is taken out."



accused the Congress of spreading the lie that if Prime Minister Narendra Modi comes to power for a third time, he will abolish reservation.

"Modiji has the majority for the last 10 years and he did not use it to abolish reservation. As long as the BJP has even one MP, no one can touch reservation," he said. Posing a question to the SP and Congress, Shah said, "I want to ask (SP chief) Akhilesh Yadav and (Congress leader) Rahul Gandhi that your government was in power for 10 years, what did Uttar Pradesh get in that period? They gave Rs 4.9 lakh crore to Uttar Pradesh in 10 years, whereas Narendra Modi gave Rs 19.11 lakh crore."

Machhlishahr will go to polls in the sixth phase of the seven-phase Lok Sabha election on May 25.

Twelve candidates are in the fray from constituency and the main contest is between the BJP's B P Saroj and the SP's Priya Saroj.

Cong gov't will complete its term: HP CM Sukhu

PNS ■ BILASPUR/HAMIRPUR

The Congress government would complete its five-year term and Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur should stop "day-dreaming" about toppling the Himachal Pradesh government, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said on Sunday. "Jai Ram Thakur's new black coat that he gave for stitching following the BJP's attempts to topple the democratically-elected Congress government in the state would remain with the tailor," Sukhu said while addressing a public rally in Bilaspur district.

He asserted that the state's interests would not be compromised as he sought support for Congress candidate from Hamirpur Lok Sabha seat Satpal Raizada. Earlier, addressing a rally at Hamirpur, Sukhu had alleged that three legislators from the district -- two Congress rebels and an independent MLA -- "sold themselves".

He was referring to the MLAs who voted for the BJP's candidate in the Rajya Sabha polls held earlier this year.

The chief minister said that these legislators have "played with the sentiments of the people" of the district and the BJP will get a befitting reply on June 4, the day the results of the polls are announced.

Nation will become colony of foreign forces if INDIA bloc comes to power: Anurag Thakur

PNS ■ HAMIRPUR

The nation will be doomed and become a "colony of foreign forces" if Congress-led INDIA bloc is allowed to rule, Union Minister Anurag Thakur said on Sunday.

He addressed several election meetings in the Hamirpur parliamentary constituency.

"The nation will be doomed and become a colony of foreign forces who are busy destabilising the integrity and unity of India if Congress-led INDIA bloc is allowed to rule," he said.

He gave a clarion call to the people to join hands with the BJP, remain united under the party banner and vote for it on June 1.

He alleged the Congress

and INDIA bloc leaders are advocating the cause of terrorists and pro-Pakistani elements but their "nefarious desires" will not materialise as people know their "evil designs".

Accusing the Congress of adopting the policy of appeasement towards minority communities,

he alleged that nepotism and terrorism prevailed during the tenure of the UPA government.

Terming the ten-year term of Prime Minister Narendra Modi as "historic and unforgettable", he said that his work and name have left an "indelible mark" on the hearts and minds of people, adding that 'My Choice Modi' is echoing across the country.



Bihar govt school teacher jailed for saying 'nobody should vote for Modi' inside classroom

PNS ■ MUZAFFARPUR

A government school teacher in Bihar has been arrested and sent to jail for allegedly telling children in his class "nobody should vote for Modi", an official said on Sunday.

According to Muzaffarpur SSP Rakesh Kumar, the teacher has been booked for violating the election model code of conduct, after an FIR lodged by the district education officer.

DEO Ajay Kumar Singh said teacher Harendra Rajak's conduct was brought to his notice by family members of a number of students of the government secondary school at Amrakh in Kurhani block.

"A written complaint was submitted by the family members that children were being told by the teacher that nobody should vote for Modi since foodgrains unfit for



human consumption were being distributed under the free ration scheme", the DEO said.

He added, "a number of boys and girls from the class also confirmed that Rajak had been saying such things inside the classroom. Prima facie it was a violation of model code of conduct which forbids any government employee from trying to influence poll outcome by speaking for or against any political party. Hence, the FIR was lodged against the teacher for needful action".

EC asks city dwellers to turnout in higher numbers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On the eve of phase five of Lok Sabha polls, the Election Commission on Sunday pointed out that Mumbai, Thane and Lucknow have shown apathy towards voting in the past and asked these city dwellers to turnout in higher numbers.

The poll authority noted that in the past these cities have "suffered" from urban apathy in voting.

"The Commission specially calls upon these city dwellers to erase the stigma by turning out in higher numbers," it said.

On May 3 too, while referring to voter turnout in phase two, the Commission had said it was "disappointed" with the turnout level in some metropolitan cities. The EC had last month

PHASE FIVE LS POLLS



assembled many metro Commissioners here to work out a strategy to fight urban apathy.

Urban and youth apathy is described as a phenomenon when young voters and those living in metros fail to turn up at polling stations on election day.

So far, the last four phases have registered a voter turnout of 66.95 per cent.

Around 45.1 crore electors have exercised their franchise in the last four phases. As in

February this year, the total number of voters stood at around 97 crore.

Polling for 23 states and union territories, and 379 seats has been completed so far.

The EC said 49 seats in eight states and union territories, including Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal will go for polls in phase five on Monday.

Besides Lok Sabha, 35 assembly constituencies in Odisha will also go to polls on Monday.

Around 9.47 lakh polling officials have been deployed across 94,732 polling stations.

Over 8.95 crore people, include 4.69 crore male; 4.26 crore female and 5409 third gender electors are eligible to vote

INDIA bloc govt will herald stable, predictable policymaking

Congress on stock market volatility

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid stock market volatility, the Congress on Sunday accused Home Minister Amit Shah of inciting "fear-mongering" and said an INDIA coalition government shall herald a new age of stable, predictable policymaking and overall prosperity.

The opposition party's assertion came after Home Minister Shah in an interview with a TV channel said the stock market shouldn't be linked with elections, but a stable government does help it

perform better.

He also suggested that the market will shoot up after June 4 as a result of the BJP and its allies sweeping the Lok Sabha elections. In a statement, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said there is no basis to the "fear-mongering" incited by the outgoing Home Minister, about the INDIA government in financial markets. The record of the Congress party in providing strong and inclusive economic growth speaks for itself, he said.



Audio books can stimulate a child's interest in reading: Ruskin Bond

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Audio books can inculcate story listening habits in children and gradually attract them to reading books, says legendary author Ruskin Bond who turned 90 Sunday.

To commemorate the day, audiobook platform Audible has brought out a keepsake edition with 25 of his popular stories. Titled "All Time Favourites for Children", the stories have been curated and selected by the author himself. The narration is by Anuj Datta.

Bond said audiobooks can be like oral storytelling and stimulate a child's interest in reading. "Sometimes a child is reluc-

tant to make the effort to start reading a book. If it's being read to them, either the book is on audio or somebody is reading from one, it helps to create interest. Once that interest develops, the young reader very often will go on to reading books on his or her own," Bond told PTI.

"I would call it a stimulus, a catalyst for the whole art of reading," he added.

Talking about his childhood, Bond said he began to read at a pretty young age.

"My father used to tell me stories mostly about history. I was an early reader but some kids are not. They come a bit late to books. So, audiobooks fit in very well there in their early



years," he said.

The stories in the new audiobook include "Goldfish Don't Bark", "Boy Scouts Forever", "The Black Cat", "Grandfather Fights an Ostrich", "A Bicycle Ride with Uncle Ken", "The Woman on Platform 8" and

"The Parrot Who Wouldn't Talk".

Bond had previously narrated many of his stories.

"A few years ago, Puffin Books brought out a whole series of my chapter books and these are short stories of mine that we split into chapters for easier reading. I went to Delhi and lent my voice for about 10 stories. Each one turned into an audiobook and I believe they're doing fairly well," he said.

On his latest venture, the Mussoorie-based author said, "I hope children would listen to it during their summer break. It excites me to know that many of my books and stories are accessible on Audible.in."

Muslims in Ayodhya say 'mandir-masjid' a non-issue, want development

PNS ■ AYODHYA

As Ayodhya gears up to vote for the first time after the Ram temple consecration, Muslim voters in the pilgrim town say "mandir-masjid" (temple-mosque) is not an issue for them and employment and development are their primary concerns.

Some, including Iqbal Ansari, who was a litigant in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case, give the BJP "due credit" for the development of Ayodhya while others feel much needs to be done to ensure that the gains percolate to all parts of the temple town.

"When elections come, political leaders start remembering God, irrespective of their party. But people want health and education facilities and security," Ansari told PTI.

"The BJP has done good work in Ayodhya and hence it should get the due credit. The BJP has an edge here. Though I do not have much interest in elections, I will definitely cast my vote on polling day," he said.

Ansari said workers of political parties have been coming to his house to seek his vote and



the BJP was the first to approach him.

Ansari had earlier said that the BJP brought an end to the Ram temple issue.

The 55-year-old found a mention in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech at a poll rally in Haryana's Gohana on Saturday.

Hitting out at the Congress for giving the January 22 Ram temple consecration ceremony a miss, Modi had said, "They have so much hatred towards Lord Ram that they rejected the invitation (for consecration ceremony)."

Whereas Ansari, who fought against the Ram Mandir in court, attended the ceremony, the prime minister had said.

Ashfaq Hussain, a builder and government contractor associated with the BJP, asserted that Muslim women are with the party.



www.dailypioneer.com

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

PAPER WITH PASSION

An intricate puzzle

Kejriwal aide's arrest sparks AAP-BJP war of words amid Maliwal's assault allegations

The alleged assault case involving former Delhi Commission for Women chief and AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal, in which she has named Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's PA Bibhav Kumar, keeps getting murky. The development came within days of Kejriwal's return to campaigning from Tihar Jail, where he had been incarcerated for his alleged role in the Delhi excise policy case. Now the arrest of Bibhav Kumar for the alleged assault has sparked a series of protests and political manoeuvres. The case centres around Maliwal who, interestingly, herself has been under scrutiny by the Anti-Corruption Bureau for alleged appointment irregularities in DCW. After first admitting to the assault, AAP now alleges that Maliwal was blackmailed with the fear of arrest in the case. Bibhav's arrest is linked to this ongoing investigation, adding fuel to an already volatile situation. In response to his aide's arrest, Kejriwal — accompanied by AAP MPs, MLAs and supporters — led a protest march to the BJP headquarters to show solidarity with Bibhav and "expose" the BJP's political vendetta. In a video message to the Prime Minister, Kejriwal asked the latter to arrest all top AAP leaders at once instead of doing that one by one. Kejriwal also emphasised that the action against Bibhav and Maliwal were attempts to stifle AAP's efforts to combat corruption and improve governance. On the other hand, the BJP has asserted that the law against corruption is being followed diligently. Its leaders argue that investigation is a necessary step in ensuring transparency and accountability in public offices. Interestingly, the Congress has chosen to remain silent on this issue. This non-committal stance could be seen as a strategic decision to avoid getting embroiled in the confrontation between AAP and BJP, both of whom are its political rivals in Delhi.



Timing is everything in politics; the cauldron is coming to a boil with less than a week to go for voting in Delhi on May 25. Meanwhile, the ongoing tussle between AAP and BJP is emblematic of the larger power struggle between the parties. This incident is likely to have ramifications beyond immediate political dynamics, potentially influencing voter perception and future elections. It would not be wise to assign motives to Maliwal at this point; besides, the case is now sub judice but one can safely say from experience that several of her past statements have been rather awkward. Once she tweeted she was a "proud daughter" and, on another occasion, said she was sexually abused by him when she was a child. The situation also brings to the fore issues of misuse of investigative agencies and the limits of political accountability. As both parties continue to trade barbs, the people of Delhi watch closely, hoping for resolutions that prioritise effective governance and justice over political expediency. As Buddha once said, three things cannot be hidden for long — sun, moon and the truth! We would know soon whether it was a political conspiracy or really a assault by her own party members!

