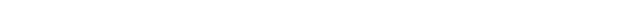


Sonia Gandhi is responsible for 1,500 suicides that took place during the Telangana movement. She has not made Telangana but people snatched it by thrashing and holding protests. Sonia Gandhi has nothing to do with the formation of Telangana. Under which protocol Sonia Gandhi will be invited to the government function? If they want to invite her, do it in the party's office and felicitate her for the killing of 1,500 people

- Kishan Reddy, TS BJP CHIEF



BJP-led central govt hell-bent on changing Constitution: Priyanka



RBI APPROVES HIGHEST-EVER DIVIDEND OF RS 2.11 L CR TO GOVT



'My performance will be more mature in LOVE ME..'



DON'T MISS...

Key files allegedly go missing from..

Several key files have reportedly gone missing in Kakatiya University. Vice-chancellor Tatikonda Ramesh's tenure came to an end Tuesday. It may be recalled that the State government on May 17 ordered a probe into the irregularities that allegedly took place in the KU as several complaints about large-scale corruption in the KU flooded the state government. Several bags of files were reportedly taken away by a car from the university on Monday. Association of Kakatiya University Teachers on Tuesday...

-PAGE: 4

Risk of hospitalisation...

On the hottest days, risk of hospitalisation for people with metabolic disorders such as those of sugar and blood pressure, and obesity, almost doubled as compared to days recording comfortable temperatures, a new study has found. The research analysing hospital admissions related to high temperatures during summer over more than a decade in Spain found that extreme heat impacted people with these conditions the most. "There are a number of reasons to explain this. For example..."

-PAGE: 5

Attrition rates continue to...

Attrition rates continue to remain an area of concern among MBA graduates, especially among the entry-level jobs for top-tier campuses, a study said on Wednesday. Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP (Deloitte India) latest campus workforce trends 2024 study revealed that attrition remained a significant challenge, especially among MBA graduates. Overall, pan-India attrition rates for infants (new recruits), one- and two-year-old employees for top-tier campuses are 21 per cent...

-PAGE: 8

It's hard to leave ailing mother in..

Afghanistan wicketkeeper-batter Rahmanullah Gurbaz has revealed that he made the difficult choice of leaving his ailing mother in hospital when his IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders sought his services ahead of the playoff clash against Sunrisers Hyderabad here as the team is also his "family". Gurbaz, in his maiden game of the season, played a vital role in KKR's win over SRH by taking two vital catches and giving his side a blazing start with a 14-ball 23 on Tuesday. He replaced Englishman Phil Salt at the top and...

-SPORTS

Will maintain cordial relations with AP: CM

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has made it clear that the Telangana State will establish cordial relations with the new government of AP.

The Telangana Chief Minister worshipped Lord Venkateswara at hill shrine Tirumala along with his family members on Wednesday. The Chief Minister, accompanied by his wife, daughter, son-in-law and grandson, fulfilled their vow at the hill shrine by performing the tonsure ceremony of Revanth Reddy's grandson.

Revanth Reddy and his family members were accorded a warm welcome by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) Executive Officer AV Dharma Reddy and



others. After worshipping Lord Venkateswara, the Chief Minister's family was blessed by priests and the EO gave him Prasadam. This is the

Victory in MLC by-polls prestigious for Cong: Revanth

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC president and Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy asked the party leaders to take the Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal graduates MLC by-poll as a prestigious one.

The Chief Minister on Wednesday night participated in a zoom meeting on erstwhile Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal graduates MLC by-poll in which MLAs,

'Cong govt better than previous regime in procurement of grains'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Agriculture and Marketing Minister Tummala Nageshwara Rao has asserted that the present Congress government is far better than the previous BRS government with regard to paddy procurement across the state.

Tummala Nageshwara Rao told media persons here on Wednesday that the Congress government had opened procurement centers well in advance this year, compared to the situation last year. He said that the Congress government had procured 4 lakh metric tonnes of paddy additionally.

The Minister mentioned that he was regularly in touch with the officials concerned to ensure procurement of paddy and its transportation to mills. The Minister said that there was no removal of



wastage in paddy. During the previous BRS government regime, 7-10 kgs were removed in the name of wastage. The Minister made it clear that the Congress government had been depositing the money into the accounts of farmers within five working days after procurement.

'Graft' in purchase of grains

❖ Alleti claims he has proof for his charges



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharatiya Janata Legislature Party (BJLP) leader Alleti Maheshwar Reddy has claimed that he has full evidence to support his charges of thousand crore corruption in the purchase of grains.

While chit-chatting with scribes at the State BJP office on Wednesday, Maheshwar Reddy pointed out that he had previously spoken about 'RR tax' and 'B tax' and yet nobody condemned it.

On Tuesday, Maheshwar Reddy

alleged that 'U-tax' was being collected in the state and that Civil Supplies Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy had sent Rs.100 crore to AICC general secretary KC Venugopal from such collections.

Maheshwar Reddy said, "I have all proofs of the corruption involving Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy and Civil Supplies Commissioner DS Chouhan. Money obtained through corruption goes to those whose share it is. I did not make any personal allegations against anyone anytime. I am ready for an open debate on my allegations. I am ready for anything if my allegations are proved wrong. Uttam Kumar Reddy should announce first whether he is ready for it? Uttam Kumar Reddy should decide the place and time for the open debate."

Maheshwar Reddy recounted that he had worked sincerely for 10 years when the Congress was not in power. The BJP supported him a lot after he came out of the Congress party. He made it clear he had been working sincerely for the BJP now.

Cong candidate snatches manglasutras, alleges KTR



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtra Samithi MLA K T Rama Rao has alleged that the Congress candidate for the upcoming by-elections in the Nalgonda-Warangal-Khammam constituency, Chintapandu Naveen alias Teenmaar Mallana, is a person who snatches manglasutra from women. "He is a thief who steals gold. He is a person who thinks that if you scold

KTR said, "This CM says Kakatiya Kalathorana and Charminar are signs of monarchy. He said Kakatiya Kalathorana will be removed from the emblem. Again, he announced Jaya Jayaha Telangana song as state anthem. The Jaya Jayaha Telangana song has Kakatiya Kalathorana and Charminar in it. We have a silly Chief Minister who does not even know them. That is our karma".

elders on YouTube, you will become big. He is a blackmailer", KTR said. KTR campaigned for Rakesh Reddy, BRS' candidate. He said: "Rakesh Reddy is from BITS Pilani and the Congress has Palli Batani (peanuts)". KTR said, "This CM says Kakatiya Kalathorana and Charminar are signs of monarchy. He said Kakatiya Kalathorana will be removed from the emblem. Again, he announced Jaya

Jayahe Telangana song as state anthem. The Jaya Jayaha Telangana song has Kakatiya Kalathorana and Charminar in it. We have a silly Chief Minister who does not even know them. That is our karma".

He said, "Revanth Reddy said 2 lakh jobs will be given. The only thing that has been done so far is Gadidha guddu -- donkey's egg. Not even a single notification. He says that he has magically given 30 thousand jobs in a way that is not possible for any magician in the world. He is cutting 30 thousand jobs from 2 lakh jobs".

"Rakesh Reddy, who has the guts to ask about the jobs, unemployment benefits, and the job calendar that you are going to give, should win. Former CBI Director JD Lakshminarayana also has advised people not to give a chance to crooks, thieves, blackmailers and cheaters who enter politics. Educated people should also think about why he is saying to give opportunity to educated Rakesh Reddy". He said that educated people are like the torch-bearers of society.

RBI does not have info on defaulting big borrowers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Going by the response to a query raised under the Right to Information Act, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) does not have information concerning those people who had borrowed more than Rs 50 lakh and have not paid back the money to banks across the country.

On May 22, replying to a query raised by Hyderabad-based social activist Sai Tejam under the RTI Act, the RBI stated that it did not have information on those persons who had borrowed more than Rs 50 lakh from various banks in the country and willfully defaulted in repayment of those loans.

ACP Umamaheswar Rao remanded in judicial custody

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Nampally ACB court on Wednesday remanded Assistant Commissioner of Police, EOW, CCS, Detective Department Umamaheswar Rao in judicial custody till June 5. On Wednesday, the ACB stated in an official note that he had acquired assets disproportionate to his known sources of income by indulging in corrupt practices and dubious means during his service.



POWER OUTAGE AT MGM HOSPITAL Health Minister seeks report BRS lashes out at 5-hour 'power cut', endangering lives of patients

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The fragility of the power sector in the state came to the fore on Wednesday, after electricity went out for five hours in MGM Hospital, which is a major destination for patients from north Telangana districts.

Bharat Rashtra Samithi MLA K T Rama Rao said, "It is heartbreaking that MGM Hospital faced a 5-hour power cut, endangering lives

from newborns to elderly patients. The Congress government cannot even maintain existing hospitals, let alone build world-class infrastructure. The CM and his ministers keep repeating that there are no power cuts. Who will take responsibility for this?" KTR asked: "If there is no electricity for 5 hours in a hospital like MGM, who is responsible if newborn babies and patients die in the ICU?"

'DON'T KILL THE GOOSE THAT LAYS GOLDEN EGG' Don't increase prices: Realtors' appeal to govt

NAVEENA GHANATE ■ HYDERABAD

Realtors requested the Telangana government to reconsider its decision of revising market value of lands and stamp duty charges. As per rules, the market value of land has to be revised every year. Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy directed the officials to take steps to revise the prices. He also advised the officials to study the extent of stamp duty compared to other states to determine whether it should be reduced or increased.

Real estate associations are intending to meet the government

and give a representation not to increase the prices, after the model code of conduct ends. C Shekar Reddy, national vice-chairman of CII - IGBC said, "Don't kill the goose that lays the golden egg. This is not the right time to increase land rates. Give some time, may be one-and-a-half to two years. Industry has to be affordable. Instead of increasing charges, there should be more turnover in market. For foreign investors, it should be affordable. Our request is keeping in sentiment, we have to be competitive and brand Hyderabad has to be there. Real estate, acquisition and lease has to be competitive."

TG medicos in Kyrgyzstan uncertain of their return home

CM URGED TO SET UP PANEL, ARRANGE FLIGHTS FOR THEIR SAFE RETURN

RASHMI BHUMIREDDY ■ HYDERABAD

Amidst the ongoing mob attacks in Kyrgyzstan's capital Bishkek, Indian students pursuing medical courses there are uncertain of their return to homeland. About 1,500 students from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh are presently doing medicine there.

Parents of several students from Telangana stuck in Kyrgyzstan are worried about their children's safety due to the ongoing violence. They have demanded that the authorities must arrange flights to facilitate their safe return to India at the earliest.

According to a student, things appear to be normal since Monday. However, "there is an atmosphere of



terror around as many police cars line up near our lanes. We are advised to stay indoors."

Another student said, "Right now, the situation is slightly under control but still we are in fear, especially during nights. I heard that many locals were knocking on the doors of foreign nationals living near Pervi."

Dr D Vageeshwari, sister of a medical student, said, "My sister is in her

According to a student, things appear to be normal since Monday. However, "there is an atmosphere of terror around as many police cars line up near our lanes. We are advised to stay indoors."

final (fifth) year of her medicine course at S. Tentshev Medical Institute, Kant, Kyrgyzstan. My sister and her classmates are suffering due to the situation. They could not step out of the house; they are not

in a position to even switch on the lights; no proper sleep, and there is a lot of anxiety and fear. Only the college management is supplying groceries for their daily needs. Parents are worried about their wellbeing and safety in the current situation. I request the government to bring our loved ones back to India safely."

A member of the Student Federation of India said, "We request the Telangana State government to take immediate action for the safety of Telangana students. We also request the state government to appoint a special minister and form a committee to take protective measures in view of the large number of Telugu students stuck there."

BRS to oppose Cong move to reorganise districts yet again

SNCN ACHARYULU
HYDERABAD

The main opposition BRS wants to utilise Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's government proposal on reorganisation of districts as a weapon to provoke people against the Congress. The reorganisation of districts may become a headache to the State government. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy feels that the previous BRS government has created new districts unscientifically for its political benefit. The previous BRS government had created 23 new districts in addition to the 10 erstwhile districts and brought the total number of districts to 33 in the State. In the name of better administration and devel-

opment, the BRS government reorganised the districts. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, in an interview, commented that a judicial commission would be constituted to look into the issue. Naturally, the BRS will oppose the reorganisation of districts to reduce the present number of districts. The people will also express dissatisfaction if their district is removed. In fact, there was a demand from the people of several areas for the creation of a new district for them.

Under the circumstances, if the Congress government removes some present districts the people of those districts will get angry. The BRS wants to utilise this opportunity to provoke the people against the



Under the circumstances, if the Congress government removes some present districts the people of those districts will get angry. The BRS wants to utilise this opportunity to provoke the people against the government. In the neighbouring Andhra Pradesh state also districts were reorganised. The Andhra Pradesh government made every Lok Sabha constituency as a district.

government. In the neighbouring Andhra Pradesh state also districts were reorganised. The Andhra Pradesh government made every Lok Sabha constituency as a district.

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is also planning

to follow the same method in the reorganisation of districts if not to reduce the number of districts to 25 or 26 from the present 33 districts. In fact, the population is not equal in all the districts. The State government found that in seven dis-

tricts there is less population than six lakh and most of them have just one revenue division. The State government is facing the shortage of staff and with the increasing number of districts it has become a further problem. The IAS and IPS officers are also not sufficient in number in the State.

Keeping all these issues in mind, the State government has proposed the reorganisation of districts. The BRS leaders says to bring the administration close to the people, their government had created new districts keeping in mind the demands of the people. Now the Congress government wants to set the administration away from the people.

Army doesn't want Agniveer scheme: Rahul

Says INDIA bloc govt will throw it in dustbin

PNS MAHENDRAGARH (HARYANA)

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said Wednesday the Agniveer military recruitment scheme will be scrapped and thrown in the dustbin if the INDIA bloc comes to power, as he slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "turning Hindustan ke jawan into labourers".

In his first election meeting in Haryana for the Lok Sabha polls, Gandhi also attacked Modi over the issue of farmers. He claimed that the Modi government waived loans

amounting to Rs 16 lakh crore for 22 "arabpatis (top industrialists)" but openly says it "won't waive farmers' debts as it will spoil them".

"We had brought the land acquisition bill to protect farmers and give them due compensation, but the Modi government scrapped it. They brought three black farm laws and farmers had to take to the streets," the former Congress president said. Slamming the BJP government over the Agniveer scheme, he said,



"This is Modi's scheme, not the Army's scheme. The Army does not want it. This scheme has been framed by the PMO (Prime Minister's Office)."

"When the INDIA bloc forms the government, we will chuck the Agniveer scheme in the dustbin, we will tear it up," he said at the rally held in the Mahendragarh-Bhiwani Lok Sabha constituency.

Supreme Court judges lament comments about working little

Say they burn midnight oil even during vacations

PNS NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday lamented that despite the effort put in by judges, who burn the midnight oil even during vacations, they have to stomach comments about working very little.

A vacation bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Satish Chandra Sharma made the remark while hearing a plea of former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren challenging his arrest in a money laundering case and seeking interim bail to campaign in the Lok Sabha elections.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Soren, complained about a Jharkhand High Court bench having taken two months to pronounce the verdict on the JMM leader's plea against his arrest.

"Unfortunate part, Mr Sibal, is that despite the efforts we put in as judges, we have to hear that judges work for very few hours," Justice Datta said,



adding judges also have to do their homework.

"Judges are not before us. They can't explain what prevented them from pronouncing the verdict. So, benefit (of doubt) has to be given to them," the apex court said.

Sibal said the delays in passing judgements have an impact on the citizens. "That you allow cognisance (of ED's prosecution complaint) to be taken and my petition gets infructuous. It's a matter of personal liberty. That's very sad and

these are all high court judges," he said. The bench said it can only hope and trust that courts dispose of cases expeditiously.

"This is happening day in and day out in the high courts. Nobody hears our matter and nobody decides our matter. People go begging in matters of personal liberty. You may say anything but it is a fact," Sibal said.

Referring to a newspaper article, Justice Datta said, "During vacation also we are burning the midnight oil.

Laxman slams Revanth for not acting against graft

PNS HYDERABAD

Bharatiya Janata Party Rajya Sabha member Dr K Laxman has criticized Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for not taking any action against the corruption that allegedly took place in the execution of the Kaleshwaram project as well as in the power sector under the previous Bharat Rashtra Samithi regime.

He was addressing a meeting at Bhongir organized on behalf of Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal graduates MLC by-poll's BJP candidate Gujjula Premender Reddy on Wednesday.

Dr Laxman alleged that the Congress party came to power by giving assurances that could not be implemented. So, the Chief Minister had been passing time by not implementing the assurances. The Congress party came to power due to the anti-incumbency factor against



the BRS government. Revanth Reddy had been wasting taxpayer money in the name of guarantees and freebies.

Laxman said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had achieved impossible works. There was no other leader in the nation who could match Modi. He pointed out that Kashmir was teeming today with tourists, thanks to Modi. Modi had been preparing an action plan for merger of Pak Occupied Kashmir with India.

8,360 candidates in fray in 2024 LS polls, highest since 1996

PNS NEW DELHI

A total of 8,360 candidates are contesting the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, the highest since 1996, according to an analysis of official data.

In the 2019 polls, there were 8,039 candidates, and in 1996, a record 13,952 candidates were in the fray for 543 seats of the Lower House of Parliament.



The 2024 general elections are being held in seven phases, with five rounds of polling completed. The sixth and last rounds will be held on May 25 and June 1, respectively.

Counting of votes will be taken up on June 4.

The fourth phase of the elections held on May 13 had the highest number of candidates in the fray, 1,717 in 96 parliamentary constituencies in 10 states and Union Territories (UTs). The first phase held on April 19 had 1,625 candidates in 102 constituencies in 21 states and UTs, according to Election.

'INDIA bloc parties will undo work done by Modi'



PNS SHRAVASTI (UP)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the SP and the Congress will undo the work done by him, taking away houses built by the government, closing people's Jan Dhan accounts, cutting off

their power connections and removing water taps.

Stating that the "INDIA alliance" is a disease worse than cancer, Modi said the "INDIA alliance" parties are staunchly communal, casteist and family-centric. These diseases are worse than cancer for the nation, he added.

Modi was addressing an election rally in support of BJP candidate from Shravasti in Uttar Pradesh, Saket Misra. "When people ask them what they did in the last 60 years, they take out their ace of cards, which is to divide the society and get vote jihad done," Modi said. Accusing the INDIA bloc parties of

indulging in the politics of appeasement, he said, "The Congress says the first right on the country's property is of Muslims. But Modi says the first right of the country have the first right on the property."

The Congress wants to snatch your earnings and give them to its vote bank which indulges in vote jihad, he told the people. "In the last 10 years, Modi gave permanent houses to four crore poor people. Now the SP and the Congress have decided to reverse everything, that is, they will take the keys of four crore houses from you, they will snatch the houses and will give them to their vote bank.

CEO reviews MLC bypoll preparedness

PNS HYDERABAD

Chief Electoral Officer Vikas Raj reviewed the preparedness of the conduct of polls on May 27 with all the DEOs & SP/CPs of 12 districts falling in Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda (erstwhile) Graduate Legislative Constituency through a video conference.

Speaking to Returning Officers, DEOs, SPs/CPs and other officers from his office here, the CEO also reviewed the preparatory exercise, including availability of ballot boxes and ballot papers. The district officials informed that everything was in place including the special pens needed for marking the preferences by the voters.

The CEO instructed that special care should be taken to provide amenities such as

drinking water, shades etc., at all booths in view of heat wave in the State. The CEO also instructed that necessary precautions against any unseasonal rains shall be taken during the poll process, especially during the transport of ballot papers and other polling material at required level.

Reviewing the law and order issues, he asked SPs & CPs to make required security arrangements at polling stations, distribution and reception centres, strongrooms and the transportation of polled ballots.

