

The Congress government's paddy bonus is bogus. They cheated farmers by saying that they would give Rs 500 bonus only for fine variety rice. I demand the immediate withdrawal of the government's decision to pay bonus only for fine rice. The government should pay a bonus of Rs 500 for all types of paddy from this season. With the latest announcement by the ministers, it is clear that the TG Congress government has no sincerity towards farmers.



- Harish Rao, BRS MLA

P2

Agniveers are not just soldiers but leaders:
CDS

ANKUSH BAHUGUNA
PAVES THE WAY FOR SOUTH ASIAN REPRESENTATIONS AT CANNES

Jr NTR, Prashanth Neel's mega action
EPIC IS ON!

DON'T MISS...

Hyd's score on City Biodiversity ...

Hyderabad's score on the City Biodiversity Index (CBI) improved significantly, marking a 58% increase. The improvement indicates the strong emphasis the city administration places on mainstreaming biodiversity conservation within the city. Hyderabad, the City of Pearls, proudly showcases its biodiversity heritage. Located in the Deccan Plateau region, Hyderabad stands out as the only city in India to have assessed and released its CBI twice within a decade, highlighting the city's commitment...

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Men at higher risk of developing...

Men with diabetes are at a higher risk of experiencing major health effects than diabetic women, a new research has found. Complications arising from diabetes such as diseases of the heart, leg, foot, kidney, and eye were observed more in men than women, regardless of how long they've had diabetes, according to researchers, which include those from The University of Sydney, Australia. The study included 25,713 people, all of them aged 45 years and above, and having either type 1 or type...

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Shopping, banking facilities soon at...

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation said on Monday that the Namoo Bharat train commuters will soon get facilities like shopping, restaurants and banking at the stations. According to a statement, these facilities will be available at the commercial spaces within the premises of the stations near the entry and exit areas, enhancing passenger convenience, it said. Recently, Namoo Bharat trains achieved the milestone of carrying one...

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Salt less KKR take on Sunrisers...

High-flying Kolkata Knight Riders and an unpredictable Sunrisers Hyderabad, teams that have built their IPL 2024 campaign on power-hitting, will look to outmuscle each other in Qualifier 1 here on Tuesday. If KKR were the first team to make IPL playoffs this year, SRH gave themselves a huge boost by inflicting a four-wicket loss on Punjab Kings on Sunday to eventually finish second with 17 points, ahead of Rajasthan Royals. While the two top teams from the 70-match league round have enjoyed some time...

-SPORTS

Iran's President, foreign minister found dead at chopper crash site

PNS ■ DUBAI

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, the country's foreign minister and several other officials were found dead on Monday, hours after their helicopter crashed in a foggy, mountainous region of the country's northwest, state media reported.

The crash comes as the Middle East remains unsettled by the Israel-Hamas war, during which Raisi, who was 63, under Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei launched an unprecedented drone-and-missile attack on Israel just last month.

During Raisi's term in office, Iran enriched uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels, further escalating tensions with the West as Tehran also supplied bomb-carry-



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ing drones to Russia for its war in Ukraine and armed militia groups across the region.

Meanwhile, Iran has faced years of mass protests against its Shiite theocracy over its ailing economy and women's rights — making the moment that much more sensitive for Tehran and the future of the country. Khamenei hours later announced Iran's first vice presi-

dent, Mohammad Mokhber, would serve as the country's acting president until elections are held.

State TV gave no immediate cause for the crash that occurred in Iran's East Azerbaijan province.

Among the dead was Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, 60.

2

Bengaluru cops bust rave party of Telugu people

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Anti-Narcotics division of Karnataka Police arrested five people, including three drug peddlers, after raiding a rave party organised at a farmhouse on the outskirts of Bengaluru on Monday.

The party, involving techies and Telugu actors, was held in the GM Farmhouse in the Singena Aghara area near Electronics City, till the early hours. The organiser had flown over 25 people from Andhra Pradesh to Bengaluru for the event. The cops found a pass belonging to an Andhra Pradesh MLA in one of the cars parked at the farmhouse, sources said.

Preliminary investigations revealed that an individual identified as Hari from Hyderabad organised the party under the pretext of a birthday celebration.

The police said the rave party was titled 'Sunset to Sunrise Victory'.

2

CM takes stock of Indian students in Bishkek

● Inquires about the incidents

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy inquired about the incidents in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, from top officials. The officials said that all Indian students are safe.

Kyrgyzstan's capital, Bishkek, has been witnessing massive mob violence for some days, with foreign students, including those from India and Pakistan, facing attacks from locals

in which many students were injured. The incident made the Indian and Pakistani embassies issue advisories to their nationals in Bishkek. Top Telangana officials contacted the Indian Ambassador in Bishkek, Arun Kumar Chatterjee, and collected details. The officials said that all Indian students are safe and that the embassy helpline is operational to respond to any emergency.

Continued on Page 2

Tech Mahindra leaving Warangal because of Congress: KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Tech Mahindra is leaving Warangal because of the Congress, BRS Working President KT Rama Rao said. This government is not even able to protect existing companies, he said.

Speaking during the graduates' MLC by-poll campaign in Khammam on Monday,

KTR said, "We built the IT hub in Warangal and Khammam to bring the IT industry to tier-2 cities. We brought Tech Mahindra to Warangal. But after Revanth came Tech Mahindra is now likely to shut down. They are not able to save even existing companies let alone bring new ones. Corning went to Chennai and Keynotes to Gujarat."

Continued on Page 2

TG financial condition deteriorating: BJP

□ Party's senior leader meets Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman



BJP Telangana unit vice-president, NVSS Prabhakar called on Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi on Monday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP's Telangana vice-president, NVSS Prabhakar, called on Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi and appraised her about the political and financial situation in the state. Prabhakar informed the FM about the polling percentage in the Lok Sabha elections and said that there are chances of the BJP winning at least 10 Lok Sabha seats in the state. Prabhakar told her that there was a strong wave in favour of Prime Minister Modi in the southern states

and people are wholeheartedly supporting the social welfare schemes of the Modi government. He also discussed with Nirmala Sitharaman the financial position of the Congress government led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. He said the state's financial position is deteriorating by the day due to the incompetence of the Revanth government which has already taken loans of Rs 12,905 crore before completion of the six-month rule and is trying to take more loans which is beyond FRBM limits.

Continued on Page 2

ONLY FOR FINE VARIETY PADDY
Govt declares Rs 500 bonus per quintal

- Sonia to be felicitated on TG Formation Day
- Congress to invite KCR too
- Govt to buy sprouted paddy too
- CM, Ministers to visit Amma Adarsha Patashalas



Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy addressing a press conference after the Cabinet meeting on Monday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Government has decided to pay Rs 500 as bonus per quintal for the fine variety of paddy (sanna vadlu) from the kharif season.

The Cabinet meeting which took the decision was held on Monday and was chaired by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy.

Addressing a press conference after the Cabinet meeting, Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy said the government had decided to encourage farmers to increase the cultivation of fine varieties of paddy during the kharif (monsoon) season.

The Cabinet decided that a letter should be written seeking the ECI's permission to organise the state's Formation Day celebrations on June 2.

The Cabinet also decided to write a letter to the ECI seeking permission to invite Sonia Gandhi to the celebrations and to honour her and those who took part in the Telangana movement.

When asked whether KCR would be invited to the meeting, Minister Sridhar Babu said he would also be invited. The Cabinet decided to speed up paddy procurement and that Collectors should ensure the smooth procurement of the paddy brought by farmers. From Tuesday, Collectors and Additional Collectors should inspect paddy purchase centres every day.

The Cabinet also decided to write a letter to the ECI seeking permission to invite Sonia Gandhi to the celebrations and to honour her and those who took part in the Telangana movement.

2

Cabinet decides to take up repairs of barrages



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Cabinet has decided to repairs of the Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla barrages of the Kaleshwaram Project as per the directions in the NDSA's interim report. The government will conduct technical tests before undertaking repairs.

The decision was taken during the Cabinet meeting held on Monday at the Secretariat chaired

by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. Ministers Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, and Sridhar Babu briefed the media about the Cabinet's decisions.

A team of Ministers and officers will review the safety of the barrages along with experts. The government is making arrangements to pump water during the monsoon season.

Continued on Page 2

'BJP to score big in South, NDA will cross 400'

Over 57% voter turnout recorded in fifth phase



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over 57 per cent voter turnout was recorded on Monday in 49 constituencies in six states and two Union territories in the fifth phase of the Lok Sabha election amid sporadic incidents of violence in West Bengal, besides EVM glitches at some booths in the state and neighbouring Odisha.

While Maharashtra recorded the lowest voter turnout at 48.88 per cent, West Bengal recorded the highest polling percentage at 73.

Among other states, Bihar recorded 52.55 per cent turnout, Jammu and Kashmir 54.21 per cent, Jharkhand 63 per cent, Odisha 60.72 per cent, Uttar Pradesh 57.43 per cent and Ladakh 67.15.

According to the figures made available by the Election Commission till 7 pm, the approximate polling percentage was at 57.38.

Although voting time was till 6 pm, people already in queue by that time are allowed to vote.

18 killed as vehicle plunges into valley in Chhattisgarh

PNS ■ KAWARDHA

Seventeen women and a man were killed and four others injured when a mini goods vehicle they were travelling in plunged into a valley in Chhattisgarh's Kabirdham district on Monday, police said.



the valley, the official said.

After being alerted, a police team rushed to the spot and launched the rescue exercise, the official said.

"Twelve women and a man were killed on the spot, while nine others sustained injuries and were shifted to a hospital, where five women died," Kabirdham Superintendent of Police Abhishek Pallava said.

The accident occurred around 1.45 pm on Banjari Ghat near Bahpani village under Kukkur police station limits, an official said. The victims were returning after plucking tendu leaves from a forest in the vehicle meant for transporting goods, he said.

The vehicle skidded off the road, tumbled down considerably and crashed onto the road below

Contaminated blood scandal rocks UK

● Inquiry slams successive UK governments for failures that killed thousands

PNS ■ LONDON

British authorities and the country's public health service committed a "catalogue of failures" and knowingly exposed tens of thousands of patients to deadly infections through contaminated blood and blood products, an inquiry into the UK's infected blood scandal found Monday.

An estimated 3,000 people in the United Kingdom are believed to have died and many others were left with lifelong illnesses after receiving blood or blood products tainted with HIV or hepatitis in the 1970s to the early 1990s.

The scandal is widely seen as the deadliest disaster in the history of Britain's state-run National Health Service since its inception in 1948.

The report said around 1,250 people with bleeding disorders, including 380 children, were infected with HIV-tainted blood products. Three-quarters of them have died. Up to 5,000 others who received the blood products developed chronic hepatitis C, a type of liver infection.

Former judge Brian Langstaff, who chaired the inquiry, slammed successive governments and medical professionals for failing to avoid the tragedy to save face and expense. He found that deliberate attempts were made to conceal the disaster, and there was evidence of government officials destroying documents.

"This disaster was not an accident. The infections happened because those in authority - doctors, the blood services and successive governments - did not put patient safety first," he said. "The response

of those in authority served to compound people's suffering."

Continued on Page 2



British PM Rishi Sunak apologises

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Monday apologised after Britain's state-funded National Health Service (NHS) was accused of cover up in an infected blood scandal dating back to the 1970s in a public inquiry report submitted to the government. Speaking in the House of Commons hours after

inquiry chair Sir Brian Langstaff delivered his scathing verdict on the issue, the British Indian leader said it was a "day of shame for the British state" after a catalogue of failures and attitude of denial documented in the inquiry.

Continued on Page 2

Appointment of TPCC chief may be after polls to local bodies

SNCN ACHARYULU
HYDERABAD

The Congress high command may concentrate on appointment of the new TPCC president and on the Cabinet expansion only after the local bodies elections and not immediately after the Lok Sabha results. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy said that he wants to hold the local bodies' elections after the announcement of Lok Sabha election results. The results will be declared on June 4. After the results, the Congress high command will be busy on national politics. If the NDA fails in getting a majority to form the government at the Centre, or even if it does so, the high command will be fully busy in the formation of INDIA government at the Centre. The Chief Minister wants to hold the local bodies' elections



some time in the month of July. The high command may prefer the appointment of the new TPCC president and the Cabinet expansion after that. In the present Cabinet, there are six vacancies and no representation for some districts. Before the local bodies elections if the new TPCC president is appointed and the Cabinet expansion is done, it may dis-

trub the party leaders and cadre. The Congress is known for dissidents and groupism. At present, the Congress leaders appear to be united. There are several aspirants for the TPCC president post and also for the berths in the Cabinet. Under the circumstances, if the appointment of new TPCC president and the Cabinet expansion is done, those who are denied posts will be dissatisfied and it may have effect on the local bodies' elections. Once the local bodies elections are completed there will be no elections in the near future. By that time, the high command will be free from political activities at the national level. Meanwhile, various BC welfare organisations are demanding that the local bodies elections be conducted only after the completion of the caste census to know their quota in the elections. But to complete the caste-wise census it will take some time and immediately it is not possible. The State government may go for local bodies' elections in the present position. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy feels that if the local bodies elections are completed at the earliest it will help to concentrate on the administration.

'Cong has different yardsticks for Kavitha & Kejriwal'



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress is speaking differently regarding BRS MLC Kavitha and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal although they were both involved in the same Delhi liquor scam, said BJP leader Konda Vishweshwar Reddy. He said the Congress demanded the arrest of Kavitha, however, the same Congress is now speaking differently regarding the arrest of Kejriwal. "Is it Congress party or confusion party?" Konda asked. Participating in a BJP campaign meeting at Sultanpuri in Delhi, Konda Vishweshwar Reddy said the BJP had gained ground in the rural areas of Telangana after the Assembly elections.

Ministers threatening school, college managements: Eatala

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Senior BJP leader Eatala Rajender said that Ministers are threatening the managements of schools and colleges to make graduates vote for Congress candidate Theenmar Mallanna in the Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal graduates' constituency MLC by-poll.



Addressing the media at Ellen during a visit to Khammam district on Monday, Eatala said the

Congress deceived the unemployed by assuring them that unemployment allowance would be given.

Pointing out that the BJP-led Central Government gave four DAs to its employees he said the TG Congress admin should reveal how many it had given. He demanded that the Congress government should explain why it is not appointing a new PRC. He also asked the government to correct GO: 317 and do justice to teachers. The functioning of universities has been affected due to the absence of fresh recruitment, Eatala added.

Bengaluru...

Continued from page 1

During the raid, it was found that drugs and narcotic substances were supplied. The investigation revealed that about 100 people attended the party. The police have recovered 15.56 grams of MDMA drugs, 6.2 grams of cocaine, 6 grams of hydro ganja, five mobiles and two vehicles from the accused persons. The Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS) and various Sections under the IPC were slapped against the five accused. According to police sources, more than 100 participants, including techies, Telugu film actors, models and young men and women from Bengaluru and Andhra Pradesh, attended the rave party.

KCR & Harish silent, only KTR campaigning for Rakesh

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS chief K. Chandrasekhar Rao and MLA T. Harish Rao are almost silent about the Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda Graduates' MLC by-poll. The poll was necessitated by the resignation of MLC Palla Rajeshwar Reddy who is now the Janagaon MLA. When Palla Rajeshwar Reddy was contesting, Harish extensively campaigned for him. However, now there is not much activity from his end. KCR used to regularly read reports and give advice. Now, Rakesh Reddy is contesting from the BRS for

the same seat and only KT Rama Rao is campaigning for him. Winds of change are clearly visible in the BRS, especially after the Lok Sabha campaign. Contrary to KCR's personality, instead of huge public meetings, KTR campaigned by holding corner meetings, roadshows, shaking hands with children and taking pictures with activists. KTR conducts three meetings a day including district-wise meetings, reviews, appointments of in-charges and others. KCR's complete silence is now becoming a topic of discussion as the public is

interested in knowing whether the party is serious about winning the by-poll. BRS sources said they are in wait-and-watch mode for the election results. KTR is extensively campaigning about the unemployed and how the BRS failed to campaign about the number of jobs they created. It is learnt that the unemployed may be still angry with KCR and so KTR has been given the baton to fight. Political analysts say that like many other BRS leaders KCR will remain silent till the results of the Lok Sabha elections come out. Based on that, KCR may turn active again.

Congress bonus is bogus: Harish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA Harish Rao lashed out at the Telangana government criticising its decision to pay Rs 500 as bonus only for fine quality rice. He demanded that the government should withdraw the decision and pay Rs 500 bonus for all varieties of paddy. Harish said in a statement on X, "The Congress government in TG has reneged on one more election promise. The Congress government promised a monthly allowance of Rs 4,000 to the unemployed, but they did not keep their word. Today they cheat farmers regarding bonuses. As part of its six guarantees, the Congress had promised to buy the entire rice produced by farmers with a bonus of Rs 500 per quintal. After coming to power they changed their word. While farmers are ready



to sell their paddy and are waiting for the bonus, it is sad that the government announced that it will pay bonus only for the thin variety paddy and that too only from the next season. "About 90 per cent of paddy cultivated in Telangana is coarse. There is good demand in the market for thin rice. The market price for thin rice is much higher than the minimum support price. But coarse rice does not command so much value. So the bonus should be given to coarse paddy cultivators.

CM takes stock...

Continued from page 1

Currently, exams are underway for the students. "All Indian students are preparing for exams. No Indian student has been seriously injured or hospitalised. Many social media posts were found to be false," the CMO said.

Earlier in the day BRS MLA Harish Rao sought the intervention of the CM and the Union Minister of External Affairs. "I am deeply concerned about the recent violence targeting Indian students in Bishkek. Many Indian students have been injured.

Contaminated blood...

Continued from page 1

Many of those affected were people with hemophilia, a condition affecting the blood's ability to clot. In the 1970s, patients were given a new treatment that the UK imported from the United States. Some of the plasma used to make the blood products was traced to high-risk donors, including prison inmates, who were paid to give blood samples. Because manufacturers of

the treatment mixed plasma from thousands of donations, one infected donor would compromise the whole batch. The report said around 1,250 people with bleeding disorders, including 380 children, were infected with HIV-tainted blood products. Three-quarters of them have died. Up to 5,000 others who received the blood products developed chronic hepatitis C, a type of liver infection.

'BJP to score big in South, NDA will cross 400'

Modi expresses unwavering confidence on Lok Sabha results

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asserted that the BJP will emerge as the single largest party in the south, as he remained unwaveringly confident that his NDA alliance will cross 400 seats in Lok Sabha when election results come out on June 4. "Our strategy for the entire nation is the same. Phir ek baar modi sarkar. Aur chaar June 400 paar," Modi said in an interview to PTI Videos on Sunday night. Modi said his opponents

have created a myth that the BJP has no strength or presence in the southern states. "Look at 2019 elections. The largest party even then in the south was BJP. Again, I say this: the largest party in the south this time will be BJP, and its allies will add more (seats) to it," he added. "We will be the single largest party in Southern India and by an even bigger margin than the last time. "We have seen a jump in mind-share already. We will see a big jump in seat share and vote share for us across the



region," Modi said. Southern India accounts for 131 of the 543 Lok Sabha seats. In the outgoing House, BJP has

29 members besides one independent backed by it, from Karnataka. Even in eastern India, "we are witnessing a massive surge of support from the people ... which is giving sleepless nights to people in sections of the media and politics in Bhubaneswar, Kolkata and even in Delhi," Modi said. Recalling how using a presentation a few years ago he had delved into development deficit in Eastern India in great detail, Modi said the NDA government was specifically working to empower this region.