PICTALK



Women carry stilted flowers in bamboo baskets, in Senapati district of Manipur

India tactfully manages US-Iran tensions



BHOPINDER SINGH

As India forges a vital partnership with Iran through the Chabahar port agreement, it must adeptly balance its regional interests against the backdrop of American concerns

Iran has had an unwarranted grip on the sensibilities of the US administrations, irrespective of their partisan divide. The moment for the bilateral fracture in American imagination starts from the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the subsequent US Embassy hostage drama. The wounded memory for the Iranians is deeper and traced to the CIA-aided coup against the popular Prime Minister, Mosaddegh, in 1953. Undoubtedly, the religious puritanism of Ayatollah Khomeini's regime after the revolution pitted it ideologically against the 'West', but the public memory of the US support to Saddam Hussein (later ousting him) in the decade-long Iran-Iraq war, is now conveniently forgotten by the duplicitous American regimes. Later, Americans linked Iran to 9/11 and the birthing of Al Qaeda/ISIL, even though Iran didn't have anything to do with either. If anything, Iran and its proxies fought ISIL in Syrian-Iraqi swathes and were instrumental in decimating the same, though later the Americans killed the Iranian General Qasem Soleimani. Because sectarian undercurrents and the chessboard of American 'allies' (Israel and Arab Sheikdoms) have a checkmate from Iran and its proxies in Syria, Lebanon and Yemen - the unjustified demonizing of Iran continues. While countries like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have contributed far more towards religious extremism and terror, they continue to receive American support, while the Iranians face crippling sanctions. Americans had unilaterally reneged on the Iran Nuclear Deal even when all other signatories i.e., P+1 countries and the UN watchdog agency IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) had confirmed that Iran had complied with all provisions. Pressure from Israel and Sheikdoms ensured that Iran continued getting conflated with everything going wrong in the Middle East, even if Iran did, or did not have any role in the same. While the Hamas group was supported by Iran (as indeed by Saudi Arabia and others, till recently), there is no credible evi-



dence to link Iran with the planning or execution of the 7th Oct 2023 attack, but the phantom of Iran linkages persisted. Pushed to a corner to retaliate to salvage its sovereign pride the Iranians did retaliate, albeit, after getting forced to do so after its senior military officers were killed in Syria, by Israelis. The must-needed justification to 'prove' Iran's purported machinations and belligerence was offered and the Americans lapped it up with both hands - that it is the election year and flexing muscles against the 'enemy' i.e., Iran, brings its electoral benefits, vitiates the situation even further. Now Joe Biden who had earlier come to power with the promise to restore the Iran Nuclear Deal torn by the unhinged Donald Trump, is all but a forgotten memory. Today, Biden is trying to outdo Donald Trump in 'taking on' the Iranians, with even more sanctions. The White House issued a Statement, "Less than a week ago, Iran launched one of the largest missile and drone attacks the world has ever seen against Israel. Together with our allies and partners, the United States defended Israel. We helped defeat this attack. And today, we are holding Iran accountable-imposing new sanctions and export



WHILE INDIA NEEDS TO MAINTAIN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE US TO COUNTER THE CHINESE THREATS, IT ALSO HAS ITS REGIONAL CONCERNS WHICH REQUIRE DE-HYPHENATION FROM US CONCERNS WITH IRAN

controls on Iran". The import of the same goes beyond the USA as it now seeks to potentially sanction any country dealing with Iran e.g., India, which has recently signed a 10-year contract to manage the strategic Chabahar port in Iran. This gateway to Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics bypasses Pakistani land routes, offers an invaluable Indian footprint on the other side of Pakistan (counters China-developed, Gwadar Port, in Pakistan) and strengthens Indian ties with the civilisational land of Iran. With the Taliban in Afghanistan tiring of Pakistan and the Iranians signing this deal, Delhi is justifiably excited about the evolved prospects of countering the Sino-Pakistani assertions in the theatre. While India needs to maintain its relations with the US to counter the Chinese threats, it also has its regional concerns which require de-hyphenation from US concerns with Iran. India cannot be a blind minion of the US as it has its own bilateral and regional imperatives that warrant 'strategic independence' in decision-making, as was done by buying Russian oil and maintaining cordial relations with Moscow, whilst nuancing concerns for

Ukraine. To be fair, the Americans have recognised the Indian positions and compulsions which are not aimed at diminishing the US interest, but only towards protecting its own, hence the restraint in actuality, even as the war of words persists. In any case, the Biden administration will be at its voluble worst and indulge in sabre-rattling (especially on matters about Iran) and therefore important to understand their compulsion of tonality. It is with this backdrop that the Statement of the US official must be understood, when pressed about the Indian agreement with Iran, "You've heard us say this in several instances, that any entity, anyone considering business deals with Iran, they need to be aware of the potential risk that they are opening themselves up to and the potential risk of sanctions". The Americans will say what they have to and the Indians will do what they have to, as it is a well-understood position on both sides. India's strategic equation with Iran is not designed to diminish the US interest. (The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

Promise and challenges of drones in agriculture



HIMANSHU VERMA

Drone technology shows promise in agriculture, offering efficiency and cost savings. Yet apprehensions galore hinder its adoption

Drone technology has gained popularity in the agriculture industry in recent years. Drones provide farmers with several advantages, such as higher yields, lower costs, and enhanced efficiency. However, there are worries that farmers would be hesitant to use drone technology because they don't know enough about it or are afraid of losing their jobs. We may examine the advantages of drone technology for the agricultural industry as well as any obstacles that might be preventing farmers from implementing it. Drones' advantages in the agriculture industry



In the agricultural industry, drones may be utilised for a variety of purposes, such as insect control, crop mapping, soil analysis, and irrigation. The following are the main advantages of drone use

- 1. Increased efficiency:** Farmers can collect data and monitor crops more successfully because of drones' ability to cover huge expanses of land swiftly and efficiently. Early problem detection can result in quicker and more efficient responses.

ers from using this tool. These are a few of the main obstacles:

- 1. Fear of losing one's job:** Since fewer people will be required to undertake physical labour on farms as a result of the adoption of drone technology, many farmers are worried about losing their jobs.
- 2. Lack of expertise:** Farmers may lack the expertise or training required to use drones safely. They might not be confident in their abilities to utilize it, which might make it difficult for them to accept this technology.
- 3. Cost:** Since drones may be pricey, many farmers might not be able to afford to invest in this technology.
- 4. Regulatory obstacles:** Farmers may find it challenging to use this technology if there are regulatory obstacles to the usage of drones in agriculture. Drone technology usage in rural India's agriculture industry is still in its infancy. This technology is attracting curiosity, but there are also worries about job loss and a lack of education and training. Nonetheless, initiatives are being made to overcome these obstacles and

promote the use of drone technology. The Digital India programme is a major endeavour that seeks to furnish rural regions with digital infrastructure. The initiative's emphasis on education and training may aid in addressing farmers' deficiencies in knowledge and experience. Furthermore, several efforts and organisations are working to further the application of drone technology in agriculture. To promote precision agricultural technology, such as drones, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) developed the Centre for Precision and Farming Technology. Farmers may be reluctant to accept this technology, though, due to worries about job loss and a lack of education and training. Farmers must have the support and training; they need to use this technology efficiently, as well as an understanding of its potential advantages. (The writer is an assistant professor of agronomy, college of Agriculture & environmental technology, Surajmal University, Uttarakhnad; view are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FOLLOW THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Madam — Apropos the news article "Mamata Promises to back INDIA in Power," published on May 16. The Chief Minister of Bengal, Mamta Banerjee, had earlier decided to go solo in the elections. Even the ruling party Trinamool Congress's (TMC) leader's atrocities against women of the Sandeshkhali haven't lowered the spirit of Didi (Mamta Banerjee). Annoyed with the saffron party at the centre and blaming it for hatching a conspiracy in the Sandeshkhali incident, the chief minister has decided to support the INDIA bloc from outside if it comes to power in the centre. Accusing Narendra Modi of not fulfilling any of the promises to the nation, Didi said Publicity and lies are his two weapons. According to the chief minister, the PM is a prachar Babu who does only 'prachar' and nothing else. Using such terms against the PM of the nation is a violation of the code of conduct. All political leaders should maintain the sanctity of the Constitution and follow a code of conduct while speaking publicly.

Abhilasha Gupta | Mohali

CHABAHAR PORT PACT

Madam — It refers to the news article "India And Iran Sign Chabahar Port Pact," this is my response. The Chabahar Port is a cornerstone of India's regional strategy, offering several critical advantages. It serves as a vital gateway for expanding trade with Central Asia, providing a direct, cost-effective route to the region's abundant resources. Additionally, Chabahar acts as a strategic counterbalance to China's influence, particularly in light of China's control of Gwadar Port in Pakistan. The port also offers a reliable alternative trade route to Afghanistan, bypassing the often volatile land routes through Pakistan and ensuring uninterrupted trade and aid flows. This collaboration with Iran further strengthens India's diplomatic ties and bolsters its position in the Asian geopolitical landscape. India's commitment to the Chabahar

Chhetri retires



Apropos the news article, "Stalwart Chhetri announces retirement," published on May 17, this is my response. The news of Sunil Chhetri's retirement has hit the Indian football community hard. As the much-admired and treasured Indian captain announced his decision to step away from international football after the FIFA World Cup qualification match

against Kuwait on June 6, emotions ran high across the country. Chhetri was the face of Indian football in a remarkable career spanning over 20 years. With a legacy that has left an indelible mark on Indian football, the 39-year-old maestro's journey has been an inspiration to millions, reshaping perceptions of this beautiful game in the nation along the way. Since his debut in 2005, Chhetri has amassed a multitude of accolades, including setting records for the highest number of appearances and goals scored for India. With 94 goals in 150 matches, Sunil Chhetri holds the third position on the list of most international goals, trailing behind only the two superstars, Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo. "A simple ball unites us all", the saying goes. Needless to say, Sunil Chhetri was a perfect example of this soccer quote. Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

project, despite the potential risk of US sanctions, underscores its strategic autonomy. India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar defended the Chabahar Port deal with Iran despite US sanctions warning, emphasising its regional benefits. India views the port as crucial for accessing Central Asia while bypassing Pakistan. Despite US pressure, India asserts its strategic independence through the deal to counter China's influence in the region.

Amarjeet Kumar | Hazaribagh

CRUELTY AGAINST ANIMALS

Madam — Apropos the feature article, "Assault most foul for kindness to animals," by Hiranmay Karlekar, published on May 18, this is my response. Compassion for all living creatures has been the philosophy of India. In most Indian households, rural and urban, when people cook, they reserve a portion of the food for cows, dogs and birds. However, human beings, born as a superior species, consider themselves the sole claimant to this planet and its related div-

idents. Dog lovers aiding animals face assaults by impostors posing as human saviors, reflecting a concerning trend of violence. Animals may be mute but we as a society have to speak on their behalf as animals breathe like us and have emotions. Even though India, with its population of over 1.42 billion, still faces significant challenges in addressing animal cruelty. Every minute, an animal in India faces abuse, despite existing laws like Sections 428 and 429 in Animal Laws. The State Government does not take animal abuse cases too seriously, making it difficult to calculate just how common they are. India was given a "C" under the Animal Protection Index (API) and is also a moderate performer under the Sanctioning Cruelty category. Unfortunately, these animal abuse statistics have shown, that animal cruelty is a real issue in India that takes millions of victims every year. Abhijit Roy | Jamshedpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN CONNECTING THE MIND AND BODY

Harnessing the potential of mind is the key to true happiness



RAVI VALLURI

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

The human mind is an enigma and a reservoir of potential. But the moot question is how do we tap this potential? The mind is a movie theatre where we script and enact innumerable movies and soap operas. Technology alone cannot be a substitute for the enormous potential of the mind. It needs to be cultured, harnessed and harmonized with needs and wants.

We need to distinguish the brain from the mind. The brain is an organ that serves as the centre of the nervous system in all vertebrate and most invertebrate animals. Only a few invertebrates such as sponges, do not have a brain, diffuse or localized nerve nets are present instead. Mind on the other hand, is the faculty of consciousness and thoughts. It is an individual's intellect or memory of his attention span or will. Sri Ravi Shankar has captured it very succinctly. He says the mind is like the sky and thoughts are like clouds. Your thoughts make or mar the progress and development of the mind.



