

sunday pioneer

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PoK is ours and we will take it:
Amit Shah

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Reliance Industries seeks
CCI NOD FOR
Viacom18-Star India merger

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Getting homeopathy
A PADMA
award

Dilse

QUOTE OF THE DAY
the pioneer

Even if there are celebrities in a drug case, no matter how big they are, don't spare them. Break the supply chain of ganja and narcotic drugs. People should be afraid to sell drugs and even to mention the word drugs.

- A Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister**DON'T MISS...****TG state song must be...**

Four days after the Telangana government met with Oscar award winner MM Keeravani over the composition of the 'Jaya Jaya he Telangana' song, the Telangana Cine Musician Association (TCMA) objected to taking the help of an AP person to compose the Telangana state song. TCMA President Mohan Ballepalli wrote an open letter to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy regarding this on Saturday. He said that the people of Telangana and the government should not forget the Telangana movement...

-PAGE: 4**First-time voters cast their ballot...**

Excited first-time voters in Delhi flaunted their inked fingers after exercising their ballot in the Lok Sabha polls and were unanimous in their demand for better employment opportunities in the government sector and changes in the country's education system. Over 2.52 lakh first-time voters cast their maiden votes in the elections in the city. At many polling booths, the first-time voters were also awarded certificates. Senior Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's daughter Miraya, a first-time voter, cast the ballot along with her...

-PAGE: 5**'Indian startup ecosystem is...**

The Indian startup ecosystem is mature, with multiple tailwinds that are poised to escalate India to become the third largest economy in the world, said AWS' Kumara Raghavan. In a conversation, Raghavan, Head, Startups, Amazon Web Services (AWS) India, and South Asia, discussed the vibrant Indian startup scene, noting its strength and innovation potential. "We are the 5th largest economy, we are trending towards becoming the 3rd largest... factors that will contribute to it are labor addition, infrastructure growth, and efficiency..."

-PAGE: 6**One in two adolescents with...**

One in every two adolescents having attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may have trouble managing their emotions, which can come out as explosive outbursts, depression or anxiety, according to a new study. People with ADHD have short-attention spans, along with hyperactivity, or restlessness, and impulsivity. Being a neurodevelopmental disorder, it is commonly diagnosed in children and adolescents but can persist into adulthood. It is known that people with ADHD have problems with self-control, which affects their ability to regulate and manage emotions. While these problems of emotion dysregulation were thought to be due to ADHD symptoms which impact an individual's...

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Break supply chain of narcotics: Revanth

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy took serious note of the drug menace during a review meeting on Saturday. The CM asked officials about the progress in eradicating ganja and drugs during the review meeting.

"We need to clamp down on cannabis and drugs in the state. We should work more actively regarding this. Conduct special drives in suspect areas. Keep special vigil in border areas. Break the supply chain of ganja and drugs," the CM said. They should be scared to supply drugs, the CM said.

"Even if there are celebrities in a drug case, no matter how big they are, don't spare them. If necessary, set up anti-drug teams. Encourage those who work effectively to eliminate drugs," he said. "Whatever it takes end the drug menace with an iron fist. Action

should be taken to make people scared even to hear the word drugs. Telangana should be made

drug-free. The TGNAB should be an example for other states in the country," he said.

**CM moots disaster management system for Hyd****PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy held a review meeting with officials on Saturday on monsoon preparedness during his visit to the Command Control Centre.

He suggested that a disaster management system should be created for Hyderabad by bringing

various departments under a single umbrella.

He asked officials to design a disaster management system taking the area inside the Outer Ring Road as a unit.

"The system should be designed to work 365 days, not just during the rainy season.

Continued on Page 2

Cyclone Remal may cause heat wave in TG

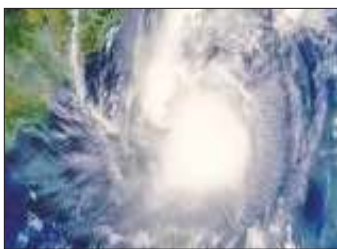
PNS ■ HYDERABAD

There is a strong possibility of a heat wave in some places in the state's southeast and eastern districts from May 26 to May 29.

The TSDPS forecast from May 25 to 31 says dry weather is expected next week. The overall rainfall deviation is likely to be below normal during the week.

Maximum temperatures are expected to be around three to four degrees Celsius above normal at some places and could range from 42 to 47 degrees Celsius. Mainly low-level Westerlies and North Westerlies will prevail over the State.

Weather Expert T. Balaji said on X, "Due to Cyclone Remal an intense heat wave would continue in some areas of Telangana with



temperatures ranging from 45 degrees Celsius to 46 degrees Celsius in North Telangana and 42 degrees Celsius in Hyderabad. Windy conditions are expected from Saturday due to north-westerly winds generated by the cyclone. Cool winds from Rajasthan can provide some respite from the heat to people who sleep on terraces at night."

2

'INDIA performing 'mujra' for its vote bank'

PNS ■ BUXAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday vowed to thwart alleged attempts to rob Dalits and backward classes of reservations by the INDIA bloc which he accused of "enslavement" and performing "mujra" for Muslim vote bank.

Addressing back-to-back rallies in Buxar, Karakat and Patliputra Lok Sabha constituencies in Bihar, the prime minister also charged the opposition coalition with indulging in "scaremongering", and claimed that he had been working "without fear" to wipe out terrorism and root out corruption.

"Bihar is the land which has given a new direction to the fight for social justice. I wish to declare on its soil that I will foil the plans of the INDIA bloc to rob SCs, STs and

OBCs of their rights and divert these to Muslims. They may remain enslaved and perform 'mujra' to please their vote bank," the PM said.



2

'Modi should maintain dignity of PM post'**PNS ■ GORAKHPUR**

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra Saturday hit out PM Narendra Modi for his "mujra" remark to target the INDIA bloc, and said no prime minister has ever used such words for opposition leaders in the history of the country.

She said the entire country



respects the post of prime minister and it is his responsibility to maintain the dignity of the post.

Continued on Page 2**Govt will make Hyd global investment destination: Uttam****PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Civil Supplies and Irrigation Minister Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy said the Congress Government is committed to making Hyderabad a premier destination for global investments in all sectors like construction, IT and manufacturing.

He said that he is confident that Hyderabad will soon become one of the best investment destinations globally.

Uttam was speaking after inaugurating the West Hyderabad Property Expo 2024 at Naren Garden in Miyapur in Hyderabad on Saturday.

2

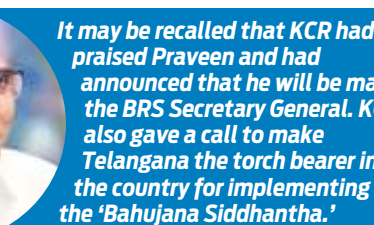
BRS brass wants to fill Keshav Rao's slot with Praveen Kumar

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

Bureaucrat-turned-politician RS Praveen Kumar is emerging as a key leader in the BRS. It appears that the BRS leadership is planning to fill the slot of senior politician K. Keshav Rao with Praveen.

After the BRS's defeat in the Assembly elections Keshav Rao left the BRS and returned to the Congress. Keshav Rao who is known as an intellectual had become the right hand man of KCR after he joined the BRS.

KCR made Keshav Rao a Member of the Rajya Sabha twice. He was also BRS Parliamentary Party leader and the BRS Secretary General.



It may be recalled that KCR had praised Praveen and had announced that he will be made the BRS Secretary General. KCR also gave a call to make Telangana the torch bearer in the country for implementing the 'Bahujana Siddhantha.'

Meanwhile, RS Praveen Kumar, a retired IAS officer, joined the BSP and started his political career. Praveen is also known as an intellectual, has a clean image, and was a sincere officer while in government service.

Like Keshav Rao, Praveen Kumar is also highly educated. While Keshav Rao belongs to the BCs, Praveen is a Dalit. In a significant development earlier Praveen had left

the BSP and joined the BRS.

After joining the BRS, Praveen was given the Nagarkurnool Lok Sabha ticket in the recent Lok Sabha elections.

Earlier, Keshav Rao was seen on all important occasions besides KCR.

Now Praveen is seen at all programmes besides KCR and KCR is also giving more importance to Praveen.

It may be recalled that KCR had praised Praveen and had announced that he will be made the BRS General Secretary. KCR also gave a call to make Telangana the torch bearer in the country for implementing the 'Bahujana Siddhantha.'

2

27 killed in Rajkot game zone fire

PNS ■ RAJKOT

At least 27 persons, including children, were killed in a massive fire that swept through a game zone teeming with people enjoying a summer vacation outing in Gujarat's Rajkot city on Saturday evening, officials said.

Relief and Rescue operations have been underway at the affected TRP game zone for more than five hours after the blaze erupted at a fibre dome constructed for gaming activities at around 4:30 pm, officials said, adding that the structure collapsed due to the huge fire.

"So far we have confirmed the death of 22 persons in the fire incident. The bodies are completely charred and it is difficult to identify them," said Assistant



Commissioner of Police (ACP) Vinayak Patel.

According to eyewitnesses, several people, including children were playing games at the game zone, located on Nana-Mava Road, when the tragedy struck.

2

CM must order CBI probe into graft in Civil Supplies Dept: Maheshwar**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Demanding that the Chief Minister should order a CBI probe into the corruption in the Civil Supplies Department, BJP leader Alleti



Maheshwar Reddy said that Congress leaders are collecting RUB (Revanth Reddy, Uttam Kumar Reddy, Bhatti Vikramarka) tax in the state. Addressing the media at the State BJP office here on Saturday, Maheshwar asked Civil Supplies Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy to explain why he is not answering the corruption allegations levelled by him.

Continued on Page 2**OBTUSE ANGLE****PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

The Governor of Jharkhand, Telangana and the Lt. Governor of Puducherry, CP Radhakrishnan, voted in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections at Ranchi on Saturday.

Standing in queue with other voters and waiting for his turn to vote, the Governor exemplified the spirit of democracy and equality. His gesture was met with admiration by fellow voters.

'All We Imagine as Light' wins Grand Prix award at Cannes

PNS ■ CANNES

Filmmaker Payal Kapadia on Saturday scripted history as her spell-binding drama "All We Imagine as Light" won the Grand Prix award at the 2024 Cannes Film Festival.

The film bagged the award, which is the second-most prestigious prize of the festival after the Palme d'Or, during the closing ceremony of the 77th edition.

Kapadia's feature directorial debut, which screened on Thursday night and has received glowing reviews in the international press, already registered its name in the history books after it became the first Indian film in 30 years and first ever by an Indian

The screening of the film received an eight-minute standing ovation from the audience members.



female director to be showcased in the main competition. The screening of the film received an eight-minute standing ovation from the audience members.

"All We Imagine as Light", a Malayalam-Hindi feature, is about Prabha, a nurse, who receives an unexpected gift from her long

estranged husband that throws her life into disarray. Her younger roommate, Anu, tries in vain to find a private spot in the big city to be alone with her boyfriend. One day the two nurses go on a road trip to a beach town where the mystical forest becomes a space for their dreams to manifest, according to the plotline.

PM Modi expresses grief at loss of lives**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday expressed grief at the loss of lives in a fire tragedy in Gujarat's Rajkot and said the local administration is working

to provide all possible assistance to those affected. Modi said on X, "Extremely distressed by the fire mishap in Rajkot. My

thoughts are with all those who have lost their loved ones. Prayers for the injured. The local administration is working to provide all possible assistance to those affected."

Rescue operations are underway at the affected TRP game zone and officials feared the count of casualties may go up as several children were present at the spot due to the ongoing summer vacation and weekend.



Revanth's stamp on CMO files

A former chief minister of combined Andhra Pradesh is notorious for his notation 'not approved' on almost all key files that reached his table. To avoid losing their files in the heap of such files on his desk, people concerned used to give him whatever he wanted so that the CM could simply add 'e' to the original notation for file movement. Thus, the file, with 'not approved' modified seamlessly as 'note approved', used to move with lightning speed. Likewise, other chief ministers had their own style of clearing files. 'Yatha Raja tatha praja'; so, in government offices it is common to find dust-laden files kept pending for years, whatever the reason. But TG Chief Minister Revanth Reddy seems determined to set a new trend. The files that reach his table are cleared in a maximum of two or three days. He either clears them or records his comments. People in the know of how CMO works say Revanth is unlike his immediate predecessor K Chandrasekhkar Rao, who at one point of time had 12,000 pending files! Revanth in fact has upped the ante so much that his ministerial colleagues and their respective teams are finding it hard to catch up with him. While a few are trying to match his speed, other seasoned leaders wink at the need for keeping pace with him. Several ministers are keeping their files pending, while prioritising some of them on the basis of whether the individual concerned is manavaadu.