British PM Rishi...

Continued from page 1

The scandal involves over 30,000 people being infected with life-threatening viruses such as HIV and Hepatitis C while they were under NHS care between the 1970s and 1990s, with over 3,000 having died. "I find it almost impossible to comprehend how it would have felt... I want to make a wholehearted and unequivocal apology," said Sunak, addressing the victims and their families, some of whom were in Parliament.

Tech Mahindra leaving Warangal...

Continued from page 1

"We have to decide what kind of leader we want. Should he be a person who practices blackmail politics and talks nonsense? Do you want someone who left his job in the US and came here to serve the public or do you want a blackmailer, a cheater, or one who defamed a woman (Congress candidate Teenmaar Mallanna)? He was in Chanchalguda Jail for 74 days with 56 cases. He did not go to

jail fighting for freedom. Should a person who blackmailed and cheated many people be in the Legislative Council? Should a person who violated a woman's honour be the representative of graduates? The voice of question this government should be in the Council," KTR said. "The Congress said that two lakh jobs will be given in a year. Not a single job has been given so far. If you want unemployment benefits, two lakh jobs and industries in this region, Rakesh Reddy should win. The

BJP is the party that refused us the Kazipet Coach Factory and the Bayaram Steel Factory. These two parties deceived us," he added. "Khammam town developed a lot in the last 10 years. If performance is the yardstick we should win 10 out of 10 seats in Khammam. But our opponents slandered us. They spread the lie that we did not create a single job. We provided two lakh jobs in the last 10 years like no one else in the country," KTR said.

TODAY ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Trayodashi: May 20 03:59 PM to May 21 05:39 PM
Chaturdash: May 21 05:39 PM to May 22 06:48 PM

Nakshatram:
Swati: May 21 05:46 AM to May 22 07:46 AM
Rahukalam: 3:26 PM to 5:02 PM
Yamagandam: 8:59 AM to 10:36 AM
Varjyam: 11:50 AM to 01:34 PM
Gulika: 12:12 PM to 1:49 PM
Amritakalam: 10:14 PM to 11:58 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:47 AM to 12:38 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Sunny
Temp: 37°C
Humidity: 54%
Sunrise: 5:42 AM
Sunset: 6:43 PM
Updated: May 20, 2024 5:00 PM

Iran's President...

Continued from page 1

The helicopter also carried the governor of Iran's East Azerbaijan province, other officials and bodyguards, the state-run IRNA news agency reported. Early Monday morning, Turkish authorities released what they described as drone footage showing what appeared to be a fire in the wilderness that they "suspected to be wreckage of helicopter." The coordinates listed in the footage put the fire some 20 kilometres south of the Azerbaijan-Iranian border on the side of a steep mountain. Footage released by the IRNA early Monday showed what the agency described as the crash site, across a steep valley in a green mountain range. Soldiers

Cabinet decides...

Continued from page 1

"In the case of Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla barrages, the NDSA said the gates should be kept open allowing the free flow of water. Although repairs will be undertaken we cannot say whether the barrage will become viable. The NDSA has appointed a six-member committee to conduct physical and technical tests. The Cabinet decided that tests should be done by Central Government certified companies. They have suggested three companies. Every dam will be assessed by two companies, that is, we will take two opinions. We will conduct repairs based on that. The Cabinet decided to follow the NDSA's decisions," Ponguleti said.

Govt declares Rs 500 bonus...

Continued from page 1

The Cabinet decided that Collectors should resolve the problems faced by farmers during the procurement process. "The government is ready to buy sprouted paddy which got soaked in the untimely rains. Where such a situation exists, Collectors should report to Civil Supplies Department officials and ensure that purchases are made. The government has already purchased 35 lakh tonnes of paddy. It has also deposited money in farmers' bank accounts three days after purchasing paddy. Collectors and Special Officers of joint districts should be held responsible if problems arise in connection with paddy procurement," Ponguleti said. There was a discussion in the cabinet on the action plan

for the monsoon crop. Last year, various crops were cultivated on 1.44 acres during the rainy season. Around 1.50 lakh acres are likely to be cultivated in the coming kharif due to the favourable weather and the forecast about rains. The Cabinet directed officials to ensure the availability of adequate seeds and fertilizers for the monsoon crop. "Strict measures have been taken to prevent the sales of fake seeds. We will intensify the campaign to make farmers aware of fake seeds. Videos will be made and broadcast. Advertisements will also be displayed in cinema theatres. The sales of seeds would be closely monitored. The agriculture department will record which seed companies sell seeds to farmers in which districts. Traders selling seeds

should record to which farmer they sold seeds," Ponguleti said. He said that steps will be taken to ensure that the list regarding the sales of seeds is with the Department of Agriculture. The companies concerned will be held accountable if fake seeds are sold. The Cabinet also discussed the infrastructure available in government schools. The Cabinet decided to bring about a massive change by setting up Amma Adarsha Patashala Committees with the participation of self-help societies. The government has already handed over the maintenance of schools to self-help societies through the Amma Adarsh Schools Scheme. The Cabinet decided to complete work by June 10 as schools reopen on June 12.

TG financial...

Continued from page 1

The senior BJP leader brought to the attention of the FM that the BRS government had taken huge loans in the name of corporations and the TG Congress government is also planning to float more corporations to take new loans from the market. Expressing concern about the financial condition of TG, Prabhakar said the Revanth government is burdening the exchequer by appointing Advisors to the government and Chairmen for various state corporations due to political considerations. He also informed the FM about Central funds being used for purposes other than the intended ones. The Congress government is misusing Central funds sanctioned to local bodies, he said.

Hyd's score on City Biodiversity Index improves significantly

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad's score on the City Biodiversity Index (CBI) improved significantly, marking a 58% increase. The improvement indicates the strong emphasis the city administration places on mainstreaming biodiversity conservation within the city.

Hyderabad, the City of Pearls, proudly showcases its biodiversity heritage. Located in the Deccan Plateau region, Hyderabad stands out as the only city in India to have assessed and released its CBI twice within a decade, highlighting the city's commitment to biodiversity conservation.

The latest CBI provides a comprehensive assessment of the city's biodiversity management and ecological health, structured around three key components: Native Biodiversity, Ecosystem Services, and Biodiversity Governance. The CBI serves as a crucial tool for monitoring and enhancing key ecological details, ensuring conservation of biodiversity, sustainability, and quality of life within a city.



Hyderabad's CBI, developed by International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives - South Asia, with support from the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) and various local biodiversity experts and organisations,

unveils the extensive variety of flora and fauna thriving in the city's tropical climatic zone. From the interspersed trails of forests to the River Musi, the CBI explores Hyderabad's ecological wealth and dedication to conserving its natural heritage.

"The CBI is an important tool for a city like Hyderabad, highlighting that biodiversity is crucial in the process of becoming a world-class city.

Initiatives by the GHMC such as Haritha Haram, conservation of lakes, increasing forest cover and improving urban lung spaces have significantly enhanced urban biodiversity. Positioning Hyderabad as a leader in biodiversity conservation, the CBI directly supports India's National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) goals by conserving biodiversity and protecting critical ecosystems," said Emami Kumar, Executive Director, ICLEI, South Asia.

The CBI for Hyderabad reveals an impressive array of species. The city is home to 315 bird species, including the Indian Peafowl, Black-headed Ibis, Bar-headed Goose and Greater Flamingo. Plant diversity features 1,665 species, with native species such as teak, sandalwood and neem and introduced species like the African Tulip Tree and Rain Tree. Hyderabad also hosts 141 butterfly species, including the Blue Mormon, Common Rose and Crimson Rose.

Laxmaiah inaugurates ABTO office in Thimphu

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Mallepalli Laxmaiah, senior journalist and vice-president of Association of Buddhist Tour Operators (ABTO), inaugurated the ABTO office at Thimphu on Sunday.

He said that the office is centrally located on the premises of I-Desire Tours and Travels, Basesa Expressway in Thimphu to facilitate the Buddhist tourists intending to travel prominent Buddhist destinations in India and South Asian countries. It also coordinates between the tour operators and the respective countries for hazel-free travel to promote Buddhist tourism. Parsu Ram Biswa, CEO of I-Desire and incharge of ABTO Bhutan office, felicitated Laxmaiah on the occasion.

Bathini fish prasadam to be given on June 8

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bathini brothers announced that the fish prasadam will be served to asthma patients at Nampally Grounds on June 8 from 11 am to June 9 till 10 am.

Addressing a press meet at the Press Club in Somajiguda on Monday, Bathini Amarnath Goud, along with his family members, Bathini Gowri Shankar Goud, Bathini Shiva Shankar Goud and Bathini Santhosh Goud said that fish prasadam is given on the day of Mrigasira Karti, which marks the onset of the monsoon according to Hindu calendar.

"We have requested the Telangana government to provide all the necessary amenities and required fingerlings. We have also requested GHMC, HMWSSB, RTC, Fire

officials and the police officials to make arrangements. As usual, the fisheries department would provide the required fish. Apart from the government and respective departments, Badri Vishal Pannalal Pitti Trust and Agarwal Seva Dal, under the leadership of Sharad B Pitti, will be the backbone to us in smooth administration of the fish prasadam. They provide free meals, tiffin, water and butter milk to all the people who come from across the globe," said Amarnath Goud.

"On that day, we insert a yellow herbal paste (prasadam) into the mouth of a live fingerling. This live fish is then slipped into the throat of a patient. For vegetarian patients, the family will prepare separate prasadam with jaggery.

However, vegetarians need to take the prasadam for a longer period. After taking the prasadam, separate prasadam which is given has to be made into pills and should be taken on three occasions for 45 days on Arudra (June 23), Punarvasu (July 8) and Pushyami (July 23). Patients are supposed to follow a strict diet prescribed by the Bathini brothers, otherwise the fish prasadam will not give desired results," he added.

"The patients who want to get rid of asthma and respiratory ailments completely, have to take the fish prasadam continuously for four years. "After completion of administration at the main venue for remaining patients, we give fish prasadam at our residence," he added.

TO ACHIEVE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

IIITH's social incubator graduates set up 12 startups in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The International Institute of Information Technology - Hyderabad (IIIT-H)'s social incubator graduates set up 12 social startups and selected 10 Greentech startups for the EPAM Social Impact Innovation on Monday.

Recognising the importance of tech and entrepreneurial innovation towards sustainable climate action and to help India achieve UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), especially Goal 13 of Climate Action, the second EPAM Social Impact

Innovation Programme (ESIIP) is supporting Greentech Startups with a focus on Circular Economy/Resource Solutions, Green Energy and Green Data.

Through this programme, AIC-IIITH Foundation and EPAM Systems, Inc., a leading digital transformation services and product engineering company, has selected 10 startups. The programme will provide these greentech startups with equity-free grants of up to Rs 5,00,000 and incubation support. It is clear that Greentech is emerging as the next sunrise sector. As per the analysis by

Cambridge Associates, the emerging markets Greentech startups attract only nine of total investment in the sector.

These startups were selected through a multi-stage process ending in a pitching session in front of a panel of esteemed experts including Shivam Gupta, Social entrepreneur and CEO of The Affordable Organic Store, Vyshali Sagar, Vontair Balendu Rashmi, CSR Manager - AMD, Nagesh Chukka, VP, Engineering Head, Ness Digital Engineering, Anuradha Vattam, Lead Architect at Smart City Living Lab@IIITH, Srinivasa Akula,

Business Analysis Team Leader and EPAM.

EPAM has provided a COVID bridge grant to four social startups and supported seven climate startups through AIC-IIITH. The day also saw the graduation of seven social startups from the Agriculture Insurance Company of India Limited (AIC) first cohort EPAM Social Impact Innovation Programme from the cleantech, environment tech and waste management and five social startups from AIC's third Akash Acceleration programme also graduated.

Burglars decamp with gold, cash in SR Nagar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In an incident reported from SR Nagar on May 18, two burglars broke into a house and stole four tolas of gold, Rs 1 lakh in cash and a laptop.

On the night of the incident, K Venkateswar Rao, a private employee, residing in Akruithi Arcade Apartment in the Czech Colony, travelled to Ongole, Andhra Pradesh, along with his family. When the family's maid arrived on Saturday morning, she discovered the lock had been broken. Subsequently, Rao approached the police and filed a complaint regarding the incident. Based on the complaint, the police launched an investigation, and upon examining CCTV footage, they spotted 'chudidar gang' known for their distinctive attire.

OU inaugurates cell culture lab at Dept of Genetics



OU Vice-Chancellor Prof D Ravinder inaugurates DBT-BUILDER

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Osmania University Vice-Chancellor Prof D Ravinder, along with Prof P Laxminarayana, Registrar, OU, and Prof B Reddy Naik inaugurated the Department of Biotechnology - Boost to University Interdisciplinary Life Science Departments for Education and Research (DBT-BUILDER) primary cell culture lab facility at the Department of Genetics on Monday.

The DBT is dedicated to supporting Life Science departments in various Central and State universities, promoting unprecedented inter-departmental collaboration with the vision to nurture post-graduate students, teachers and research scholars, making them competent for the globally competitive emerging bio-economy.

The varsity has sanctioned Rs 8.03 crore for the "DBT-BUILDER Programme for a

period of five years. The Co-Ordinator of the programme is Prof Smita C Pawar from the Department of Genetics, OU, with Co-ordinators Prof Jitender K Naik from the Department of Zoology, OU, and Prof Karuna Rupula from the Department of Biochemistry, OU. Eighteen faculty members from seven Life Sciences departments are part of this project as principal investigators.

The main objectives of the project are to facilitate interdisciplinary research in emerging areas of Biological Sciences such as Genomics, Nanobiology and Therapeutics, along with the training of faculty, college teachers, research scholars and technical assistants in these areas. Additionally, the programme aims to provide high-end instruments, laboratories and facilities by acquiring new instruments, repairing and maintaining equipment and upgrading existing facilities and equipment.

Jaya Badiga is first judge in California from Telugu States

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Jaya Badiga was appointed to the Sacramento Superior Court on Monday. She has served as a Court Commissioner since 2022 and is established as an expert in family law.

The Judge was born in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh and completed her initial education in Hyderabad. She pursued her graduation in Psychology and Political Science from 1991 to 1994 in Osmania University,



Hyderabad. She was a sole practitioner from 2018 to

2022. She served as an Attorney at the California Department of Health Care Services and at California Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

Badiga earned a Juris Doctor degree from the Santa Clara University School of Law and a Master of Arts degree in International Relations and International Communications from Boston University. She fills the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Robert S Lapham.

Offender nabbed, Rs 27 lakh recovered

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Jubilee Hills Police apprehended a 20-year-old burglar named Shiva Kumar on Monday and recovered cash, gold items and silver biscuits worth Rs 27 lakh.

Previously he was involved in two theft cases from the limits of Madhapur police station and went to jail. The offender used to work at Telugu news channel as car driver and kept his car on lease for daily reporters at the office, and at that time he conducted a recce in the surroundings.

On May 17, he went to that house and committed theft of cash of Rs 25,70,000, some gold items and silver biscuits by breaking the locker and fled away.

Later the Jubilee Hills Police arrested him on Monday and recover Rs 23.70 lakh, 21 grams gold and 50 grams silver.

The case is being investigated by an additional inspector of Jubilee Hills police station R Madhusudhan.

TMREIS students excel in EAPCET exam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Aisha Masarath Khanam, Secretary of Telangana Minorities Residential Educational Institutions Society (TMREIS), has announced that TMREIS students have excelled in the Engineering, Agriculture and Pharmacy Common Entrance Test (EAPCET) results on Monday.

A total number of 1,354 students from TMREIS had taken the EAPCET examinations held in May, 2024, out of whom 1,176 students had passed. About 732 students qualified in Engineering while 419 students qualified in Agriculture and Pharmacy. Number of boys who qualified in Engineering is 387 while the number of girls who qualified in Engineering is 345. Number of boys who qualified in

Agriculture and Pharmacy is 184 while the number of girls who qualified in Agriculture and Pharmacy is 235.

Md Omar Farooqui secured 350th rank followed by Khaja Ave Ahmed with 490th rank and Ameeruddin with 748th rank in Agriculture and Pharmacy exam. Sufiyan Mohiuddin secured 2006th rank followed by Md Feroz with 2501th rank and SK Tabriz with 3195th rank in the Engineering exam.

Shahnawaz Qasim, Secretary to Chief Minister, Tafseer Iqbal, Special Secretary to Govt., Minorities Welfare Department and Aisha Masarath Khanam, Secretary, Telangana Minorities Residential Educational Institutions Society, congratulated the students and teachers on their achievement.

TG Police to start new cybercrime training centre

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As the cyber crimes are increasing in the State, to tackle and prevent from the attacks, the police are going to start a new hitech cyber training centre for police personnel in Hyderabad. Along with a centre in TSPA, two more centres would be set up in Telangana. The expenditure of the project is yet to be finalised.

A police official said that those who are working on cyber crime and other police

personnel also would get training at the training centre to stop cyber attacks on government websites and cyber attacks on people. The training would be equipped with highly talented expertise and modern systems.

In the month of February 2024, a total of 9,661 cyber crime cases were reported in Telangana State Cyber Security Bureau (TSCSB). Along with that in March, more than 10,000 cases were registered and in May, 8,668 cyber crime cases were

reported in the TSCSB.

According to the Telangana State annual police report the crime report surged by 8.97 per cent in 2023, mainly due to the 17.59 per cent of cyber crimes. In 2023, a total of 16,339 cases were registered.

At the initial stage, the department teaches basic training After they learn the basic laws and introduction to cyber crime, based on their interest and qualifications the department would train them in future.

No doubt, it is Modi who is going to come to power again

Some pseudo-intelligentsia and the intelligentsia belonging to the Left parties have been playing second fiddle to the Opposition propaganda, unleashed in a big way, predicting that it is impossible for Narendra Modi-led BJP to come to power for the third time in a row.

The Opposition parties have been slinging mud on Modi, alleging that Modi is on the defensive and nursing fear of electoral defeat. The propaganda had taken place in 2019 too. The Opposition contended that the Congress is in a revival phase and Opposition parties have been growing stronger. But, the BJP won majority of the Lok Sabha seats in many states in 2019 too. The Opposition parties have been dubbing BJP winning the largest number of seats in 2019 as a negative factor for the 2024 elections. But, they have no rea-

sons to substantiate why the BJP would not be able to get more seats in the current elections, compared to seats it won in 2019, and why BJP failed to expand to new states.

Moreover, the Opposition parties have no confidence to say how many seats the BJP is going to win in each State. In 2014, there was a clear anti-UPA wave. But, the people believed in Narendra Modi going by the record of Modi fulfilling his promises to the people. Their confidence in Modi grew stronger in 2024. The people have begun to believe that the Centre is getting fortified under the strong leadership of Modi and it would uphold the self-respect of the nation.

