

Phone-tapping is more dangerous than Emergency. KCR should be banned from contesting elections for violating the oath of office. The Telangana government should order a CBI probe into the phone tapping case. Why is Chief Minister Revanth Reddy not arresting KCR? Why is the CM protecting Uttam Kumar Reddy in the paddy scam and KCR in the phone tapping case?
 - Bandi Sanjay Kumar, BJP MP

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DON'T MISS...

Inter-State ganja racket busted...

Secunderabad Railway Police, along with Railway Protection Force (RPF) apprehended the accused who were transporting dry ganja from Mohana in Odisha to Nanded in Maharashtra and seized 62 kgs of ganja worth Rs 15,50,000 from him during surprise checking against drug peddlers on platforms and trains at Secunderabad railway station on Monday. The accused were identified as Chand Kumar Nayak (30) S/o Dhanurija Nayak, of Ludru village, Bandhapada, Thana, Gajapathi...

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Fire deaths up by 30% as...

Fire has taken 55 lives and injured more than 300 people in the national capital so far this year, according to the official data revealed on Monday. According to the data by Delhi Fire Services (DFS), 16 people were killed in fire in January, another 16 in February, 12 in March, four in April, and seven till May 26. Fire incidents led to 51 injuries in January, 42 in February, 62 in March, 78 in April, and 71 till May 26. From January 1 to May 26, the DFS received 8,912 fire-related calls. According to the data, 36 people...

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'ONGC's high investments to...

A step-up in investments at Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) will slow down its deleveraging over the next 12-24 months, eroding headroom for the state-owned firm's 'bbb-' standalone credit profile, S&P Global Ratings said on Monday. Stating that ONGC's financial results for the fiscal year ended on March 31, 2024, were in line with expectations, S&P said despite a decline of 2-3 per cent in the company's domestic oil and gas production volumes and lower realizations in fiscal 2024, EBITDA grew to Rs 1.1 lakh...

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From setbacks to success: Shreyas...

When Shreyas Iyer recreated Lionel Messi's famous World Cup celebration after lifting the IPL Trophy as Kolkata Knight Riders captain in Chennai, it was nothing short of an Argentina moment for the embattled Indian cricketer at an individual level. His central contract torn up a few weeks before the IPL besides a recurring back injury threatening to derail him, Iyer faced numerous challenges at the start of the year. He finally found a deep sense of triumph and vindication in this victory, much like...

-SPORTS



Carnival at Tank Bund on June 2: CS

Chief Secretary Shanti Kumari said the Telangana State Formation Day will be celebrated in a grand manner on June 2. She said that a carnival with all art forms of the state will be organised on Tank Bund from 7 pm to 9 pm. Besides this, 5,000 police officers who are undergoing training will participate in the performance with the band. Around 80 stalls have been set up on Tank Bund and food stalls are being set up by well-known hotels of the city along with handicrafts, handlooms and products made by self-help groups.

2

'Follow Kerala's example in tackling 'communal' forces'

South India is going to give 100 seats to INDIA: Revanth

PNS ■ KOZHIKODE

People from other states in India should follow the 'responsibility' shown by the people of Kerala in keeping 'communal' forces at bay, Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said here on Monday. He said that whenever he visited Kerala, he felt inspired and learnt a lesson on how to prevent 'communal' forces from entering his state. Speaking at the annual meeting of Snehasadas, organised by the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), a Congress ally, Revanth congratulated the party led by Panakkad Syed Sadiq Ali Shihab Thangal for organising such an event when some people are trying to 'divide' the country by opening shops of 'hatred' in the 'market of love'. Snehasadas is about various communities coming together in harmony to show their regard for each other. The Telangana CM said that 'communal' forces, who wanted to divide this country and change its Constitution, have been trying hard to enter Kerala, but the people of

Kerala have not allowed them to do so. "Kerala is a role model for India," Revanth said, adding that the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) in Kerala, in which IUML is a partner, is a role model for INDIA. Accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi of thinking and acting like a 'raja,' he said that speaking for a particular community and speaking against a particular community, just to win an election, is not

"If 'communal' forces win this time, it is going to be 'dangerous' for our country, 'dangerous' for our Constitution, and 'dangerous' for reservation," the Telangana CM said.

compatible with the post of the Prime Minister.

2

'New state logo to reflect TG movement's spirit'

The official emblem of the Telangana state is getting its final touches and will reflect the spirit of the Telangana movement. Renowned painter Rudra Rajesam is designing the emblem. In this context, the CM held discussions with the team led by Rajesham. Around 12 models were designed and the CM finalised one of them. Some changes were suggested in the selected one. The earlier emblem



included the Charminar and the Kakatiya Kalathoranam. However, the CM felt that democracy and the Telangana movement should be reflected instead of

royal imprints. The emblem will be unveiled on June 2. The final touches to 'Jaya Jayahe Telangana,' which has been finalised as the state song are almost complete. Poet Andeshri made changes in the two-minute song without changing its feelings and emotions as per the instructions of the CM. Music director MM Keeravani composed the music according to the CM's instructions and Andeshri.

BJP is not Congress to give posts to lobbyists: Maheshwar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJLP Leader Alleti Maheshwar Reddy said that it is not proper for Civil Supplies Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy to say that he got the BJLP Leader post through lobbying. "The BJP is not the Congress for such things to happen. The BJP gave the BJLP Leader post to me after discussions with everyone concerned," he said. Maheshwar said that he had worked for 10 years with Uttam Kumar Reddy. "I know how Uttam got the PCC chief post. However, I will not level allegations like Uttam," he said.

2

Is BRS planning to remove Legislative Council chairman?

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

The BRS leadership is planning to remove Telangana Legislative Council Chairman Gutta Sukhendar Reddy. It is learnt that the BRS leadership is discussing over pros and cons on this issue. In the Legislative Council, the main opposition BRS is enjoying a majority. The ruling Congress party has only a handful of members in the Council. Having majority members, the BRS can prevent the government decisions and bills. By preventing the government decisions and bills, the BRS can only delay the implementation. Telangana Legislative Council Chairman Gutta Sukhendar Reddy belongs to the BRS. But his son and

followers joined the Congress before the Lok Sabha elections were concluded recently. The BRS leadership feels that the Chairman may act in favour of the government in the House. If he does so, there will be no use in having a majority in the House, the BRS leadership feels. In the 40 members strength of the Legislative Council, the BRS has 27 members and the ruling Congress has only 5 members. There was speculation that some BRS MLCs are likely to switch over to the Congress. Under the circumstances, the BRS suspects that if they move the proposal to remove the Council Chairman, their MLCs will be forced to join the Congress.

2

Sub-registrar offices to have corporate look

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government is working towards making Sub-Registrar Offices look like corporate offices. All sub-registrar offices in the state have been ordered to be made into model registration offices. There are 144 sub-registrar offices in the state. Of these, only 38 offices have their own buildings. The remaining 106 offices are still

in rented buildings. The sub-registrar offices of Both in Medchal District and in Shamirpet in Adilabad are ready to open after the Model Election Code is lifted. Government land has been allocated for the construction of buildings for offices in 52 places. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has decided to construct model registration offices as soon as possible if lands are available.

In the first phase, it has been decided to give priority to the construction of sub-registrar offices in Ranga Reddy, Medchal, Hyderabad and Sangareddy districts as they bring in maximum revenue. For the remaining 52 sub-registrar offices a search would be conducted for suitable sites and if sites are available construction would be taken up. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy told officials that people coming for

registrations should not have to wait under trees looking for chairs. The CM suggested that facilities like a waiting hall, drinking water, cafeteria and drinking water should be provided to the public at sub-registrar offices. The CM directed officials to ensure that there is no shortage of staff if there are more registrations. He ordered to bring staff from district offices where incomes are low to where there is more work.

TELANGANA MLC BY-ELECTION

Over 68 per cent voter turnout

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Over 68 per cent of the eligible voters cast their votes till 4 pm in the by-election to the Telangana Legislative Council from Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda Graduates' constituency on Monday. Voting began at 8 AM and concluded by 4 PM, officials said. According to official sources,



68.65 per cent voter turnout was recorded up to 4 PM. Those already waiting in queue at polling stations will be allowed to vote beyond 4 PM,

they said. The by-election was necessitated following the resignation of sitting BRS MLC Palla Rajeshwar Reddy who won the Assembly polls from the Jangaon constituency on November 30 last year. The Congress party has nominated Chinthapandu Naveen alias Teenmar Mallanna and BJP allied G Premender Reddy, while A Rakesh Reddy is BRS' contestant.

Continued on Page 2

CDO reviews works at Medigadda Barrage



A six-member team of the CDO (Central Design Organisation), led by ENC Anil Kumar, visited the Medigadda Barrage on Monday to inspect the temporary works being carried out in the seventh block of the Medigadda Barrage as per the orders of the National Dam Safety

authorities. First, the bent part of the barrage was inspected. Photographs were taken of the top of the pillars and the piers which were more damaged than ever before. A pit had recently formed near the 20th pier in the seventh block downstream of the barrage.

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Guarantees in poll manifestos not 'corrupt practice': SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has said that commitments made by political parties in their election manifestos will not amount to "corrupt practice" under the election laws. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and K V Viswanathan made the observation while dismissing a plea by a voter hailing from the Chamrajpet Assembly Constituency challenging the election of a candidate belonging to the Congress. The plea alleged that commitments by the Congress in its election manifesto for the 2023 Karnataka assembly polls were direct and indirect financial help to the public which amounted to corrupt electoral practice. "The contention of the learned counsel that the commitments by a political party in its manifesto,

The plea alleged that commitments by the Congress in its election manifesto for the 2023 Karnataka assembly polls were direct and indirect financial help to the public which amounted to corrupt electoral practice.



"It is for the other parties to show as to how implementation of the said schemes amounts to bankruptcy of the State Treasury and it can only lead to mal governance of the State. It is possible that they can be termed as wrong policies under the given facts and circumstances of the case, but cannot be termed as corrupt practices," the high court had said.

which eventually lead to direct or indirect financial help to the public at large, will also amount to corrupt practice by a candidate of that party, is too far-fetched and cannot be accepted. "In any case, in the facts and cir-

cumstances of these cases, we need not to go into such question elaborately. The appeals are, accordingly, dismissed," the bench said. The petitioner, Shashanka J Sreedhara, a voter from the

Chamrajpet Assembly constituency, had filed an election petition against the winning candidate B Z Zameer Ahmed Khan. He submitted that the five guarantees made by the Indian National Congress (INC) party in its man-

ifesto amounts to corrupt practice. The Karnataka High Court had held that a party's announcement about the policies they plan to put into place cannot be regarded as corrupt behaviour under Section 123 of the Representation of Peoples Act. "The five guarantees of the Indian National Congress have to be considered as social welfare policies. Whether they are financially viable or not is altogether a different aspect. "It is for the other parties to show as to how implementation of the said schemes amounts to bankruptcy of the State Treasury and it can only lead to mal governance of the State. It is possible that they can be termed as wrong policies under the given facts and circumstances of the case, but cannot be termed as corrupt practices," the high court had said.

Sanjay asks CM to order CBI probe into phone-tapping case

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Alleging that former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao engaged in cyber-attacks on opposition parties during the last 10 years, BJP General Secretary Bandi Sanjay Kumar demanded that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to order a CBI probe into the phone-tapping case.

Speaking to the media on Monday, Sanjay said that the phone-tapping incident was more shocking than the 1975 emergency.

KCR violated the basic principles of the Constitution and Radhakishan Rao's statement is proof for it. KCR is not eligible to take up any post including the MLA post, he said.

He asked Chief Minister Revanth Reddy why the government is not arresting KCR. "Who is protecting Uttam Kumar Reddy in the paddy scam and KCR in the phone

tapping case," he said. He demanded that Revanth Reddy should prosecute both KCR and KTR if he is sincere and that the government should order a CBI probe into the phone tapping case.

Sanjay said that what he said regarding phone tapping has become true now. KCR tapped phones to attack opposition parties, particularly the BJP,



and it is proved through Radhakishan Rao's confession, he said.

He said that Radhakishan Rao's statement has proved that KCR used the MLAs purchasing issue to protect his daughter from the Delhi liquor scam case. KCR used to destroy families by tapping the phones of wives and husbands, he said.

BJP asks EC to check CM's flight before it leaves for Delhi

Pointing out that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has been flying to New Delhi once every week, Telangana BJP Vice-President NVSS Prabhakar asked the Election Commission (EC) to check the CM's flight before it goes to New Delhi. Addressing the media at the State BJP office here on Monday, Prabhakar said that the assets of Congress Ministers are

increasing but the assets of Telangana are decreasing. He said the BRS government looted the people while procuring paddy and the Congress government too is following in the footsteps of the BRS government. Prabhakar asked the Chief Minister to respond to allegations against the Ministries of Telangana. He demanded that the CM should order a probe into the

corruption allegations against Ministers. He said that Telangana Ministers' responsibility is not collective responsibility but personal responsibility. The Cabinet should act collectively. But he said that now the admin is running with personal responsibilities and personal agendas. He said that Revanth is not 'Kaam ke Vaaste CM'.

BRS to celebrate 10 years of TG formation

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former chief minister K Chandrasekhara Rao decided to organise the closing ceremony of 10 years of Telangana Formation Day under the auspices of the BRS. As part of the event, closure celebrations will be held grandly for one to three days from June 1. On June 1, a candle rally will be held from Gun Park Martyrs Stupa to Amarajyoti at Tank Bund at 7 pm. The martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the cause of the State would be paid floral tributes.

On the day of the formation of the State, June 2, a meeting of the end of the decade will be held at Telangana Bhavan, the party's central office in Hyderabad under the chairmanship of KCR. On the same



On the day of the formation of the State, June 2, a meeting of the end of the decade will be held at Telangana Bhavan, the party's central office in Hyderabad under the chairmanship of KCR.

day, fruit and sweets distribution programmes will be organised under the auspices of the party in many hospitals and orphanages in Hyderabad. Celebrations will be held on June 3 in all districts across the State in BRS offices.

It may be mentioned here that during BRS regime, Telangana Dashabdi Utsavalu were held last year. On this occasion, party flag and the national flag will be hoisted and sweets will be distributed. KCR reiterated that the honour of establishing Telangana as a model for the country by

forming the first government in own State and achieving progress for a decade with the cooperation of the people belongs to the previous BRS government. He called upon the party ranks to organise the end of the decade celebrations in a historic context.

Congress govt saved Rs 1,100 crore through paddy tenders: Ram Mohan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress government saved Rs 1,100 crore by recalling the tenders for paddy.

TPCC Communications Chairman Sama Ram Mohan Reddy said, "Before making allegations against the Civil Supplies Department the opposition should provide proof. KCR never gave super fine rice to all students be it schools or colleges. In the midday meal scheme, anyone can participate in the tender."

"We kept the tender invited by the BRS admin aside and didn't buy the grain. You finalised tenders for the low price of Rs 1,700. How can you sell rice for such a less price? We cancelled those tenders and saved Rs 1,100 crore. KTR is angry that we foiled his attempts to engineer a scam with millers. We took action against around 40 millers. If we wanted to engineer a scam why would we take action," he said.

"Can KTR or Alleti Maheshwar Reddy show a place where superfine rice is being sold for Rs 36 a kg. We will procure it from them," Ram Mohan said.

"The BRS and the BJP (B, B) parties are airing the same charge that there is corruption in the Civil Supplies Department.

KTR offers help to bereaved family

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao gave Rs 1 lakh to the bereaved family of a three-year-old boy who died after asbestos roofing sheets fell on him at Hafeezpet on Sunday night. He consoled the family and assured all possible help from the BRS.



rain and strong winds in many areas of Hyderabad. In

Hafeezpet's Sainagar an accident occurred in a house due to the strong wind. Bricks got loose from a nearby house and asbestos roofing sheets broke. The bricks fell on Samad, a 3-year-old boy, who was in the house and he died.

BRS Working President KTR and MLA Arikepudi Gandhi consoled Samad's family on Monday.

NIA conducts multi-state raids

Arrests 5 men involved in human trafficking

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday conducted multi-state raids and arrested five persons allegedly involved in international human trafficking and cyber fraud syndicate.

The accused were luring Indian youths to foreign countries on false promises of employment, an official statement said.

The youths were being forced to work in fake call centres at Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone (SEZ), Laos and Cambodia, among other places, as part of the racket, controlled and operated mainly by foreign nationals, it said.

They were coerced into undertaking illegal activities online, such as credit card fraud, investments in cryp-

ocurrency using fake applications, honey trapping, etc., the probe agency said.

Manish Hingu of Vadodara, Pahlad Singh of Gopalganj, Nabilam Ray of southwest Delhi, Balwant Kataria of Gurugram and Sartaj Singh of Chandigarh were arrested following a crackdown at 15 locations in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and Chandigarh, it said.

denated operation with state police forces and central intelligence agencies across all the locations.

The searches led to the seizure of several incriminating materials including documents, digital devices, handwritten registers, multiple passports and bogus overseas employment letters, among others.

Eight fresh FIRs have been registered by different state/UT police forces and five accused have been arrested, the NIA said. Investigations have further revealed that the arrested accused were coordinating with traffickers operating from across the international border to facilitate illegal border-crossing of Indian youths from Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam to Laos SEZ, it said.

Centre effects secretary level reshuffle, Pradip named Lokpal Secy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior bureaucrat Pradip Kumar Tripathi has been appointed as the Lokpal Secretary as part of a secretary-level reshuffle effected by the Centre on Monday.

Tripathi, a 1987-batch Indian Administrative Service officer (IAS), is currently Secretary (Coordination) in the Cabinet Secretariat.

He has been appointed as Secretary to the Lokpal till the date of his superannuation (June 30) and thereafter on contract basis for a period of two years beyond the date of his superannuation on usual terms and conditions applicable to re-employed central government officers, said an order issued by the Personnel Ministry.

Searing heat in India pushes mercury over 48 deg C

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Temperatures in 17 locations breached 48 degrees Celsius on Monday, with the relentless heat affecting health and livelihoods across large parts of northwestern and central India.

However, some relief from the scorching heat is expected after three days due to a western disturbance and moisture incursion from the Arabian Sea, India Meteorological Department (IMD) chief Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said.