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

The human mind vacillates between the past and the future. In the past, the mind is regretful and if it is in the future, it is anxious. In either situation, the mind is not at peace or in the present moment and thus remains unhappy.

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

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

This energy can be channelled in innumerable ways. There may be some who may practice meditation, breathing techniques or simply observe silence to quieten the mind. The path is chosen based on our personality type. Several others through unflinching prayers and reading inspirational literature can silence the mind. But the aim is to be in the present and lead a happy life. Let our minds not be judgmental and complain and cling to negativities. Willy-nilly we provide the hook to hang the coat of negativity.

"Life gives you plenty of time to do whatever you want to do if you stay in the present moment," writes Deepak Chopra.

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

Economic crisis takes a backseat in elections



SHIVAJI SARKAR

As India's election fever rises, the spotlight shifts from core economic issues to religious controversies and symbolic debates



In this dance of democracy, scarce resources are seemingly rambling over the election tempo. The religious slant on employment and siller issues like the mangal sutra raised are for diverting from the core issue that has as yet to be answered by the pre-poll slogan of "we are the fifth largest economy". Aren't we that large? Some stats say that but the country has tougher stats to counter like the difficult balance of payments and still grim, Manipur the embattled State, for the failure of the provincial Government has over 67000 people displaced during the last year because of the ethnic conflict. There are also reports that farmers plough into the Punjab BJP poll campaign and express similar wrath in Haryana as well. They tell a political party to be people-friendly as also kisans are not born for doles. And Agniveers on their death are not being given a salute is a national cry.

Jobs not being there is the reality. Urban joblessness has risen to 6.7 per cent from 6.5 per cent in March 2024. The men's unemployment has jumped to 6.3 per cent from 5.8 per cent. Periodic labour survey data is a pointer to difficult job scenarios. This is reflected in the elections by the Bihar caste survey that indicates more difficult situations for marginal castes, a detested reality. Caste denotes empowerment as well as deprivation.

Would a Congress manifesto professing over 50 per cent reservation serve the issue? The BJP contests it. It is accused of wanting to rob reservations. It is repeatedly denied by RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat. No party has answered if jobs are not there, how would a reservation help? National Commission for Backward Classes has warned West Bengal and Punjab Governments for not "fully using the space available under the 50 percent ceiling for reservations for scheduled castes, tribes and backward classes and OBCs". It asked Bengal to increase it by 5 per cent and Punjab by 13 per cent. It finds that



THE MAHANAVRATNA AND NAVRATNA INDUSTRIES WERE DOING WELL WHEN MOST OF THESE WERE AXED OR SABOTAGED, LIKE AIR INDIA AND HMT, TO FACILITATE THE GROWTH OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR, WHICH EARNED HUGE PROFITS BUT DID NOT CREATE JOBS

Bengal filled up 45 per cent of the quota and Punjab only 37 per cent. The worst may be Arunachal Pradesh. Yet another sex racket is busted with eight Government officials among 21 arrested. The International Labour Organisation finds 28 million men women and children are in forced labour due to a cycle of poverty. Of these 63 percent are in the private sector. Forced labour generates \$ 236 billion in illegal profits globally every year.

"We now know that the situation has only got worse. The international community must urgently come together to take action to end this injustice," said the ILO Director General.

The report, titled 'Profits and poverty: The economics of forced labour', also estimates that traffickers and criminals are generating close to \$10,000 per victim, up from \$8,269 (adjusted for inflation) a decade ago. The survey also said that forced commercial sexual exploitation contributes to more than two-thirds (73 per cent) of overall illicit profits, despite accounting for only 27 per cent of all victims in privately imposed work. "Total annual illegal profits from forced labour are highest in Europe and Central Asia (\$84 billion), followed by Asia, including India and the Pacific (\$62 billion), the Americas (\$52 billion), Africa (\$20 billion) and the Arab States (\$18 billion)," the report said.

The ILO cautions India. It also worked on conditions of Indian labour in the Arab countries. In a scenario, where people compromise with their dignity, the ILO doubts the figures on India's galloping progress. The supposed \$3 trillion economy, highly burdened

with debt, has an annual repayment of over Rs 10.4 lakh crore.

Economic issues remain at the forefront of the voters. Globally shrinking jobs, particularly in IT, has rattled many Indians. Political parties offering sops of reservations or apprenticeships of Rs 1 lakh a year (approx. Rs 8000 plus a month) sells well among the burgeoning numbers of jobless, who are already hit by one of the highest inflation of 55 per cent in ten years. It is not easy for them to manage it amid farmers' distress and the trade deficit widening to a four-month high at \$19.1 billion. Exports rise by one per cent to \$35 billion and imports by over 10 per cent to \$54.1 billion. This upsets the Government's calculations on the impending forex reserves.

How would the country improve the job scenario? The age-old move to wean the workers away from the farms has failed. Still, agriculture employs over 54 per cent of the Indian workers. The Nehruvian economy created robust public sector organisations. In 1994-2000, PSUs employed 19.4 million (about 2 crores) people or 69 per cent of the total employed. The other 31 per cent were employed in the central and State Governments. Some 3.4 million jobs were added to non-farm payrolls and unemployment at 5.6 per cent had fallen from 6.6 per cent.

In sharp contrast, in 2021-22, PSU employment reduced to 8.61 lakh. And it is gradually reducing. According to official statistics, employment in the organized sector is now a mere 8.34 per cent, of which the public sector accounts for 5.77 per cent and the private sector only 2.58 per cent in the total employment generated.

The Government's massive infra investment of Rs 11 lakh crore this fiscal may have added some jobs in the construction sector but these short-term jobs are not considered quality work. Apart from infra investments are subject to erosion in many ways, right from excess cost estimation to longer gestation.

So the promise of reservation is a dream. According to CMIE, employment in India increased by a mere 5.8 million till March 2023. An additional 119 million people were not added to the potential labour force during the same. The estimates show that self-employment has been the chief driver of the Indian job market, which was hit hard by demonetisation crushing a parallel self-sustained economy.

Poll promises apart, the country is in the grip of a severe economic crisis. Ideally, more PSUs are required to stop labour exploitation in the private sector as well as their disinclination to create jobs. The Mahanavratna and Navratna industries were doing well when most of these were axed or sabotaged like Air India and HMT to facilitate the growth of the private sector, which earned huge profits but did not create jobs.

Reversing it would require revival and reforming the Planning Commission and reshaping the economy in the public sector where the private sector would have to compete on equal terms. Reservations to benefit the deprived castes then only would yield results. Would a revamp be possible?

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

Complex challenges necessitate consciousness and policy shift

India's pressing issues demand pragmatic action and a collective mindfulness shift for lasting, transformative change

India faces multitudes of challenges arising from different quarters. It is tempting to think of these problems as belonging to society, polity, economics etc. But essentially all problems have their roots in the mind of the human being and arise from a lack of adequate understanding of the self. The solutions therefore have to be both in the external and the internal domain. Let us look at the five major conflicts and challenges plaguing India. A vision for the future would involve constructively responding to these problems.

1. Climate Change
It is well-established that climate change is an anthropogenic phenomenon. Ladakh is already agitating about the palpable changes that climate change is inflicting on the



ACHARYA PRASHANT

region's ecology. Five years is too long a time if India does not immediately take corrective steps. There is a terrifying lack of public awareness on this issue leading to political inaction. How are we planning to deal with swathes of terrible heat waves that are going to engulf the country? What will diminishing crop yields and extreme weather events do to the poor? Do we not know the origins of the toxic air that we

are consuming or the water distress we are facing? We continue to wreck the Himalayas with deforestation and the construction of massive carbon-emitting infrastructure, despite knowing that this is causing erratic rain patterns, melting of the glaciers and eventual destruction of life as we know it.

Blind lust for consumption comes from the blind belief that consumption is an indicator of the fulfilment or success of one's life. The sheer size of our population coupled with this notion of consumerism is a recipe for self-destruction. In the next 5 years, we need education and mass-awareness programs on this biggest threat that mankind faces and also genuine efforts towards correcting the consumption-

based flawed philosophy of life, through programs on self-awareness.

2. Animal Rights
The same lust that threatens to destroy the planet also co-opts the rights of all living creatures on Earth. The problems of animal rights violations, ecology loss and biodiversity extinction - all arise from the same source. When we talk of animal rights, it is today unfortunately a struggle for the basic right to survive. Close to 50% of all living species on the planet have gone extinct in the last 50 years. Most of it is because of violent human action. 100-1000 species go extinct every day. Also, this is 100 to 1000 times faster than the natural extinction rate.

As Indians and as humans, we can survive either physically or

spiritually with the kind of carpet 'speciecide' we have launched against the entire planet. In its scale and brutality, it exceeds any act of violence the Earth has ever seen. It is especially lamentable to see that India, with its Ahimsa, is among the worst perpetrators of atrocities towards life-forms. Be it meat exports, the expansion of the dairy industry, or the organised destruction of animal habitats through so-called developmental activities, it only augurs doom for all.

In the next 5 years, I wish to see direct and strong action on this front, which can only result from an arousal of public consciousness.

3. Education
Public statistics on the State of India's education portray the

deep waters that the country is in. There are startling revelations on the basic quantitative and linguistic abilities of school students, not to mention the unemployability of college pass-outs. Compared to the developed world and the mass of developing countries, this highlights the utter lack of importance that Indian society places on education.

The problems of today can have only spiritual solutions and we have kept the young population oblivious of spirituality. Our education has become very dangerously anti-life. A human being is alive only if he can reflect and understand. There is a need to urgently ramp up the basic education infrastructure of the country and also to prioritize the integration of life

education into the modern education system.

In the next 5 years, we need to see an education system that places deep emphasis on both Vidya (knowledge of the self) and Avidya (knowledge of the world).

4. Protection of rights of the marginalised communities
More than half of the world's wealth resides in the hands of less than 1% of individuals. The situation in India is no different. When national resources are commanded by just a few individuals, the outcome is that much of the world is plagued by poverty, even starvation. The glamorization of wealth and the promise of pleasure has made the middle classes disconnected and indifferent to the stark realities of the world.

In the next few years, the rights of the vulnerable sections must be defended in all ways - through education, legal frameworks and socio-religious reform.

5. Creative and dignified employment for the youth
Work is not something that you can choose as per the prevailing norms in your academic institution family or community. I would want to see, in the next 5 years, the creation of an academic, social and economic environment that brings creative vocation to the youth, not just as a means of livelihood but as the fulfilment of life itself.

(The author is a Vedanta teacher, author and the founder of Prashant Advait Foundation; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

Zinc demand in India likely to double in next 5-10 years

The demand of zinc is expected to double in India in the next five to 10 years on the back of huge investments in infrastructure sector, including steel, International Zinc Association said on Sunday. The demand for zinc in India depends largely on the growth of the steel market as zinc is mainly used to galvanise steel to protect it from corrosion. "I see a doubling of the demand (for zinc) in the next five to 10 years. The market for primary and refined zinc in India is currently close to 800 to 1,000 tonnes (per annum) and has a great opportunity to increase with all the developments that we are witnessing in India. We see huge investments in additional steel capacity and...steel still needs to be protected by galvanized coatings. We see a lot of plans and investments going on for new galvanizing lines. So I expect a strong role for zinc in India," International Zinc Association Global Director Martin Van Leeuwen said in an interaction.



Egyptair looks to operate daily services connecting Delhi, Cairo

Encouraged by rising traffic between Egypt and India, Egyptair is looking to operate daily flights connecting Delhi and Cairo, according to a senior executive. Currently, the Egyptian carrier, which started operations in India more than four decades ago, has nine weekly flights to Cairo. Out of them, five flights are from Mumbai and the remaining four are from the national capital. "We hope to operate daily flights from Delhi to Cairo," the airline's Country Manager Amr Aly said on Sunday. He said that air traffic between the two countries has improved and there is also transit traffic to other places. The carrier started Delhi-Cairo flights last August. The services on this route are operated with A320 neo aircraft and Boeing 737-8 plane is used for flights connecting Mumbai and Cairo. Egyptair, part of the Star Alliance, has a codeshare partnership with Air India.