Keeravani was CBN's choice for TG state anthem score

Most Telanganites are no doubt elated that Oscar Award-winning music composer MM Keeravani is set to compose the state anthem for Telangana based on writer and playback singer Ande Sri's hugely popular Jaya Jaya He 'Telangana' song that had amplified people's voice during the statehood movement. Interestingly, there is an 'Andhra' background score to what is now emerging as a Keeravani musical. It is learnt that AP's former CM and TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu recommended the Oscar-winning composer for the TG song. CBN has a penchant for involving artistes in works that appeal to the public so that the required hype is on autopilot. It may be recalled that CBN

had roped in director S S Rajamouli for his designs to build Amaravati. The saving grace is that even BRS top leadership has so far not objected to the decision to engage AP-born Keeravani for the state song.

BRS leaders still do not know their job as opposition party

Reporters ought not to struggle to get responses from opposition leaders, who, by default, may not be as busy as leaders of the ruling party. However, BRS bigwigs, despite switching sides in the Assembly, continue to behave as if they are still the ruling party. They are usually tight-lipped when asked to comment on burning issues or simply remain inaccessible. They unabashedly drive the narrative 'Media is against us'. When they feel like reaching out to the media, they do so with a single-point agenda and refuse to take questions related to other subjects. This happens more often with

According to Jagga Reddy, Modi has never done this before. "Modi is doing it in this manner because he is afraid of his defeat this time," he added, while distributing photographs of the PM wearing North East States' traditional clothes as proof. While shutterbugs accepted the evidential visuals dutifully, one of the scribes raised a point of order, saying that AICC former president Rahul Gandhi too wore traditional clothes and danced with local folks. Realising his gaffe, Jagga Reddy asked the photographers to discard their pieces of evidence, saying the scribe had a point. He then conceded that Rahul wore traditional clothes and even danced with local folks in Sangareddy during the Telangana leg of his Bharat Jodo Yatra.

Clean break with name or surname?

Netas do make novel pledges or throw formidable challenges to win public admiration. In the high-profile keenly-fought electoral contest in Pithapuram, seasoned politician Mudragada Padmababham pledged during his campaign that he would change his name should Jana Sena President Pawan Kalyan win from the seat. From YSRCP former MP Vanga Geetha contested from this seat. Although it is not clear as to who will win from the seat, the followers of both the parties are claiming victory of their respective leaders. The larger, more interesting question doing the rounds in political circles is: How should Mudragada Padmababham modify his name if Pawan Kalyan wins. Should he make a clean break with his first name or surname? Or, settle for a new combo? Anti-Mudragada people say that he should change his name to 'Padmanabha Reddy' since he had joined YSRCP headed by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. The followers of Mudragada are very confident that such a situation will not arise for their leader in the first place. In the worst case scenario, they say, their leader must go with 'Nabham MP' (Mudragada Padma implied), considering his role as an ace parliamentarian!

(With inputs from Naveena Ghanate, K Venkateswarlu and SNCN Acharyulu)

REPORTERS' DIARY

the party's working president K T Rama Rao, whose pressers are confined to a solitary topic. As the working president BRS, scribes expect him to confidently take a wide range of questions. This is in stark contrast to how things work with the Bharatiya Janata Party or the Congress. Some scribes did have the nerve to point out to the pink party brass: "That's not how the Opposition works". Still, things have not changed. It perhaps indicates their lack of knowledge.

Neta accepts scribe's point of order

During Assembly or Parliamentary sessions, when a member thinks that the rules of the House are being violated, he or she can make a Point of Order (that is, 'raise a question of order') thereby calling upon the chair for a ruling and an enforcement of the regular rules. Scribes too cheekily raise 'points of order' during their interactions with netas outside the House. On Friday, TPCC working president Jagga Reddy observed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had been wearing traditional clothes during his election campaign out of diffidence.

CPI, CPM, TJS leaders meet CM, back Mallanna



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The leaders of the CPI, the CPM and the TJS met Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on Saturday and the CM conducted a review meeting along with them on the MLC by-poll.

Later, speaking to the media, TPCC Working President B. Mahesh Kumar Goud said the CPI, the CPM and the TJS are supporting Congress candidate Theenmar Mallanna.

Mahesh said that Mallanna will win the graduate MLC by-poll with a huge margin.

CPI MLA Kunamneni Sambasivarao said that graduate voters have to ensure the victory of the Congress candidate.

He said that Theenmar Mallanna's victory is necessary if one wants to ensure the survival of democracy and called upon CPI activists to work for Mallanna's victory. He declared that the CPI is extending full support to Theenmar Mallanna.

TJS chief Prof. Kodandaram said the TJS supported the Congress and had opposed the BJP and the BRS during Assembly elections.

People have rejected lies, hatred and propaganda: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said on Saturday that people rejected lies, hatred and propaganda and gave priority to real issues related to their lives in the first five phases of the Lok Sabha elections.

He urged people to come out in large numbers in the sixth phase of the elections on Saturday and vote for their



rights and the future of their families. Gandhi and his

mother, former Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, exercised their franchise at a polling booth in New Delhi. After casting his vote, Gandhi also posted a picture with Sonia Gandhi, displaying their inked fingers. "In the first five phases of voting, you have rejected lies, hatred and propaganda and given priority to grassroots issues related to your life," Gandhi said in a post in Hindi on X. "Today is

the sixth phase of voting and your every vote will ensure that: Recruitment for 30 lakh vacant government posts and first job guarantee scheme of Rs 1 lakh per year is started for the youth. Rs 8,500 per month starts coming into the accounts of women from poor families. Farmers are debt free and they get the right MSP on their crops. Labourers get a daily wage of Rs 400," he said.

CM must order...

Continued from page 1

Maheshwar said that Uttam made his party activists file cases against him for exposing his corruption and that Uttam is avoiding giving an answer. He addressed an open letter to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy regarding the corruption in the Civil Supplies Department with 18 questions. He said that the Congress government is conspiring to blame the Centre regarding paddy procurement.

'Modi should maintain...

Continued from page 1

The prime minister has become nervous and has forgotten he is a representative of the country and of people, and such words should not have come out of his mouth, Vadra said here.

Earlier in the day, addressing rallies in neighbouring Bihar, Modi asserted he will foil opposition INDIA bloc's

"plans" to rob SCs, STs and OBCs of their quota and divert these to Muslims. "They (the opposition bloc) may remain enslaved and perform 'mujra' to please their vote bank," the PM said. Vadra responded to his statement at a joint election rally with SP chief Akhilesh Yadav in Gorakhpur in support of INDIA bloc candidate Kajal Nishad and Bansgaon candidate Sadal Prasad.

27 killed in Rajkot...

Continued from page 1

Rajkot Collector Prabhav Joshi said the Fire Control Room received a call at around 4:30 pm regarding the blaze at the game zone.

"Fire tenders and ambulances rushed to the spot to douse the flames. The fire caused the collapse of the structure, and debris is being cleared," Joshi added.

However, the exact cause of the massive fire is not known.

The state government has assigned the investigation to a Special Investigation Team (SIT).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed grief at the loss of lives in the fire tragedy and said the local administration is working to provide all possible assistance to those affected.

Modi spoke to Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel to enquire about the rescue and relief efforts.

Govt will make Hyd global...

Continued from page 1

He emphasised the government's commitment to ensuring a conducive environment for Hyderabad's growth, highlighting the importance of law and order, world-class infrastructure, a moderate climate and a talent pool.

"Our government will ensure ease of doing business and maintain perfect law and order," he assured.

'INDIA...

Continued from page 1

Modi also alleged that the people of Bihar have been hurt by insulting remarks against migrants of the state from leaders of the Congress in Punjab and Telangana and the DMK and the TMC in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal respectively, and claimed, "These RJD people who keep doing 'mujra' with their lantern (poll symbol) do not have the courage to speak a word in protest."

He also alleged that the opposition alliance was banking on the support of those who were indulging in "vote jihad" and referred to the Calcutta High Court order that struck down the West Bengal government's decision to include a number of Muslim groups on the list of OBCs.

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Uttam proposes a commission on environment and development

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

All forms of clean and renewable energy will be promoted by the government at a very rapid pace, reducing the production of energy by coal, Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies N Uttam Kumar Reddy said. The difference between the previous government and the present government is that "we are transparent and we stay grounded."

Uttam Kumar Reddy assured that he would do everything possible to promote renewable energy. He also mentioned that the solar energy tariff has come down to less than the cost of coal production, which is a very good sign.

He assured that a Commission on Environmental and Development would be proposed, stating that the government is ready to take any suggestions for sustainable development.

He was participating as a chief guest in the media workshop on "Clean Energy Transition in India: Focus on



Minister for Irrigation N Uttam Kumar Reddy speaking at a meeting on 'Clean Energy Transition in India: Focus on Telangana' in Hyderabad on Saturday

Telangana" at the Telangana Tourism Plaza hotel here on Saturday.

He said that by a series of coincidences and circumstances, he has been interested in renewable and clean energy and climate change issues for the last 20 to 25 years. He pointed out that as a member of Parliament, he was invited to speak at COP27

in Egypt in 2022. He also said that out of passion and interest, he has been addressing and speaking at many international forums on renewable energy, carbon emissions, and other subjects.

Uttam Kumar Reddy said he has been a member of Parliamentary standing Committee on Energy where many discussions were held

on reducing carbon emissions with targets set for 2030, 2050, and 2070. The Government of India also planned for Carbon Net Zero emissions by 2070, although many noted that none of us might be alive by then.

The Minister emphasised that targets needed to be set closer to the present, stressing that mankind has been exploiting resources in an unbridled fashion and that society has become hugely consumptive worldwide. He quoted Mahatma Gandhi, saying, "There is enough for everybody's need on this earth, but it is not enough for everybody's greed."

He said that mankind is singularly set to destroy the earth, which consists of millions of flora and fauna, and that we must own the earth and leave it to our children as it used to be.

He also said that despite all targets being set, carbon emissions and global warming are increasing, along with unbearable climate changes. He warned that "if we do not act now, our very existence will be doomed."

NOTA PRECLUDES UNANIMOUS ELECTION

State EC urged to declare None of the Above a fictional candidate

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Forum for Good Governance met State Election Commissioner C Partha Sarathi and urged him to declare NOTA (None of the Above) as a fictional candidate. It would preclude unanimous election of a candidate in elections to be held to local bodies

According to the Forum for Good Governance, when no candidate is preferred in an election, voters choose NOTA. However, voting for NOTA currently means rejecting all the candidates, and no significant action is taken regardless of how many votes NOTA receives.

The FGG said that in the State of Gujarat, to benefit a single candidate in a Parliamentary election, all other candidates withdrew their nominations. This situation also occurred in Madhya Pradesh.

A case is pending in the Supreme Court to declare NOTA as a fictional candidate and prevent unanimous elections.

In local body elections, State



Forum for Good Governance members submitting a memorandum to State Election Commissioner C Partha Sarathi in Hyderabad on Saturday

Election Commissions in Haryana, Maharashtra, and Delhi declared NOTA as a fictional candidate. This decision ensures that elections must be held regardless of NOTA votes.

In the 2019 Panchayat elections in Telangana, the position of Sarpanch was auctioned in some villages, and the highest bidder was elect-

ed without contest. This practice would rob people of their right to vote and is considered destructive.

Elections may be held soon in Telangana. The Forum for Good Governance has petitioned the State Election Commissioner to recognise NOTA as a fictional candidate in the State.

NALSAR invites applications for 2-year LLM course

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The NALSAR University of Law and Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) invite applications for the prestigious 2 Year L.L.M. programme in Insolvency and Bankruptcy Laws for 2024- 2026. The entrance exam has been scheduled on June 23 for 100 marks.

Online registrations for entrance exams have already started on the official website.

The online application form is available on the following websites www.nalsar.ac.in, www.llmibl.nalsar.ac.in. Application fee for general candidates is Rs 5,000, for OBC/PWD candidates is Rs 4,000 and for SC/ST/EWS category candidates should pay Rs 3,500 for apply for the course.

Candidates can download their halltickets on 20 June, personal interviews will be conducted on June 24, final results will be announced on July 15. While selecting a candidate, the marks calculated as an entrance exam weight would be 60 percent and personal interview (online mode) weighs 40 percent.