"There could be thunderstorm activity in northwest India and rain in the western Himalayan region," he said.

The national capital stayed under the grip of searing heat as maximum temperatures in parts of the city crossed 48

RESPIRE LIKELY AFTER 3 DAYS



degrees Celsius. The city was on red alert on Monday and will remain so for the next three days, the weather office said. The IMD has predicted a higher number of heatwave days in northwest India and adjoining parts of the central

region in June. "Normally, northwest India and the adjoining areas record two to three heatwave days in June. This time, we expect four to six days of heatwave in this region," Mohapatra said at a press conference.

Govt cracks down on SMS scammers; blacklists fraudsters

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major crackdown on SMS scammers, the government has blacklisted 'principal entities' behind SMS headers that were used for sending over 10,000 fraudulent messages over the past three months, according to an official release.

The Department of Telecom (DoT), in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), has taken decisive action to protect citizens from potential SMS fraud through the Sanchar Saathi initiative, it said.

Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) under MHA provided information about the misuse of eight SMS headers for sending



fraudulent communications for committing cybercrime.

It was noted that more than 10,000 fraudulent messages were sent using these eight headers in the past three months. The principal entities which were the owners of these eight SMS headers have been blacklisted.

'Principal entities' in telecom

parlance refer to business or legal entities sending out commercial messages to telecom subscribers through SMS. A header means an alphanumeric string assigned to a 'principal entity' to send commercial communications.

All the 73 SMS Headers and 1,522 SMS content templates owned by these principal entities were also blacklisted.

"None of these principal entities, SMS headers or templates can now be used to send SMS...," it said.

The DoT has prevented further potential victimisation of citizens by blacklisting these entities, and reiterated its commitment to safeguarding citizens against cybercrime.

Govt allows Som Distilleries to supply beer

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

There is good news for beer consumers as the Congress government has permitted Som Distilleries to supply beer. Som Distilleries will supply beers like Power 1000, Blackfort, Hunter and WoodPecker. However, after the statement, the company's shares fell seven per cent in the stock market.

Meanwhile, boozers are not in a position to buy beer for some days as liquor shops have been selling brands that have no address.

Interestingly, Excise Minister Juppally Krishna Rao had said a few days ago that nobody had applied for the sale of new brands.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Panchami: May 27 04:53 PM to May 28 03:24 PM
Shashthi: May 28 03:24 PM to May 29 01:39 PM

Nakshatram:
Uttara Ashadha: May 27 10:13 AM to May 28 09:33 AM
Shravana: May 28 09:33 AM to May 29 08:38 AM

Rahukalam: 3:27 PM to 5:04 PM
Yamagandam: 8:59 AM to 10:36 AM
Varjyam: 01:24 PM to 02:56 PM
Gulika: 12:13 PM to 1:50 PM
Amritakalam: 10:38 PM to 12:10 AM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:47 AM to 12:39 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Partly Cloudy
Temp: 39°
Humidity: 45%
Sunrise: 5:41 AM
Sunset: 6:46 PM

Updated: May 27, 2024 5:00 PM

CDO reviews...

Continued from page 1

The team took measurements and took photographs of the pit.

They observed the latest conditions in the upper and lower areas of Medigadda and gave suggestions to the construction company and engineering authorities on how to tackle problems that can arise during monsoons.

The extent of the core cutting work was examined by a drill machine near the gate between piers 15 to 21. The engineering officials explained to the team the extent of the sandbanks underground through core cutting, whether there are holes at the bottom of the gates and that if there is any other problem underground it can be found

through core cutting. Similarly, the work done in the CC block to withstand the flow of water below the barrage was examined. Copper sheets have been sent into the ground with the help of machines to prevent the steam wall from being swept away by the flood flow at the lower part of the barrage pillars. The water coming from two more newly formed pits at the bottom of the pillars is being pumped by heavy pumps.

The officials directed the engineering officials and the construction company to complete the work quickly before the rains. Chief Engineer Sudhakar Reddy, EE Tirupathi Rao and L&T officials too attended the programme.

BJP is not Congress to give posts...

Continued from page 1

He said that he met the Chief Minister after getting the permission of the BJP's Telangana unit president. Raising doubts about meeting the CM is nothing but insulting the CM, Maheshwar said.

Speaking to the media at the State BJP office here on Monday, Maheshwar said the Minister resorted to a personal attack to counter his criticism.

"Uttam did not respond when I spoke on R tax and B tax. However, he responded when I spoke about U tax.

That means one can guess how much corruption took place in the Civil Supplies Department," Maheshwar said.

Carnival at Tank Bund...

Continued from page 1

A recreation hall with facilities for sports has been arranged for children who come to attend the programme. As a large number of people are likely to be present on tank bund, officials have been directed to make proper arrangements.

Shanti Kumari explained that after the cultural performances on Tank Bund, a fireworks display and a laser show would be arranged. She said that all government offices should be decorated with electric lights on the occasion. The CS said that

after the Chief Minister pays tributes to the martyrs of Telangana in Gun Park on the morning of June 2, he will attend the programme organised at the Secunderabad Parade Grounds.

The CS held a review meeting with Secretaries and senior officials of various departments at the Secretariat on Monday regarding preparations for Formation Day celebrations.

DGP Ravi Gupta, Secretaries Dana Kishore, Shailaja Ramayya, Srinivasa Raju, GAD Secretary Raghunandan Rao and other

officials attended the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, the CS said that the Chief Minister will unveil the TG state song in the morning at the Parade Ground and will give a message.

Additional DG Sanjay Kumar Jain, TGRTC MD Sajjanar, Additional Commissioner of City Police, Special Commissioner of Information Department, Hanumantha Rao, TGSPDCL MD Musruf, HMDA Additional Commissioner Amrapali Kata and other officials attended the review meeting.

'KCR tried to use farmhouse...

Continued from page 1

"In the last week of October 2022, Prabhakar Rao told me that KCR had got information from SMLA Pilot Rohith Reddy that some persons claiming to be influential in the BJP are in touch with him asking him to leave the BRS and join the BJP along with some more MLAs," the report mentioned.

After coming to know this, KCR reportedly asked the Special Intelligence Bureau (SIB) to monitor them by putting the MLA and others under surveillance.

"The SIB's Praneeth Kumar did the surveillance and provided an audio clip by intercepting cell phones. The same audio clip was given to KCR and he ordered us to lay a trap by strictly instructing MLA Rohith Reddy to cooperate with us. Accordingly, the MLA

enticed Nandu and two lesser-known Swamijis to come to a farmhouse near Aziz Nagar near Moinabad as per our plan. I had procured spy cameras for this purpose by sending task force officers Srinath Reddy, Inspector and Srikanth to New Delhi through some contacts and got them fixed in the farmhouse by our task force officers," the report said.

The report revealed that the operation was reportedly carried out and the Cyberabad SOT police took further action.

"Later, the SIT was set up and KCR wanted to arrest BL Santosh to make the case strong so that the BJP would come to a compromise and it could be used to get rid of the ED case on his daughter MLC Kavitha. However, due to the inefficiency of some Cyberabad police officers in Kerala, one important person of Mata

Amritanandamayji Institution escaped the police and later SP Renu Rajeswhari and Gattu Mallu an Inspector of SIB, and some others were sent to Kerala on a chartered flight but the job could not be done. The case went to High Court where orders not to arrest them were issued and then the SIT case was transferred to the CBI.

'Pedayana' (KCR) was very angry for not completing the job as he expected," the report said.

Along with those, the officials reportedly helped political developments in different constituencies and gathered information about persons posing a threat to the BRS and its leaders and passed on the same to Praneeth Kumar who reportedly used to monitor them to develop profiles useful for controlling them to help the BRS.

'Follow Kerala's...

Continued from page 1

"If 'communal' forces win this time, it is going to be 'dangerous' for our country, 'dangerous' for our Constitution, and 'dangerous' for reservation," the Telangana CM said.

He said the BJP was speaking about 400 plus seats only to change the Constitution and 'scrap' SC and OBC reservations.

"People gave Modi two chances, but he 'failed' to do anything. So this time the people will defeat him," Revanth said.

The BJP is going to get only half the seats in states where they won during the 2019 Parliament elections and if they want more seats, they will have to go and contest in Pakistan, he said.

"South India is going to give 100 seats to INDIA.

STUDENTS DISALLOWED FROM ATTEMPTING EXAMS

Guru Nanak varsity students raise fees issue

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
The students of Guru Nanak University have raised their voice against the payment of fees which was more than the agreed amount. The university has been unauthorised since its establishment by the university Grants Commission. However, the State government has not accorded permission to the university to admit students thereby forcing them to transfer them to Osmania University constituent colleges. The constituent colleges are demanding higher fees from the students than the agreed amount. Moreover, the authorities of Osmania University constituent colleges are not allowing the students to attempt their exams.



Vishal, a student of Guru Nanak University said, "We are really helpless as the authorities of OU constituent colleges are demanding more fees than the agreed fee payment."

really helpless as the authorities of OU constituent colleges are demanding more fees than the agreed fee payment. The authorities are forcing us to pay fully, otherwise they are not

allowing students to enter classes and attempt exams. Moreover, they are demanding us to pay the full amount within the first month itself. The authorities are not taking our attendance due to this issue. We have reached the OU authorities to tackle this issue but they haven't responded yet."

Another student said, "The constituent colleges are demanding second year fees, which is more than what we agreed to pay in the Guru Nanak University. The authorities of these colleges have not collected the first year fees from our institution. They are asking us to pay Rs 70,000 as partial payment and are not releasing the second semester results. The authorities are not allowing us to attempt internals and semester examinations."

Man arrested for posting woman's details in websites



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Gachibowli Police have arrested 42-year-old Abhishek Mohan Kirtikar, who has shared a woman's personal details in the porn websites. The accused was arrested on May 25 at Mumbai and brought to Hyderabad on a transit warrant.

Madhapur DCP Vineeth said that this is a case of serious cyber-stalking to a corporate woman by posting her personal details in porn websites. The accused is habituated to harass women who rejects his love or marriage proposal.

In this case, the accused met the victim only once but still he was stalking her from various mail IDs and phone numbers. He also went to the extent of blackmailing her by sending fake messages to her workplace as well.

The DCP said that during the investigation it has come to light that there were other women victims who were suffering due to the accused. Among them, some complained from different cities.

62 KGS OF GANJA WORTH RS 15.5 LAKH SEIZED

Inter-State ganja racket busted by railway police

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Secunderabad Railway Police, along with Railway Protection Force (RPF) apprehended the accused who were transporting dry ganja from Mohana in Odisha to Nanded in Maharashtra and seized 62 kgs of ganja worth Rs 15,50,000 from him during surprise checking against drug peddlers on platforms and trains at Secunderabad railway station on Monday.

The accused were identified as Chand Kumar Nayak (30) S/o Dhanurjya Nayak, of Ludru village, Bandhapada, Thana, Gajapathi district in Odisha. The other culprits are Mihir, of Mohana village, Gajapathi district in Odisha and Chida of Mohana village, Gajapathi district in Odisha. Three other offenders from Nanded were absconding.

On Monday morning, the GRP staff, along with RPF staff, were checking on platform No.10 of Secunderabad railway station, where they apprehended the accused in possession of two trolley suitcases and three shoulder bags containing 62 kgs of dry ganja. The accused were apprehended.

B. Praveen Kumar, I/c SHO/RPS, Secunderabad, along with MA Majeed, SIRP, P Seetharamulu, RHC, S.K. Nagu Basha RPC, V Ramu, RPC, Srinivasulu, RPC of RPS, Secunderabad, along with RPF staff BM Hussain, RPF ASI, Murali, RPF HC and Praveen Kumar, RPF PC, apprehended the accused under the supervision of Shaik Saleema, Superintendent of police and SN Jawed, DSRP, SC(U).

ADG Railway and Road Safety Mahesh Bhagwat appreciated the officers and rewarded them suitably.

MAN OF THE MONTH SAFETY AWARDS FOR 6 RAILWAY STAFF

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Arun Kumar Jain, General Manager, South Central Railway (SCR) presented 'Man of the Month' safety awards to six employees who have shown exemplary alertness and dedication on duty, during a safety review meeting held on Monday at Rail Nilayam, Secunderabad. The General Manager presented the safety awards to six employees - one from Secunderabad division, two from Vijayawada division and three from Guntakal division for showing alertness and taking timely action to prevent unsafe conditions. He congratulated the awardees and appreciated them for the commitment in performing



duties with utmost dedication. The employees belonged to various categories like loco pilots, technicians, pointsman and track maintainers. Later, Arun Kumar Jain conducted a detailed review on the safety of train operations over the zone. He instructed the officials to ensure observance of all safety precautions and guidelines without fail so as to avoid any untoward incidents.

No accountability in new criminal laws, says Asaduddin Owaisi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) president Asaduddin Owaisi on Monday said there is no accountability in the new criminal laws of India.

During a press conference, former Inspector General of the Andhra Pradesh Police, E Damodar said that the new criminal laws will make police more accountable while solving cases. Reacting to Damodar's

statement Owaisi took to X and said, "There's no police accountability in the new criminal laws. A person can be put in jail for up to 90 days without demonstrable evidence. What happens to police officers if an investigation or prosecution is not completed in the prescribed time limit? Are cops punished?"

The AIMIM president also took a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the latter's 'Mujra' remark against the



INDIA alliance. Owaisi, took to X and said, "Narendra Modi, you spoke about Mujra, so I

want to ask you that for the last three years, China has occupied 2,000 square kilometers of India's territory. You didn't take action against China, were you busy disco dancing?"

Addressing an election rally in Bihar a few days ago, PM Modi said, "The INDIA alliance is free to remain subservient to its vote bank and perform mujra for it. I will stand firm with SC, ST and OBC reservation and will continue to fight for it."

ILLEGAL PROCUREMENT OF INSULIN

DCA cancels licence of wholesale shops

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Drug Control Administration (DCA) has cancelled the licence of six wholesale dealers in Hyderabad for illegally procuring insulin injections and seized stock worth Rs 51.92 lakh.

The insulin injections were detected during raids conducted from March 15 to 20. The licence has been cancelled for a month. The DCA found that the injections were sourced from New Delhi without purchase bills and were being sold at substantial discounts of more than 40% by these wholesalers.

Procuring medicines illegally without purchase bills is a violation of Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. Illegal procurement of medicines without purchase bills is deemed fraudulent primarily because it involves the following risks. Without purchase bills, the quality, authenticity and safety of the medicines cannot be verified, posing risks to consumers' health; Tax Evasion: Furthermore, failing to maintain purchase bills may also lead to tax evasion as it prevents accurate reporting of expenses and revenue related to the procurement and sale of medicines.



GLOBAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE ON JUNE 26

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Anti Narcotics Bureau (TSNAB) has announced that June 26 will be observed as International Day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking. The purpose of the programme is to spread awareness regarding drug abuse. It will stress on youth, educational institutions and the

society at large. The TSNAB will conduct an open short film-making competition. The theme for the competition is "Drugs and their adverse impact on Society." The participants must submit their entries via Google forms by June 20. The first prize consists of Rs 50,000; second prize is Rs 30,000 and the third prize is Rs 20,000.

Aparna Mall to invest Rs 284 cr in retail

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Aparna Constructions and Estates Private Limited on Monday announced it will invest Rs 284 crore in the retail-commercial and the entertainment segments with the launch of Aparna Neo Mall and Aparna Cinemas in Hyderabad. Located in Nallagandla region, Aparna Neo is spread

across 3.67 acres with an impressive expanse of 3.5 lakh square feet, and is the only mall within the 8 km radius. Aligned with their broader business diversification goals, Aparna Constructions has made a strategic investment of Rs 252 crore in Aparna Neo and an additional investment of Rs 32 crore in Aparna Cinemas.

Officials told to monitor 120 water-logging points

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) Managing Director Sudarshan Reddy ordered the officials to regularly monitor the 120 water-logging points in Hyderabad under the limits of the GHMC and the Water Board. He directed to remove the silt from the manholes from time to time. The authorities concerned were advised to prevent garbage from entering the water pipelines and canal-crossings. Warning boards should be installed with red paints at flooded manholes.

On Monday, Sudarshan Reddy held a meeting on the monsoon plan with the Water Board officials at the head office in Khairatabad.

He ordered the officials to coordinate with the officials of the GHMC and the police departments. The MD appealed to the people of the city not to open the lids of manholes under any circum-

stances. If the manhole lid is destroyed or noticed to be left open anywhere, call Jala Mandali customer care number 155313 and give information.

The GHMC has a sewerage network of 5,767 km, while suburban municipalities have 4,200 km. There are about 6,34,919 manholes in the limits of the GHMC, of which 63,221 are deep manholes. Out of these, 26,798 are under the GHMC and 36,423 are under suburban municipalities.

Sudarshan Reddy ordered the officials to focus on drinking water supply and sewage management. He said that sewage overflow should be taken seriously and no problems should arise anywhere in the city.

For this monsoon season the Water Board has taken appropriate measures like setting up a special 'Central Safety Protocol Cell' to monitor monsoon works. This cell with six members works under the supervision of the Chief Vigilance Officer.

Virtual market for arts & crafts proposed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Gadwal Vijayalakshmi, Mayor of Hyderabad and Pinky Reddy, Philanthropist, inaugurated Amulyam Hyderabad, a startup store which offers a wide range of Indian arts and crafts and home decor items at Banjara Hills on Monday. The store was set up by Amulyam Hyderabad startup co-founders Sushanth Agarwal and Trishala Agarwal.

Mayor Vijayalakshmi said, "The collection is unique and I haven't seen such a fare before. Today online is the



mainline. I suggested they go online as well because there will be a huge virtual market for their products as they are most sought after. I hope they

expand their footprint fast with more branches." Pinky Reddy admired the collection at the store. She said, "It is a one-stop shop for unique arte-

facts and wedding gifts. It is a paradise for houseware. I am surprised at the amazing collection."

Sushanth Agarwal and Trishala Agarwal, the husband-and-wife duo said they began their journey from a small room in their apartment with pickle-making. After four years of hard struggle, they have come up with their maiden store at Road No 12, Banjara Hills.

