

INDIA CORNER

Himachal CM Sukhu meets Dalai Lama, enquires about health

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhinder Singh Sukhu on Friday met Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama at his residence in Dharamshala's McLeodganj and enquired about his wellbeing...



For Congress, Jharkhand is ATM of corruption: Amit Shah

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday launched a scathing attack on Congress, alleging that the grand old party sees Jharkhand as an "ATM of corruption"...



BJP telling lies about my health, I am fine: Odisha CM

Odisha Chief Minister and BJD president Naveen Patnaik on Friday asserted that he is in "very good health" and campaigning in the elections for the Lok Sabha and Assembly all over the state...



'India will ensure global balance remains in favour of freedom'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's growing weight will ensure that the overall balance in the world order remains in favour of freedom, openness, transparency and a rules-based order, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Friday...



Jaishankar said the world is undergoing a flux, driven by geopolitical, geo-economic and geo-technological developments and that the global order today is visibly under stress...

data harnessing are leveraged, national security has become crucial to many economic transactions," he said. Jaishankar said the transformation of India is critical to strengthening multipolarity in Asia itself...

BJP leader, scribe among four booked in attempt to murder case

PNS ■ BALLIA (UP)

Police have booked four people including a local BJP functionary and a journalist in connection with an alleged murder attempt on a businessman here, officials said on Friday...

'INDIA bloc for robbing quota of SCs, STs, OBCs to appease Muslims'

PNS ■ KUSHINAGAR (UP)

Hitting out at the INDIA bloc, BJP president J P Nadda on Friday alleged that the "ghamandia" (arrogant) alliance is against the Dalits, tribals and backwards because they want to rob the reservation of these sections and appease Muslims...



Nadda was addressing an election rally organised here in support of BJP candidate and sitting MP from Kushinagar Lok Sabha constituency Vijay Dubey...

third largest economy of the world." Reminding the Covid crisis, Nadda said, "No leader of the world was capable of fighting Covid. America, Europe and Japan could not take a decision but Narendra Modi imposed a lockdown and made the country capable of fighting Covid within two months..."

Displaced KPs to vote at 34 special polling stations in Jammu, Udhampur and Delhi

PNS ■ JAMMU

More than 26,000 displaced Kashmiri Pandit voters from across the country are eligible to vote at 34 polling stations in the sixth phase of the Lok Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag constituency on Saturday...



"Over 26,000 Kashmiri migrant voters will cast their ballots at special polling stations set up in Jammu, Udhampur and Delhi tomorrow. All arrangements have been made for free and fair polling tomorrow," Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner Dr Arvind Karwani said.

tion officers at 21 polling booths and 8 auxiliary ones in Jammu, one in Udhampur and four in Delhi. Assistant Electoral Returning Officer (AERO) Dr Riaz Ahmed urged the Kashmiri migrant voters to participate in the election...

'Cyclone Remal' to make landfall in WB tomorrow

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

'Cyclone Remal' brewing in the Bay of Bengal will make landfall between Sagar Island and Khepupara around Sunday midnight as a severe cyclonic storm, the IMD said in an update...

Bengal coasts between Sagar Island and Khepupara around Sunday midnight as a severe cyclonic storm, the IMD said in an update. The cyclone could reach a wind speed of 120 kilometres per hour on Sunday...



Bay of Bengal until May 27. The IMD warned of localised flooding and major damage to vulnerable structures, power and communication lines, kutcha roads, crops and orchards in South and North 24 Parganas districts of West Bengal...

have been asked to remain indoors and vacate vulnerable structures. Scientists say cyclonic storms are intensifying rapidly and retaining their potency for longer periods due to warmer sea surface temperatures, a result of oceans absorbing most of the excess heat from greenhouse gas emissions...

Madhavan Rajeevan, former secretary of the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences, said a sea surface temperature of 27 degrees Celsius and above is needed for a low-pressure system to intensify into a cyclone. The sea surface temperature in the Bay of Bengal is around 30 degrees Celsius at present...

Kamal Kishore starts term as envoy of UN chief for disaster risk reduction

PNS ■ UNITED NATIONS

Kamal Kishore, a top Indian official for disaster and climate risk management, has started his term as a special representative of UN chief Antonio Guterres for disaster risk reduction. On March 28, Kishore, 55, was appointed by Guterres as his special representative for disaster risk reduction and the head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)...



erving as the Acting SRSG prior to his arrival. Kishore has served as Head of the Department of India's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) since 2015, leading the Group of 20 (G20) Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction under India's G20 presidency...

Four dead as torrential rains lash Kerala, IMD sounds red alert

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Four people were killed as torrential rains lashed several parts of Kerala, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Wednesday sounding a red alert in five districts that were likely to receive heavy rainfall...



Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) said. Though Alappuzha, Kottayam, and Ernakulam were earlier placed under an orange alert, the IMD later upgraded the warning, predicting extremely heavy rainfall in isolated places there...

A red alert indicates heavy to extremely heavy rain of over 20 cm in 24 hours, while an orange alert means very heavy rain of 11 cm to 20 cm, and a yellow alert means heavy rainfall between 6 cm and 11 cm.

WB govt to move higher court to challenge Cal HC order on OBCs

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday announced that her government will approach a higher court, challenging the Calcutta High Court order that cancelled all OBC certificates issued in the state since 2010...

vacation," Banerjee said. The Calcutta High Court on Wednesday struck down as illegal the OBC status of several classes in West Bengal granted since 2010, sparking a political debate in the middle of the Lok Sabha elections...

Prayagraj: 'LS polls a fight to save Constitution'

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj Lok Sabha constituency is expected to witness an interesting electoral battle with some sections of voters here raising local issues such as cleanliness and healthcare facilities, while many seeing the poll as a fight to save the Constitution and the unique 'Ilahabadi' culture...

seat of education, spirituality and syncretic culture in Indian history. One of the largest and most populous districts of Uttar Pradesh, it also takes pride in giving India seven prime ministers. "The city has produced so many politicians, civil servants. It has three Bharat Ratna awardees within a radius of one km and has given seven prime ministers to the country...



here have a 'hekdi' (arrogance) and don't cow down to anyone. It's intellectually a very vibrant city and if some mistake has been committed in the past, this city will rectify it, be assured of that," said Bakht, who identified unemployment and youth distress as major issues here this election...

Prayagraj has a total of 31 lakh registered voters, of which 20.67 lakh are in Phulpur constituency and 18.25 lakh in the Allahabad seat, according to official data. Surendra 'Rahi', president of the Progressive Writers Association (PWA) said institutions, and not individuals, are pillars of a democracy...

If the character of these pillars is changed, or the system of check and balances through institutions is changed, be it the press, election commission or even the judiciary, if the government begins to change



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Market's thumbs-up

There is jubilation in economic circles, signalling positive investor sentiment in Govt fate

It is not every day that the market breaches new records just days ahead of the Lok Sabha poll results. Both Sensex and Nifty are shooting northwards, especially since the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) declared a huge dividend bonanza for the Government. The stock market has witnessed a historic surge, with the benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty hitting lifetime highs two consecutive days. With the RBI also recently announcing a record dividend for the Government, this confluence of events has fostered an atmosphere of positive investor sentiment, largely driven by optimistic expectations from election outcomes. The RBI's decision to transfer a record dividend of Rs87,416 crore to the Government has been a crucial factor in this financial upturn. This move not only bolsters the Government's fiscal position but also signals robust economic health and prudent management by the Central bank. Such a hefty dividend payout is expected to provide the Government with additional fiscal space to boost public spending, invest in infrastructure projects and support social welfare programmes. The substantial RBI dividend is seen as a sign of economic stability and strong fundamentals, encouraging both domestic and foreign investors to pour capital into the market. Following the dividend announcement, both Sensex and Nifty have experienced unprecedented highs. Sensex soared past the 62,000-mark while Nifty breached the 18,600-level.



This surge reflects investor confidence in Indian economy's resilience and growth potential. The interplay between the RBI's dividend announcement and the buoyant stock market creates a positive feedback loop. Another critical driver of this market exuberance is the anticipation of favourable election outcomes. Investors often view political stability as a key determinant of economic policies and growth trajectories. This growth prospect attracts more investment, driving the stock markets higher and creating a cycle of optimism and financial prosperity. The prevailing sentiment suggests that the election results will lead to a continuation of pro-business and market-friendly policies. Historical trends indicate that markets typically react positively to clear and stable election results, which are seen as conducive to consistent and predictable economic governance. The interplay between the RBI's dividend announcement and the buoyant stock market creates a positive feedback loop. The additional fiscal resources enable the Government to undertake more significant developmental initiatives, which in turn stimulate economic growth. This alignment of fiscal prudence, economic strategy and political expectations bodes well for the nation's future. As the election comes to an end shortly and a new Government takes over, a positive sentiment among investors is likely to reinforce market stability and growth. However, the market does not reflect the state of the economy. The indices are more speculative and driven by positive sentiments rather than actual ground realities.

This alignment of fiscal prudence, economic strategy and political expectations bodes well for the nation's future. As the election comes to an end shortly and a new Government takes over, a positive sentiment among investors is likely to reinforce market stability and growth. However, the market does not reflect the state of the economy. The indices are more speculative and driven by positive sentiments rather than actual ground realities.