The conference was attended by ADGP L&O Sanjay Jain, Additional CEO DS Lokesh Kumar, Commissioner, Rachakonda Commissionerate Tarun Joshi, Joint CEO Sarafraz Ahmed and Deputy CEO Satyavani from Hyderabad.

TG...

Continued on Page 1

We request Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to set up a special committee to coordinate with the Indian Embassy in Kyrgyzstan to continuously monitor their situation. Communication between the affected students and their families and with the authorities concerned should be facilitated. Action must be taken immediately to protect state students abroad."

Laxman, parent of Akash, said, "My son is scared because of what has happened in the country in the last two days. I only want my son to return home safely with other students. When I spoke to my son he said the situation is slightly under control but they were not allowed.

ACP...

Continued on Page 1

ACB officials conducted searches on 21 May at his house and 10 other places belonging to his relatives, friends and other associates. During the searches, Rs 37,00,000 in cash as well as gold ornaments weighing 600 gms were found.

Documents relating to moveable and immovable properties worth around Rs 3,51,83,510 were also found during the searches. The total value of the properties found during the searches was put at Rs 3,95,83,510 at government rates. The market value of the properties could be many times higher than the document value. According to the ACB note, further verification of additional assets is underway.

Actor Shah Rukh Khan hospitalised in Ahmedabad after heat stroke

PNS AHMEDABAD

Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan was admitted to a hospital in Ahmedabad on Wednesday after suffering from a heat stroke, police said.

He was admitted to multi-speciality K D Hospital, they said.

Khan was in Ahmedabad on Tuesday to attend an Indian Premier League (IPL) match of his Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) team at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

"Actor Shah Rukh Khan was admitted to K D Hospital after suffering from a heat stroke," Ahmedabad (Rural) Superintendent of Police Om Prakash Jat said.



Security has been tightened around the hospital, they said.

Ahmedabad recorded a maximum temperature of 45.2 degrees Celsius on Tuesday. It rose to 45.9 degrees on Wednesday.

KKR entered their fourth IPL final with a thumping eight-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad in Qualifier 1 here on Tuesday.

TSRTC changed to TGSRTC



PNS HYDERABAD

The acronym of Telangana State Road State Corporation was changed from TSRTC to TGSRTC on Wednesday, following the government orders. In the first step, the TGSRTC changed their official Twitter accounts.

In an official release on Wednesday, the TGSRTC said that they have changed their X handles from @tsrtcmodoffice, @tsrtcchq to @tgsrtcmodoffice and @tgsrtcchq respectively.

The TGSRTC requested the passengers to give suggestions and complaints to the new accounts.

As per the instructions, all official communications should use TGSRTC in place of TSRTC. Websites and online platforms of the TSRTC shall be replaced with TSRTC wherever it is required. The logos on the bus depots and buses would be replaced with the new logo and name.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha

Tithi: Purnima: May 22 06:48 PM to May 23 07:22 PM

Krishna Paksha Pratipada: May 23 07:22 PM to May 24 07:25 PM

Nakshatram:

Vishaka: May 22 07:46 AM to May 23 09:14 AM

Anuradha: May 23 09:14 AM to May 24 10:10 AM

Rahukalam: 1:49 PM to 3:26 PM

Yamagandam: 5:45 AM to 7:22 AM

Varjyam: 01:24 PM to 03:03 PM

Gulika: 8:59 AM to 10:36 AM

Amritakalam: 11:22 PM to 01:02 AM

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

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Sunny

Temp: 37°C

Humidity: 53%

Sunrise: 5:42 AM

Sunset: 6:44 PM

Updated: May 22, 2024 5:00 PM

Will maintain...

Continued on Page 1

After worshipping the god, the Chief Minister addressed the media outside the temple. He said that the Telangana state would establish cordial relations with the new government of AP. "The Telangana state wants to construct a guest house and Kalyana Mandapam in Tirumala for the convenience of pilgrims from Telangana state," he stated. "I will meet the new Chief Minister of AP after the results are declared and the government is formed. I will discuss the pending issues with the new CM and find a solution to resolve the issues," Revanth Reddy asserted.

He said that he invoked the god to bless the two



Telugu states to flourish with progress. Stating that the farmers in Telangana state are happy with the Congress regime, he added that the timely rains resolved the water scarcity problem. Later, Telangana Chief Minister left for Hyderabad for Renigunta airport in a special flight.

Victory in MLC..

Continued on Page 1

Ministers and in-charges participated. He directed the three erstwhile district MLAs, Ministers and in-charges to work actively for this election.

The CM said that the party activists and leaders should get ready at field level as election is on May 27. He asked that all MLAs should visit all polling booths in their respective constituencies. The said that Congress candidate Theenmar Mallanna would work as a bridge between the government and unemployed and students to solve problems. He said that Theenmar Mallanna's victory would help solve their problems. The CM said, "It is not only an election of Theenmar Mallanna but also an election of the Congress party. The party leaders should ensure the victory of the party with a huge majority."

POWER OUTAGE AT MGM HOSPITAL...

Continued on Page 1

According to an official statement issued later, there was an interruption in the power supply to MGM Hospital on 21-05-2024 in the evening at 6.15 PM due to VCB (breakers) between the main HT lines and MGM power lines.

Minister, Health, Medical and Family Welfare, C. Damodar Rajanarsimha reviewed the situation in the morning at 11 AM on 22-05-24 with the Secretary Health, Medical and Family Welfare and Director Medical Education. The Minister has instructed the Managing Director, Telangana Medical Services & Infrastructure Development Corporation to submit an enquiry report within 24 hours, fixing responsibility for lapses, if any. The Managing Director has been instructed to deploy his engineers for inspection of all

Government Hospitals in the State, on a war-footing, and submit report within (1) weeks' time. They shall assess the functionality of backup power systems, and repair or replace non-functioning generator systems, in view of the upcoming monsoon season and to avoid such untoward incidences in future.

The back-up generators at MGM Hospital have ensured uninterrupted power supply to the patient care areas, including the Emergency areas. This included the Emergency, ICU, Operation Theatres, Specialty & Super specialty Blocks, Patient wards, Maternal and Child Health Wards. The patients in the Dialysis wing continued their dialysis treatment through battery back-up. By 9 PM, full supply to MGM Hospital through repair of HT lines and defective breakers was resolved by the NPDCL engineering wing.

'DON'T KILL THE GOOSE..

Continued on Page 1

He said, "Our request on rationalising the land value is to make 7.5 to 4.5%. When there is more turnover, government will also get more revenue. After the code, we will approach the government, not to increase but reduce the prices. When we become uncompetitive, we lose edge. The government has to bring in a win-win situation for investors and people. Focus should be on more turnover than increasing value. Affordability should be there."

He said, "Builder may not be affected but common man will be affected. End-user has to pay. About 2.5 years ago, government increased land

prices and built-up area value for the purpose of registration. Overall registration charges were 6% which then went up to 7.5%. We expected it to go down by 4.5% but instead it went up. Today taxation is about 33% for buying properties i.e. nearly one-third is going to taxation.

Real estate is one nation many taxes. We have GOI taxes, GoTG taxes, GST on material, nala charges, change of land use charges, impact fee for 5th floor and above, permit fee and external dev, hmwssb and electricity. Increasing charges is not a right decision. Roti Kapda aur Makaan may become unreasonable for LIG and MIG folks."

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Call to mainstream ways to stop, reverse biodiversity loss

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Principal Secretary of Environment, Forests, Science and Technology, Government of Telangana, Vani Prasad, who was the chief guest at the International Day for Biological Diversity 2024 at the Kasu Brahmananda Reddy (KBR) National Park on Wednesday, emphasised that biodiversity loss should be mainstreamed as we are already aware of ozone depletion and climate change.

Speaking on the occasion, Vani Prasad expressed her wish for a wonderful earth in the future. She said, she was pleased to see the growing awareness among the younger generation. She outlined three important aspects where the younger generation should focus, which are, climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.

Interacting with the students, she discussed the importance of bees and butterflies, noting their decline due to chemicals and poisonous gases. She warned that while a zoonotic virus might come and go, disturbing ecosystems would have severe consequences for humans.

Vani advised the students to study the benefits of eating



Principal Secretary of Environment, Forests, Science and Technology, Government of Telangana, Vani Prasad addressing a programme to mark the International Day for Biological Diversity

millets and wished them a happy and good time at KBR Park, concluding with a call to protect lakes, rocks and parks.

With the theme 'Be part of the plan', which calls for all stakeholders to stop and reverse the loss of biodiversity, the Telangana Biodiversity Board (TDBB) conducted awareness programmes and online competitions in painting, elocution, dance, essay-writing, quiz and cartoon designing for students and the public.

These initiatives were conducted to create an impact among students and the public, helping them understand the importance of biodiversity and the conservation of nature

Celebrating the Interna

tional Day for Biological Diversity 2024 with the students, the welcome address was given by Secretary, Telangana State Biodiversity Board, Kalicharan Khartade, who had an interactive session with the children, where he explained the need to protect biodiversity.

He highlighted the effects of hot temperatures and unseasonal rains, urging the children to study how to maintain biodiversity.

Addressing the gathering, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Telangana State, Mohan Chandra Pargaen, said that all life forms are part of biodiversity, from fungi to big trees, including many living organisms in the ocean that are yet to be discovered.

Clay modeling and millets expo held at Nehru Zoo Park

Promoting education and awareness among visitors, International Biodiversity Day was celebrated at Nehru Zoological Park on Wednesday. Deputy Curator of Nehru Zoological Park A Nagamani inaugurated a clay modeling workshop and a millets exhibition centre at the zoo. Nagamani said that around 800 visitors participated in the clay modeling programme where they were trained to design models of wild animals and birds. She said most of the visitors expressed happiness and learnt about the importance of each species. A millets exhibition was also conducted in the afternoon in collaboration with ICAR-Indian Institute of Millets Research, Hyderabad. Nine varieties of millets were exhibited and their importance explained.

T-works & We-Hub get new CEOs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana government appointed CEOs to We-Hub and T-works. Sita Pallacholla was appointed to the post of Chief Executive Officer, WE-HUB for a period of 3 years w.e.f. April 6, 2024 with a remuneration of Rs 2 lakh per month and variable remuneration of Rs 6 lakh per annum subject to performance.

As per the GO issued by Jayesh Ranjan, IT Secretary, the services of Deepthi Ravula, who was first WE-HUB CEO ended on March 31, 2024.

Joginder Tanikella was appointed to the post of Chief Executive Officer, T-Works for a period of three years w.e.f. April 9, 2024 with a remuneration of Rs 1.50 lakh per month and variable salary of Rs 6 lakh per annum subject to performance.

The government appointed Sai Krishna as Advisor to Minister of ITE&C, to render advice on issues related to IT Portfolio w.e.f. April 26, 2024 for a period of two years.

26 food inspectors to oversee thousands of eateries in city

CHITHALURI REVANTH ■ HYDERABAD

There are more than 20,000 eateries in the GHMC limits, but only 26 food inspectors are employed to detect malfunctions. From among the 26 inspectors, a few of them go on leave, some of them go for VIP's food inspection and four are under suspension. Of the 26 inspectors, only 13 are on the field and inspecting eateries in the city.

However, due to the initiative of various officials, the GHMC increased the number of food inspectors from four to 26 inspectors. It would be better to have three inspectors are employed for every GHMC circle. The GHMC has 30 circles. If a total of 90 inspectors would be employed for the food inspection in the eateries, there would be good changes in the food courts.

The Food safety department was started in 2011. Till 2021, the number of inspectors was only four but the number of inspectors increased to 26.

A GHMC official said, "For every eatery it would take four to five hours to conduct inspections, take samples and write a



the restaurants, but also pursue the first seller of the item and try to find the manufacturer of the food item.

After collecting the samples from the restaurants the officials send them to the food laboratory in Nacharam. The laboratory sends the results of the

- The number increased from 4 inspectors in 2011 to 26 in 2021
- Task force inspections on restaurants on the rise
- Eateries' licences would be suspended if they violate for second time

report. In the recent raids, the Food security department filed 24 cases against food courts under the Food Safety & Standards Act, 2006. More than 80 show cause notices have been given to restaurants since May 1 for their response.

In the inspections, the officials are finding more adulteration in spices, ginger, cumin and oil. When the officials find an adulterated packed item in a restaurant, they not only fine

samples within 14 days. Accordingly, the department takes action. Based on the severity of the case, the Additional Collector imposes a fine up to Rs 5 lakh fine on food courts.

If the restaurants are found to be guilty for the second time, their licences would be suspended and they would be penalised for a minimum of 3 months or fined up to Rs 5 lakh, based on the severity.

Four minors among 9 held for robbery

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Commissioner's Task Force (North) Zone Wednesday arrested nine persons, including four juveniles involved in three cases of theft. Three cell phones and two motorcycles were seized from the accused.

The accused were identified as Katekula Rohan Raj (19) of Neredmet; VD Vivian Raj (19) of Trimulgherry, Secunderabad; Yugen Alex (19) of Lal Bazar; Narpat Singh (19) of Lal Bazar and Sirigiri Raj Kumar (25) of Secunderabad.

Three cases of theft were booked against the accused under 392 IPC of Trimulgherry police station; 392 IPC under the Market police station and 380 IPC under the Neredmet police station.

Advisory against cyber fraudsters in TRAI's name

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Additional DGP for Railways and Road Safety Mahesh M Bhagwat on Wednesday issued an advisory against cyber fraudsters who are cheating the public in the name of the Telecom Regulatory Authority (TRAI). Victims are contacted through their mobile number with a recorded call that the call is from TRAI and within two hours the mobile number is blocked.

The fraudsters further tell that the victim's personal details such as Adhaar card, sim cards and others are being used for anti-national activities; they further terrify the victim stating that an FIR has been registered



against them by the Hyderabad or Mumbai police. They force the victim to dial 9 and connect them to a skype call with one of the accused impersonating as a police officer. The fraudster would then read the content

of the FIR.

To avoid arrest, the victims were asked to pay a large sum of money via online transactions and were put under digital arrest.

Bhagwat issued the following guidelines to prevent such incidents: "Don't pick up calls from any unknown numbers; Don't trust on fraudsters regarding your Adhaar card or mobile number compromised and misused to commit crimes; Don't yield to any monetary or other demand of fraudsters putting you under fear of arrest; Record calls of fraudsters and take a screenshot and immediately approach Cybercrime Police or Dial 1930 or log on to www.cybercrime.gov.in and lodge a complaint."

Boxer Nikhat Zareen feted for winning gold in Elorda cup

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

GHMC Commissioner Ronald Rose felicitated boxer Nikhat Zareen, who won a gold medal in the 52 kg weight category at the Elorda Cup competitions held in Kazakhstan. She was honoured during a courtesy call on Wednesday.

During the meeting in his chamber, Commissioner Ronald Rose presented her

with a shawl and congratulated Nikhat Zareen and expressed hope for the future of boxing in Hyderabad. He emphasised the importance of Hyderabad excelling in boxing to enhance the city's reputation and bringing honour to the country.

Ronald Rose said, "The government is actively supporting athletes and the GHMC is working towards developing

the sports sector." He also mentioned that a special summer coaching programme has been launched to enhance sports skills among boys and girls.

Former Director of GHMC Sports Dr SR Prem Raj, former treasurer K Maheshwar, president of Telangana Boxing Association Baburao Sagar and others participated in the programme.



ACB nabs Bhainsa civic chief

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) caught two officers from Bhainsa Municipal office in Nirmal district. One of them is Municipal Commissioner Venkateshwar Rao when he demanded and accepted a bribe amount of Rs 30,000 through Bill Collector Vidyasagar, from the complainant.

They have taken the bribe for doing official favour, which was not to demolish the complainant's newly constructed building at Bhainsa town which was constructed in the year 2022 by taking permission from the Municipal Corporation, Bhainsa and not to tax in lakhs of rupees as per the show cause notice issued to the complainant by Venkateshwar Rao.

Tainted bribe amount of Rs 30,000 was recovered from the possession of Vidyasagar.

1.2 tonnes of banned cotton seeds worth of Rs 3 lakh seized

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Special Operation Teams (SOT) of Medchal, along with the officials of the Agricultural department and Genome Valley police conducted joint operations and nabbed four persons, who have been illegally transporting and selling banned cotton seeds in order to sell them to gullible farmers. The officials have seized 1.2 tonnes of banned BG-III/HT cotton seeds worth Rs 30 lakh.

One of the cases was filed under the Sections of 188, 420 IPC and 19 of Seeds Act and Section 15 of Environment Protection Act in the Genome Valley police station.

Pulikonda Yashwanth Kumar is a professional driver.

Pindi Suresh Yadav was paying Rs 40,000 for a trip. The driver was sent to Sindhanur town of Raichur district in Karnataka to bring seeds to Mandamarri in Mancheril district of Telangana.

As per the instructions of Suresh Yadav, he stayed in a lodge at Sindhanur town. One unknown person came to him and took his empty vehicle and returned with 1.2 tonnes of seeds, each bag containing 40 kgs and a total of 30 bags, which total 1200 kgs of BG-III/HT cotton seeds.

They have been smuggling of the prohibited seeds for the past few years and selling them to innocent farmers. Suresh Yadav is absconding and police are investigating the case.

BITS Pilani starts admissions for MBA, M Tech, MSc and B Tech

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Work Integrated Learning Programmes (WILP) division of Birla Institute of Technology & Science (BITS), Pilani, has opened admissions for working professionals to enroll in its widest range of MTech, MBA, MSc and BTech programmes in Advanced Technology, Engineering and Management domains on Wednesday.

Over 45,000 working professionals are currently pursuing various programmes that are offered along with their jobs. The final date to apply for these programmes is June 17, 2024. The portfolio consists of 15 MTech, eight MBA, three BTech, three PG Diploma, one PG Certificate and two Msc programmes. As most of the modern businesses need continuous innovation and digital



technologies in an effort to reinvent their business models and significantly transform their products or services, all these programmes have been meticulously designed with inputs and feedback from academicians and industry partners. This aspect aids working professionals to remain relevant in their chosen profession and grow in their own careers

by making a meaningful impact for their respective organisations/industries as well.

The participants of these programmes can also leverage BITS Pilani's state-of-the-art labs, including Management, Analytics and Finance labs to gain hands-on skills via experiential learning assignments, including case studies and business simulations.

These programmes help them in addressing their upskilling requirements in various topics, such as Accounting, Finance, Economics, Statistics, Marketing, HR, Strategy and operations, E-Commerce, Digital Business Design, Strategies for Digital Business, Digital Customer Experience Management and Digital Technologies and Analytics.

TSBIE relaxes 'one minute' rule for IPASE

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education (TSBIE) on Wednesday announced that one-minute late norm has been relaxed for the Intermediate Public Advanced Supplementary Exams (IPASE) that will commence on Friday. Students will be given five minutes of grace time to enter the centres.

Around 4.6 lakh first and second-year students registered for the examinations scheduled to be held from May 24 to June 3 with first year exams in the morning session from 9 am to 12 noon and second-year exams from 2.30 pm to 5.30 pm. About 900 centres have been arranged across the State for smooth conduct of the exams.

WORLD RENOWNED DOCTOR AT IIIT-H 'Brain has potential to be repaired by regenerative medicine'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Discussing about memory loss, Dr Mike Chan emphasised regenerative medicine as a treatment, highlighting that as we age, we will experience memory loss, with the brain's peak function typically lasting from 60 to 75 years. He expressed concern that the brain's functionality declines over time, leading to neurodegeneration. He said that the brain has the potential to be repaired by the regenerative medicine.

Upon an interaction with IIIT Hyderabad students focused on entrepreneurship, innovation and research and development, world-renowned scientist, Immunology & Regenerative Medicine & Founder- EWBG, Dr Mike Chan said that India, as the most populous country,

should become the centre of regenerative medicine. He said that the medicine has the capability to regenerate kidneys for patients with kidney failure, eliminating the necessity for dialysis or transplants.