The store brings to light the forgotten art and craft forms - Pichwai, Jodhpur, Udaipur of cutlery and crockery, including the Karimnagar silver filigree artefacts.



Leading perspectives in work integrated learning discussed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The International Conference on Work Integrated Learning (ICONWIL-2024) hosted by Birla Institute of Technology & Science (BITS) Pilani Work Integrated Learning Programmes (WILP) division at its Hyderabad campus concluded on Monday. The event witnessed the convergence of diverse perspectives, innovative ideas and deliberation of some of the leading practices in the field of Work Integrated Learning (WIL).

The conference brought together scholars, practitioners and policymakers from across the globe to exchange research findings, innovative ideas and share their experiences, besides facilitating healthy discussions around solutions to practical challenges encountered in the field.

Prof TG Sitharam, Chairman, All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), Government of India, chief guest for the opening ceremony of the conference, congratulated BITS Pilani WILP for hosting a unique conference at such a scale and emphasised the importance of

skill development and higher education, especially among the youth in today's world.

Prof Daniel Bernstein, Professor-Emeritus, University of Kansas, delivered a highly impactful talk on "Harnessing available resources to maximise learning." Prof Nelson Lacey, Professor-Emeritus, University of Massachusetts, delivered an insightful keynote speech on "experiences with development of online degree programs." Prof Manu Kapur, Professor, ETH Zurich, on "Productive Failure in the context of Work Integrated Learning." The keynote speeches on: "Role of Work Integrated Learning in Innovative Manufacturing" by Dr Jaitirth R Joshi, Scientist and Program Director, DRDL, Hyderabad and "Role of Metacognition in Teaching Learning process" by Dr Edamana Prasad, Professor, IIT, Madras, was also well received by the audience. The panel discussions on "Key ingredients and approaches for designing industry-relevant curriculum" and "Innovative pedagogies for work integrated learning" engaged the participants effectively.

SSC advanced suppl. exams from June 3

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Director of Government Examinations announced on Monday that SSC Advanced Supplementary Examinations June-2024 will be conducted from June 3 to 13.

A total of 51,237 candidates registered for the examinations. Out of them, 31,625 are boys while 19,612 are girls. In all, 170 chief superintendents, 170 departmental officers and 1,300 invigilators are appointed for 170 examination centres in the State.

The timings of the examinations are from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm for all the subjects except for first language (Composite Course) and Science subjects. First Language (Composite Course) timings are from 9.30 am to 12.50 pm and in

case of Science there are two parts i.e., Part-I Physical Science, Part-II Biological Science; timings are from 9.30 am to 11.00 am on two separate days.

He also stated that hall-tickets and printed nominal rolls have already been dispatched to the schools through concerned district educational officers in the State. Candidates can receive their hall-tickets from the headmaster concerned of the school. They are also hosted in the office website, www.bse.telangana.gov.in. Students can also download their hall tickets from the website. The candidates are informed to reach the examination centre one hour before the commencement of the examination.

Social Intelligence Bootcamp sets standard in experimental learning

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Social Intelligence Bootcamp 2024: From Protocol to Poise organised by the World Trade Centre - Shamshabad (interim office) in Nanakramguda concluded on Monday. The three-day event featured a stellar lineup of speakers and engaging workshops.

The event commenced with the launch of the book 'SI-The Social Alchemy: Crafting Success through Social Intelligence' by Dr Usha Yanamandra, founder of Catalyst and organiser of the Social Intelligence Boot Camp. The camp included inspiring sessions by renowned experts, such as former Ambassador of Armenia Dr Deepak Vohra on



'Empowered communication,' Prasanna M Nori on 'Building a digital identity,' Bhanu Murthy Y on 'Cyber safety and resilience' and Charan Lakkaraju on 'Stronger communities through social intel-

ligence.' Participants also enjoyed luxury gifts, organic samplers and the chance to win exciting prizes.

The event concluded with two key announcements: the launch of monthly master

classes and the upcoming Global Summit in the UAE to be jointly organised by Catalyst and the Valmiki Group. These initiatives promise to extend the transformative impact of the bootcamp, empowering individuals to continuously enhance their social intelligence and achieve personal and professional success.

"The Social Intelligence Bootcamp 2024 has set a new standard in experiential learning, leaving participants inspired and eager for future opportunities to elevate their skills. We are thrilled with the overwhelming response and look forward to continued growth and collaborations that will shape the future of social intelligence," said Dr Usha Yanamandra.

Modi's agenda is to render social justice

Is there any substance in allegations being levelled by Rahul Gandhi and his aides that social justice is being denied to the people of the nation? To what extent the people pay attention to these allegations? Answers to the questions will be out on June 4.

The unsubstantiated allegations over denial of social justice to the people being levelled by Rahul and his team will fell flat with the people, especially at a time when millions of SCs, STs, BCs and Adivasis derive benefit from welfare schemes of the Union government.

The schemes benefit the poorest of the poor to join the national mainstream and achieve economic equality. When Prime Minister Narendra Modi got the opportunity, he first elevated Ramnath Kovind and subsequently Draupadi Murmu to the office of the President of India, the highest office in the country.

When Mrs Gandhi imposed the draconian Emergency in the country and which saw hundreds shot dead, all parties united behind Jayaprakash Narayan to unleash social revolution. In the opposition struggle, Jan Sangh also played a pivotal role. This development became the main reason for the downfall of the Congress. Such conditions do not prevail in the country now.

Modi did not unleash repression on the people like Mrs Gandhi. He did not postpone elections by one year and did not enforce Emergency. Government agencies have been taking action against the corruption of the political parties under the BJP regime, but they did not do anything with ordinary people. Millions of voters, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, have been exercising their right to franchise, demonstrating a democratic spirit. Where is the evidence for the

Modi did not unleash repression on the people like Mrs Gandhi. He did not postpone elections by one year and did not enforce Emergency. Government agencies have been taking action against the corruption of the political parties under the BJP regime, but they did not do anything with ordinary people

allegation that democracy is being eroded in the nation? How can taking action against the corrupt, anti-social forces, those who are keen to foment trouble in society and those who join hands with foreign powers be described as undemocratic? Why did the Opposition parties remember social justice and Muslim welfare only at the time of elections? The terminology was the creation of the outdated Left parties.

The Left parties, which are wiped out all over the globe, have joined hands with the Congress and imposing their ideology on the Congress. Because of this ideology, Left parties were wiped out from West Bengal and Tripura. In Telangana, the Left parties contested from 17 Assembly seats and received severe drubbing in all seats.

On the other hand, the Congress imbibed Muslim League ideology and has been



Y SATYA KUMAR
BJP National Secretary

levelling allegations as if Modi regime did injustice to the Muslims. People from all religions derive benefit under schemes like Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojna, power connections, free LPG cylinder supply, Ayushman Bharat and other schemes. Modi is the first leader to notice that Pasmada, the community that is regarded as the untouchable among the Muslims, were benefited. He implemented several mea-

asures to benefit Ansaris (weaver community), Khureshis, Kunjda (vegetable sellers), tailors, Mansuris (cotton growers) and so on to render them social and economic justice. After the BJP came to power in UP, it appointed a Pasmada community person as minority welfare minister. In the local body elections held in the nation's capital, the BJP gave tickets to six Muslims, including four Pasmada Muslims. The Congress has sided with the Muslims who occupied higher echelons of society, but Modi government has been trying to render justice to Pasmada Muslims, who are not known to many. That is why Shia Muslims and a large number of Pasmada Muslims have been supporting the BJP. Narendra Modi is the first leader to take measures to render justice to Muslim women, who were discriminated against. Today,

a large number of Muslim women patronise the BJP because of Modi's initiative against triple talaq. Either PM Modi or the BJP never tried to convert the Muslims into a vote bank. In fact, no other regime saw communal riots that occurred during the Congress regime. Did anyone come across communal riots in the 10-year rule of Modi? Modi sent the message across the nation that every citizen of the nation would be safe as long as they feel they are Indians first. The BJP corrected historic wrongs, but it did not affect the interests of any section of society. Everyone knows if Congress-led grand alliance INDIA is voted to power, the minority and vote bank politics will come into play and majority Hindus would be in a defensive position. The Constitution approved caste-based reservations but

not religion-based quota. However, successive Congress regimes raked up the quota for the Muslims. Justice Ranganath Misra Commission proposed 15% quota for the Muslims. The UPA regime proposed 4.5% quota for the backward Muslims. Kerala, Karnataka and Telangana governments took measures to provide quota for the Muslims. That is why if the grand alliance of INDIA were to come to power it would change the statute and provide legality to reservations, Modi cautioned people. As long as he is alive, he declared, he would not agree to quota on religious grounds. Objective of the BJP is to render equal justice to all sections. People of Kashmir enjoy benefits of Modi's government schemes by virtue of making Kashmir an integral part of India. Another objective of Modi would be to implement Uniform Civil Code (UCC).

TRULY SPEAKING

Telangana student killed in road accident in Florida

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a tragic incident, a 25-year-old student from Telangana, died in a road accident in Florida on Sunday night. She went to the United States for higher studies.

She was identified as Guntipalli Sowmya of Yadagiripalle village in Yadadri-Bhongir district. According to reports, Sowmya was hit by a speeding car on Sunday while she was crossing the road in Florida, leading to her death on the spot. She had completed her Masters degree from Florida Atlantic University and was trying to find a job.

Sowmya's parents Koteswara Rao, Balamani and other members of her family



Guntipalli Sowmya

have requested for assistance from the Centre to bring her body back to India

Telangana Woman Dies in US Car Crash Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy expressed condolences to the bereaved family and stated that efforts are being made to bring back her body.



City-based NGO Youngistaan Foundation holding its fourth edition of 'Break the Silence' in Hyderabad on Sunday

Event facilitating period-friendly world hosted

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

City-based NGO Youngistaan Foundation on Sunday evening hosted its fourth edition of 'Break the Silence' event to raise awareness on creating a period-positive environment for menstruators, observing the menstrual hygiene month.

With Telangana State Innovation Cell (TSIC) and Naari Women Wellness Initiative as community partners, the panel discussions and theme-based art performances were held at Navika Cafe & Studio, Jubilee Hills. Over 250 participants including beneficiaries, policymakers, representatives from the development sector and youngsters were present at the event.

The panel on 'A Comprehensive Approach to Menstrual Equality' saw constructive discourse by Dr Vani Joseph, Head, Centre of Gender Studies and Development; Ravi Naidu, Child Survival Consultant for UNICEF; Dr Nandini, Gynecologist from Fernandez Hospital and Arun Daniel Yellamaty,

Founder & Director, Youngistaan Foundation. "Since 2017, through our Gender and Health programme at Youngistaan Foundation, we have been striving to foster conversations about safe menstruation, the right products, nutrition, hygiene and menstruation waste management.

We observed a significant need in the communities we aimed to engage with, including children, women and other spaces where such discussions are crucial," said Arun, adding that the primary goal in hosting these open dialogues is to sensitise and inspire innovation and education to address menstruation needs.

Another panel discussion on 'Role of Innovation in Promoting Menstrual Hygiene at Grassroots' with Padverse Founder Manish Sagar, in REPLACE State Coordinator Shyam Rathod and Naari Founder Anju Arora shed light on local initiatives.

Slam Poets, Rappers and Standup comedians also put up thoughtful performances.

BRS alleges liquor scam by State govt in Telangana

Distilleries which killed people and donated money to Congress got permissions

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS leader Manne Krishank said that the Congress government is resorting to liquor scam in Telangana by giving approvals to fraudulent companies involved in killing various people through spurious liquor. Krishank was addressing a press meet at Telangana Bhavan on Monday.

He said, "Today Liquor manufacturer Som Distilleries and Breweries Ltd on Monday, wrote to NSE that it has received approval from the Telangana government to sell its beer brands in the State. This company has links with Congress leaders, gave donation to the party and also killed people through illicit liquor. During KCR's regime



Manne Krishank

illegal spurious liquor was banned in Telangana. When the Congress came to power, they opened the door to illegal liquor."

Krishank said that there was a case that Congress national leader Digvijay Singh was involved in bribery with Som Distillery. Furthermore, in 2019-

2020, through Indus Ind bank, Rs 1.30 crore was given to Congress party by Som Distilleries as donation, alleged Krishank quoting media reports.

He said that prior to that the distillery donated Rs 25 lakhs in 2013-14 and Three times they transferred Rs 25 lakhs as donation to Congress party.

Krishank said, "In 1999, then as CM Digvijay Singh hoped that Som Distilleries will earn well as all of them have vested interests in it. As many 24 people died after drinking spurious liquor, Som Distilleries has been seized by Madhya Pradesh government. Congress government just because they are getting donations and funding, in an illegal way are giving permission to the party."

Reacting to Minister Juppally Krishna Rao said that he will file a defamation suit of Rs 100 crore if proven that new brands were given approvals by government, Krishank said, "Minister Juppally said that no new brands of liquor were given permissions in the State, it all turned out to be a lie. A new beer company is being brought to Telangana by Som Distilleries Company. Fact is Excise Minister Juppally Krishna Rao is blatantly lying. Does Juppally know that Som Distilleries Company is coming to Telangana? ...Did CM Revanth Reddy deal and give permission to Som Distilleries Company to sell beers in Telangana? Has Juppally been ignored? Why is the government risking lives of people



Uppal ground bags best stadium award

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Uppal Stadium won the best pitch and ground award of the IPL-17 season. Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) President Arshanapally Jaganmohan Rao received the award at the closing ceremony of the IPL held in Chennai on Sunday.

Along with this award, the IPL organisers also presented a cash prize of Rs 50 lakh to

the HCA. On this occasion, Jaganmohan Rao said that Secretary Devraj, along with other Apex Council members and HCA staff worked tirelessly to conduct the IPL matches successfully.

Chief Curator Chandrasekhar and other groundsman staff have done a wonderful job. Jaganmohan Rao said that this award is a reward for the hard work of all HCA family members.

Praveen Kumar meets DGP, seeks inquiry into Sridhar Reddy murder

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS leader RS Praveen Kumar has demanded comprehensive probe into the murder of BRS leaders Sridhar Reddy at Lakshimpalli village under Chinnambavimandal in Kollapur Assembly constituency.

He, along with the family members of the slain BRS leader, on Monday met the DGP and lodged a complaint with him asking the latter to take stern action against those who were responsible for the murder of Sridhar Reddy.

None was arrested so far even four days after the murder of Sridhar Reddy. No action was taken against Minister Juppally Krishna Rao



RS Praveen Kumar

when a complaint was lodged against him. If justice was not done to Sridhar Reddy's family in a week, the BRS would launch demonstrations, he cautioned the police.

Praveen Kumar wondered whether there is the rule of

law in the state. The police did not even question the aides of Juppally Krishna Rao. Sridhar Reddy's father has been appealing to the government to take steps to arrest the culprits

Revanth Reddy and Juppally Krishna Rao have been targeting the BRS leaders and workers.

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has been holding the portfolio of home too, he said. What is the use of it if he failed to provide protection to the common man?

Chinnambavi sub-inspector is a puppet in the hands of the Minister the former IPS officer alleged demanding the dismissal of police officers who is hand-in-glove with the ruling party leaders.

KU off the track in the absence of regular Executive Council

PNS ■ WARANGAL

The full Executive Council of Kakatiya University functioned only till October last year. Since October, an ad hoc council is governing the university. The employees, teachers, students and research scholars of the KU have been asking the State government to constitute a full executive council and thereby constitute a search committee to appoint university vice-chancellor.

In fact, the full council would have 13 members. Besides the university Vice-Chancellor, secretaries and commissioners of higher education and collegiate education officiate as permanent members of the council. It may be recalled here that the KU Vice-Chancellor laid down



office on May 21 at the expiry of his term.

On the orders of the state government, four members representing spheres of education, fine arts, service and culture sectors from Adilabad, Khammam and Warangal districts will be appointed to the to the executive council.

Sociology professor Prof Tatikonda Ramesh laid down his office as the 14th VC on May 21 at the expiry of his term.

In spite of code of conduct is in vogue, the state government took permission from the election commission and got its approval

to appoint VCs to the universities.

It constituted search committee for all universities in the state except that of KU. The search committees have been going through the applications received for the VC posts. It is busy gathering background information of the candidates. As the Kakatiya University has no executive council, it could not send search committee members' names to the government, derailing the process to appoint the VC.

The student, teachers, research scholars and others of the KU have been demanding the state government to constitute an executive council and appoint a search committee to take up the process of appointing the VC.

Inter-state gang of vehicle-lifters nabbed: 67 bikes seized

PNS ■ NALGONDA

District superintendent of police Chandana Deepthi said on Monday that the city police arrested a five-member interstate vehicle lifters and seized 67 motorcycles worth Rs 90 lakh, mobile phones and a dummy pistol from them, the police said here on Monday.

The arrested were identified as Tupakula Venkatesh, 30, resident of Chilakaluripeta in Palnadu district, GuvvalaSabarish, 26, working as a supervisor at V Convention Function Hall in Hyderabad, GunjiAnkamma Rao, 25, belonging to Chilakaluripeta of Palnadu district in AP, Mettupalli Srikant, an autorickshaw driver by profession hailing from



Piduguralla of Palnadu district and AvulaVenu, 25, of Chilakaluripetamandal of Palnadu district of AP.

The seized motorcycles include 20 Royal Enfield Bullet motorcycles and 44 Pulsar motorcycles. Other motorcycles seized from them are: a TVP Apache motorcycle, a Honda Activa scooter and a HF Deluxe motorcycles.

For the past several months, Royal Enfield Bullet and Pulsar motorcycles were being stolen from Tippiarti, Nalgonda, Miryalaguda, Narketpalli, Nakrekal, Suryapet and Bhongir in Telangana Piduguralla, Dacheppalli, Chilakaluripeta, Yedlapadu, Mangalagiri and Guntur regions of Andhra Pradesh.

Under the supervision of Nalgonda DSP K Sivaram, Nalgonda Two-Town CI B Daniel Kumar, SI R Nagaraju, head constables Vishnuvardhan Giri, Balakoti, Lingaswamy and Mahesh arrested the culprits as they were found moving under suspicious conditions while the police party was searching vehicles near Panagal By-pass Road in Nalgonda on Sunday.