PICTALK



Buddhist devotees stand in a queue to light butter lamps during Buddha Jayanti, in Kathmandu

Ambedkar's warning on democracy rings true



BHOPINDER SINGH

India backslides on global democracy indexes and exhibits resistance to internal party democracy, starkly contrasting with the political culture of the UK

In 1936, Dr BR Ambedkar wrote an undelivered speech, 'Annihilation of Caste', where he forewarned, "Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment. It has to be cultivated. We must realise that our people have yet to learn it. Democracy in India is only a top-dressing on an Indian soil which is essentially undemocratic." This sharp but sage observation was well before the Constitution of India was formally framed and adopted under his leadership. Eighty-eight years since the speech that was considered too controversial to be delivered, the issues of caste, constitutional impropriety and his controversial but astute insistence that "Democracy in India is only a top-dressing on India soil which is essentially undemocratic" resonates loud and clear with the proceedings (rather, regressions) in the ensuing Lok Sabha elections.

Amongst the most invoked, galvanising and feared concerns in the ongoing election pitch are still, caste and religion. Beyond the trumpeting label of 'world's largest democracy' which we proudly accept and acknowledge, is the damning backsliding on various Democracy 'indexes' - which we equally readily slam as vested, unfair, or even 'anti-national'. An unmistakably think-skinned spirit and hypersensitivity about the unflattering reportage abounds, which does not help build credentials of a mature, confident and progressive democracy. The 'mother of democracy' simply cannot be selectively entertaining of all praise and simultaneously small-spirited against criticism. However, beyond the multiple and well-known afflictions like dynastic tendencies, majoritarianism, ethnic-casteist-regional assertions, muscle power, money power et al, lies yet another serious curse of the complete lack of, or even any pretence of an 'internal democracy' in any political party, national or regional. We seem to be partaking in the exercise of democracy with a rather regrettable set of undemocratic parties. Beyond the obvious threats of the 'carrot-and-stick' nature (with murmurs of the infamous 'wash-



ing machine' phenomenon) that may have made many opposition politicians jump ships - there is yet another loud concern expressed of unapproachability, remaining essentially unheard, or even of inaccessibility attributed to political leadership that leads to members to leave political parties for greener pastures. All Indian political parties have their exclusive leadership cocooned, isolated and protected from lesser leaders - this seemingly helps build leadership aura, mystique and even fear of the respective 'high commands'. The top leadership is only for taking the 'final call' and all others must robotically comply with the same, as described in the uniquely Indian expression of subservience, 'as disciplined soldiers of the party'. Such obsequious and diktat-filled frameworks are more suggestive of autocracies rather than participative democracies. This suffocating, intolerant and illiberal normalcy of Indian political culture is in stark contrast to that of its progenitor, British-Westminster politics. In the UK, there have always been divisions within party ranks (on issues), expressed ambition for top roles and public expression of dissenting positions e.g., Brexit. All these individualistic or non-conformist positions do not warrant the automatic



THERE ARE NO PERMANENT GODS IN BRITISH POLITICAL PARTIES, UNLIKE IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT, WHERE A FEW INDIVIDUALS RULE THE ROOST WITHOUT GETTING SUBJECTED TO ANY INTERNAL CHALLENGE, QUESTIONING OR CHANGE

expulsion or diminishment of an individual from party ranks. The ruling Conservative Party has many active and known 'camps' that may or may not agree with the policies and decisions of their Partyman as the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak. It has always been so with divides amongst social liberals and social democrats, modernisers and traditionalists and Brexiters of various sides and shades etc.. Therefore, even though the Conservative Party has ruled uninterrupted since 2010 (then by David Cameron), it has since had five different Prime Ministers i.e., David Cameron, Theresa May, Boris Johnson, Liz Truss and now, Rishi Sunak. Even now the jostling within the Tories continues with apparently Boris Johnson planning a comeback to David Cameron having staged a dramatic comeback as the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, under Rishi Sunak! It is the same concept of 'internal democracy' that has seen a similar leadership change in the principal opposition party i.e., the Labour Party. Since 2010 under Gordon Brown, it has seen a constant change in leadership Harriet Harman, Ed Miliband, Jeremy Corbyn to now Sir Keir Starmer. Each of these individual leaders has

reflected the topical preference of the party cadres and leaders. Now with Keir Starmer sure to get elected as the Prime Minister of the UK, he couldn't be more unlike his party predecessor, Jeremy Corbyn, both in person and policies. Starmer continues to consult both the former Labour Prime Minister i.e., Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, though neither has any outsized political relevance. In short, there are no permanent Gods in British political parties, unlike the Indian context where a few individuals rule the roost without getting subjected to any internal challenge, questioning or change. The rules and circumstances for leadership can be made to change overnight to suit certain individuals or dynasties which essentially seek to perpetuate the leadership composition, that has existed for years. As Winston Churchill once said, "The opposition occupies the benches in front of you, but the enemy sits behind you" implying in his party ranks - that such internal competition can never be a sign of weakness but of ensuring that only one with the most competitive, compelling and winning credentials leads the party. (The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Recognise Palestinian sovereignty



Guterres said that the Hamas attack did not take place in a vacuum. His comment was as right as the observation that the Indian Rebellion of 1857 did not take place in a vacuum. There were acts of terrorism against British civilians like Kennedy ladies during the British Raj in India. Khudiram Bose and his friend Prafulla Chaki threw a bomb at a carriage thinking that the district magistrate of Muzaffarpur, Douglas Kingsford, was in the carriage. However, Kingsford was seated in a different carriage and the bomb killed two British women. Can such attacks on the British civilians justify the Jallianwala Bagh massacre? Had the British still been ruling India, would the world have lent moral support to the colonial regime against the freedom fighters? Gaza massacre put Jallianwala Bagh to shame. More than 35,000 Palestinians, including nearly half of them children and elderly, have been killed in Gaza. Sujit De | Kolkata

decreased productivity and physical health issues like headaches and sleep disturbances. Address gaslighting by documenting interactions, building support, prioritising self-care, limiting exposure and seeking intervention. Organisations must cultivate a supportive work environment through awareness campaigns, clear reporting mechanisms, robust anti-bullying policies, respectful communication practices and training for managers to identify and address gaslighting. By empowering employees and fostering a supportive culture, organisations can combat gaslighting effectively and build a healthier workplace for all. Amarjeet Kumar | Hazaribagh

MAKE STRESS YOUR FRIEND

Madam - In a world where stress is often demoralised, reframing it as a friend can transform your relationship with it. Most people think that stress makes them sick; it increases the risk of everything from the common cold to cardiovascular disease. Basically, we have turned stress into our enemy. One study found that people who

experienced a lot of stress in the previous year had a 43 per cent increased risk of dying, but that was only true for people who believed that stress was harmful to their health. The researchers estimated that the people who died prematurely died not from stress but from the belief that stress was bad for them. Cultivate a mindset shift: view stress as a sign that your body is energised and ready to tackle tasks. Embrace the physiological changes, like an increased heart rate, as your body gears up for action. If you're breathing faster, there is no problem; it's getting more oxygen to your brain. Over a lifetime of stressful experiences, this one biological change could be the difference between a stress-induced heart attack at age 50 and living well into your 90's. Ultimately, by reframing stress as a friend rather than a foe, you no longer need to get rid of your stress; instead, make yourself better at it. Harshita Dhakad | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopyioneer@gmail.com

New-to-credit users drive financial inclusion

New-to-credit users have become one of the fastest-growing segments over the past three years but they also present challenges



MANISH SHARA

New-to-credit (NTC) users or first-time users of credit products were one of the fastest-growing consumer segments in the lending category in the last three years, driving sustainable financial inclusion and economic growth in India. Industry data suggests that India currently has around 200 million active credit users and around 800,000 NTC consumers are being added to this pool every year. Over the last few years, these consumers driven by easy access to credit cards and short-term-personal loans (STPL) grew the retail credit category at a rapid pace. Rapid digitisation of the lending process gave a boost to the rise in NTC customers but also resulted in challenges in background checks and client's repayment capacity. It took the RBI to step in by increasing risk weightage to control the uncontrolled growth in this category. As a result, the supply has been curtailed with first-time users increasingly finding it difficult to get easy access to credit products. However, there are



some specially co-created credit cards for first-time users, helping them to build a good credit history before getting access to other credit products. In such a situation, managing debt smartly has become important for first-time consumers. For them, using a credit card responsibly is crucial for building a positive credit history and avoiding debt. Here are some financial tips: **Understand your need for a credit card:** For new users, it is very important to understand the terms and conditions of your credit card. These include interest rates, fees, grace periods and rewards programs if applicable. We often make the mistake of activating the

credit card without understanding the finer details of credit card usage. This mistake may cost you a bad debt and a bad financial history, limiting your access to credit in the future. **Start small:** There is always a temptation to overspend with a credit card, especially if you are a first-time user. So, it is advisable to begin with a low credit limit to avoid overspending and to ease into managing credit responsibly. **Always pay on time and in full:** Always pay your credit card bill on time and in full to avoid late fees and interest charges. Setting up automatic payments can help ensure you never miss a due date. **Monitor your spending:** Keep track of your credit card transactions to stay within your budget and avoid overspending. Many credit card companies offer online or mobile banking apps to help you monitor your spending in real time. Keep utilisation low: Aim to keep your credit utilisation ratio-the amount of credit you're using compared to your total credit limit-below

30 per cent. This shows lenders that you're using credit responsibly and can help improve your credit score. **Avoid cash advances:** Cash advances often come with high fees and interest rates, so it's best to avoid using your credit card for cash withdrawals unless necessary. **Regularly check your credit report:** Monitor your credit report for any errors or unauthorised activity. You're entitled to a free credit report from each of the three major credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian and TransUnion) once a year. **Build an emergency fund:** Having an emergency fund can help cover unexpected expenses without relying solely on credit cards, reducing the risk of accumulating debt. Having a financial discipline is very important towards a good financial future. For NTC consumers the early they start is good for a healthy future but with a bit of discipline and consciousness. (The writer is a co-founder Zet-fintech platform; views are personal)