Dr Reddy's, Sun Pharma, Aurobindo recall products in US

Drug makers Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Sun Pharma and Aurobindo Pharma are recalling products in the US market due to manufacturing issues, as per the latest Enforcement Report of the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA). Dr Reddy's Laboratories is recalling close to 20,000 cartons of a medication used to control blood phenylalanine levels in adults and children. Princeton (New Jersey) based Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Inc. is recalling Javygtor (sapropterin dihydrochloride) Powder for Oral Solution (100mg) due to it being a "Sub-potent Drug", USFDA stated. The company is also recalling another lot of sapropterin dihydrochloride for the same reason, it added. The USFDA said the drug maker initiated the Class I recall in the US on April 8 this year. As per the US health regulator, a Class I recall pertains to defective products that can cause serious health problems.



3 jailed in Patanjali Soanpapadi case

A court here has sentenced three people to six months' imprisonment for violating food safety standards in making Patanjali Elaichi Soanpapadi. Assistant Prosecution Officer Ritesh Verma said that Pithoragarh Chief Judicial Magistrate Sanjay Singh on Saturday also imposed fines of Rs 5,000 to Rs 25,000 on them, besides the jail sentence. Verma said that the court sentenced Leeladhar Pathak, a shopkeeper from the Bering town of Pithoragarh, to six months' imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 5,000 for selling the product.

GDP growth likely to be 6.7% in Q4; 7% in FY24: Ind-RA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India Ratings and Research expects the country's GDP growth rate for the March quarter at 6.7 per cent and around 6.9-7 per cent for the 2023-24 fiscal, its principal economist Sunil Kumar Sinha said. The GDP numbers for the fourth quarter (January-March 2024) and the provisional estimates for the 2023-24 fiscal are scheduled to be released by the government on May 31. The Indian economy grew 8.2 per cent in the June quarter, 8.1 per cent in the September quarter and 8.4 per cent in the December quarter of 2023-24. "We are expecting the fourth quarter growth to be 6.7 per cent and the overall GDP growth for FY24 to be around 6.9-7 per cent," Sinha told PTI Videos in an interview. He said the growth rate in



the first two quarters benefited from a low base, though the 8.4 per cent growth rate in the third (October-December 2023) quarter was surprising. "When we analyse the data, then what is visible is the wedge between the GVA and GDP. A large impetus to Q3 GDP has come from higher tax collection, but this phenomenon is unlikely to be repeated in the fourth quarter. The

ter, the GVA was 7.7 per cent and GDP 8.1 per cent. GDP is the total value of goods and services produced in a given period. GVA is GDP minus net taxes (gross tax collection minus subsidy). The Reserve Bank, in its monetary policy review in April, projected GDP growth for 2023-24 at 7 per cent. As regards the economic growth in the current fiscal, Sinha said the GDP is expected to expand at 7.1 per cent. "Even if we set aside the tax component, the momentum witnessed in the first and second quarters has continued in the subsequent quarters, and the likelihood is that momentum will continue in FY25," he added. The services sector, he said, will continue the momentum, led by construction and electricity, while mining and industrial output will be laggard.

NEGOTIATION ON FTAS

Comm Min holds discussions on formulating SOPs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The commerce ministry has held detailed discussions with senior officials of different departments and trade experts on formulating standard operating procedures (SOP) for negotiating free trade agreements (FTAs), an official said. To discuss the various aspects of these agreements, the commerce ministry has organised a two-day 'Chintan Shivir' on FTA strategy and SOPs for trade negotiations on May 16-17. Suggestions that came up during the discussions included comprehensive consultations with public and private sector players and sharing details of the proposed FTAs with the line ministries, the official said. "Consultations should be held at every stage of FTA negotiations. Representatives of certain ministries suggested

the commerce ministry to share FTA details with them in a timely manner so that they can prepare their views on those agreements," the official added. The exercise assumes significance as India is engaging with several trade partners to negotiate free trade pacts. Former commerce secretaries, trade experts and government officials from ministries, including finance, IT and electronics, and mines, participated in the deliberation. In the Chintan Shivir, various issues were discussed,

including India's trade strategy and vision 2047; economic assessment and modelling of FTAs; inclusion of new disciplines into FTAs such as labour, environment, gender, and indigenous people; services and digital trade; and SOPs for FTA negotiations. A separate session was also organised on leveraging India's FTAs to address new forms/kinds of measures like CBAM (carbon border adjustment mechanism), supply chain disruptions, critical minerals, and artificial intelligence. India is negotiating trade pacts with the UK, the EU (European Union), Peru, and a comprehensive trade deal with Australia. It is also in talks with the Eurasian Economic Union for a trade agreement. India's goods and services exports in 2023-24 reached an all-time high of US\$ 778.2 billion, up 0.23 per cent from US\$ 776.4 billion in 2022-23.



Mutual Funds invest Rs 1.3 L cr in equities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mutual funds (MFs) showed strong confidence in Indian equities this year, injecting around Rs 1.3 lakh crore, driven mainly by significant retail investor interest and the robust performance of the stock market. Mutual funds, which manage long-term wealth for domestic investors, prioritise the Indian market's underlying growth potential and are less rattled by short-term events like elections, which allows them to keep investing in equities, Tradejini COO Trivesh D said. Additionally, the growing interest in systematic invest-

ment plans (SIPs) on the back of astonishing compounding stories by influencers and industry veterans has perked investors, who otherwise wish to stay away from the markets, to start participating through these mutual funds, he added. According to the data from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), MFs invested Rs 26,038 crore in the first fortnight of the ongoing month and Rs 20,155 crore in April. Moreover, the highest MF buying for 2024 was experienced in March, as they put in a net of Rs 44,233 crore. Also, they invested Rs 14,295 crore in February and Rs 23,010 crore in January.



Bank of Maharashtra tops among PSU banks in business growth

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Bank of Maharashtra recorded the highest growth rate last fiscal in terms of total business and deposit mobilisation among public sector lenders at a time when most banks are facing difficulty in achieving double-digit growth. The Pune-headquartered lender has registered a 15.94 per cent rise in the total business (domestic) in FY24, followed by the country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) with 13.12 per cent growth, according to published financial numbers of the public sector banks (PSBs). However, SBI's total business (deposit and advances) was about 16.7 times higher at Rs 79,52,784



crore compared to Rs 4,74,411 crore of Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) in absolute terms. Similarly, BoM continued to maintain its top spot in

terms of growth in deposit mobilisation, with a 15.66 per cent rise in FY24. It was followed by SBI (11.07 per cent), Bank of India (11.05 per cent) and Canara Bank (10.98 per cent). Out of 12 public sector banks, only these four lenders could log a double-digit growth in deposits in the financial year 2023-24. In terms of low-cost CASA deposits, the Bank of Maharashtra continued to top the chart with 52.73 per cent growth, followed by the Central Bank of India with a 50.02 per cent rise at the end of March 2024. A higher level of current account and savings accounts helps banks to keep their cost of funds low. With regard to loan growth, the Kolkata-based UCO Bank was a tad higher at 16.38 per cent, followed by BoM at 16.30 per cent. SBI also reported 16.26% growth in advances in FY24.

Reliance seeks access to ATF pipelines, storages of PSU oil firms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Industries Ltd has sought access to pipelines and storages that public sector oil companies have built over the years for supplying jet fuel (ATF) from depots and oil refineries to airports, as it looks for a larger pie of fuel trade at some of Asia's busiest airports. Reliance, which produces a fourth of India's aviation turbine fuel (ATF), wants access to storage depots outside the Delhi airport as well as to pipelines leading to Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad airports. It currently supplies small volumes of ATF when compared with supplies made

by state-owned firms. The firm made the suggestion in its comments to oil regulator PNGRB's draft regulation calling for supply of ATF in all existing and future airports through pipelines that can be accessed by any supplier so as to bring in competition and cut fuel cost. While the fuel market is open, airplanes at the country's busiest airports are fed by pipelines that were built by state-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) over decades.



Tea major B&A Ltd ventures into retail segment

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

For the first time in its over-100-year history, B&A Ltd has forayed into the retail segment through its 'Gatoonga' brand of black tea, a top company official said. The brand was launched in Assam on Saturday, with the company looking to tap the market in the home state before entering other parts of the country, B&A Ltd Managing Director Somnath



Chatterjee said. "The company's retail foray has begun with 'Gatoonga' brand by tapping the Assam

market and it will gradually expand across India based on a demand-driven growth strategy," he said. B&A Ltd Deputy Managing Director Dhruva Jyoti Dowerah said the company's parent group had four verticals previously, and the retail branding being the fifth one. The existing verticals are tea manufacturing and processing, packaging, tea tourism and broking.

Trade ties with India suspended due to 'heavy duties': Pak Foreign Minister

PNS ■ ISLAMABAD

Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has said that trade ties between Islamabad and New Delhi have remained suspended since 2019 due to the imposition of "heavy duties" by India on imports from Pakistan after the Pulwama attack. In a written reply submitted to the National Assembly on Saturday, Dar, who also holds the deputy prime minister's slot, said: "India decided to



impose 200 per cent duty on imports from Pakistan, suspended the Kashmir bus service and trade across the Line of Control after the Pulwama attack." According to the Dawn newspaper, Dar was responding to a question by Pakistan Peoples Party lawmaker Sharmila Faruqui seeking details about trade challenges faced by Pakistan in its relations with neighbouring countries, especially India.

FPIs withdraw Rs 28,200 cr from Indian equities on poll jitters

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign investors have pulled out a massive Rs 28,200 crore from Indian equities so far this month, owing to uncertainties about the outcome of the general elections and attractive valuations of Chinese markets. The withdrawal was way higher than a net pullout of over Rs 8,700 crore in April on concerns over a tweak in India's tax treaty with



Mauritius and a sustained rise in US bond yields.

Before that, FPIs made a net investment of Rs 35,098 crore in March and Rs 1,539 crore in February. Going forward, there is likely to be a dramatic change in foreign portfolio investors' (FPIs) equity flows in response to election results. Political stability will attract huge inflows in the Indian market, VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

Govt recovers Rs 852 cr under amnesty scheme for exporters

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has recovered about Rs 852 crore under the amnesty scheme for exporters for one-time settlement of default in export obligation by the holders of advance and EPCG authorisations, an official said. The figures are likely to increase further as the exercise is on for the compilation of the data, the official added. The government has fixed March 31 as the last date for

payment of customs duty plus interest. Under the scheme, 6,705 applications were filed and as per the provisional figures, an amount of about Rs 852 crore has been recovered. This figure is further expected to increase," the official said. Meanwhile, several small exporters have requested the government to continue the scheme for a one-time settlement of default in export obligation till September. Ludhiana-based Hand Tools



Association President SC Ralhan has said several small exporters have not been able to

avail of the benefits of the scheme due to fulfilling their obligations to make payments to MSMEs within 45 days. In the new foreign trade policy (FTP), the scheme was announced for exporters for one-time settlement of default in export obligation by the holders of advance and EPCG (export promotion for capital goods) authorisations. Under the scheme, all pending cases of the default in meeting export obligation (EO) of certain authorisations can be regularised by the authorisation holder on payment of all customs duties that were exempt-

ed in proportion to unfulfilled EO and interest at 100 per cent of such duties exempted. India's merchandise exports rose by 1 per cent to US\$ 34.99 billion in April, even as the trade deficit widened to a four-month high of US\$ 19.1 billion during the month, according to government data. Imports also increased by 10.25 per cent to US\$ 54.09 billion in the month under review from US\$ 49.06 billion in April 2023 due to a significant jump in gold imports.

ITC's Sanjiv Puri assumes charge as CII president

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sanjiv Puri, Chairman and Managing Director of ITC, has assumed office as the president of the Confederation of Indian Industry for 2024-25, the chamber said on Sunday. He takes over from R Dinesh, Chairman of TVS Supply Chain Solutions. Puri heads ITC Ltd, a conglomerate with businesses in FMCG, hotels, paperboards & packaging, agribusiness, and IT.

He is also the Chairman of ITC Infotech India Ltd, its subsidiaries in the UK and US, and Surya Nepal Private Ltd. Rajiv Memani takes over as President-Designate of CII for 2024-25. He is Chairman of the India region of EY (Ernst & Young), a leading global professional services organisation. He is also a member of EY's global management body as the Chair of its Global Emerging Markets Committee.