Jaya Jaya He Telangana song is not Natu Natu: RSP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS leader RS Praveen Kumar asked what is Andhra music director MM Keeravani's dominance on the Telangana State song? What is the need for rewriting this song? However, how long will Andhra music directors keep dominating Telangana poets? It's been 10 years since Telangana came??

He said, "Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, this is not a 'natu natu' song to be composed by Keeravani. The sacrifices of hundreds of martyrs who rose up in rebellion against the Andhra rulers of the time, are every form of dreams of four crore people. A battle cry, a tone of contempt. With the original tune

given by Andeshree, the entire Telangana sang this song. You wouldn't have done this feat if you saw the way lakhs of people sang this song en masse at Osmania University on January 3, 2011 in a student roar. You probably don't know because you never had the chance to be there. I am telling you because I was there that day."

He said, "Tollywood and Telangana movement are different. Tollywood is for entertainment and on the other hand, Telangana anthem is a common thread of emotion that brought all hearts of Telangana together during movement. It's not Hollywood that gave tune to Jana Gana Mana and

Vandemataram. Unfortunately, Andeshree is innocent and helpless; so he is sitting silently. Whatever you do, he will bear it."

RSP said, "By the way, if you are so impressed with Andhra musicians, please go to AP and be the CM there. If you sit on the CM's chair of Telangana, you must respect the emotions of Telangana people and encourage Telangana talent, sir. We had enough of rule by proxies and Andhra agents. Many generations fought vehemently against such exploitative rule and lost their lives. People of Telangana, shall we sing our Telangana song composed by Andhra musicians on June 2, or our original song?? Feeling hurt, to say the least", He said in a post on X

INDIA CORNER

Coal scam: Court convicts Maharashtra-based company, directors

A Delhi court on Monday convicted a Maharashtra-based company and two of its directors for cheating and criminal conspiracy in a case related to irregularities in the allocation of a coal block in the state. This was the 16th case related to the alleged coal scam in which the court pronounced its judgment. Special Judge Sanjay Bansal held the accused -- B S Ispat Ltd, Mohan Agrawal and Rakesh Agrawal -- guilty under sections 420 (cheating) and 120-B (criminal conspiracy) of the IPC, noting that the prosecution had proved the case beyond any reasonable doubt. The case pertains to irregularities in the allocation of 'Marki Mangli-I' coal block situated in Maharashtra in favour of the company. The court is likely to hear the arguments on the sentence tomorrow. The convicts face a maximum punishment of a seven-year jail term, while the court is likely to impose a fine on the company.



Missing for 22 years, man rejoins family with help of police

An eight-month long investigation by a team of Haryana police has helped reunite a 29-year-old man with his family in Uttar Pradesh, over two decades years after he went missing, an official said on Monday. Separated from his family at the age of seven after he was allegedly abducted by someone and later abandoned, Amit grew up in different children's homes in Delhi. Rajesh Kumar, Assistant Sub-Inspector, Haryana Police's Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU), who led the investigation, on Monday said Amit was recently reunited with his family after 22 years. Amit's relentless search for his family finally bore fruit after he came in contact with ASI Kumar came a few months ago when the officer had gone to Delhi in connection with a missing child's case. With only fragmented memories of an oil mill in his village and a place named 'Bala Chowk' shared by Amit, ASI Kumar embarked on a meticulous investigation to trace his family.



Primary school teacher suspended for making indecent remarks against PM

A teacher posted in a government primary school in Kaushambi district was suspended on Monday after a case was registered against her for making indecent remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on social media. Basic education officer Kamleendra Kushwaha issued the suspension order against the teacher named Varsha. Kushwaha said that taking cognizance of the social media post of Varsha, the principal of a government primary school posted in a village in Sirath tehsil, an official lodged a complaint at the Kokhraj police station based on which a case was registered against her on Sunday night under sections 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony), 505(2) (statements creating or promoting enmity, hatred or ill-will between classes) and 295A (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs) of the IPC and the IT Act.



INDIA leaders likely to meet on June 1 to assess poll performance

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The top leaders of the opposition INDIA bloc are likely to meet in the national capital on June 1 to assess their performance in the Lok Sabha elections and chalk out their strategy ahead of the results.

The sources said the proposed meeting will be convened in the afternoon of June 1 when the last phase of polling will be underway.

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge, who is one of the senior-most leaders of the opposition bloc, has convened the meeting, they said.

The sources in the Trinamool Congress (TMC) said party supremo Mamata Banerjee, general secretary Abhishek Banerjee and other



The sources said the proposed meeting will be convened in the afternoon of June 1 when the last phase of polling will be underway. Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge, who is one of the senior-most leaders of the opposition bloc, has convened the meeting, they said

top leaders will be voting on the day and hence, will be unable to attend the meeting and pointed out that the party has so far attended all

meetings of the opposition bloc.

The TMC has conveyed this to the organisers, the sources added.

Voting will take place on nine seats in West Bengal on June 1, including two seats in Kolkata - Kolkata Dakshin and Kolkata Uttar. The other constituencies that go to polls in the state include Jadavpur, Dum Dum, Barasat, Basirhat, Jayanagar, Mathurapur and Diamond Harbour.

During the meeting, the opposition leaders will discuss their strategy ahead of the June 4 results and assess their performance in the seven-phase elections, they said.

The opposition alliance has been claiming that it will be able to stop the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) from returning to power at the Centre and cobble together a government of its own.

'Religion-based reservation will not be allowed'

PNS ■ VARANASI

Reservation based on religion will not be allowed to be implemented till Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP are in power, party president JP Nadda said on Monday.

Accusing the opposition of planning to give reservation based on religion, he said, "It is clearly written in the Constitution that there will be no religion-based reservation."

"As long as PM Modi and BJP are in power, there will be no such reservation," the BJP president said.

"We will not allow anyone to encroach on the reservation of our Dalit, tribal, backward and extremely backward classes. You will see what will happen to the opposition on June 4 (the counting day)," Nadda said.

GAME ZONE FIRE

Gujarat HC raps Rajkot civic body, says it doesn't have faith in state machinery

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

The Gujarat High Court on Monday said it does not have faith in the state machinery "which gets into action only after innocent lives are lost", as it pulled up the Rajkot civic body over the purported lapses in functioning of the game zone facility where a massive fire killed 27 persons.

A special bench of Justices Biren Vaishnav and Devan Desai asked whether the civic body sat over the fire safety orders passed earlier on a PIL for 18 months.

The HC was hearing a suo motu PIL on the TRP game zone fire tragedy which occurred on May 25. A day earlier, the HC termed the inci-

dent a prima facie "man-made disaster".

The bench asked whether the civic body had turned a blind eye to such a big structure coming up in its vicinity

after its lawyer submitted that the TRP Game Zone had not asked for requisite permissions.

The bench noted that all commissioners of the Rajkot municipal corporation from

the time the TRP game zone was set up in 2021 till the time of this incident (on May 25) "should be held accountable for the tragedy that occurred," and directed them to furnish separate affidavits.

On Monday, a counsel pointed out the state government will have to come forward to hold a person accountable, and this calls for drastic steps.

"Who will take such drastic steps? Honestly speaking, we do not have faith in the state machinery now. Four years after orders of this court, directing them, after their assurance, this is the sixth incident that has happened. They only want lives to be lost and then trigger the machinery," the bench said.



Modi made all-out efforts to topple Himachal's Congress govt: Priyanka

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi made all-out efforts to topple Himachal Pradesh's democratically-elected government by using money power, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra alleged on Monday.

The only purpose of BJP leaders, starting from Prime Minister Modi, is to grab power at any cost and they indulge in corrupt practices, bribe legislators and mislead people in the name of God to achieve their purpose, she claimed.

"Modi made all-out efforts to topple the democratically-elected Congress government in the state by indulging in corrupt practices and using money power," the Congress general secretary said while



addressing a poll rally in Chamba for party's Kangra Lok Sabha seat candidate Anand Sharma.

Priyanka Gandhi also asked the public if they would prefer such a leader.

Addressing another rally in Kangra district, she spoke about the Himachal's political turmoil that took place in February-March and alleged that legislators were given Rs 100 crore each by the BJP.

Two doctors, staffer of Sassoon hospital remanded in police custody

PNS ■ PUNE

A court here on Monday remanded two doctors and an employee of Sassoon General Hospital arrested in connection with the Porsche crash in police custody till May 30.

The police produced the three in the court of Judicial Magistrate First Class (Small Causes) A A Pande and sought their custody for 10 days.

Earlier in the day, the police arrested Dr Ajay Taware, head of the state-run hospital's Forensic Medicine department and Dr Shrihari Halnor, the chief medical officer for alleged manipulation of blood samples and destruction of evidence in the case, an official had said.

The third arrested person, Atul Ghatkamble, works under Dr Taware.

The police told the court that

PUNE CAR CRASH



some financial transactions had taken place to change the blood samples and they needed to search the houses of the accused in connection with it. The court then remanded the three in police custody till May 30.

Two IT professionals died

Teenage boy drives BMW car without license with man on bonnet in Kalyan; case registered

PNS ■ THANE

Close on the heels of the Pune Porsche car crash in which two IT professionals were killed, a 17-year-old boy allegedly drove a BMW car without a license on busy streets in Kalyan with a man lying on its bonnet, prompting the police



to register a case after videos of the stunt went viral. Police arrested the man

after their motorcycle was hit by a speeding Porsche allegedly driven by a 17-year-old minor, son of realtor Vishal Agarwal, in the early hours of May 19. The police claim the teenager was drunk at the time.

lying on the car bonnet, identified as Subham Mithila, and booked the 17-year-old who was at the wheel and his father, a retired government official who owns the car, an official said on Monday. The teenager drove the car on Saturday in the busy Shivaji Chowk area in Kalyan city in Thane district.

Modi should not be referred to as PM in BJP poll campaign: Mamata

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said that Narendra Modi should be referred to as a BJP leader and not as the prime minister in the saffron party's campaign as he is a "caretaker PM".

Addressing an election rally in Burrabazar area in Kolkata Uttar seat for party candidate Sudip Bandyopadhyay, Banerjee said, "Modiji has every right to campaign. He has every right to come here



and participate in election programmes. But I am surprised to see him being referred to as the PM in his party's campaign advertisements."

"Can he do this? I am being

referred to as TMC chairperson by my campaign managers and by my party here even though it is not assembly polls. Still, I am adhering to the model code of conduct," she said.

Modi is scheduled to take part in a roadshow in Kolkata on May 28.

Referring to Modi as the "caretaker PM", Banerjee asserted that the BJP will not return to power for a third term and the INDIA bloc will form the government at the Centre.

SWATI MALI WAL ASSAULT CASE Court rejects Bibhav Kumar's bail plea

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A court here on Monday dismissed the bail plea of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's close aide Bibhav Kumar who is accused of assaulting AAP MP Swati Maliwal at the CM's residence.

Metropolitan Magistrate Gaurav Goyal rejected the bail plea of Kumar, a personal assistant of the CM, after

hearing arguments from both sides in the court. A detailed order on the matter is awaited.

During the proceedings, Rajya Sabh MP Maliwal told the court that there was a threat to her life and "grave danger" to her family if Kumar was released. She claimed that a "one-sided video" about the incident "was made by a YouTuber", following which she started receiving the threats.

'Every time you criticise Modi govt, you are termed anti-national'

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Monday said whenever people criticise the Narendra Modi government, they are accused of being anti-national and claimed there is an effort to "delegitimise dissent".

The Congress leader drew a parallel between the regimes led by India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the present dispensation led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He said Nehru, whose death anniversary is being observed today, was somebody who said



democracy has to be instilled and encouraged in the people of India.

Referring to Modi, Tharoor said a 'chaiwala' could become the country's prime minister because of the democratic institutions and values laid down by

Nehru more than 17 years ago. "In a democracy, we have the right to challenge and criticise the government. But every time you criticise the government you are accused of being an anti-national," Tharoor, who was accompanied by former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, said.

"That means your criticism is no longer legitimate. You are dubbed anti-Hindu and anti-national, what kind of talk is this," Tharoor, who reached here after campaigning in Punjab for his party candidates, told a news conference.

Fire deaths up by 30% as compared to 2023

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Fire has taken 55 lives and injured more than 300 people in the national capital so far this year, according to the official data revealed on Monday.

According to the data by Delhi Fire Services (DFS), 16 people were killed in fire in January, another 16 in February, 12 in March, four in April, and seven till May 26.

Fire incidents led to 51 injuries in January, 42 in February, 62 in March, 78 in

April, and 71 till May 26.

From January 1 to May 26, the DFS received 8,912 fire-related calls. According to the data, 36 people had lost their lives during the same period in 2023.

"The number of fire calls increased to 32.26 per cent this year. According to the data, a total 6,436 calls related to the fire were received from January 1 to May 26, last year, but this year the number has gone up by more than 32 per cent with 8,912 fire related calls during the same period," an official of



the Delhi Fire Services said.

"Last year 36 people had lost their lives, this year total 55 people have so far lost their lives," the official added.

On Sunday, six newborn

died after a massive fire broke out at a private children's hospital in east Delhi's Vivek Vihar.

The blaze broke out at the Baby Care New Born Hospital at around 11.30 pm on Saturday and soon spread to two other adjacent buildings.

Sixteen fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the blaze and a massive rescue operation was launched. Of the 13 children taken out from the hospital, six were declared dead.

Police had said that one child had already died before

the fire broke out.

DFS chief Atul Garg told PTI Videos, "The neonatal hospital has no fire NOC and has not even proper fire combat arrangements. Besides that, oxygen cylinders were also kept there which had exploded."

"Be it NOC required or not, everyone must ensure proper fire safety arrangements in all types of buildings. Installing sprinklers is one of the best ways to combat fire initially and to inform firefighters," he said.

BSP, BJP have joined hands covertly: Akhilesh

Says 'Bahujan Samaj' should support INDIA bloc

PNS ■ GHAZIPUR

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Monday claimed that the BJP and BSP have joined hands covertly and urged the voters from SC, ST and OBC communities that have been supporting Mayawati's party to choose the INDIA bloc this time "to save the Constitution".

Addressing an election rally here, Yadav said only Uttar



Pradesh "can save the country" by voting out the BJP.

"This election is about saving our future. At the same time, this election is also about

saving the Constitution, which gives us respect, which protects our rights.

"It is being seen that BJP and BSP have joined hands covertly. Hence, we want to appeal to the people of 'Bahujan Samaj' that this election is also to save the Constitution of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar and they should support the INDIA bloc," the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Up in flames

Ten fatalities in overnight Delhi fires reflect poorly on CM Kejriwal, who is busy campaigning

A tragedy of the highest order and an act of unpardonable negligence by civic authorities: Two blazes in Delhi have claimed 10 lives in separate incidents. A fire broke out late on Saturday at a children's hospital in East Delhi, resulting in the death of seven babies. The other incident, in the same district, occurred in the early hours of Sunday when three persons were killed in a fire that engulfed a residential building. The hospital fire which burnt seven infants alive is a horrible incident. The Capital, grappling with these tragedies, finds itself in grief and introspection. The Delhi incidents come on the heels of another inferno in Gujarat, where 27 children were charred to death in a gaming arcade. It is summer when, understandably, Delhi is more prone to fire incidents. Before the blame game starts and accountability fixed, someone in the Delhi Government must own moral responsibility and strict action should be taken against those who played with human lives. Prima facie it is a case of utter negligence as oxygen cylinders stored on the ground floor burst open, though the fire may have been triggered by a short circuit incident. Safety protocols exist only on paper and the authorities concerned look the other way when it comes to complying with the norms. Often, fire protocols that mandate safety measures are flouted at will, including fire drills which never happen. In a particularly devastating case, an entire family perished due to a fire caused by an electrical short circuit. Firefighters, despite their best efforts, face significant challenges due to narrow approach lanes and inadequate water supply in certain areas.



These tragic incidents have sparked a public outcry for improved fire safety regulations and more robust enforcement of existing laws. Amidst this sorrow and anger, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's absence has not gone unnoticed. Currently out on interim bail and engrossed in election campaigns in Punjab, his stance that he can manage Delhi's affairs from within jail has become a contentious issue. This claim, though technically plausible with today's technology, seems detached from ground realities that demand immediate and hands-on governance. The Chief Minister's current focus on electioneering in another State raises legitimate concerns about where his priorities lie and whether he can adequately address the urgent needs of Delhi while physically away from home and office. Indeed, the responsibility for these tragic incidents is multifaceted. On the one hand, the immediate causes point to systemic issues; on the other, the wider accountability lies with the city's administration and leadership. But whether it is the Ghatkopar tragedy, the gaming arcade fire or the Delhi blaze, we learn nothing from these incidents. After the initial hue and cry, everything is normalised and life goes on. It is time we at least ensure proper fire audits of at least hospitals and schools and do not put children's lives at risk. Hope our activist Chief Minister will take action and things will improve in the Capital before it is too late.

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PICTALK



A man feeds pigeons and crows on a hot summer day, in New Delhi

Buddhist influence on Tagore's work



RAJDEEP PATHAK

Gurudev drew heavily from Buddha's teachings on non-violence and respect for all life, which resonate deeply in a world starved for peace, offering tranquillity

The relevance of Buddha's teachings in the contemporary world is profound. His principles of non-violence and compassion offer a path toward greater harmony in a world often plagued by conflict. The Buddha's teachings also emphasise respect for all forms of life and interdependence, principles crucial for addressing today's environmental challenges. Embracing these values fosters sustainable practices and a deeper connection with nature. Ethical living, as outlined in the Buddha's Eightfold Path, remains pertinent in personal, professional and societal contexts, promoting integrity and cooperation.