CONTROL PLASTIC USE

Madam - Although the central and State Governments have imposed a complete ban on polythene covers of thickness less than 125 microns in the State, it is not seen in practice. The viscosity of polythene bags is too high. 75-micron-thick bags, which were once banned, are still being used today. A large number of polythene covers are used in vegetable, tiffin, grocery, big shops and wholesale shops. As authorities have failed to ban polythene covers, they are seen everywhere on roads and canals. Cattle are falling sick by eating the wastes dumped in these covers in front of the houses and on the road. Criticisms are being heard that even though so many mishaps are happening, the concerned authorities are not paying attention. The authorities should clamp down on the sale of banned polythene bags which harm the environment and take strict action against those selling them. The authorities should make an effort to inform the people about the disadvantages caused by the use of banned polythene bags and to organise awareness programmes to encourage people to use eco-friendly clothing as an alternative. Appanna Gonapa | Visakhapatnam

WORKPLACE GASLIGHTING HARMS

Madam - It refers to 'Deleterious Effects of Workplace Gaslighting' (May 23). Gaslighting within the organisational setting presents a significant threat to employee well-being and overall organisational effectiveness. This form of psychological manipulation, characterised by the deliberate undermining of an individual's perceptions, beliefs and reality, fosters a detrimental work environment with far-reaching consequences. The erosion of employee confidence and self-esteem, heightened anxiety and paranoia, social isolation and withdrawal and manifestations in physical health are some of the critical impacts of gaslighting in the workplace. Gaslighting through denial, blame-shifting and criticism erodes employees' self-worth and competence, causing isolation, stress,



FIRST COLUMN TRUST IN THE SUPREME BEING!

The writer ponders the true nature of belief and the role of religion in our lives



SANJAY CHANDRA

I am not an atheist! But I do believe that there is a supreme power that guides us through the journey that we call life. Yet, there are questions that the rational mind refuses to subdue. One such dilemma that I have not been able to resolve is that we cannot be the only living beings in this vast universe. There have to be others. Would they also look like us?

Probably not my mother was a firm believer in the Gods of the faith that I was born in. She would make it a point to visit the nearby temples every week, accompanied by our father and the three of us children. We would watch her from outside the temple folding her hands in supplication before each God, praying for our wellbeing. I never asked my father the reason that he would stand at the entry to the temple, not accompanying his wife inside. Maybe it was to keep a watch on my mother's footwear, which had to be left outside.

Even a temple was not immune to missing slippers or sandals or shoes — others were more in need of the accessory. It also might have been because it was a little difficult to untie and then retie the laces on our shoes. As I grew up, I was intrigued by the increase in traffic at the temples, particularly at examination times. Young boys and also girls, could be seen touching the holy steps and then bowing to the deities, sometimes even putting their books reverentially at the feet of the Gods. I asked a friend, who smirked at my naiveté, before explaining that this helped in securing good marks. I also saw young unmarried women fasting and then visiting the temple on specific days of the week in the hope of getting a suitable husband.



I do not know if they lived a happily thereafter life. As I grew older, I too felt the need to visit the temple, particularly when facing a difficult time — initially when I was a student and then during my professional life. And then I realised the power of trust in a supreme being. It was this implicit faith, that the Lord above will not forsake me in my tough times, that gave me the confidence. It was a trust in my capabilities, reinforced by faith, that kept me going and kept me working. It sounds clichéd, but I also understood that my God resides within me; I do not need to visit a temple to pray to my God. I can do it wherever I am, whenever I need to. There was an interesting episode in my life recently. I got trolled on the WhatsApp group of my society by the same people who had only in the morning appreciated my writing. My fault — I had sinned opposing the construction of a temple inside the gated community. I felt there were more pressing issues to be attended. I smiled as I was called an elitist — the gentleman probably wanted to call me a pseudo-intellectual. These are the persons who have chosen, like me, to live out their lives in this complex — and hence, by default, they are the extended family. Relationships went for a toss. Which brings me to the query of the rational me. If there is a life after death and if there is life on many distant planets, then, I might be reborn in another form somewhere else. In that other life, I might pray to the supreme being in another form or shape. Then, is it really important for us to wear our religion on our sleeves or even to let it divide?

(The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)

Political messaging in Indian elections



SAIDEEP KAR

The current election cycle witnesses a proliferation of digital misinformation campaigns, presenting new challenges for the authorities and citizens alike



A prominent film programmer and writer David Schwartz has rightly quoted, "Political commercials pretend to be like documentaries, but they use all the techniques of fiction filmmaking, including scripts, performances and music." This could be quite apt to ponder on the current general election and political communication in India. The use of technologies including deep fakes is attempting to make this election distinct from the 2019 general election.

Political communication is the production and influence of persuasive political messages, campaigns and advertisements, often involving the mass media. It is an interdisciplinary field that uses communication, journalism and political science. Political communication concerns ideas such as information flow, political influence, decision-making, news and impact on citizens. Since the advent of the World Wide Web, the amount of data to be analysed has increased and researchers are turning to computational methods to study the dynamics of political communication. This can be quite relevant in the light of Parliamentary elections, 2024 in India.

The parliamentary elections in India have started from 19 April and will continue up to 1 June in seven phases to elect all 543 members of the Lok Sabha. This is the longest election in history, surpassing the previous election of 44 days, second only to the Indian general election of 1951-52. Approximately 970 million of the 1.4 billion people are eligible to vote, that is 70 per cent of the total population. In the States of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim, parliamentary elections will be held simultaneously with general elections and by-elections to 25 constituencies in 12 legislative assemblies. The votes will be counted and the results announced on June 4. Current Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has completed his second term, is running for a third consecutive term.



THE FRAUD PULSE HAS FOUND A NEW, MORE ENTHUSIASTIC CHANNEL IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS. LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES ARE WARNING LOUDER THAN EVER THAT THE AVERAGE INDIAN VOTER IN 2024 IS MOST AT RISK OF BEING MISINFORMED ABOUT THE ELECTION

Social media in the political domain

Social media has become an increasingly important tool for political communication. For certain demographics, it is one of the main platforms where people get their news and interact with it by commenting and sharing. Social media has dramatically changed the way modern political campaigns are run. As more and more digitally native citizens vote, social media has become an important tool for politicians to establish themselves and communicate with voters.

The experience of using social media depends largely on the user, as the platform's algorithms tailor the consumer experience to each user. This leads to each person seeing more like-minded people due to increased digital social behaviour. In addition, social media changed politics because it gave politicians a direct way to inform their constituents and people to speak directly to politicians. This unofficial nature can lead to misinformation because it is not subject to the same "fact-checking processes as institutional journalism". Moreover, social media platforms serve as democratising agents, empowering individuals to participate in political conversations irrespective of geographical or socio-economic barriers. Citizens can voice their perspectives, amplify marginalised narratives and mobilise collective action, thereby enriching the democratic fabric of society. Concurrently, social media's interactive nature engenders heightened transparency and accountability within political institutions, as public scrutiny intensifies and feedback mechanisms proliferate.

AI Deepfakes: A new era

Technological implications are increasingly becoming imperative in the current election in India about political communication. This election season, misinformation has a new face. This time, India smiles, talks and woos the voters with a wisdom that is hard to start and harder to regulate. The 2019 election was no stranger to hate and misinformation campaigns, but the technology that enables this ecosystem has changed the rate of misrepresentation. The fraud pulse has found a new, more enthusiastic channel in the last five years. Law enforcement agencies are warning louder than ever that the average Indian voter in 2024 is most at risk of being misinformed about the election. There are gaps in people's ability to distinguish between real and artificial intelligence, leaving them vulnerable to fraud and unauthorised access. Social media companies struggle to curb fake news and propaganda; The Indian Government is updating existing legislation to better address the spread of online counterfeiting. The 2019 election took place on social media. Researchers identified sophisticated campaigns that used WhatsApp messaging and massive deployment of IT bots to distribute cropped photos, post coordinated content and publish fake videos on Facebook during the 2024 general elections. The pressing question now is how digital platforms tag, identify and contextualise such media. Even in the era of generative AI, such enforcement measures were nascent or seasonal at best. Now, cheap or free tools allow even amateurs to create deep fakes without content filters to prevent fake or illegal content from

spreading. This means that technology platforms have to act stronger against criminals and break the chain of disinformation faster than they do. One of the biggest changes in social media after the 2019 elections in India is the absence of Twitter (Now X), the platform used by India's controlled politicians and Government agencies to broadcast official information to the country's media.

A way forward

In today's world, understanding politics means delving into how political actors communicate and navigate various media channels. These channels not only reflect but also shape political messages and images. Just as political systems influence media through policies and decisions, media structures profoundly impact political communication processes.

Easy-to-make AI videos with near-perfect shadows and hand gestures can sometimes confuse even the digitally literate. But the risks are greater in a country where many of its 1.4 billion people are technologically challenged and where manipulated content can easily stoke sectarian tensions, especially during elections. The Election Commission of India recently warned political parties against using artificial intelligence to spread misinformation, issuing seven provisions of IT and other laws that carry up to three years in prison for offences including forgery, rumour and hostility. Looking forward to a free and fair election this time!

(The author is from Journalism and Mass Communication, Rama Devi Women's University, Bhubaneswar; views are personal)

Millennium City says 'no development, no vote'

Frustrated by poor infrastructure despite high taxes, Gurgaon residents are shunning election candidates

This month Gurgaon has seen protests in several localities with frustrated and disillusioned residents announcing 'Election candidates not welcome, no development, no vote'.