Take the example of UP; antagonists to the Congress brought down curtain on the false propaganda that backward classes and minorities

The Opposition parties have no confidence to say how many seats the BJP is going to win in each State. In 2014, there was a clear anti-UPA wave. But, the people believed in Narendra Modi going by the record of Modi fulfilling his promises to the people. Their confidence in Modi grew stronger in 2024. The people have begun to believe that the Centre is getting fortified under the strong leadership of Modi and it would uphold the self-respect of the nation.

will stand united and throw their support to the Samajwadi Party-Congress combine. These two parties contested jointly in 2019 too. Then also the Opposition parties harped on BCs, Dalits and Minorities unitedly trouncing the BJP. But, the BJP polled more number of votes and won more seats in 2019 compared to the votes polled to it in 2014 and seats

won by it in 2014. A glance of the results pouring in constituency-wise indicated that the BCs and Dalits had voted for the BJP. The double-engine circus of Modi at the Centre and Yogi Adityanath in UP implemented many development programmes in the past five years. Modern UP has been evolved with the development of expressways, roads and rail routes. The



Y SATYA KUMAR
BJP National Secretary

majority of the people are jubilant over the construction of Varanasi corridor and building of Ram temple in

TRULY SPEAKING

Janata Dal, resorted to sloganeering that they will bring back the party to power which brought Ram Lalla to the temple (Jo Ram Ko Laayehal, ham unkolayenge). The people knew how Laloo Prasad Yadav, his spouse Rabri Devi and corruption indulged in by his relatives put the State backwards by several decades.

It was the BJP that won the highest number of seats and maximum votes in Bihar in the last two Lok Sabha elections. ABP-C-Voter joint survey predicted that NDA will win more than 50% of the total LS seats in Bihar. In fact, 69% of the people surveyed want to see Narendra Modi as the PM, the survey indicated.

In fact, such an opinion was not limited to Bihar alone, but to the majority

people of the country, who are happy with the Modi's rule. In fact, more than 50% of the women of the country have decided to unilaterally vote for Modi. BCs, SCs and Adivasis find no other leader greater than Modi. This is attributed to the social welfare programmes implemented by Modi reaching closer to people now than in 2019. These sections constitute Modi Cabinet and BJP State-level leadership.

Ever since Narendra Modi came to power, the number of voters to the BJP is augmented by 15 crore. Since the people are faithful towards Modi's leadership, the BJP has decided to make electoral promises to the people in the name of "Modi Ki Guarantee".

Who is skeptical about Modi-led NDA securing the highest number of LS seats? Certainly the people are not skeptical about it.

Cong, BRS taking people for a ride, says Jagadish Reddy

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Former minister and Suryapet MLA G Jagadish Reddy expressed confidence that the BRS will win the election to the Legislative Council from the Graduates' constituency. He said the BRS had won the seat four times in the past.

Addressing the media here on Monday, he said that BRS working president KT Rama Rao would take part in the campaign here on Tuesday and exhorted the party rank and file to make his election campaign a grand success.

He said that the State and Central government have been taking the people for a ride. The whole nation was pushed into darkness, he said.

The BJP will speak about Pakistan only at the time of elections, he said adding that the true colours of the BJP



Former minister G Jagadish Reddy speaking to the media in Nalgonda on Monday

were revealed.

The show of the Congress has become an utter flop across the nation. The party has been biding its time spreading falsehoods, he alleged.

The Congress government has been hoodwinking the farmers promising to waive crop loans, he said.

The Congress went back on its promise that it would con-

duct Backward Class census first and then hold panchayat elections, he said, exhorting the youth to keep them in mind before exercising their right to vote in the MLC polls. The Congress completely duped the youth.

Hostel students have been falling ill due to food poisoning. Was there any greater misery than this, he ques-

tioned. He appealed to the youth to exercise their franchise using their discriminatory powers.

Former minister V Srinivas Goud appealed to the graduate voters to think before they vote. While K Chandrashekar Rao filled jobs, Revanth Reddy only distributed appointment orders claiming credit for the success of KCR.

The BJP has destroyed all systems, while the Congress duped all sections of society. Therefore, the voters should vote considering various aspects of the contestants.

Former market committee chairman Cheera Pankaj Yadav, Zilla Grandhalaya Samstha former chairman Mallikarjuna Reddy, former chairman of Nalgonda municipality Mandadi Sai Reddy, Kanagal MPP Karim Pasha and others were present at the press meet.

Telangana: Couple held for murdering mentally ill daughter

PNS ■ RAJANNA SIRCIALLA

A couple was arrested for allegedly murdering their mentally ill daughter in this district, police said on Monday.

According to Rajanna Sircilla Superintendent of Police Akhil Mahajan, Chepyala Narsiah (49) and his wife Yellava (43) of Nerella killed their daughter Priyanka (24) and claimed it was a natural death.

The woman had been suffering from a mental disorder for several years. The parents got her treated and conducted marriage for her. She had a 13-



month-old son.

Due to the recurrence of mental sickness, the woman was given treatment again and taken to a place of worship, but of no use.

Vexed, the parents planned to end her life. They allegedly strangled her with a rope while she was asleep at their house on May 14, the police official said.

They informed their son-in-law about the death and conducted the funeral on the following day. The villagers were suspicious over the woman's death and lodged a complaint with the police. During the investigation, the couple confessed to the crime.

The couple was remanded to judicial custody, Mahajan said, adding, further investigation is underway

Harish flays Cong over bad state of diagnostic centres

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) leader and former health minister T Harish Rao on Monday took a dig at the Congress government over the deteriorating condition of diagnostic centres in the State and the non-payment of salaries to the staff.

Rao took to X and said, "It is sad that the Telangana diagnostic system, established during the BRS regime to provide free medical check-up to the people has collapsed after the Congress government was formed.

KCR established 36 diagnostic centres across the State providing 134 types of medical tests and made Telangana an ideal for the country in terms of medical services. The diagnostic centres provided quality medical tests and relieved the poor of financial burden. Not paying the salaries to the staff for six months is proof of Congress government's careless attitude towards public health," he remarked.

"The BRS demands the government to take steps and ensure all medical services are provided at the diagnostic centres," Harish Rao demanded.

SPREADING FALSEHOOD AGAINST HEALTHCARE CENTRE

Gandhi Hospital complains to police against BRS leader

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Gandhi Hospital administration on Monday filed a complaint against a Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) member Harish Reddy for sharing a seven year old video claiming that a power cut in the hospital led to the death of a patient.

Gandhi Hospital Superintendent, Dr Raja Rao said, "The video which is circulating is seven year old. I looked at the video and could make out that the wards shown in it don't belong to the Hospital. This is a public hospital and when such videos are circulated, the common people are hesitant to visit the government hospital. Hence I filed a complaint against the man."

In a letter to the Chilkalguda police, the hospital authorities



said, "The video is seven years old. It has been posted on X in an attempt to tarnish the image of Gandhi Hospital. Moreover, such a manipulated tweet creates a fear among patients of the Gandhi Hospital. It is with a malafide intention towards a public healthcare institution providing free healthcare to patients."

The authorities further

said, "The video is from a news article published by NTV titled 'Child dies due to power cut at Gandhi hospital. Due to power cut.' The wards shown in the video seem to be fabricated and the genuinity of the video can't be proved."

Following the complaint, the Chilkalguda police registered a case under section 505 (2) of the Indian Penal Code

SC to hear plea against Telangana Bar Assn eligibility rule for Civil Judge post

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a plea challenging the Telangana High Court decision upholding an eligibility criteria that allows only lawyers enrolled in the local bar association to appear for examination for the post of civil judge in the state.

A bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy and Prashant Kumar Mishra issued notice on a plea of advocate V Rakesh Reddy, who is enrolled with the Delhi Bar Council, and allowed him to apply for the post of civil judge in Telangana.

"The petitioner is allowed to upload his admission form online, in terms of advertise-

ment dated April 10, 2024. As an interim measure, the same should not be rejected on the grounds mentioned in 5.2(A) (III)(a) of the Telangana State Judicial (Service and Cadre) Rules, 2023 and the qualification in Clause 6(A)(III) of the Recruitment Notice," the bench noted in its order of May 17.

As per the provisions of the Telangana State Judicial Services Rules of 2023, a candidate who wants to apply for the examination is mandatorily required to be a practitioner from the local bar association and submit a certificate of practice as a proof.

The bench noted the submission of advocates Apoorv Kurup and Nidhi Mittal, appearing

for Reddy that he is enrolled as a lawyer with the Delhi Bar Council and was interested in applying for the post of civil judge in response to the advertisement dated April 10.

Kurup, assisted by advocate Rahul Jangra, submitted that since the candidate is also required to produce a certificate of practice from the local bar association, Reddy's candidature may be rejected at the threshold.

The bench noted that the court has already agreed to hear a similar challenge made in a plea of a candidate for the post of district judge and an interim relief has been granted to him to apply for the job. It tagged Reddy's plea along

with the pending matter. Reddy, who hails from Andhra Pradesh, had challenged the high court's May 3 order which upheld certain rules of the Telangana State Judicial Services Rules, 2023 as well as the notification dated April 10, 2024.

The notification provided for the requirement of being enrolled with Bar the Association of Telangana as an eligibility criteria.

"However, the impugned notification, which is at variance with the previous notifications, has added an impediment to candidates such as the petitioner who have now to enrol themselves with a bar association in Telangana.

Man files case against his wife, woman refutes allegations

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A man named Temujian, who was allegedly harassed by his wife on Sunday filed a case against his wife in Alwal police station.

On Sunday, he said that there is a threat to his life and the lives of his parents from his wife. He had been mentally and physically tortured by his wife since he got married, he alleged. He alleged that his wife attacked him with a knife to kill him.

Temujian hails from Rajolu

in Andhra Pradesh and was married to Gowthami seven years ago. They have a five-year-old boy.

His wife, Gowthami, lab programmer in Malla Reddy Institute, on Monday said that her husband was making false allegations against her. "He is expecting divorce from me but I am not giving it to him. So it seems that he is making plans to get a divorce without giving me alimony," she alleged. Alwal police said that a case has been registered against the man.

Hubby goes to police station wearing only underwear to complain against wife

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

Women more often than not complain against their husbands. But under the changed scenario, it seems to be the turn of men to complain against their wives.

Now, it is the wives who are not hesitating to beat their husbands. There is no account of how many such incidents do take place within the four walls of house.

But one such account came to light recently.

A victim of his wife lodged a complaint with the Banswada police station in Kamareddy district. The husband, who went to the

police station sporting only an underwear, poured out his tale of woe to the police and appealed to the police to save him from his wife. He told the police that his wife has been beating him almost daily.

Lending a patient ear to him, the police conveyed their sympathy to him and counselled both the wife and husband.

However, the local people expressed their sympathy to the husband, "None else should face such difficulty," a woman was heard saying.

However, it could not be ascertained immediately why the wife has been beating him.

Octogenarian man hit with walking stick on his head

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

An 80-year-old man was hit fatally on head by his daughter-in-law and grandchildren with a walking stick at a drinking water tap on Sunday morning at Hasanparti in Hanamkonda district putting the old man to death on the spot.

On the basis of a complaint lodged with Hasanparti police by his widow Sammakka, the police registered a case.

The property dispute was stated to be the cause for the clash that took place near the public tap on Sunday between Saraiah and Sammakka and their rivals Ramadevi, daughter-in-law, and her sons Sai Krishna and Sasi Kumar.

According to details, the couple Jalli Saraiah (80), and Sammakka had two sons and two daughters. The youngest son died at a young age, while his elder son Ramesh died of kidney ailment nine years ago.

Protect Indians in Kyrgyzstan, Asaduddin Owaisi to MEA

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM) president Asaduddin Owaisi on Monday urged External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to protect Indian students in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan and called for arrangements to be made for their safe return.

Owaisi took to X and shared an audio in which an Indian student is heard seeking help from an Indian official for evacuation. "Some locals in #Kyrgyzstan have been violently targeting

Indian students. A student reached out to me saying that they have not eaten for the last five days. Please take strong steps to protect our people there. Arrangements must be made for their return if the situation does not improve," read the post.

In the past few days, videos of Kyrgyz students attacking Indian and other foreign students have been circulating on the social media. It is believed that the situation arose due to a brawl between two groups of Kyrgyz and Egyptian students in Bishkek.

TJUDA threatens to go on strike over pending stipends

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Junior Doctors Association (TJUDA) on Monday threatened to call for a strike on May 22 over pending stipends and honorarium for super-specialty senior residents, among other demands.

In a letter to Telangana Director of Medical Education, the Association said, "We, the Telangana Junior Doctors Association (TJUDA), wish to

draw your immediate attention to a range of pressing concerns affecting junior doctors across the State. Failure to address these issues promptly will necessitate an indefinite strike commencing Wednesday May 22."

The list of demands includes timely release of stipend, Junior doctors (house surgeons, post-graduates and senior residents) endure consistent delays of approximately 20 to 30 days in stipend disbursements by the

Finance Department. TJUDA insists on stipend releases within 2-3 days post token number generation at the DME, incorporating stipends under budget relaxation citing ref.1 &2; pending stipends;

Presently, stipends for March and April 2024 remain pending for government approval despite repeated consultations with the DME. Immediate release of these pending stipends is imperative.

Honorarium for super-specialty senior residents: dated November 16, 2022, TJUDA emphasises the necessity of honouring the committed stipend of Rs 1,25,000 for super-specialty senior residents, as previously agreed upon. They wanted 15% reservation of seats for Telangana students in AP.

Incidents of violence against doctors persist across hospitals, requiring immediate reinforcement

ment of security outposts and strict law enforcement against assailants. Hostel facilities: non-commencement of new hostel construction is leading to accommodation shortage for post-graduates, contravening National Medical Commission mandates. The protracted delay in constructing the new OGH building necessitates urgent action to prevent overcrowding and improve patient care standards, they said.

INDIA CORNER

Rs 35 lakh cheque fraud in Arunachal, man held in Assam

Arunachal Pradesh police arrested one person from Assam on the charge of forging a cheque for Rs 35 lakh, a senior police officer said here on Monday. It is alleged that the accused somehow managed to get a leaf from the chequebook of a person, who is an account holder in a PSU bank branch in Itanagar, forged his signature and transferred the money to a private bank in Assam's Biswanath Chariali. The account holder lodged a complaint with the police regarding the unauthorised transfer in February, following which an investigation was initiated. Capital Superintendent of Police Rohit Rajbir Singh said. One person was arrested in Guwahati in this connection on May 18. The SP said that investigations revealed that a cheque leaf was missing from the chequebook of the complainant. The police also found a letter pad in the arrested man's possession, which he used to practise forging the signature of the complainant, Singh said.



Man gets life term for killing wife, mother-in-law in Odisha

A court in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district on Monday sentenced a 50-year-old man to rigorous life imprisonment for killing his wife and mother-in-law in 2019. Mayurbhanj district additional sessions judge Satyanarayan Patra also imposed a fine of Rs 50,000 on Purna Chandra Mohanta, and in case of default, the convict has to remain in jail for another six months, said Krushna Chandra Das, additional public prosecutor. The court pronounced the judgement after examining the statements of 13 witnesses and medical reports, he said. Due to a family dispute, Purna Chandra killed his wife Mamata and mother-in-law Sunati Mohanta with an axe on June 17, 2019 in Khuntapal village under the Moroda Police station limits in the district. Both died on the spot, he said. Based on an FIR lodged by Purna's brother-in-law, the police registered a murder case and arrested the accused.



Mercury again breaches 47 degrees Celsius Delhi

Temperatures in several parts of Delhi again breached the 47 degrees Celsius mark on Monday, with the weather office issuing a 'red alert' for the next five days due to heatwave to severe heatwave conditions in the national capital. The searing heat pushed the city's peak power demand to its highest for May, while the Delhi government directed the schools that have not closed for summer vacations to do so with immediate effect. Delhi has been seeing a steady rise in temperature in recent days, culminating in the highest temperature recorded this summer on Sunday when the overall temperature reached 44.4 degrees Celsius. Saturday's temperature was 43.6 degrees Celsius, up from 42.5 degrees Celsius on Friday. On Monday the national capital experienced the second-highest maximum temperature, 3.7 degrees above normal. Najafgarh recorded a high of 47.4 degrees Celsius on Monday.



Agniveers are not just soldiers but leaders: CDS

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan on Monday visited the Maratha Light Infantry Regimental Centre in Belagavi to address the Agniveers, as they embark on their military journey, an official said. In his address, he underscored the noble purpose of military service and its pivotal role within the military framework. He said the Agniveers are not only soldiers but also leaders, innovators and defenders of the nation's sovereignty. In a statement, the Defence PRO said, "Addressing the evolving nature of warfare, he underscored the complexity and unpredictability of future conflicts to include cyber warfare, Artificial Intelligence and asymmetric threats which are now an integral part of the battlefield." He also spoke about technology integration and continuous learning and mentioned that in addition to staying abreast



He underscored the complexity and unpredictability of future conflicts to include cyber warfare, Artificial Intelligence and asymmetric threats which are now an integral part of the battlefield

with the latest advancements, there is also a need to showcase innovative approach towards combat. He expressed his gratitude for the commitment made by Agniveers by choosing the armed forces as a profession which is a testament to their exceptional duty towards the

nation. The CDS acknowledged the personal challenges faced by the soldiers and their families and the hardships they endure while operating in challenging environments. He assured that despite the challenges, the Agniveers will find their journey immensely

rewarding and each step, will lead to their personal growth and deep sense of pride in serving the nation. The CDS lauded the Regimental Centre and the team of instructors for creating a conducive environment for training and ensuring that best of the training is being imparted to the Agniveers. He also emphasised the critical role of professional instructors in shaping the future of the armed forces. Chauhan also emphasised that the quality of training directly impacts the operational readiness and urged to be honest towards it. He encouraged Agniveers to continue striving for excellence, to uphold the values of integrity and honour, and to serve as role models for their peers. He also stressed upon the importance of remaining steadfast in their commitment to nation building and to make a positive impact, the statement added

HC restrains BJP from publishing ads violative of poll code

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Monday issued an injunction restraining the BJP from publishing advertisements that violate the election Model Code of Conduct (MCC) until June 4, the day the Lok Sabha election process ends. The court, in an injunction order, also restrained the BJP from publishing advertisements mentioned in the TMC in its petition claiming unverified allegations against it and its workers. A single bench of Justice Sabyasachi Bhattacharyya restrained the BJP from publishing advertisements in any form of the media which is violative of the MCC till June 4 or until further notice. The court observed that a perusal of the newspaper advertisements annexed by petitioner TMC evince that those are in violation of the MCC. It also criticised the Election Commission (EC) for not addressing the complaints promptly, especially with most phases of the Lok Sabha elections already completed.

India to participate in G-7, Ukraine peace summits: PM

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

India will participate in all important summits that promote the agenda of global peace, security and development, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said while referring to invitations to him to attend the G-7 meeting and the Ukraine peace summit next month. In an interview, the prime minister said India will "resonate the voice of the Global South" at these summits to shape the global discourse and advance the vision for human centric development and a prosperous and peaceful world. "The level of participation will be the factor of timing, logistics and parallel commitments," Modi said in response to a question on whether he will be attending the two multilateral gatherings. Italy is hosting the G-7 Summit meeting from June 13-15, while the Ukraine peace summit will be held in Switzerland from June 15-16. Modi said the invitations



"The level of participation will be the factor of timing, logistics and parallel commitments," Modi said in response to a question on whether he will be attending the two multilateral gatherings

extended to India to attend the summits were an acknowledgment of its significance and contribution to international affairs. "These reflect the robust global engagement that we have in keeping with our philosophy of Vasudhaiva

Kutumbakam (the world is one family)," the prime minister said. "India will be participating in all important summits that promote the agenda of global peace, security and development," Modi said.