Practitioners of this philosophy such as the Vietnamese Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, alias Thay have advanced the principles of non-violence, compassion and mindfulness to promote global peace. Their "Engaged Buddhism" encourages integrating mindfulness into everyday life and social activism, advocating for peaceful conflict resolution and environmental care. His teachings on deep listening and loving speech, help bridge divides and heal communities. Similarly, the Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama promotes interfaith dialogue, compassion and ethical responsibility, inspiring global movements for human rights and sustainability. These leaders illustrate how ancient Buddhist principles can address modern challenges, fostering a culture of peace and understanding worldwide.

social status. He rejected the caste system, asserting the importance of ethical behaviour over birthright. British Historian and author Karen Armstrong notes that Buddha challenged the social and religious norms of his time by not endorsing the caste system. Even Buddha's monastic community, the 'Sangha', welcomed individuals from all backgrounds, promoting spiritual equality and inclusiveness. In one of his plays "Chandalika", Tagore articulates the notion of oneness through the character of Prakriti, a woman from the untouchable caste and Ananda, a revered Buddhist monk. Drawing inspiration from Buddhist scriptures, Tagore reimagines the narrative to explore the enduring struggle against societal divides, particularly the historical plight of untouchables in ancient India. Ananda's humble acceptance of water from Prakriti poignantly rejects caste prejudice and acknowledges her intrinsic dignity. Despite Prakriti's attempt to ensnare Ananda with a spell in a desperate bid for affection, his unwavering faith in Buddha's teachings serves as a beacon of purity. Divine intervention ultimately frees Ananda from the enchantment, symbolising the triumph of spiritual integrity over worldly desires - which is one of the characteristics of



BUDDHA'S TEACHINGS EMPHASISE INCLUSIVITY, COMPASSION AND THE INHERENT POTENTIAL FOR ENLIGHTENMENT IN EVERYONE. HE REJECTED THE CASTE SYSTEM, ASSERTING THE IMPORTANCE OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR OVER BIRTHRIGHT

meditation in Buddhism. Through Tagore's lyrical prose, the story transcends its narrative framework, evolving into a profound meditation on the enduring power of love, redemption and the unity that connects all souls. This legacy, left by Buddha, urges his followers to break free from societal constraints, form a 'Sangha', and become messengers of peace. Further, Tagore uses Prakriti's character elevating her to question societal norms restricting the freedom of women and thereby restoring her own identity. In his bid, Ananda's compassionate attitude — a specific characteristic of the Buddhist philosophy — rekindles Prakriti's sense of self-worth, asserting that all humans are fundamentally equal. The water she pours on Ananda's hands symbolises her purity and love, as well as his boundless benevolence and humanity. Tagore explores the themes of spirituality and untouchability through the symbolic union (read elevation) of Prakriti through the medium of Ananda. This (union) represents the harmony between man and woman, purity and impurity and spirituality and passion. Tagore uses this synthesis to depict a balanced and civilised society. Similarly, the Buddha emphasised the importance of compassion (karuna) and loving-kindness (metta) towards all

beings, advocating for empathy and support within the community, especially towards those who are suffering or marginalised. His First Noble Truth, addressing 'dukkha' (suffering), underscored the universal human experience of suffering, fostering a shared commitment to alleviating it for everyone. To this, Thich Nhat Hanh reflects, "Understanding suffering gives rise to compassion and from compassion, understanding deepens" (The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching). Buddha's teachings on right livelihood and ethical behaviour promoted social justice and fairness, contributing to a more inclusive and compassionate society. In Buddhist philosophy, the 'Middle Way' focuses on avoiding extremes and finding balance, a principle reflected in Rabindranath Tagore's works. For example, in his play "The King of the Dark Chamber," ('Raja' in Bengali), Tagore explores the themes of light and darkness and ignorance and enlightenment, mirroring the Buddhist search for harmony. The main character's journey to understand and accept both the light and dark aspects of life represents the Middle Way's emphasis on balance.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GUIDELINES FOR A HEALTHY LIFE

Madam — Apropos the news story "Key takeaways from ICMR's new dietary guidelines," published on May 27, this is my response. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) have released new dietary guidelines to address the significant burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in India. With 56.4 per cent of diseases linked to poor dietary habits, these guidelines aim to promote healthier eating and lifestyle choices. The recommendations emphasise a balanced diet incorporating a variety of food groups, with a focus on whole grains, millets and natural protein sources. Limiting fat intake to 30 per cent of daily calories and including fresh vegetables and fruits in every meal are also crucial. In addition to dietary changes, the guidelines highlight the importance of regular physical activity—at least 30-45 minutes for adults and 60 minutes for children. Special advice for pregnant and lactating women includes exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months. For cooking and storage, using air fryers, granite-coated utensils and earthen pots is recommended to maintain nutritional quality and safety.

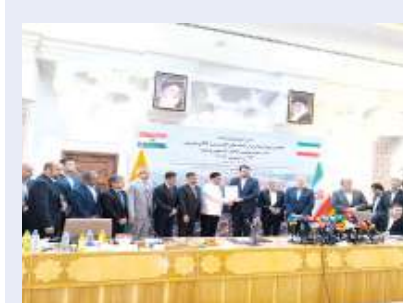
Aman Kumar | Dhanbad

LIVE HAPPILY ANONYMOUSLY

Madam — Apropos the news story "Embracing silence in the age of social media," published on May 27, this is my response. Recently, I came across a famous quote by Khalil Gibran: "Travel and tell no one; live a true love story and tell no one; live happily and tell no one; people ruin beautiful things." This reminded me of the cautionary advice from our elders to avoid flaunting good fortune to ward off the evil eye. Back then, we cherished and shared our joys within close circles.

The times have changed. The shift from letters to emails marked a significant transition in communication, though Government and corporate sectors still

Chabahar's strategic masterstroke



Apropos the news story "India-Iran revitalise Chabahar Port," published on May 27, this is my response. The recent 10-year, \$370 million agreement between India and Iran to develop the Chabahar Port marks a significant milestone in regional connectivity and economic collaboration. As an avid newspaper reader, I see this project as a testament to

India's strategic foresight. Chabahar not only offers India a crucial gateway to Afghanistan and Central Asia but also provides an alternative route that bypasses Pakistan, mitigating geopolitical roadblocks. The port's strategic location on Iran's south-eastern coast enhances India's regional influence, countering China's dominance with its Belt and Road Initiative. Moreover, Chabahar offers Afghanistan a viable alternative to the Karachi Port, potentially fostering greater economic stability in the region. Despite the hurdles posed by US sanctions and regional instability, India's commitment to Chabahar underscores its readiness to navigate complex diplomatic landscapes. This port symbolises India's assertive global stance, promoting regional stability and economic growth through enhanced connectivity.

Roshan Daa | Rourkela

cling to physical signatures for validation. Despite technological advances, the reluctance to embrace complete digital transformation persists, often due to the sender's unfamiliarity with digital tools. Reflecting on the past, I recall the anticipation of waiting for responses to my manuscript submissions. Today, a quick rejection email highlights the impersonal nature of modern communication. Social media's omnipresence underscores this shift, contrasting starkly with Gibran's timeless wisdom. In an age where oversharing is the norm, his advice feels both radical and refreshing, challenging our constant urge to broadcast every aspect of our lives.

Riya Aggarwal | Jind

INNER STRENGTH HELPS ENJOY LIFE

Madam — Apropos the news story "Strategies for Inner Peace and Empowerment," published on May 27, this is my response. Are we pursuing an illusion, like the golden deer of the Ramayana? This chase often feels like a self-destructive mission, driven by a mind over-

whelmed with 70,000 thoughts a day. Our lack of focus and the influence of negative environments and unhealthy habits cloud our judgment. I understand this deeply, having battled alcoholism myself. Recovery through Sudarshan Kriya and Pranayama showed me the importance of a strong mind and healthy surroundings. Effective time management is crucial. Techniques like the POSEC method help us prioritise, while a SWOT analysis and delegation aid efficiency. Tackling tough tasks first and maintaining flexibility prevent burnout. Developing hobbies and practicing gratitude can transform our outlook. To quiet our minds, we should embrace activities like walking, talking through problems and pursuing passions. Exercise and cold baths can invigorate our spirits. Ultimately, we must accept our inner strength, declutter our minds and cultivate positivity to truly celebrate life.

Priyanka Singh | Lucknow

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Science archives preserve our scientific legacy

Establishing a National Science Archives Centre in India is crucial to safeguarding our scientific heritage for future generations



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

As an ever-evolving discipline, science continually shapes our understanding of the world and our place within it. Each discovery, innovation and technological advancement contributes to the present and builds the foundation for future generations. Most scientific activity in our laboratories may become part of tomorrow's history. People who have seen and overcome the COVID-19 pandemic may understand the hardships people faced during the pandemic. The innovations and discoveries developed to combat the global pandemic are now part of scientific history. Similar is the case with most of our scientific discoveries and inventions. Scientific knowledge is inherently cumulative. Each generation of scientists builds upon the work of their predecessors, advancing our understanding of complex phenomena. For instance, the development of quantum mechanics in the early 20th century paved the way for modern advancements in quantum computing. Scientific developments also



highlight the pain the researchers undertook during that time. It can act as an inspiration for future researchers to move forward. Unfortunately, we dig into the past of a scientist only when their work gets global recognition. By this time, we might have lost all resources related to the discovery except for the research publications available on the public database. Science archives are essential for preserving human knowledge's vast and intricate tapestry. They store various materials, including research notes, correspondence between scientists, experimental data, publications and even artefacts such as laboratory equipment and specimens. This preservation is critical because it ensures that valuable scientific information is not lost over time. For example, the archives of the Royal Society in London contain records dating back to the 17th century, chronicling the early days of modern science. These documents provide insights into the time's experimental techniques and intellectual debates, allowing historians and scientists to trace the evolution of scientific

thought and practice. In India, the Archives at NCBS (https://archives.ncbs.res.in/) serve as a novel initiative to preserve the scientific history of modern India. The centre has over 250,000 processed objects across 30+ collections in various forms, ranging from paper-based manuscripts to negatives to photographs, books, fine art, audio recordings, scientific equipment, letters and field and lab notes. The documents stored in volatile electronic or digital storage are susceptible to being permanently erased by a single button press or the malfunction of a hard drive. If these artefacts are not systematically conserved, they will be permanently lost, leading to what has been referred to as the Digital Dark Age. The Government should also make it mandatory for every researcher to periodically submit the documents to archives so that age and memory don't fade the significance of their research work.

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





FIRST COLUMN MITIGATING THE E-WASTE CRISIS

It can be tackled with innovations, regulations and corporate responsibility



SHAINY SHARMA

Today with the advancements in the field of science and technology, computers and other mobile devices have become such an integral part of everyone's work and personal lives that it is hard to imagine life without them. Not only that, but along with that the problem of e-waste continues to grow every year as consumers frequently upgrade their gadgets leading to the high turnover of electronic devices. E-waste or electronic waste refers to discarded electronic devices and appliances that have reached the end of their useful life or are no longer wanted by their owners. It is one of the significant problems due to its complex composition, rapid generation and the challenges it poses to human health and the environment. Due to the presence of various toxic substances such as lead, mercury and cadmium present in batteries and semiconductors can cause of neurological damage and can even damage the kidneys and bones. Not only this the toxic chemicals released from such wastes can leach into soil, making it infertile and unsafe for agriculture.

Not only will the soil get contaminated but the other sources of the environment that is water and air will also be affected badly as improper disposal of e-wastes can contaminate the waterbodies thereby affecting the water supplies and aquatic life and; toxic fumes released for extracting valuable metals will contribute to respiratory problems. It is believed that airborne toxins can travel long distances, affecting air quality and human health. Quite often in many developing countries, informal e-waste recycling activity is a significant source of income. Such activities are often unregulated and the workers are exposed to high levels of toxic substances without adequate protection.



This exposure can lead to respiratory problems, skin disorders and other severe health issues. The improper disposal and recycling of e-waste contribute to greenhouse gas emissions thereby contributing to environmental degradation and increased carbon footprints. According to the Global E-waste Monitor 2020, the world generated 53.6 million metric tons of e-waste in 2019 and this figure is expected to grow to 74.7 million metric tons by 2030. Only a fraction of this waste is properly recycled, with much ending up in landfills posing significant environmental and health risks.

Proper recycling of such wastes is the only solution that can help recover valuable materials and reduce the need for new resource extraction and the same is possible only and only when the Government enacts and enforces stringent regulations for e-waste management, including proper collection, recycling and disposal practices such as e-waste collection drives and recycling centres to facilitate proper disposal. Manufacturers should also be held responsible for the entire lifecycle of their products, including take-back programs and recycling initiatives. Investing in advanced recycling technologies can help improve the efficiency and safety of extracting valuable materials from e-waste. Encouraging the manufacturers to design such products that are easier to recycle, repair and upgrade can reduce e-waste generation. Educating consumers at the same time about the importance of proper e-waste disposal and the available recycling options can reduce improper disposal practices. Establishing international standards for e-waste management can help ensure safe and efficient recycling practices worldwide. Strengthening international regulations to prevent the illegal export of e-waste to developing countries where it is often processed unsafely. Remember, from gadgets to green initiatives, every individual living on this planet should recycle their e-waste and pave the way for a cleaner greener tomorrow.

(The writer is an educator, views are personal)

Raisi's legacy endures in Iran, despite West



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

Over three million mourners gather in Mashhad to honour the late President Raisi. The hold of hardliners in the country is much stronger than the West might think

Over three million Iranians have gathered in Mashhad, Iran's second-largest city, to honour the late President Raisi, who tragically perished in a helicopter crash along with eight others. The massive turnout, which filled the streets to capacity, reflects the deep respect and admiration many citizens held for Raisi, contradicting assertions by Washington that he was widely despised. Raisi's interment at the holy shrine of Imam Reza, a significant and unprecedented honour for a political leader, accentuates his esteemed status in the country. This unprecedented event defies the distorted and often misunderstood sentiments of the Iranian populace towards their leaders. Often, those who are demarcating the enemies, forcing others to accept their version of the story as gospel truth, are met with a ground reality that tells us the exact opposite.

The circumstances of the incident, however, have fuelled a wave of conspiracy theories. Moments after the crash, US Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer declared there was no evidence of foul play, citing intelligence officials, despite Iran's rescue teams not yet having reached the crash site. Subsequently, some blame the secret organisation of Iran's arch-enemy State, Israel's Mossad. Others speculate that the death was the result of an inside job. However, this tragedy marked a significant event not only in Iranian politics but in the constantly growing West versus Rest dynamic, which is now more strongly questioning the partiality of international organisations while strengthening the established strong alternatives such as BRICS and the New Development Bank. Iran is playing a pivotal role in this.

Meanwhile, a segment of Western media recently published a series of stories about the helicopter crash suggesting that American sanctions have severely hindered Iran's ability to maintain its fleet of American-manufactured helicopters. It was suggested that a technical failure caused the crash, but so far there's no evidence to support this. The helicopter was one of three Bell 214 models; the other two returned safely, but President Raisi's did not. An Iranian defence firm, under the Iranian Aviation Industries Organisation (IAIO), specialises in maintaining and reverse-engineering US-model helicopters for Iran's military and the IRGC. Added to the US Department of the Treasury's SDN list in January 2018, its assets under US jurisdiction are frozen and transactions with US parties are prohibited under Executive Order 13382, targeting WMD proliferators. However, contrary to suggestions that Raisi's helicopter was overloaded and that this put undue strain on its engines, the aircraft was not operating beyond its capacity. The helicopter was carrying nine passengers and crew combined, well within its maximum capacity of 15 persons. The notion that the helicopter's age contributed significantly to the crash is also questionable. While the media has painted the Bell 214 as ancient, in reality, it was built in 1994 by Bell Helicopter Textron in Canada. With a global average age for commercial helicopters at around 23 years, Raisi's helicopter, though slightly older, was not exceptionally outdated. Moreover, helicopters used for presidential transport typically receive meticulous maintenance.

As Stephen D. Bryen, a leading expert on technology security who led the Pentagon's technology policy efforts during the Reagan



PRESIDENT RAISI WAS FOCUSED ON COOLING DOWN BORDER TENSIONS AND EXTENDING HIS DIPLOMATIC OUTREACH TO NEIGHBOURING ARAB COUNTRIES. HIS CHOSEN FOREIGN MINISTER, AMIR ABDOLLAHIAN, WHO ALSO PASSED AWAY WITH HIM, WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN REENGINEERING IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICY

administration, pointed out, the engines of Raisi's helicopter, Pratt and Whitney PT6Ts, are also Canadian-made and widely regarded for their reliability. The implication that the helicopter's maintenance was compromised due to sanctions lacks substantiation, especially considering the high-profile nature of the passengers. The critical question of whether Canada currently supplies spare parts to Iran remains unclear, adding another layer of complexity to the narrative. Nonetheless, the assertions of technical failure due to sanctions remain speculative without concrete evidence and the focus should be on a thorough and unbiased investigation into the actual causes of the crash.

President Raisi was focused on cooling down border tensions and extending his diplomatic outreach to neighbouring Arab countries. His chosen Foreign Minister, Amir Abdollahian, who also passed away with him, was instrumental in reengineering Iranian foreign policy. A notable example of this effort was the steps taken to normalise Iran-Saudi Arabia diplomatic relations. This Chinese-backed diplomatic initiative is crucial for reshaping the West Asian diplomatic terrain. Similarly, the recent irrigation project constructed across the Aras River, which Raisi jointly inaugurated with his counterpart in Baku, is a demonstration of this new diplomatic approach.

The Aras River, spanning 1,072 km, originates in Eastern Turkey and flows along several borders: Turkey and Armenia, Turkey and Azerbaijan, Iran and Azerbaijan and through Azerbaijan into the Kura River. This region, a small riverine area in the Caucasus between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, has witnessed numerous tragedies, including the often-overlooked Armenian Genocide, which claimed around 1.5 million lives. The 689 km Iran-Azerbaijan border, demarcated by the Aras River, highlights the geopolitical sensitivity and strategic importance of this area. After the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, Azerbaijan gained independence and assumed control of part of the Iran-Soviet border, leading to

escalating disputes. The 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War saw Azerbaijan seize full control of the western border with Iran, heightening tensions. Relations between Iran and Azerbaijan slightly improved under President Hassan Rouhani, but Baku never hesitated to provide Israel with a strategic opportunity. Israel strengthened its alliance with Azerbaijan, turning it into a significant market for advanced weaponry. The 2020 conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh resulted in approximately 5,700 deaths, with Israel supplying a significant portion of Azerbaijan's arms, highlighting the deepening strategic ties between the two nations. As a result, Azerbaijan was able to absorb the Artsakh Republic, also known as Nagorno-Karabakh, a self-proclaimed republic dissolved in January this year.