Gurgaon residents are piqued that despite paying taxes (the highest share in the State), they are getting a raw deal. Sensing the mood of the public, both BJP stalwart and five-time MP, Rao Inderjit Singh and Congress candidate Raj Babbar, have made development their poll plank. Interestingly though it is a national election, focus remains on local issues, especially in the absence of a central national poll theme. Gurgaon may have fancy



VINOD BEHL

tags of 'Millennium City' and 'Cyber City' but the city which has made a global mark, lacks badly on physical and social infrastructure. It presents an ugly face with city waste besides construction debris lying all over, posing a serious health hazard.

It is not just Gurgaon, even the new sectors of the city which are grappling with poorly maintained roads (leading to accidents and dust pollution), inadequate drinking water, power and sewerage infrastructure. In the absence of proper drainage. Failure of civic authorities has made matters worse.

The lack of an adequate metro network in the city has created a traffic mess on



the roads. The lack of proper parking infrastructure has only made matters worse. A lot of the city's civic infra woes are because of the flawed development model of real estate development preceding infrastructure

development. Moreover, unlike in neighbouring Noida where there is a single development authority, Gurgaon lacks on this front. GMDA (Gurgaon Metropolitan Development Authority) constituted to

put an end to a multiplicity of development authorities, has proved to be an eyewash with MCG (Municipal Corporation Gurgaon) and HSVP (Haryana Shahari Vikas Pradhikaran) around. Seeking vote on development, Rao Inderjit Singh takes credit for initiating the mega infrastructure and connectivity projects like KMP Expressway, Delhi-Mumbai Expressway (passing through Gurgaon), Sohna Elevated Expressway, Dwarka Expressway, Metro Expansion, Gurgaon Railway Station upgradation.

In rural and Muslim-dominated Nuh, he is telling voters about the development gains of key infrastructure projects like the Delhi-

Mumbai Expressway and Orbital Rail. Raj Babbar, on the other hand, is also playing the development card to counter Rao Inderjit, pointing to shoddy development with several civic issues plaguing the city, turning it into a slum. Long delays in metro expansion, Lack of an Inter-State Bus Terminus and the absence of a suitable Civil Hospital are among the issues he has been raking up among the voters, demanding a fair share of development. He is promising the transformation of Gurgaon.

Though Rao Inderjit Singh may be facing anti-incumbency he has an obvious advantage of a well-oiled organisation besides the Modi factor. On the other

hand, Raj Babbar faces the challenge of being an outsider. Besides he has the disadvantage of being a late starter due to a delay in announcing his nomination. The Gurgaon electorate seems to be in a mood to give another chance to the BJP, banking on the strong pro-development credentials of Modi. However, they have also shown their displeasure with the political parties. Indeed Gurgaon's infrastructure is not up to the mark and needs an immediate attention. Besides, their anger has led politicians to take notice of their woes and have now started showing interest in infrastructure upgradation.

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

'There's no need to seek medical care elsewhere with advanced options available in Hyd'

In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, Dr. Srirang Abkari, a consultant physician at Udai Omni Hospital, Hyderabad shares his association with the city.

SUBODHINI PUROHIT

Hyderabad, a place where tradition and modernity blend to create a vibrant culture, we have Dr. Srirang Abkari, a consultant physician at Udai Omni Hospital in Hyderabad, proudly carries the legacy of three generations deeply rooted in this historic hometown.

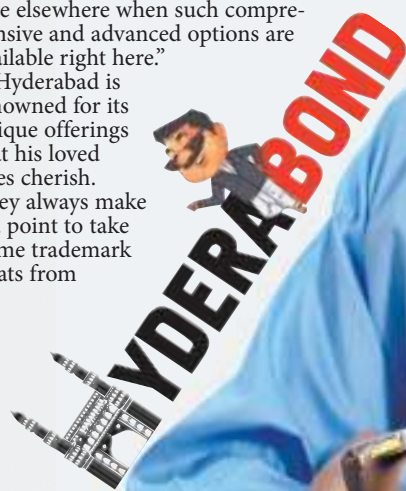
Hyderabad is an incredibly welcoming city with a rich, cosmopolitan culture. People from all backgrounds and communities live together harmoniously. "The city exudes warmth and kindness, and I've never encountered any form of discrimination here. It's truly a place filled with wonderful, good-hearted people."

Hyderabad, he says, is a wonderful place, full of cherished childhood memories. One festival that stands out for him is Sankranti when the sky is filled with kites flown from every terrace. It was a time when different communities came together to celebrate in unity and joy.

The diverse environment at St. Paul's High School brought together people from all walks of life, shaping who they are today. The values and lessons learned there have profoundly influenced both his personal development and professional career.

Meanwhile, he feels that the city boasts an excellent health infrastructure, making medical care highly accessible compared to abroad. Both government and private hospitals, as well as numerous clinics, are readily available throughout the city. Thanks to continuous advancements and a plethora of educational conferences and activities, healthcare in Hyderabad remains affordable, he emphasises. "There's no need to seek medical care elsewhere when such comprehensive and advanced options are available right here."

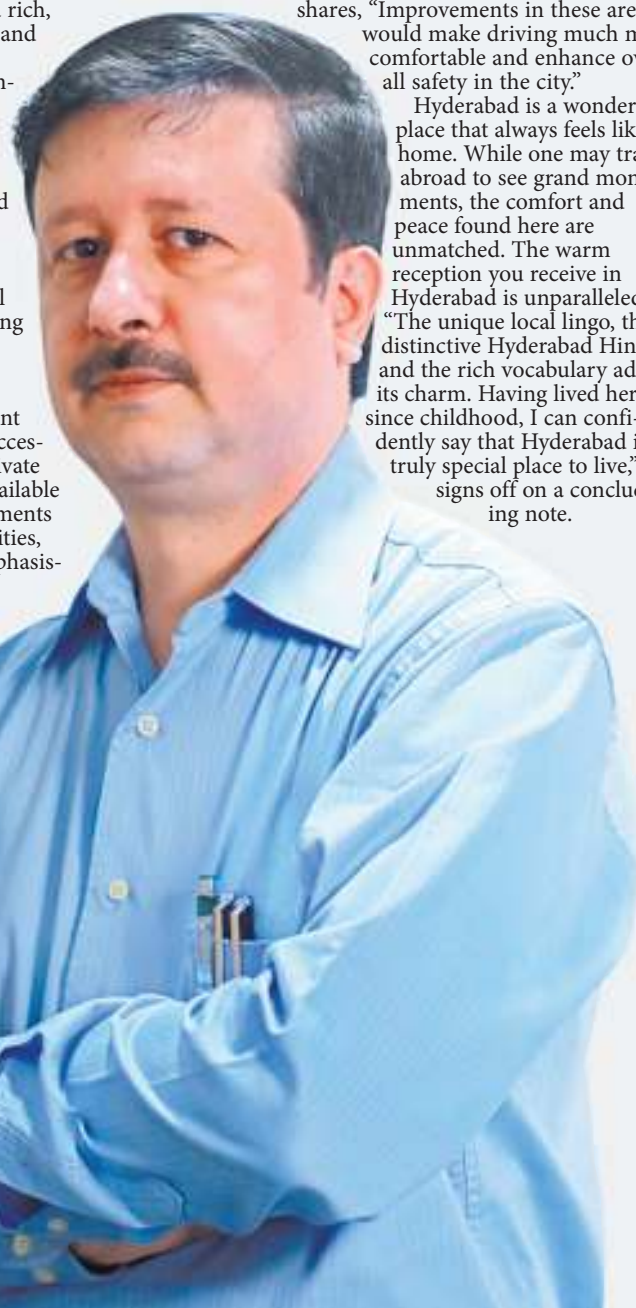
Hyderabad is renowned for its unique offerings that his loved ones cherish. They always make it a point to take home trademark treats from



Karachi Bakery, like their cashew biscuits and fruit biscuits, which are the perfect blend of sweet and savoury. He says, "Souvenirs from iconic landmarks like Charminar, and Golconda, and traditional handloom and Pochampally sarees are also a must-have for my closed ones, capturing the essence of Hyderabad's rich culture and heritage."

He loves the warm, cosmopolitan culture and hospitality of Hyderabad. However, he dislikes the traffic situation and the frequent instances of wrong-side driving, and he shares, "Improvements in these areas would make driving much more comfortable and enhance overall safety in the city."

Hyderabad is a wonderful place that always feels like home. While one may travel abroad to see grand monuments, the comfort and peace found here are unmatched. The warm reception you receive in Hyderabad is unparalleled. "The unique local lingo, the distinctive Hyderabad Hindi, and the rich vocabulary add to its charm. Having lived here since childhood, I can confidently say that Hyderabad is a truly special place to live," he signs off on a concluding note.



'Films like 8 A.M. Metro bring out the emotions that we tend to hide'

PNS| HYDERABAD

Be it whether playing a villainous role like that of in *Hate Story* and *Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela*, or that of a funkish kind of character in *Hunterrr*, Gulshan Devaiah has not just proved his prowess but also makes his character so impactful that one can just not take their eyes off. For example; talking of his recent film that has now been in talk-of-the-town, *8 A.M. Metro*, we see a whole different Gulshan altogether.

The film which is now streaming on Zee 5, has been gaining immense traction on the OTT, even more than that back when the film was released in the theatres. Well, speaking of the aspect that compelled him to be a part of this film, he shares, "I read this script, and I thought it was very moving. I cried in the end and was thinking a lot about the story, the characters. It was very emotional. I had a discussion with Raj, the director and it seemed like the idea and the story both are great, and we must make this into a movie. I connected with the script, and I wanted to be Pritam in this story. I didn't quite know how I would do it, but I had this intense urge to explore the idea of being Pritam in *8 A.M. Metro*. That's

how I became part of the film."