WRITES TO MHA SEEKING FCRA PROBE

ED alleges over Rs 7-cr foreign funding to AAP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has written to the Union Home Ministry alleging the Aam Aadmi Party, which rules Delhi and Punjab, has received more than Rs 7 crore foreign funds in contravention of the FCRA, official sources said Monday. The federal probe agency sent the communication after it recovered some documents and emails during a drug-linked money laundering probe against former Punjab AAP MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira and some others. The probe was launched in 2021 and Khaira was arrested by the ED that year. He is now with the Congress party. Official sources said the ED had sent a detailed communication to the Union Home Ministry in August last year, underlining the alleged violations by the AAP and categorising these instances as contravention of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) and the

Representation of the People Act. It is understood that the ED recently shared some fresh inputs in this case with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). Sources said the ED found the AAP received overseas donations of about Rs 7.08 crore till now and they allegedly "mis-declared and manipulated" the identities and nationalities of the foreign donors apart from some other details. The agency has also informed the MHA about the verified names of the donors, their nationalities, passport numbers, amount donated, mode of donation and bank account number of the donor, receiver, billing name, address, phone numbers, email, time and the date of donation and payment gateway used, the sources said. Some fundraising events held by the AAP through its overseas wing volunteers in the USA and Canada between 2015 and 2016 are reported to have been made in alleged violation of the FCRA, the agency told the ministry.



EXCISE SCAM

ED seeks judicial custody for Kejriwal after he surrenders on June 2

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The ED on Monday sought extension of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's judicial custody after he surrenders on June 2 in an excise policy-linked money-laundering case. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) moved the application before Special Judge for ED and CBI Kaveri Baweja, seeking 14-day judicial custody for Kejriwal when he surrenders on June 2, claiming that the period of judicial custody granted earlier ends on Monday. Kejriwal is out on interim bail till June 1 following an order of the Supreme Court, which has directed him to surrender on June 2. The ED, meanwhile, told the court that there is sufficient evidence against Kejriwal and co-accused, Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) leader K Kavitha, to put them on trial in the case. The central probe agency made the submission in support of its supplementary charge sheets filed against both the politicians. The judge will continue hearing the ED's arguments on the point of taking cognisance of the charge sheets on Tuesday.

No cabinet reshuffle on cards post LS polls: K'taka CM

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said a cabinet reshuffle is not on the cards. He also predicted that the Congress will get between 15 and 20 seats out of 28 Lok Sabha seats in the state. The chief minister also dismissed the BJP's allegations that the five guarantees implemented by the state government would be discontinued after the elections. "We are not thinking of any cabinet reshuffle after the Lok Sabha elections," Siddaramaiah said during the 'Meet the Press'

event organised by the Press Club of Bangalore. The Congress will go by the directions of the high command, he said. Siddaramaiah predicted that the Congress would win a minimum 15 seats and maximum 20 seats out of 28 Lok Sabha seats in Karnataka, and ridiculed former chief minister and BJP leader B S Yediyurappa's claim that the saffron party would win all 28 Lok Sabha seats. Accusing the BJP of spreading lies that the five guarantees of the Congress government would be stopped after the



election, the chief minister said the schemes will not be discontinued for any reason. "For no reason we will discontinue any guarantee

schemes. People have blessed us for five years. So long as their blessings are with us, these guarantees will not stop," he said. The chief minister also clarified that there is no dearth of funds for development funds in the state. "The BJP is lying that the state's treasury is empty due to the guarantees. Let them lie but it should be close to the truth. What they are talking is the height of lies," Siddaramaiah said. He said that BJP state chief B Y Vijayendra and the Leader of Opposition in the Karnataka

Assembly R Ashoka do not understand economics, due to which they are lying that the treasury is empty. Siddaramaiah also lashed out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for allegedly spreading lies about reservation for Muslims. "Modi is telling another lie that we will take away the reservation from the backward communities and give it to the Muslims. This is an outright lie," he said. Citing Chinnappareddy Commission report, Siddaramaiah said Muslim reservation has been in place in the state for 30 years.

After June 4, Rahul Gandhi will have to take out 'Congress Dhundo Yatra': Shah

PNS ■ HISAR (HRY)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said after June 4, Rahul Gandhi will have to take out a "Congress Dhundo Yatra" as the grand old party will not even get 40 seats in the ongoing Lok Sabha polls. After addressing a rally in Haryana's Karnal, Shah kept up his attack on the Congress on various fronts at another public meeting in Hisar, where he campaigned for the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Lok Sabha poll candidate, Ranjit Singh Chautala. Asking the gathering if it wants to know the results after

four phases of polling in the general election, Shah said the BJP, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has already secured majority with more than 270 seats. He asserted that after the three remaining phases of polling, the saffron party's tally of seats will go past 400. "Shehzadon, damadon-wali Congress will not even get 40 seats," Shah claimed. Pointing out that the "shehzada" (prince) of the Congress, "Rahul baba" (Rahul Gandhi), had taken out the "Bharat Jodo Yatra", he said, "After June 4, Rahul baba will have to take out the 'Congress

Dhundo Yatra'. The Congress will not be seen even with binoculars," he said. The Lok Sabha poll results are scheduled to be declared on June 4. Shah said Modi's "Vikas ka Kamal" is blooming everywhere in Haryana. He said for the voters, on one hand there is Congress, during the rule of which scams worth Rs 12 lakh crore took place, and on the other hand there is Modi, who also served as the Gujarat chief minister for years and no one could level an allegation of corruption involving an amount of even "25 paise" on him.

NOT RK MISSION OR BHARAT SEVASHRAM

Mamata says she criticised monks who indulged in politics

PNS ■ ONDA/PANSKURA

Praising the Ramakrishna Mission and Bharat Sevashram Sangha for their philanthropic work, West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee on Monday said she was not against any institution but criticised one or two persons for indulging in political activities despite being monks. Banerjee had on Saturday alleged that some monks of the two

The chief minister also praised Bharat Sevashram Sangha, saying that it works for the people and that they also love her. "I had spoken about Kartik Maharaj, he did not allow Trinamool Congress agent to sit (at a polling booth) in Rejinagar," Banerjee said. Claiming that the Bharat Sevashram Sangha monk from Murshidabad district was working for the BJP, she accused him of instigating people when clashes between two groups happened at Rejinagar a few weeks ago. "If he wants to do BJP, he can, but should do it wearing its badge," she said, alleging that he was earlier aligned with Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury. Recounting her gestures for the Ramakrishna Mission in the past, Banerjee said that she saved Swami Vivekananda's house in Kolkata from getting sold off by getting the Kolkata Municipal Corporation to acquire it.



Men at higher risk of developing problems because of diabetes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Men with diabetes are at a higher risk of experiencing major health effects than diabetic women, a new research has found. Complications arising from diabetes such as diseases of the heart, leg, foot, kidney, and eye were observed more in men than women, regardless of how long they've had diabetes, according to researchers, which include those from The University of Sydney, Australia. The study included 25,713 people, all of them aged 45 years and above, and having either type 1 or type 2 diabetes. Through surveys, the partici-

pants were followed up for 10 years for major health problems developed because of diabetes. The responses were then linked to their medical records. The researchers found that 44 per cent of the men experienced a cardiovascular complication, including stroke and heart failure, compared to 31 per cent in women. The findings were published in the 'Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health'. Further, 25 per cent and 35 per cent of the men were found to develop conditions of leg/foot and kidney, respectively, as compared to 18 per cent and 25 per cent of the women, respectively. Problems of the



leg/foot included ulcers and bone inflammation, while those of the kidney included chronic disease and failure. Overall, the researchers found that diabetic men were 51 per cent more likely to develop heart problems than

diabetic women. Men with diabetes were also found to be 55 per cent and 47 per cent more likely to develop complications in the kidney and leg/foot, respectively. However, regarding the overall risk of developing eye complications, the team found little difference between men and women. Of the participants, 57 per cent of the men developed these conditions, while among women, 61 per cent developed them. Men were found to have a 14 per cent higher risk of developing sight-threatening eye disease diabetic retinopathy. "Men had a 1.5-fold increased risk of cardiovascu-

lar disease (CVD), lower limb, and kidney complications, and risk of diabetic retinopathy was 14 per cent greater in men than in women. These findings are reflected in the ~1.4 times higher 10-year rates for CVD, lower limb, and kidney complications in men compared with women," the authors wrote. The researchers said that while rates of developing complications because of diabetes rose in tandem with the number of years lived with the metabolic disease for both men and women, the sex-based differences in complication rates persisted. As a possible explanation, the researchers point-

ed out that the men in the study were more likely to have well-known risk factors. Men, in general, may also be less likely to make lifestyle changes, take preventive medications, or get health checks to lower their risks, they suggested. Being an observational study, no causal factors could be established, the researchers said. They also acknowledged a lack of information on potentially influential factors, such as diabetes medications and glucose and blood pressure levels. The authors said that even though men with diabetes are at a higher risk of developing complications, these rates are high in both men and women.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

The PoK hobgoblin

In election season, BJP leaders intensify campaign for PoK integration with India

If it is election season in India, can references to Pakistan be far behind? In 2019, it was Pulwama and the resultant surgical strikes. This time, an IAF convoy came under terror attack in the Poonch area on May 4, following which Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) made a rather late entry into the poll narrative. The call for reclaiming PoK is being given wide currency by the BJP; its top leaders are making bold assertions on the issue. Senior party leaders Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and Himanta Biswa Sarma have all recently underscored the BJP's commitment towards integrating PoK with India. To begin with, Amit Shah made a striking declaration, asserting that India will take PoK as it "belongs to us". The statement is seen as a bold political promise, aligning with the BJP's long-standing position on PoK. Then, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma echoed the sentiment, adding that the move is not merely aspirational but a realistic objective under the current Government. Then came Rajnath Singh's slightly different approach,



focusing on the human rights situation in PoK. Singh called on international bodies to take cognisance of the rights violations in the region. These statements during the ongoing polls are clear indication that the BJP wants to draw people's attention to this long-pending issue. They also underline the party's strategic use of PoK as a rallying point in the lead-up to the elections, aiming to consolidate support among nationalist segments.

Indeed, the situation in PoK is not good. The locals there are demanding greater autonomy and political rights, more self-governance and local control. They are also concerned about rights abuses and restric-

tions on civil liberties, calling for the protection of their basic rights, freedom of expression and an end to political repression. Additionally, economic development is a major issue, with calls for better opportunities, improved infrastructure, healthcare and education, along with increased investment to drive regional growth. But can India intervene in PoK matters and reintegrate it in our territory is another question. Unfortunately, such statements often cross borders and have unintended ramifications on the other side. Domestically, it may serve to galvanise the party's core supporters and assert the BJP's strong stance on national security and territorial integrity. It is also likely to influence electoral dynamics, with the party hoping to leverage this narrative to bolster its performance in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. Internationally, these statements may further strain India-Pakistan relations, potentially escalating tensions in an already volatile region. The call for international intervention on human rights grounds adds a new dimension to the discourse, potentially inviting global scrutiny and diplomatic engagements which India has been avoiding ever since this issue started. These remarks are more driven by poll expediency and election rhetoric rather than the Government's stated policy. These statements could exacerbate regional tensions and complicate diplomatic efforts.

Communal friction must end now

Despite facing criticism, Modi's tenure has seen minimal communal clashes, emphasising the importance of mutual understanding for communal harmony



PRAFULL GORADIA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the hectic campaigning for the current Lok Sabha elections has asked the Muslim community to seriously introspect; he has also exposed the Congress of endlessly pampering their notions of separateness. As expected, he has been pilloried for doing some blunt speaking.

No honest political observer can deny that Prime Minister Modi's administration has been free of communal clashes, except the Delhi riots of 2020. Earlier, this used to be a regular feature. The only other communal clashes have been over the abduction of cows. Hindus detest the killing of cows and oxen. In the 16th century, the Mughal emperor Akbar banned the killing of cows, because it offended Hindu sentiments.

In the 20th century, the Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Hind, founded by Maulana Azad advised Muslims to avoid killing cows as it offends Hindus. An unwritten clause of the Partition of India was that those Muslims who wanted to stay back in post-Partition India shouldn't do anything to offend Hindu sentiments. Qaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah had clearly stated in his Lahore speech of March 22, 1940, that "Hindus and Muslims are very different and cannot exist in the same country". Dr BR Ambedkar endorsed this view in his 1941 book Thoughts on Pakistan that an exchange of population should be organized on the Turko-Greek lines in 1923, under the auspices of the League of Nations. Jinnah, Ambedkar and Dr Rajendra Prasad endorsed this view. Rajendra Babu, India's President from 1950 to 1960, had written India Divided, wherein he proposed that Muslims who couldn't emigrate to Pakistan could be specially permitted to stay back, not as citizens but as aliens with visas.

Jinnah and other League functionaries in 1946 and 1947, had repeatedly demanded an exchange of population. Their views were published in the Dawn, newspaper Jinnah (now published in Karachi but initially printed in Delhi). Sir Feroze Khan Noon, later Pakistan's first prime minister, threatened in



April 1946 that if Hindus took an obstructive attitude to population exchange, Muslims would re-enact the murderous orgies of Genghis and Halaqu Khan. Iftikhar Husain, the Nawab of Mamdot, in December 1946 said he supported an exchange of population because many Muslims wanted to settle in Sindh. Ismail Chundrigar, later Pakistan's sixth prime minister, said that the British had no right to hand over Muslims to a subject people over whom they had ruled for 500 years. Shaukat Hayat Khan, son of Sikandar Hayat Khan, said the exchange of population was an integral part of the demand for Pakistan. Ismail Mohammed, a Muslim Leaguer from Madras said that Muslims were in the middle of a jihad. Similar were the views of Raja Ghazanfar Ali, who was later Pakistan's food, agriculture and health minister.

To the extent that Professor M Mujeeb, Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia University in Delhi met the Turkish representative to the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization (UNO), the latter was surprised and asked Mujeeb, "How are you representing India? I thought all Muslims went away to Pakistan". The point here is that all



THE INCUMBENT GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN BOLD ENOUGH TO BRING IN SOME REFORMS, HOWEVER LIMITED. INSTANT VERBAL DIVORCE HAS BEEN ABOLISHED AND EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AND INITIATIVES HAVE BEEN EXPANDED TO INCLUDE MUSLIM GIRLS

clashes or friction between the two communities ought to have been put finally at rest. They would have been so but for the insertion of Articles 25 to 30 into the Constitution of India by the Leftist followers of the country's first PM Jawaharlal Nehru. They wanted a substantive vote base for their great leader. This explains why a Uniform Civil Code was made a non-justiciable part of the Constitution. While zamindaris and jagirdaris were abolished, waqfs, which have been nationalized in many Islamic countries, were left untouched. Every other aspect of the separateness of the community's separate identity, like Urdu, polygamy, instant verbal talaq, etc., was not only not touched but continuously pampered. Madrasas, which foster a parallel and obscurantist education system, continue to thrive, preaching sectarianism and schism, to the detriment of their community. The present Government has been bold to bring in some reforms, however limited. Instant verbal divorce has been abolished and educational facilities and initiatives have been expanded to include Muslim girls. The womenfolk of the community, who have benefitted from these reforms, are being suspected of voting for a Hindu party in these elec-

tions. Islam accords priority to the ummah (community) over the vatan (country). There can be no denying that former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had said that Muslims have "first claim over our national resources" and he would have no hesitation in allotting 15 per cent of resources to them. During his regime, he appointed no less than five commissions to 'enquire' how and why Muslims in India were disadvantaged and what should be done to pull them up. Qutubuddin Aibak captured Delhi in 1192 AD and thereafter, one Muslim dynasty after another ruled Delhi till 1857, i.e., a total of 665 years before they were erased by the British Crown. With such a long rule, has any Government asked why the community is backward and needs a lift-up? Is taqlid (orthodoxy) in preference to ijthad (re-interpretation) the reason for this? Does the neglect of women also further this state of near-perpetual backwardness? Who is answerable for these crimes of omission? Is the present prime minister, the first Indian leader to ask these uncomfortable questions, in any way answerable for this?

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha; views are personal)

PICTALK



People show their inked finger after casting their vote during the fifth phase of Lok Sabha elections, in Ladakh PTI

Museums are pillars of culture and education

Museums play an essential role in preserving the history of human civilisation, offering tangible evidence of our existence and activities throughout time

Museums play an indispensable part in understanding the history of human civilisation. It is proof of our existence on this planet and material evidence of human activity carried out during our lifetime. Understanding the diverse cultural tapestries that make up human history helps build more inclusive societies. Museums come in various types, each focusing on different aspects of human knowledge, culture and the natural world, like Art museums, history museums, natural history museums, science museums, military and war museums, aviation and space museums, etc. This range of purposes results in a remarkable diversity of museums in terms of their form, content and function.



The history of museums is a fascinating journey that reflects humanity's evolving ways of collecting, preserving and interpreting objects of significance. The concept of collecting valuable or significant objects dates back to ancient civilisations. In ancient Greece, for instance, temples often housed collec-

tions of art and artefacts dedicated to the gods. The word "museum" originates from the Greek "mouseion," a term used to describe a place dedicated to the Muses, the goddesses of the arts and sciences. The concept of the public museum began to take shape in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Many consider the Ashmolean Museum, which opened in 1683 at Oxford University, as the first public museum of its kind. The founding of the British Museum in London in 1753 was a watershed moment in the evolution of museums worldwide. Numerous national museums were founded in the 19th century, frequently serving as emblems of cultural identity and national pride. The history of museums in India is deeply intertwined with the country's rich cultural and historical legacy. The colonial period saw the estab-

lishment of the first formal museums in India. The British East India Company and other colonial powers began collecting artefacts, often to showcase their conquests and understand local cultures. The Indian Museum in Kolkata, founded in 1814, is the oldest museum in India and one of the earliest in the world. It was established by the Asiatic Society of Bengal and housed collections that ranged from geological to archaeological artefacts. Post-independence, the National Museum under the Ministry of Culture was established in Delhi in 1949. It houses a vast collection of artefacts representing over 5,000 years of Indian history. It was a significant step towards preserving and showcasing India's cultural heritage. To propagate science and develop scientific temper, the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM) was established on April 4, 1978. Today, it administers 26 Science Centres/Museums spread across the country and is considered the world's largest network of science centres/museums. Museums not only play a vital

role in education and research, serving as repositories of knowledge, culture and history, but also in the conservation and preservation of the region's cultural heritage. Their contributions extend beyond simply displaying artefacts; they provide immersive learning experiences, support scholarly research and engage the public in various educational activities. Museums offer interactive exhibits that engage visitors in hands-on activities. These interactive elements make learning more engaging and memorable, helping visitors, especially children, to grasp complex concepts in science or history through experience. Museums also act as centres of active research. Researchers in archaeology, anthropology, biology and art history rely on museum collections for their studies. Much breathtaking research in science, especially on paleogenomics, was done using the artefacts from museums.

(The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru; views are personal)

ECONOMIC HARDSHIPS PERSIST

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Economic crisis takes a backseat in elections," published on May 20, this is my response. In this dance of democracy, scarce resources are rambling up election tempos. The focus shifts from core issues like employment to distractions like religious and cultural symbols. Despite being touted as the fifth-largest economy, India faces grim realities: high unemployment, displacement due to conflicts in Manipur and agrarian distress. Political promises of increased reservations appear futile without sufficient job creation. The International Labour Organisation highlights severe forced labour issues, questioning India's progress. With inflation soaring and trade deficits widening, the economic situation remains dire. Public-sector job cuts and reliance on self-employment indicate systemic failures. To truly uplift the marginalised and revitalise the economy, a robust public sector and equitable competition with the private sector are essential. Would politics support such a transformation?