Dr Chan also said, this approach represents both the present and future of medicine, achieved simply by repairing deceased kidney cells. He also said that the regenerative medicine works on any living tissue within the organs and they can be regenerated.

Dr Chan mentioned that he has spent more than half of his life in Germany and Switzerland, during which time he authored 50 books. He added that he has gained extensive knowledge from thousands of doctors in the field of bioregenerative medicine, as a new form of medicine.

National Health Mission workers protest over pending salaries

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The National Health Mission (NHM) contract workers have called for protest over pending salaries. As many as 17,514 employees have been affected due to the long-standing issue; some have also been forced to quit their jobs and find alternatives.

Addressing the issue S Balasubramanyam, Vice-President of the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), Telangana unit said, "This issue is persistent

since the new government has come to power. We are demanding salaries every month. There have been no regular salaries since December.

A strike was called in the month of February following which the salaries for that month were given. There have been no salaries since the month of March, which has forced some of the employees to quit. A protest will be held at the Commissioner's office in Koti on Friday.

Sai Jyothi, a former NHM

contract worker said, "I quit the job nearly 1.5 years ago due to too much pressure and low salary.

I had to work 24X7 without any leave; hence I switched fields." Sruti, who worked at a Public Health Centre at Ameerpet said, "I quit the job a few months ago due to heavy workload. I worked as an accountant for six years with no increment. We had to work really hard in the COVID-19 pandemic for which we received no recognition or compensation."

Dana Kishore takes charge as OU Vice-Chancellor

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Principal Secretary of Municipal - Urban Development Department, M Dana Kishore took charge as the Vice-Chancellor of Osmania University on Wednesday.

He reached the OU Administration Bhavan in the morning and took charge from Prof D Dandaboina Ravinder, the former Vice-Chancellor. Dana Kishore said that he feels honoured to take charge as the Vice-Chancellor of the prestigious university. He assured that he would work to solve the

problems in the varsity to the best of his ability.

"Osmania University is credited with providing leadership in various fields with constant enthusiasm. Although I have held many key positions, taking charge as the Vice-Chancellor of Osmania University gives me a great feeling," he added. Registrar Professor P Lakshminarayana and OSD B Redyanik welcomed him. The deans, principals, directors, teachers and student union leaders of the respective departments greeted him on the occasion.

DCA raids three locations, seizes medicines from quacks

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Drug Control Administration (DCA) on Wednesday raided three locations across the State and seized medicine stocked by quacks.

In a raid conducted in Jayashankar\Bhupalpally, Bakkathala Nagesh was operating a clinic at Singampalle village. Similarly, in Medchal\ Malkajigiri, Ashok Kumar was running a healthcare facility at Sanjay Gandhi Nagar.

The third individual Jalandhar was operating a facil-

ity at Yedira village in Mahabubnagar. During the raids, 70 varieties of medicine worth Rs 95,000 were seized from the quacks.

Medicines including antibiotics, steroids, analgesics, cough syrups, anti-ulcer drugs, anti-diabetics, anti-hypertensives and higher generation antibiotics were detected and seized at the clinics during the raids.

In another raid, the DCA seized Ayurvedic medicine 'Mahasudarshan Kadha', manufactured by Om Pharmaceuticals, Bengaluru and marketed by

Shree Dhootapeswar, Mumbai, that was being retailed in the market with a label claiming that it can treat fevers, which is in contravention of the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954.

Officials also seized ITZO-CAP-200 capsules (Itraconazole Capsules 200 mg), at a medical shop in Sangareddy on May 21, which is under price control as per Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 2013 and ceiling price fixed by National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA).

TELANGANA FORMATION DAY

State BJP opposes invitation to Sonia Gandhi for fete

Saffron party's state unit president G Kishan Reddy criticises State government for going back on its promises

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP State unit is opposed to the Telangana Congress government's decision to invite All India Congress Committee former president Sonia Gandhi on the occasion of Telangana Formation Day celebrations on June 2.

BJP State unit president G Kishan Reddy, at a media conference on Wednesday, asked the State government to explain on what basis the government decided to invite Sonia Gandhi on the occasion of the Telangana Formation Day celebrations.

He ridiculed the Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, who described Sonia Gandhi as 'Goddess of Sacrifices'. He asked the Chief Minister to tell how Sonia Gandhi became the 'Goddess of Sacrifice'.

The BJP leader said that sacrifices of Telangana martyrs led to the formation of Telangana State and it was not granted by Sonia Gandhi. Sonia Gandhi is responsible for 1,500 suicides that took place during the Telangana movement. She has not made Telangana but people snatched it by thrashing and holding protests. Sonia



BJP State unit president G Kishan Reddy speaking at a media conference on Wednesday

Gandhi has nothing to do with the formation of Telangana. Under which protocol Sonia Gandhi will be invited to the government function? If they want to invite her, do it in the party's office and felicitate her for the killing of 1,500 people.

It may be recalled that the State Cabinet took a decision to invite Sonia Gandhi as the chief guest for the Telangana State Formation Day celebrations to be held on June 2. The Congress government

in Telangana has deceived the farmers by not honouring its promise of farm loan waiver made before the Assembly polls, he said.

Kishan Reddy, who is also union minister for tourism, said the grand old party before coming to power also promised to give Rs 15,000 annually to tenant farmers and a bonus of Rs 500 per quintal for paddy over MSP.

"Within 100 days after forming the government in Telangana, the Congress had

promised to implement loan waiver for farmers. They promised to waive up to Rs 2 lakh loan of each farmer. The Congress dispensation is not taking any steps towards fulfilling it," he said.

The Congress leaders made the announcement on December 9, birthday of AICC former president Sonia Gandhi, but failed to implement it, he alleged.

He further said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has issued instructions to the departments concerned to procure even parboiled rice from Telangana irrespective of quantities. Noting that the Centre was ready to procure either paddy or rice in any quantity, he said, and the state government should not create problems. The BJP also accused the state government of 'failing' to supply an agreed quantity of rice for 2023-24 kharif season and said there is still pending 2.2 million tons of the commodity to be supplied to the centre.

According to him, the Central government had agreed to procure 7.5 million tonnes of paddy for the rabi season while only 3.3 million tons was delivered to the centre.

Women demonstrate with empty pitchers

PNS ■ MANCHERIAL

Women of Timmapur village of Jannarammandal of Mancherial district on Wednesday demonstrated carrying empty pitchers highlighting the miserable drinking water condition in their village in the Congress rule.

They took to streets and protested on the roads highlighting the lack of drinking water supply to SC colony in Timmapur village. Water level in wells has receded to touch the rockbottom, there is no Mission Bhagiradha drinking water supply to the village, they said alleging that the officials are not showing any interest towards providing drinking water facility to the village. They appealed to the mandal level authorities to supply drinking water through tankers.

GRADUATES' CONSTITUENCY POLL CAMPAIGN

Congress, BJP are cut from same cloth: Jagadish Reddy

PNS ■ SURYAPET



Former minister G Jagadish Reddy speaking to the media in Suryapet on Wednesday

Former minister and local MLA G Jagadeesh Reddy on Wednesday said that the BRS candidate Enugula Rakesh Reddy, who is educated and knowledgeable, should win in Nalgonda-Warangal-Khammam MLC election to be held on May 27.

Former minister Srinivas Goud and former MLA Gadari Kishore participated in the election campaign.

The former minister interacted with the students in the library. A meeting was also held with the booth level in-charges.

Speaking to the media, he said that the first priority should be to vote for Rakesh Reddy, a highly educated and who is accessible to people. The Congress and BJP are cut

from the same cloth.

He criticised Congress candidate Teenmar Mallanna is known for deceit. The BJP candidate is seen only during elections and disappeared after polls. The BJP and the Congress have cheated the people by making false promises. At present, there is a strong

opposition to the Congress party. BRS candidate Enugula Rakesh Reddy is leading in the election.

Former minister Srinivas Goud urged the intellectuals, employees, unemployed and youth to cast their vote for BRS party candidate Enugula Rakesh Reddy.

BRS finds fault with Cong govt for renegeing on promises

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS senior leader Ravula Sridhar Reddy has alleged that the style of functioning of the Congress government in Telangana is totally different from what has been enshrined in its election manifesto, which the Congress president Mallikarjuna Kharge has described as Quran, the Bible and the Bhagavad Gita for the Congress leaders.

The Congress compared its manifesto with the holy books only to insult them, he alleged.

Addressing media at Telanana Bhavan here on Wednesday, Ravula remarked that the Congress manifesto for

the LS elections titled Abhaya Hastam has been rendered useless.

Apparently, the Congress government seems to be not sincere in implementing the schemes announced in its manifesto. Does Indiramma Rajyam mean betraying people by making false promise, he wondered.

The Ministers have no clarity about the implementation of the manifesto, he said, alleging that the government is unsteady in running the administration.

He observed that the CM and Ministers are not coherent on crucial issues. Different tones adopted by ministers on extending bonus to paddy has

been causing anxiety to the farmers, he said.

When the Congress government is going to implement Rythu Bharosa, input subsidy to tenant farmers, paying Rs 12,000 to each agricultural worker per annum, he said.

The congress promised to implement six guarantees in 100 days, but making the farmers stand in serpentine queues to get subsidized seeds, he said breathing fire on the government. The state government has no planning with regard to extending assistance to the farmers, he alleged.

When the government is going to give one tola of gold to the beneficiaries of Kalyana

Lakshmi scheme, he questioned.

What happened to Congress government giving Rs 2500 a month to women under Mahalakshmi scheme, he queried. Also, he sought to know the fate of the interest-free crop loans. What happened to the Telangana International Schools proposed in each mandal, he asked the government. Similarly, what happened to Rs 100-crore funds for journalists, he said blaming the government for not finalizing the policies.

It was high-time, the Congress government set clear deadlines in the implementation of the election manifesto.

Key files allegedly go missing from Kakatiya University

PNS ■ HANAMKONDA

Several key files have reported gone missing in Kakatiya University. Vice-chancellor Tatikonda Ramesh's tenure came to an end Tuesday.

It may be recalled that the State government on May 17 ordered a probe into the irregularities that allegedly took place in the KU as several complaints about large-scale corruption in the KU flooded the state government.

Several bags of files were reportedly were taken away by a car from the university on Monday.



Association of Kakatiya University Teachers on Tuesday demanded that University Registrar Prof Malla Reddy should be held accountable for missing files. The Registrar, however, dismissed

the rumours that important files were taken away from the university in the wake of the State government ordering a probe into the alleged corrupt activities.

During the three-year tenure

of the VC, several protests by students and teachers rocked the university campus.

Controversy dogged the VC right from the day he entered the office of the VC till he laid down the office at the end of the expiry of his term.

There were allegations that the VC troubled not only the students but also the teachers during his tenure.

On Tuesday, the students of the university took out a funeral procession with an effigy of the controversial VC. They alleged that irregularities and corruption ruled the roost in the three year tenure as VC.

Officials to strengthen anganwadi centres

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Women and Child Welfare Minister Dansari Anasuya Seethakka has directed the officials to provide infrastructure in all Anganwadi Centres in the State and strengthen them further during a departmental review with Women and Child welfare department officials at BR Ambedkar Secretariat on Wednesday. The Minister directed the officials to make facilities mandatory in every Anganwadi Centre. She

ordered the officials to pay special attention to the elderly and to examine their health condition time to time. They were also directed to organise a week-long awareness conference in the Transgender Department of Women and Child Welfare.

Women and Child Welfare Department Secretary Vakati Karuna, Nirmala Kanti Wesley, Disabled Welfare Department Director Shailaja and other officials participated in the review meeting.

3-year-old girl dies as car doors locked automatically

PNS ■ BHADRADRI-KOTHAGUDEM

A three-year-old baby girl died of asphyxia in Sambai Tribal Hamlet of Manugurumandal of Bhadradi-Kothagudem district on Tuesday when the doors of the car in which she was playing got automatically locked.

She was identified as Kalmisha, daughter of Sai Kumar and Likhita.

On Tuesday, Kalmisha in a playful mood entered the family's car parked on the premises of the house. The moment the toddler went inside, the car

doors got locked up automatically.

The parents thought that their baby is playing nearby. The couple found the baby missing, they started searching here and there and looked inside the car.

They found the girl in an unconscious state. She was rushed to the government hospital at Manuguru where doctors described her as dead on arrival.

Parents of the girls have been weeping inconsolably for the baby. A pall of gloom has descended on the village.

Staff, students bid farewell to outgoing VC of MGU

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Vice-Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi University (MGU) Acharya Gopal Reddy was felicitated at a farewell function at the seminar hall. The faculty and the student attended.

Speaking on the occasion, Gopal Reddy shared his experience with Nalgonda. The love and affection of people in Nalgonda district will always be remembered. He said that the development of Mahatma Gandhi University has all the positives and it can become a leader in higher education in the State by setting up new courses overcoming the shortage of staff.



Mahatma Gandhi University outgoing Vice-Chancellor Acharya Gopal Reddy speaking at a farewell function in Nalgonda on Wednesday

He expressed his happiness over the government body making quick decisions in promoting the university. New hostel buildings and administrative buildings were also

sanctioned. He advised everyone to make use of the opportunity provided by the system and contribute to further development of the university.

Acharya Koppula Anjireddy, Registrar Acharya Aluwala Ravi, MV Gona Reddy, Krishna Reddy, Controller Dr G Upender Reddy, Domala Ramesh, Prem Sagarmadileti, Arunapriya, Sudharani, Miriyala Ramesh, Dr Y Prashanthi, Akula Ravi, Suryanarayana Reddy, Rekha, Annapurna, other teachers, students, National Election Watch President Bommaraboina Kesavulu participated.

Harish Rao presents cheque for Rs 2 lakh to widow of BRS activist

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Former minister and BRS MLA T Harish Rao on Wednesday said that the BRS has been providing accidental insurance to the party activists and assured that the party leadership will take the party rank and file under its wings.

In case of accidental death of the party workers, the bereaved family will receive Rs 2 lakh towards accident insurance, he clarified.

So far, bereaved families of 48 BRS activists received a total of Rs 96 lakh towards insurance at the rate of Rs 2 lakh for each bereaved family, he said.

He quoted the example of the party workers Sunchanakota Yadagir of Nangunurumandal who recently died in a drowning incident. He distributed Rs 2 lakh cheque to the bereaved family of Yadagiri on Wednesday.

BRS mandal president A



Lingam Goud, former MPP J Srikrant Reddy, BRS leaders Yedla Somireddy, PACS chairman Ramesh Goud, MPTC Sunita Mahender and others were present on the occasion.

Police searching for YSRCP MLA Pinneli

Macherla MLA was spotted at Isnapur, but gave a slip to police

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh police and the Telangana State special task force police are searching for MLA Pinneli Ramakrishna Reddy, who was caught on a CCTV camera while destroying an EVM on the polling day in Macherla. The YSRCP MLA was reportedly spotted at Isnapur in Sangareddy district of Telangana, but gave a slip to the police.

The MLA was booked as first accused in the case pertaining to destruction of EVM at Palvai Gate polling booth in Macherla on May 13. The police have issued a lookout notice prevent-



ing the MLA from leaving the country. The AP police have formed four special teams and reportedly took Pinnelli's aides

into custody. DGP Harish Kumar Gupta informed the EC that four special teams were formed, led by the Additional SP. Raids and checks are continuing in Telangana and a lookout circular has been issued. The DGP added that the AP police registered cases against Pinneli and his brothers under 10 various sections and put all efforts to arrest them.

The EC has taken the incident seriously and ordered the arrest of Pinneli. The police registered a case and formed seven special teams, which went to Telangana as Ramakrishna Reddy absconded from his constituency after the news broke

out. The police started searching for him and also sent a special team to Hyderabad.

They have received information that Pinnelli was travelling towards Sangareddy. The local police found his vehicle in Kandi village near Sangareddy town. However, Ramakrishna Reddy was not found. The cops reportedly took his driver into custody.

The Palnadu police also sounded alert all over the district fearing retaliatory attacks between political rivals following the possible arrest of the Macherla MLA. Section 144 is also in force and additional forces were summoned to man the sensitive areas of the district.

Cordon and search ops continue across state

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Director General of Police (DGP) Harish Kumar Gupta has stated that the police are continuing the cordon and search operations across the State to maintain law and order and to control crimes.

Cordon and search operations are conducted in important circles, villages and outskirts in all districts and cities, he said in a press release here on Wednesday.

During the cordon and search, the police checked crime suspects and those



with criminal records. They also searched the houses of criminals and their secret places to find illegal liquor, arms, crackers, drugs, and vehicles without documents, he said.

INDIA CORNER

Trapped leopard dies hours after being tranquilised in Kerala village

A leopard found trapped in a barbed wire fence in a village on the forest fringe died hours after it was tranquilised and rescued by wildlife officials in Kerala's Palakkad district on Wednesday. The female leopard, estimated to be around four years old, was found tangled in the wire fence erected on a property owned by Unnikrishnan, a local resident, near Kollengode this morning. Wildlife officials said the animal seemed healthy and active even after it was tranquilised with a dart and shifted to a cage by the Rapid Response Team (RRT) of the department. A senior forest official said there was no external injury found on the carcass of the big cat after its death, and so an internal injury is suspected to be the cause of its sudden death. However, that can only be confirmed only after an autopsy, which would be performed on Thursday morning, he said. "The animal looked healthy... Even after darting, it was active and growled several times."



Strengthen social harmony: President Murmu's message on Buddha Purnima

President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday greeted citizens on the eve of Buddha Purnima and asked all to strengthen social harmony and take pledge for nation-building by imbibing the ideals of Lord Buddha. The embodiment of compassion, Lord Buddha, has given the message of truth, non-violence, harmony and love for humanity and all living beings, she said. "Lord Buddha had said, 'Appa Deepo Bhava' i.e. be a light unto yourself. His teachings of tolerance, self-awareness and good conduct inspire us to serve humanity. His Eightfold Path paves the way for leading a meaningful life," President Murmu said. "Let us strengthen social harmony and take pledge for nation-building by imbibing the ideals of Bhagwan Buddha in our lives," the president said in a statement issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan.



Using seat belts in cars, helmets on bikes made mandatory in Tripura

The Sikkim government made it mandatory for the drivers of vehicles to use seat belts and motorbike riders to wear helmets in the state with effect from June 1, according to an official order issued on Wednesday. The order was issued to mitigate the number of accidents and to safeguard the well-being of all road users, Transport Commissioner-Secretary Raj Yadav said. Non-compliance with the rule will invite penal action, he said. Whoever drives a motor vehicle without wearing a safety belt or carries passengers not wearing seat belts shall be punishable under Section 194 B (1) of the Central Motor Vehicle Act 1988, the Transport Commissioner-cum-Secretary Raj Yadav said in an order issued on Wednesday. The wearing of seat belts shall be applicable for light motor vehicles (LMV), transport vehicles (Taxis & Commercial) and non-transport vehicles (private and government), he said.



National security of paramount importance, asserts SC

Sets aside HC order granting bail to suspected PFI men

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday set aside a verdict of the Madras High Court which had granted bail to eight alleged PFI members and office bearers, saying national security is always of "paramount importance" and any act aiding terrorist activity is liable to be restricted.

The apex court said it was satisfied with the charge sheet filed in the case and material and documents relied upon by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) that there were reasonable grounds for believing that the accused against them were "prima facie true". The top court delivered its verdict on NIA's appeal against the high court's October 19 last year verdict granting bail to these eight accused, who are alleged to be members of the Popular Front of India (PFI), in a case registered under the provisions of the Unlawful



Activities (Prevention) Act and the Indian Penal Code.