8 A.M. Metro opens discussions around mental health, suicide, social anxiety and many other such issues but in an unusual manner. Talking about such issues he says is really important, and that in itself is a help. A lot of times, "I think, we face issues, and we don't know how to talk about it, or we refrain from talking about it due to the social stigma or we want to seem stronger. We don't want to show or open up and reveal our weaknesses, so we tend to hide them, but films like this bring out emotions. I did get the opportunity to watch this movie with a live audience, I randomly went into a movie hall, people were sitting and watching. They were moved and were crying which means that it brings out a certain emotion. People were able to identify and resonate with the characters or their trauma and that in

itself is quite therapeutic. I guess it urges people to think about how they are feeling, if they have any addictions or certain traumas, and then they would find a way to talk about it. That's how I think films such as *8 A.M. Metro* will help people."



Actor Gulshan Devaiah, who is known for his remarkable performances in the industry, speaks to *The Pioneer* on some interesting insights about being a part of *8 A.M. Metro*.

Pediatric Intensive Care Units: A critical aspect of healthcare

This can be a cause of too much anxiety and stress amongst parents and other family members who may find themselves in need of such services unexpectedly.

Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICUs) are specifically designed to provide high-level medical care to children from infancy to adolescence who are critically ill, some even with life-threatening medical conditions.

Understanding PICU

A Pediatric Intensive Care Unit is significantly more specialised than a typical hospital ward. It is equipped with cutting-edge medical technology and staffed by specialised healthcare professionals trained to handle severe and acute conditions in children.

A PICU is equipped with complex medical equipment, including mechanical ventilators, advanced monitoring devices (cardiac monitors etc) and specialised equipment to support failing kidney or liver functions.

These units are intended to address a variety of serious health issues in children, such as severe respiratory distress, serious neurological disorders, heart ailments and other organ injuries like the involvement of the liver or kidneys. PICUs are geared to manage children needing complex surgeries or those with severe infections (Dengue, Malaria, Brain fever, pneumonia, etc), children with trauma (road traffic accidents, children with burns, drowning, those with falls from heights, poisoning, etc).

Not all PICUs can manage all types of emergencies and complexities in child healthcare. Depending upon the expertise and the availability of trained and skilled manpower, PICUs are stratified into Level-1 to Level-4 units, with Level-4 units having competencies of the highest order.

Some PICUs are highly specialised to take care of specific categories of clinical conditions, e.g. children after liver transplant or kidney transplant surgeries, or children who are operated on for heart conditions, etc.

Pediatric intensivists are physicians working in the PICUs with advanced training in critical care for children. These specialists understand how children's physiological needs differ from those of adults in critical care situations. The PICU team also includes a highly skilled and specialised team of nurses, which are the most critical part of any good PICU.

Apart from physicians and nurses, a good PICU team comprises respiratory therapists, clinical pharmacists, nutritionists, and social workers, all of whom play critical roles in each patient's care.

The Role of Pediatric Intensivists

Pediatric intensivists are essential to the operation of a PICU. They oversee the child's care plan and participate in all aspects of their treatment. These professionals are trained to make quick decisions about life-saving interventions and manage complex technologies like mechanical ventilators, intravenous lines, and monitoring systems, frequently required for their pediatric patients.

Support from Paediatric Sub-Specialties:

A level-3 or Level-4 PICU can not be complete without round-the-clock support from important paediatric subspecialties like a paediatric neurologist, pulmonologist, haematologist, nephrologist, gastroenterologist, endocrinologist, surgeons (paediatric surgeons, plastic surgeons, orthopaedic surgeons, fascio-maxillary surgeon, neuro surgeon etc).

The PICU team also needs support from microbiology, pathology and radiology departments and, if possible, a reliable blood bank.

Financial aspects of care

The cost of PICU care can be a major concern. Insurance coverage can prove very useful in facing the rising cost of care in PICUs. Various government schemes and contributions from various charitable organisations also help families in meeting the cost of care.

Counselling of families and family-centric care:

Modern PICU teams are increasingly focusing on families' involvement in caring for their children in PICUs. In any good PICU, the treating team of physicians is involved

closely with the family members in daily counselling and discussion regarding not only the treatment and cost of care of their child but also how the overall progress is taking place and how they plan to work together for early liberation of their child from PICU.

Awareness and Education

The general public is unaware of when and why a child may need to be admitted to a pediatric intensive care unit. Parents frequently fail to recognise the severity of a condition until it is far advanced, delaying potentially life-saving medical care.

Educating the public on the warning signs of severe illness and the availability of PICU services is critical. This includes recognising the signs of serious conditions such as meningitis (brain fever), septic shock (blood infection with a fall in blood pressure), or severe allergic reactions that necessitate immediate medical attention.

Preventive measures

Preventive healthcare is also important in lowering the need for PICU services. This includes ensuring that children have received all necessary vaccinations, which can help them avoid serious illnesses.

Improving hygiene and cleanliness also can prevent many diseases. Furthermore, promoting safe practices at home and on the road can reduce the number of injuries and accidents that may necessitate emergency care.

Conclusion

To summarise, while PICUs in India play an important role in pediatric healthcare, there is a significant need for increased public awareness and education about these facilities.

Parents and caregivers should be educated on the symptoms of critical illnesses, the operation of a PICU, and preventive measures that can help keep children healthy.

Understanding these aspects can help improve the timely and effective use of PICU resources, resulting in better health outcomes for children.

(The author, Dr. Farhan AR Shaikh, is the Head of the Department of Paediatric Intensive Care Unit, at Rainbow Children's Hospital, in Banjara Hills.)



Aditi Rao Hydari brings out her red carpet look at Cannes Film Festival 2024



The Indian film industry luminary Aditi Rao Hydari made a breathtaking appearance at the Cannes Film Festival 2024, as L'Oréal Paris' ambassador. This year marks the 27th anniversary of the brands' association with the Cannes Film Festival, and Aditi's presence epitomised this milestone with elegance and glamour.

Aditi achieved a very simple yet elegant look, styling her hair into a neat bun to complete her look.

Radiating confidence and style, she wore a Gaurav Gupta ensemble, a monochrome gown that had voluminous drapes on the side in ivory. Her outfit not only highlighted her impeccable fashion sense but also displayed her exquisite taste and sophistication. This is Aditi's third appearance at Cannes since her debut in 2022.

The *Heeramandi* star perfectly embodied the theme for the brand at Cannes 2024, 'Many ways to be an icon.' The brand embodies an inclusive representation of beauty that resonates with women across the globe. Through this partnership, they aim to amplify the message of self-worth and inspire millions worldwide to embrace and honour their unique individuality. As the Festival de Cannes' official makeup partner, it inspires ambassadors, actors, and actresses to showcase this empowered beauty vision on the red carpet.



Actor Srikanth, along with other celebrities Venkat, Hebba Patel, and AM Rathnam, among others, attended the launch of Joint nutrition, a latest innovation in health and wellness, during an event held at Filmnagar Cultural Center (FNCC) banquet hall.

LISTINGS

Gemini TV to premiere *Shrimad Ramayanam* in Telugu from May 27

Gemini TV has announced the premiere of the timeless epic *Shrimad Ramayanam* in Telugu, starting May 27th. Airing from Monday to Saturday from 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM, this captivating series brings the revered story of Lord Rama to Telugu audiences, showcasing the rich cultural heritage and moral values embedded in our Heritage. *Shrimad Ramayanam* narrates the legendary tale of Lord Rama, depicting his virtues as a devoted son, loyal brother, loving husband, steadfast friend, and righteous king. The serial promises to resonate deeply with viewers, highlighting the significance of dharma through Lord Rama's exemplary life.

With advanced graphic technology and exceptional performances by seasoned actors, *Shrimad Ramayanam* is set to be a visual delight, enhancing the storytelling experience.



CURTAIN RAISER

INDULGE IN BHUTANESE DELIGHTS

Get ready for an exclusive culinary adventure! VEEN, in collaboration with Novotel Mumbai International Airport and Accor Live Limitless, presenting 'Bhutan to Bharat—A Culinary Journey with Chef Michael Swamy'.

Food lovers can indulge in a curated dinner buffet featuring Bhutanese delicacies such as Ema Datshi, Doh Syiar Nei-long, and Bak Thuk Noodles with Asian Vegetables. Live cooking stations will showcase signature dishes being prepared right in front of the guests, offering an immersive culinary experience. Don't miss this chance to explore

the rich traditions and flavours of Bhutan!

Dates: May 24th to June 2nd, 2024

Venue: Food Exchange, Novotel Mumbai International Airport

Timing: 7:00 pm - 10:30 pm

Price: INR 1995 plus taxes



PIND DI RASOI—A 10-DAY FOOD FESTIVAL

Here's your chance to immerse yourself in the vibrant traditions of Punjabi cuisine at Sheraton Hyderabad Hotel's 10-day food festival - 'Pind Di Rasoi', showcasing the culinary mastery of visiting home chef Shanna Oberoi. From the robust table an array of recipes that have been cherished and handed down over generations. From the robust flavours of Butter Chicken to the perfectly seasoned Chole Bhature, every dish is a celebration of Punjab's bountiful agriculture and vibrant cultural history.