Kunal Singh | Patiala

THE TRUMP SYNDROME

Madam — In US politics, Donald Trump was not the cause of a democratic crisis of faith. He just rode to power on it. Once in control, he leveraged the same disillusionment that helped him into office. Debasing democratic norms and abusing tall institutions led to the subversion of democratic systems. This Trump syndrome of relentless polarisation, which spawns apathy and disconnect in the polity, is seen creeping into nations across the globe to keep the political brew on a boil. Scandals and crises would shake voters' faith in the political system occasionally, but an engineered schism and dysfunction in the polity with agenda-driven governance turned corrosive.

Universally, people feel that democracy is failing because the Governments it produced were unable or unwilling to address their greater concerns. In the ongoing

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Combating wildlife trafficking



YouTube highlights a troubling trend. It's alarming that tech-savvy wildlife traffickers exploit YouTube's vast user base to market and sell protected species, such as parakeets, rare turtles and pangolins. This underscores a significant challenge: the intersection of advanced technology and traditional crime. Despite YouTube's policies against animal abuse, the persistence of these videos suggests enforcement gaps.

The WCCB's proactive steps, involving volunteers and "WILD NET," show progress in wildlife crime control through digital tools. Stronger tech-enforcement collaborations are vital for effective monitoring and policy enforcement. As we applaud the WCCB's efforts, we must also recognise the ongoing battle against a lucrative and persistent illicit wildlife trade that adapts as quickly as we counter it.

Neha Gupta | Delhi

phase of political asphyxiation, the disillusioned electorate is dispirited to defend a system that has failed to champion its cause. Worse, it could be more than ever before that ballots may no longer be the sole guarantee of true democracy. Apathy towards democracy is a gateway to larger unrest.

R Narayanan | Mumbai

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT

Madam — Various things on earth now feel the effect of climate change. Due to climate change, it has been seen that the negative impact on the mental health of people has increased. This research has been published in the journal "Lancet Neurology." Fluctuations in temperature are now affecting brain diseases as well. I recently read in the news that the severity of diseases like cerebral palsy and encephalitis is increasing. Cases of cerebral palsy are also increasing due to the rise in nighttime temperatures. Overall, the scope of climate change is becoming very large. Due to the increase in temperature, various birds and animals have also start-

ed to be affected. It is time for them to go to human settlements for drinking water. All this is happening due to many things. It seems that more than 5 million trees have been cut in India only from 2018 to 2022. This was recently stated in the report "Nature Sustainability." According to this report, most trees have disappeared in Telangana and Maharashtra. It has come to light that big trees have been cut down to expand agriculture in many areas. The remaining trees are also affected by forest fires and fungal infections. One factor that mitigates overall temperature rise is the current state of the tree. The temperature rise will affect many things and many cities near the sea are also likely to go under water. The increase in temperature should be stopped by humans. Otherwise, it seems that he will have to face many problems and the Government should also take measures for this.

Shantaram Wagh | Pune

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FIRST COLUMN ADDRESSING EMOTIONAL IMBALANCE IN SOCIETY

Independence is not possible without education in emotional self-control



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Today, whether you open a newspaper or tune into a news channel, you are almost guaranteed to encounter reports of crimes ranging from petty thefts to dacoity, murder, terrorism and sexual offences. Crime is alarmingly on the rise. This surge in criminal activity to a variety of factors, each adding to the growing sense of unease in our society. Giving the rationale behind this frightening phenomenon, they explain that some cases are due to the motive of money, others due to rage, hate, enmity and revenge and yet others due to odious discrimination based on caste, religion, ethnicity, culture or nationality or due to business rivalry or professional jealousy. However, they do not go into the common root cause of all these multifarious manifestations and motives of crime. As a result, they fail to address themselves to the real problem and to remedy the worsening and threatening situation. So, it would be correct to say that, in reality, there is no other problem but that people do not know and eradicate the roots of the tree of all problems and, instead, they try to get rid of some of its branches only. Of course, no one can deny that in a society where corruption and criminal tendencies have become strongly entrenched and where the virus of crime has entered and spread into the whole body of society, it has become difficult to breathe the pure air of freedom or liberation from worry, fear and tension and, despite lacs of able-bodied military men and police and trained and thoughtful investigating officers, life is neither safe from ruffians nor Governmental apathy. Everyone is fed up with the delaying tactics of those whose job is to facilitate rather than obstruct. Everyone is tired of the corrupt ways of everyone who can do something good and gracious but who, in practice, is doing the reverse.



But still, everyone is doing, more or less, what he or she considers distasteful, disdainful, obnoxious or horrible. If we go deep into this problem, then we will find that emotional disturbance is the origin of all disturbances. Yes! emotional imbalance or instability of the mind is the forerunner of all imbalances and instabilities. Emotional imbecility is the mother of all kinds of anarchy, deviant behaviour and crime — big or small. It is a lack of emotional intelligence that is at the back of every kind of waywardness, wanton behaviour and vicious tendencies.

In this context, let us understand that like and dislike are the natural tendencies in all men and women. But liking for a particular gender may become so irresistible as to grow into -lust and dislike for certain persons may become so strong as to grow into deep hatred and, in the case of these emotions going berserk, people may, one day, find that they have landed in jails. So, when we talk of emotional maturity or control, what we mean is that we have to have a measure of discipline or control over our tendencies of inclination and aversion, liking and disliking or love and hate so that these natural tendencies enable us to keep the company of what is good and salubrious and keep away from what is bad and harmful.

When we refer to emotional intelligence, we, refer to our sound judgment as to what are the things or who are the persons with which or with whom we should associate and what or who are of the opposite kind so that we may ward them off. But, alas! Most men and women miss that education that trains emotions or develops emotional potential positively. As long as this continues to happen, we will have a society where crimes are rampant and where people live in a State of tension with the push and pull of criminal tendencies pounding their minds. But what else is the means of emotional training than spiritual education? Our struggle for independence will remain incomplete unless people are educated to have emotional self-control.

(Writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist; views are personal)

Celebrating the power of cultural diversity



RAJDEEP PATHAK

As Nobel laureate Desmond Tutu once articulated, our differences underscore our mutual interdependence, highlighting the profound value of cultural diversity

The "World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development", celebrated annually on May 21st, stands as a beacon of hope in a world often marred by conflicts stemming from cultural, religious and socio-economic differences. In such a situation of growing discord, dialogue emerges as a powerful tool for fostering understanding, cooperation and ultimately, development. Dialogue serves as the cornerstone of development in a world, characterized by its diversity. The 1984 Nobel Peace Prize winner from South Africa and Theologian Desmond Tutu had eloquently stated, "We are different so that we can know our need for one another," thus necessitating the essence of cultural diversity - an opportunity to learn, grow and empathize with others.

UNESCO established the "World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development" in response to the 2001 terrorist attack that destroyed the Bamiyan Buddha statue in Afghanistan. In December 2002, the United Nations General Assembly officially designated May 21st as this day. The 2002 Universal Declaration recognized the need to "Enhance the potential of culture as a means of achieving prosperity, sustainable development and global peaceful coexistence".

Moreover, with 89% of all current conflicts in the world occurring in countries with low intercultural dialogue, to forge effective cooperation and sustain peace, strengthening intercultural dialogue becomes a necessity. Further, according to UNESCO data (https://www.un.org/en/observances/cultural-diversity-day), the cultural and creative sector is one of the most powerful engines of development worldwide. It accounts for more than 48 million jobs globally - almost half of which are held by women - representing 6.2% of all existing employment and 3.1% of global GDP. It is also the sector that employs and provides opportunities for the largest number of young people under the age of 30. However, the cultural and creative sector still does not have the place it deserves in public policies and international cooperation. Thus, in a bid to change this, in September 2022, delegations from 150 States gathered in Mexico for MONDIACULT 2022 - the largest world conference devoted to culture (in the last 40 years) - where they unanimously adopted the historic 'Declaration for Culture' affirming 'culture' as a "global public good" and calling for it to be integrated "as a specific goal in its own right" in the Development Agenda beyond 2030.

But what exactly are the concepts of diversity and inclusion along with culture? Diversity encompasses the intentional and inclusive gathering of individuals from various backgrounds, encompassing differences in race, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, age, educational background and this list can go on. It emphasizes the importance of bringing these diverse identities together to interact positively and contribute to a shared environment. Inclusion goes beyond merely acknowledging and respecting each person's distinct experiences and identities. It requires fair treatment and widespread recognition. It means embracing and appreciating these differences as essential



THROUGHOUT HISTORY, NUMEROUS INSTANCES UNDERSCORE THE TRANSFORMATIVE POTENCY OF DIALOGUE IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION. ONE SUCH EXAMPLE IS THE GANDHIAN MODEL OF 'NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION'. MAHATMA GANDHI ADVOCATED 'SATYAGRAHA' AGAINST OPPRESSION

elements for the progress and well-being of all.

Thus the 'World Cultural Diversity Day', commemorating the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, also emphasizes four key objectives. First, it advocates for policies fostering the creation, production and dissemination of diverse cultural goods and services. Secondly, it encourages initiatives facilitating a balanced exchange of cultural products while enhancing the mobility of artists and cultural professionals. Thirdly, it promotes sustainable development policies and international aid programs that embrace cultural integration. Lastly, it underscores the importance of aligning international and national legislation with human rights and fundamental freedoms, ensuring the preservation and flourishing of cultural diversity worldwide. All this is because, 'Cultural Diversity', drives development, not only economically, but also personally.

Simultaneously, 'Dialogue' also transcends geographical and cultural boundaries, catalysing cross-cultural understanding and cooperation. As Rumi, the 13th-century Persian poet, poignantly expressed, "The wound is the place where the Light enters you," a profound insight underscoring the potential for growth and enlightenment that arises from engaging in dialogue, even amidst adversity.

In today's complex landscape, dialogue emerges as an urgent necessity, given the multitude of global challenges like climate change, economic disparity and geopolitical tensions. Martin Luther King Jr's timeless words, "Injustice any-

where is a threat to justice everywhere," emphasize the interconnectedness of human experiences and the pivotal role of dialogue in addressing systemic inequalities in this landscape.

Engaging in dialogue, not only enhances self-awareness but also fosters profound connections with others. For instance, movements like 'Black Lives Matter', sparked by tragic incidents like George Floyd's and Breonna Taylor's deaths, underscore the imperative of dialogue in combating systemic racism and police brutality. Meaningful conversations among communities, law enforcement agencies and policymakers are essential for driving substantial reforms and promoting racial equity.

Throughout history, numerous instances underscore the transformative potency of dialogue in conflict resolution. One such example is the Gandhian model of 'nonviolent communication'. Mahatma Gandhi advocated for 'Satyagraha' or truth force, advocating peaceful resistance against oppression. His commitment to dialogue and nonviolence inspired millions, to follow the path of non-violence against the might of British colonial rule. Through nonviolent protests, civil disobedience and constructive dialogue, Gandhi showcased the power of dialogue in effecting profound social and political change. His method challenged colonial oppression's legitimacy, spurring a global movement for civil rights and social justice, across the country and inspiring others worldwide. Gandhi's legacy underscores dialogue's enduring potential in resolving conflicts and advancing justice worldwide.

CEO of the East African Centre for Human Rights, Judith Oloo, writing for "The Standard" in her article "The World Day of Cultural Diversity: Children's role as carriers of culture" (standard media.co.ke), lays importance on the role of children as torchbearers of cultural diversity. She says that children, "As participants in and carriers of our culture... are a critical part of our population - the future of our societies". According to her, culture profoundly shapes children's development, influencing emotional, social, physical and linguistic growth from birth. Customs, beliefs and practices surrounding food, art, language and religion play significant roles. Recognizing this, professionals working with children, such as social workers and child rights advocates, must grasp these influences to bring about a change.

In today's world, addressing global challenges requires collaborative approaches rooted in dialogue and mutual understanding. According to the UN, "Three-quarters of the world's major conflicts have a cultural dimension. Bridging the gap between cultures is urgent and necessary for peace, stability and development." Each of us has a role in fostering understanding to cultivate thriving communities. It's crucial to recognize how culture, in its various diversified forms, enriches discourse and contributes to sustainable development across different realms - social, environmental, economic and so on. Is it then not the time for us to at least sit across the table and start communicating?

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

Outrage over superstar Mammooty's alleged Jihadi ties

The controversy has ignited a fierce political debate and exposed deep-seated tensions within Kerala's political landscape

The disclosure by Mohammed Sharshad, a Chennai-based businessman, who is also a CPI(M) activist, that Malayalam cinema's "super mega star" Mammooty has shocked the secular, liberal and democratic political leaders of Kerala. The CPI(M), CPI and Congress leaders have come out openly against the Sangh Parivar for portraying Mammooty as a Jihadi. The disclosure about Mammooty's links with Jihadi organisations was made by a Muslim youth, a local leader of the CPI(M). The first person to attack Sangh Parivar about the report about Mammooty's Jihadi links was K T Jaleel MLA, a former CPI(M) minister and former president of the banned SIMI. Jaleel is famous for his



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

speeches and writings that India could be liberated only through Islam. Then other ministers took up the issue and it has caused ripples in Kerala. Mammooty, who was a below-average student during his college days is an Arabic graduate from Maharaja's College Ernakulam. While he was a student, Prof Ummer was the head of the Arabic Department and it was the latter who set the question papers

and valued the answer sheets. No Arabic student has failed in BA Arabic examination in Maharaja's College those days. The title super mega star reminds one of the age-old adage in the land of the blind, the one-eyed is the King. Mammooty is no match for his counterparts in Hindi movies or Hollywood. Being a Jihadi or communalist is not a crime. The issue here is that one who questions the organized bargaining capacity of the Muslim community becomes persona non grata in Kerala. Leaders who were bold enough to point out the hidden agenda of the Muslim political and spiritual leaders ended up in dustbins. EMS Namboodirippadu tops the list of such persons who

were decimated by the Islamist leaders. Before the 1991 assembly elections, there was a suggestion from certain CPI(M) leaders like E K Nayanar and M V Raghavan (both left to meet Marx, Lenin and Stalin) that the party should ally with the Muslim League. But Namboodirippadu was quick to retort that the Muslim League should get rid of its name and flag (that resembled the Pakistani national flag) to be considered an ally. Leaders of the Muslim League became furious and they saw to it that Namboodirippadu was cut to size and the CPI(M) removed him from the coveted position of general secretary in 1992. The next to earn the wrath of leaders of the Muslim community was A K Antony who was the chief minister during the

period 2001 to 2004. The 2003 Marad beach massacre that saw the slaughtering of eight Hindu fishermen by Islamic radicals happened during Antony's tenure. Antony was for an investigation by the CBI but made a hasty retreat as Muslim League leaders throttled the move. But he warned the League leaders openly that the organized bargaining power of communal outfits would not be entertained by his Government. This hurt the Muslim League leadership who asked the Congress High Command to remove Antony from the chief minister's post at the earliest. That's how Antony tendered his resignation post-2004 Lok Sabha polls and moved over to New Delhi. V S Achuthanandan, a widely respected leader of the

CPI(M) was sworn in as chief minister in 2006 after the assembly election. Achuthanandan was always against any kind of communalism and fanaticism. During a press meeting in the national capital in 2010, Achuthanandan said that Love Jihad was a reality. "The Muslim fundamentalists have an agenda to convert Kerala into a Muslim majority State within the next two decades," he had said. Though the CPI(M) lost the 2011 elections by a whisker, the party returned to power in 2016 making use of the goodwill enjoyed by Achuthanandan all over Kerala. The highway from Kasaragod to Thiruvananthapuram was dotted with larger-than-life-size

posters of Achuthanandan giving an impression that he would be the automatic choice of the CPI(M) as chief minister after the election. But Pinarayi Vijayan, whose pictures or posters were conspicuously absent, was nominated as chief minister by the party's leadership and since then the former has become the uncrowned king of Kerala. Achuthanandan was sidelined not because of the influence wielded by the Muslim community in the CPI(M). The ire of the Muslim League and community leaders also claimed the political career of G Sudhakaran, a CPI(M) minister who was disliked by the district-level leaders of Alappuzha (all belonging to the Muslim community) from where he hails. PC George, the

seven-time legislator who had defeated both the LDF and the UDF in assembly elections was made to bite the dust in his home turf of Poonjar for lambasting Love Jihad and the role of various Islamist outfits in this operation. For more than four decades, George was a secular leader acceptable to the Muslim community. But when he pointed out the plight of the victims of Love Jihad, George became an enemy of humanity and the entire Muslim community voted against him in the 2021 assembly election. This is Kerala's brand of secularism. Caveat Emptor would be the ideal word of caution for those daring to question the Islamic outfits. (The writer is a special correspondent with The Pioneer; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

SII commences shipments of malaria vaccine 'R21/Matrix-M' to Africa

Vaccines manufacturer Serum Institute of India (SII) on Monday said it has started exports of 'R21/Matrix-M' malaria vaccine to Africa as part of the global fight against the disease. Developed in collaboration with the University of Oxford and Novavax's Matrix-M adjuvant, the R21/Matrix-M vaccine is the second malaria vaccine to be authorised for use in children in malaria-endemic regions, SII said in a statement. The initial shipment is being sent to the Central African Republic (CAR), followed by other African countries such as South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo in the coming days, it added. In total, 1,63,800 doses of the 'R21/Matrix-M' malaria vaccine have been specifically allocated for the CAR region, of which only 43,200 doses have been dispatched on Monday from SII's facility in Pune. The shipment of the 'R21/Matrix-M' malaria vaccine to Africa marks a momentous milestone in our collective fight against this life-threatening disease.



Oil India posts 18% rise in Q4 net profit; announces 1:2 bonus share

State-owned Oil India Ltd (OIL) on Monday reported an 18 per cent rise in net profit in the March quarter on the back of higher prices of crude oil. The consolidated net profit of Rs 2,332.94 crore in January-March -- the fourth quarter of the 2023-24 fiscal year -- compared with Rs 1,979.74 crore earning in the same period of the previous financial year, according to a stock exchange filing by the nation's second biggest state-owned oil and gas producer. Higher oil prices led to a 16 per cent rise in turnover to Rs 10,375.09 crore. Earnings from crude oil produced and sold rose 18 per cent but the same from gas dropped 16.5 per cent on lower prices. For the full 2023-24 fiscal (April 2023 to March 2024), net profit fell 29 per cent to Rs 6,980.45 crore. OIL said its board approved issue a 1:2 bonus issue (one free share for every two held).



Uber gets licence to operate buses in Delhi

Ride hailing app Uber has received an aggregator licence by the Delhi Transport Department to operate buses in the national capital under the Delhi premium Bus Scheme, the company said in a statement. Delhi becomes the first state to award a licence for bus operations and Uber becomes the first aggregator to be granted a licence under the Delhi Premium Bus scheme, the statement said. "Following a successful pilot programme, where we witnessed significant demand for buses, we are thrilled to officially introduce the convenience of Uber rides to buses in Delhi," Uber Shuttle India head Amit Deshpande said. Customers will be able to pre-book seats on their preferred route by choosing the 'Uber Shuttle' option on the Uber app. The formal launch of Uber Shuttle, a bus service tailored for daily commuting needs, brings to fruition a pilot programme that was initially tested in Delhi-NCR and has been operational in Kolkata since last year under an MoU with the West Bengal government, as per the statement.