Shabbir Ali compliments officials for upkeep of Nehru Zoo Park

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Advisor to Government of Telangana and Former Minister Mohammed Ali Shabbir visited Nehru Zoological Park in the city, along with Shazia Parveen, Forest Officer, and family members on Saturday.

Sunil S Hiremath, Director and Curator of Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad, gave a warm welcome and briefed them about the zoo management, the role of the zoo in wildlife conservation, breeding programs, and the animal adoption scheme.

Mohammed Ali Shabbir took a tour of the zoo, visiting the safari park complex, reptile house, nocturnal animal house, and big cat enclosures.

After visiting all the animal enclosures, he expressed happiness and satisfaction with the zoo management.

Shabbir said, the zoo has a very good team of dedicated officers and staff working for



Advisor to Telangana government Mohammed Ali Shabbir along with others visiting Zoo Park on Saturday.

wildlife conservation and education. He also said, all the animals are very healthy and active, the enclosures are very impressive, and their night houses are well-maintained and hygienic.

He thanked all the officers and staff for their efforts to improve the zoo and for providing an opportunity to see all the animals in one place.

A. Nagamani, Deputy Curator, N.Z.P, Hyderabad, MA Hakeem, Deputy Director (Vet), N.Z.P, Hyderabad, A Satish Babu, AC-1, N.Z.P, Hyderabad, B. Laxman, AC-2, N.Z.P, Hyderabad, M.A. Rahim, Zoo Sergeant, N.Z.P, Hyderabad, H.M. Hanifulla, PRO, N.Z.P, Hyderabad accompanied the Advisor.



HMWSSB Managing Director C Sudarshan addressing the officials in Hyderabad on Saturday

HMWSSB gears up for monsoon woes

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In view of the pre-monsoon showers exposing the inundation in the city, the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) is getting ready for the monsoon in a prepared manner.

On Saturday, water board MD C Sudarshan Reddy held a meeting with the officials of the board and ordered them to prepare for the monsoon season with plans. During the meeting, he inquired about division-wise man holes, deep manholes, and water logging areas.

He ordered officials to repair the manholes before the onset of the rainy season. Officials should plan for the next few months. If stores do not have enough equipment, officials should buy every piece of machinery which is useful in the rainy season.

Sudarshan Reddy said that after the start of rains, officials should go to the water logging points daily. Those works should be inspected by Managers and other officials. It has been ordered to take measures to install safety grills, warning boards and red flags on manholes in all divisions.

USING GOOGLE MAPS

City-based tourists drive into stream in Kerala

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Using Google maps to navigate resulted in a tourist group from Hyderabad driving into a stream swollen with water near Kuruppanthara in this south Kerala district, police said on Saturday.

The incident occurred late Friday night when the four-member group, including a woman, were going towards Alappuzha.

The road they were travelling on was covered by water overflowing from the stream due to heavy rains and since the tourists were unfamiliar with the area, they drove right into the water body while navigating using Google maps, police said.

All four managed to escape unharmed due to the efforts of a nearby police patrolling unit and local residents, but their vehicle was completely



submerged under the water, an officer of Kaduthuruthy police station said.

The vehicle -- a Ford Endeavour -- was later pulled out of the stream using a crane.

Thereafter, the man who was driving the vehicle told reporters that he and his friends were going to Alappuzha from Munnar and they took the route shown by Google maps.

"At around 2-3 pm, it started raining very heavily. The road was waterlogged. I was going very slow at around 10 kms per hour. But, suddenly

the front tyres went deep into the water and the vehicle lost control.

"Then the rear tyres also went in and the vehicle started floating forward. We quickly pulled down the windows and jumped out. We somehow managed to safely reach the shore," he said.

Meanwhile, residents of the area said such accidents happen there during the rainy season when the road gets submerged.

This is not the first such Google map-related accident reported in Kerala.

In October last year, two young doctors died in a car accident which occurred after they allegedly followed directions on Google Maps and fell into a river.

Following the incident, the Kerala police had issued cautionary guidelines for using the technology during the monsoon season.

TGSRTC to seize Jeevan Mall if rent is not paid by May 30

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Road State Corporation (TGSRTC) on Saturday clarified that as per the High court orders the corporation can seize the Jeevan mall, if the Vishnujith Infra Developers Private Limited could not pay the rent to the tune of Rs 2.51 crore before May 30.

In a press release, the TGSRTC officials said that if they did not pay the dues, they would follow the court orders. It meant that they would seize the mall on the next day of the



dead line. "If the rent is not paid on time, the mall can be taken over without giving any prior notice", the press release reads. On Friday, the TGSRTC gave permission to open the Jeevan Reddy Mall and Multiplex keeping in mind the sub-lessees as directed by the High Court.

It may be important to mention here that TGSRTC has given 7,059 square yards of land lease to Vishnujith Infra Developers Private Limited near Armoor Bus Station in Nizamabad District in 2013 for 33 years.

Counting will start at 8 am on June 4th

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad District Electoral Officer (DEO) Ronald Rose said that a total of 16 counting centres have been set up in the district for the counting of votes on June 4. There will be supervision to ensure that the counting of votes is done segment wise, the counting will start at 8 am and the counting of votes will start at the appointed time.

As part of the Lok Sabha elections, training classes on counting process were conducted for Micro Observers, Counting Supervisors, Counting Assistants and AROs at Komaram Bheem Adivasi Building in Banjara Hills on Saturday. Where, he said that the regulations of the Election Commission of India (ECI) should be followed without any mistakes. On counting day, if any technical snag arises in the EVMs dur-



Hyderabad District Electoral Officer Ronald Rose explaining the vote counting process on Saturday in Hyderabad

ing the counting of votes, experts will be available and correct them.

Ronald Rose said that according to the ECI's instructions, 14 tables are being set up in each hall for the counting of votes in all segments and the counting will be done round wise. Each table will have a micro observer, counting supervisor and counting assistant. The role of micro-observers is very crucial in the

process of counting votes transparently and they have to give each round-wise report to the election observers.

He has clarified that mobile phones are not allowed inside the counting hall. Officials should have full understanding of all the matters related to the counting process.

The Hyderabad District Collector and Returning Officer Anudeep Durishetti explained to the officers the

Ronald Rose said that according to the ECI's instructions, 14 tables are being set up in each hall for the counting of votes in all segments and the counting will be done round wise

process related to VVPAT slips counting and postal ballot counting.

Secunderabad constituency Returning Officer Hemant Keshav Patil, Secunderabad Cantonment Joint CEO, Additional Commissioner (UBD) District Election Training Nodal, AROs, Micro Observers, Counting Supervisors, Counting Assistants, and other officers participated in the meeting.

Mentally ill person arrested, admitted in mental care hospital

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Panjagutta police arrested a 25-year-old mentally challenged person on Friday on charge of stealing two bikes and set fire to a two wheeler. After being produced in the court, the police shifted the accused to the mental care at Erragadda here.

On May 22, a two-wheeler which was parked in front of the Panjagutta Police Station compound wall was set on fire. On the same day, another two-wheeler was stolen from the same place. Through CCTV footage the police had identified the person as Mohd Feroz Khan alias Pavan.

Later, while he was moving

within the limits of the Lake Police Station with the stolen two-wheeler in a suspicious manner and upon questioning, the accused gave incoherent answers to the police. The Lake Police handed him over to the Panjagutta Police. Upon inquiry, Panjagutta Police discovered that accused Mohd Feroz Khan was mentally unsound and had previously been treated at Erragadda Mental Hospital. Later the police found out that he set fire to the vehicle, while in a mentally impaired condition.

The accused was produced before the court and admitted in Mental Hospital, Erragadda in Hyderabad.

RAVE PARTY

MAA urges media not to slander Hema

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As Telugu cine actress Hema's name is being used in the rave party case in Bangalore, The Movie Artist Association (MAA) president Manchu Vishnu on Saturday urged people and media to not come to a conclusion and spread unverified information. Hema deserves to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

On Saturday, he took to social media X and posted that "Regarding the recent drug-related case at a rave party, few media outlets and individuals are making baseless allegations about actress

Hema". She is also a mother and a wife, and slandering her image based on rumors is unjust.

"The Movie Artist Association (MAA) condemns any illegal activities. If concrete evidence implicating Hema is provided by the police, MAA will take appropriate action. Until then, please avoid sensationalizing unsubstantiated news", he posted.

However, blood samples of 86 of 96 persons have tested positive, those who have participated in a rave party in Bengaluru.

Rampant illegal quarrying continues in RR district

PNS ■ RANGA REDDY

Ranga Reddy district is facing a crisis of epic proportions as quarrying continues unchecked, flouting regulations and exploiting public resources for private gain. Illegal quarrying operations, proliferating unchecked, are not only causing loss to government's exchequer of crores of rupees. It is also wreaking havoc on the environment and local communities.

The scale of the problem is staggering with illegal quarrying outnumbering the one authorized by the government. Ibrahimpatnam, Shadnagar,

Rajendranagar, Chevella, and Maheshwaram constituencies are among the hardest-hit areas, where the illicit acquisition of land adjacent to permitted zones facilitates unauthorised excavation with impunity.

Compounding the issue is the apparent nexus between local political figures and enforcement agencies, hampering any meaningful efforts to enforce law. Despite repeated complaints from affected locals, including farmers and villagers, concerns over pollution, noise pollution, and encroachment on agricultural land continue to be disregarded.



ed.

The uncontrolled proliferation of crushers, both legal and illegal, is wreaking havoc on villages with pollution levels skyrocketing and health risks

multiplying. The noise and air pollution from quarry blasting are not only impacting residents but also jeopardising agricultural productivity. Reports of diminished crop

yields, scarcity of livestock fodder, and a surge in respiratory ailments due to crusher dust exposure are on the rise.

Furthermore, the transportation of quarry materials exacerbates the situation, with overloaded vehicles damaging roads and posing a constant safety threat.

Despite regulatory mandates, authorities responsible for monitoring vehicle weights and speeds are accused of negligence, compounding the villagers' woes.

Another pressing concern is the depletion of groundwater, exacerbated by the failure of quarry owners to rehabilitate

mined areas properly. Instead of backfilling pits as required, owners abandon quarries, disrupting local hydrology and exacerbating water scarcity in villages like Lakudaram.

In response to these dire circumstances, urgent action is imperative.

Authorities must take decisive measures to rein in the quarry mafia, rigorously enforce regulations, and safeguard the interests of local communities.

Failure to act swiftly could have devastating consequences for both the environment and the well-being of residents across Ranga Reddy district.

WIPO concludes new treaty to protect genetic resources

India plays key role

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Members of Geneva-based World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) have concluded an agreement under which it will be mandatory for patent applicants to disclose country of origin or source of genetic resources if the claimed invention is based on those materials or associated traditional knowledge.

The treaty will provide additional protection for Indian genetic resources and traditional knowledge. Although these are currently protected within India, they are prone to misappropriation in countries, which do not have disclosure obligations.

The current patent legislation does not have a mandatory provision requiring patent appli-



The WIPO treaty on "intellectual property, genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge" is a significant win for countries of the global South and for India, which is a hub of biodiversity hotspots with abundance of traditional knowledge, and wisdom.

cants to disclose the country of origin or source in case where the invention is based on genetic resources. At present, only 35 countries have some form of disclosure obligations, most of

which are not mandatory and do not have appropriate sanctions or remedies in place for effective implementation.

The new treaty was adopted on May 24 at the WIPO headquarters in Geneva after 192 countries and 86 observers

changes in their existing legal framework for enforcing disclosure of origin obligations on patent applicants.

Genetic resources (GRs) are present in things like medicinal plants, agricultural crops, and animal breeds. While genetic resources themselves cannot be directly protected as intellectual property, inventions developed using them can, most often through a patent.

Some genetic resources are also associated with traditional knowledge (ATK) through their use and conservation by indigenous peoples as well as local communities, often over generations. This knowledge is sometimes used in scientific research and, as such, may contribute to the development of a protected invention.

participated in the two-week negotiations from May 13-24 at a Diplomatic Conference.

This treaty will require contracting parties, including the developed world, to bring

India seeking FTA with Maldives: Min

PNS ■ MALE

Maldives on Saturday said India has initiated efforts to create a Free Trade Agreement between the two countries and deliberations are ongoing for achieving it.