A bench of Justices Bela M Trivedi and Pankaj Mishra said it was conscious of the legal position that it should be slow in interfering with the order when bail has been granted by the high court. However it is equally well settled that if such order of granting bail is found to be illegal and perverse, it must be set aside, it said. "This court has often inter-

preted the counter terrorism enactments to strike a balance between the civil liberties of the accused, human rights of the victims and compelling interest of the state," the bench said. "It cannot be denied that national security is always of paramount importance and any act in aid to any terrorist act - violent or non-violent is liable to be restricted," it said.

The bench said the UAPA was one of those Acts that have been enacted to provide for effective prevention of certain unlawful activities of individuals and associations, and to deal with terrorist activities, as also to impose reasonable restrictions on the civil liberties of persons in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India.

It said there was sufficient material in the form of statements of witnesses and other incriminating evidence in the form of digital devices, books, photographs etc collected dur-

ing the investigation and relied upon by the NIA to form an opinion that there were reasonable grounds for believing that accusations against the accused were prima facie true.

"Considering the nature and gravity of the alleged offences and considering their criminal antecedents, in our opinion high court should not have taken a lenient view, more particularly when there was sufficient material to show their prima facie involvement in the alleged offences under the UAPA," the bench said.

"In the instant case, we are satisfied from the charge sheet as also the other material/documents relied upon by the appellant (NIA) that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the accusations against the respondents are prima facie true and that the mandate contained in the proviso to section 43(D)(5) would be applicable for not releasing the respondents on bail," it said.

Kanhaiya assault case: Court grants bail to accused

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A court here has granted bail to the 41-year-old man arrested for allegedly assaulting and splashing Congress Lok Sabha candidate Kanhaiya Kumar with ink, saying it has to balance the state's interest of maintaining public order with the accused's right to personal liberty.

On May 17, when Kumar, the Congress candidate for the North East Delhi seat, was coming out of ally Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) office in New Usmanpur after a meeting with local Councillor Chhaya Sharma, a group of people attacked him. The Delhi Police arrested one of the accused, Ajay Kumar, on Tuesday morning.

Metropolitan Magistrate Arushi Parwal heard the city police's application seeking Ajay Kumar's judicial custody for 14 days on Tuesday. The investigating officer (IO) said it was necessary to prevent him from committing similar offences.

Stop campaign on communal lines: EC to Nadda, Kharge

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission Wednesday came down heavily on ruling BJP and opposition Congress, asking them to desist from campaigning along caste, community, language, and religious lines.

Noting that the country's socio-cultural milieu cannot be made a casualty to elections, it told BJP president J P Nadda and Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge that utterances of star campaigners follow patterns and create narratives which can be damaging beyond the model code period.

Referring to their respective replies to the notices issued to them on April 25, the election authority said that "technical loopholes or extreme interpretations of other political party's utterances" cannot discharge the parties and their campaigners from the core responsibility of their own content which ought to be corrective to the ongoing discourse "and not further plummeting the quality of campaign discourse".



It reminded the two parties of provisions of the model code which state that no party or candidate will include in any activity which may aggravate existing differences or create mutual hatred or cause tension between different castes and communities, religious or linguistic.

Nadda was issued the notice on opposition charge that Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave a divisive speech in Rajasthan's Banswara.

In his reply to the notice, Nadda had maintained that the statements of BJP's star campaigners rely on facts to expose

the "mal intent" of the Congress to the nation.

He had also told the EC that the Congress and the INDIA bloc, in pursuance of vote-bank politics, have begun opposing India as a nation, its identity, its original Hindu religion.

The poll watchdog rejected Nadda's defence describing it as "not-tenable" and asked him and his party's star campaigners to desist from campaigning on religious and communal lines.

It also asked the BJP to stop campaign speeches that may divide society.

INDIA bloc doesn't have any leader who can become PM: Shah

PNS ■ GHATAL/PURULIA

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday launched a blistering attack on the "corrupt INDI alliance," stating that the opposition bloc lacks any leader capable of becoming prime minister.

Addressing back-to-back rallies at Ghatal and Purulia, Amit Shah criticised the INDIA bloc leaders, stating they only aim to advance their dynasties and "neither have any leaders to lead the country nor any intention for the development of the nation."

Shah, while referring to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir said "PoK is part of India and we will take it".

"It is a foregone conclusion that the BJP will form the next government. But who is the Prime Ministerial candidate of this INDI alliance? The alliance doesn't have any leaders. It wants five PMs in five years. They want a rotational PM system," he said.

"But can these rotational PMs give a befitting reply to



Pakistan and end terrorism? During Congress' rule, we have seen how terror acts were a regular affair. We have also seen how Narendra Modi has ended terrorism in Kashmir," he said.

Dubbing the opposition bloc as "Ghamandiya Gathbandhan (arrogant alliance)", Shah said, "the bloc is only interested in promoting their own family members." The BJP leader said the ongoing parliamentary elec-

tions are about choosing between "leaders of dynastic politics and honest leader Narendra Modi" who considers the country as his family. "Sharad Pawar wants his daughter to be the chief minister. Mamata Banerjee wants her nephew to succeed her as chief minister. Stalin (Tamil Nadu CM) wants to see his son succeed him. Sonia Gandhi wants Rahul Baba to become the Prime Minister. On the other side, there is Narendra Modi who considers the entire country as his family," he said.

Kejriwal for fair probe into Maliwal assault case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In his first reaction on AAP MP Swati Maliwal's alleged assault at his official residence, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday said he expects a fair investigation into the matter and justice should be served.

Maliwal has alleged she was "assaulted" by Kejriwal's personal assistant Bibhav Kumar when she went to meet the chief minister on May 13. The police have registered a case and arrested Kumar in connection with it.

In an interview, the chief minister said the matter is currently "sub-judice" and his comment might affect the proceedings.

"But I expect there will be a fair investigation. Justice should be served. There are two versions of the event. Police should investigate both versions fairly and justice should be done," Kejriwal said. Asked whether he was present at his official residence at the time of the incident, the AAP national convener said he was there. "But I was not present at the scene," he said.

His aide Kumar is currently in five-day police custody in connection with the case.

BJP-led central govt hell-bent on changing Constitution: Priyanka

PNS ■ GODDA (JHARKHAND)

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday alleged that the BJP-led central government was hell-bent on changing the Constitution, and it has weakened institutions like Parliament and judiciary in the last 10 years.

Vadra, addressing an election rally at Godda, also claimed that all those who opposed the Centre's policies were being victimised.

"If they (the BJP) will come to power again, they will change the Constitution and cut down on reservations. They weak-

ened democracy in last 10 years, as well as institutions like Parliament and judiciary," she alleged.

Unlike the BJP government, the Congress' policies are aimed at strengthening the rights of tribals, Vadra said.

"PM (Narendra) Modi put former Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren behind bars on false cases; and his wife Kalpana is fighting like a lioness... Earlier, debates were held in Parliament for framing laws, but now they (BJP leaders) attack the opposition," the Congress leader said.

She also claimed that the



prime minister took "Rs 52-crore donation" from a firm that manufactures Covid vaccines.

"That vaccine is now causing reactions in people's bodies;

many have suddenly lost their lives at the gym or at work," she said.

Vadra said the BJP thought of sailing through smoothly by putting Hemant Soren behind bars, but instead, "the tribals have emerged stronger and are challenging the saffron party for its anti-tribal policies".

"The BJP-led central government is framing policies for billionaires, and it has sold the nation's assets like airports and ports to industrialists. It also waived Rs 16 lakh crore of several billionaires, but failed to provide any relief to farmers, who are committing suicides," she claimed.

Vadra alleged that capitalists are "eying your 'Jal, Jungle and Jameen' (water, forest and land)", and Godda is an example of that, where the Adani Group has set up a mega power plant, but "electricity is not available for the poor here".

"Your land, your water... has been given to PM's billionaire friend Adani... this is BJP's policy," the Congress leader alleged.

She also claimed that 70 crore youths in the country were unemployed as the BJP handed over the country's assets to capitalists.

HC scraps OBC status of several classes in Bengal

Benefits obtained already not to be affected

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Wednesday struck down the OBC status of several classes in West Bengal granted since 2010, finding such reservations to vacancies in services and posts in the state are illegal.

Passing judgment on petitions challenging the provisions of the Act, the court clarified that the services of citizens of the struck-down classes, who are already in service or have availed the benefit of reservation

or have succeeded in any selection process of the state will not be affected by the order. The number of enlisted persons under OBC in West Bengal after 2010 is likely to be above five lakhs, one of the lawyers representing the petitioners said.

The court struck down several classes for reservation as Other Backward Classes (OBC) given under The West Bengal Backward Classes (Other than Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) (Reservation of Vacancies in Services and Posts) Act, 2012.

The bench directed that the state's executive orders classifying several other classes as OBCs from March 5, 2010, to May 11, 2012, were also quashed, in view of the illegality of the reports recommending such classification.

The court said that the directions will be given prospective effect. A clause in the 2012 Act allowing inclusion of classes for OBC reservation by the state government through notification in the official gazette was also struck down.

Country will see new film to be released on June 4: Akhilesh Yadav

PNS ■ AZAMGARH (UP)

A new film will be released on June 4 which the country will see with greater enthusiasm, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said on Wednesday, exuding confidence about the victory of the opposition alliance in the ongoing parliamentary polls.

Yadav alleged that Mayawati-led Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has joined hands with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the Lok Sabha elections.

The BSP is helping the saffron party by splitting the opposition SP votes, he added.

"The INDIA alliance is surging ahead with the passing of every round of voting. A new film will be released on June 4 which the country will see with enthusiasm," Yadav said, addressing a rally in favour of SP nominee Dharmendra Yadav.

Counting of votes will take place on June 4.

"Five phases of voting so far indicate that the BJP is on its way out from the government. The sixth phase of voting will remove the saffron party (from power)," the SP

chief said.

Five phases of voting have been completed in Uttar Pradesh while the sixth is scheduled on May 25. Dharmendra Yadav is pitted against Bhojpuri film star Dinesh Lal Yadav 'Nirahua' of the BJP in Azamgarh.

Nirahua had defeated Dharmendra Yadav two years ago in the bypoll which was necessitated after Akhilesh Yadav vacated the seat following his victory in the assembly polls from Karhal.

The SP supremo talked about scrapping the Agniveer scheme of recruitment in the armed forces. He asserted that the job in the state police will be restricted for three years.

He said the SP will go for a caste census in UP after coming to power at the national level. Akhilesh Yadav said since the days of Mulayam Singh Yadav, the party always took special care for the development of Azamgarh.

The SP chief asked the crowd to give a better victory margin in Azamgarh than Kannauj, from where Akhilesh Yadav himself is a candidate in the ongoing polls.



Risk of hospitalisation more in people having sugar, BP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On the hottest days, risk of hospitalisation for people with metabolic disorders such as those of sugar and blood pressure, and obesity, almost doubled as compared to days recording comfortable temperatures, a new study has found.

The research analysing hospital admissions related to high temperatures during summer over more than a decade in Spain found that extreme heat impacted people with these conditions the most.

"There are a number of reasons to explain this. For example, in people with obesity, heat

loss responses work less efficiently, as body fat acts as an insulator, making them more susceptible to heat disorders," said Hicham Achebak, a researcher at the Barcelona Institute for Global Health.

Higher levels of air pollution further appeared to worsen the risk of hospital admission for people with these conditions, including diabetes, the researchers said.

The study also found that on hotter days, men showed a higher risk of hospital admission due to injuries, while women showed a higher risk of hospitalisation from infectious, hormonal and metabolic, respiratory or urinary diseases.



HOTTEST DAYS

"Under conditions of heat stress, the body activates cutaneous vasodilation (more blood flows to skin) and sweat production in order to lose heat.

The subsequent reactions can affect people differently

depending on a series of factors, such as age, sex or pre-existing health conditions," explained Achebak, corresponding author of the study published in the journal Environmental Health Perspectives.

"We know, for example, that women have a higher temperature threshold above which sweating mechanisms are activated and are more susceptible to the effects of heat," he said.

The researchers analysed data of more than 11.2 million emergency hospital admissions between 2006 and 2019 from 48 provinces in mainland Spain and the Balearic Islands, an archipelago off eastern Spain in the Mediterranean.

Using statistical methods of analysis, the team estimated how temperatures affected the different causes of hospitalisation for summer (June to September) and by province. They also considered daily

average temperatures and relative humidity, along with air pollutant levels, including those of PM2.5.

High temperatures were found to have "a generalised impact on cause-specific hospitalisations."

Children under a year and adults older than 85 years were the most vulnerable, even as heat heightened the risk of hospitalisation across all age groups, the researchers said.

"The underlying mechanisms by which heat triggers adverse health outcomes remain unclear, but they seem to be related to how our body regulates its own temperature," said Achebak.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Warcraft for all

Project Udbhav celebrates India's rich heritage in military statecraft and makes it citizen-inclusive

The adage, "If you want peace, be prepared for war," reflects a longstanding philosophy in India. Historically, India has maintained peace while staying strong, refraining from warmongering unless provoked. This approach stems from ancient Indian wisdom, emphasising the importance of advancement in warfare to deter any potential threats. India's rich and ancient heritage in military statecraft, rooted in the Vedas, Puranas and the Mahabharata, forms a significant yet often overlooked aspect of its cultural legacy. The Army's Project Udbhav aims to bring this historical wealth into the public eye, engaging citizens in the defence domain and fostering a deeper understanding of India's strategic and military traditions. The Vedas, among the oldest sacred texts, provide early references to warfare, strategy and the ethical dimensions of combat. The Puranas, a genre of ancient Indian literature, elaborated on the principles of statecraft and warfare. Texts like the Vishnu Purana and Agni Purana offer insights into military



organisation, the roles and responsibilities of warriors and the strategic use of resources. The Mahabharata, one of the greatest epics in world literature, is a treasure trove of military wisdom. The epic not only narrates the Kurukshetra war but also delves into detailed discussions on strategy, the art of war and the moral dilemmas faced by warriors.

Other ancient Indian texts offer timeless wisdom adaptable to modern defence strategies, such as intelligence, psychological warfare and ethical conduct. Launched last year, Project Udbhav delves deep into these ancient texts and aims to promote indigenous discourse in the Army by integrating India's ancient strategic acumen

into contemporary military domain, ensuring that the force remains future-ready. It is also an endeavour to involve our citizens and educate them about warfare for any eventuality. Involving citizens in understanding warfare and being prepared is crucial for several reasons. It fosters national pride and identity by highlighting India's intellectual and strategic achievements, countering one-dimensional portrayals of its history. Under Project Udbhav, workshops, seminars and online courses will educate citizens about ancient Indian military texts and their modern relevance. Collaborations with universities and research institutions will ensure academic rigour and accessibility. Additionally, a series of books, documentaries and articles will highlight various aspects of Indian military statecraft, including translations and commentaries on key texts for a broader audience. Project Udbhav is laudable as it represents an endeavour to weave a strategic vocabulary and conceptual framework deeply embedded in India's philosophical and cultural heritage. This initiative underscores the importance of understanding and valuing the rich military heritage that has shaped India's strategic culture, offering invaluable lessons for contemporary and future defence strategies. It is indeed a praiseworthy effort to revive ancient wisdom lest it is lost.

PICTALK



Weaver birds build a nest on a tree, in Nadia

Fighting age fraud for Indian football's integrity

From local matches to the big leagues, age falsification distorts fair play and erodes the essence of sportsmanship

The issue of age fraud has plagued Indian football for decades. This persistent dishonesty has not only undermined the integrity of the sport but has also stunted the growth of genuine talent, ultimately leading to India's poor performance at the senior team level.

For the last 50 years, age fraud has been an open secret within the football community. Players, coaches and officials are all aware of it, yet the problem persists unchecked. From local tournaments to State, district and national leagues, age fraud is rampant. Shockingly, it even extends to the national team, where overage players take the field under pretences. This systemic dishonesty is a national disgrace. The lack of genuineness and honesty in our footballing ecosystem is a national embarrassment.

My personal experience highlights this issue vividly. When I was 14, I shared accommodation with much older players—some even 24—yet they possessed fake birth certificates claiming



they were my age. These older players competed alongside me in national leagues, creating an uneven playing field and undermining the credibility of the competitions. This personal encounter opened my eyes to the widespread nature of this fraud.

The impact of age fraud is profound. Young, talented players who play by the rules find their careers destroyed by those who cheat the system. Genuine athletes are overshadowed by older players who dominate youth categories through sheer physical C cognitive advantage. This not only robs honest play-

ers of opportunities but also skews the development pathway, leaving India with a senior team that lacks the authentic experience and growth needed to compete internationally. Cases of age fraud emerge regularly from all corners of the country, yet there is little action from authorities. Until the Government takes decisive measures to eradicate this issue, Indian football will remain stagnant. The current State of affairs ensures that we will never achieve success on the international stage. It is a profound shame and it undermines the spirit of the sport. The rigged system favours deceit over talent

and honesty, leaving the sport in shambles. It is time for a rigorous overhaul, strict enforcement of age verification processes and a zero-tolerance policy towards fraud. Only through a genuine commitment to integrity can Indian football hope to reclaim its lost potential and earn respect on the global stage.

Until then, we must acknowledge this harsh reality: as long as we continue to cheat, we will never truly win. The future of Indian football depends on our ability to foster a culture of honesty and fairness, giving every player a fair chance to shine based on merit, not deception. The future of Indian football hinges on our commitment to integrity. We must give every player a fair chance to succeed based on their true abilities. Until we do, our dreams of footballing glory will remain just that—dreams. The time for change is now, for the sake of our sport and the generations of players to come.

(The writer is a football coach; views are personal)



ARYAN RAJVANSH

Another 10 days to go and the two-month-long election process would be over. These elections would be remembered for the spearhead of the ruling party, Narendra Modi and of the opposition, Rahul Gandhi battling the heat and dust of the famed Indian summer to spur their cadres to give the best performance.

In the national media, what's being discussed is the punishing schedule of the Prime Minister and the Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP president JP Nadda trying to match him with almost equal vigour. From the opposition side, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has ensured to create the perspective that the campaign just did not rest on the shoulders of the Gandhi family.

In any war, there always is a clinching battle that decides who won and who lost. In World War II, the Battle for Berlin proved to be the most crucial. It's the image of the Soviet soldiers putting the flag of the USSR on the Reichstag in Berlin in May 1945 which marked the defeat of Germany under Adolf Hitler.

Similarly, the general elections of 2024 will always be remembered and will be decided on who wins the battle of Uttar Pradesh. With 80 seats, Uttar Pradesh is the citadel of the BJP monolith, which has a dominant presence in the Hindi heartland States of Bihar, UP, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Haryana. Unlike MP, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Haryana, in Uttar Pradesh the BJP is not in a direct contest with the Congress but a strong regional outfit — Samajwadi Party. UP also cannot be compared to Bihar, where it's fighting another strong regional party — the Rashtriya Janata Dal but in the companionship of another strong regional outfit — the Janata Dal (United).

Thus in Uttar Pradesh, the BJP is completely on its own with nowhere else to look forward to but its cadres and leaders. Here the role of Uttar Pradesh chief

minister Yogi Adityanath becomes crucial. The Mahanth of the Goraknath Math has been in campaign mode ever since he retained power with a thumping majority in 2022.

He first delivered the Ram temple at Ayodhya. The consecration of the idol at Ramlalla temple in January this year has been the biggest-ever achievement of the right-wing schema in the country. This would not have been possible but for the determined, firm and passionate execution of the construction plan by the Uttar Pradesh Government of not just the temple complex but the whole of the city of Ayodhya.

The second has been to galvanise the cadres and keep them functioning for a full two months to ensure that the rivals are stopped and checked in their determined assault. He started the polls campaign with the Prabudh Jan Sammelan on March 27 and would continue it till May-end the last phase of polling.