Govt plans to ensure adequate coal stock at thermal plants

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The coal ministry has planned extensively to ensure adequate stock of dry fuel at all thermal power plants ahead of monsoons in order to meet increased demand for electricity.



During monsoons, coal availability gets impacted due to rains. According to official sources, in a recent sub-group meeting with state power generating companies at the level of inter-ministerial committee of coal, power and railways, it has been observed that adequate stock of coal is available at all thermal power plants (TPPs) in

the country. Coal supply and logistics issues are discussed and resolved on weekly basis through sub-group meetings. This year, coal production is growing at 7.26 per cent over

last year, source said, adding that thermal power generation is growing at 8.78 per cent and rake supply is growing at 8.45 per cent. Adequate transportation arrangements are in place to meet enhanced demand of

coal for increased need of thermal power for the growing economy, they said.

Total stock of coal as on May 15, 2024 at pit-head and on transit to TPPs is 147 million tonnes (MT) compared to 117 MT on the same day last financial year, showing a growth of 25 per cent.

Coal stock at TPPs as on May 15, 2024 stood at 45 MT, 29 per cent higher than the stock of 34.83 MT on the corresponding date of last year.

Coal India Ltd (CIL) which accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal production has pithead stock of 85 MT, which is 30 per cent higher compared to last year.

GenAI both an enabler and destructor: Report

Companies wary of AI-fuelled malware, phishing

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

GenAI presents dual prospects of possibilities and peril, and a large majority of cybersecurity leaders from around the world are wary of its negative impact, a global survey has found.

A staggering 93 per cent respondents of the survey conducted by CyberArk said they anticipate negative impact from AI, with AI-powered malware and phishing topping the list.

CyberArk's 2024 Identity Security Threat Landscape Report -- which surveyed 2,400 cybersecurity leaders across 18 countries -- found that "cyber debt continues to build with GenAI the rise of machine identities, and increasing third



and fourth-party risks". The report said about 99 per cent of organisations take help of AI in cybersecurity defence initiatives. However, it also predicted "an increase in the volume and sophistication of identity-related attacks, as skilled and unskilled bad actors also increase their capabilities, including AI-powered malware and phishing".

A total of 93 per cent respondents, it said, anticipate AI-powered tools to create cyber risk for their organisations in FY25. "In the last 12 months, 9 of 10 organisations were victims of a breach due to a phishing/vishing attack. These types of attacks will be harder to detect as AI will automate and personalize the attack process," it said.

Altogether, 93 per cent of Indian organisations had two or more identity-related breaches in 2023, it said.

"Looking at the year ahead, organisations can expect to be affected by data leakage from compromised AI models, AI-powered malware, and phishing," it added. The report further raised concerns around the burgeoning circulation of deepfakes, especially with elections around the corner.

"Get ready for a pivotal and unsettling Decision 2024 as over 4 billion voters prepare to elect leaders in over 60 countries -- and AI-powered deepfake campaigns become the weapon of choice for anyone wanting to influence election outcomes," it said. The report also named machine identities as a vulnerable source of risk, "ready to be exploited by bad actors with AI-powered ability to execute at scale".

FSIB to interview candidates for SBI Chairman post today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

FSIB, the headhunter for directors of state-owned banks and financial institutions, is scheduled to interview eligible candidates for the post of SBI chairman on Tuesday, sources said.

Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB) will interview the eligible MDs of the bank to select a replacement for Dinesh Khara, who will be superannuating on August 28, when he turns 63, the upper age limit for the SBI Chairman position. As per the convention, the chairman is appoint-

ed from a pool of serving managing directors of SBI, the country's largest lender.



FSIB would recommend the name and the final decision would be taken by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

FSIB is headed by Bhanu Pratap Sharma, former secretary of Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT). The members of the government-appointed selection panel are Financial Services Secretary, Department of Public Enterprises Secretary and an RBI Deputy Governor.

Other members of the headhunter are Animesh Chauhan, former chairman and MD of erstwhile Oriental Bank of Commerce, RBI's executive director Deepak Singhal, and Shaileendra Bhandari, former MD of erstwhile ING Vysya Bank

India has sufficient domestic tyre capacity

Imports must not be liberalised: ATMA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has sufficient tyre manufacturing capacity and imports should not be liberalised about sectors in which through FTAs by way of duty concessions, industry body Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association said on Monday.



The automotive tyres rank at the forefront of those sectors where domestic manufacturing capabilities can render imports unnecessary, Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association

(ATMA) has communicated to the Centre.

This was in response to the government seeking feedback about sectors in which India has capabilities to be self-reliant so that upcoming FTAs could be drafted while safeguarding the interests of domestic industry, ATMA said in a statement.

The industry body has pointed out that imports should not be liberalised through FTAs by way of duty concessions.

'Realty sentiment index up; positive outlook for next 6 mths'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Real estate developers and financial institutions are bullish on growth in the Indian real estate sector, as the current sentiment index improved during January-March with high optimism for the next six months, according to Knight Frank-NAREDCO.

High economic growth and strong property demand are key factors for the improvement in their sentiments.

Real estate consultant Knight Frank and realtors' industry body NAREDCO on Monday released the Real Estate Sentiment Index Q1

2024 (January-March) report, which is based on a survey



from supply-side stakeholders, showing an unprecedented surge in market confidence among the supply side of real estate.

The Current Sentiment Index Score improved to 72 against 69 in the preceding quarter. The Future Sentiment

score also saw an uplift, climbing from 70 in October-December 2023 to 73 in January-March 2024.

"This positive trajectory reflects stakeholders' sustained optimism regarding the Indian economy, and the enduring demand in the real estate market," the consultant said.

The quarterly report provides a comprehensive analysis through a primary survey of current and future sentiments in the real estate sector, considering the economic climate and funding availability as perceived by supply-side stakeholders and financial institutions.

ULIP offers huge opportunities to states: DPIIT Secy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP) offers huge opportunities for states to enhance their logistics frameworks, a top government official said on Monday.

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh encouraged all states to actively leverage ULIP and drive forward a seamless, efficient and inclusive logistics sector across India.

The platform was launched on September 17, 2022, as part of the national logistics policy.

Govt to hold 2nd meet with stakeholders to issue draft guidelines for new EV policy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Heavy Industries will hold a second round of meeting with stakeholders in a "month or two" to issue draft guidelines for the new electric vehicle (EV) policy that has been framed to attract global automakers like Tesla to set up manufacturing operations in India, a senior official said on Monday.

Automakers wishing to avail of incentives under the policy will have to invest afresh as per the new norms, and old investments will not be considered, the official said.

This has been told to

Vietnam's electric carmaker Vinfast, which in February this year had said it would invest US\$ 500 million (Rs 4,000 crore) in Tamil Nadu over a period of five years, according to the official.



In a significant move aimed at revolutionising the EV landscape in India, the government approved the Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Electric Passenger Cars in

India (SPMEPCI) on March 15, 2024. The first stakeholders' meeting was held in April in which an advisor representing Tesla -- The Asia Group (TAG) -- had also attended.

"We have got a lot of representations. We have studied them so maybe in a month or two we may have the second consultative meeting. The task before us is to issue guidelines," the official explained.

Stating that the government wants to issue them through a consultative process, the official said, "We will make the draft guidelines and will circulate those amongst the possible applicants and again call a consultative meeting."

Kalpataru Projects Int'l bags SAR 3.4 bn contracts from Aramco

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Kalpataru Projects International Ltd on Monday said it has bagged three contracts worth 3.4 billion Saudi Riyal (SAR) from Aramco to expand gas supply network in Saudi Arabia.

In March, Kalpataru Projects International Ltd (KPIIL), formerly Kalpataru Power Transmission, announced that it received a Letter of Intent (LoI) from Saudi Arabia's energy major Aramco, for carrying out EPC work for three packages

of the third expansion phase of the Master Gas System Network (MGS-3) in the country.

The company signed the three contracts for a contract value of SAR 3.4 billion (presently equivalent to Rs 7,550 crore) on Sunday, KPIIL said in a regulatory filing.

The scope of work covers the laying of over 800 km of lateral gas pipeline.

The MGS-3 aims to expand the existing gas network to provide gas supply to various industrial consumers in the region.

India Inc gets inked; corporate leaders vote for stable govt

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Captains of industry, including bigwigs from the house of Tatas, Ambanis and Birlas, joined fellow citizens in the financial capital to vote on Monday in the fifth phase of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections.

The half a dozen Lok Sabha seats in Mumbai were along 13 constituencies that voted in the fifth and last phase of elections in Maharashtra.

Development and good governance, and the need to accelerate economic growth, were mentioned as key issues influencing voting choices by business leaders while exercising their constitutional right at polling booths in the metropolis.

step out of their homes and cast their ballot.

Voting centres in tony neighbourhoods of south Mumbai started witnessing queues from very early in the morning, with Tata Sons chairman N Chandrabosekar being among the first of the India Inc leaders to exercise their franchise.

Polling across the Lok Sabha seats in Mumbai started at 7 am.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das voted with family members at a school near his official residence in south Mumbai, while richest Indian Mukesh Ambani, who resides a few blocks away, turned up at the same school later in the evening with his wife Nita and son Akash in tow.

Noted industrialist Kumar Mangalam Birla ecstatically told reporters that his 19-year-old younger daughter Advaitesha also cast the vote for the first time along with him and her elder sister Ananya.

Shopping, banking facilities soon at Nammo Bharat stations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation said on Monday that the Nammo Bharat train commuters will soon get facilities like shopping, restaurants and banking at the stations.

According to a statement, these facilities will be available at the commercial spaces within the premises of the stations near the entry and exit areas, enhancing passenger convenience, it said.

Recently, Nammo Bharat trains achieved the milestone of carrying one million passengers to their destinations. In light of the increasing number



of passengers each day, the availability of these facilities within the premises of the stations will further enhance passenger convenience, the statement said.

The NCRTC said the commuters of the corridor will

soon enjoy amenities such as shopping, dining at restaurants, food outlets and banking services in addition to fast and comfortable travel on the Nammo Bharat trains.

The NCRTC has invited bids for commercial spaces at

The NCRTC said the commuters of the corridor will soon enjoy amenities such as shopping, dining at restaurants, food outlets and banking services in addition to fast and comfortable travel on the Nammo Bharat trains.

stations on the operated section of the corridor to provide these amenities. In the first phase, bids have been invited for spaces at Sahibabad, Guldhar and Duhai stations. The last date for bid submission is June 4. Bid documents can be viewed on the NCRTC website, it stated.

Currently, the Nammo Bharat train services operate at eight stations along the 34-km section between Sahibabad and Modi Nagar North. The process for opening commercial spaces at other stations within this operated section will commence soon, it stated.

built-up area of around 165 square metres in the entry and exit block adjacent to Vasundhara and the Sahibabad industrial area is available for bidding. Similarly, at the Guldhar station, a built-up area of around 145 square metres offers an attractive opportunity for commercial establishments such as restaurants, food outlets, shopping outlets, banks and offices, it said.

At the Duhai station, there are two commercial spaces available for bidding at entry/exit Pocket A and Pocket D, around 140 and 135 square metres respectively, the statement said.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
 Date: 20.05.2024
 Name of Work: Monsoon Emergency Teams, Estimate Amount / ECV: Rs. 412.20 Lakhs, Start Date / Last Date & Time for Receipt of Bids: 21.05.2024 @ 02.00 PM and 28.05.2024 @ 02.00 PM. Name & Address, Officer Cell No.: SE/KPZ, GHMC, 9989930363.
 Sd/- Superintending Engineer
 Kukatpally Zone, GHMC
 P.O.No: 12163-PP/AD/1/2024-25, D: 20-05-2024



CANNES GOES DESI

Ankush Bahuguna paves the way for South Asian representations at Cannes

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Ankush Bahuguna, one of the most prominent, talented, and well-liked content creators, who seamlessly blends comedy and beauty, added distinction to the famous red carpet at the 77th Cannes Film Festival, marking a watershed event in South Asian representation!

With this appearance, Bahuguna became the first Indian male beauty content creator to make his global debut in Cannes. To learn how Ankush made every stride a style statement on the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival, we got in touch with this beauty influencer exclusively. He begins by adding, "I was happy, apprehensive, enthusiastic, and a little scared by the size of the event. It was a mixed bag of feelings, but I was also quite thankful that all of my hard work over the years has led me to Cannes and that male beauty, particularly the South Asian portrayal of it, is being recognised on such a large scale. I think it's a huge win! However, I believe that there is still a lot of acceptance that needs to happen. Hopefully, milestones like these affect the course of events, even if in a minor way. Any progress is progress."

Ankush Bahuguna, who recently made a remarkable appearance at the 77th Cannes Film Festival, speaks exclusively with *The Pioneer* as he shares his feelings of walking down the red carpet, exploring different sides of his personality as a content creator, and more.

I hope to see more South Asian masculine beauty on the Cannes red carpet. I believe walking the red carpet will lead to new opportunities."

After one month of architecture, Ankush realised that he didn't want to be an architect. So he joined up for something he knew little about. "Just like many others of my age, I had no idea what to do with my life, so I went with the flow. Later, I landed an internship as a content writer for a men's lifestyle magazine. I began writing stuff for them and eventually transitioned to writing and acting in comedy. I had a nice experience and was well-accepted. At the time, Instagram and TikTok were popular platforms for content creation. I realised that if I can write, act, and perform, why not do it for myself and establish myself as a brand and key opinion leader?" he adds.

He learned that the internet, particularly social media, has enabled creative people to become content creators and create the type of content they desire while also being recognised for their true skills. He has always considered himself a jack of all trades, has always wanted a platform to channel all of this at once, and believes that content creation has provided that opportunity!

Frankly, Ankush didn't establish his page to challenge gender norms. As a cisgender guy, he had unique privileges that must be acknowledged. When he applied cosmetics, people were more receptive than when a gender-fluid, non-binary, or trans person did the same. Many excellent artists may not receive adequate recognition owing to their gender identity. He cannot claim to be the movement's torchbearer! Individuals, like Sushant Divgikar, influenced his decision to wear cosmetics. Besides, "The problems I confront include being honest and open on the internet. When you first start posting content online and are not a skilled professional makeup artist, you will undoubtedly make mistakes. I started uploading videos from the beginning, even though I had no idea how to apply blush or concealer, and this exposes you to a lot of unwanted abuse and bullying. Your work will not always be perfect, but you must accept that you will

make mistakes and learn from them. Doing something in full public view can have a negative impact on your mental health."

At the same time, he feels that if you do something on the internet that deviates from the norm, you will face backlash. It may influence your mental health at some point. He advises, "Just remember that putting anything on the internet is a risky move since you expose yourself to a wide range of perspectives. And you should be aware that, while everyone on the internet has the right to express themselves, not all opinions are worth listening to. As a designer, my suggestion would be to understand that the game is unpredictable." When evaluating a successful content developer, several aspects must be considered! It may take time. Individuals may have immediate results or require a significant amount of time. Being honest is key to connecting with your audience on the internet.

Furthermore, he utters, "I've always looked at myself as a well-rounded person instead of just a comedy or a beauty creator. I don't want to put myself in a box, and that's what I've always stood for—that we are so much more than just one thing. Content creation is giving me the chance to explore all sides of my personality, be it comedy, fashion, beauty, or acting. Acting has always been the dream of my life, ever since I was a child. I actually started acting before I started content creation, but it took off, so people started seeing me as a content creator more than an actor. But now I've moved to Mumbai to train as an actor! I'm currently training, auditioning, taking workshops, and working on my skills; I'm just looking for the right project to feature in."

He also desires to see non-binary, gender-fluid, and trans people receive the same acceptance as cisgender individuals. "I hope that we may all be accepted, regardless of gender. I advocate for guys to utilise makeup, skincare, and haircare in the same way that women do, as these are not gender-specific. Everyone should have access to these things. It is a means of self-expression. Men's beauty and skincare are a sort of creativity that I hope will

become more mainstream."

As the Cannes Film Festival promotes artistic expression and cultural interchange, how did he anticipate his participation in the festival impacting the discourse around diversity and inclusion in the entertainment industry? Well, he voiced, "Influencers and content creators are increasingly collaborating with film industry professionals such as producers and directors. We work together to promote a better film. Growing up watching Bollywood might mould our identities based on the characters we witness. As Indians, we are deeply connected to cinema. Attending Cannes offers a unique opportunity to experience global cinema and connect with people from all around the world through shared feelings. I assist other Indian artists and use my platform to promote Indian films that are being screened. I'm delighted to network with prominent Indian and international people. I believe this is what I want to accomplish. We'll discuss diversity and inclusiveness, as I symbolise male beauty in South Asia. But it is also about movies. Our goal is to promote cinema through the film festival too. All of us are eager to do so since cinema has impacted our entire childhood."

"I suppose the first message I want to send folks back home is that they should come here and experience how much love Indian films receive. It will make you very proud of our culture and the films we are now making. Look at how much love Indian celebs receive on the red carpet, and now content creators have joined in! We are going worldwide, and that is the message I want to express. Beauty is evolving, as is the value of representation in culture and entertainment. South Asian participation is steadily expanding, and I couldn't be happier. The inclusion of males in beauty on a large platform is long overdue, and I believe it will provide opportunities for marginalised groups. The progress is remarkable, and I anticipate positive changes in the near future," winds up Ankush, who was spotted wearing a bespoke reverse tuxedo designed by Rohitash Notani, exuding confidence and flair.

'I'm jokingly called the 'richest gareeb' by my friends'

SUBODHINI PUROHIT

Karan Wahi is an actor whose trajectory resembles a narrative twist in a Bollywood blockbuster. Initially pursuing a cricket career, destiny chose to throw him a curveball. Karan is unexpectedly thrust into the spotlight after being granted a role in the cult hit *Remix*.

From there, it's a frenzy of auditions, uncertainty, and, finally, victories. As he navigates the rollercoaster ride of show business, he not only conquers the world of acting but also dabbles in the adrenaline-fueled world of reality TV with shows.

In addition to acting, he has hosted *Nach Baliye*, *Indian Idol*, and *India's Next Superstars*, and has shown his humorous side on Colors TV's comedy show *Comedy Nights Bachao*.

Finding a passion by coincidence is frequently the most incredible journey one can start on. Many people believe Karan's acting career was the result of a chance encounter that changed his life. "Acting was not a deliberate choice for me," begins the *Dill Mill Gaye* fame. But little did he know that a producer would unexpectedly approach him at his college in Delhi and give him a role in *Remix*. "I came to Mumbai without much consideration, expecting to act for a year, enjoy it, and then return. However, I never went back. Initially, I had no desire to become an actor, but I regarded this opportunity as a way to improve my graph for a time."

The audition in Delhi came as a surprise after someone discovered his photographs in an agency. Initially hesitant, "I eventually received a callback and was confirmed for the role after 10 or 12 days. My first producer, Shristi Arya, saw something in me that none of us expected would lead to the enormous success of *Remix*. We spent months filming without knowing if the show would ever air. But when it did, it caused a sensation! I suddenly found myself being identified, which drew me to act. Two decades ago, breaking into the industry was not as easy as it is today, so success felt like a huge milestone, one that motivated me to stay."