'I would have been somewhere else if I'd catered to *Log Kya Kahenge* in real life'

TEJAL SINHA

Peer pressure—something that we've all been aware of and, on the other hand, something that is very well portrayed in the Prime Video series *Dil Dosti Dilemma*.

The series shows how a smart and young girl, Asmara, comes from a wealthy family in Bengaluru and is eager to spend her summer vacation in Canada. However, her plans take an unexpected turn when she arrives at Tibbri Road, her maternal grandparents' middle-class neighbourhood. What she originally perceives as a punishment evolves into a journey of new experiences and realisations. Through mishaps, new friendships, a growing relationship, and many beautiful moments, Asmara realises that there is more to life than financial possessions and luxurious trips. *The Pioneer* quickly connects with the national-award-winning actress Tanvi Azmi, who plays the character of Asmara's Naani, discussing this important theme.

"See, it's coming-of-age for this girl, and she has been exposed to these readily available roads and hi-fi places," begins the much-celebrated actress. She feels that, unfortunately, these are the value systems that these youngsters are growing up with.

Going ahead, she shares, "I feel why this went right was the incredible choice of her mother to take that responsibility of cancelling her trip to Canada and sending her to the godforsaken lower middle-class locality, which is a completely unfamiliar territory for her. I think what is commendable about this is that the parents are stepping in and deciding that this is enough and that this is not how you are going to behave. I don't know, as a mother, if I would have the guts to do this. She (Asmara) realises how flippant, friv-



olous, and false her life is and how she's keeping up with it."

The peer pressure is certainly something that many youngsters these days have put themselves under. And in fact, as we discuss much in detail about the same, the *Bajirao Mastani* actress shares, "If you ask me, parents are just throwing money on their children, so the value of money and relationships have just disappeared, which is very tragic."

She also speaks of how important it is for conversations between elders and youngsters to happen like dialogue and not about imposing authority. Youngsters these days,

she says, are no doubt anti-authoritative, and there's a need to keep it as give-and-take in the conversations. "In *Dil Dosti Dilemma*, Asmara gives some valuable lessons to her grandmother, and her grandmother gives her value lessons, sharing each other's point of view. Somehow, I don't know how people have been blown away by this story. For me, it was a normal thing because I grew up in a joint family. So I felt this was an important show in that sense for older people to get perspective and also for the younger people."

Be it in *Akele Hum Akele Tum*, *Dushman*, *Mela*, *Raja Ko Rani Se Pyar Ho Gaya*, *Delhi-6*, *Thappad*, *Tribhanga*, and *Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani*, to name a few, screen space never defined her presence. But with *Bajirao Mastani*, we got to see a whole different Tanvi Azmi altogether. In fact, she shares, "I am always approached for characters that require me to be warm, strong, loving, and everything at the same time, but never like that of a character in

Bajirao Mastani. When I went to meet Sanjay for *Bajirao Mastani*, he said you've only played these strong, warm, and loving characters. How would you be able to play this? I was like, You need to have faith in yourself for choosing me as an actor, and you need to see if I'm capable or not. One needs to understand that, as actors, that's what you are supposed to do, and that's your job. Just because you are good at being warm, sensitive, and affectionate, you can just not keep playing the same. There has to be something else on your platter. Now I'm being approached for a lot of antagonistic roles also, which is great."

Log kya kahenge (What will people say!) This phrase is something that many people, not just previous generations, but also younger generations, are concerned about. And as we see, that's something that her character too thinks of in the *Dil Dosti Dilemma*. Certainly not someone who believes in this in real life, she says, "Interesting question, yaa. Actually, this is who I am. I am completely mad, vibrant, and sarcastic. I know I can be fun, so I am all of that, but I will still bring those bits to Naani as and when required. You know, sometimes it's just the look, but the point is that you have to touch the core of the character, which is what I feel, and once you do that, everything flows and things come automatically. Log kya kahenge toh woh generation ka toh hai hi (What will people say? It is definitely of that generation); in fact, not just that generation but also a lot of us are holding on to ourselves. Even today, kids are like, they will judge me. It's only as you grow older that you realise that nobody really has time for you and nobody's judging you. They will say one sentence and move on in their lives. You have to see what you need to do. Frankly, I've never been one to cater to *Log Kya Kahenge*. Maine toh itna sab kuch kiya hai, agar maine socha hota toh kahin aur hi hoti. Hindu Maharashtrian Brahmin girl marrying a Muslim at the age of 21 ab uske aage aap kya karenge (What will Longe say? I have done a lot of things, and if I had given it a thought, I would have been somewhere else. Hindu Maharashtrian Brahmin girl marrying a Muslim at the age of 21 (what will you do next)? So after that sab kuch maaf (everything is forgiven), you need to stop worrying about the world. The world is not worrying about you."

National-award-winning actress Tanvi Azmi, who was recently seen in the Prime Video series *Dil Dosti Dilemma*, discusses with *The Pioneer* the central theme of the series and enunciates the thought process of her character with her real-life experiences.

TRANSFORMING HIS CIVIL SERVICE DREAMS INTO A THRIVING START-UP

In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, Surajit Kalita takes us through his journey from being a civil servant and working with the Assam government to creating his own AI special interest group in Hyderabad.

RASHMI BHUMIREDDY

Life is all about surprises that come to your plate, consisting of unexpected twists and turns. Well, similar is the story of this young man from Assam. Well, many dream of cracking the civil service examination, don't they? But Surajit Kalita, on the other hand, not only cracked the state civil services examination, but in order to pursue his desire of getting into managing consultancy, he quit his civil servant job.

Hailing from Guwahati, he comes from a family where his late father, K.N. Kalita, worked as the proprietor of a civil construction firm. Having been brought up by his mother, who was a homemaker, who managed to handle the finances, along with the education of his and his other two sisters and other expenses through the properties.

"Since childhood, I always aspired to become a civil servant so that I could contribute to the socio-economic development of Assam," begins Surajit on a brighter note in this exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*.

Fortunately, he achieved his dream by passing the state civil service exam on his first attempt in 2018. "I have many fond memories from my time as a civil servant. It provided me with ample opportunities to serve in various leadership roles across different capacities. While working as a civil servant, I joined as an executive magistrate for the government of Assam. I served in three rural districts, taking care of economic development, administration, law and order, revenue collection, disaster management, and the conduct of elections under the ambit of the ECI. I was responsible for managing the state's response to saving and rehabilitating people during natural disasters."

He found himself doing the service in the highly flood-prone districts of Morigaon and Kamrup. Additionally, he led the Health Department during the fight against COVID-19. Furthermore, he was also responsible for managing law and order and also led from the front to manage and contain violent mass protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

Surajit, who was also involved in many developmental projects aimed at uplifting

women and children in rural Assam, somehow shifted his career from a stable government job to a management consultancy. In regards to this, he goes on further and shares, "While a government job undoubtedly offers many opportunities and a secure career, it also comes with limitations in terms of geography and jurisdiction. When I joined, I aimed to serve the people of my state with full dedication and capability. I am proud to say that during my time as a civil servant, I achieved all the goals I had set for myself. However, I realised the need to upskill and prepare myself for the rapid innovation and progress the world is experiencing. Management consulting offers the opportunity to stay updated with these transformations and solve problems for both businesses and people."

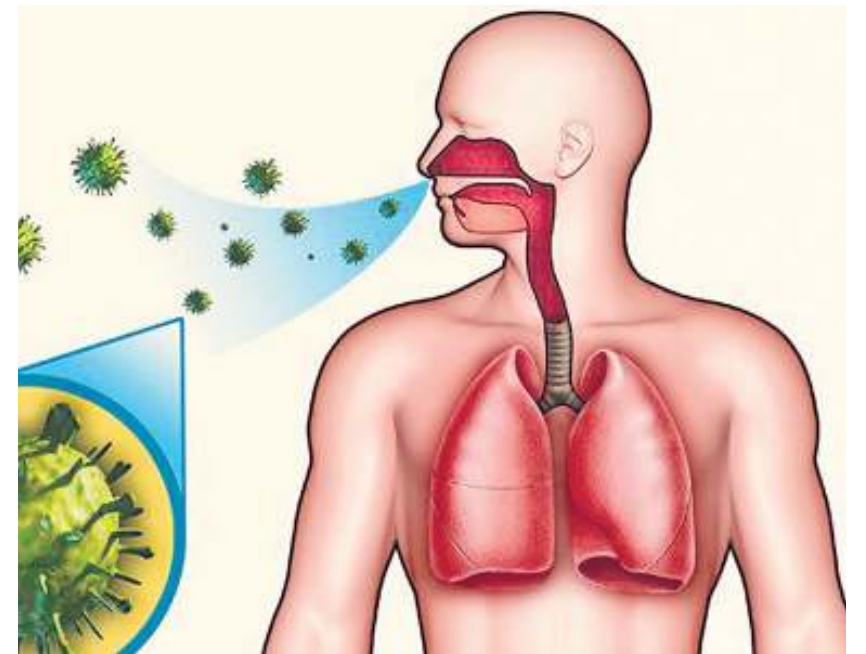
Thus, he went on to pursue a Post Graduate Program (PGP) in Strategy and Information Technology at the Indian School of Business, Hyderabad.

His learning experience at ISB, he says, was truly enriching and transformative. He further shares, "The program provided me with a holistic understanding of business management, honed my analytical skills, and equipped me with the tools necessary to tackle complex problems in various domains. One of the most valuable aspects of ISB was its faculty and leadership conclaves. The professors and experts in the conclaves brought real-world experience to us, which made the learning more practical and relevant. Their insights into industry trends, case studies, and best practices were invaluable. Moreover, its diverse student cohort enhanced my learning experience since interacting with peers from diverse backgrounds and industries broadened my perspective and allowed me to learn from their experiences. Collaborating with them on projects and assignments not only improved my teamwork and communication skills but also exposed me to different approaches to problem solving."

During his tenure at ISB, he and other co-

founders launched an AI special interest group (SIG). This platform allows students who are interested in AI to share knowledge, resources, and insights. Members discuss the latest developments, research papers, and case studies in the field, enhancing their understanding of AI concepts and applications. It also facilitates networking among students, faculty, and industry professionals interested in AI. Through events like guest lectures, panel discussions, and networking sessions, members connect with experts and potential mentors, expanding their professional network and gaining valuable insights into career opportunities in AI.

While the SIG membership is currently limited to the ISB ecosystem, we have organised numerous sessions in collaboration with other prominent institutions, including MIT Sloan and several IITs, that helped build a wider and more accessible community.



Valley fever demystified!

Valley Fever is an infection caused by the fungus *coccidioidomycosis* scientifically known as *coccidioidomycosis*. It attaches to an individual's lungs leading to severe coughing and difficulty in breathing. It poses a greater risk to children, elderly people, or persons with weak immune systems due to their vulnerability levels where they cannot fight it effectively as compared to others who are healthy against it.

Causes and Transmission

Valley fever is a disease that occurs when fungal spores are inhaled from the soil. These spores are usually present in arid environments characterized by dust. They become airborne when the soil is disturbed or during processes such as land cultivation, building, or wind. When inhaled, these molds can attach themselves to the lungs, and this causes infection.

Symptoms

Valley Fever's effects are different in different people, they may be mild on the one hand but severe in others.

- A slight fatigue, a cough, fever, shortness of breath, hurried headache, and night sweats may often be used to describe the symptoms associated with this disease and others with valley fever hence causing confusion for doctors trying to diagnose the right case among these cases.

- It can be more dangerous for people with weak immune systems e.g. in cases of such diseases or conditions as HIV/AIDS, organ transplant, or corticosteroid intake.

- In its extreme forms, this sickness may spread from one part of the body (generally the lungs) to another like the brain, spinal cord, bones, and joints leading to likely fatal complications.

Diagnosis

Valley fever is difficult to diagnose because it has symptoms similar to other respiratory diseases. The disease is diagnosed by healthcare practitioners through clinical approach and tests. Therefore,

they may have to perform blood tests, take chest X-rays, or even use CT scan images. They may also do blood cultures for fungus detection.