Prime Minister Modi's campaign has been faulted several times and has also caused concern among his supporters for allowing the achieve-



YOGI ADITYANATH, WHO IN THE PAST SEVEN YEARS HAS COMBINED HIS VISION WITH A STRONG EMPHASIS ON LAW AND ORDER AND CULTURAL NATIONALISM (HINDUTVA), HAS CONTINUED TO KEEP HIS CAMPAIGN ON THE SAME TRACK

ments of the past ten years to be pushed to the background in pursuing a very polarising agenda. The campaign has not aligned with Modi's espousal of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas" (Collective Efforts, Inclusive Growth, Everyone's Trust) slogan, which encapsulates an inclusive approach aimed at fostering economic growth and social cohesion.

Prime Minister's initiatives, such as Make in India, Digital India and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission), which underscore his commitment to modernising India's economy and infrastructure, have seldom found space in his speeches. This has somewhere allowed the opposition to attack the Government. On the other hand, Yogi Adityanath, who in the past seven years has combined his vision with a strong emphasis on law and order and cultural nationalism (Hindutva), has continued to keep his campaign on the same track. His leadership in Uttar Pradesh is characterised by a drive to restore cultural heritage and end minority appeasement, as seen in initiatives like the grand celebration of Diwali in Ayodhya and the renam-

ing of places to reflect their historical Hindu significance.

The lynchpin of his governance has been the emphasis on strict law enforcement, aiming to improve safety and reduce crime, which resonates even with many of his non-Hindu constituents. His determined perusal of anti-crime drives has found a fan following that goes beyond the traditional Hindutva admirers.

Coming back to the battle of Uttar Pradesh, it would take the collective strength of the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Uttar Pradesh chief minister to make the BJP bandwagon have a safe journey to the national Capital. Modi and Yogi are both distinct personalities and both have significantly impacted Indian politics and governance, albeit in different ways. On June 4, in the event of the BJP unfurling its flag, the contributions of the Uttar Pradesh chief minister would as much be accounted for as that of the Prime Minister.

(The writer is the author and president of The Centre for Reforms, Development & Justice; views expressed are personal)



SIDHARTH MISHRA

Epic election battle enters decisive phase

The ultimate battleground is UP, where Yogi Adityanath's unwavering leadership is crucial in the BJP's fight to maintain its stronghold



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AMOEBA KILLS

Madam — Strange are the ways of meeting death for a young soul. A five-year-old girl has died of brain-eating amoeba after taking a bath in a pond in Malappuram district of Kerala. She was undergoing treatment at the Kozhikode Medical College of Institute of Maternal and Child Health. She had taken a dip in the pond on May 1 and started showing symptoms of fever, headache and vomiting on May 10. The girl, afflicted by amoebic meningoencephalitis, a rare brain infection caused by a free-living amoeba found in contaminated waters. Still waters are dangerous. Don't let go.

This is not the first case reported. Amebiasis is an intestinal (bowel) illness caused by a microscopic (tiny) parasite called Entamoeba histolytica, which is spread through human feces (poop). Often there are no symptoms, but sometimes it causes diarrhoea (loose stool/poop), nausea (a feeling of sickness in the stomach) and weight loss. The main symptoms of the disease are fever, headache, vomiting and seizures. All infected patients have lost their lives due to the disease so far, as the mortality rate for this rare brain infection is 100 percent.

Jayanthi Subramaniam | Mumbai

DRONES IN AGRICULTURE

Madam — Apropos the article, "Promise and challenges of drones in agriculture", published on May 20, this is my response. Drones, or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) are becoming increasingly popular in India's agricultural sector. Drones offer a range of benefits to farmers, like improved efficiency and enhanced crop yields. However, some challenges may hinder the adoption of drone technology such as fear of job loss, lack of knowledge and training and regulatory barriers. Drones can capture high-resolution images and provide information on crop health, growth and yield.

Leadership vacuum in Iran



Apropos to the front page article, "Iran Pres dies in chopper crash after stinging Israel," published on May 21. The shocking death of the President in a helicopter crash had left Iran in the lurch and uncertainty from

all sides. For the last three years, after he took the Presidential position in 2021, Mr Raisi has managed to frame Iran as a Shia Muslim leader block of the world with his conservative cleric ideology.

His sudden death had created a leadership vacuum in Iran in the devil's time. The US and Israel are among the direct culprits of Tehran's current situation, despite their denial on personal grounds respectively. Iran needs time to cope with all the big losses it has suffered recently, according to the according to the President, Foreign Minister and other key authorities. The recent death incident had scratched the old scars of Iran when it lost its Revolutionary Guard General Qasem Soleimani. Iran has been a victim of targeted killings especially for VVIPs, ever since its bitter relationship with the US over the last two decades. Time will heal everything itself, the domestic and international uncertainty will shed away for Iran with time and normalcy will be restored.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

This can help farmers to identify issues early and take corrective measures to optimise their inputs and outputs. But, drones are expensive and many farmers may not have the financial resources to invest in this technology. Hence, there is a need for more subsidies incentives and economical financing options to make drones more affordable and attractive to farmers. It requires a coordinated effort from the Government, the industry, farmers and the civil society to create a conducive and supportive environment for the use of drones in agriculture. There is little doubt that drones can be a powerful tool for transforming Indian agriculture and ensuring the country's food security and prosperity.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

MUSEUMS PRESERVE HISTORY

Madam — Apropos of the article "Museums are pillars of culture and education," published on May 21. Museums

are an inevitable part of our lives as they depict culture, history and artefacts. They tell us about the evolution of man and let us get familiar with the historical and scientific facts as well. But these days, people, especially children, hardly show interest in visiting museums as they find it boring. The educational institutions must include visits to museums in the curriculum to enable students to broaden their horizons and get valuable knowledge. Museums are a great source of understanding our civilisation, culture and heritage and help explore various branches of research work. The Government should take the initiative to help the masses visit museums as they are the storehouses for preserving our ancient history and heritage.

Abhilasha Gupta | Mohali

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN DELETERIOUS EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE GASLIGHTING

It is a menace that undermines individuals' perceptions, beliefs and reality



SAKSHI SETHI

In the network of modern workplaces, emerges a shadowy spectre, threatening the very fabric of organisational culture and well-being - Gaslighting, a form of psychological manipulation in which one person seeks to undermine another person's perceptions, beliefs or reality often done regularly or subtly making the victim doubt their perception, memories or sanity by shifting blame or responsibility onto the victim.

Gaslighting can create a hostile work environment where employees feel anxious and confused and at times even question their competence causing a detrimental effect on themselves, their teams and organisational culture. It is a form of psychological manipulation that can have serious consequences for the well-being and productivity of those involved. When talked about the workplace, the term Gaslight can manifest in myriad forms, often subtle and insidious. It may begin with seemingly innocuous comments undermining an individual's contributions or abilities and may gradually lead to dealing with small instances of manipulation that escalate over time. Gaslighting tactics often target an individual's sense of self-worth, competence and confidence resulting in significant emotional distress, including feelings of anxiety, depression and confusion. It even isolates victims from their support networks by undermining their relationships with coworkers, friends and even family members.



It is often believed that toxic workplace gaslighting can stem from various causes that are often rooted in systemic issues, interpersonal dynamics or individual motivations such as power imbalances, insecure leadership, lack of accountability, interpersonal conflicts and many more. When communication breaks down, tensions escalate, egos clash and employees/individuals start resorting to gaslighting as a means of gaining leverage or inflicting harm.

Addressing the toxic workplace gaslighting requires a comprehensive approach that involves raising awareness, fostering a culture of respect and accountability and providing support for those impacted. Promoting transparency, accountability and psychological safety in organisations is crucial to recognise toxic gaslighting behaviour effectively.

Undoubtedly, workplace gaslighting thrives on power imbalances and psychological manipulation. Victims of gaslighting suffer immense stress, anxiety and identity erosion. Prolonged exposure leads to physical health issues like headaches, GI problems and sleep disturbances, weakening immunity and increasing illness risks.

It becomes crucial for the victims to first recognise and validate their experiences, refusing to internalise the gaslighter's manipulations. The use of assertive communication techniques, such as "I" Statements and boundary-setting, can help individuals confront gaslighting behaviour while preserving their self-esteem and dignity. Additionally, fostering a culture of accountability and transparency within organisations empowers employees to speak out against gaslighting tactics without fear of reprisal. Remember, when personal gain takes precedence over ethical conduct, gaslighting may become a tempting strategy. The only way that may benefit the victims of gaslighting is by seeking support from trusted colleagues, mentors or mental health professionals. By creating a workplace culture that promotes open communication, respect and accountability can the organisation help prevent gaslighting and other forms of manipulation from taking hold as left unchecked, it can inflict lasting psychological harm, exacerbating issues of mental health and well-being in the workplace.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

Do not withdraw capital support for oil PSUs



UTTAM GUPTA

The Government slashes equity infusions for three major oil sector CPSUs by 50 per cent, contradicting its 2023-24 budget commitments



In the Budget for the financial year 2023-24 (April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024) presented on February 1 last year, the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced an equity infusion of Rs 30,000 crore in three Central public sector undertakings (CPSUs) viz. Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), are majority-owned by the Government of India (GOI). She had also proposed Rs 5,000 crore for buying crude oil to bolster its strategic reserves (SRs) in underground storages at Mangalore in Karnataka and Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.

The equity infusions in IOCL/BPCL/HPCL were meant to support their capital investment plans for the transition to 'Green Energy' and achieve 'Net Zero' objectives. Net zero refers to a situation where the emissions of polluting gases such as carbon dioxide due to human activities and their removals are in balance over a given period. On the other hand, the allocation for SRs was meant to guard against the possibility of any disruption in its supply.

Under the above, IOCL and BPCL had done necessary spade work including approval by their respective boards for coming up with 'rights issues' of requisite amounts to enable the Union Government to give effect to its capital contribution (albeit by way of equity) promised in the budget. In the case of HPCL, the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) having acquired majority equity shares from the GOI in FY 2017-18 was to come up with the issue of the preferential issue to give effect to the latter's budgetary intention. However, in a big climb down, in November 2023, the Government reduced the amount of equity infusion to the trio by 50 per cent to Rs 15,000 crore even while deferring implementation of the budgetary announcement on the SRs. Meanwhile, the Interim Budget for FY 2024-25 presented by Sitharaman on February 1, 2024, didn't show any allocation for equity infusion for FY 2023-24. The said amount has been earmarked for the FY 2024-25. This was confirmed by Finance Secretary T V



JUST BECAUSE DURING FY 2023-24, THEY HAVE IMPROVED THEIR PROFITS DUE TO CONTINUING MODERATION IN THE PRICE OF CRUDE OIL, IT WON'T BE LOGICAL TO TRIM THE PROMISED BUDGETARY SUPPORT

Somanathan at a post-budget press conference. As for SRs, the budget documents do not provide any funds either in the revised estimate for FY 2023-24 or during FY 2024-25.

Why did the Government climb down? Even as the Ministry of Finance (MoF) hasn't given any reason, it seems the decision was prompted by a significant boost to their profitability during 2023-24. The IOCL posted a standalone net profit of close to Rs 40,000 crore as against a profit of a little over Rs 8000 crore during 2022-23. The BPCL posted a net profit of around Rs 26,500 crore in 2023-24, compared to about Rs 1,850 crore profit during 2022-23. The HPCL posted a profit of around Rs 14,500 crore during 2023-24 against a loss of about Rs 9,000 crore in 2022-23.

When the companies can generate good profits hence, a good investible surplus for meeting their investment commitments, why do they need the Government's budgetary support? But, there is much more than what meets the eye on a plain reading of the profit numbers. First, out of the net profit, a substantial amount is paid as dividends to the shareholders. For instance, in case IOCL @Rs 7 on a share of Rs 10 each, the payout during 2023-24 on a total of 1,412 crore outstanding shares would be around Rs 10,000 crore.

Second, these undertakings are engaged in the business of refining crude oil to produce a range of finished products such as petrol, diesel, LPG etc besides importing them to meet their demand. That makes their operations highly capital-intensive. Consequently, their investment requirements for expansion and growth are heavy. This is exacerbated by their commitments regarding the transition to 'Green Energy'. While IOCL has decided to

achieve 'Net Zero' by 2040, BPCL and HPCL intend to reach this goal by 2045.

Third, the most potent reason as to why the Government shouldn't backtrack on the capital support once promised to oil PSUs has to do with the loss the latter had suffered during FY 2022-23, courtesy of directions given by the former regarding setting retail prices of petrol and diesel. To understand the full ramifications of such orders, let us look at some basics.

Petrol and diesel were deregulated long back in June 2010 and November 2014 respectively. As a result, oil PSUs got the freedom to fix their retail prices. The price is fixed as refinery-gate price or RGP (import parity price or IPP and export parity price or EPP of the fuel in the ratio of 80:20) plus freight, marketing costs, marketing margin, dealers' commission taxes and duties. Considering that over 85 per cent of India's crude oil needed for making refined products is imported (the balance 15 per cent is sourced from domestic companies such as ONGC, Oil India Limited or OIL) etc, an increase/decrease in its international price should lead to corresponding increase/decrease in the retail price of petrol and diesel but only if the marketing PSUs are allowed to fix the price strictly as per the formula. But, this is rarely done. The Government issues tacit instructions to IOCL/BPCL/HPCL (together, they account for around 90 per cent of the domestic fuel retail network in the country) to fix the retail price. This is driven by extraneous considerations. Ever since the start of the Ukraine war in February 2022, the international price of oil has been on the boil. The average of the basket of crude oil that India imports during April-September 2022 was \$ 103.7 per barrel against the \$90 per barrel that prevailed before the war started. But,

these PSUs were told to keep the price of petrol and diesel unchanged for six months. This led to substantial under-recovery from the sale of these products.

For instance, in June 2022, the price of petrol in Delhi remained at Rs 97 per litre corresponding to the pre-war crude price of US\$ 90 per barrel. This was despite the price of crude jumping to US\$ 116 per barrel which would have required the price to be set at Rs 112 per litre. Consequently, on the sale of petrol during June 2022, the PSUs suffered under-recovery of Rs 15 per litre (112-97).

Cumulatively, the three PSUs incurred a loss of around Rs 40,000 crore during the first half of FY 2022-23. As the crude price started to decrease from October 2022 onward, their finances became a shade better during the second half. For the whole year, they posted a meagre profit of Rs 850 crore. The capital infusion of Rs 30,000 crore proposed in the budget for 2023-24 was meant to help them offset the losses incurred in the previous year.

Just because during FY 2023-24, they have improved their profits due to continuing moderation in the price of crude oil, it won't be logical to trim the promised budgetary support. Moreover, they need some cushion to guard against crude prices moving north yet again; that possibility is not ruled out considering the continuing tense geo-political situation. For the same reason, the Government shouldn't defer bolstering the strategic buffer of crude oil.

In sync with its emphasis on 'predictability' and 'stability' of the policy, having deregulated petrol and diesel, the Government shouldn't interfere in the process of setting prices by the oil PSUs.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Is AI a game changer or a disruptor in the communication landscape?

Artificial Intelligence has introduced complex dilemmas, balancing data-driven insights with human ingenuity and profoundly impacting various sectors

The growing tentacles of AI have become a push factor for change, innovation and disruption in the borderless world that we live in today. AI tools, processes and its vast architecture have been billed as game changers, influencing a vast range of stakeholders including policy-makers, Governments, multi-lateral bodies, agencies and institutions, which are responsible for carving out the road ahead. The debate today hovers around whether AI has become a disruptor or a transformative catalyst leading to a new normal, which is unpredictable, tech-driven and bereft of the necessary human connection. It has disrupted the new normal driving the communication engagement matrix to a terrain that at



CHAITANYA K PRASAD

times is daunting, unpredictable, spontaneous and instant. In the given context, it is important to understand that AI has truly created layers of dilemma, a tug-of-war related to ideas, content, data analysis and the conflict between human minds and data-driven mindsets. We are in a situation perhaps where we over-depend on machines, their learning tools & predictability leading to an

ecosystem that is technology savvy, the behaviour of stakeholders being driven by data metrics and accompanying models and influenced by the power of prediction. The impact of AI has been profound in several areas, as the search for the unknown has grown bigger. A report on India's media and entertainment sector published by EY #Reinventin 2024 mentions that AI can provide an Rs 450 billion boost to the Indian M&E sector by 2027. The report also mentions AI and especially Gen AI - gives it the tools the sector has always dreamed of and can result in a 10 per cent revenue growth and 15 per cent cost efficiency. AI is now used for measuring the effectiveness of campaigns, the growth of cus-

tomised solutions for addressing issues, analysing data for data-driven narratives and stakeholder engagement and changing equations in the context of the client-agency relationship. There is a need to balance human competence with tech tools and the fear of the unknown in the future. For AI to succeed its performance indicators must be based on open, transparent and inclusive. Its tools are re-engineered to reflect the spirit of "Oneness", and "The World is One Family" and the social and economic impact is studied and analysed. As far as outreach is concerned, the need is to balance the technology push that characterises AI outlining its operational efficiency and the creative quotient of human

beings. As a tool for outreach AI supplements outreach with data-focused audience insights which provide practitioners with a feel of audience preferences and behaviours leading to focused and targeted communication strategies. The data processing of the medium also leads to a better and more comprehensive understanding of stakeholder demographics, dynamics, strategy protocols and audience behaviour. There is an urgent need to integrate the communication matrix with the broad themes to ensure a seamless operation of both verticals. AI being futuristic commands the means to create a positive perception of the AI architecture. Some of the themes to be discussed are AI and Machine

Learning in communication networks, AI-powered communication networks: Shaping a greener digital future and including other sectors such as health, environment and education. In all such discussions, the process of communicating the theme will be critical for both policymakers and practitioners. It is also critical that in the era of change, the continuity of technology is weaved with access that is open and democratic. The benefits of positive change must be beneficial to all through the principle of open sourcing; tools, processes, opportunities and community participation. There must be standard operating procedures and processes that ensure the standardisation of algorithms, address

the frailties of human behaviour and integrate the machine and human mind. Technological advancement is only possible if the gap is bridged between the haves and have-nots. AI as a tool for policy formulation and information dissemination should be based on the strong foundations of adaptability, cohesiveness, inclusivity, access and a proper understanding of the complex and diverse social ecosystem of which we are its key constituents. As the impact of AI grows across different terrains, the evolution has to be in sync with human abilities and the irreplaceable human trait that characterises outreach. To ensure a sustainable process, AI needs to follow the five mantras of outreach commu-

nication: Being Receptive, Responsive, Responsible and Reciprocal and Reconcile to the needs and requirements of an ecosystem that believes in equity, equal participation, mutual recognition and collaboration. The success of communication depends on the balance between perception, tools and trust i.e. positioned across different platforms and sectors. A model of this nature will certainly ensure a perfect symphony between AI and the communication landscape bringing forth an effective and lasting communication process.

(The writer is a former civil servant. Views are Personal. Inputs by Vaishnavie Srinivasan and Zoya Ahmad)

MONEY MATTERS

Sun Pharma posts net profit of Rs 2,654.58 cr in Jan-Mar quarter

Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd on Wednesday reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 2,654.58 crore in the fourth quarter ended on March 31, 2024. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 1,984.47 crore in the fourth quarter of the previous fiscal, Sun Pharmaceutical Industries said in a regulatory filing. Consolidated total revenue from operations in the fourth quarter was at Rs 11,982.9 crore in the quarter under review. It was at Rs 10,930.67 crore in the same quarter a year ago, it added. India formulation sales were at Rs 3,707.8 crore while US formulation sales were at US\$ 476 million (around Rs 3,964 crore) in the fourth quarter. Sun Pharma said the results for the quarter ended on December 31, 2023, and the quarter and the year ended on March 31, 2024, are not comparable with other periods due to the acquisition of 60 per cent shareholding in Vivaldis Health and Foods Pvt Ltd which was completed during the quarter ended June 30, 2023.