Location: Feast, Sheraton Hyderabad Hotel

Dates: Till May 30

Timings: Lunch from 12:30 PM to 03:00 PM and Dinner from 07:00 PM to 11:00 PM

Reservations: Call +91 7337358581 to book your table

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



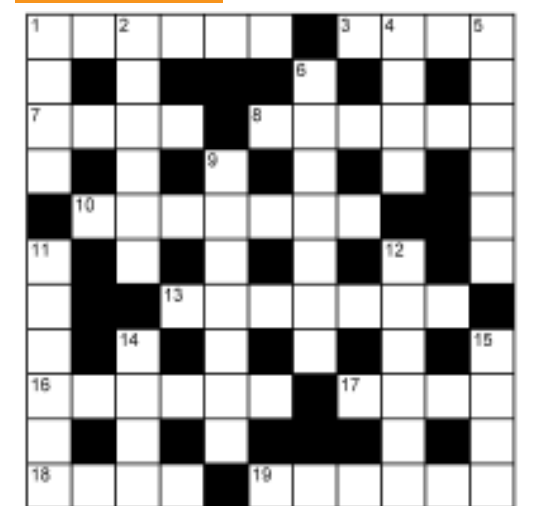
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

- 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

- A hole in a hill for a train
- Unlock
- Very uncommon
- An animal with a shell
- An erupting mountain
- A long sort of table where you are served in a shop
- Meat and vegetables cooked slowly in liquid
- Scraps of material
- A planet
- Required
- On fire
- A month
- Reply
- Defeated
- Make music with the voice
- These birds hunt at night

DOWN

- Ripped and ragged
- Opposite of wide
- Tame animals kept at home





ASHIKA RANGANATH TO BE ON BOARD FOR VISHWAMBHARA

Megastar Chiranjeevi's highly anticipated magnum opus Vishwambhara is the most ambitious project for director Vassishtha and also for the production house, UV Creations. While Vassishtha is rightly utilising the opportunity to make a memorable film for mega fans and movie buffs, UV Creations is mounting the movie on a large canvas in an uncompromised manner. Meanwhile, the team of mighty Vishwambhara welcomes the charming Ashika Ranganath to the epic cinematic journey of Vishwambhara. Yes, the actress who impressed one and all with her stunning looks and superb performance in *Naa Saami Ranga* comes on board to play one of the important roles in the movie. The ageless diva Trisha Krishnan is the female lead opposite Chiranjeevi in this movie that features some other noted actors in prominent roles. Vikram, Vamsi and Pramod are bankrolling this fantasy action adventure. MM Keeravani who recently won an Oscar Award scores the music, while the popular lensman Chota K Naidu is the cinematographer. Vishwambhara will be released for Sankranti in 2025 on January 10.



Rajinikanth receives Golden Visa from UAE

Renowned actor Rajinikanth has been granted the prestigious Golden Visa by the UAE's Department of Culture and Tourism, marking a significant recognition of his contributions to the world of cinema. A video capturing the heartfelt moment of the legendary actor expressing his gratitude towards the Abu Dhabi government and his close associate, MA Yusuff Ali, the chairman and managing director of Lulu Group, has been making rounds on the internet.

In the video, Rajinikanth, aged 73, can be seen extending his heartfelt thanks to the UAE government and Yusuff Ali for the honour and hospitality bestowed upon him. He remarked, "Today, I am honoured to receive a prestigious Golden visa of UAE. My heartfelt thanks to the UAE government, and to my friend Lulu Group, chairman and managing director, Yusuff Ali, without him, this would not have happened, I am grateful to him".

The Golden Visa was presented to the actor by Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Member of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council and Chairman of the Department of Culture and Tourism

(DCT), Government of Abu Dhabi, in the presence of MA Yusuff.

During his stay in Abu Dhabi, fondly referred to as Thalaivar, Rajinikanth also took the opportunity to visit the renowned Hindu temple, BAPS, to offer prayers. A video capturing his visit to the temple, where he received an official tour and blessings from the priests, has gone viral on social media. Rajinikanth could be seen admiring the temple's architecture and receiving blessings with reverence.

On the professional front, Rajinikanth recently wrapped up shooting for his upcoming movie, *Vettaivan*, scheduled for release in October 2024. Alongside Amitabh Bachchan, Fahadh Faasil, and Rana Daggubati, the Chandramukhi actor will captivate audiences with his performance.

Looking ahead, Rajinikanth is set to commence shooting for Lokesh Kanagaraj's *Coolie*, starring alongside Shruti Haasan. Additionally, there are reports suggesting a potential reunion with Nelson Dilipkumar for a sequel to *Jailer*, tentatively titled *Hukum*, although official confirmation is pending.

Bellamkonda Srinivas's Tyson Naidu new schedule begins in Rajasthan

Promising young hero Bellamkonda Sai Srinivas's unique action entertainer being helmed by Saagar K Chandra is produced by 14 Reels Plus.

The movie titled *Tyson Naidu* had its title and glimpse unveiled on Bellamkonda Srinivas' birthday and received a stupendous response.

On Friday, the makers began a new crucial 2 week long schedule of the movie in Rajasthan. The team will be canning breathtaking action blocks which is very significant for the movie for 10 nights in Rajasthan forts under the supervision of Stun Shiva which will be one of the major highlights in the movie. In this 2-week long schedule, the makers will also shoot some talkie part. The movie is being made in an uncompromised way as the team is super confident on the subject. Bellamkonda sports a massy and bulky look in the movie, as shown in the glimpse. Saagar K Chandra is presenting him in a never-before-seen action-packed character as a cop.

Some prominent technicians are taking care of different crafts of the movie. Mukesh Gnanesh and Anith are the lensman, while the in form sensational composer Bheems Cecireleo provides the music. Kotagiri Venkateswara Rao is the editor of the movie, while Avinash Kolla are the art directors. Stun Shiva, Vijay Venkat, and Real Satish oversee the action part of the movie.

Kajol, Prabhudeva to unite after 27 years for Telugu director Charan Tej

Acclaimed Telugu filmmaker Charan Tej Uppalapati is widely celebrated for his exceptional cinematic vision. Now, all set to make his long-anticipated directorial debut in Hindi, Charan Tej Uppalapati is busy working on a high-budget action thriller. The star-studded spectacle features industry stalwarts such as Kajol, Prabhudeva, Naseeruddin Shah, Sanyuktha Menon, Jishu Sen Gupta, and Aditya Seal among its esteemed cast.

Marking the much-awaited reunion of Kajol and Prabhudeva after 27 years, the first schedule of the mass entertainer has been completed, and the makers are gearing up to release the film's teaser soon.

An ambitious venture, the action thriller has top-tier technicians on board, including GK Vishnu as the Director of Photography, Music Director Harshavardhan Rameshwar, and editor Navin Nooli. The screenplay is penned by Niranjan Iyengar and Jessica Khurana. Production designer Saahi Suresh will craft the visual aesthetics.

While further details of the project are awaited, the combination of a stellar cast and a top-notch technical crew makes this action spectacle one of the most anticipated upcoming releases.



SURIYA TO BANKROLL KARTHI'S FILM

Tamil film industry's celebrated siblings, Suriya and Karthi, have long harboured a desire to collaborate on a project. However, despite their aspirations, such an endeavor failed to materialise. In a recent development, Suriya has taken a significant step towards fulfilling this dream by announcing his production venture, featuring his brother Karthi in the lead role.

The much-anticipated project has been confirmed, with a sneak peek set to be unveiled soon. Notably, the acclaimed director of *96*, Prem Kumar, has been roped in to helm the film, adding to the excitement surrounding the announcement. Karthi, along with Arvind Swamy, will headline the cast, promising a captivating cinematic experience.

This collaboration marks a significant milestone as it's the first time Karthi will be working under the production banner of Suriya's 2D Entertainment, co-produced by Suriya and Jyotika.

While Suriya is currently occupied with his ongoing commitments, including *Kanguva*, which is set for release soon, and an upcoming project under the direction of Sudha Kongara, Karthi is busy shooting for *Vaa Vaathiyaare*, scheduled for release this year. Additionally, he is gearing up to commence filming for *Khaidi 2*, helmed by Lokesh Kanagaraj, in the near future.

As anticipation builds around this sibling collaboration, fans eagerly await further updates on the project and look forward to witnessing the dynamic duo's combined talents unfold on the silver screen.



Harish Shankar lauds Yevam teaser

The teaser of the *Yevam* opens with a captivating voiceover narrating a traditional Indian folktale, setting the stage for a story that explores the battle between good and evil. We see glimpses of Vasishtha Simha, the antagonist, harbouring a dark desire for Chandini Chowdary, the protagonist, who embodies strength as a police officer. The parallels drawn between Vasishtha and the mythological Indra, known for his lustful pursuits, further hint at the film's exploration of societal norms and the objectification of women.

Adding fuel to the excitement, renowned director Harish Shankar, who launched the teaser and even participated in the muhurtham shot, showered the project with praise. He commended the director's

unique vision, the high production quality, and the teaser's ability to hook viewers. This endorsement from a prominent filmmaker has only heightened anticipation for the film. Director Prakash Dantuluri's unconventional approach to promotion shines through. Each character poster released so far comes with a distinct tagline, offering a glimpse into their personalities. This strategy effectively builds intrigue and piques audience interest.

Yevam promises to be more than just a thrilling ride. The press release hints that the film will challenge societal norms and celebrate the strength of women. This focus on female empowerment adds another layer of depth and significance to the project. Produced by Navadeep and Pavan Goparaju, *Yevam* boasts a talented crew, including music composers Keertana Sesh and Neelesh Mandalapu. With a captivating teaser setting the stage, the film promises to be a cinematic milestone.