Prevention

It is unfortunate that as of now, there is no vaccine against Valley Fever. Yet, there's something people could do to decrease their chances of catching it. One could avoid going to areas where it is common when there is too much wind or dust around, putting on safety garments whenever they are doing their job in dirty places, and also remaining indoors prior and amid dust storm.

Treatment

The type of treatment for Valley Fever depends on how serious the disease is.

- For mild cases, those which are not too much, some people may take some antifungal drugs so that this fungal infection gets cleared.

- However, other forms of therapy are required in instances where the sickness is severe involving lung infections or meningitis so that the fungus is gotten rid of. These include having patients under anti-fungal medication from an indefinite future point alongside being admitted into the hospital at times.

Valley Fever is a very serious respiratory disease due to breathing in fungi spores found in soil. Typically, it shows mild symptoms however, people who have weak immunity are more likely to suffer from these symptoms heavily if they contract it.

The infection must be diagnosed early and managed through effective treatment to prevent dangerous complications that could prove life-threatening. By learning how to spot the signs of Valley Fever, detecting it early could protect anyone affected by this hidden danger of the desert.

(The author, Dr. Gera Smitha Raj, is a Consultant Dermatologist, at Apollo Clinic in Chandanagar.)



Actress Raashi Khanna launched the new Venus: The Goddess of Emerald collection at Mangatrai Neeraj, at Lumbini Jewel Mall in Banjara Hills road no: 2. This new collection, designed by Nayan Gupta, represents a perfect blend of tradition and modernity, showcasing the unmatched beauty of emeralds in contemporary designs.

PARTY

Photos by- SV Chary

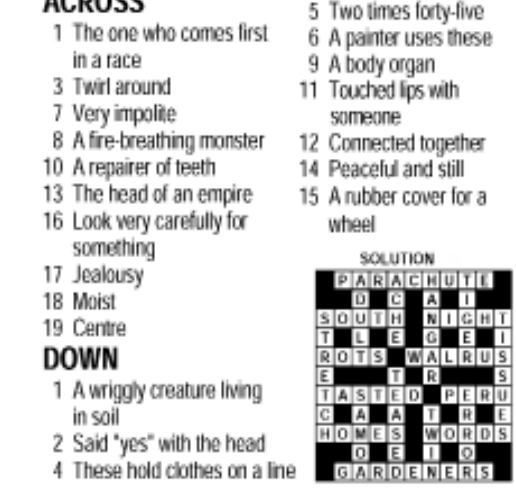
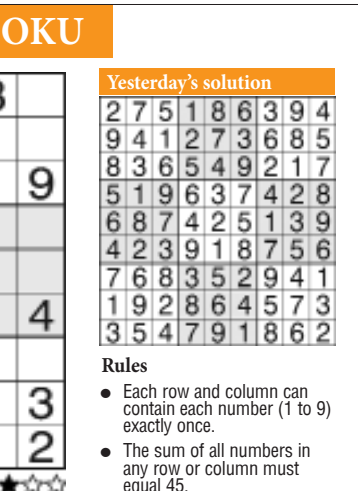
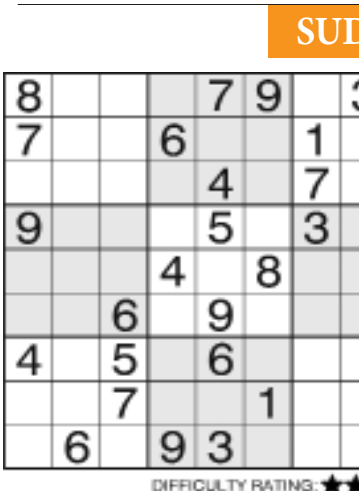
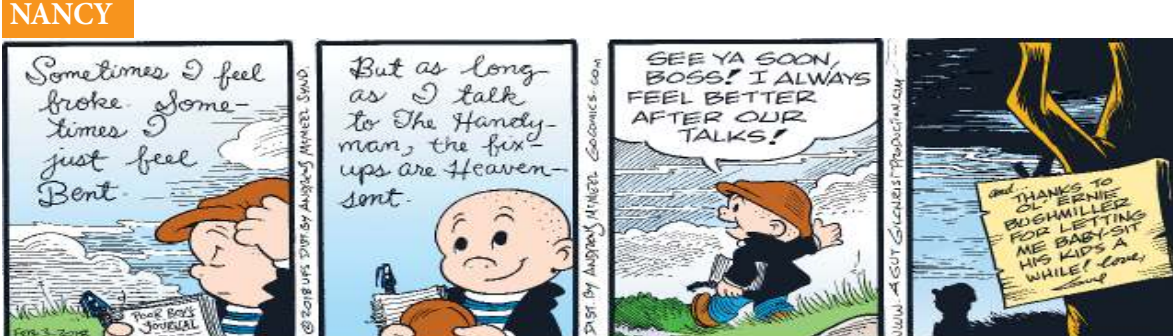


Several dignitaries and celebrities, attended the reception ceremony of businessman Mohammed Omer Azam Ali's son, Alhaj Mohammed Azam Ali, and the daughter of Mohammed Mukram Ali, which was held at the Celebration Convention venue in Shamshabad.



Serilingampally Congress Party Incharge V. Jagadeeshwar Goud, and Autumn Salon business head Sridhar Babu, launched its new branch in Chanda Nagar.

FUN



Actress Tanvi Akaansha Koppineedi, who is all set to make her theatrical debut with Vijaya Bhaskar's *Usha Parinayam*, gets candid with *The Pioneer* over an exclusive call, sharing interesting insights about her breakthrough in the industry.

'MY CHARACTER IN USHA PARINAYAM HAS DIFFERENT SHADES & EMOTIONS'

TEJAL SINHA

Tanvi Akaansha Koppineedi, is all set to make her theatrical debut with the upcoming Vijaya Bhaskar-helmed *Usha Parinayam*. What makes this project even more special is that Tanvi will be seen playing the lead protagonist opposite Sree Kamal.

Well, this is not going to be the first time that she's going to show us her acting prowess, because it was in 2021 when she starred in the Zee5-streamed *Alanti Sitrulu*. The OTT project was undeniably a film she's always going to be grateful for. Not only was it her first-ever project, but it was through *Alanti Sitrulu* that she got to learn anything and everything about the shooting process. However, it didn't seem easy for her to post that after going to multiple auditions. But again, getting to the auditions was also not a cakewalk because she had to constantly look through Instagram and make casting calls.

"Since I was four years old, I have always dreamt of being an actress," recalls the budding star in this exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*. And so, watching her film on the big screens is definitely going to be a surreal and dream-come-true moment. "Ever since I was a kid, I was trying to get that one project, and finally it happened with *Alanti Sitrulu*, which in a way helped me a lot." In fact, when she was a four-year-old, she auditioned for a kid's role in *Jai Chiranjeeva*, alongside megastar Chiranjeevi. However, I couldn't make it through.

Breakthrough projects also bring different emotions and challenges. However, with *Usha Parinayam*, she shares,

"Everybody on set made it very easy for me, especially sir, my director (Vijaya Bhaskar). He took very good care of me. So, once I got the project, it just felt like I was working with a family; it didn't feel like an outsider for me as such. I consider it a 100% God's blessing that I got to debut with such a talented director who makes such classic films. It's an absolute honour to be under his guidance, to learn from him, and to know him as a director. He is a very kind-hearted person and a beautiful human being. I really hope to work with him again and again."

We wondered how she bagged the project. Well, she goes on to reveal, "My dad is an executive producer in the industry, and through one of his friends (Hari uncle), who is a casting director, he happened to show my profile to sir. I went and met sir, and actually, you know, our interaction was just for five minutes. He just saw me and spoke to me a little bit. I thought I didn't make it because I didn't audition for it, but he told me that when he saw me, he knew I was his Usha." Well, that's so overwhelming!

Further, she also brings in some exclusive revelations: "There were over 200

girls who had auditioned for the role, and a few were, in fact, also finalised. However, it didn't happen with them for some reason, and I got the role."

A special moment from the sets of *Usha Parinayam*: "After I had just done my scene, everyone on the set started clapping for me. I think that is something I will cherish forever after my first shot. We were shooting in Kashmir, and every day was so fun; Kamal would make me laugh and everybody would take care of me," she shares, adding her camaraderie with Kamal: "He is a very humble and down-to-earth person, very sweet, and made me feel extremely comfortable. Not only me; he takes care of everybody on set and is sweet to everybody. He is very talented. It is a privilege to make a debut with such a talented person as him."

The national-award-winning filmmaker Vijaya Bhaskar is known for his romantic comedies. So what can we expect from *Usha Parinayam*? The lead actress shares, "You can expect a romantic comedy. It's a full package; there are commercial aspects to it and a lot of entertainment. At the end of the day, I feel like everybody will feel like I have watched a good movie and family entertainer, and all age groups can watch it." Further shar-

ing some exclusive insights about her character without revealing much detail, she shares, "This role has all kinds of emotions, and she is a strong character. I get to play so many shades in the story, so it's like a beautifully written character, and it's like any heroine would love to debut with. I could really showcase how she is."

Undeniably being a little nervous, and just as her bio reads 'faith over fear', even this time she says, at the end of the day, this was something that she has always dreamt about. "I just had to calm myself. I talked to myself and just kept reading the script. But after my first shot, I got a lot of confidence, and sir was very sweet about it. He was like, 'Don't be nervous, and you can do it'. Kamal was also a very encouraging person. The set had around 70 to 80 people, while *Alanti Sitrulu* had not more than 10 people. So it was very intimidating as everyone was watching me."

Usha Parinayam also has a special mass song that has Seerat Kapoor dazzling the screen with her beauty and moves. Recalling her interaction with the actress, she shares, "I met her, and she is extremely sweet. I went on the last day of the shoot of the song, and I was behind the sets. I feel it is definitely going to be a blast in the theater, and everybody will have fun watching it."

She also discloses that a song was also shot in Dubai. Well, on a concluding note, the budding actress, who is looking forward to working with all of the actors and directors in the Telugu film industry, shares, "I just love Telugu films and hope that the audience will love me and Kamal on-screen. And moving forward, I would love to work with everybody here."



Who is Bujji from *Kalki 2898 AD*?

The anticipation surrounding the magnum opus, *Kalki 2898 AD*, is high among movie enthusiasts worldwide. With the announcement of the revelation of the fifth superstar and Bhairava's best friend, Bujji, on May 22, 2024, excitement knows no bounds. In a fascinating behind-the-scenes glimpse titled 'From Scratch EP4: Building A Superstar', the creators take us on an enthralling journey, starting from director Nag Ashwin's visionary inception back in June 2020. Described as a "superhero," "Bhairava's best friend," and "Best Companion," Bujji's buildup has left netizens guessing and eager to know more about this much-talked-about 5th Superstar of the film. The 2-minute, 22-second video even offers teasing glimpses, including a mysterious encounter

with Prabhas in what appears to be a garage setting, heightening the eagerness for Bujji's grand debut on May 22nd. Moreover, a recent revelation into the realm of *Kalki 2898 AD* through Amitabh Bachchan's portrayal of Ashwatthama has left fans spellbound. The character reveal, celebrated as a true pan-Indian teaser, seamlessly weaves together languages such as Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, and English. Directed by the visionary Nag Ashwin, *Kalki 2898 AD* stands tall as the cinematic event of the year. With an ensemble cast featuring luminaries like Amitabh Bachchan, Kamal Haasan, Prabhas, Deepika Padukone, and Disha Patani, and supported by the esteemed Vyjayanthi Movies banner, the stage is set for a monumental release on 27th June, 2024.