BHEL shares tank over 5% after earnings; mcap slumps Rs 6,023.97 cr

Shares of state-owned Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) on Wednesday tumbled over 5 per cent after the company reported an over 25 per cent decline in consolidated net profit in the March quarter. The stock declined 5.42 per cent to settle at Rs 301.90 on the BSE. During the day, it tanked 7.58 per cent to Rs 295. At the NSE, it slumped 5.26 per cent to Rs 302.40. The company's market capitalisation (mcap) declined Rs 6,023.97 crore to Rs 1,05,123.49 crore. In traded volume terms, 58.78 lakh shares of the company were traded on the BSE and 749.33 lakh shares at the NSE during the day. BHEL on Tuesday reported an over 25 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 489.62 crore in the March quarter, mainly due to higher expenses. Its consolidated net profit stood at Rs 658.02 crore in the quarter ended on March 31, 2023, according to a regulatory filing on Tuesday. Total expenses of the firm rose to Rs 7,794.11 crore in the quarter from Rs 7,411.64 crore in the same period a year ago.



Gold prices falls Rs 50; silver jumps Rs 600

Gold prices fell Rs 50 to Rs 74,600 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday amid fall in precious metal rates in overseas markets, according to HDFC Securities. The yellow metal had closed at Rs 74,650 per 10 grams in the previous session. However, silver prices jumped Rs 600 to Rs 95,100 per kg. It had settled at Rs 94,500 per kg in the previous session. In the global markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at US\$ 2,417 per ounce, down US\$ 3 from the previous close. "Gold fell further on Wednesday as investors evaluated recent statements from the US Federal Reserve officials that downplayed the timing of interest rate cuts. Traders are now closely monitoring US Fed's Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting minutes to be released later on Wednesday, as they could offer fresh perspectives on the US central bank's monetary policy trajectory," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. However, silver was trading higher at US\$ 31.75 per ounce.



'Sebi's new guidelines on market will help in fair pricing of M&A'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sebi's new guidelines for managing stock price impact arising from market rumours will ensure that the share price used in the merger and acquisition (M&A), buyback, and other transactions are not artificially influenced by speculative market activities, experts said on Wednesday. Market rumours pertaining to a company's business can create significant volatility in stock prices, often leading to transactions that don't reflect a company's true value. This market rumours could be related to anything, including exiting of top management, cancellation of an order and financial health. "Sebi's framework addresses this issue by establishing a



mechanism to determine the unaffected price -- the price of a stock before the rumour surfaced. "This price would be used for transactions unless the rumour itself caused price fluctuations in subsequent trading days," Trivesh, Chief Operating Officer of Tradejini, said. In its circular on Tuesday, Sebi outlined the framework for calculating the adjusted

Volume Weighted Average Price (VWAP) for considering unaffected prices in transactions. The guidelines also mandates that the adjusted VWAP be calculated by excluding the price variations attributable to the rumour, thereby reflecting the stock's value before the market reaction to the rumour. The aim is to exclude price disruption caused by rumours while determining the price for acquisition. Generally, unaffected price refers to the share price of a company in case there is no market rumour. Since sharp price movements could impact the overall value of a transaction, the regulator has suggested to consider a scrip's unaffected price. Under the Listing

Obligations and Disclosure Requirements (LODR) Regulations, unaffected prices shall be considered for transactions on which pricing norms specified by it or stock exchanges are applicable. This requirement is also subject to the rumour pertaining to such a transaction being confirmed by the company within 24 hours from the trigger of material price movement. This prompt confirmation helps in curbing prolonged speculation and provides clarity to investors, Deputy CEO of Anand Rathi Wealth Feroze Azeem said. The requirement to verify market rumours will be applicable to the top 100 listed companies from June 1 and top 250 listed entities from December 1. Azeem further said the core

Expect double-digit sales growth this fiscal: Benz



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mercedes-Benz India is eyeing double-digit sales growth this fiscal as demand remains strong, especially for high-end models, a senior company executive said on Wednesday. The company, which on Wednesday introduced luxury models -- Maybach GLS 600 4MATIC SUV and AMG S 63 E Performance Edition 1 on Wednesday, had sold 18,123 units last fiscal. It was a growth of 10 per cent over 16,497 units sold in 2022-23.

Benefits from 38 critical blocks put on sale unlikely to accrue soon: ICRA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

ICra on Wednesday said that benefits from the 38 critical mineral blocks that have been put on sale are not likely to accrue in the current decade ending 2030 as the mines are not fully explored. "The preliminary stage of exploration for most of the domestic blocks that are currently being auctioned suggests that their commercialisation and associated benefits are unlikely to fully accrue in the current decade ending 2030. Therefore, India's downstream manufacturing facilities are likely to remain exposed to potential future supply shocks of critical minerals in the

intervening years," ICra said in a statement. The government is auctioning two lithium blocks in the ongoing auctions. The one in Jammu & Kashmir has

been named lepidolite. The other in Jammu & Kashmir has been named lepidolite. The one in Jammu & Kashmir has been named lepidolite. The other in Jammu & Kashmir has been named lepidolite.



clay deposits. While the technology for extracting lithium from hard rock and brine deposits has matured, the same for extracting lithium from clay deposits remains

untested globally. Given these challenges, the J&K lithium block received less than three bids, resulting in a re-auction of the block, Grishankar Kadam, Senior Vice-President & Group Head, Corporate Sector Ratings, ICra said. On the other hand, the lithium block being auctioned in Katghora, Chhattisgarh is a hard rock deposit. The ore here belongs to a broader class of lithium-bearing minerals named lepidolite. China is a large producer of lithium from lepidolite ores. Therefore, competition to acquire the Katghora mine is likely to be much higher compared to the J&K block.

National Health Claim Exchange likely to be operational soon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Health Claim Exchange (NHCC) is likely to be launched in the next two-three months, official sources said on Wednesday. The NHCC is a digital health claims platform developed by the National Health Authority (NHA) to ensure interoperability and faster processing of health insurance claims.



The National Health Authority (NHA) and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) last year joined hands to operationalise the NHCC.

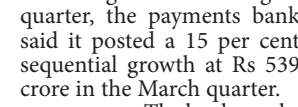
The Irdai, through a circular in June 2023, had advised all insurers and providers to onboard the NHCC. Insurance companies have separate portals, making it cumbersome and time-consuming for hospitals, patients, and other stakeholders to process health insurance claims. "The NHCC is ready and is likely to be launched in the next two-three months.

Airtel Payments Bank's FY24 profit surges 60% to Rs 34.5 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Airtel Payments Bank on Wednesday reported a 60 per cent year-on-year surge in its profit at Rs 34.5 crore in FY24. Revenue for the fiscal saw a 42 per cent increase to Rs 1,836 crore, according to a company statement. "As we witness sustained demand for our digital offerings and accelerate customer acquisitions, we remain steadfast in our mission to empower every Indian with safe, simple and rewarding digital banking services," Anubrata Biswas, MD and

CEO of Airtel Payments Bank, said. Calling it the strongest quarter, the payments bank said it posted a 15 per cent sequential growth at Rs 539 crore in the March quarter.



The bank, a subsidiary of telecom major Bharti Airtel, said it witnessed significant momentum in savings account acquisitions in Q4FY24 and now onboards over a million new customers monthly. Its monthly transacting users (MTU) grew to 80.4 million, and its gross merchandise value (GMV) reached Rs 2,550 billion.

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex advanced 267 points while Nifty closed higher for the fifth day in a row on Wednesday amid buying in bluechips Reliance Industries and Infosys amid mixed cues from global markets. The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 267.75 points or 0.36 per cent to settle at 74,221.06. During the day, it jumped 354.48 points or 0.47 per cent to 74,307.79. Extending gains to the fifth day in a row, the NSE Nifty rose by 68.75 points or 0.31 per cent to finish at 22,597.80. FMCG and realty shares supported the uptrend while banking and metal shares declined. "Despite mixed global mar-

ket sentiments ahead of the US Fed minutes, Indian markets exhibited a subtle positive trend. Investors are optimistic about stable Q4 earnings and easing election jitters that had previously increased



volatility. "Interest in the FMCG sector has risen due to the potential for an early onset of monsoon. Nevertheless, markets may underperform in the short term as they wait for the election outcome, with FIIs staying on the sidelines,"

Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said. Among the Sensex firms, Hindustan Unilever, Reliance Industries, Infosys, Asian Paints, ITC and UltraTech Cement were the major gainers. State Bank of India, JSW Steel, Axis Bank, ICICI Bank, Tata Steel and Tata Motors were among the laggards. "Nifty ended a range-bound session in the positive. Nifty settled higher for the fifth consecutive session and recorded its longest winning streak since April 25," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities. In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.18 per cent while midcap index dipped 0.05 per cent.

Market cap of BSE-listed firms hit US\$ 5-trillion milestone at close

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The combined market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies hit the historic US\$ 5-trillion mark for the first time at the close of trade on Wednesday amid an optimistic trend in equities. The 30-share Sensex climbed 267.75 points or 0.36 per cent to settle at 74,221.06. During the day, it advanced 354.48 points or 0.47 per cent to 74,307.79. At the close of trade, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies stood at Rs

4,15,94,033.72 crore (US\$ 5 trillion) -- its all-time high. Investor wealth rose for the ninth straight trading session



on Wednesday. Investors gained Rs 22.59 lakh crore on Wednesday. "Despite weak global cues,

markets moved in a range and were positive for most part of the trading session aided by selective buying in IT, FMCG and realty stocks," said Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd. The combined market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies hit the US\$ 5-trillion milestone for the first time in intra-day trade on Tuesday. At the close of trade, the total valuation of the exchange-listed companies stood at Rs 4,14,62,306.56 crore (US\$ 4.97 trillion), the BSE data showed.

Organised jewellery retailers likely to witness 17-19% growth

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Organised gold jewellery retailers are expected to clock 17-19 per cent year-on-year revenue growth in 2024-25, driven by higher realisations following a surge in gold prices, while volume is likely to remain steady, a report said on Wednesday. The revenue of organised gold jewellers is expected to rise 17-19 per cent this fiscal, while volume growth is likely to stagnate due to rising gold

prices, Crisil Ratings said in a report. The report further stated that the working capital requirements of retailers might increase due to higher inventory levels resulting from the substantial rise in gold prices and new store additions. However, credit profiles should remain stable, it added. The organised sector accounts for slightly more than a third of the market, with the highly fragmented unorgan-



ised sector making up the rest, it noted. Domestic gold price increased 15 per cent during FY24 and reached Rs 67,000 per

10 grams at the end of March 2024, Crisil Ratings said. Gold prices inched up to about Rs 73,000 in April 2024,

as gold kept its shine as one of the safer investment options seen by various central banks across the world as well as end consumers amid geopolitical uncertainties. "Apart from ramping up branding and marketing expenditure, retailers are likely to offer higher discounts to buyers even as they continue to expand product designs and offerings in a bid to attract customers amidst higher gold prices.

Karur Vysya Bank to open 100 new branches

PNS ■ CHENNAI

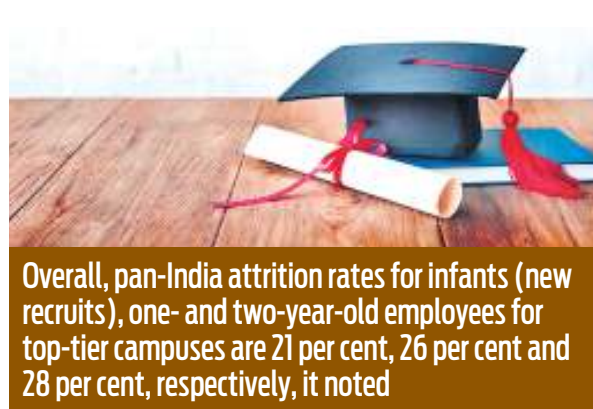
Private sector Karur Vysya Bank has set a target of opening 100 new branches during the current financial year across the country, a top official said on Wednesday. The Tamil Nadu-based bank's 840th branch in Ayodhya was inaugurated by the bank's Chairperson Meena Hemchandra. Karur Vysya Bank Managing Director and CEO B Ramesh Babu said the bank had opened 39 branches during the current financial year and proposes to add about 100 new branches across the coun-

try during the period. In a statement, here, Babu said the bank recorded the highest-ever annual net profit of Rs 1,605 crore in the last financial year while the net Non-Performing Assets (NPA) were at 0.40 per cent as on March 31, 2024. "The bank continues its strong growth momentum, consistency in asset quality and profitability," he said. Babu along with Directors of the Bank Sarvashri K S Ravichandran, R Ramkumar and K G Mohan were present at the inauguration of the new branch in Uttar Pradesh, which is also the 35th branch in Delhi division, the statement added.

Attrition rates continue to remain high for MBA graduates: Study

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Attrition rates continue to remain an area of concern among MBA graduates, especially among the entry-level jobs for top-tier campuses, a study said on Wednesday. Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP (Deloitte India) latest campus workforce trends 2024 study revealed that attrition remained a significant challenge, especially among MBA graduates. Overall, pan-India attrition rates for infants (new recruits), one- and two-year-old employees for top-tier campuses are 21 per cent, 26 per cent and 28 per cent, respectively, it noted. However, these rates are slightly lower for tier II and III campuses at 19 per cent, 21 per cent and 25 per cent, respec-



Overall, pan-India attrition rates for infants (new recruits), one- and two-year-old employees for top-tier campuses are 21 per cent, 26 per cent and 28 per cent, respectively, it noted

executives favour decisions on hiring, pay, promotions, among others, based on skills over job history or network, citing reduced bias and improved fairness, he said. "Thus, there is a need for educational institutions to equip students with the multi-faceted skills to succeed in the digital age," he added. Despite higher attrition rates, 70 per cent of organisations actively seek MBA graduates, reflecting their importance in business success and a 5.2 per cent CAGR in compensation over five years. Meanwhile, the study found that the year-on-year compensation has declined for the first time in five years across tiers of MBA talent and in the top 10 tiers for M.Tech and B.Tech.

RBI approves highest-ever dividend of Rs 2.11 L cr to govt

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India will pay a record Rs 2.11 lakh crore dividend to the government for the fiscal ended March 31, more than double of what was budgeted expectation, helping shore up revenue ahead of a new government taking office. The RBI board, at its meeting on Wednesday, approved the transfer of surplus, the central bank said in a statement. The government had budgeted a receipt of Rs 1.02 lakh crore as dividends from the RBI, public sector banks and financial institutions in the interim budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 (April 2024 to March 2025) presented in February this year.

The dividend or surplus transfer by the RBI to the Centre was Rs 87,416 crore for the fiscal 2022-23. The previous high was Rs 1.76 lakh crore in 2018-19. The decision on the dividend payout was taken at the 608th meeting of the Central Board of Directors of the Reserve Bank of India held under the chairmanship of Governor Shaktikanta Das. "The Board... approved the transfer of Rs 2,10,874 crore as surplus to the Central Government for the accounting year 2023-24," the RBI said in a statement. The central government aims to contain the fiscal deficit or gap between expenditure and revenue to Rs 17.34 lakh crore (5.1 per cent of the GDP) during the current financial year.

CLOSING THE GAPS IN CIRCULARITY AND SOLVING PLANET'S WASTE CRISIS!

A forward-thinking environmental organisation dedicated to driving positive change is OneEarth Foundation, focusing on promoting sustainability and combating environmental challenges. This week, *The Pioneer* hears from the founder as we discuss their mission!

SHIKHA DUGGAL

To contribute to a cleaner world, the OneEarth Foundation delivered study tables and benches manufactured from separated low-value plastic garbage gathered during the 30-day anti-plastic pollution campaign to an underprivileged school in a slum.

The program, which aimed to prevent plastic pollution and promote sustainable practices, raised awareness among over 1300 people and students, collected 1.4 tons of trash, held 59 seminars and clean-up drives, and paddled 120 kilometers along the Goa shoreline.

This effort is more than just a symbolic gesture; it symbolises the OneEarth Foundation's core ideals, which are based on circular economy techniques. It believes in closing the loop by managing garbage in a sustainable manner, which will contribute to a more ecologically conscious society.

This "more ecologically conscious society" prompted us to do an exclusive community wise column with the foundation, in which we hear from founder Ferdin Sylvester: "Our mission is to protect India's coastal ecosystems, specifically targeting marine plastic pollution and preserving the mangrove ecosystem and beyond. We empower communities, educate kids across the country, and promote equitable access to climate and related education for government and socially disadvantaged pupils."

The foundation advocates a circular economy model that reduces waste and improves resource efficiency through concepts such as reduce, reuse, repair, and recycle. They focus on programs aimed at effectively managing ocean-bound plastic garbage. They bridge the gap with the circular model, repurposing waste as valuable resources rather than disposing of it in landfills or the ocean! They also use new techniques to turn low-

value plastics into usable items, which promotes environmental sustainability and drives systemic change.

"Recognising the importance of mangrove ecosystems, we work with local people of southwestern coast to expand mangrove plantations and preserve existing mangroves. Our strategy focuses on empowering communities, particularly women, through awareness programs on the socio-economic benefits of mangrove agriculture. The charity places a high priority on climate education and awareness. Our IEC projects serve as change agents, raising awareness and encouraging action toward more sustainable living. The foundation lobbies for policy reforms and climate-friendly policies at the local, national, and international levels, participating in programs such as the Rural WASH program under SBM-G 2.0 and JJM 2.0," adds the founder.

They conducted various investigations on rivers and estuaries, including extensive mapping, baseline surveys, categorisation and characterisation studies, to discover data weaknesses such as plastic trash, mangrove diversity, and biodiversity. They use cutting-edge technologies such as arcGIS and satellite imagery in their research, as well as conducting in-depth analyses of published papers and reports from reputable organisations!

The founder goes on, "In the face of an unsustainable environment created by human acts, we must go deeper and accelerate efforts both personally and systematically. The behaviour change and information, education, and communication awareness are critical components of our activities. We prioritise disseminating good narratives through a variety of channels. Combating disinformation is critical in an information-rich age, especially in the environmental and sustainability realms. Our work on the 16 ways waste segregation initiatives demonstrate the power of community action and individual responsibility in environmental management. Segregation at the source is critical to reducing trash mishandling, increasing recycling, and lowering government costs for refuse-derived fuel."



Accolades, prizes, and recognition are more than just achievements; they demonstrate their enthusiasm and commitment for the founder. As a youthful and enthusiastic group, their mission is to safeguard coastal ecosystems and communities while building sustainable cities through circular waste management systems, mangrove restoration, and empowering youngsters to take positive climate action. Their case study, "Mitigating Plastic Waste in Coastal Ecosystems Through Education and Circular Economy Innovation," was recognised and featured in the India Sanitation Coalition's flagship publication, Business of Change Series 2023!

Furthermore, "being recognised by leading corporations, funding organisations, think tanks, and mentors is extremely rewarding. It confirms that we are on the right track and strengthens our reputation in the eyes of stakeholders, partners, and supporters worldwide. This increased visibility not only allows us to reach a larger audience, but it also reinforces our message of environmental protection and sustainability. Building on recent triumphs, such as our anti-plastic pollution campaign, we intend to expand these efforts beyond coastal waters to include streams, backwaters, and land areas."



Kritika prefers substantive roles, regardless of platform

SUBODHINI PUROHIT

Kritika Bharadwaj has received recognition for her remarkable performances in *Mismatched*, *Yodha*, and *Rashmi Rocket*. Her interest in theatre grew over her undergraduate years, and she made the daring decision to pursue acting as a career in her second year. Everything changed when she got the attention of a prominent casting director, who was blown away by her talent. She begins, "This opportunity brought me to Mumbai, where I began an incredible journey in acting. This experience offered me significant information about auditions, scripts, director preferences, and acting skills. Every day has been an exciting adventure as I hone my abilities and expand my knowledge of the profession. Despite the obstacles, I am confident that I am intended to be an actor."