"They (India) want there to be a Free Trade Agreement with Maldives, in addition to SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Agreement)," Minister of Economic Development and Trade Mohamed Saeed told a press conference here.

The Maldives President has offered this opportunity to all countries, Saeed said, adding that the government aims to enter into agreements with as many countries as possible to offer ease in trade activities.

India's reported effort at seeking an FTA with the Maldives comes in the backdrop of an ongoing diplomatic row between the two countries since November last year when President Muizzu, known for his pro-China leanings,



took the oath. Within hours of his oath, he had demanded the withdrawal of Indian military personnel from his country. The last of the Indian military personnel were replaced by civilians earlier this month.

Meanwhile, the 1981 India and Maldives trade agreement provides for the export of essential commodities. According to the records from the Indian High Commission, growing from modest beginnings, India-Maldives bilateral trade crossed USD 300 million for the first time in 2021, which further crossed the USD 500 million mark in 2022.

Even without an FTA, India has offered concessions on several products to the Maldives, news portal Edition.mv quoted the minister as saying.

Reliance Industries seeks CCI nod for Viacom18-Star India merger

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani-promoted Reliance Industries has sought approval from fair trade regulator Competition Commission of India (CCI) for the USD 8.5-billion merger of Viacom18 and Star India Pvt Ltd (SIPL).

"The proposed transaction aims to combine the entertainment business (along with certain other identified businesses) of Viacom18, part of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) group and SIPL, wholly-owned by The Walt Disney Company (TWDC).

"As a result of the transaction, SIPL, currently a wholly-owned entity of TWDC through its subsidiaries, will become a joint venture (JV) which will be jointly held by RIL, Viacom18 and existing TWDC subsidiaries," a notice filed with the CCI said on Friday.

The proposed transaction

will not cause any appreciable adverse effect on competition in India, RIL said in the notice.

However, to facilitate the CCI's assessment, they have identified several key markets where horizontal overlaps were significant such as licensing of audio visual content rights, distribution of broadcast TV channels, provision of audio visual (AV) content, and supply of advertising space in India.

SIPL is engaged in a range of media activities, including TV broadcasting, motion pictures and operation of an OTT platform. It is a wholly-owned entity of US-based The Walt Disney Company (TWDC). Viacom18 is engaged in the business of broadcasting of television (TV) channels, operation of an over-the-top (OTT) platform, in India and worldwide.

It is also engaged in the business of production and distribution of motion pictures.



Reliance Power reports Rs 397 cr loss in Q4

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Power Ltd on Saturday reported a consolidated loss of Rs 397.66 crore during the March quarter, mainly on account of increased cost of fuel consumed.

It had posted Rs 321.79 crore profit in the year-ago period, the company said in an exchange filing.

The company's total income, however, increased to Rs 2,193.85 crore from Rs 1,853.32 crore a year ago.

Among expenses, its cost of fuel consumed increased to Rs 953.67 crore during the quarter from Rs 823.47 crore in the

January-March period in 2022-23.

For the full fiscal year, the company's losses widened to Rs 2,068.38 crore from Rs 470.77 crore loss in FY23.

The board of the company also "approved authorisations of members for issuance of foreign currency convertible bonds (FCCBs) and securities through qualified institutional placement (QIP). These shall be in terms of the applicable rules, regulations, guidelines, and laws, including Securities and Exchange Board of India".

Reliance Power has close to 6,000 MW of operational power generation assets.

‘Submit timely notifications on sugar subsidies in WTO’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A group of WTO member countries, including Brazil, Canada and the European Union, have urged India to submit timely notifications on sugar subsidies in the World Trade Organisation, an official said.

The issue came up for discussion during the meeting of the WTO's agriculture committee on May 23-24 in Geneva.

These countries are also major sugar exporters like India and they allege that support measures by India distort



global sugar trade.

Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Paraguay, New Zealand, the EU, and Guatemala have "urged India to submit timely notifications on the subsidies",

the Geneva-based official said. India has stated that the Indian central and state governments neither paid for nor procured sugarcane from farmers, as all purchases were



AI's Mumbai-San Francisco flight takes off after inordinate delay

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Air India's flight to San Francisco from the city took off on Saturday evening after an inordinate delay due to multiple reasons.

The flight, which was originally scheduled to take off at 1600 hours on Friday, was delayed by over 25 hours, due to multiple reasons and rescheduled for Saturday.

Again on Saturday, the flight was initially expected to fly out in the morning but finally took off for San Francisco around 1730 hours, according to an official. Details about the number of passengers could not be ascertained. On Friday, passengers had to wait inside the aircraft for more than five hours before the flight was rescheduled for Saturday. An airline official had said the Boeing 777 plane, which was scheduled to take off at 1600 hours, was first delayed due to a technical glitch, then some passengers deboarded and subsequently, another passenger fell ill.

After deboarding the passenger who started feeling unwell around 1917 hours, it was noticed that by the time the flight would have reached San Francisco, there would be night-landing restrictions and also, the crew would have crossed the flight-duty limitations, the official had said on Friday.

New plant of Indian pharmaceutical company inaugurated in Bangladesh

PNS ■ DHAKA

India has been a credible partner in the growth story of Bangladesh's pharmaceutical industry, its envoy here said on Saturday as a new plant of a leading Indian pharmaceutical company was inaugurated in this country.

Private Industry and Investment Adviser of Bangladesh Prime Minister Salman F Rahman and Indian High Commissioner to



Bangladesh Pranay Verma jointly inaugurated the new plant of Sun Pharma at Meghna Industrial Economic Zone in the Sonargaon upazila

of Narayanganj district at the bank of the river Meghna adjacent to the Dhaka-Chittagong highway, the UNB news agency reported.

Aurobindo Pharma Q4 net profit rises 79.6% to Rs 909 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aurobindo Pharma on Saturday reported a 79.6 per cent increase in consolidated net profit at Rs 909 crore for the March quarter.

The drug firm had reported a net profit of Rs 506 crore in the January-March quarter of the FY23 fiscal.

Revenue from operations rose to Rs 7,580 crore in the period under review as compared with Rs 6,473 crore in the year-ago period, Aurobindo Pharma said in a statement. For the financial year ended March 31, 2024, the drugmaker reported a net profit of Rs 3,173 crore as against Rs 1,927 crore in FY23.

The company's revenue from operations rose to Rs 29,002 cr in the last fiscal as against Rs 24,855 cr in FY23

India Global Forum to spotlight UK-India ties as bridge between elections in both countries

PNS ■ LONDON

The annual India Global Forum (IGF) in London is set to spotlight UK-India strategic ties bridged between general elections in both countries next month, with a line up of senior ministers, entrepreneurs and analysts weighing up the future trajectory of bilateral ties under newly elected governments.

IGF London, confirmed this week to be held between June 24 and 28, will cover the full spectrum of the partnership including the course of the free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations. The India-UK FTA talks began in January 2022 and are now stalled in the fourteenth round of talks as both countries stepped into their general election cycles this year.

"Regardless of which govern-



ments come to power, a series of opportunities, and certainly challenges, await them; that's why IGF London 2024 is set to be a crucial event in the diary, serving as a major economic and geopolitical stocktake, offering vital insights and informing the strategic direction for any new administration," said Manoj Ladwa,

Founder and Chairman of UK-headquartered strategic events platform India Global Forum. "As the world looks to India and vice versa, IGF London will be instrumental in shaping perspectives and strategies on both sides. It will not only analyse the current geopolitical climate but also create the essential pathways for collaborations and

innovations, far into the future," he said. The week-long event now in its sixth year, addressed by both British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Opposition Leader Keir Starmer in the past, will look ahead to the UK general election on July 4 and analyse the results of the Indian elections — out on June 4.

It is conceived as a platform for evaluating and course-setting for future UK-India relations and review the progress of the 2030 Roadmap, with thousands of high-level speakers and participants across 15 events at iconic venues in London and nearby in Windsor. IGF London will culminate in the annual UK-India Awards, which celebrate individuals and organisations driving the bilateral partnership forward.

MONEY MATTERS

I-T deptt notifies cost inflation index for current fiscal



The income tax department has notified the Cost Inflation Index for the current fiscal beginning April 2024, for calculating long-term capital gains arising from sale of immovable property, securities and jewellery. The Cost Inflation Index (CII) is

used by taxpayers to compute gains arising out of sale of capital assets after adjusting inflation. The CII for financial year 2024-25, relevant to assessment year 2025-26, stood at 363, as per a notification of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT). The CII number for last fiscal was 348 and for 2022-23 financial year it was 331. Moore Singhi Executive Director Rajat Mohan said the CII reflects the inflation in the economy, which causes the prices of goods and services to increase over time. For the financial year 2023-24, the CII was set at 348. The index for the following financial year, 2024-25, has been updated to 363, marking an increase of 15 points, which corresponds to an annual inflation rate of approximately 4.3 per cent. This is consistent with the retail inflation rate of 4.83 per cent recorded in April 2024.

Bengal govt plans new AI and ML-focused data centre



The state government is setting up a powerful, high-capacity data centre that will allow 2,300 concurrent users to run artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) applications, an official said on Friday. This

facility will enable the practical application of data science by providing infrastructure to support advanced data analysis, the official said requesting anonymity on the sidelines of the Data Science 2024 Conference. "Our state is already equipped with advanced infrastructure, supporting over 5,000 users in real-time," the official noted. One more data centre with a focus on AI and ML is being built with a capacity of 2,300 concurrent users, he said. "To address capacity and growing demand, we are establishing this new data centre with greater capacity. Once operational, the data load will be split between the two centres," the official said. While the primary beneficiary of this new facility will be the government, there are plans to offer some startups access to the infrastructure for advanced data analytics, he said.

Busy Bee Airways withdraws bid for Go First



More than three months after jointly bidding for Go First, travel portal EaseMyTrip's CEO Nishant Pitti on Saturday said he was withdrawing the bid for the bankrupt airline. Busy Bee Airways, majority-owned

by Pitti, along with SpiceJet Chief Ajay Singh, had put in a bid for Go First, which is undergoing an insolvency resolution process, in February. Pitti said after careful consideration, he decided to withdraw the bid for Go First in his personal capacity. "The decision allows me to better focus on other strategic priorities and initiatives that align with our long-term vision and growth objectives," he said in a statement. The latest move also comes less than a month after the Delhi High Court allowed lessors to take back 54 planes leased to Go First. On April 26, Pitti had said he will consider any necessary adjustments to its proposed offer for the grounded airline after reviewing the court order. It could not be immediately ascertained whether Ajay Singh will be pursuing the bid since the joint bidder Busy Bee Airways has opted out.

‘Indian startup ecosystem is mature, set to bolster economy’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian startup ecosystem is mature, with multiple tailwinds that are poised to escalate India to become the third largest economy in the world, said AWS' Kumara Raghavan.

In a conversation, Raghavan, Head, Startups, Amazon Web Services (AWS) India, and South Asia, discussed the vibrant Indian startup scene, noting its strength and innovation potential.



"We are the 5th largest economy, we are trending towards becoming the 3rd

largest... factors that will contribute to it are labor addition, infrastructure growth, and efficiency improvements, where technologies like GenAI will play their part, a large developer ecosystem, the ability to build products in the country and serviced all over the world, then there are regulatory tailwinds like Make in India and Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme as well," he said.

Raghavan lauded the maturity of the Indian startup ecosystem, noting the significant contributions of experi-

enced founders who have embarked on multiple entrepreneurial ventures. "We are the third largest startup ecosystem in the world. And there are a couple of tailwinds going for us," he said.

He gave credit to various factors for driving India's growth as a startup ecosystem.

"Over the last decade, we have seen founders launch multiple startups over the last 7-8 years," he said, adding that this wealth of experience has not

only accelerated the lifecycle of startups but has also enhanced their chances of success.

India's strong developer ecosystem has further bolstered the startup scene, offering a competitive advantage and fostering a culture of innovation, he added.

"These combine to give us a very strong momentum... India is one of the most vibrant and open markets. And there are so many opportunities to solve," he noted.