In the ever-changing environment of Indian television, breakthrough moments frequently come from unexpected places. Such was the case with him. He adds, "To be honest, none of us had any expectations for Ranveer or whether people would like him. However, after two or three months of its release, *Remix* became a hit, filling a hole in Indian television's youth-centric

programming. Prior to *Remix*, the landscape consisted primarily of family dramas such as *Kyunkis* and *Kahaniis*, but there were also serials that did not target younger audiences. The enormous success surprised us because it appeared to appeal to a wide segment of viewers seeking material tailored to their interests."

Friendships formed on the set of a show frequently withstand the test of time, across distances and diverging paths. Sharing his bonds, the *Kuch Toh Log Kahenge* star says, "I'm still friends with everyone from the show, though we only see each other on occasion because everyone is so busy with their lives and careers. Some remain in the industry, while others have taken alternative paths. However, we always make it a point to get together on November 1st to celebrate the release of *Remix*. With the twentieth anniversary coming, I am positive there will be a reunion."

Every part an actor portrays is remarkable in its own unique manner. However, the one character that resonates with and expresses the actor's own personality always leaves a lasting impression. "In television, you immerse yourself in a character day after day, inadvertently incorporating aspects of yourself into the role. This has certainly been true for the majority of the gigs I've performed. If I had to pick one character who spoke to me the most, it would be Sid (Dr. Sidhant Modi) from *Dill Mill Gaye*. At 24, I was as funny and stupid as my character, so it felt like a natural fit," says the *Channa Mereya* star, who appreciates receiving immediate reactions while anchoring live on television. However, he emphasises that it is a distinct type of challenge, needing instinctive reflexes and balancing retakes to keep viewers interested.

He is not someone who seeks inspiration from others; he goes on to say, "Your personality is what makes you distinct. While working with Maniesh Paul, I enjoyed the enthusiasm we had

onstage, and part of his flair may have rubbed off on me. However, everyone is unique, with their own sense of humour and intuition on stage. While it's fine to learn from others' hard work and expertise, it's critical to be loyal to yourself rather than attempting to emulate someone else's success."

Many people like simplicity, and Karan is no exception, finding comfort and confidence in his traditional manner. "I'm probably the least likely person to enjoy fashion. My style is really straightforward; I prefer t-shirts and denim, adhering to the classics. Shopping alone isn't my forte either; I basically go for whatever the mannequins are wearing. My aesthetic sense isn't great; my friends jokingly call me the "richest gareeb" (poor) since I prefer to stick to what's comfortable and familiar, frequently wearing the same t-shirt in different colors." We got it, Karan.

OTT, which is driving the industry's transformation, has something to offer everyone in the sector because it has ushered in a new era of possibilities and has produced a lot more talent. "It's an exciting period for everyone involved in the profession, including performers, technicians, and directors. The abundance of jobs and various personas to portray is absolutely impressive."

"Today, stardom does not ensure success; audiences have diverse tastes, and productions are diversified. The OTT revolution has created innumerable chances, but not every show will succeed. Those who seize opportunities and work hard will enjoy the benefits. However, there is a risk of complacency; waiting for that one breakthrough role can slow growth. It's critical to be realistic and proactive when chasing prospects."

Excitement fills the air as he delves into a new project unlike any other, and he concludes by saying, "I'm currently working on a project that has piqued my interest from the beginning. It's a novel format, particularly for the web, with a lengthy plot. Plus, working with pals like Jennifer Winget of *Dill Mill Gaye* is always a plus. My character, Virat, is unlike any others I've played. He's flawed and real, unlike the traditional hero archetype. The feedback has been tremendous, and this is the type of initiative that encourages you to give your all. Even when I finish my work for the day, it stays with me, which I find motivating."



Non-surgical nose that's reshaping the beauty industry scene

Non-surgical nose reshaping, also known as non-surgical rhinoplasty or liquid rhinoplasty, is a popular cosmetic procedure in the beauty industry. This minimally invasive technique offers a way to enhance the appearance of the nose without the need for traditional surgery. It is especially favoured by individuals seeking subtle changes with minimal downtime.

The procedure
Non-surgical nose reshaping involves the use of dermal fillers, such as hyaluronic acid, to alter the shape of the nose. The procedure typically takes about 15-30 minutes and is performed in an outpatient setting. Here's how it works:

- 1. Consultation:** The process begins with a consultation where the patient discusses their aesthetic goals with the practitioner. This helps determine the areas of the nose that need enhancement.
- 2. Preparation:** The treatment area is cleaned, and a topical anesthetic may be applied to minimise discomfort.
- 3. Injection:** Using a fine needle, the practitioner injects the filler into specific areas of the nose. Common areas for injection include the bridge to straighten a bump, the tip to lift it, or the sides to create a more balanced look.
- 4. Shaping:** The practitioner then gently moulds the filler to achieve the desired shape. This step requires a skilled hand to ensure a natural-looking result.

- Benefits**
Non-surgical nose reshaping offers several benefits:
- **Quick and convenient:** The procedure is quick, often completed in under 30 minutes, making it convenient for those with busy schedules.
 - **Minimal downtime:** Unlike surgical rhinoplasty, there is little to no recovery time. Patients can usually return to their normal activities immediately.
 - **Reversible:** If hyaluronic acid fillers are used, the procedure is reversible. An enzyme called hyaluronidase can dissolve the filler if the patient is unhappy with the results.
 - **Cost-effective:** It is generally more affordable than surgical rhinoplasty.

Considerations
While non-surgical nose reshaping has many

- advantages, there are also important considerations:**
- **Temporary results:** The results are not permanent. Fillers typically last between 6 to 18 months, after which the procedure must be repeated to maintain the appearance.
 - **Limitations:** This method is best suited for minor adjustments. It cannot reduce the size of the nose or correct functional issues such as breathing difficulties.
 - **Potential risks:** As with any cosmetic procedure, there are risks, including bruising, swelling, and, in rare cases, more serious complications like vascular occlusion.

Importance of certified practitioners
The success and safety of non-surgical nose reshaping highly depend on the skill and experience of the practitioner. Complications are more likely to occur in the hands of an untrained person. **Potential complications include:**

- **Vascular occlusion:** This occurs when filler material blocks a blood vessel, which can lead to tissue death and scarring if not promptly treated.
- **Infection:** Improper techniques can introduce bacteria, leading to infection.
- **Blindness:** Though extremely rare, injecting filler into or near blood vessels that supply the eyes can cause blindness.
- **Asymmetry and lumps:** Incorrect injection techniques can result in uneven appearance and palpable lumps.

Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that a certified and experienced practitioner performs the procedure to minimise these risks. They are trained to handle complications should they arise and are knowledgeable about the anatomy of the nose, ensuring safer and more effective results.

Non-surgical nose reshaping is an excellent option for those seeking minor aesthetic improvements without the commitment and recovery associated with surgery. Its popularity continues to grow in the beauty industry due to its convenience, minimal downtime, and effective results. However, it's essential to consult with a qualified practitioner to ensure the procedure is appropriate for your needs and to achieve the best possible outcome.

(The author, Dr. Dhruv Chavan, is an Aesthetic Surgeon at Clear Skin and Hair MD Clinics.)

Since making his debut into the entertainment world with *Remix*, Karan Wahi has since become a much-celebrated face in the industry. The actor, who is soon going to celebrate 20 years of his cult classic, speaks to *The Pioneer*, taking us through his formative years, and his breakthrough moments with the show.





Hyderabad International Jewellery Show (HIJS) is being organised by United Exhibitions at GMR Arena in Hyderabad. The expo is going to be held from June 21 to June 23. The products on display will be a dazzling array of exquisite designs, from timeless classics to avant-garde creations, meticulously curated to captivate the end customer's senses!



Prachi Thaker



Amisha, Preethi and Urimila



Priya and Aparna



Tejaswi



Madhavi and Nadhita



AD11 Sports, in association with Dr. TDR Reddy Ortho Care and an event curated by Dreamz Entertainments, announced Doctors T20 Premier Cricket League HYD—Season 1, which is being organised from May 24 to June 2, 2024, at Grand Arena Sports County, Maheshwaram, Hyderabad. The aim of this tournament is to promote health, sports, and wellness by showcasing doctors and cricketers as role models.

PARTY

Photos by- SV Chary

OELLT strengthens university partnership

The Oxford English Language Level Tests (OELLT), part of the Oxford International Education Group, announced the addition of 30+ university partners from across the globe. The expanded network now includes esteemed institutions such as the University of Edinburgh, UK, and top-ranking universities like Washington State University, including the University of Edinburgh in the UK and Washington State University in the USA, which are highly sought after by Indian students for their academic excellence and impactful research programs. The hassle-free process and fast turnaround time allow Indian students to pursue their educational dreams abroad effortlessly.

VLCC unveils advanced wellness center in Himayat Nagar

VLCC announced the grand opening of its latest center in Himayat Nagar, featuring revolutionary technologies for permanent fat reduction, state-of-the-art anti-aging skin laser treatments, and advanced machines for muscle toning and building.

Outbrain expands its presence in India

Outbrain has announced the opening of its first Global Talent Center (GTC) in India. Headquartered in New York, Outbrain is a leading ad-tech and web recommendation platform that helps connect users with content they might be interested in while also working as an advertising platform for businesses. The establishment of its GTC in India comes as part of its global expansion plans.

Wellconnect Platform

Riskbirbal Insurance Brokers Private Limited, specialising in personalised insurance solutions, announced the launch of Wellconnect, a groundbreaking platform that seamlessly integrates cutting-edge technology, data-driven insights, and personalised care to transform the healthcare and insurance experience.

Cannes Film Festival Red Carpet Podcast

Amazon Music India and Film Companion will bring the live glam right from the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival. With the biggest names from the entertainment industry gracing the red carpet, listeners will be able to keep up with it right from their homes. Hosted by Anupama Chopra and Sneha Menon Desai, the podcast has a stellar guest lineup of filmmaker Chidananda Naik, actor Kiara Advani, actor Naseeruddin Shah, filmmaker Payal Kapadia, and musician AR Rahman.

Revolutionising Gaming

Ant Cloud was launched in India. This allows users to play any AAA game on any device at any time. But Ant Cloud isn't just limited to gaming; with its PC Mode, users can seamlessly perform productivity tasks using a fully-featured Windows gaming PC on the cloud. Ant Cloud is the first-of-its-kind subscription service originating from India, offering a pay-as-you-go model. The service, with prices starting at just INR 599 per month, is set to transform the way people engage with gaming and PC activities.

Happiness-centric smart cities

Ajitesh Korupolu, the founder and CEO of ASBL, emphasised the need for urban planning to prioritise the well-being and happiness of citizens. In a recent podcast, he asserted that cities should evolve with a 'happiness-centric' approach to enhance the quality of life for residents. Mr. Korupolu delved into various key talk points during the podcast, shedding light on the current state of urban planning policies and their implementation.



The BBG Talent Factory Awards Ceremony was held at the Om Convention in Narsinghi. This event honoured the exceptional achievements and contributions of BBG associates across various categories, recognising their dedication and hard work. With actress Ritu Varma taking center stage to present the awards, the evening became a platform for celebrating the diverse talents within the organisation and inspiring others to strive for excellence.



Citizens Specialty Hospital marked a significant milestone by hosting the country's first Continuing Medical Education (CME) session on CODE E-CPR in the Emergency Department (ED) at its Hyderabad facility. The event witnessed the participation of 60 delegates and 20 faculties, comprising esteemed medical professionals and experts in the field.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



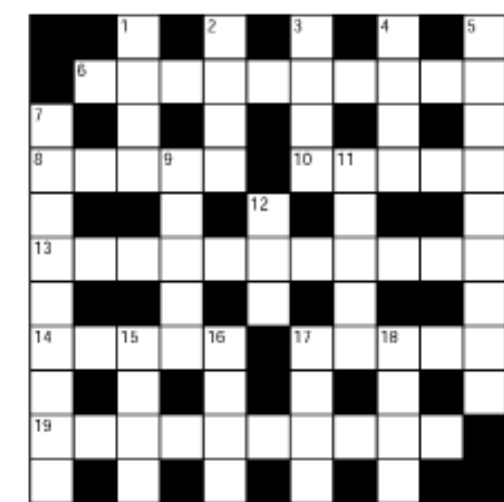
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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	8		5	6				
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Yesterday's solution

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

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

ACROSS

- 6 Intentional; on purpose
- 8 Weary
- 10 Frequently
- 13 Scary
- 14 Go in
- 17 A baking ingredient
- 19 Turned from liquid into vapour
- 9 A big bird of prey
- 11 Last
- 12 A place where pigs are kept
- 15 A salty drop of water from your eye
- 16 An area in a house
- 17 A young horse
- 18 Bake things in here

DOWN

- 1 Close by
- 2 Discover
- 3 Someone who has done something very brave
- 4 Sprinkle this on food
- 5 People aged 13 to 19
- 7 Went rigid



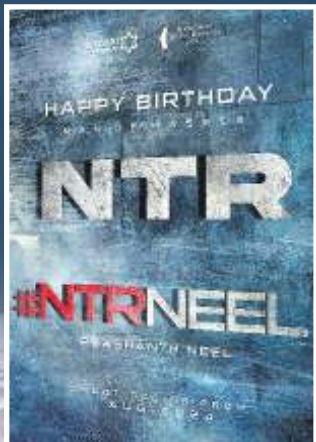
JR NTR, PRASHANTH NEEL'S MEGA ACTION EPIC IS ON!

The much-awaited collaboration between the "Man of Masses," NTR, and the blockbuster director, Prashanth Neel, is finally set to roll. Tentatively titled *NTRNeel*, this action-packed extravaganza has been generating immense buzz since its announcement. In a delightful birthday surprise for NTR fans, the makers unveiled a crucial update: filming for *NTRNeel* will kick off in August 2024. This announcement has sent waves of excitement rippling through the fandom as anticipation reaches fever pitch. Director Prashanth Neel, known for his gripping narratives and larger-than-life visuals, is meticulously crafting the script to match the colossal expectations surrounding the project.

With Prashanth Neel's track record of delivering blockbuster hits like the *KGF* series and *Salaar*, paired with NTR's unmatched charisma, *NTRNeel* promises to be a cinematic spectacle of epic proportions. Produced by production houses Mythri Movie Makers and NTR Arts, the film aims to scale the same heights of grandeur as the *KGF* franchise.

As fans eagerly await the dynamic collaboration between NTR and Neel, industry insiders are predicting that *NTRNeel* will redefine the Indian film landscape. With NTR currently immersed in his commitments to *Devara* and *War 2*, he is slated to join the sets of *NTRNeel* once he wraps up his ongoing projects.

As August 2024 draws closer, all eyes will be on *NTRNeel*, poised to witness the magic that unfolds when two powerhouse talents come together to create cinematic history.



Manchu Manoj returns as Black Sword in Mirai

After an electrifying hiatus spanning eight years, actor Manchu Manoj is poised for a triumphant comeback to the silver screen. In a move that promises to redefine the superhero genre, Manoj takes on the mantle of "The Black Sword" in the much-anticipated film, *Mirai*. Directed by the visionary Karthik Ghattamaneni and produced by TG Vishwa Prasad of People Media Factory, this cinematic extravaganza marks Manoj's debut in a universe pulsating with action, adventure, and unparalleled excitement.

Amidst the fervour of his birthday celebrations, the curtains were lifted to unveil the first glimpse of Manchu Manoj as "The Black Sword." The teaser presents Manoj in a never-before-seen avatar, exuding intensity and power as he wields a mysterious weapon against the backdrop of a ravaged landscape. His portrayal exudes a commanding presence, blending swagger with grit, as he embodies the essence of "The Black Sword" character. With long hair tied in a ponytail and a stylish beard, Manoj's appearance strikes a balance between lethal and fashionable, captivating audiences with every frame.

The introduction of this character adds a new layer of depth to the narrative, showcasing Manoj's versatility and dedication as an actor. His journey promises to resonate deeply with viewers, elevating the film's impact to new heights.

Reflecting on his return to the industry, Rocking Star Manoj Manchu remarked, "Portraying such a powerful and enigmatic



character has been both challenging and exhilarating. 'The Black Sword' embodies the strength and resilience that every hero should possess, and I am thrilled to embark on this journey with my fans, who have patiently awaited my return."

Set against the backdrop of the visually stunning world of *Mirai*, the film offers a seamless blend of traditional heroism and contemporary storytelling that is poised to captivate audiences worldwide. Exploring the mysteries of Ashoka's nine unknown books, *Mirai* weaves together elements of history and mythology into an epic tale of adventure and discovery.

With the recent release of Super Hero Teja Sajja's teaser garnering widespread acclaim, Manoj Manchu's unveiling on his birthday heralds a statement of intent that reverberates across the Telugu film industry and beyond.

Ritika Nayak joins the cast as the lead actress opposite Teja Sajja, while Karthik Ghattamaneni and Manibabu Karanam lend their creative talents to the screenplay and dialogue. Adding to the film's allure is the musical genius of Gowra Hari, with Sri Nagendra Tangala serving as the art director and Vivek Kuchibhotla as the co-producer. Krithi Prasad assumes the role of creative producer, supported by Sujith Kumar Kolli as executive producer.

Mirai is slated for release in multiple languages—Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam—on April 18th, promising audiences an immersive cinematic experience in both 2D and 3D formats.

HOMBAL FILMS TO START THEIR OWN FILM, MEDIA AND CREATIVE ARTS INSTITUTE

After creating waves across the globe with *KGF*, *Kantara*, and *Salaar*, Hombale ventures into the film, media, and creative arts institutes with the aim of giving back to the creative community.

The production house has served as a launch pad for many names, and in an exciting move, they're going to now open 'School of Film, Media, and Creative Arts'. This marks India's first liberal school and creative arts-led film and media school.

The aim behind this is to conduct a masterclass for aspiring filmmakers, writers, and actors, and they will all be trained and taught by artists, directors, and super technicians. The experts will provide complete training in their internship sessions, and Hombale Films has helmed top names for their film school. In the training session, they will be giving several programs and will also provide certificate courses. Talking about Hombale Films, they have always proved their mettle, and with the *KGF* franchise, they dared to dream big! The production house is solely responsible for Kannada Cinema on the global map with their two biggest blockbusters, *KGF 1 and 2*, and *Kantara: A Legend*.

Meanwhile, Hombale Films has an exciting line-up of films in the pipeline, which includes *Salaar Part 2: Shouryanga Parvam* and *Kantara: Chapter 1*.

AJAY MEETS AJAY DEVGN IN THE 'COP'VERSE

In an exciting crossover move, Tollywood actor Ajay is set to join Bollywood's iconic *Singham* franchise alongside superstar Ajay Devgn. Known for his versatile performances in Telugu cinema, Ajay is all set to make his mark in the cop genre.

The *Singham* series, one of Bollywood's biggest franchises, has captivated audiences with its high-octane action and powerful storytelling. Now, with the addition of Ajay from the Telugu film industry, fans can expect an even more thrilling cinematic experience.

Stepping into the shoes of a cop is a new challenge for Ajay, who has impressed audiences with his phenomenal roles alongside Tollywood's star heroes. His versatility and acting prowess are sure to shine in this new avatar.

With Ajay Devgn leading the charge as the iconic *Singham* and Ajay bringing his own unique flair to the table, anticipation is at an all-time high for this crossover collaboration. Fans can't wait to see these two powerhouse actors share the screen and set the box office on fire.

As preparations for the film are underway, the excitement surrounding *Singham* is palpable. Stay tuned for more updates as this dynamic duo gears up to deliver a cop drama like never before.