Sharwanand's Manamey releasing on June 7

Accomplished hero Sharwanand is all set to provide wholesome entertainment with his landmark 35th movie *Manamey*. Helmed by talented director Sriram Aditya and produced luxuriously by TG Vishwa Prasad under the banner of People Media Factory, the movie joins the summer race. To end the dry summer season, *Manamey* is coming on June 7, as officially announced by the makers.

Summer is one of the biggest seasons for films. However, this year, Tollywood did not witness the outing of even a decent number of releases. Audiences are waiting keenly for an out-and-out entertainer. Their wait ends in another couple of weeks with Manamey gracing the cinemas on June 7. The release date poster presents Sharwanand in a slick and sophisticated avatar in the suit with a laptop bag in his hand. He looks extremely joyful here with a charismatic smile on his face.

Each and every promotional material created hype for the movie. As the release date is not far off, they will up the game in promotions in the coming days. As shown in the teaser, Sharwanand,

and Krithi Shetty will be seen in contrasting roles in the movie where the kid Vikram Aditya will be seen in a crucial role.

This new-age entertainer has Sriram Aditya mark adequate entertainment which was observed in the teaser.

Vishnu Sharma and Gnana Shekar VS are the cinematographers, while Hesham Abdul Wahab scored the music.

Vivek Kuchibhotla is the co-producer, while Krithi Prasad and Phani Varma are the executive producers. Popular technician Prawin Pudi is the editor and Jonny Shaik is the art director. The dialogues for the movie are provided by Arjun Carthyk, Tagore, and Venky.



SPEED 220 RELEASING ON JUNE 7

The film *Speed 220* is ready to hit the screens worldwide on June 7. Produced by Vijayalakshmi Productions, this youthful romantic entertainer, directed by Harsha Bezawada, features Hemant and Ganesh as the lead actors, with Sneha Gupta and Jahnavi Sharma playing the

female leads. Currently, the post-production work and censor formalities are being completed, and the film unit is committed to releasing it on June 7, on a global scale.

Promotional materials, including videos and posters, are intriguing audiences. The first single from the film has already been released, featuring a special song by singer Geetha Madhuri, choreographed by Sneha Gupta. It has garnered significant attention on social media platforms. Another song, titled *Emotional Melody*, composed by Shekar Mopuri with lyrics by Suresh Gangu, was also released, receiving praise for its emotional depth. Both songs are gaining traction on YouTube.

The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) has already reviewed *Speed 220*, indicating positive feedback and raising expectations for a remarkable

cinematic experience. The filmmakers are confident that the movie will create a sensation among all sections of the audience. With grand promotions and high expectations, the movie is set to connect with the youth audience. The title *Speed 220* itself promises an exciting narrative, and audiences are eagerly awaiting its release on June 7th to discover the storyline along with its captivating songs.



PRERNA ARORA TO JOIN HANDS WITH OSCAR-WINNING COMPOSER KEERAVANI FOR HERO HEEROINE

Producer Prerna Arora, who has backed substantial films such as *Padman*, *Rustom*, *Toilet: Ek Prem Katha*, and *Pari*, is speculated to be joining forces with *Baahubali* and *RRR* fame music director and composer MM Keeravani for her upcoming film *Hero Heeroine*, a Suresh Krissna directorial. Arora, along with the Oscar-winning composer, are expected to bring together romantic commercial tracks to enhance the emotional narrative and add depth to the plot. This upcoming film boasts a starry ensemble cast including Divyah Khosla, Paresh Rawal, Tusshar Kapoor, Soni Razdan, and Suchitra Krishnamoorthi among others.

For *Hero Heeroine*, an industry insider revealed that Prerna Arora and MM Keeravani are keen to incorporate romantic commercial numbers that will enhance the storytelling and emotional depth of the film. These songs will play a pivotal role in connecting the audience with the characters and their relationships, adding layers of depth and nuance to the narrative. The film's first schedule is slated to hit the floors in June in Hyderabad, and promises to tell a tale of love, music and also bring back the brilliance of Indian cinema. The makers are yet to reveal the titular 'Hero' of the film. If sources close to the production are to be believed, this announcement will happen just before the shoot begins!



Rythu teaser introduces Tirupati character from Kanyakumari

Kanyakumari is a movie starring Geet Saini and Sricharan Rachakonda. Damodara is producing this film under the banner of Radical Pictures.

This movie, which is being made as a village backdrop entertainer, is getting ready for a grand theatrical release after completing all the preparations. Today, the teaser for *Rythu* was released, introducing the character of Tirupati from the movie *Kanyakumari*.

The *Rythu* teaser portrays a five-acre farmer, Tirupati, from Pentapadu in the Srikakulam district. Tirupati, who has studied up to the seventh standard, is engaged in agriculture. This career becomes an obstacle to his marriage. Wherever he goes to seek a match, he is told that their daughters will only marry a working man.

Tirupati is looked down upon as a farmer. He challenges those who belittle him by saying that he will marry a well-educated girl. The movie will reveal whether this young farmer can meet this challenge. The funny and interesting teaser of *Rythu* is impressive.





DK BOOSTED ME WHEN I STRUGGLED IN IPL 2022: KOHLI

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Former India batter Virat Kohli has paid tribute to Dinesh Karthik after his retirement at the end of RCB's IPL campaign, describing the veteran wicketkeeper-batter as a wise and honest person who lifted his spirits during a phase of struggle in the league's 2022 season.

The 38-year-old, who joined Royal Challengers Bengaluru from Kolkata Knight Riders in 2022 for his second stint after 2015, played his last IPL match on Wednesday when RCB were eliminated by Rajasthan Royals in the playoffs.

"Off the field, I have had some really nice and interesting conversations with him. He is a wise man, and has great knowledge about a lot of things, not just cricket," Kohli said in a special tribute video posted by RCB.

The little over 11-minute video features tributes from Karthik's wife, Dipika Pallikal Karthik; his personal mentor, Abhishek

Nayar; RCB assistant coach, Malolan Rangarajan; and fitness coach, Shanker Basu. Kohli recalled the 2022 season when he averaged just 22.73 scoring 341 runs from 16 matches as they missed the final bus losing to Rajasthan Royals in the second qualifier.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my conversations with him. Even in that phase in 2022 when I did not have a great IPL season, I was really struggling for confidence," he recalled.

"He sat me down a couple of times and just gave me a very honest explanation of how he saw things and maybe I am not able to see them myself," Kohli added.

A veteran campaigner in the IPL, Karthik has been involved in all the editions of the league since the inaugural 2008 season and has represented six franchises, including leading KKR to the playoffs in 2018. He ended with 4,842 runs in 257 matches with 22 fifties.

"I just like his honesty, his courage to go and speak to



anyone about things that he really feels about. And that, I think, is the most special thing for me when it comes to Dinesh. "And that's something that I've always cherished about him. And that's why we get along really, really well."

A CORRECT PLAYER: Kohli also hailed Karthik as a technically "correct" and versatile batter.

"I always looked at Dinesh and felt like he was such a correct player technically that he could adapt to any kind of role that's been given to him, and I remember watching him in the 2013 season where he got 600 runs or something and he batted brilliantly at three.

"I saw him play shots which were like 'wow'. I think he's done brilliantly to switch and become a renowned finisher.

"...I wish him all the very best for all his future endeavours moving forward." Kohli hoped that Karthik would stay connected to the RCB franchise in some capacity.

"...Because his expertise when

it comes to cricket is priceless. I think he's of great value to this franchise," he said.

'HYPERACTIVE, CONFUSED PERSON': Recalling his first meeting with Karthik during India's tour of South Africa in 2009, Kohli said at first, he found him to be a hyperactive and confused person moving all over the place.

"The first time I met him, I remember we were playing in South Africa if I am not wrong in the Champions Trophy 2009. It was the first time I shared the change room with Dinesh, and I found him to be very amusing, very... I would say hyperactive, confused person. "Most of the time, he was moving all over the place, never stopping. That was my first impression of Dinesh.

"He is an outstanding talent, brilliant batter to watch and my first impression and the present-day impression are not far — just that he has become wiser and calmed down a lot," Kohli added.

No reason for Dhoni to stop playing: Kaif

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Former India batter Mohammad Kaif feels there is no reason why Mahendra Singh Dhoni should not play the next season of the IPL, given his form, fitness and ability to play big shots with ease.

Speculation has been rife that Dhoni, who has led CSK to five IPL titles, could have played his last IPL season.

The former CSK skipper, who had undergone surgery to treat a knee injury issue last year, scored 161 runs in 73 balls at a strike rate of 220.55 this season. He was also good behind the stumps.

Kaif thinks Dhoni has enough left in the tank to keep playing. "Personally, I don't think he's done, he could not win the game (last league match against RCB). In the last over after hitting a six, he got out. You could make out seeing his



body language that he seemed very disappointed not winning the game for CSK," Kaif, a cricket expert with Star Sports, told PTI Videos.

"Why he should not come back? He is fit, he is scoring runs and hitting sixes, and there's no reason to stop playing... It's up to him, we can't say with Dhoni what's his plan," added Kaif, regarded as one of India's greatest fielders.

20 points.

"He (Iyer) missed the whole IPL last year and KKR probably missed his captaincy in 2023. The way he is changing the bowlers, and picking his playing XI, he looks very calm under pressure.

"In a tournament like the IPL, you have to be very composed, you have to know what's happening in the game and Iyer has come a long way. He has become a much better captain now," opined Kaif.

Experts are also attributing KKR's success this season to Gautam Gambhir returning to the side as the team mentor but Kaif said the team's superb run had got a lot to do with how Iyer marshals his boys on the field.