In exchange for Israeli weapons, Azerbaijan provided oil. Ilham Aliyev, president since 2003, was re-elected for a fifth term on February 7 with over 92 per cent of the vote. Aliyev, who succeeded his father, Heydar Aliyev, a former Soviet KGB officer, has strengthened Azerbaijan's ties with Israel. Aliyev amended the constitution in 2009 to permit unlimited presidential terms and, in 2016, extended the presidential term from five to seven years. Azerbaijan can be seen as a family-run State prioritising clan interests, yet Aliyev has skillfully navigated relations with Eastern and Western powers to serve his political aims. It is not hyperbole to say Aliyev is a skilled Machiavellian politician in contemporary politics. An investigation by Israeli media outlet Haaretz published recently detailed the strategic relationship between Israel and Azerbaijan, through which Tel Aviv has supplied Baku with billions of dollars worth of weapons in exchange for "oil and access to Iran."

This extensive military cooperation underscores the depth of the strategic alliance between the two nations. Azerbaijan has reportedly permitted Israel's Mossad intelligence agency to establish a presence in the country to monitor Iran, its southern neighbour. Additionally,

Azerbaijan has facilitated the setup of an airfield for Israel to potentially strike Iranian nuclear facilities from its territory. In exchange, Azerbaijan receives the most advanced weapons, including ballistic missiles, air defence systems and kamikaze drones. However, as Yossi Melman, a noted Israeli writer and journalist who is an expert on intelligence and strategic affairs, affirmed, it is unlikely for Israel, particularly Mossad, to be involved in such an assassination as it never targets such individuals. But one should not forget that it was under President Raisi that Iran launched its first-ever direct attack on Israel, the single largest drone attack ever carried out by any country. President Raisi and his top diplomat left a legacy far greater than what they achieved while in power. Their deaths are more impactful than the assassination of President Mohammad Ali Rajaei and Prime Minister Mohammad Javad Bahonar, who were cut short in an explosion set by the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organisation, in August 1981. Despite expectations of seclusion and controversy, Raisi navigated international relations adeptly, maintaining uranium enrichment and escalating tensions with the West, but also restoring ties with Saudi Arabia, which advanced peace talks in Yemen and prevented military escalation.

This diplomatic success, seen as strategic pragmatism, opened dialogue with other regional powers and reduced tensions. Raisi revived the Chabahar port deal with India, defying US sanctions and facilitated a major prisoner exchange with the US, demonstrating diplomatic flexibility. Though Iran was blamed for supporting Hamas in the October 2023 attacks on Israel, no concrete evidence linked Iran directly, yet its backing of such groups has increased its regional influence and garnered support for Palestinians from other Arab countries. Iran lost two great politicians, but it is hard to assume it will change the Iranian political structure rather it will be strengthened.

(The writer is a Sri Lankan journalist and author. Views are personal)

The crisis in Kerala's State-run hospitals runs deep

The alarming frequency of medical mishaps in Kerala's Government hospitals paints a dire picture of the State's healthcare system

The day is not far off when all the Government-run hospitals in Kerala will spot the hoarding "Patients, enter at your own risk". This is not an exaggerated Statement as botched-up surgeries and wrong diagnoses have become the hallmarks of State-run hospitals.



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

Recently, a four-year-old girl was admitted to Government Medical College Hospital in Kozhikode for the removal of her sixth finger. However, the doctor who performed the surgery operated on her tongue while leaving the finger untouched. Though her parents alerted the hospital authorities, the initial reaction was denial of the faux pas by the latter. Remember, the Kozhikode Medical College

and Hospital is a most sought-after institution by prospective medical students! The police have filed a FIR against Bejohn Johnson, the doctor who performed the surgery and has slapped charges on him under IPC Sections 336 (endangering the life or personal safety of others) and 337 (causing hurt by an act endangering the life or personal safety of others). In all probability, the general public

would forget this incident as more and more cases like this come up daily from the Government hospitals. Controversies are not new to the GMCH Kozhikode. In 2023 July, it was reported that a woman who underwent a caesarian in the hospital in 2017 developed severe pain in her abdomen. It was found that a pair of forceps was accidentally left in her stomach after the 2017 surgery and she was living with the same till acute pain made her approach the hospital in 2023. The hospital authorities found to their surprise that Harshinia, the patient, had a pair of mosquito to artery forceps in her stomach post the caesarian which was caused by medical negligence. The police as well as the investigating doctors con-

firmed the finding and sent their reports to the minister for health Veena George. The minister, a former newsreader in a private TV channel who made a lateral entry into the CPI(M) is yet to take any action on the incident while Harshinia is staging a sit-in in front of the medical college hospital demanding solatium. The standard reply given by the Department of Health is that it was an isolated incident that is being blown out of proportion by vested interests. In yet another shocking incident, a patient admitted to the ICU post-surgery was raped and molested by a hospital employee who is a trade union leader affiliated with the CPI(M). The nursing officer who reported the matter to the

higher authorities was shunted out to a far-off hospital while the rapist is walking free in search of his next victim. Even doctors and nurses are not free from attacks by patients and their relations. In May 2023, Vandana Das, a 22-year-old doctor working as an internee in Kottarakkara Government Hospital was stabbed to death by a drug addict suffering from withdrawal paranoia while the police and her colleagues remained mute spectators. Even as this article is written, here comes a report from GMCH Kozhikode about a complaint from a patient. The implant meant for another patient was wrongly inserted into the complainant's hand. These events are sufficient to prove the CPI(M)'s claim that

Kerala is the State with the best healthcare facilities is a blatant lie. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan exhorts people from other States and countries to visit Kerala for world-class health care. The authenticity of the Kerala Model of Development and Health Care has come down like a pack of cards. According to senior doctors who have been in Government service for more than three decades, the ruling CPI(M) itself is behind the collapse of Kerala's health sector. "The CPI(M) owns super speciality hospitals across the State named after its late leaders. Since the State-run hospitals have collapsed, the party can make a giant kill by forcing the patients to these party-run hospitals which are no different from corporate

hospitals. The CPI(M) is the leader of the hospital mafia in Kerala," said a veteran doctor. There are not enough specialist doctors to meet the requirements of patients. The trust deficit between doctors and the Government has reached a point of no return. Kerala is one of the States that saw maximum casualties during the COVID-19 pandemic though the Government managed to cover up the details with its carrot-and-stick policy. The claims by both the ministers K K Shylaja (2016-2021) and Veena George (2021-till date) were found to be stranger than fiction as nearly one lakh deaths have been reported from the State since the pandemic was detected for the first time in 2020. Though the Kerala

Government declared time and again that the State would develop its vaccine, K-Vaccine, the announcement remains on paper. The State of health in Kerala is such that whenever he is afflicted with a common cold, Pinarayi Vijayan takes the first available flight to the USA where Mayo Clinic is his favourite destination. The same is the case with ministers as well as CPI(M) leaders who have an inherent weakness for anything associated with the imperialists. While the chief minister himself asks people from other countries to come to Kerala for medical treatment, he is not sure about the quality of treatment in the State-run hospitals.

(The writer is a special correspondent with the Pioneer, views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

Rupee falls 4 paise to close at 83.14 against US dollar

The rupee pared its initial gains and settled for the day lower by 4 paise at 83.14 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, mirroring the benchmark indices that erased their gains and ended the day off their record-high levels. Forex traders said the rupee settled in a narrow range as the weakness of the American currency in the overseas market supported the rupee, while elevated crude oil prices in the international market restricted the upmove. At the interbank foreign exchange, the local unit opened at 83.08, then touched an intra-day high of 83.05 but soon pared the gains and settled for the day lower by 4 paise at 83.14 (provisional) against the American currency. On Friday, the rupee rallied for the fourth consecutive trading session and settled with a sharp gain of 19 paise at 83.10 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 104.67, lower by 0.05 per cent.



Ashok Leyland shares rally nearly 8% after Q4 earnings

Shares of Ashok Leyland on Monday rallied nearly 8 per cent after the company reported a 16.73 per cent increase in consolidated net profit to Rs 933.69 crore in the March quarter. The stock jumped 7.69 per cent and ended at Rs 226.75 on the BSE. During the day, it climbed 8.59 per cent to the 52-week high of Rs 228.65. At the NSE, it zoomed 7.78 per cent to Rs 227.10. The company added Rs 4,756.85 crore taking its market valuation to Rs 66,581.22 crore. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 799.87 crore in the same period of the previous fiscal, Ashok Leyland said in a regulatory filing on Friday. Consolidated revenue from operations in the quarter under review stood at Rs 13,577.58 crore as compared to Rs 13,202.55 crore in the year-ago period, it added. Total expenses in the fourth quarter were marginally lower at Rs 12,037.16 crore as compared to Rs 12,085.5 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year.



Awfis Space Solutions IPO subscribed 108.17 times

The initial public offer of co-working space operator Awfis Space Solutions got subscribed a whopping 108.17 times on the closing day of subscription on Monday, amid heavy participation from institutional investors. The Rs 599 crore initial share sale received bids for 93,34,36,374 shares against 86,29,670 shares on offer, according to data available with the NSE. The portion for non-institutional investors fetched 129.27 times subscription while the category for Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) got subscribed 116.95 times. The quota for Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) attracted 53.23 times subscription. The initial public offer (IPO) of fresh issue of up to 1,22,95,699 equity shares began for bidding on Wednesday. The price range for the IPO is Rs 364-383 per share. The IPO of Awfis Space Solutions was fully subscribed on the first day of bidding on Wednesday.



MODI GOVT RESHAPED BUDGET IN 10 YEARS

Reforms to continue to make India developed nation: FM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said the Modi government has reshaped the Union budget in the last 10 years from a mere record of expenditure to a strategic blueprint for equitable distribution, and stressed that the pace of reforms will continue to make India a developed nation. Sitharaman said the government will continue to maximise the value and impact of hard-earned taxpayer money, ensuring it is put to the best possible use for the benefit of all. The minister said the Modi government has prioritised transparency in its budgeting practices and numbers. Countries with transparent budgets are often viewed favourably by international bodies such as the IMF and the World Bank. This can lead to improved global trust. "This starkly contrasts the @INCIndia-led UPA government's repetitive practice of



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hiding the deficits through off-budget borrowings and issuance of 'Oil Bonds', which somewhat covertly shifted the fiscal burden to future generations. Under UPA, standard fiscal practices were routinely changed to make Budget numbers look favourable,"

Sitharaman said in a post on X. She said the last decade has witnessed a substantial improvement in the sanctity and credibility of the Union Budget, leaving past constraints and archaic practices behind. "Our government has reshaped the budget from a

mere record of expenditures into a strategic blueprint for equitable development. We make judicious & efficient use of every rupee collected from our taxpayers and give them a transparent picture of public finances," Sitharaman said. The minister said the government has taken various reforms to strengthen and bring transparency to the budgetary process and practices. Since FY 2017-18, the budget presentation has been shifted to 1st February instead of the last working day in February. It effectively advanced the expenditure cycle by two months, she said. Sitharaman further said reform in government expenditure by bringing in Treasury Single Account (TSA) for the 'just-in-time' release of funds to autonomous bodies has lowered the borrowing costs for the Centre. "TSA has resulted in savings of more than Rs 15,000 crores to date," she said.

Gold, silver prices rebound on strong global cues

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold and silver prices rebounded sharply on Monday after falling for three straight sessions, with the precious metal jumping Rs 220 to Rs 72,820 per 10 grams in the national capital, tracking a strong trend in the overseas market due to escalating tensions in the Middle East. Gold had closed at Rs 72,600 per 10 grams in the previous session on Friday, according to HDFC Securities. Silver prices also bounced Rs 1,050 to Rs 92,850 per kg. In the previous session, it had finished at Rs 91,800 per kg. Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 72,820 per 10 grams, up by Rs 220 against the previous close.

Record RBI dividend at 0.6% of GDP may not be sustained: Fitch

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Fitch Ratings on Monday said the record-high dividend transfer by the RBI to the government is equivalent to 0.6 per cent of GDP, and such high level of dividends as a percentage of GDP is unlikely to be maintained. The board of India's central bank last week decided to transfer a record Rs 2.1 lakh crore dividend to the government out of the profits earned in fiscal 2023-24. This is more than double of Rs 1.02 lakh crore that was budgeted by the government. Fitch said an important driver of higher RBI profits appears to be higher interest revenue on foreign assets, though the central bank has not yet provided a detailed breakdown. "The RBI recently

announced a record-high dividend transfer to the government equivalent to 0.6 per cent of GDP (Rs 2.1 trillion) from its operations in FY24. This is above the 0.3 per cent of GDP expected in the FY25 budget from February, so will aid the performance but depend on various factors, including the size and performance of assets held on the central bank's balance sheet and India's exchange rate. Transfers may also be influenced by the RBI's views on what level of a buffer is appropriate to be maintained in balance sheet, it said. "The potential volatility of transfers means there is significant uncertainty about their medium-term path, and we do not anticipate that dividends as a share of GDP will be sustained at such a high level," Fitch said. However, such windfall dividend transfer should help to ensure the 5.1 per cent of GDP deficit target for the fiscal year ending March 2025 (FY25) will be met and could be used to lower the deficit beyond the current target.

authorities in meeting near-term deficit reduction goals," the rating agency said in a statement. Fitch said transfers from the Reserve Bank of India to the government can be significant at the margin for fiscal



Samsung launches made-in-India Galaxy F55 5G smartphone

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Samsung on Monday said its all-new Galaxy F55 5G smartphone has been made in India as the consumer electronics major outlined its growth strategy pivoting on product differentiation and rapid adoption of 5G. Raju Pullan, Senior Vice President, MX Division, Samsung India, said that Q1 2024 "has taken off well" and "created a strong momentum for Samsung". Speaking at the launch of Galaxy F55 5G -- which is being billed as the most premium Galaxy F series smartphone -- Pullan said that Rs 20,000-30,000 segment is the fastest-growing segment in the smartphone category. The Galaxy F55 5G will be available in three storage variants (starting from Rs 26,999), on Flipkart, Samsung.com, and at select retail stores. The Galaxy F55 5G smartphone is made in India and made for India, he said.

Sensex scales 76,000 peak, Nifty hits new high before closing lower

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Sensex scaled the 76,000 level for the first time while Nifty hit a new lifetime peak before closing marginally down on Monday as investors booked profits at record levels amid high volatility ahead of the results of Lok Sabha polls. The 30-share BSE Sensex closed lower by 19.89 points or 0.03 per cent lower at 75,390.50. Intra-day, the barometer climbed 599.29 points or 0.79 per cent to an all-time peak of 76,009.68 following gains in select banking, financial and IT shares. However, investors preferred to book profits at record levels and the index declined around 835 points from the day's high to hit a low of 75,175.27. Broader Nifty of the NSE declined by 24.65 points or 0.11 per cent, to end at 22,932.45. The 50-issue barometer rose by 153.7 points or 0.66 per cent to hit a new lifetime high of 23,110.80 during the day. However, it tanked

around 240 points at the fag-end due to selling in oil, energy and FMCG shares. Index heavyweight Reliance Industries declined nearly 1 per cent, dragging the benchmark indices into the negative. Selling in FMCG giant ITC also eroded gains. Equity benchmarks were



on a record-breaking rally for the third straight day ahead of the results of Lok Sabha polls and a rally in global markets. The results of the ongoing general elections will be declared on June 4. Sensex breached the historic 75,000-mark for the first time on April 9. It took 31 trading sessions for the

benchmark to climb 1,000 points to reach the 76,000-mark on Monday. The BSE benchmark took 21 trading sessions to reach 75,000-mark on April 9 after hitting the 74,000-level on March 6. From the Sensex pack, Wipro, NTPC, Sun Pharma, Mahindra & Mahindra, ITC and Reliance Industries were among the biggest laggards. IndusInd Bank, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finance, HDFC Bank, Larsen & Toubro and State Bank of India were among the major gainers. "The bulls are facing stiff resistance at 23,000 levels as investors start booking profit at higher levels to avoid any knee-jerk reaction in the market ahead of the election result. Better earnings growth, the expectation of a revival in private capex, and a moderation in FII's selling intensity are the key positive triggers in the market," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

Adani Ports shares end over 1% higher; hit 52-week high weeks before Sensex entry from June 24

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) on Monday ended over 1 per cent higher and hit the 52-week high level during the day. This comes less than a month before the company's entry into the 30-share BSE Sensex from June 24 replacing IT major Wipro. The stock went up 2.93 per cent to hit the 52-week high of Rs 1,457.25 during the day on the BSE. It ended at Rs 1,431.75, up 1.13 per cent. Shares of Wipro, however, declined 2.36 per cent to Rs

452.55. During the day, it dropped 2.57 per cent to Rs 451.55. The stock of Wipro was the biggest laggard among the 30-share BSE Sensex firms. This would mark the first inclusion of any Adani Group firm in Sensex. The group has 10 listed firms. The changes will be effective from June 24, 2024, Asia Index, a joint venture between S&P Dow Jones Indices and BSE, said in a statement on Friday, adding that the replacement is a part of a periodic review. Both APSEZ and Wipro are constituents of NSE's Nifty index.



HCLTech, Arm collaborate to work on custom silicon chips for AI-led biz

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IT company HCLTech on Monday said it has partnered with British semiconductor and software design company Arm to work on custom silicon chips that support AI-driven business operations. A semiconductor designed for a specific task is referred as custom silicon chip. The partnership will enable semiconductor manufacturers, system OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) and cloud services providers to enhance the computing efficiency of their data centre environments, HCLTech said in a statement. "HCLTech's collaboration with Arm will contribute to the development of industry-leading cus-

tom AI silicon solutions that will revolutionize the way AI workloads are addressed in data centre environments," said Ameer Saithu, Executive Vice President, Engineering and R&D Services, HCLTech. HCLTech said it will utilise Arm Neoverse Compute Subsystems (CSS) to help clients minimise development risks and deliver innovative, market-customized solutions geared towards improved performance and scalability for AI workloads.