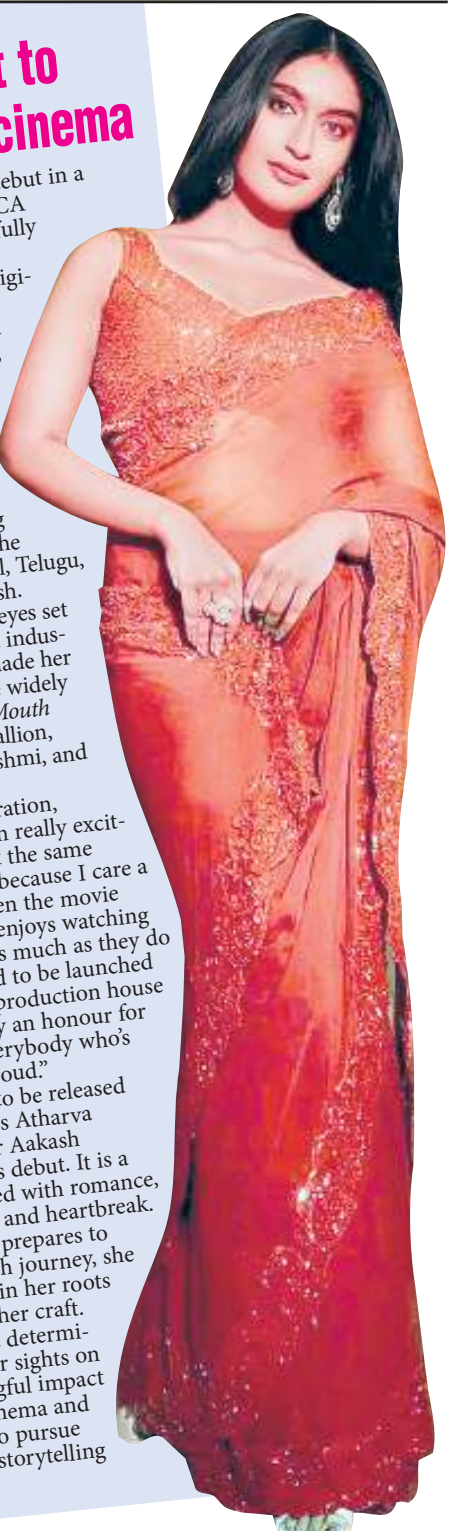
Niharika NM set to debut in Tamil cinema

Niharika NM is set to debut in a Tamil movie with LYCA Productions, successfully setting foot into the world of movies after conquering the digital landscape. While it is her third time at the Cannes Film Festival, she will be attending the festival this year as a debutant actor.

Niharika's debut in Tamil cinema is a testament to her talent and relentless hard work. Niharika has always been quick at picking up languages and accents. She speaks five languages: Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Hindi, and English. Owing to this, she has her eyes set on working across the film industry. Earlier this year, she made her Hollywood debut with the widely popular global show *Big Mouth* alongside Megan Thee Stallion, Jordan Peele, Padma Lakshmi, and Maitreyi Ramakrishnan.

Expressing her exhilaration, Niharika NM says, "I am really excited and really nervous at the same time. I'm nervous only because I care a lot. I just hope that when the movie comes out, everybody enjoys watching me on the big screen as much as they do on the small ones. And to be launched by LYCA, the biggest production house in South India, is truly an honour for me. I hope I make everybody who's ever supported me proud."

The movie, slated to be released early in 2025, features Atharva Murali, with director Aakash Baskaran making his debut. It is a wholesome film filled with romance, comedy, friendship, and heartbreak. As Niharika NM prepares to embark on this fresh journey, she remains grounded in her roots and committed to her craft. With humility and determination, she sets her sights on making a meaningful impact in the world of cinema and inspiring others to pursue their passion for storytelling fearlessly.



Real gold used for Yash's outfits in *Ramayana*

Actor Yash, who will be playing the role of Ravana in Nitesh Tiwari's upcoming film *Ramayana*, will be seen sporting garments made out of "actual gold". A source close to IANS shared details about costumes: "The clothes that are being made for Yash are made of real gold." The demon king's kingdom was known as the 'Golden City of Lanka' according to mythology. The source further shares, "Actual gold is being used because Ravana was the king of Sri Lanka and it was a golden province at that time. So, all his clothes, whatever is being used, are being made in real gold." The upcoming magnum opus also stars Ranbir Kapoor as Lord Rama and Sai Pallavi as Sita. It also has actress Lara Dutta playing Kaikeyi and Arun Govil as Raja Dashrath. Designer duo Rimple and Harpreet, who have made costumes for films like *Padmaavat*, *Housefull 4*, and the series *Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar*, have come aboard to make ensembles for *Ramayana*.

Chandini Chowdary's next is a musical family entertainer

Santhana Prapthirasthu, a musical family entertainer, has been officially launched by producers Madhura Sreedhar Reddy and Nirvi Hariprasad Reddy. The film stars Vikranth and Chandni Chowdary in the lead roles. The movie's formal launch took place in Hyderabad. Produced under the banners of Madhura Entertainment and Nirvi Arts, *Santhana Prapthirasthu* is directed by Sanjeev Reddy. Notably, the screenplay is penned by Sheikh Dawood Ji, known for his work on films like *Venkatadri Express*, *Express Raja*, and *Ek Mini Katha*.

At the launch event, the camera was switched on by producer and businessman Ambika Krishna, while Vasudha Foundation Chairman Mantena Venkata Ramaraju sounded the clapboard. Madhura Sreedhar Reddy directed the first shot, and the both producers handed over the script to director Sanjeev Reddy. Director Sanjeev Reddy stated, "The film is a musical family entertainer. From children to adults, the movie appeals to everyone. We are addressing a contemporary issue in an entertaining manner. The story revolves around a Warangal girl and a Hyderabad boy, portraying a problem faced by a newly married couple."

Director Sanjeev Reddy stated, "The film is a musical family entertainer. From children to adults, the movie appeals to everyone. We are addressing a contemporary issue in an entertaining manner. The story revolves around a Warangal girl and a Hyderabad boy, portraying a problem faced by a newly married couple."



Anand Deverakonda bulks up for *Gam Gam Ganesha* with lean muscle gain!

In preparation for his upcoming film *Gam Gam Ganesha*, Tollywood heartthrob Anand Deverakonda has undergone a stunning transformation, showcasing a significant gain in lean muscle mass. The actor, known for his dynamic performances, is set to portray a character that resonates with the audience in a refreshing way.

In *Gam Gam Ganesha*, Anand takes on the role of a hero with a twist, one who doesn't always emerge victorious but ensures that his efforts are never in vain. What's more striking than his on-screen persona is the dedication he has shown towards his physical transformation. Through rigorous workouts and a disciplined fitness regimen, Anand has sculpted his physique, embodying the essence of his character with authenticity and grit.

The actor shared a picture of his chiseled body he made for the film on X handle and wrote, "Bulking up for *Gam Gam Ganesha!* Rather, I gained some super lean muscle!! Playing a hero who never quite saves the day, but at least the muscles are real. #GamGamGanesha on May 31st #GGG."

Speaking about his journey, Anand expressed, "Portraying this character has been an incredibly rewarding experience. I wanted to ensure that I not only understood the role mentally but also physically. The training sessions were intense, but the results have been truly satisfying."



KIARA ADVANI STUNS AT CANNES

It was "a night to remember," said actor Kiara Advani, who was honoured at the Women In Cinema Gala, which was held alongside the 77th edition of the Cannes Film Festival. Advani was one of the six women to be felicitated at the dinner, hosted by the Red Sea International Film Festival and Vanity Fair Europe on Saturday on the sidelines of the ongoing extravaganza in France. For the event, she opted for an off-shoulder pink and black gown with a bow on the back and black lace gloves. She tied her hair in a high bun, and completed her look with an ornate neckpiece and a ring. The *Satyajug Ki Katha* actor shared a series of photos on her Instagram page on Sunday.



Nee Dhaarey Nee Katha locks release date

The makers of *Nee Dhaarey Nee Katha* announced that the film is all set to hit theatres worldwide on June 14. According to them the movie is an unforgettable journey full of great music and emotions.

Directed by Vamsi Jonnalagadda, this music-based story offers a captivating cinematic experience, combining mind-blowing music with a youthful and engaging story-

line. The film has themes like passion, friendship, determination to achieve our dreams and the bond between father and son. The audience feels like a rollercoaster of emotions. As the music sets the tone, the main theme of the film is perseverance in the face of life's challenges. *Nee Dhaarey Nee Katha* is a must watch movie with a talented cast and a screenplay that entertains all age groups.



KAMAL HAASAN'S INDIAN 2 BRACES FOR PROMOTIONAL BLITZKRIEG

The highly anticipated sequel to the 1996 blockbuster *Indian*, *Indian 2*, starring Universal Hero Kamal Haasan and directed by visionary filmmaker Shankar, is finally nearing its grand release. With post-production nearing completion, the makers are gearing up for a promotional blitzkrieg to reignite the excitement surrounding this cinematic event. The *Indian 2* team has already descended upon Mumbai, kicking off a series of promotions with a stylish appearance



by Kamal Haasan. The "Ulaganayagan" made a dapper entrance at the airport, sporting a trendy casual look and radiating charm and charisma. Fans are eager to hear from Kamal Haasan himself, as he will be promoting *Bharateeyudu 2* (the Telugu title) in Mumbai, engaging with fans and hosts at Star Sports. The film's audio launch is scheduled for a lavish ceremony in Chennai on June 1st, 2024, setting the stage for a grand unveiling of Anirudh Ravichander's musical score. The makers are targeting a worldwide release in July 2024. The first look and teaser of *Indian 2* have already garnered

immense response, fuelled by the presence of a talented cast including Kajal Aggarwal, Rakul Preet Singh, and Priya Bhavani Shankar. The film also features powerful performances by SJ Suryah, Siddharth, and Gulshan Grover. Produced jointly by Subaskaran Allirajah's Lyca Productions and Udhayanidhi Stalin's Red Giant Movies, *Indian 2* is set to reaffirm the creative brilliance of its makers and raise the bar for cinematic excellence. Subaskaran Allirajah, known for his passion for films, is poised to deliver another thought-provoking and entertaining spectacle for audiences.



RCB'S TURNAROUND WILL INSPIRE OTHER TEAMS, SAYS DINESH KARTHIK

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's remarkable turnaround to win six games on the trot and barge into the Indian Premier League playoffs this year, believes wicketkeeper-batter Dinesh Karthik. RCB, who lost seven of their first eight games including six defeats in a row, came back roaring from the brink of elimination in the 17th edition of IPL to make the final four. The Faf du Plessis-led side on Friday got the better of defending champions Chennai Super Kings by 27 runs to seal the fourth spot in the points table. "People will always remember certain journeys. The way we have come back after eight games, we needed to win six, people will remember this team," Karthik was quoted as saying in a RCB release. "Every year in this tournament, when you hit the seven-game mark, there will be one or two teams which would have probably won one



or two and they will look to us and say, 'RCB did it. That was special. We are going to try and repeat what RCB did.' "That is what we all play cricket for, sport for, where people follow us and believe us that they can do something

special. It is hard. It is not going to be easy, I can tell any team that. What we have achieved today is very, very special," Karthik said. RCB will now face the team which finishes third, one among Sunrisers Hyderabad

and Rajasthan Royals, in the Eliminator to be played at Ahmedabad on Wednesday. "We have it within our grasp to do something that people will remember us for many decades. It will be a journey where people will say, 'wow,

that RCB team was special. We are on that journey," Karthik said. Karthik said RCB's confidence was the differentiating factor between them and CSK, a team which has a better bilateral record. "Coming into this game, there was a sense of quiet confidence about us, playing the defending champions, and the way we played we should be really proud," Karthik said. The senior wicketkeeper pointed out RCB's fielding and aggressive batting, despite rain intervention, as the factors which worked for them. "We can proudly say we are the best fielding team in this tournament without a doubt," he said. "Even though it turned, we had a rain break, we had to go, start again, just the way Virat (Kohli) and Faf played the next three overs made it feel like 140-150 could be a decent total. "Most teams would have thought about that and we would have thought about that for a second as well," he said.