Having last seen in *Yodha*, she indicated that she had little time to prepare for her role. She explains, "I actually began shooting for *Yodha* just three days after finishing *Mismatched* Season 2. Fortunately, my director helped me understand the technical requirements of playing a pilot, and filming the sequences in a chronological order made things easier."

The set had a calm environment, and despite her early fears, the entire experience went surprisingly well. *Yodha* contained numerous dramatic action sequences;

therefore, her character had few action scenes in the film. She says, "I focused on getting the technical things right without appearing false. Sagar walked me through the details of the final scenario. During action sequences, all I had to do was try to act naturally while others engaged in fierce fighting."

She prioritises projects based on whether she would like to watch them personally. She prefers substantive roles, regardless of platform or scale, as long as the character has depth and meaning.

For example, "When I was offered the opportunity to work on *Mismatched*, I had no idea it would become such a popular Netflix show, but being a part of it was a huge thing. When the filmmaker approached me about *Rashmi Rocket*, I didn't hesitate, especially given his talent. Similarly, *Yodha* came from auditions. Even after *Mismatched*, I've turned down projects whose scripts

Urdu, thanks to my upbringing in Lucknow. It's a solid foundation that has helped me advance my career in the Hindi film industry."

However, she has yet to play a role that is related to her heritage. She emphasises, "While I've often been cast in these hoity characters, I'm eager to explore roles that showcase different facets of my talent."

Working on the set of *Mismatched* for her is like going to a never-ending party. It has been an extremely rewarding experience, one of the most wholesome of her life. She says, "From the start, there was genuine camaraderie among us, and it felt like we had suddenly become a

close-knit family. It's unusual to discover such a pleasant dynamic among a group of people, especially when they're all the same age. Fortunately, we clicked right away, which made the entire event enjoyable." Even when they weren't shooting, they found themselves missing the set terribly.

Mismatched's first two seasons got excellent appreciation from both fans and critics. She gave some light on the process of portraying a character who is always evolving, especially during production breaks. "Akarsh is recognised for his extraordinary casting abilities. He has an uncanny capacity to spot the correct individual for a given character almost immediately. When I auditioned for the role of Simran, he only wanted to meet me and see whether I was a good fit for the character. He casts with incredible precision. Even though Simran isn't the nicest person in *Season 1*, I found it easy to play her. This doesn't imply I'm a bad person; there's just something about her demeanour that appealed to me as an actress."

Aside from *Mismatched* and *Yodha*, she is looking into other opportunities. She explains, "I'm actively engaging with industry professionals, reading scripts, and auditioning. While there is nothing specific to report at this time, I will surely announce any developments when the time is right."

Actress Kritika Bharadwaj has become a known face since her stint in *Mismatched*, for all the obvious reasons. Without sharing much detail about the upcoming season, she does get candid with *The Pioneer* about the *Mismatched* franchise and working on the sets.



THE WORLD'S FIRST ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TREATMENT FOR AUTISM

Autism, a developmental disease recognised over a century ago, has long posed challenges to families and societies around the world. This illness has had an impact on the lives of thousands of innocent children over the past 133 years. Every parent has an unwavering hope that their children will prosper, regardless of the hardships.

Pinnacle Blooms Network® uses Pinnacle Therapeutic AI™ to help children and families with autism achieve self-sufficiency, integrate into society, and live fulfilling lives.

For countless moms, fathers, and families afflicted by autism, this hope has a champion! With the world's first artificial intelligence engine treating autism, Dr. Sreeja Reddy Saripalli, mother, chief strategist, and CEO, leads this groundbreaking organisation on a mission to transform the lives of 90 crore children and families affected by autism through innovative therapies and cutting-edge technology.

Dr. Sreeja's team just got the prestigious honour of being the top autism therapy center network. We also had some fascinating chats with them regarding the current and future of autism for children, parents, families around the world, business, and other topics. Here are some snippets from the conversation!

When asked about the accolade, Dr. Sreeja was full of admiration for her staff. "Receiving the coveted award is more than just an honour; it demonstrates our deep devotion to helping children and families affected by autism globally. This honour confirms all our energy and strengthens our resolve to continue leading innovative advancements in therapy, technology, and care."

The attempt is motivated by a deep desire to empower nearly 90 crore children, parents, and families worldwide. Their willpower to #CoreSuccessfulLives has a global impact, fostering excellence, inclusion, and innovation. This accolade inspires the team to pursue their future goals with renewed enthusiasm and purpose! The doc goes on to say, "With over 160 patentable breakthroughs, systems, technologies, and methods, we have established new standards in autism therapy. Among these, it stands out as a huge step forward. As the world's first artificial intelligence engine built to treat autism across 400 distinct dimensions of child development, it represents a watershed moment in customised and successful healthcare. This technique combines more than a century of autism studies and has already resulted in 10.3 million successful therapies in 60 countries."

Its unique feature is its holistic approach to therapy, which is based on a trinity of fundamental components: teams of certified professionals, a data-driven methodology, and persistent innovation. This combination fosters a loving environment, resulting in significant improvements and mainstream societal integration for those with autism.

"The global impact extends to almost 60 countries. We take satisfaction in making a meaningful difference in the lives of millions of people, allowing them to live regular lives. Their allegiance to diversity guarantees that all services are available, regardless of their financial situation. It has accumulated over 1 crore successful therapies, including speech, ABA, occupational, and special education therapies, with a 97% improvement rate," added the successful doctor who is leading the organisation! While several projects aim for similar goals, it stands out for its AI-powered approach to therapy. Their focus is on empowering individuals to lead self-sufficient lifestyles, with the objective of reaching 90 million children and families worldwide. This aim motivates them to scale their technologies.

Looking forward, "We intend to extend to include further aspects of child development. Future plans include opening new facilities throughout the world to address marginalised areas and investing in ongoing research to advance the field of autism treatment. Our wholeheartedness to inclusivity extends to the introduction of a first-of-its-kind OTT platform that provides high-quality self-therapeutic services to children and families globally."

Every mother, father, and family see it as a light of hope. They encourage readers to trust in everyone's potential, welcome innovative thinking, and prioritise equality and accessibility. "Together, we can create a world where every child and family affected by autism can thrive and lead wonderful, self-sufficient lives as integral members of mainstream society." Because, for the first time in the 133-year history of autism therapy, it launched Pinnacle S.O.U.L., which captures every second of your child's golden age and makes the entire world work for your child's self-sufficient, mainstream, and delightful existence. "It assesses your child's developmental milestones, delays, current conditions, behaviours, and tantrums from birth to the present day and, using 133 years of autism research, develops a scientific, exclusive early intervention program and therapy goals suited to your child's specific requirements. The success of giving over 1 crore therapies with a 97% improvement rate demonstrates the usefulness of this strategy," is what information we acquired from the founder.

It's more than just a therapeutic clinic; it's a holy movement for empowerment. Each therapist is equipped with the information and instruments necessary to provide the greatest therapy possible, similar to offering prayers in sacred sites where their potency is multiplied by the location's cosmic force. This equates to the Therapist + God + the Entire World + #1CroreLivesSuccess, resulting in an atmosphere in which your child can grow! The holistic approach incorporates the use of technology to customise therapy programs. This powerful AI, similar to the Google or Amazon of autism therapy, understands exactly what therapy materials to utilise, what strategies to employ, and the best time frames, repetitions, and sequences for your child's age and gender. This means that every moment is used to prepare your child for a self-sufficient, mainstream, and beautiful life.



what's brewing?

Jagadeshwari

Richi Dastani

Learnorama Technologies Pvt. Ltd. conducted the Tech Generation Summer Camp at GD Goenka School in Hyderabad. The camp catered to primary and high school students, offering activities ranging from chess and dance to artificial intelligence and coding. Notably, high school students created business and service websites, with some launching an e-commerce site.

Photos by - SV Chary

Muta Gopal

Ateeq Siddiqui and Mumtaz

Dilawar Patel

Farooq Hussain

Tareq Ansari

Mohd Feroz

Several notable personalities attended the reception ceremony of Shaik Ahmed, son of businessman Shaik Mohammed, as he tied the knot with the daughter of Mohammed Ansar Ali, held at the King's Crown Convention in Gudimalkapur, Mehdiapatnam.

Ecolink launches new power-packed fans

In line with the customer demands for the summer season, Signify, announced the launch of its new revolutionary range of energy-efficient fans. The innovative product line combines advanced technology with superior performance, offering consumers a breath of fresh air in any space. Starting at a price range of Rs 3000 to Rs 5500, the product line includes five new innovative models - AiroGeometry, AiroJewel, AiroZephyr, AiroSerenade and AiroSleek all designed to provide superior air delivery, efficient performance, and significant energy savings. The uniquely designed product range operates on advanced technology ensuring high energy efficiency and low power consumption. Equipped with aluminum blades and copper winding heavy duty motors, these fans guarantee durability and high performance. The high-speed fans with 370RPM are designed for superior air delivery.

Hyperleap AI launches generative AI platform

Hyperleap AI, a Hyderabad-based new age Generative AI (GenAI) startup, has launched India's first enterprise-ready end-to-end Generative AI platform. With the growing demand for AI platform solutions, this disruptive platform is well-timed to revolutionise how businesses integrate and leverage AI to become "AI-Powered". Hyperleap AI bridges the gap between the potential of AI and its practical implementation in real-world business scenarios, offering fastest time to market, enhanced ROI (Return on Investment). Speaking of the launch, founder Gopi Krishna believes that businesses and technologists alike are making GenAI unnecessarily too complex, and it is his personal mission to "Make AI simple and accessible"

MBU attains Diamond Rating in QS I-GAUGE Indian Universities rating

Mohan Babu University (MBU), established in 1992 under the visionary guidance of Padma Shri Dr. M. Mohan Babu stands proudly among the distinguished institutions recognised by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), the world's largest global higher education network, for its exceptional performance across nine domains. QS I-GAUGE has accorded MBU the prestigious diamond status in the overall category, propelling it to the ranks of esteemed educational institutions. This acknowledgement by QS I-GAUGE underscores MBU's leadership in higher education and reaffirms its unwavering commitment to excellence.

LISTENINGS

MATTER honoured with Clarivate South Asia Innovation Award 2024

MATTER, a pioneering force in India's Electric mobility and energy landscape, announced winning the Clarivate South Asia Innovation Awards 2024 in the Automotive category, solidifying its position as an emerging player. This esteemed accolade, conferred by Clarivate, a global leader in providing trusted insights and analytics, celebrates MATTER's relentless commitment to innovation and technological excellence in the realm of clean energy and mobility solutions. At MATTER, innovation is not just a goal; it's a way of life. With a steadfast focus on revolutionizing India's energy landscape, MATTER stands at the forefront of developing cutting-edge future mobility products and advanced energy storage solutions. Operating through two key segments - MATTER Mobility and MATTER Energy - the company is committed to reducing carbon footprints, enhancing energy efficiency, and empowering individuals to contribute meaningfully to a greener, more sustainable world.

BAFTA breakthrough India returns for a 4th year

BAFTA is back with its Breakthrough programme for a fourth year in India, in partnership with Netflix. BAFTA Breakthrough India identifies and celebrates the next generation of talented professionals in the films, games, and television industries across the country. This year also marks the second time the BAFTA Breakthrough programme opens applications simultaneously in India, the US and UK regions. BAFTA, through its mentorship and talent programme, has guided several creative individuals in the pursuit of their craft by curating an all-encompassing programme that helps breakthroughs address the barriers in their respective fields of work, sharpening their skills, and assisting them to create international networks that will accelerate their careers. Applications for BAFTA Breakthrough India 2024 are open now. To learn more about the programme, eligibility criteria, and how to apply, please visit <https://www.bafta.org/supporting-talent/breakthrough/bafta-breakthrough-india>.

JioCinema announces official trailer of House of the Dragon S2

The bloodbath is all set to begin! JioCinema has announced the official trailer of the global hit HBO series *House of the Dragon S2*. Streaming exclusively on JioCinema Premium, *House of the Dragon S2* will be available in English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Bengali, and Marathi, starting June 17th, with episodes dropping weekly every Monday, along with the US. Based on George R.R. Martin's "Fire & Blood," the series tells the story of House Targaryen, following the tumultuous power struggles within the noble family as they navigate political intrigue, familial rivalries, and the looming threat of civil war in their quest to reclaim the Iron Throne. Set in a world of dragons and dynasties, the series explores the complex dynamics of ambition, loyalty, and betrayal as key figures vie for control over the Seven Kingdoms.

FUN

ARCHIE

I ORDERED THAT SERVICE FROM THE PHONE COMPANY THAT BLOCKS OUT ALL THOSE UNWANTED SALES CALLS!

THAT'S GREAT! ARCHIE WAS ALWAYS HAVING TROUBLE GETTING THROUGH BECAUSE OF THOSE!

HENRY BASKFELL CAME BOLDMAN 7-8

CANCEL!

CALVIN AND HOBBS

OK, LET'S TEST THIS TRANSMOGRIFIER GUN.

I WANT TO BE A PTERODACTYL, SO YOU THINK OF ONE AND POINT THE TRANSMOGRIFIER AT ME.

THIS WILL BE GREAT. I'LL TERRORIZE THE NEIGHBORHOOD AWHILE AND THEN YOU CAN TRANSMOGRIFY ME BACK TO A BOY WHEN THE NATIONAL GUARD COMES.

WHAT'S A PTERODACTYL? SOME KIND OF BUG?

NO NO! IT'S A BIG FLYING DINOSAUR! DON'T SHOOT IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS!?

GARFIELD

I CALL IT "EVOLUTION OF SNOWMAN"

REALITY CHECK

OFF-TRACK BETTING: MY PREDICTION IS SHE'LL BE COMIN' AROUND THE MOUNTAIN WHEN SHE COMES.

I'LL DO YOU ONE BETTER! I BET SHE'LL BE RIDIN' SIX WHITE HORSES WHEN SHE COMES!

LET TAKE "THE BET!"

SPEED BUMP

BOB?

FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

CROSSWORD

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

NANCY

LES AND MORE FIND PHIL IN MR GOWER'S DINER... AND TELL PHIL IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS THAT IT'S TIME THAT HE AND AUNT FRITZ! FINALLY TIE THE KNOT!

BUT YOU KNOW I LOVE HER AND WANT TO ASK HER!

THEN WHY HAVE YOU BEEN MOVIN' LIKE WALTER BRENNAN IN SUPER SLO-MO!

I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR EVERYTHING TO BE PERFECT! ME WITH THE PERFECT FINANCES, THE PERFECT TIME!

AIN'T NO MAN THAT CAN MAKE A PERFECT ANYTHING! ONLY GOD CAN DO THAT!

BUT, IF YOU LOSE HER... WE'LL KNOW GOD MADE YOU THE PERFECT FOOL!

SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

- Strong hairs sticking out from a cat's face
- A sour citrus fruit
- A room on a ship
- People who get coal or metal ore from underground
- A joint between two ropes
- Midday
- Cardboard box
- The brother of your father or mother
- A soldier's bravery award
- Things that belong to someone

DOWN

- Adult females
- Take no notice of
- Strike with the foot
- A red-breasted bird
- A light metal
- Immediately
- Someone who grows crops or raises animals
- Happen
- A soft toy bear
- Jump over

SOLUTION

D	I	N	O	S	A	U	G	H
I	A	C	S	A	P	E		
G	E	S	K	E	V			
U	N	D	E	R	L	E	A	V
I	N	S	T	R				
S	H	O	E	S				
D	I	V	E	M	M	G	E	R
F	I	N	D					
K	S	T	U	D	O	R	N	



'MY PERFORMANCE WILL BE MORE MATURE IN LOVE ME..'

RAMYA SREE

Prepare to be spellbound as *Love Me If You Dare* gears up to weave its tale of love, mystery, and the supernatural on the silver screen, set for release on May 25. With its unique blend of horror and romance, the film has already captured the imagination of audiences, having cleared the censor board with a U/A certification.

Directed by novelist-turned-filmmaker Arun Bhimavarapu and produced by Dil Raju Productions, the film stars Ashish and Vaishnavi Chaitanya in lead roles, promising a cinematic experience unlike any other.

Ahead of the much-anticipated release, Ashish, known for his acclaimed performance in *Rowdy Boys*, shares insights into his character and the making of the film.

In an exclusive interview, Ashish delves into the intricacies of his role, stating, "My character represents a dark theme. My character is such that I will do all the work that I am told not to. I am a YouTuber in this film. No one can judge what my character does or thinks."

Reflecting on the preparation process, Ashish highlights the importance of workshops and discussions with director Arun, stating, "I spent more time with my director, who explains the character very well. We did workshops, which helped me a lot. I give a much more mature performance in this movie."

Speaking about the film's unique premise, Ashish shares, "I have a duet song with the ghost in the movie. I found the story very different; the romance and love track with a ghost are very different."

Ashish also sheds light on the film's production journey, stating, "MM

Keeravani sir immediately okayed the film. We shot for 15 days to see if we could implement what we wanted, and it came out well, so we proceeded further." As for the character dynamics, Ashish reveals, "This is a love story. Mine is a carefree character. Ghost is also a character in this movie."

Moreover, Ashish confessed that he is a big fan of Allu Arjun, Dulquer Salman, and Dhanush and wants to do films that are both commercial and content-oriented.

Dispelling misconceptions, Ashish clarifies, "Many thought Vaishnavi was a ghost in this movie. She is not. The audience will be surprised to know the other characters in the film." With legendary cinematographer PC Sreeram on board, Ashish expresses gratitude, stating, "The film has a legendary cameraman, PC Sreeram, and receiving compliments for him gave me more confidence."

Looking ahead, Ashish teases, "There are a lot of emotions and pain in this movie. There are many twists and turns. Our way of approaching it is also different." In closing, Ashish emphasises the importance of theatrical experiences, stating, "We are living in the OTT era, but I believe the impact you get in theaters will not be getting at OTT. This movie will give a visual experience; that's why I want the audience to watch the movie in theatres."

With promises of surprises and twists in store, *Love Me If You Dare* emerges as a must-watch for cinephiles seeking an immersive and exhilarating cinematic journey.



Adah Sharma's C.D (Criminal Or Devil) clears censor

Renowned for her captivating performances, Adah Sharma has garnered nationwide acclaim with her roles in critically acclaimed films such as *The Kerala Story* and *Bastar*. Now, she ventures into the realm of Telugu cinema with *C.D. (Criminal Or Devil)*, a psychological horror thriller set to enthrall audiences with its chilling narrative.

Directed by Krishna Annam and produced by SSCM Productions, *C.D. (Criminal Or Devil)* features Viswanth in the male lead role, promising a cinematic journey filled with suspense and intrigue. With a growing demand for films spanning genres like horror and thriller, anticipation for *C.D. (Criminal Or Devil)* has soared, fuelled by its intriguing

concept and captivating promotional materials.

Following the completion of censorship formalities, the film has received a U/A certificate, clearing the path for its highly anticipated theatrical release on May 24th. The positive feedback from censor officials has only intensified the excitement surrounding the film's impending debut.

In addition to Adah Sharma and Viswanth's stellar performances, *C.D. (Criminal Or Devil)* boasts a talented ensemble cast, including Jabardasth Rohini, Bharani Shankar, Ramana Bhargav, and Mahesh Vitta, who bring depth and authenticity to their roles. With A. Muddu

Krishna crafting gripping dialogues and Satya Giduthuri overseeing the meticulous editing, the film promises to deliver a seamless blend of storytelling and technical prowess.

As the release date approaches, *C.D. (Criminal Or Devil)* emerges as a cinematic treat for audiences craving a thrilling and immersive experience. With its spine-tingling premise and talented cast, the film is poised to captivate viewers and leave them on the edge of their seats.