Ghana ties up with Reliance Jio arm for building 4G, 5G telecom infra

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Ghana has signed deals with a Reliance Jio subsidiary, Tech Mahindra and other vendors to build 4G and 5G infrastructure as the African country aims to enhance its telecom capabilities. Ghana's state-backed Next-Gen Infrastructure Company (NGIC) has partnered with Jio's arm Radisys, Tech Mahindra and Nokia to build



the necessary infrastructure for delivering affordable 5G mobile broadband services. Ursula Owusu-Ekuful, the West African country's minis-

ter for communication and digitalisation, told reporters here that India was a "strategic choice" due to its similar demographics and Ghana wants to replicate the Indian story on telecom penetration. "Your (India's) demographics are just like us, the Jio model was rolled out just a few years ago, so the learnings are still fresh," she added. NGIC has been allocated 5G

spectrum and local telcos will be utilising the shared infrastructure to roll out the services in the next six months. As per reports, the overall contract is over US\$ 200 million. Ekuful said Ghana is a part of the 33-nation Smart Africa alliance, and other countries in the continent will be closely watching the rollout to see whether they can also emulate the same locally.

'ONGC's high investments to delay deleveraging'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A step-up in investments at Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) will slow down its deleveraging over the next 12-24 months, eroding headroom for the state-owned firm's 'bbb+' standalone credit profile, S&P Global Ratings said on Monday. Stating that ONGC's financial results for the fiscal year ended on March 31, 2024, were in line with expectations, S&P said despite a decline of 2-3 per cent in the company's domestic oil and gas production volumes and lower realizations in fiscal 2024, EBITDA grew to Rs 1.1 lakh crore from Rs 93,600 crore in fiscal 2023. "We attribute the higher EBITDA to the strong performance of downstream subsidiaries - Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corp



Ltd (HPCL), which together accounted for about 30 per cent of the group's EBITDA during the year. We forecast ONGC's EBITDA will remain at about Rs 1 lakh crore over fiscal years 2025 and 2026," it said. ONGC's integrated operations will support earnings resilience. The firm's production volumes should rise gradually

over fiscal years 2025 (April 2024 to March 2025) and FY2026 as the company scales up oil and gas production from its block in the Krishna Godavari (KG) basin in India. "We expect output from the group's international assets, held through ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL), to grow by 2-5 per cent during this period," S&P said.

The higher output should mitigate the impact of moderating oil prices based on S&P Global Ratings' Brent crude oil price assumption of US\$ 85 per barrel for the rest of 2024 and US\$ 80 per barrel for 2025 and 2026. "Our base case also assumes the average realization on the company's domestic gas production will be US\$ 9.5 per metric million British thermal unit (mmBtu) for the next two years. This is given the mix of output from nomination fields and difficult acreages, and India's administered gas price formula," the rating agency said. It forecast ONGC's annual capital expenditure will increase to Rs 57,000-58,000 crore annually over the next 12-24 months, from about Rs 52,000 crore in fiscal 2024 (April 2023 to March 2024). Of this, the company is like-

ly to spend Rs 33,000-35,000 crore annually to primarily arrest declining output from its matured fields in India. The balance will be spent at its downstream subsidiaries, MRPL and HPCL, to enhance refining and petrochemical capacities. "ONGC's planned capital investments are likely to consume about 60 per cent of the company's operating cash flow. This, and ONGC's stated financial policy on shareholder distributions, will leave limited headroom for the company to undertake sizable additional investments, in our view. "We expect ONGC's ratio of funds from operations (FFO)-to-debt to remain at 45-55 per cent in fiscals 2025 and 2026, compared with about 55 per cent in fiscal 2024, assuming the acquisition of ONGC Petro additions Ltd (OPAL) will be completed in fiscal 2025.

GST to be paid by telcos along with instalments towards spectrum charges

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom companies will have to pay GST along with the instalments paid towards spectrum charges, a senior official said. The Department of Telecom (DoT) will hold the next round of spectrum auction on June 6 for eight spectrum bands meant for mobile phone services. The base price for the auction has been set at Rs 96,317 crore. The spectrum will be assigned for 20 years and successful bidders will be allowed to make payments in 20 equal annual instalments in the coming mega auction. The official said Goods and Services Tax (GST) will have to

be paid at 18 per cent by telecom companies along with each instalment. "The GST Council in its next meeting is likely to clarify the procedure for payment of GST by companies winning the bids during the spectrum auction," the official told PTI. The clarification will end

confusion among field formations regarding the method for collection of GST in the auction process. All the available spectrum in the 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1,800 MHz, 2,100 MHz, 2,300 MHz, 2,500 MHz, 3,300 MHz, and 26 GHz bands are part of the auction. The total frequencies being put under the hammer are valued at Rs 96,317 crore on base price. Moore Singhi Executive Director Rajat Mohan said under the new GST law, spectrum payment is covered under licensing services for the right to use other natural resources on which tax is levied at 18 per cent.



A pioneer of East-West fusion, L Shankar, who in the latest times mesmerised the audience with the Aditya Birla Masters of Music concert, takes *The Pioneer* had the enchanting experience of inventing his double violin and collaborating with the legendary Vikku Vinayakram and Zakir Hussain.

Celebrating L Shankar's famous quartet

SHIKHA DUGGAL

The Aditya Birla Masters of Music, a unique concert, gathered together great music titans, one of which was L Shankar, whose works enveloped the listeners and combined the traditional beats of classical percussion with strings!

Shankar Lakshminarayana, the violinist, vocalist, and composer, is widely considered a pioneer of East-West fusion, combining the rich traditions of classical music with Western genres such as jazz, rock, and electronic music. In an exclusive interview with us, the person credited with creating the stereophonic double violin states, "Necessity is the mother of inventions. When I was in London recording my debut, which Frank Zappa produced, I overdubbed violin, viola, cello, and bass. Because of my numerous musical interests, I used to have different violins for classical, *Shakti*, and other rock projects and collaborations. It was tough to transport so much equipment. I wanted to create a single instrument that could be played in all genres. Hence, I designed the LSD (L Shankar's Double Violin). I worked on the prototype for two years to ensure the proper angle and distance between the two necks. The instrument has a full orchestral range and can mimic the sounds of flute,

guitar, and synthesizers. I can play on one neck while the other produces sympathetic sounds. For decades, this instrument has proven to be exceptional. I currently have the fourth edition. People have attempted to reproduce it." The event provided a once-in-a-generation opportunity to commemorate this famous artist's quartet! Furthermore, he adds, "You must keep an open mind. Growing up in a musical family, I've always felt at ease with diverse musical genres. I studied international music. Artists vary in their style and adaptability, making it enjoyable to collaborate with them. This leads to unrestricted creativity and enjoyment."

An exuberant musician discusses the impact of music and the success of his album *Pancha Nadai Pallavi*, as well. "I collaborated extensively

with artists Vikku Vinayakram Ji on *ghatam* and Zakir Hussain Ji on *tabla*. The *Pancha Nadai Pallavi* was a complicated work with a unique rhythmic cycle, *Mahalakshmi tala* (9 1/2 beats), named after the mother of the famous Mahaperiyava saint. We rehearsed the *Pallavi* extensively before recording." Because, on a general note, he was keen to tell us, "Music is a common thread that connects all of us around the world. I participated in performances with the Prince's Trust in London, UN Peace Day, Nelson Mandela's charity shows, and numerous Amnesty International shows, where many musicians volunteered to promote peace. I learned a lot from these encounters."

The L. Shankar on the double violin continues, "My family has a great musical legacy that spans generations. Our musical family includes Vikku Vinayakram Ji and '3G' with Selvaganesh Ji and Swaminathan Selvaganesh from South India, as well as Ustad Fazal Qureshi from the renowned Ustad Alla Rakha's family from the North. This elite group comes from a well-known family with a long history. So, the sky was the limit for these exceptional artists. We covered the difficult *Ragam Tanam Pallavis* and *Shakti* classics from the first three albums. We offered a large selection of songs to choose from."

Finally, the Madras-born singer advises budding musicians to be completely passionate about what they do, committed, unconcerned about criticism, and concentrated. "It's a long road, but if you enjoy it, it's a pleasure because we are fortunate to do what we do. One must not accept no for an answer! If you serve Saraswati, she will look after you. If you serve the music, it will serve you forever. I am solely a music student and will remain so. Here are my feelings. I only compete with myself, not with others." You know what? His world music records with the band *Shakti* during the mid-70s became the 'standard to assess the playing and composition ability of any world musician following in *Shakti's* vast wake. As a result, his enormous body of work covers a wide range of genres, including vocal and instrumental works! It was a joy to know Shankar, who was born in Madras as the sixth child in a musical family. Considered a child prodigy, he began vocal training with his father at the age of two. Within a year, he was able to hum complicated lines from traditional Indian music. Since, look at him now, when their house was attacked and burned down during the ethnic riots in 1958—Shankar and his two older brothers created the *Violin Trio*, which made history in the 20th century Carnatic music scene after fleeing Sri Lanka. That's how it's done!



Interesting facts about plastic surgery that you should be aware of

There is an increase in the number of patients seeking cosmetic procedures over the years. While plastic surgery has always been a topic of interest, there are still many misconceptions surrounding it. In this article, Dr. Anmol Chugh, consultant, Plastics & Aesthetics Centre, CK Birla Hospital shares 10 interesting facts about plastic surgery that the general public should be aware of!

appearance, it can positively impact their mental and emotional well-being.

1. Plastic surgery is not just about vanity

Contrary to popular belief, plastic surgery is not just about enhancing one's appearance for purely aesthetic reasons. It also includes reconstructive surgery to improve function and correct defects caused by burns, trauma, or birth defects.

6. Technology has advanced significantly

Thanks to technological advancements in the medical field, plastic surgery procedures are now safer, more precise, and have a shorter recovery time. Innovative techniques and tools have greatly improved the results of cosmetic and reconstructive surgeries.

2. It has a long history

Plastic surgery dates back to ancient civilisations such as India, Egypt, and Greece. The first documented plastic surgery procedure or nose job was performed in India over 3000 years ago.

7. It is on the rise

The demand for plastic surgery has been steadily increasing over the years.

3. It involves extensive training

Contrary to what some may believe, becoming a plastic surgeon is not an easy feat. It requires almost 15 years of training starting from MBBS to becoming a full-fledged plastic surgeon.

8. Men are also seeking plastic surgery

While traditionally seen as a procedure for women, men are now seeking plastic surgery as well.

4. There are many types of plastic surgery

Plastic surgery is not limited to procedures like breast augmentation or rhinoplasty. It also includes reconstructive procedures such as cleft lip repair, scar revision, and hand surgery.

9. It is not just for the wealthy

Contrary to popular belief, plastic surgery is not just for the wealthy. With advancements in technology and more options for payment and financing, it has become more accessible to people from all walks of life.

5. It can boost self-confidence

While plastic surgery should not be seen as a solution to low self-esteem, it can definitely boost one's self-confidence. When a patient is happy with their

10. There are risks involved

As with any surgical procedure, there are risks involved with plastic surgery. It is essential for patients to have realistic expectations and to choose a qualified and experienced plastic surgeon to minimise these risks.

In conclusion, plastic surgery is a complex and multifaceted field that goes beyond the surface level of vanity. It has a rich history, requires extensive training, and offers a range of procedures to improve both function and appearance. As with any surgical procedure, it is essential to do thorough research and consult with a qualified professional before making any decisions.

'Sanjay Leela Bhansali wanted casting to feel like 'tawaifs' of Lahore'

TEJAL SINHA

It's been almost a month since its release, and *Heeramandi* has still been creating the same buzz and providing one and all with more insights about the period drama, helmed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. Now, be it with some BTS insights, adoring Bibojan's *Gajagamini* walk, or Alamzeb being trolled, the series has been all over the news! If truth be told, the casting, right from Manisha Koirala as 'Mallikajaan' to Taha Shah Badushsa as 'Nawab Tajdar Baloch', Farida Jalal as 'Qudisha Begum' to Fardeen Khan as 'Wali Bin Zayed-Al Mohammed', has undeniably been a bonus point.

So why not gain more insights behind the casting from the casting director Shruti Mahajan, whose notable works in her repertoire include iconic titles like *Bajirao Mastani*, *Gangubai Kathiawadi*, *The Big Bull*, *Lipstick Under My Burkha*, *Padman*, *Mary Kom*, *Satyagraha*, *Ghoomer*, and *Lust Stories 2*, to name a few.

"The casting for *Heeramandi* was similar to that of the other projects I have cast for," begins the casting director in this exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*. So basically, she got a script from the directing team almost more than a year before the project went on the floor. "For this series, I didn't get a script. I got a Bible (she laughs). In the script, after reading the character presented by Sanjay Leela Bhansali and knowing that it was going to be streamed on OTT, expectations were very high. I knew the antagonist and protagonist had to be faces in the search for the right actor for the right role! Just like *Heeramandi*, the casting also had to be larger-than-life. We kept on doing multiple rounds of presentations, and after the main cast was done, we got into the secondary casting."

A revelation she brings to us: "There were auditions hap-

pening for Alamzeb and Tajdar's characters, and for the rest of the characters, it was just a look test."

Speaking of Alamzeb's character, the discussions around Sharmin Sehgal's performance don't seem to stop anytime soon. People have, in fact, also criticised Sanjay Leela Bhansali's niece for having no expression! As we discuss the same thing with Shruti, she shares, "You cannot please everyone. Furthermore, given the nature of our work, we receive a wide range of feedback. One has to take everything with a pinch of salt and move on. You must continue to improve your craft and give it your all. It's a packaged deal. We are aware of what we have accomplished and the effort we have expended, and we must be respected for it. Regarding criticism, I believe that we learn to accept it in the same way that we accept love. As a casting director, I always tell actors to focus on their skills. I feel

that a lot of people have liked Sharmin's work. There is a lot of praise for her voice and for her innocence, so I feel she's done a fine job; she has given her best."

She recalls that she has come a long way working with Sanjay Leela Bhansali. Her first project with him was *Ramleela*, and she says she's got to learn a lot while working with him. "Now we share a beautiful working relationship. Yes, the expectations are very high with each film that I work on with him because

he always thinks it's going to get better and better. Every time that I cast for him, I know that it has to be out-of-the-box casting. It is not easy to please him," she shares with sheer excitement and further speaks of casting veteran actors like Manisha Koirala and Farida Jalal. "He wants to push the envelope, and that is when, when it came to the casting of Mallikajaan, we thought of Manisha because the character had to be larger than life and had to belong to an era and to that part that was beautiful, had to be aesthetic, and we know Manisha is a great actor. We've always seen Manisha doing these pretty soft beauty roles, but Bhansali had worked with her in the past and was definitely aware of her skills, so when her name popped up, he was very excited. And I was like, this is something nobody has ever seen Manisha do. Back then, she was in Nepal, and when we called her, she was also very excited to be a part of it. And with Fareeda Ji, it just happened that the role required a graceful, classy grandmother, with a lot of love and affection, and then an age group, which was also supposed to be right. The first name that came as a reference was her! And during that, we heard rumours that she wasn't keeping well. So we first had to check on her health."

In the context of *Heeramandi*, she shares that the biggest challenge was the expectations from Netflix. "They knew that somebody like SLB was known for his casting and his craft. Casting for a series doubles the work. He wanted that the casting should feel like they belonged to the world of Lahore, Pakistan, and that it was also an era that was more real. The challenge for the character was to understand every part, and all these characters had their own tracks. The core was the same during casting but had their own uniqueness, and the guys had to give a royal vibe to men who could be dominated by these courtesans, and they could drive these men into the story."

As we head towards the end of this chat with her, Shruti, who is going to work on a film with Akshay Kumar *Sarfira*, one series with Rajkumar Gupta, and Bhansali's *Love and War*, to name a few, says, "The only best decision is to follow what I've liked. It's a dream come true. Every film on which I have worked is special, as is working with such filmmakers. I only have gratitude if you follow your passion; the sky is the limit."



The *Heeramandi* cast has certainly been the talk of the town ever since its announcement. What better can it be than gaining more insights on the selection from the casting director, Shruti Mahajan, herself in this exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*.

what's brewing?



Actresses Arpita Lohi, and Shreya, along with other fashion lovers marked their presence at the date announcement event of Hillife exhibition, which is going to be held at HICC Novotel in HITEC City, starting from June 11. The expo will end on June 13.

Bhargavi Reddy

Shreya

Bindu

Aishwarya and Priya

Monika and Jabilli

Arpita

PARTY Photos by- SV Chary

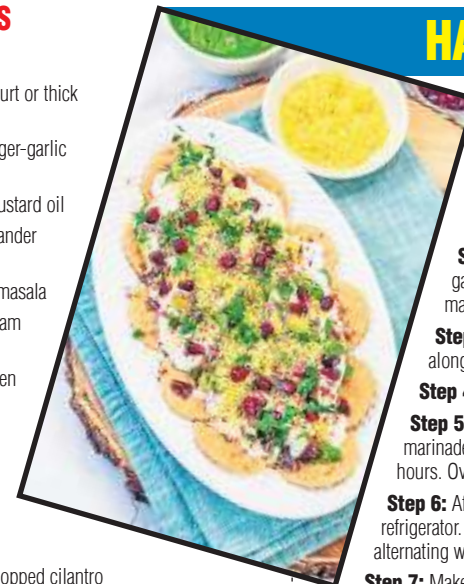
INGREDIENTS

- Hazari Marinade
- ½ cup Greek yogurt or thick yogurt
- 1 tablespoon ginger-garlic paste
- 2 tablespoons mustard oil
- 2 teaspoons coriander powder
- 1 teaspoon chat masala
- ¾ teaspoon garam masala
- ¼ teaspoon green chilli paste
- 1 teaspoon thick spinach puree
- ½ teaspoon salt or to taste
- 1 lemon juice of
- 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- 2 tablespoons chopped mint
- 150 grams paneer cut into big cubes, around 2 heaping cups of cubed paneer
- 1 large onion finely chopped
- 1 large bell pepper cut into 1-inch cubes, I used a mix of red and green peppers

HAZARI PANEER TIKKA

INSTRUCTIONS

- Step 1:** Whisk the yogurt in a large bowl until smooth. used Greek yogurt here, you can use regular yogurt just make sure to strain it for several hours until you have thick yogurt left and then use in the recipe.
- Step 2:** Add all the ingredients for the marinade to the yogurt- ginger garlic paste, mustard oil, coriander powder, chat masala, garam masala, spinach puree, green chilli paste, and salt.
- Step 3:** Whisk to combine everything together. Add in juice of 1 lemon along with chopped cilantro and mint. Mix well.
- Step 4:** Stir in the paneer cubes and bell peppers.
- Step 5:** Mix until all the paneer pieces and veggies are well coated with the marinade. Cover the bowl and refrigerate for minimum for 1 hour or up to 4 hours. Overnight also works!
- Step 6:** After 1-2 hours, take the marinated paneer and veggies out of the refrigerator. Take a skewer and arrange paneer, onion and peppers on a skewer, alternating with each other.
- Step 7:** Make all skewers similarly. Coat paneer with chopped onion Meanwhile heat clay oven or (regular oven) to 896F (480C) degrees.
- Step 8:** Arrange all the prepared skewers on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Spray the tikka with a oil spray. This is important so that the veggies don't dry out.
- Step 9:** Cook at 896 F degrees for 10 minutes and Broil for 2 to 3 minutes until paneer pieces look little charred.
- Step 10:** Remove from clay oven, sprinkle chat masala and serve.