Raj and DK rope in Aditya Roy Kapur for Family Man 3: Reports

Aditya Roy Kapur grabbed headlines recently amid rumours of his split with Ananya Panday. On the professional front, the actor marked his OTT debut with *The Night Manager*, earning accolades from his fan base. As anticipation builds for his upcoming projects, a recent report unveiled that Kapur is set to collaborate with acclaimed directors Raj and DK for his next venture.

According to a report, Aditya Roy Kapur will join forces with Raj and DK for an upcoming project, marking their first collaboration together. The report disclosed that Kapur has officially signed on for the project, although specific details are yet to be finalised. A source mentioned, "Aditya has committed to a project with Raj and DK, and preparations are currently underway. While further project details remain undisclosed, Aditya is slated to portray a sports-related role in the yet-unnamed venture."

Reportedly, Kapur will commence preparations for his character in the Raj and DK project in the near future. The source added, "Raj and DK are currently occupied with the post-production of *Citadel India*, and *The Family Man 3* filming has recently begun. Following these commitments, they will actively begin work on their collaboration with Aditya." However, neither the actor nor the director have officially confirmed these reports.

Many aspects of the project remain shrouded in secrecy, including whether it will be a film or a web series. Kapur was last seen in *Gumraah*, where he portrayed a dual role, and is presently engaged in filming *Metro... In Dino*. Renowned for their acclaimed web series like *The Family Man*, *Farzi*, and *Guns & Gulaabs*, director duo Raj & DK's collaboration with Kapur has stirred considerable excitement among fans and industry insiders alike.



Anand Deverakonda's Gam Gam Ganesha brings confusion, chaos and comedy altogether

Hero Anand Deverakonda's upcoming film *Gam Gam Ganesha* has been one of the projects that's creating enormous buzz and features a compelling element of crime comedy. The teaser seemed both exhilarating and entertaining.

The film, which is directed by Uday Bommisetty, opens with Anand being introduced as a thief. The carefree criminal flirts with his girl and goes about his regular life with his companion. But he finds himself in a position where he must steal the idol of God.

Two individuals are engaged in a political power struggle that is depicted in parallel.

Anand also becomes entangled in this situation. He is completely absorbed in formulating a scheme to amass wealth as a lifetime settlement. The remaining narrative reveals whether or not Anand has achieved success. This time, Anand is creating a distinct character. He plays a more animated role in the movie than he did in his earlier productions. He might benefit greatly from this, and the movie is technically sound.

The cast of the project includes Anand Deverakonda, Pragati Srivastava, Nayan Sarika, Emmanuel, Vennela Kishore, Raj Arjun, and Satyam Rajesh.

Srikanth opens up on rave party rumours

Recently, there were rumours that many Tollywood influencers and actors had attended a rave party in Bengaluru, which was busted by the police.

It was circulated that actor Srikanth Meka was also present at the party. While initially Srikanth and his family laughed off these rumours, later, because of the calls he has been receiving from the media and other well-wishers, the actor wanted to issue a clarification about the same.

"I'm not the one who attends rave parties or goes to pubs. Please don't believe such rumours," clarified actor Srikanth in a video released by him on Monday.

Speaking further, Srikanth made it clear that he has no affiliation with the rave party held in Bengaluru. "I am currently at home in Hyderabad. I have never attended any rave parties in Bengaluru, nor have I been arrested by the police, as reported. Some media friends called me seeking clarification, but I didn't respond to their queries. Recently, there were rumours that I attended a rave party in Bengaluru. My family members and I laughed it off upon hearing the news. They have put up fake thumbnails, alleging me to be the person attending the party. They even added a beard to my face. I am shocked. Please don't believe such false news. I'm at home. Please don't believe such rumours." He also requested that the media confirm and fact-check any news before publishing, as earlier they spread rumours that he was getting divorced!

Rakshana producer takes legal action against Paayal Rajput!

In her most recent film, *Mangalavaaram*, actress Paayal Rajput astonished everyone by taking on a difficult and distinctive character. *Rakshana*, a crime investigative thriller, is her upcoming film on cards, where the actress will assume the role of a tough police officer for the first time in her career.

The producer further mentioned that if the main lead does not attend the promotion of the film, he and his family will suffer financial losses as her absence from the promotion of the movie will have a considerable impact on the business and revenue from the film to be released.

On the other hand, the actress had also taken this issue to her Instagram and shared a post where she also alleged some serious allegations against the producer. Sharing the post, she revealed that her team had attempted to negotiate the digital promotion of *Rakshana* with Paayal, suggesting clearing dues with compensation first. However, they had refused to compromise!

She further went on to reveal that they had used inappropriate language, stating that the distributor asked Paayal to showcase certain assets and would further be banned from doing films.

According to the producer and as per the agreement, she was supposed to work for 50 days for the completion of the film in addition to the promotion of the film. However, the producer used her services for 47 days. He mentioned that with all the problems faced by him due to COVID, he completed the film and, with business done on the above-mentioned film, planned to release it on April 19.

Notwithstanding the above, the producer and director informed that he is ready to pay the balance



PICTURE BLOCK

The LB Stadium in Hyderabad was abuzz with excitement as some of Tollywood's biggest stars and directors gathered to celebrate 'Directors' Day 2024'. The event, touted as India's biggest celebration of filmmaking talent, witnessed a star-studded turnout that left fans and industry insiders alike in awe.

Leading the pack was none other than the iconic Allu Arjun, whose charismatic presence lit up the venue. The *Pushpa* star, known for his stylish demeanour and electrifying performances, stole the spotlight as he graced the event with his signature charm.

Joining Allu Arjun were other top-notch talents from the Telugu film industry, including the versatile Natural Star Nani. Renowned for his

GLAMOUR GALORE



impeccable acting prowess and relatable characters, Nani added his own brand of charm to the festivities, delighting fans with his presence.

But the glitz and glamour didn't stop there. The event also played host to a galaxy of acclaimed directors, who are the creative minds behind some of Tollywood's biggest blockbusters. From innovative storytellers to visionary filmmakers, the gathering

was a testament to the incredible talent pool that drives the Telugu film industry forward. As the stars mingled and exchanged pleasantries, the atmosphere was filled with camaraderie and excitement.

Photographers captured candid moments, fans cheered their favorite celebrities, and the air was electric with anticipation for what the future holds for Telugu cinema.



Salt less KKR take on Sunrisers Hyderabad in power hitting slugfest

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

High-flying Kolkata Knight Riders and an unpredictable Sunrisers Hyderabad, teams that have built their IPL 2024 campaign on power-hitting, will look to outmuscle each other in Qualifier 1 here on Tuesday. If KKR were the first team to make IPL playoffs this year, SRH gave themselves a huge boost by inflicting a four-wicket loss on Punjab Kings on Sunday to eventually finish second with 17 points, ahead of Rajasthan Royals.

While the two top teams from the 70-match league round have enjoyed some time off courtesy incessant rains during their respective clashes over last 10 days, the lack of turnaround time to compete in a high-intensity playoff game will also pose a unique challenge.

KKR and SRH will get only a day's time to traverse thousands of kilometres and get here for the first half of the playoffs as they both featured on the final day of the league round on Sunday. SRH would feel they have hit their strides following a comprehensive win over PBKS and having also got recent game-time, which isn't the case for KKR whose last complete game was on May 11.

Shreyas Iyer's KKR had won four games on the trot before rains washed away their last two league games and the two-time winners.

Table-toppers KKR (19 points) will also have to fill in the huge void at the top with their second-highest run-



scorer and wicketkeeper Phil Salt (435 runs) leaving the camp for national duties with England ahead of the T20 World Cup. Salt had forged a devastating partnership with Sunil Narine (461) at the top and KKR were immensely benefited by their ultra-aggressive approach with the bat, backed up well by a potent middle-order even though skipper Iyer (287) has not had a major impact yet. The washed out contest against

RR in particular robbed KKR of an opportunity to give expected replacement Rahmanullah Gurbaz a go at the top with Narine, something that would have settled a few concerns certainly. For KKR, the form of Nitish Rana adds more solidity to the middle-order while a fiery Andre Russell among the finishers promise them vital runs. In many ways, SRH match KKR's firepower on paper and

that is what adds more to the lure of this contest. Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma have both got their runs at a strike rate exceeding 200 while inspiring their side to rewrite a few records. Australian southpaw Head has in many ways redefined aggressiveness with the bat while also remaining successful (533 runs with one century and four fifties). His fearlessness has also brought the best out of the

young Indian batter Abhishek (467), who has clobbered an overall 41 sixes this IPL - 10 more than his overall tally of 31 in the previous six seasons.

SRH have also managed to find answers to a couple of questions which were lingering on for a while. At No 3, the 2016 winners have found a dependable option in Rahul Tripathi who can both accelerate as well as weather storms when bowlers are on-song.

Additionally, Heinrich Klaasen has rediscovered his form after a dip in the middle of the tournament. With a crucial knock of 42 against PBKS, Klaasen has signalled having found his mojo back, which only makes SRH even more formidable.

At Ahmedabad, as seen in the World Cup final last year, teams batting second have had more success, winning four out of six completed games while only twice the team which batted first could defend successfully.

Also, against the style of play for both these teams - to bury oppositions under mountains of runs - this venue has had only two scores of 200 or above in 12 innings, which means the bowlers will also have their say. If KKR have a battery of spinners to back their fast bowlers led by Mitchell Starc, SRH's pace bowling attack led by skipper Pat Cummins has time and again produced unified efforts to make their mark.

In their only meet earlier this season back in late March, KKR had pipped SRH by four runs in a high-scoring game.



Swapnil Singh contemplated quitting cricket until RCB picked him up in IPL auction

PTI ■ BENGALURU

When Swapnil Singh went unsold in the initial rounds of the 2024 IPL auction, the dejected left-arm spinner felt it was time to end his 18-year-old-career.

But then Royal Challengers Bengaluru raised the paddle late in the auction to add a welcome twist to his cricketing journey.

"The day of the IPL auction I was travelling to Dharamsala for a game. It was around 7-8 pm after I landed. Nothing had happened by then and the last rounds were on. When I missed out at first, I thought that's it. Frankly I thought it was all over," Swapnil told RCB Bold Diaries. "I thought I would play out the ongoing (domestic) season, and if needed, I would end my career after playing the next season because I did not want to keep playing all my life," he said.

"There are other things to do well in life as well. I was very disappointed," said Swapnil, who made his debut in 2006 and had even shared the dressing room with RCB teammate Virat Kohli at one point in time. Bought at a base price of Rs 20 lakh, the 33-year-old has repaid the faith the franchise showed in him.

Swapnil has played a pivotal role in RCB's recent string of wins which have propelled them into the playoffs, with the 2016 finalists set to face a struggling Rajasthan Royals in Ahmedabad in the Eliminator on Wednesday.

Swapnil said it was an emotional moment for his entire family after they learnt that he was picked up by RCB. "As soon as my family called, we broke down. Because no one else understands how emotional the journey has been."

Swapnil has also credited former Zimbabwe captain and RCB head coach Andy Flower for showing the faith in him.

"Before RCB picked me in the auction, they had organised a trial-cum-camp. I spoke to Andy sir and told him all about how my (domestic) season had gone. I told him, 'Just give me one chance. This might be my last chance. Just have faith in me.' He told he had faith in me. He called me for the camp," Swapnil said. Swapnil also revealed his wish that he expressed to his brother, that he wanted to contribute with the bat in IPL. The moment eventually arrived when he smacked a four and a six against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

"I would tell my brother that I have neither scored a four nor a six in the IPL, and I have taken only one wicket. So I really want to hit a four and a six," he said.

OTHER SPORTS

Rohan to pair with either Balaji or Yuki at Paris Games

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's top doubles player Rohan Bopanna will pick either N Sriram Balaji or Yuki Bhambri as his partner for the Paris Olympics and All India Tennis Association (AITA) will most likely approve his choice even as the combinations will be discussed by the selection committee.

Ranked four in the world, 44-year-old Bopanna, being a top-10 player, can pick a player of his choice as per the rules.

The men's doubles draw at the Paris Games will be a 32-team affair, where one nation can have a maximum of two teams.

The qualification criteria gives top-10 players the privilege to pick their partners, who should be inside top-300 on the ATP and WTA ranking charts.

The rankings of June 10 after the

conclusion of the French Open will be considered for qualifications.

According to AITA sources, Bopanna had recommended names of Balaji and Bhambri to the national federation for inclusion in TOPS as his potential partners for Paris Olympics.

"Usually, it's the player's choice (to pick his partner). The selection committee will ask him about his choice and discuss that. Whoever Rohan wants to play with, will be considered positively," AITA Secretary General Anil Dhupar told PTI when asked if the national federation will allow Bopanna to play with the partner of his choice or impose its own choice on him.

Both Balaji and Bhambri have got some decent results on clay in lead up to the Roland Garros, where the action will unfold during the Summer Olympics from July 27. Balaji won the Cagliari Challenger



event with German partner Andre Begemann apart from reaching the semifinals at Francavilla al Mare in Italy.

Bhambri won the ATP 250 event in Munich with French player Albano Olivetti in April and reached the semifinals of the Bordeaux Challenger — the only event he competed this month.

The nominations for Olympics or other multi-sporting events have often created controversy in Indian tennis. In 2012, a huge controversy had erupted when both Mahesh Bhupathi and Bopanna had refused to pair with Leander Paes, who was forced to play with Vishnu Vardhan.

Sania Mirza was then asked to pair with Paes in the mixed doubles event and the top woman player of the country had chastised the AITA for using her as bait to placate Paes. In the 2018 Asian Games, Paes had

pulled out of the continental event just two days before the start of tennis competition, saying he was not given a specialist player to pair with. AITA had nominated Bopanna and Divij Sharan as a team, leaving Paes with no option but to pair with one of the singles players in the squad.

It will be Bopanna's last shot at winning an Olympic medal, having come close to a bronze medal with Sania Mirza in the mixed event of the 2016 Rio Games.

In the singles, Sumit Nagal will need a good run at the French Open to boost his ranking. He is placed 94 as of Monday.

In a draw of 64, the organisers will accept 56 direct entries and out of six ITF places, three men's quotas have been awarded to winners of continental events — Asian Games, African Games and Pan-American Games.



Nagal bows out of Geneva Open after loss to world number 19 Baez

PTI ■ GENEVA

India's top-ranked singles player Sumit Nagal made a first round exit from the Geneva Open after going down fighting against Argentina's Sebastian Baez.

The world no.94 went down 6-7 (7) 3-6 to the Argentine, who is a clay court specialist, in a match that lasted one hour, 52-minutes here on Sunday.

"Gutted with the loss today. But good preparation ahead of Roland Garros. Paris next," Nagal, who has qualified for the French Open, tweeted after the loss.

Nagal started off brightly taking an early 4-1 lead over Baez. He also had a set point. But world no. 19 Baez, who has already won two titles on clay this season, showed his class to force a tiebreaker owing to his fantastic first serve performance.

In the second set, Baez continued to bank on his superb first serve, and wrapped up the proceedings in 38 minutes.

Focus on Sindhu as she looks to end title drought at Malaysia Masters

PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Back from a break, P V Sindhu will look to hit the right notes in her quest for some confidence-boosting wins ahead of Paris Olympics when she spearheads India's campaign in the Malaysia Masters badminton tournament starting here on Tuesday.

Sindhu, a former world champion, returns to the international circuit after skipping the Uber Cup and Thailand Open, and she will aim to go deep in the women's singles draw of the BWF World Tour Super 500 event.

The 28-year-old from Hyderabad hasn't been able to hit top form after recovering from a knee injury sustained in October last year.

A silver and bronze-winner at the Olympics, Sindhu's return hasn't been smooth and she has endured a series of narrow losses. Sindhu has just two quarterfinal finishes to show in her six competitive appearances so far.

The last title win for her came in the 2022 Singapore Open though she did come close to claiming the Spain Masters last year when she reached the finals in Madrid. Sindhu, who had also suffered a stress fracture on her left ankle en route to the 2022 Commonwealth Games gold,

will look to hit the ground running when she opens against Scotland's Kirsty Gilmour this week.

Top stars such as An Se Young, Chen Yu Fei, Akane Yamaguchi or Carolina Marin are not participating this week and Sindhu will be desperate to test her preparation against the next generation players, who have troubled her recently.

With a new set-up under mentor Prakash Padukone, Sindhu has shown glimpses of her menacing game but she hasn't been consistent with her shot-selection.

Ashmita Chaliha, Aakarshi Kashyap and Malvika Bansod too will look to produce some good results after having been in the circuit for quite sometime now.

Chaliha has played some quality matches against the likes of Han Yue and Aya Ohori, both of whom she had pushed to three games recently. In men's singles, Kiran George is the lone Indian in fray and he will open against Japan's Takuma Obayashi.

While Thailand Open champions Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty have opted out and it will be a chance for Krishna Prasad Garaga and Sai Pratheek K to show their prowess in men's doubles.

In mixed doubles, the husband-wife duo of B



Sumeeth Reddy and N Sikki Reddy, and Sathish Kumar Karunakaran and Aadya Variyath would be carrying India's hopes.

Paralympics opens in 100 days; Paris organizers launching campaign to boost ticket sales Paris, (AP) With 100 days until the Paralympics begin, Paris organizers are delivering a message from the athletes in a bid to boost ticket sales: I am

not missing anything, except you. The countdown campaign for the August 28-September 8 Paralympic Games begins Monday. It features three Paralympic athletes, each of them alone in an empty stadium.

The campaign slogan - "Il ne me manque rien, sauf vous" (I'm not missing anything, except you) - is a rallying call to get people to come along and

watch them compete.

The French athletes featured in the campaign are Arnaud Assoumani, a long jump and triple jump specialist who won gold at the 2008 Games in Beijing; wheelchair tennis player Pauline Déroulède, and blind soccer player Gaël Rivière who was a European championship winner two years ago. He plays at club level for Bondy Cécifoot Club - in

the same suburb where France star Kylian Mbappé grew up. The French athletes featured in the campaign are Arnaud Assoumani, a long jump and triple jump specialist who won gold at the 2008 Games in Beijing; wheelchair tennis player Pauline Déroulède, and blind soccer player Gaël Rivière who was a European championship winner two years ago. He plays at club level for Bondy Cécifoot Club - in

Tickets are available from 15 euros (USD 16) for track and

field sessions at Stade de France, wheelchair tennis at Roland Garros, or blind soccer at the foot of the Eiffel Tower. The finals cost from 25 (USD 27) euros and it costs 45 euros (USD 49) to watch the closing ceremony.

Ticket sales could escalate once posters start appearing around Paris, with organizers aiming to raise awareness and increase fan engagement and solidarity. There will be 651 posters dotted around the city, 972 on the subway and a further 2,520 on the sides of buses.

On Tuesday, four Paralympic athletes will walk up the famed steps at the Cannes Film Festival along with Paris 2024 Olympic head Tony Estanguet. Of the tickets sold so far, organizers said 300,000 have been bought by the state and 150,000 by the International Olympic Committee and National Paralympic Committee. Organizers haven't released details for the amount of tickets sold for the opening ceremony, which takes place along a section of the famed Champs-Élysées.

Paul McCartney has let the song "We All Stand Together" be used in a promotional film for the International Paralympic Committee. The Paralympics will have a record 164 broadcasters worldwide covering 549 events across 22 sports.