"We always talk about (Gautam) Gambhir, but he can't enter the field... In the rope with the players. Iyer has been there with the players

and it will help him grow as a person and player.

"He missed out on the (T20) World Cup this year (beginning in the US and West Indies next month), but certainly it's great learning for him, captaining the team, leading it to the finals. He has a great future ahead," said Kaif.

Kaif said KKR were the overwhelming favourites to lift the IPL trophy this season given that they have quality bowlers and a balanced side, the two ingredients required to win.

"I think KKR is a very well-balanced side. Tournament-winning team has to have good bowlers, KKR has got the bowlers. You saw how (Mitchell) Starc bowled against (SRH in Qualifier 1), it's a balanced side. KKR has got all bases covered in terms of batting and bowling. They are the team to beat in IPL, they are way ahead."

Shah denies approaching Aussies for coach job



PTI ■ MUMBAI

BCCI secretary Jay Shah on Friday rejected claims that the Board has approached any former Australian cricketer to be India's next head coach and hinted that Rahul Dravid's successor could be an Indian by saying that he should have a "deep understanding" of the game's structure in the country.

While Dravid has reportedly told the board that he is not interested in a third stint, former Australian players like Ricky Ponting and Justin Langer have claimed that they have turned down approaches for the high-profile position.

"Neither I nor the BCCI have approached any former Australian cricketer with a coaching offer. The reports circulating in certain media sections are completely incorrect," Shah said in a statement.

Both Ponting and Langer are involved in the Indian Premier League as the head coaches of Delhi Capitals and Lucknow Super Giants respectively. World Cup-winning former batting star Gautam Gambhir, who is currently mentoring Kolkata Knight Riders, is speculated to be among the top contenders for the post right now.

"Finding the right coach for our national team is a meticulous and thorough process. We are focused on identifying individuals who possess a deep understanding of the Indian cricket structure and have risen through the ranks," Shah said.

The BCCI secretary also said that having in-depth knowledge of Indian domestic cricket will be one of the important criteria for appointing the next coach. He said the understanding would be crucial to "truly elevate Team India to the next level."

Ponting had claimed on Thursday that he was

approached to take over the role but said that he declined as it did not fit with his "lifestyle" right now.

Ponting told ICC review, "I've seen a lot of reports about it. Normally these things pop up on social media before you even know about them, but there were a few little one-on-one conversations during the IPL, just to get a level of interest from me as to whether I would do it."

"I'd love to be a senior coach of a national team, but with the other things that I have in my life and wanting to have a bit of time at home...everyone knows if you take a job working with the Indian team you can't be involved in an IPL team, so it would take that out of it as well," he said.

Taking up the job of coaching India also implies spending 10-11 months away from home but Ponting said his family seemed ready for it.

"...I had a whisper to my son about it, and I said, 'Dad's been offered the Indian coaching job' and he said, 'Just take it, dad, we would love to move over there for the next couple of years,'" he said.

"That's how much they love being over there and the culture of cricket in India, but right now it probably doesn't exactly fit into my lifestyle," Ponting said.

Meanwhile, Langer, who had remained noncommittal about applying for India coaching role after IPL clash between LSG and Mumbai Indians, said he would "never say never" but at the same time revealed receiving crucial advice from Lucknow skipper KL Rahul.

Langer told BBS Stumped Podcast, "It would be an amazing job. I also know that it's an all-encompassing role, and having done it for four years with the Australian team, honestly, it's exhausting. And that's the

Australian job."

"You never say never. And the pressure of doing it in India... I was talking to KL Rahul and he said, 'You know, if you think there's pressure and politics in an IPL team, multiply that by a thousand, (that is) coaching India. That was a good bit of advice, I guess,' Langer said.

"It would be an awesome job, but not for me at the moment," he added.

Former England and current Royal Challengers Bengaluru head coach Andy Flower had also ruled himself out of the race saying he is happy being involved in franchise cricket for now.

Chennai Super Kings chief executive Kasi Viswanathan has done the same for Stephen Fleming claiming the former New Zealand captain won't be keen on taking a job which requires him to work "nine-ten months a year."

Shah described the position of India's head coach as the most prestigious job in international cricket, saying it demands high level of professionalism given the kind of support the national side enjoys.

"When we talk about international cricket, no role is more prestigious than that of the Head Coach of the Indian Cricket Team. Team India commands the largest fan base globally, enjoying support that is truly unrivalled," he said.

"Our rich history, passion for the game make this one of the most lucrative jobs in the world. The role demands a high level of professionalism as one gets to nurture some of the best cricketers in the world and an assembly line of talented cricketers to follow.

"Catering to the aspirations of a billion fans is a huge honour and the BCCI will pick the right candidate, capable of propelling Indian cricket forward," Shah added.

OTHER SPORTS



Indian junior men hockey team loses 4-5 against Dutch local club

PTI ■ ANTWERP (BELGIUM)

Indian men's hockey team will hope to iron out the flaws ahead of the Paris Olympics, while the women's team under new skipper Salima Tete will look to overcome the disappointment of not qualifying for the Summer Games, when the gruelling European leg of the FIH Pro League commences here with matches against Argentina on Wednesday.

The men's team under drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh is coming into the tournament following a 0-5 Test series whitewash at the hands of Australia and would look to make the most of the opportunity in Europe to get back to winning ways ahead of the Paris Games.

"Undoubtedly, we are focused on the Olympics but we also need to give our best to finish as champions (in Pro League) and secure direct qualification for the 2026 Hockey World Cup as well," said Harmanpreet, whose team is currently placed third with 15 points from eight Pro League games. Netherlands are leading the charts with 26 points (12 matches), while Australia are on 20 points (8 matches).

"To achieve both these targets (doing well ahead of Olympics and secure direct qualification for 2026 World Cup), we will strive to give our all on the pitch

and win all our matches," the skipper added.

Besides Argentina, the Indian men's team will also test their Olympic preparations against Belgium, Germany and Great Britain. The Indian women, currently placed sixth on the Pro League table, have a chance to climb up the table when they take on world No.7 Argentina on Wednesday.

The world No.6 side has earned eight points from an equal number of games in the Pro League home leg, registering victories against the United States and Australia.

Newly-appointed captain Salima said the friendlies against South Africa in India earlier this month had helped her team prepare for the European leg of the Pro League.

"We played practice matches against South Africa (in India) to prepare for these Hockey Pro League matches. The point difference between us and second-placed China is just seven points," said Tete in a Hockey India release.

"We (will) aim to close this gap in the remaining matches against Argentina, Belgium, Germany, and Great Britain in a bid to finish as high as we can," she added. China are placed second on the table with 15 points from eight games, while leaders Netherlands are on 36 points with an all-win record in 12 games.

Delhi HC appoints administrative committee for Equestrian Federation of India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has appointed an ad-hoc administrative committee under its retired judge to run the affairs of the Equestrian Federation of India (EFI) following allegations of "impropriety" in its functioning.

Justice Tara V Ganju said, ordinarily, a court does not interfere in the administration of a national sports federation but when there is "clear impropriety" and the administration is being carried

on in an "arbitrary" or "perverse" manner, the situation cannot be ignored. The court said the ad-hoc administrative committee (AAC) shall have former high court judge Justice Najmi Waziri as its chairperson, former Chief Election Commissioner S Y Quraishi as observer/member and advocate Rohini Musa as member.

The order came on a petition by Rajasthan Equestrian Association.

"Pending the conduct of elections, EFI cannot be left

without any office bearers.. This Court cannot in good conscience leave the functioning of the EFI solely in the hands of those office bearer(s) whose tenure has expired and who are acting in a capricious manner and in violation of the directives of the court," said the court in an order passed on May 21.

"Accordingly, the interest of justice would be served if an ad-hoc Administrative Committee is appointed to supervise the administration of the Respondent No. 1/EFI," the court ordered.

Atwal, Jeev open with 69s at seniors PGA Championships

PTI ■ BENTON HARBOR (US)

Indian golfers Arjun Atwal and Jeev Milkha Singh opened with identical rounds of 2-under 69 each and were Tied-19th at the end of the first round at the KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship, one of the Majors for the Seniors, on the Champions Tour here.

As the Indian duo began strongly, leading the field in the USD 3.5 million seniors' event (over-50s), were Australian Richard Green and Englishman Richard Bland, who shot 7-under 64 each at Harbor Shores.

Green hit all 13 fairways and 17 of the 18 greens in regulation en route to the 64.

Green shared the lead with Englishman Richard Bland, playing his first over-50s event. Bland showed great overall form and did not miss a fairway until the eighth hole, which was his 17th of the day. He was bogey free on his debut on the PGA TOUR Championships.

Defending champion Steve Stricker opened with a 5-under 66 and was among five players



with 66.

Jeev, playing from the first alongside Italian Emanuele Canonica (69) and Jeff Schmid (66), opened on the first with three pars and then had a great run. He birdied the fourth and then had three in a row from seventh to ninth to turn in an impressive 4-under.

On the back, he missed a couple of birdie chances but was hit by a double bogey on Par-4 12th and no more birdies or bogeys to finish with 69.

Atwal, the only Indian to have won on the main PGA TOUR,

began on the 10th with a birdie and added a second on the 12th. He dropped three shots in a row from 16th to 18th and turned in 1-over.

On the back nine, Atwal birdied the first, third and the ninth and bogeyed Par-4 sixth to finish in 69, while his playing partners Jake Reeves (89) and Kirk Triplett (75) struggled through the day.

Presidents Cup International team captain Mike Weir mixed six birdies with one bogey to open in 5-under 66 and was T-4. He played alongside Darren Clarke (67) and Ernie Els (70).