"Until you dig a hole,
you plant a tree, you
water it and make it
survive, you haven't
done a thing. You are
just talking"
— Swami Vivekananda



As we navigate life’s twists and turns, we can draw inspiration from the timeless wisdom from nature to embrace the changes that come our way, always making room for new growth and opportunities, write **BKP SINHA** and **ARVIND KUMAR JHA**

GENESIS OF GROWTH FROM BUD TO BRANCH

As you stand beneath the towering majesty of a tree, your gaze is naturally drawn upwards, captivated by the intricate network of branches that crisscross the sky. Each branch, unique in pattern and structure, defines the tree's character and beauty. Yet, behind this awe-inspiring spectacle lies a more fascinating tale of growth and transformation. The narrative unfolds with the emergence of a bud from the tree's trunk. Given the right balance of sunlight, water, and nutrients, this bud slowly grows and develops into a mature branch. The genesis of a bud, or bud set, is initiated in regions of the plant rich in meristematic cells. These cells, found at the tips of stems and roots, have the unique ability to divide and differentiate into various types of plant cells, leading to the formation of new organs such as leaves, flowers, and branches. When these meristematic cells, or apical buds, are exposed to sunlight, they initiate new growth. This is where the plant hormones auxin and cytokinin come into play. Auxin, originating from the shoot apex, inhibits the outgrowth of axillary buds, allowing the apical bud to grow faster and taller. This phenomenon, known as apical dominance, ensures that the central stem of the plant grows more strongly than the side stems. Cytokinin, on the other hand, which is stimulated by the removal of the shoot apex, promotes the outgrowth of axillary buds by providing them with more nutrients.

This tug-of-war between auxin and cytokinin is crucial for the plant's growth strategy. It allows the plant to adapt to its environment, growing taller to reach for sunlight or spreading out its branches to occupy more space. As the bud grows, the meristematic cells divide and differentiate, giving rise to different types of cells that constitute the branch. Some cells form the outer layer, transforming into bark cells, while others form the wood, turning into the xylem and phloem. As the cells continue to divide and differentiate, the bud gradually elongates, evolving into a twig. Over time, the twig undergoes lignification, a process involving the deposition of lignin, a complex organic polymer that provides rigidity to the plant's cell walls. This process gradually transforms the flexible, green twig into a hard, brown branch. Lignin is a key component of the plant's defense mechanism. It forms a physical barrier in the cell walls that protects the plant against pathogens and pests. This barrier also makes the plant resistant to decay, thereby increasing its lifespan. Moreover, lignin is essential for the plant's water transport system. It makes the plant's vascular tissues waterproof, preventing the leakage of water and nutrients, and facilitating their upward movement from the roots to the leaves. This waterproofing property also prevents the absorption of excess water, protecting the plant from waterlogging and associated diseases.

The anatomy of a branch reveals a marvel of plant architecture. At its very base lies the branch collar, a swollen area where the branch attaches to the main trunk. This specialized structure houses tissues that are instrumental in wound healing and act as a protective shield against the invasion of pathogens.

Progressing from the branch collar, we come across the branch junction. This crucial juncture signifies the point where the branch diverges from the trunk, paving the way for the branch's outward expansion. From this point, the branch unfurls, giving rise to lateral shoots known as secondary branches or twigs.

These offshoots, in turn, branch out into finer limbs, culminating in the production of leaves, flowers, or fruits. Branching patterns in trees are an intriguing aspect of plant biology, reflecting both the genetic makeup of the species and the environmental conditions in which they grow. One such pattern is 'alternate branching', seen in certain species. In this arrangement, branches are staggered along the main stem, reducing overlap and creating spaces between branches. This results in a more open canopy structure, which is not only an architectural marvel but also a strategic adaptation. The open structure allows sunlight to penetrate evenly, reaching the lower branches and the forest floor. This not only benefits the tree itself by ensuring all parts receive adequate sunlight for photosynthesis but also nurtures the understory plants with filtered light. However, this strategy is not without its challenges. The staggered arrangement of branches creates a less rigid framework, which, while potentially allowing for more movement during wind events, might also increase the tree's susceptibility to structural damage in severe storms. On the other hand, some species showcase 'opposite branching', with pairs of branches sprouting in symmetrical opposition. Trees with opposite branching patterns often experience higher levels of shading within their canopies due to the symmetrical arrangement of branches. This leads to a denser and overlapping canopy structure, akin to a natural umbrella that provides shade and conserves moisture. The increased density results in shading between opposite branches, limiting the penetration of sunlight to lower branches and the interior of the canopy. However, this denser structure often provides increased mechanical stability against wind or storms. Branches inherently exhibit negative geotropism, meaning they grow in the opposite direction of gravity, reaching upwards and outwards for sunlight. This strategic adaptation enables them to maximise their exposure to sunlight and secure their place in the fierce competition for resources. In dense forests, where sunlight is scarce, trees adopt a different strategy known as 'self-shading avoidance'. They grow more vertically to minimize the shading of their lower leaves and reach toward the scant light available in the canopy. Wind, the invisible sculptor, also plays a significant role in shaping tree growth. In windy environments, trees often adopt narrower branching angles, resulting in a more streamlined shape that reduces wind resistance. These branches, often perceived as mere offshoots, are in fact, the vital lifelines of trees. Much like arteries in the human body, branches serve as crucial conduits within the arboreal world, playing an indispensable role in the survival and well-being of the tree. They perform the critical function of transporting water and nutrients from the roots to the leaves, while also carrying back the sugars produced during photosynthesis from the leaves to the rest of the tree. They also provide habitat and support for a diverse range of organisms. Birds build nests on them, insects and lichen find refuge on the bark and leaves, and mammals use branches for shelter and as a pathway for movement. This biodiversity creates a mini-ecosystem within the branches themselves, contributing significantly to the overall health of the tree and the complex web of life that surrounds it. Many trees have flowers and fruit on their branches, which are essential for reproduction. Flowers attract pollinators, and fruits, containing seeds, are eaten by animals who then disperse the seeds in their droppings, aiding in the spread of the tree species. Some seeds are even equipped with wings or fluff, enabling them to be carried by the wind, thus allowing plants to disperse their offspring over a wide area. In some remarkable instances, branches themselves become the genesis of new life. This is observed in the process of vegetative propagation, where fragments of branches can give birth to entirely new trees. This form of asexual reproduction results in a new tree that is genetically identical to the parent tree. Trees, in their wisdom, are active architects of their growth. They strategically shed lower branches that are no longer efficient at photosynthesis. This calculated act of self-pruning allows trees to channel their energy and resources toward the higher branches, which are better positioned to capture more sunlight. But how does the tree accomplish this? When a branch becomes unproductive, the tree gradually severs its supply of water and nutrients. The branch then loses its bark and becomes frail and susceptible to fungi. Eventually, the branch falls off, leaving behind a stump that is sealed by resins or gums. This seal protects the tree from harmful pathogens that could infect the wounded area and jeopardize its health. As the fallen branch decomposes, it bestows its accumulated nutrients back into the soil, a final act of nourishment for the tree that once gave it life. This process enriches the surrounding ecosystem, fostering new life and affirming that in every ending, there is a new beginning. This ongoing cycle of growth and retreat mirrors life's profound truth: Change is the only constant. It serves as a reminder that life isn't merely about relentless growth, but also about the wisdom of knowing when to let go. Much like a tree that sheds an unproductive branch to conserve energy for new growth, we too should find the courage to let go of what no longer serves us. As we navigate life's twists and turns, we can draw inspiration from this timeless wisdom from nature to embrace the changes that come our way, always making room for new growth and opportunities.

(Former Principal Chief Conservators of
Forests, UP and Maharashtra)



BKP SINHA



ARVIND K JHA

“OVER TIME, THE TWIG UNDERGOES LIGNIFICATION, A PROCESS INVOLVING THE DEPOSITION OF LIGNIN, A COMPLEX ORGANIC POLYMER THAT PROVIDES RIGIDITY TO THE PLANT'S CELL WALLS. THIS PROCESS GRADUALLY TRANSFORMS THE FLEXIBLE, GREEN TWIG INTO A HARD, BROWN BRANCH. LIGNIN IS A KEY COMPONENT OF THE PLANT'S DEFENSE MECHANISM. IT FORMS A PHYSICAL BARRIER IN THE CELL WALLS THAT PROTECTS THE PLANT AGAINST PATHOGENS AND PESTS”





EXPLORING THE GARDEN OF JADE

PAWAN SONI
embarks on a
delightful journey
through Chinese
cuisine
with innovative
twists adding a
new dimension to
the experience



Reminiscing about my unforgettable dining experience at Jade under the mastery of Chef Vivek Rana, I recently revisited this iconic Chinese restaurant, now under the stewardship of Chef Ankur Gulati. The restaurant has undergone a transformation, now boasting a spacious layout flooded with natural light, offering a refreshing and open ambience. As I settled into one of the three Personal Dining Rooms (PDRs), I pondered if the meal would succeed in replicating my prior experience. Skipping drinks and soup, we dove straight into the Golden Fried Prawns,

FACT SHEET
Address: Jade, 102, The Claridges, 12, Dr APJ Kalam Road, New Delhi Phone: 011-39555000

RATINGS
Food: 4.25/5 | Service: 4/5 | Ambience: 4.5/5 | Overall: 4.25/5



a new addition to the menu of this classic dish. The large sized prawns were perfectly chunky, coated in a light batter of potato starch, and paired excellently with a spicy-sweet pineapple chili sauce. A variety of dim sum followed, each a masterpiece in its own right. The soupy pork and ginger, steamed lobster and scallop, lettuce wrapped prawn, truffle mushroom, and cream cheese in a carrot-shaped skin were all exquisite. The lettuce wrapped prawn stood out for its subtle flavors, although the chicken dim sum in coconut milk-based broth, while delicious, seemed more suited to Thai cuisine. The lamb chops, a departure from traditional cumin based Chinese fare, were a surprising delight. Paired with a Chinese-style sauce featuring butter, garlic, ginger, and a hint of ketchup, they offered a unique and satisfying blend of flavors. For the mains, the steamed Chilean seabass in a wine-based soy sauce was a standout, offering a light yet flavorful experience. The mushroom crab, while promising, fell short due to the use of frozen crab meat, which compromised its sweetness and freshness. The meal concluded with a serving of coconut ice cream accompanied by liquid jaggery, a sweet yet refreshing end to a memorable dining experience. However, the single scoop served for Rs 695 felt slightly lacking, and I would have appreciated a larger portion. The meal at Jade was a delightful journey through Chinese cuisine, with Chef Ankur Gulati's innovative twists adding a new dimension to the experience. The ambience, now more spacious and airy, complements the culinary offerings, making Jade a must-visit destination for aficionados of Chinese cuisine.

Home Chefs push Food Frontiers

FOODFREAK



PAWAN SONI



In the dynamic world of gastronomy, a fascinating trend is unfolding: the ascent of home chefs transitioning into the professional sphere, offering a taste of home to professionals far from their roots. This trend not only reshapes the culinary landscape but also enriches the dining experience for food enthusiasts globally. Eleven years ago, recognising the talent of home chefs and bakers, I created a platform through our awards — The Big F Awards. While most awards still focus on restaurants and hotels due to their financial considerations, the role of home-based chefs is gaining recognition, with professional platforms like ChefPin becoming the Zomato of the home chef arena. ChefPin app help diners discover hidden talents by using the app that can be downloaded from Android playstore and Apple Appstore. Rocky Mohan, founder of ChefPin says, "Platforms like ChefPin are leading this culinary revolution, dedicated to discovering and showcasing talents from home kitchens. Through ChefPin's innovative approach, home chefs not only display their culinary skills but also immerse themselves in the world of professional cooking. Collaborating with seasoned chefs in renowned hotels such as Shangri-La, these aspiring cooks learn high-end cuisine intricacies, refine their techniques, and gain invaluable experience." I have personally attended many of these pop-ups at hotels, particularly Shangri-La, and have been impressed by the regional cuisines they offer. Recently, I experienced a pop-up by home chef Sai Priya, unveiling hidden Oriya cuisine dishes. Past events featured Rekha Rigo's South Indian flavours, Surabhi Bhandari's vegetarian Marwadi cuisine, including traditional gluten-free dishes, mango peel-based delicacies, and

Gul Ali's Awadhi dishes. Such pop-ups help document many unknown dishes, preserving their heritage. Abhishek Sadhoo, General Manager at Shangri-La Eros, New Delhi, highlights, "As a part of bringing the World on a Platter at Tamra, these collaborations not only allow a gourmet of multiple cuisines of home food for our guests but also enhances culinary team members to explore new regional cuisines, techniques, and ingredients, enriching their culinary knowledge and adding a new dimension to their expertise." Furthermore, these pop-up events offer hotel guests a unique dining experience, indulging in homely, traditional dishes prepared with love and care by home chefs. This break from the standard hotel menus not only enhances the hotel's appeal but also creates a buzz among food enthusiasts, attracting more guests to experience this culinary fusion. Over the years, I have witnessed many home chefs grow and achieve professional success. One such example is Abhilasha Jain, also known as *Marwadi Khana*. From preparing authentic Rajasthani cuisine at home, she now operates a small professional setup, offering deliveries, *laddoos*, *gujiya*, and stylish catering while maintaining a homely touch. The emergence of home chefs in the professional culinary scene, facilitated by platforms such as ChefPin, demonstrates the evolving nature of gastronomy. It breaks barriers, fosters cultural exchange, and redefines the food experience. As this trend continues, it promises to bring new levels of creativity and diversity to the world of fine dining.