Rayudu does not feel Dhoni has played his last match, puts ball in BCCI court

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India batter Ambati Rayudu doesn't feel MS Dhoni has played his last match in the IPL and wants the BCCI to continue with the contentious impact player rule as it could help the long-serving legend to keep going in top-flight cricket. Dhoni's Chennai Super Kings bowed out of this edition of the Indian Premier League following a 27-run defeat to Royal Challengers Bengaluru in a much-anticipated southern derby in Bengaluru on Saturday. The five-time defending champions needed 17 in the final over to qualify for the playoffs on better net run rate, but bowler Yash Dayal, after being hit for monstrous six by Dhoni, held his nerves to help RCB prevail. Later, speaking on Star Sports Cricket Live, Rayudu said, "I don't think this is his last game. I just don't see him wanting to end on this note." Even as the RCB players broke into wild celebrations, Dhoni shook hands with the opposition's reserves and support staff before quietly disappearing into the dressing room. Rayudu said, "He looked a little frustrated, even when he got out. That's very unlike MS



Dhoni, he just wanted to qualify and finish on a high. But you never know with MS Dhoni, he might come back next year." Rayudu, who played under Dhoni at CSK, brought the BCCI into the picture. "... With the impact player role as well, it gives him the opportunity to be able to come in those last few overs and truly make that impact. "BCCI better not remove the impact player role because we still want to see MS Dhoni play. So, it's up to BCCI now. Do we want to see MS Dhoni play or not?" While the match ended in agony for Dhoni and Co, RCB continued their revival with a sixth straight win in a row, a remarkable feat that saw them rise from the bottom of the table to make the playoffs. Speaking of Dhoni, former Australian opener Matthew

Hayden said, "Yeah, I suppose the thing is when you come to the end of your career, whether it is the last part of his career or not, what you don't want to see is diminishing returns as an athlete. "Firstly, as a leader, he is The Thala of the Chennai Super Kings. This is telling me that nothing here is about becoming anything else other than first place. He's desperately using his brains, all of that cricket knowledge. "And of course, the power is there and that's always been MS Dhoni. He's always hit balls at this stage of an innings. At the front, you can understand how players can hit it. But at the back, it's really hard to hit balls." Dhoni made 25 off 13 balls with the help of three fours and a huge six, showing that he can still send the ball a long, long way.

God's plan: Year after Rinku's rapidfire, Yash Dayal redeems himself

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Yash Dayal couldn't shake the haunting memory of Rinku Singh's five consecutive sixes last year as MS Dhoni lofted his full-toss over the Chinnaswamy roof, before regaining his composure to complete the 20th over and clinch RCB's berth in the 2024 IPL playoffs. Dayal, who cut a forlorn figure after being hammered for five sixes in a row by his Uttar Pradesh mate Rinku last season, redeemed himself on Saturday night by defending 17 in the final over against the likes of Dhoni and Ravindra Jadeja. "God's plan baby," that was how Rinku summed the reversal of fortunes for Dayal.

The 26-year-old from Prayagraj was released by Gujarat Titans after the 2023 season but he found a new IPL home in RCB, who showed faith in him by paying a handsome Rs 5 crore at the auction. Dayal not only repaid the faith but also erased the scars of last season. "When I got hit the first ball (by Dhoni), subconsciously you reach that place (Rinku's five sixes off him). But I did well this whole season and I kept telling myself that I just had to bowl a good ball. "I didn't have to look at the scoreboard. I just had to bowl well. I used that confidence in execution," said Dayal who kept RCB's remarkable comeback story alive in this

IPL. The last over also indicated the coming of age for Dayal, who learned from the mistakes he made against Rinku's onslaught. After the full toss that Dhoni duly dispatched out of the ground, Dayal returned to bowling slower balls into the pitch that resulted in the former India captain's wicket and just one run off the following four balls. "The last time what happened with me, it made me a little nervous. But since I have come in the RCB setup, I have worked very hard on practice and I have delivered in matches. I just wanted to focus on bowling two balls well. "Even if when plans were not



executed well, the seniors were standing, they did not scold me or anything. That was a positive thing and it helped me a lot on the ground." In what arguably has been the toughest season for bowlers, Dayal has managed 15 wickets in 13 games at a decent economy rate of 8.94. Dayal was supposed to bowl the penultimate over but a last-minute change of plan saw him bowling one of the most important overs of his life. "Actually, I was going to bowl the second last over. But suddenly DK bhैया and Faf spoke. I don't know what they talked about. They said that Lockie will bowl and then I'll bowl the main over. I was fine

with both." Dayal feels the constant support that he has received from RCB has led to desirable results. "I have got proper backing from RCB. When I came at the start, the management told me that I am an important player. I will be backed from the starting to the end, which is a very good thing. "All the youngsters who were picked, they were told the same thing. That is now visible in the results also." The home crowd was RCB's 12th man as usual and with a play-off berth on the line, the atmosphere fired up the team even more. It is difficult to keep emotions in check at such a juncture but

Dayal tried to calm himself down. "There are so many people around you, there is a whole crowd. So, somewhere or the other, the mind gets diverted. But as a player, we are built for this." He also gave due credit to the army of RCB loyalists. "I had never felt like this since childhood. Whenever I used to watch a RCB match on TV, I never thought that I would be part of this team. Today I am here and I was feeling unreal on the ground. It is an unbelievable crowd and very supportive," added Dayal. What was the turning point of the game? "I think Dhoni bhैया's wicket was the turning point, as the first ball went for six."

OTHERS SPORTS

Satwik, Chirag win Thailand Open title

PTI ■ BANGKOK

In a confidence-boosting performance ahead of Paris Olympics, star Indian shuttlers Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty on Sunday won the Thailand Open Super 500 badminton tournament with a straight-game win over Chen Bo Yang and Liu Yi of China, here. Satwik and Chirag, the world number three pair, prevailed 21-15 21-15 over Liu and Chen, ranked 29th, for their ninth BWF world tour title in men's doubles. It was also the second title of the season for the Asian Games

champions following their triumph at the French Open Super 750 in March. They had also finished runners-up at Malaysia Super 1000 and India Super 750. "It has been a lucky tournament for us. The journey started from here. We lifted this title in 2019 and again we are lifting it here now. After 2019, we went on to win many tournaments and, hopefully, it will give more boost to us in the upcoming important tournaments," Satwik said after the win. "They keep on playing fast and we knew we couldn't relax. Overall, I think it's the best match we played throughout the tournament. We kept



everything calm and under control. So really happy that we played well." Asked about Paris Games, Chirag said: "Not just us but all athletes want to go out there in the Olympics and win that medal and we too want that

and hopefully we will play well there." For Satwik and Chirag, the title comes at a crucial juncture of their careers as they had some low returns in the last couple of tournaments. The Indian pair lost in the second round at All England Championships and then missed the Asia Championships due to an injury to Satwik. The Thomas Cup campaign was also not too fruitful as they lost a couple of narrow matches to top pairs. Satwik and Chirag had come into the Thailand Open final without dropping a game and were favourites to claim the title, while Liu and Chen also produced some stunning wins in the run-up to the summit clash and

had the reputation of never losing a final. However, it was always going to be a tough task to tame the top-seeded Indians, who didn't allow the Chinese to get into long rallies or sustain any pressure. Satwik and Chirag made a superb start by quickly opening up a 5-1 lead. Chen and Liu clawed back with a four-point burst. At 7-7, the Chinese pair won a 39-shot rally and surged ahead to 10-7 before spraying one long. Liu and Chen played a few intense rallies but Chirag unleashed a bullet return to draw level at 10-10 but Liu ensured they had a slender edge at the break.

Messi held scoreless but Inter Miami extends unbeaten string



AP ■ FORT LAUDERDALE

Lionel Messi was kept off the scoresheet for the second consecutive match, but Inter Miami extended its unbeaten string with a 1-0 win over DC United. Leo Campana scored four minutes into second half stoppage time as Miami, 6-0-3 since a 4-0 loss at the New York Red Bulls on March 23, avoided a second consecutive scoreless draw. Campana, who entered the match a minute earlier, received a pass from Sergio Busquets on the right wing and converted on a shot that landed inside the left post. Miami had used its allotted five substitutions but was allowed an additional replacement when United's Martin Rodriguez left the match because of a concussion. Second half stoppage lasted 10 minutes. "I know that lately I have not been getting too many minutes but it is my responsibility to be ready," Campana said in Spanish. "Whether it's 30, 20, 15 or one minute you have to be ready. Thankfully, we had the time to

score the goal." For a team known for its high-powered offense that has produced a league-high 36 goals, Miami secured its second straight shutout. "We were not as fluid offensively and they formed a solid defense," Miami coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino said. "Defensively we worked very well." The win improved Eastern Conference-leading Miami to 9-2-4 with 31 points. DC United dropped to 4-5-5 and 17 points. Messi returned to the lineup after missing Wednesday's match at Orlando because of knee soreness. The Argentine star forward had at least one goal and assist in five consecutive matches until a 3-2 win at Montreal on May 11. Messi began Saturday with a league-leading 12 assists. Tightly marked for most of the match, Messi found a slight opening in the 71st minute, but his shot from 22 yards sailed high above the crossbar. Miami goalkeeper Drake Callender preserved the shutout when he stopped a shot from United's Jacob

Aravindh Chithmabaram beats Salem to claim sole lead in Sharjah

PTI ■ SHARJAH

Indian Grandmaster Aravindh Chithmabaram defeated local star A R Saleh Salem to emerge as the sole leader on 4.5 points after the end of the fifth round of Sharjah Masters chess tournament here. Chithmabaram is now followed by four players, the Iranian duo of Amin Tabatabaei and Bardiya Daneshvar and Americans Hans Moke Niemann and Sam Shankland who all have four points apiece. Top seed Arjun Erigaisi is in the next pack of eight players having 3.5 points each and giving him company here is another Indian in Sankalp Gupta.

With four rounds still to be played in the USD 52000 prize money tournament, as many as 16 players have an identical three points each. The list includes Indians Abhimanyu Puranik, Leon Luke Mendonca, P Iniyan and V Pranav. It turned out to be a tough day at the office for many but Chithmabaram was in his element as he simply crushed Salem in all departments of the game. It was a King's Indian defense by Salem who played black and the middle game saw Chithmabaram exerting pressure on the queen side. It was on the 17th move that the Chennai-based GM unleashed a brilliant tactical sequence, giving up two



minor pieces for a rook. As things turned out, white's position remained better for the rest of the game and Salem was outdone eventually in the endgame wherein white's rook proved superior. The game lasted 48 moves.

Erigaisi was in a spot of bother at some point against Volodar Murzin, the upcoming talent from Russia who has to play under FIDE flag here. After attaining an optically better position in the middle game out of a Queen pawn game,

Erigaisi was on the defensive as Murzin made some steady recovery. He had to liquidate to a rook and pawns endgame where the draw was a just result. Sankalp continued with his impressive run, holding highly regarded Teimour Radjabov of Azerbaijan to a draw while Abhimanyu Puranik could not keep up with his form and lost to Amin Tabatabaei of Iran. Important and Indian results Round 5 (Indians unless specified): Aravindh Chithmabaram (4.5) beat A.R. Saleh Salem (Uae, 3.5); Hans Moke Niemann (Usa, 4) drew with Alexey Sarana (Srb, 3.5); Erigaisi Arjun (3.5) drew with Volodar Murzin (Fid, 3.5); Abhimanyu Puranik (3) lost to Amin Tabatabaei (Iri, 4);

Sankalp Gupta (3.5) drew with Samuel Sevian (Usa, 3); Shreyas Royal (Eng, 3) drew with Nihal Sarin (3); Leon Luke Mendonca (3) drew with Nikolaas Theodorou (Gre, 3); P Iniyan (3) drew with Teimour Radjabov (Aze, 3); V Pranav (3) beat Nodirbek Yakubov (Uzb, 2); Abhimanyu Mishra (2.5) drew with Bharath Subramaniam (2.5); Benjamin Gledura (Hun, 2.5) drew with Pranav Anand (2.5); Aditya Mittal (2.5) drew with Siddharth Jagadeesh (Sgp, 2.5); B Adhian (3) beat Pouya Idani (Iri, 2); Abhijeet Gupta (2.5) drew with Mahdi Gholami Orimi (Iri, 2.5); D Harika (1.5) lost to Emre Can (Tur, 2.5); Yilmaz Mustafa (Tur, 1.5) drew with Raja Rithvik (1.5); S P Sethuraman (1) lost to Yazig