Doing a film soon with Anushka, Vijayashanthi: Producer SK Basheed

Producer SK Basheed is confident of his win as an MP candidate in Rajampet with a heavy majority. He started his journey as a producer with the 2007 Telugu film *Allare Allari*, starring Allari Naresh and Venu as heroes. He told the media in the Hyderabad Film Chamber that he has come into politics to serve the people but has faced many obstacles.

Speaking there, he mentioned, "I came into the film industry as a producer with the film *Allare Allari*. Now I am venturing into business as well as producing. Recently, I met director Suresh Krishna. He is directing a movie with Anushka and Vijayashanthi in the lead roles. We have not finalised any more details with them yet. We are going to distribute this film."



KAVIN08 CONFIRMED: Nayanthara to star in Vishnu Edavan's next directorial

Excitement is brewing in the film industry as actor Kavin gears up for his next project after the success of *#Mask*. The talented actor has been confirmed to star in an upcoming film, tentatively titled *Kavin08*, under the direction of Vishnu Edavan, known for his lyrical contributions to hit films like *LEO*, *DaDa*, and *Devara*. Adding to the anticipation, the film will feature the powerhouse performer Nayanthara in the lead role, marking a significant collaboration between two acclaimed talents of the industry. This casting coup has already set expectations high among fans and movie buffs.

Behind the scenes, the project is backed by the reputed production house 7 Screen Studio, renowned for delivering blockbuster hits like *Master*, *KVRK*, *Cobra*, and *LICFilm*. With a track record of delivering quality entertainment, the studio's involvement further raises anticipation for *Kavin08*.

As details continue to unfold, fans eagerly await further updates on the film's storyline, cast, and release date. With an ensemble of talented individuals coming together, *Kavin08* promises to be an enthralling cinematic experience for audiences.

Kamal Haasan's insightful perspective: "GOOD THINGS TAKE TIME"

In response to queries regarding the prolonged duration between the release of his iconic film *Indian* and its sequel, renowned actor Kamal Haasan offered a thought-provoking insight, drawing parallels from India's cricketing history. He aptly compared the delay to the gap between India's first and second cricket World Cup victories, succinctly asserting, "Good things take time." This analogy resonated deeply,

emphasising the significance of patience and persistence in attaining significant milestones. Haasan's profound observation struck a chord with many, underscoring the notion that meaningful achievements often require dedication and endurance. By referencing India's cricketing journey, the actor underscored the value of resilience and drew parallels between two of India's biggest passions, cinema and cricket, both of which require immense skill and a lot of blood and sweat in order to achieve excellence.



Meanwhile, *Indian 2*, will be released in theatres on July 12. The producers released the first song from the film *Paaraa* on Wednesday. Composed by Anirudh Ravichander, *Paaraa* is a delightful blend of his vocals and those of Shruthika Samudhrala, with lyrics penned by Pa Vijay. The lyrical video doesn't show any scenes from the film, but a closer look reveals it's exploring the back story of Kamal's *Senapathy*. The animated video shows a man fighting a war against the British during the Independence movement while his lover awaits his safe return.

Manisha Koirala celebrates UK- Nepal's friendship treaty with UK PM Rishi Sunak

Actor Manisha Koirala met UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak at his residence to celebrate 100 years of the United Kingdom and Nepal's friendship treaty.

The *Heeramandi* star took to her Instagram to share a series of photographs from the celebrations at Sunak's official residence, 10 Downing Street, in London. "It was an honour to be invited to 10 Downing Street to celebrate United Kingdom - Nepal relations and 100 years of our friendship treaty. It was such

a pleasure to hear the Prime Minister @rishisunakmp speak fondly of our country Nepal. I took the liberty of inviting the PM and his family to come trek to Everest Base Camp," the Nepal-born actor posted.

Koirala, 53, also said that it was surprising that many people at the event had watched her OTT series *Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar*. "Can you believe that most of the attendees had seen *Heeramandi* on Netflix and loved it? I was thrilled!!" the actor wrote.



KIARA ADVANI AND JANHVI KAPOOR TO STAR OPPOSITE SILAMBARASAN IN #STR48

The latest buzz reveals the cast of *#STR48*, the upcoming project of the versatile actor Silambarasan TR. In a thrilling development, Bollywood sensations Kiara Advani and Janhvi Kapoor are confirmed to play the female leads in this much-anticipated film, as per sources.

The collaboration between Silambarasan, Kiara, and Janhvi has already sparked immense curiosity among fans, promising a fresh and dynamic on-screen chemistry. With their stellar performances in previous projects, both actresses have carved a niche for themselves in the Indian film industry, making their presence in *#STR48* all the more enticing.

Directed by the talented Desingh Periyasamy and produced by RKFI, the shooting for *#STR48* is slated to commence in June. Adding to the visual appeal of the film is cinematographer Sathyan Sooryan, known for his remarkable work in the industry.

As anticipation builds up for *#STR48*, audiences eagerly await further updates on the storyline, supporting cast, and release date.



Shruti Haasan revisits her childhood home in Chennai

In a touching homage to her roots, actress and musician Shruti Haasan recently took a trip down memory lane by visiting her childhood home in Chennai. Sharing the experience with her fans through a series of Instagram stories, Shruti offered a rare glimpse into the place where her dreams first took shape.

One memorable story features Shruti standing on the roof of her old house, with a serene backdrop and a caption that reads, "Thank you, Akshara, for the picture and the best memories too." This brief yet heartfelt note reflects the close bond she shares with her sister, Akshara Haasan, and the fond memories they have of their early years together.

In another story, Shruti is seen sitting on the roof, deep in thought. She writes, "Many days spent, wishing and dreaming for the future I enjoy as my



present today. I work hard, never to forget that Chennai girl who never forgot to be a weirdo and dream on her own terms." This candid reflection underscores her journey from a young dreamer to a successful artist, emphasising the importance of staying true to oneself.

Another image shows Shruti standing on the terrace, looking out with a contemplative gaze.

She shares, "I started to dream for myself; I began writing music and thinking of going to music school; and I fell in love with life and myself for the very first time." This revelation highlights the pivotal moments of self-discovery and passion for music that were nurtured in this very place.

On the work front, Shruti is looking forward to her next schedule of *Dacoit* in Hyderabad and the release of her international film, *The Eye*.



STANDALONE

On Wednesday, the makers and Naga Chaitanya released a moving still from his upcoming film *Thandel*. The dashing look of Chay as Thandel Raju has created quite a great buzz on X.



It's hard to leave ailing mother in hospital but KKR is family too, says Gurbaz

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Afghanistan wicketkeeper-batter Rahmanullah Gurbaz has revealed that he made the difficult choice of leaving his ailing mother in hospital when his IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders sought his services ahead of the playoff clash against Sunrisers Hyderabad here as the team is also his "family".

Gurbaz, in his maiden game of the season, played a vital role in KKR's win over SRH by taking two vital catches and giving his side a blazing start with a 14-ball 23 on Tuesday. He replaced Englishman Phil Salt at the top and hit the ground running to help the two-time champions enter the IPL final with their comfortable eight-wicket victory here on Tuesday.

"As a cricketer, you (should) know, what to do. (In) League cricket, only a few players can play. If there is opportunity for you, you should do best. If there's no

opportunity for you, you should be prepared, well prepared for the opportunity," Gurbaz told the media here after the match.

"My mom is still sick. I went (back) there and the call from here was (that) Phil Salt was leaving. They called and they messaged me that 'Gurbaz, we need you, and what is your feedback for us?'," he revealed.

"I said, 'yes, I will come. My mom is still in hospital, and I'm always talking to her, but this is also my family. I should manage both of that, my mom and my KKR family. It's hard, it's tough, but still, I need to manage it," he added.

SRH skipper Pat Cummins' decision to bat first backfired. Gurbaz said KKR had planned to bowl first had they won the toss.

"We all (had) decided that we should go and we should bowl first, because in this kind of moment, and team likes Sunrisers that have a strong batting side and you should know what (is) the total and then you go for it," he said.



"We bowled really well, actually. (To get a) team likes Sunrisers all out on 160, that was bowling effort. And then once we come to the batting end, we also not just try to, we should win the circle (powerplay).

"(In) my mind was (the) only (thought) that I should win the circle, because sometime in low total like this, you need to have a good circle, otherwise, match can be difficult in the end."

Gurbaz said it was the best he had seen KKR pacer Mitchell Starc bowl after the left-arm pacer took three wickets in the powerplay to set up the game for his side.

"He was just unbelievable. The way he bowled today, he's one of the best, he has a lot of experience, he knows how to manage the big games. I saw him today totally different than other games," he said.

Gurbaz said Afghanistan players are preparing well for the T20 World Cup next month. He said

franchise cricket is something that comes second and doing well for their country is always their priority.

"It's all about hard work. It doesn't mean that you come from Afghanistan, you come from India, you come from Australia, whatever. It's all about hard work, I think. If you work hard, if you know what to do, and it's help you in every situation.

"Afghanistan is not the same Afghanistan. We know what to do and how can we represent our country. Everything is good for cricket there, and we played really well, the last World Cup, and from the last six-seven years, Afghanistan is doing great," he said.

"Our mindset (is) not (just) to play for league cricket, our mindset is always to do something better for our country, and then come the leagues. If you do good for your country, all leagues will pick you, and that's the point that we play all the leagues," he added.



Till I play Tests, I will limit franchise appearances to only two events a year: Travis Head

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Travis Head might have taken this year's IPL by storm but Test cricket remains his top priority and till the time he is playing the format, the Australian big-hitter would like to limit his participation in T20 leagues to just two events per year.

Head, who has enjoyed an incredible last 10 months, has been a nemesis for India with centuries in both the World Test Championship and the ODI World Cup finals. Currently, he has blazed to 533 runs for Sunrisers Hyderabad, forging a fabulous opening partnership with uncapped Indian Abhishek Sharma.

Needless to say he is sought after and asked how he plans to manage the lucrative T20 offers with his commitment for the 'Baggy Green', Head said it's a no brainer.

"This has been the first year in IPL for me in quite a while (since 2017). I would put all my eggs in Test basket for the moment, I will continue to do that," Head told PTI during an exclusive interview organised by Prime Video ahead of their upcoming docu-series, 'The Test Season 3', featuring the Australian team's tour of England last year.

"After Tests, I will pick formats, and see in which different ways I am available for selection."

T20 events have mushroomed across the world with some like West Indies' Andre Russell and Sunil Narine appearing in multiple events, adding up to more than five a year.

Having had a great run for the 'Orange Army' this season, Head is keen on coming back to IPL next year too.

"At this stage, I would like to be back here in IPL next year. Like I will play Major League Cricket (MLC) in USA this year right after the World T20 but next year might just look a lot different.

"Each year, you prioritise what you can and can't do. Next year, Test cricket is around, we tour the West Indies and probably I will not feature in many other franchises," the 30-year-old was categorical.

"Look, in few years when I am finished with Test cricket, then probably there will be few more opportunities to play a bit more franchise cricket. But at this time, I would try to limit it to a couple of franchise may be, and (focus on) Test cricket."

The last 10 months have been very hectic for Head starting with the WTC final, followed by the Ashes and then the World Cup where he came in during the second half after recovering from a hand injury.

Right now, more than two months of IPL will be followed by World T20 in the Americas. But the southpaw doesn't want to make a big deal about workload management.

"I will be home in a couple of days' time once we are done with IPL. Be home for two-three days and make the trip to the West Indies with family and start all over again.

"Look, we are very fortunate to do what we do and I am not going to do it forever. So try and make the most of it as we can, we are lucky that we are well looked after."

He then tried to put things in perspective.

"I know in a few years, I can retire and do nothing. I will have plenty of time to look back and wish I was back on tour, I would like to be in the moment, keep batting through and stay in the moment, enjoying the moment."

CRACKING THE 'INDIA CODE': The performance that Head has delivered over the past few months, he believes that the seeds of it were sown early in 2023 when he came with the Test team, a hard-fought series that Australia lost 1-2.

"I think a lot of that has come from the Test tour last year, spending time here and working on things and also being a bit older, understanding my game and its blueprint and how you want to go about it and being content and my family being around, all those things," he explained.

"In IPL, I have evolved continuously while getting better but I still have some work to do," he seemed confident. His national team skipper Pat Cummins has been his SRH skipper and he says they have developed a chemistry where both know what to expect of each other.

"We are just close friends and just enjoy each other's company. Not too much game stuff and over time when you build relationships, he now knows how I will go about it (my job)..." he said.

"...If I need anything, I talk to him but he lets me do what I need to in order to perform. He backs me."

SRH lost the first qualifier on Tuesday to Kolkata Knight Riders but will have another shot at qualifying for finals in the second qualifier in Chennai on May 24.

Asked if a documentary like the 'The Test Season 3' can be intrusive and possibly catch players when they are at their most vulnerable and want to privately get over a low phase, Head,

I could not have made better choices: Former RCB owner Mallya on Kohli

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Royal Challengers Bengaluru owner Vijay Mallya on Wednesday said he couldn't have made a better choice when he bid for Virat Kohli in the inaugural IPL auction as he lauded the superstar batter for his brilliant run in the ongoing season.

RCB have made a tremendous comeback after losing seven out of their first eight games to qualify for the playoffs with six straight victories, riding on Kohli's sublime form which

has so far fetched him 708 runs from 14 innings.

RCB will face Rajasthan Royals in the Eliminator on Wednesday night.

"When I bid for the RCB franchise and I bid for Virat, my inner instinct told me that I could not have made better choices," Mallya, who currently lives in the United Kingdom and is trying to avoid extradition to India, wrote on 'X'. "My inner instinct tells me that RCB have the best chance to go for the IPL Trophy. Onward and Upward. Best of luck."

Kohli was bought by RCB for USD



30,000 ahead of the 2008 IPL following his title-winning run with India's U19 World Cup.

RCB, however, hasn't been able to lift the trophy despite reaching the final thrice — in 2009, 2011 and 2016.

Mallya is accused in a bank loan default matter of over Rs 9,000 crore involving his defunct Kingfisher Airlines.

He has been living in the United Kingdom since March 2016. The same year he had to forego his ownership of RCB due to the legal proceedings against him.

Sunrisers Hyderabad batting approach was puzzling: Gavaskar

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Legendary Sunil Gavaskar has questioned the "puzzling" batting approach of Sunrisers Hyderabad during the powerplay in the first IPL Qualifier, suggesting their reckless strategy may have cost them the match against Kolkata Knight Riders.

Having cleaned up his fellow Australian Travis Head with a peach of a delivery with his second ball, Mitchell Starc blew away the SRH top-order in his opening spell of 3-0-22-3.

SRH lost four wickets inside the powerplay to be dismissed for a paltry 159, a target KKR shot down in 13.4 overs to storm into the Sunday's summit clash in Chennai.

"It was a terrific performance, no question. Such an impressive display with both the bat and the ball. They took four wickets in the power play,



and that's where the Sunrisers were pushed onto the back foot, really on the ropes. They couldn't recover from that," the former Indian captain told Star Sports Cricket Live.

"There was a partnership of sorts, but to me, the approach of the SRH batters in those first six overs was puzzling."

With Vaibhav Arora dismissing the in-form

Abhishek Sharma in the next over, SRH's explosive opening pair were out for 13 runs.

Gavaskar said after losing two key wickets, SRH's batters should have played more

cautiously. Instead, they continued to play aggressively, which led to further losses and ultimately cost them the match.

"When you've lost two wickets and the two who have been scoring runs for you, a certain amount of caution is required. Sure, don't miss out on scoring opportunities, but don't look to throw your bat at everything. That's what we saw."

"They lost those four wickets, and losing four top batters means you can't really expect numbers five, six, seven, eight, and nine to get you to 200. So, that is where they may have lost it. But full credit to Kolkata for the way they attacked and took advantage of that pitch as well," Gavaskar said.

The former India opener was all praise for Venkatesh Iyer and emphasised his value as a versatile player, a top left-handed batter and a capable medium-pace bowler, even if

he hasn't bowled much recently.

Venkatesh struck a 28-ball 51 not out in an unbroken partnership with his skipper Shreyas Iyer (58 not out; 24b) to seal their eight-wicket win with 38 balls to spare.

"He's been a very good player for such a long time. His first season, a couple of seasons ago, was outstanding. Then, as it happens to everybody, the second season is harder because opponents have a better idea of how to bowl to you," Gavaskar said.

"But Venkatesh is the kind of cricketer you want in your team. He's a top batter, a left-handed batter, and he can bowl medium pace. We haven't seen him bowl much recently, but he's a very good medium-pace bowler. He might not always pick up wickets, but he can bowl those few overs that can make a significant difference," he added.

OTHER SPORTS

Khilari defends gold at World Para Athletics, India surpasses best ever tally



PTI ■ KOBE (JAPAN)

India's Sachin Sarjerao Khilari defended his gold medal in the men's shot put F64 category with an Asian record at the World Para Athletics Championship as the country surpassed its best-ever haul in the global competition here on Wednesday.

India, now have 11 medals, five of them gold. They bettered their previous best tally of 10 (3 gold, 4 silver and 3 bronze) in the 2023 edition in Paris.

Sachin heaved the iron ball to a distance of 16.30 metres, bettering his own Asian record of 16.21 metres set during the World Para Athletics Championship in

Paris last year. The F64 category in para athletics events is for those with moderately affected movement in one or both arms or the absence of limbs. These athletes have to transmit power from hips and legs into the throw.

In the case of Sachin, who hails from Karangani village in Maharashtra's Sangli district, he suffered a mishap during his school days leading to disability in his left hand.

The stocky 34-year-old lost his muscles from the elbow due to gangrene and despite multiple surgeries, his arm never recovered.

On Tuesday, India had reaped a rich haul

of five medals to swell its tally to 10 (4 gold, 4 silver, 2 bronze). China is currently leading the medals tally followed by Brazil.

The Hangzhou Asian Games gold-medallist thrower told PTI that he was confident of taking the top podium spot.

"I was expecting the gold here and I am happy. I have also qualified for Paris Olympics and hope to win gold there also," Sachin said from Kobe.

With three more days still to go, India are in with a chance of winning a few more medals including gold and head coach Satyanarayan said he was quite optimistic.

"We are expecting two more gold medals and hoping to touch the 17-medal mark," said Satyanarayan.

On Tuesday, Reigning Paralympics champion Sumit Antil had defended his F64 javelin throw world title, while Thangavelu Mariyappan and Ekta Bhanu also grabbed gold medals in their respective events as India jumped to third place in the World Para Athletics Championships here.

Antil, who had won gold medals in the Tokyo Paralympics and 2023 World Para Athletics Championships, sent his spear to a distance of 69.50m to stand on top of the podium.

The 25-year-old Haryana athlete thus continued his global domination in the F64 javelin event. He is the current world record holder also, courtesy his massive 73.29m throw while winning gold in the Para Asian Games in Hangzhou, China last year.

He also holds the World Para Athletics Championships record of 70.83m which he had produced while winning the gold in the last edition in Paris in 2023.

Compatriot Sandeep won the bronze medal in the same event with a throw of 60.41m. Sri Lanka's Dulan Kodithuwakku took the silver with a throw of 66.49m.



Hina, Kanika strike as India juniors beat Dutch hockey club 2-0

PTI ■ BREDA (NETHERLANDS)

Hina Bano and Kanika Siwach scored a goal each as the Indian junior women's hockey team began their tour of Europe with a 2-0 win against Netherlands club Bredase Hockey Vereniging Push here.

After a goalless first half on Tuesday, which saw both sides testing each other's strengths, India broke the deadlock with Hina scoring off a penalty corner after three failed attempts with the set-pieces in

the second quarter.

Bredase Hockey Vereniging pushed aggressively for the equaliser but success eluded them despite the hosts earning three PCs in the third quarter.

Kanika Siwach found the back of the net to double India's lead in the fourth quarter following which the defenders did well to ward off several spirited attacks from the opponents in the last few minutes.

The Indian junior team will play their next match against Belgium in Breda, Netherlands later on Wednesday.