— Author is a food critic and founder of the Big F Awards. He can be reached at Pawan.Soni@indianfoodfreak.com

DREAMY DARJEELING

Serene Himalayan Hideaway

For many years, filmmakers have been captivated by the enchanting allure of DARJEELING nestled in the foothills of the Himalayas. It possesses a charming blend of grandeur, cinematic appeal, and intimacy, making it ideal for both visual storytelling and as a muse for writers seeking creative inspiration.



BY **AKANKSHA DEAN**

Since childhood, I dreamed of visiting Darjeeling. Nestled in the Himalayan foothills in West Bengal, India, it captivates with lush tea gardens stretching over rolling hills, set against snow-capped mountains. Perched high at 6,710 feet, towering above its neighbouring regions. I imagined myself enjoying tea amidst the mountains, enveloped by the serene beauty of nature. After a two-hour flight and a two-hour drive from steamy Delhi, I find myself in Ghoom, where staff dressed in charming smiles graciously serves me delightful tea besides breath-taking views of the Kanchenjunga, India's loftiest peak at 28,169 feet (8,586 meters) at this lavish 6.4-acre haven aka The Sterling Darjeeling, just steps from Yiga Choeling Monastery, making it a dreamy retreat for my getaway. To my surprise, Darjeeling's history wasn't always intertwined with tea.



Back in 1835, the British obtained the lofty ridge, standing tall at 7,000 feet (2,134 meters), from the rulers of Sikkim. Initially intended as a sanctuary to rejuvenate weary colonialists fatigued by the plains' sweltering heat, this haven quickly transformed into a popular destination for the elite British community from Kolkata (Calcutta), seeking respite and breath-taking views of Kanchenjunga. The infusion of tea culture didn't grace Darjeeling until the 1840s, thanks to the efforts of Dr. Campbell, a Scottish physician who introduced tea bushes from China to the region.

PLAYING TOURIST

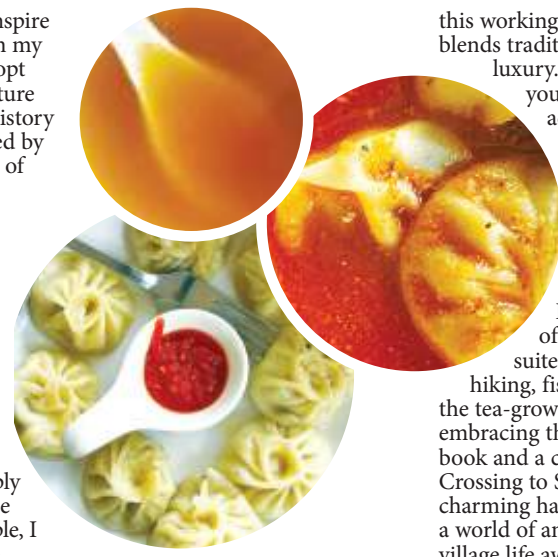
Apart from being located at an amazing location with brilliant services, The Sterling Darjeeling boasting 101 rooms has easy access to a number of tourist attractions. My Privilege Suite at the Sterling has a valley view that I never get tired of rising to, while giving the warmth of a heritage hotel with the luxuries of a slicker. Embarking on a holiday at Sterling also means a delightful array of exclusive Discoveries & Experiences, both within the resort's confines and beyond, allowing you to immerse yourself in the rich tapestry of local art, culture, cuisine, history, nature, and activities. From

savouring authentic culinary delights to embarking on enlightening culture trails, Sterling is dedicated to providing guests with a multitude of avenues to enjoy a distinctive and memorable holiday experience. As I begin my day at the bustling Batasia Loop Market, I find myself mesmerized by the vibrant displays of jewellery and colourful clothing that flank the Gorkha War Memorial and Batasia Eco Garden. Immersing myself in the local culture, I embark on a nostalgic journey aboard the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, known fondly as the Toy Train, evoking precious

childhood memories that inspire me to capture the essence in my writing. Thrill-seekers can opt for a thrilling rafting adventure on the Teesta River, while history enthusiasts will be enchanted by the remarkable architecture of Zang Dhok Palri Phodang perched on Durpin Hill.

CHILL ZONE

Chowrasta, the lively hub situated on Nehru Road in the old town became our favourite haunt and we would go there literally every evening. This bustling area features a promenade where visitors and locals gather to shop, dine, or simply enjoy the scenery. Seizing the opportunity to observe people, I savour a cup of tea amid the vibrant atmosphere. As Bollywood tunes filled the air and families interact with vendors, I soak in the sights and sounds of the bustling streets. Amidst the fragrant pine trees, I encounter women vendors selling corn on the cob. Engaging with one, I learn about Chowrasta's significance: symbolizing an intersection, the four roads branching out from the mall lead in different directions. The days gracefully wind down at Glenary's bakery and café, where we watch the sun set beyond the panoramic windows, savouring a comforting cup of tea as we reflect on the remarkable experiences of the day. Back at the Sterling Resort, in the evenings the Holiday Activity



Centre offers a plethora of entertainment options, from engaging in table tennis and carrom to diving into board and fun group games. Upon my request, I am treated to enchanting themed nights and have the pleasure of attending events at the charming amphitheatre, adding a touch of magic to my stay.

THE LAST LEG

For those seeking to delve into Darjeeling's tea culture, a stay at upscale tea estates like the Glenburn Tea Estate offers an unrivalled retreat steeped in rich heritage. Beginning from its 1860 inception under the stewardship of the esteemed Prakash family,

this working tea estate seamlessly blends tradition with modern luxury. Nature envelops you here, with 1,000 acres of private forest and two rivers meandering through the estate. Choose between the Burra Bungalow and the Water Lily Bungalow, each offering four elegant suites. We enjoy our days hiking, fishing, and exploring the tea-growing process and embracing the tranquillity with a book and a calming cup of tea. Crossing to Sikkim via a charming hanging bridge unveils a world of ancient forests and village life awaiting exploration. While winding our way back to the airport, we pause at Timboor on the Trail, renowned for its Nepalese cuisine amidst a garden ablaze with azaleas and petunias. Yearning for a taste of traditional Nepalese thali, I sought to revisit cherished meals from my travels among Nepalese friends. Perfect ending to my Darjeeling trip. Akanksha Dean is an independent food & travel writer, a chef and a catalyst and is the first Indian to have trained at Osteria Francescana, in Modena, Italy, rated as the world's best restaurant in the World's 50 Best Restaurants, in 2016 and 2018 and currently in the Best of The Best Category.

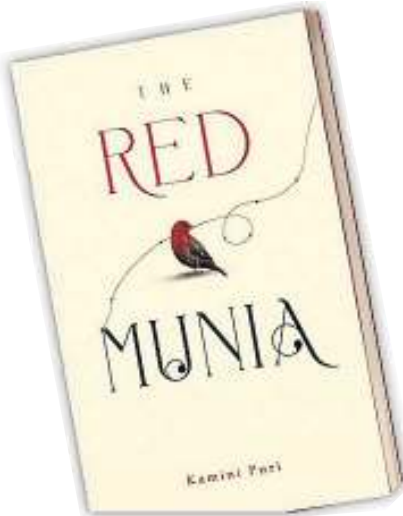
A SYMPHONY OF DREAMS, LOSS AND A NATION'S AWAKENING

KAMINI PURI'S words breathe life into the pages of *The Red Munia* as she intricately interweaves the personal and the political, offering readers an exploration of love, loss and the human spirit amidst India's transformative history, writes **SAKSHI PRIYA**

The *Red Munia* by renowned author Kamini Puri delves into the history of India, beautifully exploring the themes of family, love, Indian history and loss amidst a transforming nation. Puri's novel is a compelling journey of self-discovery set against the vibrant landscapes of India. The story is as much about the characters as it is about the cultural and natural beauty that surrounds them. The novel reflects contemporary reality, illustrating how "Politics is something we are unknowingly growing up on without even understanding the meaning of it." The novel's charm lies in its rich descriptions and the deep emotional resonance of its characters as they navigate the complexities of love, identity, and freedom. In the prologue, Puri introduces the *red munia* bird, an enchanting creature with deep red wings speckled with brown and white. This bird, despite its beauty is often captured and caged, symbolising India's own history of being subjugated for its riches and splendour. The red munia's plight mirrors the nation's suffering under British rule establishing a resonant and evocative framework for the story. Laila, the vibrant heart of the novel, takes readers on a voyage from her

childhood in Kapurthala, Punjab. Her determination is well-portrayed by Puri, showcasing her dreams and emotional connection with her sister. As Laila grows up, she leaves her sheltered life in Kapurthala to pursue journalism in Bombay. Her quest for independence and self-expression leads her to London, where she dreams of meeting the Queen of England. In London, she meets Jai, whose carefree attitude and understanding of love transform her perspective on life. Their romance faces numerous challenges, reflecting the complexities of cultural integration and personal ambitions. The first chapter, 'Childhood Bliss,' introduces readers to the blissful world of Laila in 1942 Kapurthala, Punjab. Laila, her sister Dia, and their friend Maya live a life filled with joy and adventure epitomised by their games, horse riding and the warmth of family traditions. The vivid descriptions of their home, particularly the beloved divan in the verandah, evoke a sense of nostalgia and comfort. Laila's narration brings to life the household dynamics, with Papaji's morning rituals and Biji's attachment to old furniture adding layers of authenticity to the family portrait. The playful interactions between Laila and Dia, their mimicry of Papaji's shaving routine and their

THE RED MUNIA
Author: Kamini Puri
Publisher: StoryMirror
Infotech
Price: ₹349



uncontrollable laughter highlight the innocence and joy of childhood. However, beneath this idyllic surface, there are hints of the larger political context. Laila's awareness of her father's concerns about the anarchic state of India adds a layer of depth to her character, foreshadowing her eventual journey toward personal and political awakening. At 18, Laila leaves her hometown to pursue journalism in Bombay (Mumbai), a decision that marks the beginning of her journey toward self-discovery. The portrayal of Bombay in the 1940s is vivid and immersive, showcasing the city's bustling streets, diverse culture, and vibrant atmosphere. The chapter 'Bombay Dreams' is particularly special for every reader as it captures Laila living in the city of dreams to pursue her ambitions. Through Laila's experiences, Puri masterfully captures the essence of the city, highlighting its role as a melting pot of dreams and aspirations. One of the novel's most compelling aspects is Laila's relationship with her family. Despite her physical distance from them, Laila's emotional connection to her family, particularly with her sister Dia, is heartwarming, as it serves as a source of strength and support for both sisters as they navigate life's challenges.

Central to the novel is the theme of grief, portrayed with raw honesty and sensitivity. The protagonist's struggles to come to terms with loss, both personal and collective, is depicted with heartbreaking realism. Puri explores different facets of grief - anger, denial and eventual acceptance — with nuance, making it a deeply relatable and poignant read. In the chapter 'Unforgettable Meeting,' where Laila interviews Jawaharlal Nehru, her achievement is significant, yet she misses the sharing that comes from a soulful relationship. This moment describes the emotional depth of the book, as she has no one to share her accomplishment with apart from her father, highlighting the emptiness she feels despite her success. The novel also shines in its portrayal of the impact of historical events on individual lives. Through the protagonist's journey, Puri illuminates how larger political events, such as India's struggle for Independence and the assassination of Gandhi, reverberate in the lives of ordinary people, shaping their choices and beliefs. Character development is another strong suit of the novel. The protagonist's growth and transformation are beautifully rendered, making them fully realised and empathetic characters

The novel is more than just a personal journey, as it explores the complexities of finding your voice and chasing your dreams amidst societal constraints. Laila's burning ambition to become a journalist is juxtaposed against the expectations placed upon young women of her times. This internal conflict is further amplified as she grapples with the cultural shifts and social changes sweeping across India. The titular red munia bird emerges as a powerful symbol. Is it a representation of the freedom and resilience that Laila aspires to? Or perhaps, a reminder of the beauty and fragility of her homeland? The ambiguity adds depth to the story, inviting readers to contemplate the symbolism throughout the narrative. Arguably, *The Red Munia* is a beautifully written novel that offers a compelling portrait of pre-Independence India. Through its vivid imagery, well-developed characters and touching storytelling, Kamini Puri creates a narrative that is both appealing and thought-provoking. It is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the enduring power of hope and determination, making it a must-read for anyone interested in journeys of self-discovery and the rich history and culture of India.

At His Majesty's Service

Chander Lall's book offers a panoramic view of the Constitution, the history of India's Independence movement, and the social milieu of that era in an inimitable style, writes **KUMAR CHELLAPPAN**

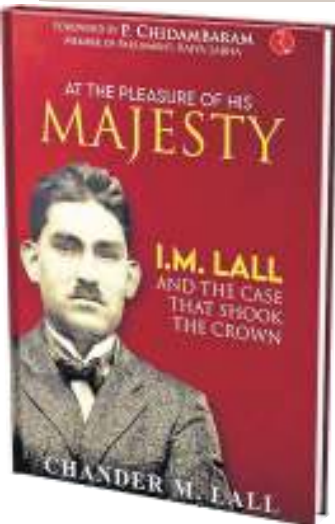
Having worked with Central Government Establishments for close to a decade and a half, this writer has come to the conclusion that a Government job is a safe haven for those with an IQ below par. Apart from the obvious security and regular salaries that accompany such a job, it also leads to some individuals barely doing any work worth its name. In fact, it is this sense of security that draws countless aspirants to seek a position in State/Central Government departments. Recently, I came across the case file of a driver employed with the Andaman Lakshadweep Harbour Works whose service was terminated following unauthorised absence from duty for a period of eight years. It took years for the Central Administrative Tribunal to concur with his superiors that his continuous absence from duty for such a long period was devoid of any justification and uphold their decision to terminate his services. This is just one such instance of the freedom enjoyed by Government servants who are blissfully unaware of the landmine-paved paths of the private sector. While modern-day Government employees are fortunate to enjoy complete freedom at their work places, things were not as smooth during the tenure of the British administration. Anyone, including officers of the high profile and elite Indian Civil Services, could be relieved of their responsibilities for the most innocuous of reasons. It took a daredevil ICS officer like Inder Mohan Lall to take on the British administration by the horns and tutor them on the fact that there is due procedure to be followed in taking disciplinary

action against any errant Government officer or lower staff. The Civil Service Regulations had given enough power to the then Federal Public Service Commission as well as the Government of India's Home Department under the Government of India act 1935 to "fire" anyone accused of misconduct while in service. The draconian rule did not have any provision to furnish the accused with a chargesheet, his version of the story holding no relevance. This rule was challenged by Lall, taking on His Majesty's Government from 1939 to 1948. The case culminated in Lall's victory as the Court ordered that the Government of India Act should have Article 311 which ensures that "no person who is a member of the civil service of the Union or an all India Service or a civil service of a State shall be dismissed or removed by an authority subordinate to that by which he was appointed." No such person as aforesaid shall be dismissed or removed or reduced in rank except after an enquiry in which he has been informed of the charges against him and given a reasonable opportunity of being heard in respect of those charges, the Court ordered. Lall had faced a series of charges for his decision to appoint Sundar Das, his wife's nephew, as a subordinate staff in the court where he worked as district judge of the Hoshiarpur district. This antagonised some of the junior staff members who had eyed the post for themselves. Lall had taken stringent action against many Government employees for their corrupt practices so they were waiting for an opportunity to strike back. Sundar Das came served as the right opportunity for them to take it up with the Secretary of

State. The latter appointed two commissions of enquiry, one after another, to foist cases on Lall in order to get rid of him from His Majesty's Service. The enquiries and the ensuing legal battle form the plot of his book. What author Chander M Lall has done is to chronicle the events in a reader-friendly manner. He commences with his family history that includes Lall's life as a soldier in the British Indian Army during the First World War and how he made it to the ICS from where he was removed, based on the reports submitted by the enquiry commissions. We seldom go into the details of a new legislation enacted by law making

bodies like the Parliament or legislative assemblies. However, each and every law enacted addresses a specific concern. The first time the Constitution was amended was to address certain difficulties arising out of rulings by the Supreme Court. Famous cases like Golak Nath versus State of Punjab or Keshavananda Bharati versus State of Kerala were a follow up to the restrictions placed on the land ownership of individuals. Henry and William Golak Nath, two brothers, owned hundreds of acres of prime land in Jalandhar. But the Punjab Government declared that each brother could own only 30 acres of land and declared the rest as surplus land. The brothers challenged the Act and the apex court upheld the decision of the State of Punjab. Similarly, Keshavananda Bharati, the pontiff of Edneer Mutt, challenged the Kerala Government's move to take over vast stretches of land owned by the Mutt (monastery) as per the Land Reforms Act. A constitutional Bench in a split verdict upheld the Kerala Government decision but ruled that Parliament cannot amend the basic structure of the Constitution while making such legislations. The Kerala Government's action was a specific move against Hindus as it left untouched thousands of acres of plantations belonging to other communities. No surprise that the title of Fali Nariman's last book was, *You Must Know Your Constitution*. Chander Lall's *At the Pleasure of His Majesty* is an important work. It offers the readers a panoramic view of the Constitution, history about India's Independence movement, and the social milieu of that era in a truly splendid style.

**AT THE PLEASURE
OF HIS MAJESTY**
Author: Chander M Lall
Publisher: RUPA
Price: ₹295



TALE OF VALOUR, LOVE, AND REDEMPTION

HARINDER SIKKA tells Gobind's story with rare passion and candor, highlighting the protagonist's ability to uphold his promises, says **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

Harinder Sikka, the acclaimed author whose book *Calling Sehmat* inspired the 2018 film *Raazi* starring Alia Bhatt, explores the depths of human emotion and resilience in his latest novel, *Gobind*. This compelling story is set against the dual backdrops of Bihar's poverty and the valorous spirit of the Indian Navy. Through a rich narrative, Sikka delves into themes of love, loyalty, and redemption, offering readers a deeply personal and stirring literary experience. For Sikka, *Gobind* is more than just a story; it is a personal literary voyage that weaves together themes of love, selflessness, and unwavering determination," he explains. The novel is based on true events that transpired between the late 1970s and early 1990s, providing a rare and profound insight into the disciplined and highly motivated Armed Forces of India, particularly the Indian Navy. Through meticulous storytelling, Sikka highlights the rigorous training, passion, and dedication of naval officers, weaving in shocking incidents that occurred in St Petersburg, Russia, and India. *Gobind* centres around its titular character, a man born into abject poverty to parents who held deep faith in Guru Gobind Singh. Named after the revered saint, Gobind realises early on that it is up to him to change his family's circumstances. With no means or support beyond the values instilled by his parents, Gobind works tirelessly to gain admission to the Indian Military Academy (IMA), eventually qualifying for recruitment into

CALLING SEHMAT
Author: Harinder Sikka
Publisher: Penguin
Price: ₹499



the Indian Navy. Although Gobind achieves professional success, his personal life is marred by tragedy. The girl he loves commits suicide after her landlord father arranges her marriage to another man. This devastating loss leaves Gobind shattered, despite being celebrated in his village for his professional achievements. Yet, he rises from this personal devastation with renewed determination. Gobind's journey takes him to Russia as part of a team tasked with purchasing submarines for the Indian Navy. Despite the immense responsibility, he performs his duties with unwavering diligence. His integrity shines through when a

senior officer, compromised by a Russian honey trap, approves the quality check on a submarine. Gobind refuses to concur, standing firm in his commitment to duty and integrity. His moral fortitude is further tested when he falls in love with a Russian girl, a relationship that challenges his fundamental rights. Sikka tells Gobind's story with rare passion and candour, highlighting the protagonist's ability to uphold his promises and appeal to the higher principles of those around him. Through Gobind's journey, Sikka presents a thrilling yet deeply sensitive narrative that provokes thought while delivering a profound message. The story inspires and entertains, making it a multifaceted read. *Gobind*, published by Penguin, was recently launched and has already garnered significant attention. Harinder Sikka, who was commissioned into the Indian Navy in January 1981 and took premature retirement in 1993 as a Lieutenant Commander, brings his firsthand experience and insights into the narrative. Besides *Calling Sehmat*, Sikka has also authored *Vichhoda*, further establishing his prowess in weaving powerful stories. In *Gobind*, readers will find a powerful tale of a man who dared to challenge the world for the principles he stood for. Sikka's narrative not only tells the story of a determined naval officer but also explores the broader themes of love, selflessness, and unwavering determination, offering a deeply enriching reading.

HOW TO RESPOND TO NEXT EMERGENCY

Efforts to draft a pandemic treaty falter as countries disagree

PNS ■ GENEVA

A global treaty to fight pandemics like COVID is going to have to wait: After more than two years of negotiations, rich and poor countries have failed — for now — to come up with a plan for how the world might respond to the next pandemic.

After COVID-19 triggered once-unthinkable lockdowns, upended economies and killed millions, leaders at the World Health Organization and worldwide vowed to do better in the future. In 2021, member countries asked the U.N. health agency to

oversee negotiations to figure out how the world might better share scarce resources and stop future viruses from spreading globally.

On Friday, Roland Driece, co-chair of WHO's negotiating board for the agreement, acknowledged that countries were unable to come up with a draft. WHO had hoped a final draft treaty could be agreed on at its yearly meeting of health ministers starting Monday in Geneva.

"We are not where we hoped we would be when we started this process," he said, adding that finalizing an international agreement on how to respond to a pandemic was critical "for the

sake of humanity."

Driece said the World Health Assembly next week would take up lessons from its work and plot the way forward, urging participants to make "the right decisions to take this process forward" to one day reach a pandemic agreement "because we need it."

The draft treaty had attempted to address the gap that occurred between COVID-19 vaccines in rich and poorer countries, which WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said amounted to "a catastrophic moral failure."

Addressing a sullen final day of negotiations, the WHO chief insisted, "This is not a failure."

"We will try everything — believing that anything is possible — and make this happen because the world still needs a pandemic treaty," he said. "Because many of the challenges that caused a serious impact during COVID-19 still

exist."

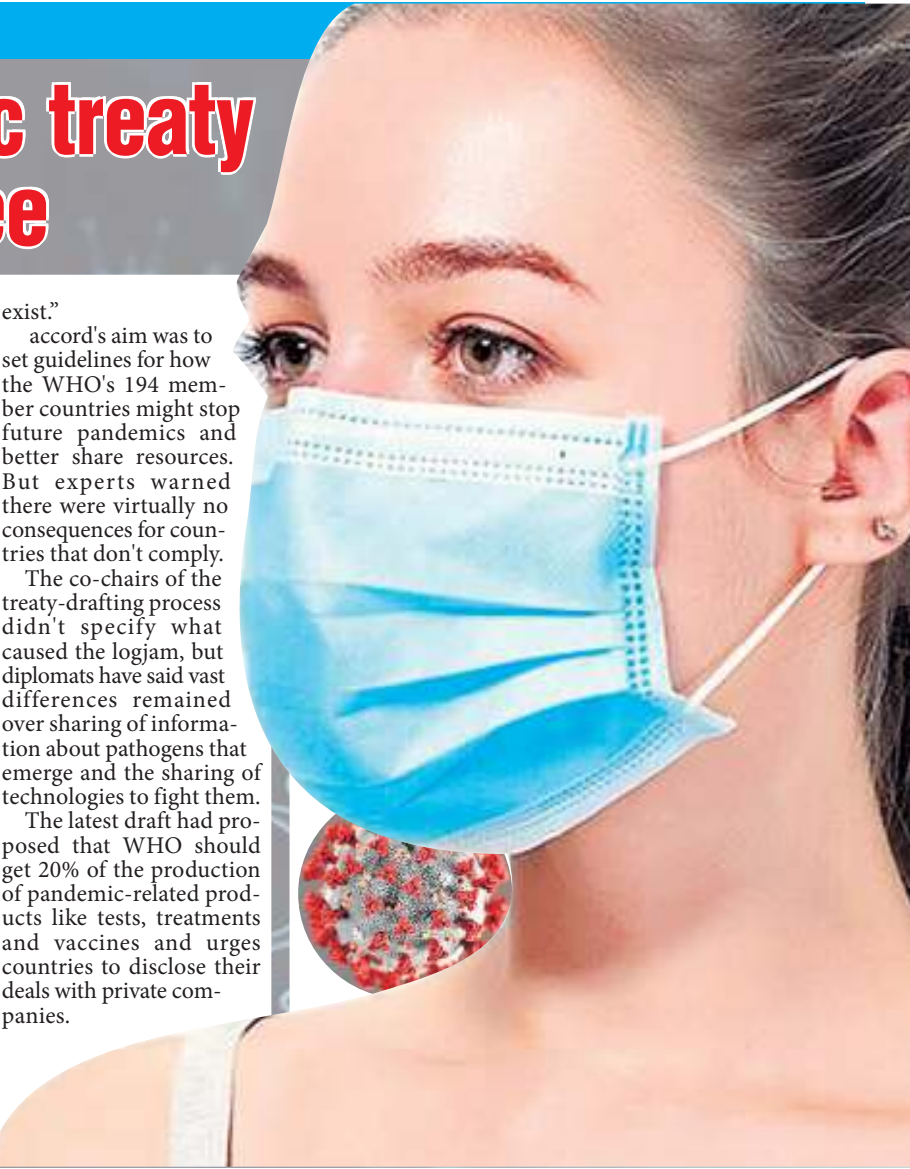
accord's aim was to set guidelines for how the WHO's 194 member countries might stop future pandemics and better share resources. But experts warned there were virtually no consequences for countries that don't comply.

The co-chairs of the treaty-drafting process didn't specify what caused the logjam, but diplomats have said vast differences remained over sharing of information about pathogens that emerge and the sharing of technologies to fight them.

The latest draft had proposed that WHO should get 20% of the production of pandemic-related products like tests, treatments and vaccines and urges countries to disclose their deals with private companies.



The latest draft had proposed that WHO should get 20% of the production of pandemic-related products like tests, treatments and vaccines and urges countries to disclose their deals with private companies.



Chinese military ends biggest, closest drills around Taiwan

PTI ■ BEIJING

The Chinese military has ended its two-day joint drills surrounding Taiwan, stated to be the biggest and closest exercises held around the prosperous self-ruled island that China claims to be part of its mainland.

The drills on Thursday and Friday were held in retaliation to Taiwan's new President Lai Ching-te's remarks rejecting Beijing's sovereignty claims over the island and tested the Chinese People's Liberation Army's (PLA) ability to seize power.

China views Taiwan as a rebel province that must be reunified with the mainland

even by force. While there was no official announcement that the drills ended, the Chinese social media WeChat account of the PLA's Eastern Theatre Command on Saturday said the exercises lasted two days from Thursday.

It said the exercises by land, navy, air force and missile forces were "punishment" for "Taiwan separatists" and a "severe warning" to outside forces intent on interference and provocation. The drills, called Joint Sword-2024A, involved "advancing", "besieging", "blockading", "attacking", "destroying" and "cutting off", the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post quoted the WeChat post.

UN court order demanding Israel to halt Gaza offensive further isolates US position

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

A ruling by the top United Nations court ordering Israel to halt its military offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah has deepened its disconnect with the United States over an operation that faces mounting international condemnation but that American officials describe, at least for now, as limited and targeted.

The decision Friday by the International Court of Justice in The Hague adds to the pressure facing an increasingly isolated Israel, coming just days after Norway, Ireland and Spain said they would recognize a Palestinian state, and the chief prosecutor of a separate international court sought arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as well as leaders of Hamas.

The Biden administration stands apart from the global community - though it is opposed to a major offensive in Rafah, the administration also insists that the steps its close ally Israel has taken so far have not crossed red

terms of Israel's military operations in that area has been more targeted and limited, has not involved major military operations into the heart of dense urban areas, national security adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters at a White House briefing this week. But, he added, "We now have to see what unfolds from here."

A State Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity to describe the administration's internal assessment of the situation, said the operation in Gaza had "not yet moved into the core heart of Rafah that gets us to the densest of dense areas."

Earlier this month, the White House announced it was pausing a shipment of some 3,500 bombs, including massive 2,000-pound explosives that the Biden administration said were leading to civilian deaths.



lines.

Administration officials so far have appeared determined to press on with military and political support for Israel following the deadly Hamas attack it endured last October, while also pressuring its ally to avoid a full-scale military operation in densely populated Rafah.

"What we have seen so far in

Rio de Janeiro bay reforestation shows mangroves' power to mitigate climate disasters

PNS ■ RIO DE JANEIRO

At the rear of Rio de Janeiro's polluted Guanabara Bay, thousands of mangroves rise as tall as 13 feet (about 4 meters) from a previously deforested area.

The 30,000 trees, planted by non-profit organization Instituto Mar Urbano over four years in the Guapimirim environmental protection area, stand as an example for cities seeking natural means to improve climate resilience.

Such ecosystems are vital for protection against floods that have become increasingly frequent around the world. Brazil's southern state of Rio Grande do Sul is still reeling from a devastating flood earlier this month that wreaked havoc and took lives, with waters far from subsiding to normal levels.

Mangroves slow sea water's advance into riverbeds during storm surges by soaking it up, and protects the land by stabilizing soil that otherwise could be washed away. They also act as a carbon sink. The reforestation in Rio's bay

improved the cleanliness of water that's a breeding ground for marine species. Crabs have returned, providing extra income for the local crab pickers who helped plant the trees.

"To plant a tree in this mangrove is an act of environmental recovery and also an act in the fight against climate change,"

Ricardo Gomes, a director at the non-profit, told The Associated Press on Thursday. "Today we can be sad, because of all that has been lost (in Brazil's South), all that was destroyed. But we never had so much knowledge, so much technology and resources to recover our environment."

A lack of mangroves wasn't the cause of flooding around Rio Grande do Sul's capital, Porto Alegre, that sits

beside a lagoon. The flooding largely stemmed from water that flowed down rivers into the area.

The coastal risk map created by Climate Central, a nonprofit science research group, forecasts areas west and north of Porto

Alegre will be underwater by 2100. In Rio, it shows two large areas in the back of its bay — one of which includes the Guapimirim protected area — will be underwater by 2050. That underscores the need for action to mitigate

sea water's

encroachment. Natural vegetation like that of Guapimirim "is like a true sponge," avoiding or mitigating

floods by reducing the energy of the waters, Mauricio Barbosa Muniz, the manager of a

reserve at Brazil's federal agency Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation, said. Vegetation in the region safeguards 1 million residents in the city of Sao Goncalo, in Rio's metropolitan

region, and others.

"In places that were occupied irregularly, such as cities, it is possible to restore those areas and make human settlements that are resilient and prepared for the effects of climate change," Muniz said.

Since 2000, flood-related disasters across the planet have increased by 134% over the two previous decades, according to a 2021 report by the World Meteorological Organization.

Environmentalists say the loss of natural vegetation due to agriculture and cattle ranching in Rio Grande do Sul state amplified the flooding. A recent study by MapBiomass, a network that includes non-profit organizations, universities and start-ups, says the Brazilian state lost 22% of its native vegetation between 1985 and 2022, equal to an area greater than the U.S. state of Maryland.

Federal, state and municipal authorities seem to be in agreement since tragedy struck that a massive reforestation effort will be needed in Rio Grande do Sul, but the scope of the investment.



The 30,000 trees, planted by non-profit organization Instituto Mar Urbano over four years in the Guapimirim environmental protection area, stand as an example for cities seeking natural means to improve climate resilience

Selfie points, pink booths, creche facilities elevate voting experience

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The specially designed pink and model booths were a hit among the voters, who not only cast their votes with ease but also enjoyed clicking selfies on the polling day.

The seven Lok Sabha constituencies in Delhi went to polling in the sixth phase on Saturday.

A vibrant effort to enhance the voting experience, the polling stations featured model encouragement facilities, including pink sofas, spacious waiting areas with water fans, pitcher water, colourful rangoli, beautiful hanging decorations, selfie booths, carpets and wheelchairs to help the disabled.

Speaking about the pink booth arrangement, Priyanka Vajpayee, a voter, said, "I was surprised when I entered the booth because it was not like the last time. It was all decorated with flowers and balloons."

The pink booth was managed by female staff and it was decorated with lots of cutouts, motivational quotes and beautification work to enthuse people.

Talking about the decoration, another voter Geeta said, "The booth is so colourful that it feels like we are here to attend a cultural programme, giving us a moment of joy as we participate in the election. These new booths are adding extra excitement to the election."

At some polling stations in Matia Mahal, soft toys and souvenirs were also given to

the voters as tokens of appreciation.

Additionally, mugs with the message "Am I a proud voter" were given to the voters who exercised their voting rights.

On the other hand, model booth selfie corners were overloaded with people getting clicked on the selfie points right after performing their voting duty.

Speaking about the selfie stand at the CPWD Service Centre in North Avenue,



where the center was decorated with colourful fabrics and flowers, another voter Anuradha said, "Voting is our responsibility and we step out to fulfil that. But seeing this arrangement has filled us with excitement."

managed. It was a swift voting experience for me. I have been casting my vote for 15 years. It is well coordinated this time," she told PTI.

On the other hand, there are seven PWD polling stations which was managed by the PWD staff.

A long carpet stretched from outside the

center to the polling room in the model polling station, adorned with long-hanging decorative pieces.

Talking about the experience at these special booths, Ashok Kumar, a handicapped voter, said these special arrangements have made the voting exercise easy and convenient.

"But voting is our power, so we should not think about being in comfort. The booths are near our house and there are arrangements to give you some comfort. So when we have such an important power to choose who will rule over us, we should come forward to vote and elect our candidates," Kumar said.

"And now there are so many facilities here to give you convenience. If we can step out with the support of my family and wheelchair, why can't others?" he asked.

Rakesh and Sanyam, who were blind, came to cast their votes in Kalkaji. "It took us less than five minutes to cast our votes," Rakesh told PTI.

Shaded areas have been set up at each polling station due to the heat and the waiting areas have been fully covered. Coolers and fans have been installed to mitigate any discomfort.

A family, present to cast their votes, said, "It's Saturday and our entire family is here to give our votes. The best part is we were worried about our dadi maa (grandmother) who suffered from paralysis a few years ago, and still her lower body does not function properly. We were concerned about

One in two adolescents with ADHD have trouble managing emotions, finds study

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

One in every two adolescents having attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may have trouble managing their emotions, which can come out as explosive outbursts, depression or anxiety, according to a new study.

People with ADHD have short-attention spans, along with hyperactivity, or restlessness, and impulsivity. Being a neurodevelopmental disorder, it is commonly diagnosed in children and adolescents but can persist into adulthood. It is known that people with ADHD have problems with self-control, which affects their ability to regulate and manage emotions. While these problems of emotion dysregulation were thought to be due to ADHD symptoms which impact an individual's motivation and their ability to think (cognition), researchers showed that such people can have trouble managing their emotions regardless of those symptoms.

This was something new for the voters and they were quite happy to see the vibrant energy and vibe outside the polling booth.

There are total 13,641 polling stations across Delhi.

The team of researchers from the University of Cambridge, UK, and Fudan University, China, also found strong evidence that high levels of emotion dysregulation

raises the likelihood of developing more ADHD symptoms. The findings are published in the journal Nature Mental Health.

"Parents and teachers often say they have problems controlling children with ADHD, and it could be that when the children can't express themselves well -- when they hit emotional difficulties -- they may not be able to control their emotions and have an outburst rather than communicating with the parent, teacher or the other child," author Barbara Sahakian from the University of Cambridge said.

For the study, the researchers included data from the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) study, tracking brain development and mental health of children and adolescents across the US.

The researchers developed an ADHD-symptom score, based on data available for over 6,000 individuals from the ABCD study. The score indicated an individual's chances of having the disorder.

Of the group, the team also identified 350 participants having high symptom scores that met the clinical criteria for ADHD.

By responding to questionnaires, parents or guardians had previously provided information on how well or not their children coped when feeling upset, the researchers said. The responses were evaluated to score participants on their emotion dysregulation.

The authors found that more than half of those in the high-symptom group (51 per cent) showed signs of emotion dysregulation, regardless of problems with their cognition and motivation. Emotion dysregulation was also found to be a strong risk factor for developing more ADHD symptoms. Of all the participants, children showing low symptoms of ADHD at ages 12 and 13 but having high emotion dysregulation at age 13.