DAHI PAPDI CHAT 2.0

INGREDIENTS

- Papdi 3 to 4 pec
- Curd 1 cup
- Sugar 2 tabs
- Salt ¼ tsp
- Sev as needed
- Green chutney as needed
- Red chutney as needed
- Water 1 liter
- Sodium alginate 6 gm

METHOD

Preparation for Yoghurt spheres.

Step 2: start by preparing the alginate bath. Mix the sodium alginate in the water using an immersion blender until the sodium alginate is completely dissolved. If this is your first time doing this, be aware that this may take longer than expected. Let it rest for 2-24 hours in the fridge so that the air that has entered the mixture disappears and the sodium alginate is completely rehydrated.

You can speed the process of removing bubbles by straining through a sieve or use a magnetic stirrer rather than a blender to avoid air bubbles in the first place.

Step 2: To create the yogurt mixture just mix all the ingredients together.

Step 3: You are now ready to start the specification process! Remove the alginate bath from the fridge. Scoop the yogurt mixture with a half sphere 5ml measure spoon and carefully pour it into the alginate bath. Stir the bath gently with the slotted spoon without touching the spheres. If you let them sit in the bottom of the bath, they will flatten and if you let them float, the top won't be covered with the calcium solution and won't gel. However, it is important that the yogurt spheres don't touch since they would stick together.

Step 4: Leave the yogurt spheres "cooking" for about 2 minutes in the alginate bath and then carefully remove them using a slotted spoon.

Step 5: Then rinse them very gently with water and strain them carefully. If desired they could be stored in a sealed container with water in the fridge.

Chutney foam instructions

- Green chutney 50 gm
- Water 200 ml
- Soy lecithin 2 gm
- Mix The Beet Root And Lecithin Together Using Hand Blender
- Store In The Refrigerator
- Using Immersion Blender To Whip Up The Surface Until It Has Texture Of Foam

Green chutney

- 2 cups Coriander leaves chopped
- 7 Almonds
- 2 Green chillies
- 1 tablespoon Lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon Cumin seeds
- Salt & Water As needed

Instructions

- Step 1:** Clean the coriander leaves, remove the root part. Wash well twice and grind all the ingredients to make into a smooth chutney. (you can use the stem part of the coriander also)
- Step 2:** Add water while grinding as needed. It takes very less water, so add carefully. Lastly transfer to an airtight container and store in fridge.

Red chutney

- 14 Dates
- 1 tablespoon Tamarind
- 3 tablespoon Jaggery
- ¾ teaspoon Red chilli powder
- ¾ teaspoon Chat masala
- ½ teaspoon Cumin seeds

Instructions

- Dates tamarind chutney
- Pressure cook the dates and tamarind with very little water upto 3 whistles.
- Cool down and extract a thick juice from tamarind, grind the dates in to smooth paste.
- Mix the tamarind extract, dates paste, jaggery, water and bring to boil.
- Add red chilli powder, chat masala or black salt and mix well.
- Boil until glossy. Add the roasted cumin powder lastly and give a boil.
- Let the chutney be thick like the tomato sauce in consistency.

Instructions serving papdi chat

- In the serving plate, first arrange the papdis
- Spread the green chutney on papdi
- Then place the yoghurt spheres on top
- Then using squeeze bottle pour the tamarind chutney on top and garnish with chutney foam



Recipe by Chef Siddhesh Parab, corporate chef, SpiceKlub, Cupertino California



VisionIAS announced their UPSC Abhyaas Prelims at A.V. College of Arts, Science and Commerce (Offline centre in Hyderabad) and in over 100 cities across India. The examination was held at various centres in cities including Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Bhopal, Chandigarh, Delhi, Guwahati, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Lucknow, Prayagraj, Pune, and Ranchi.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



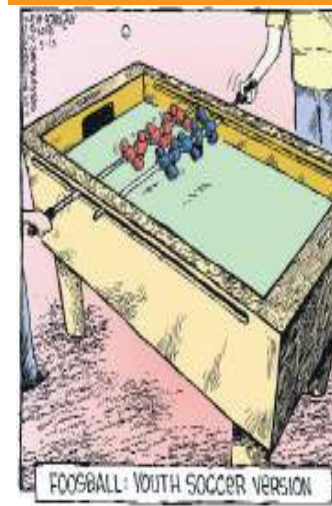
GINGER MEGGS



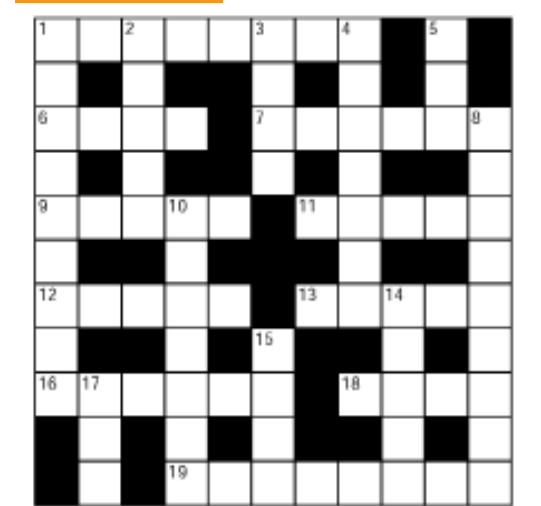
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

ACROSS

- 1 Creatures that turn into frogs
- 6 Absent
- 7 Extremely foolish
- 9 Vote into power
- 11 One fifth of thirty-five
- 12 Memorise
- 13 The part of a theatre where people perform
- 16 Take something away
- 18 A toy on a string that can be spun up and down
- 19 Dried grapes used in baking

DOWN

- 1 Someone on a journey
- 2 A male duck
- 3 Fewer

SOLUTION

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



'BEING CALLED RADHIKA JUST MAKES MY DAY'

Ahead of the release of the film *Gangs of Godavari*, actress Neha Sshetty interacted with us about her journey, from childhood aspirations to her admiration for Sridevi's iconic rain dances.

K. RAMYA SREE

In Indian cinema, the legacy of mesmerising rain sequences once belonged to the iconic Sridevi. Today, that mantle is being carried forward by none other than Neha Sshetty, whose consecutive chart-topping rain songs have captivated audiences nationwide. As Neha gears up for the much-anticipated release of her upcoming film *Gangs of Godavari*, starring alongside Vishwak Sen, excitement is very high. Sharing the screen with acclaimed actress Anjali, Neha reflects on the camaraderie and positive energy fostered on set, enhancing the overall filming experience. Bankrolled by Sithara Entertainments and helmed by director Krishna Chaitanya, *Gangs of Godavari* promises to be a cinematic extravaganza spanning multiple genres, with a release date set for May 31st. Ahead of the film's debut, Neha sat down with us to discuss her journey, from childhood aspirations to her admiration for Sridevi's iconic rain dances. Beginning with her character in the film, she shared, "I play Bujji in *Gangs of Godavari*. She is a beautiful, elegant, and vulnerable girl, yet surprisingly strong. Set against the backdrop of the 1990s, the film explores Bujji's transformation into a resilient woman amidst village life. Our director drew inspiration from veteran actress Sobhana, ensuring authenticity in every aspect of the character." Reflecting on the misconceptions surrounding the film's premise, Neha

clarifies, "Despite what the trailer may suggest, *Gangs of Godavari* offers a balanced blend of romance, thriller, comedy, and emotion. Our director, Krishna Chaitanya, drew from personal experiences, infusing authenticity into every frame." Filmed primarily in Rajahmundry, Neha fondly recalls the warmth and hospitality extended by the locals, creating cherished memories both on and off-screen. She shared, "People in Rajahmundry were very welcoming. We had great food. Everyday we had different types of food coming from different households." Embracing her newfound moniker as "Radhika,"

inspired by Shah Rukh Khan's iconic character, Neha humbly acknowledges the audience's adoration for her on-screen persona. In her words, she shared, "Like how Shah Rukh Khan has 'Badshah', I got Radhika very early in my career. Being called Radhika just makes my day. The audience liked the character so much, that's why they call me that." She added, "I was 5 years old when I decided I would become an actress. I love dancing. I've always wanted to be an actress since I was a child." Asked about being called the new rain dance queen of Tollywood, the *DJ Tillu* star expressed, "When it comes to rain songs, Sridevi remains unparalleled. Now people are giving me compliments for my rain songs, and I am very happy about it. I have been lucky with songs. I am thankful to my directors that I am getting such songs." Furthermore, about her roles in all her films where she is seen mostly in sarees, Neha expressed, "Scripts are coming in which I have to wear a saree. When I came to the industry, I was much younger, and I wasn't even sure if I liked wearing a saree, but today I am very comfortable wearing a saree." With a discerning eye for future projects, Neha remains committed to delivering engaging narratives, mindful of the shifting dynamics in post-pandemic cinema. "I have one upcoming film with Bellamkonda Srinivas that is yet to start, directed by Saagar Chandra. I am being selective with my movies now. I feel that after COVID, audiences are not coming to theatres much, and I want to give them something interesting for my films," concluded Neha on a fun-filled note.



Rajinikanth, Sathyaraj reunite for *Coolie* after 38 years

The revelation of the title of Rajinikanth's upcoming film has set his fans into a frenzy. Directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj, *Coolie* signifies a significant milestone in the actor's illustrious career, and audiences are eagerly awaiting updates on this highly anticipated project.



Adding to the excitement is the reunion of two actors after a staggering 38 years. In a noteworthy development, veteran actor Sathyaraj has been confirmed to star in the film, marking a special reunion with Rajinikanth. Sathyaraj's character in *Coolie* is poised to play a pivotal role as Rajinikanth's friend, promising to add depth and intrigue to the storyline.

between the duo. With both Rajinikanth and Sathyaraj bringing their immense talent and charisma to the table, the inclusion of Sathyaraj in the cast promises to elevate *Coolie* to new heights.

The news of the reunion between these two iconic actors has ignited anticipation among fans, who are eager to witness the on-screen chemistry

As anticipation for *Coolie* continues to soar, fans are eagerly awaiting further updates and insights into this highly anticipated project. Stay tuned for more exclusive updates on *Coolie* as the film gears up for production, promising an unforgettable cinematic experience for audiences worldwide.

Vijay Thalapathy turns singer for *GOAT*

Actor Vijay is gearing up for the much-anticipated release of *The Greatest Of All Time (GOAT)*, marking a significant moment in his career. While the buzz about this movie is already very high, a recent revelation about the film by music composer Yuvan Shankar Raja has added more fuel to the ongoing buzz. In a recent media interaction in Dubai, Yuvan Shankar Raja shared insights about *GOAT*. Initially hesitant, Raja finally disclosed that Vijay had lent his melodious voice to two songs in the film. "For the first time ever, Thalapaty Vijay has sung two songs for his film," Raja announced, unveiling the exciting news.

The revelation quickly went viral on social media platforms, with fans expressing their excitement and anticipation.

The first song from *GOAT*, titled *Whistle Podu*, sung by Vijay himself, was released on April 14 to widespread acclaim. However, details about the release of the second song are yet to be revealed. This isn't the first time that Vijay has lent his voice to movies. He became a singer for some of his previous movies, however, he lent his voice to a song after a very long time.

Since the announcement of *GOAT* by Venkat Prabhu, the makers have been actively sharing updates and behind-the-scenes glimpses from the film's set on social media. In the movie, Vijay will portray dual roles, essaying both the younger and older versions of his character. Produced by AGS Entertainment, the ensemble cast includes Prashanth, Prabhudeva, Ajmal Ameer, Meenakshi Chaudhary, Mohan, and Jayaram in pivotal roles. The highly anticipated film is slated for release on September 5, promising audiences an unforgettable cinematic experience.



SECOND SINGLE FROM *INDIAN 2* SET TO DROP ON MAY 29

The much-awaited sequel, *Indian 2 (Bharateeyudu 2)*, starring Kamal Haasan, has been creating waves among movie buffs. Directed by the visionary Shankar, this film has been in the making for quite some time and is finally gearing up for release in July.

While snippets of information about the film have been surfacing on social media, fans are eagerly awaiting more updates. The latest buzz is all about the release of the second single from *Indian 2*, which is scheduled to hit the airwaves on May 29.

"Let the magic of music sweep you away. The mesmerising love song from *#Bharateeyudu2* is set to release on May 29th. *Bharateeyudu-2's* second single on May 29th," wrote the makers on their official social



media handles. The announcement has sparked a frenzy on social media platforms, with fans eagerly anticipating what the musical maestro Anirudh Ravichander has in store for them. With a stellar cast that includes Kamal Haasan, Siddharth, Kajal, and Rakul Preet, among others, and backed by the powerhouse production house Lyca Productions, *Indian 2* promises to be a cinematic extravaganza. Scheduled for release on July 12, the film is poised to deliver a gripping blend of action, drama, and social commentary. As the excitement continues to soar, fans are eagerly counting down the days until the release of the second single, hoping for another musical masterpiece to add to the film's allure.

Gam Gam Ganesha boasts of impressive comedy: PRODUCER VAMSI KARUMANCHI

Producer Vamsi Karumanchi, who is making his Tollywood debut with *Gam Gam Ganesha*, shares insights into the film's journey and his experiences in the industry.

K. RAMYA SREE

As the much-anticipated action crime comedy *Gam Gam Ganesha* gears up for its grand theatrical release on May 31, producer Vamsi Karumanchi, making his Tollywood debut, shares insights into the film's journey and his experiences in the industry. "Our roots are in Guntur. We moved to the US for work and business but returned to India during the lockdown. Due to travel restrictions, we couldn't go back to the US," reveals Vamsi, adding, "Since childhood, I've been a movie enthusiast and a fan of Balakrishna. Even in the US, we watched all Telugu movies, often surprising others with our enthusiasm in theaters."

Discussing the genesis of *Gam Gam Ganesha*, Vamsi explained, "When director Uday Shetty narrated the story, Anand liked it. Anand plays a funky character that's somewhat brash and daring. *Gam Gam Ganesha* revolves around a Ganesh statue and money, blending action and comedy."

Elaborating on the film's journey to the big screen, Vamsi shares, "We initially aimed to release it during Vinayaka Chavithi but postponed it due to industry strikes and Anand's involvement in *Baby*. We then planned a release for the 25th of this month but shifted to the 31st to avoid clashing with *Dil Raju's Love Me*."

"Gearing up for a substantial release, *Gam Gam Ganesha* is being distributed by Mythri Movie Distributors in Nizam and Dheeraj Mogilineni Entertainments in AP and Karnataka, with over 400 theaters secured. We also have an OTT deal with Amazon Prime," he adds.

Reflecting on the film's unique charm, Vamsi emphasizes, "Anand's role in *Gam Gam Ganesha* is unique and should not be compared to his role in *Baby*. The film boasts impressive comedy, with Jabardast Emmanuel delivering humour. Heroines Nayan Sarika and Pragathi Srivastava shine with significant roles."

Commending director Uday Shetty's vision, Vamsi remarks, "Directors often struggle to bring crime comedy genres to life as well as they narrate them, but Uday has executed *Gam Gam Ganesha* excellently. The budget was significant, but the quality is evident."

Looking ahead, Vamsi expresses excitement about future projects and the possibility of working with his favourite actor, Balakrishna. As *Gam Gam Ganesha* prepares to hit theaters amidst healthy competition, Vamsi Karumanchi exudes confidence in the film's potential to captivate audiences and make a mark in Tollywood.



Payal Rajput's *Rakshana* all set for a powerful strike on June 7

Mark your calendars as *Rakshana* is all set to hit theatres on June 7, offering a fresh perspective on Payal Rajput's versatility as an actor. Her portrayal of a police officer in this thrilling crime investigation adds a special appeal to the film. The audience can anticipate an engaging cinematic experience as the story unfolds on the big screen.

Crime investigative movies always manage to captivate audiences due to their intriguing twists and turns, keeping viewers on the edge of their seats. *Rakshana* is no exception, as it draws inspiration from a real-life incident, providing an added layer of authenticity and intrigue to the narrative. The teaser for the film has already received a positive response from movie enthusiasts, adding to the excitement surrounding its release.

Apart from Payal Rajput, the film features an exceptional cast, including Roshan, Maanas, Rajeev Kanakala, Vinod Bala, Sivanarayana, and others. *Rakshana* is being crafted under the banner of Haripriya Creations, boasting stellar contributions from Anil Bandari as the cinematographer, Mahati Swara Sagar as the music composer, J.R. Ethiraj as the sound designer, Gary B.H. as the editor, Venkat Master as the stunt choreographer, Rajeev Nair as the production designer, Tayanidhi Sivakumar as the writer, and Alagarsamy and Mayan-Pradeep Pudi handling the VFX.

With Payal Rajput leading the way and a talented team behind the scenes, *Rakshana* promises a thrilling and immersive cinematic experience. Be ready to witness the story unfold on June 7 and brace yourself for an unforgettable crime investigative journey.



TRAILER RELEASE GALA



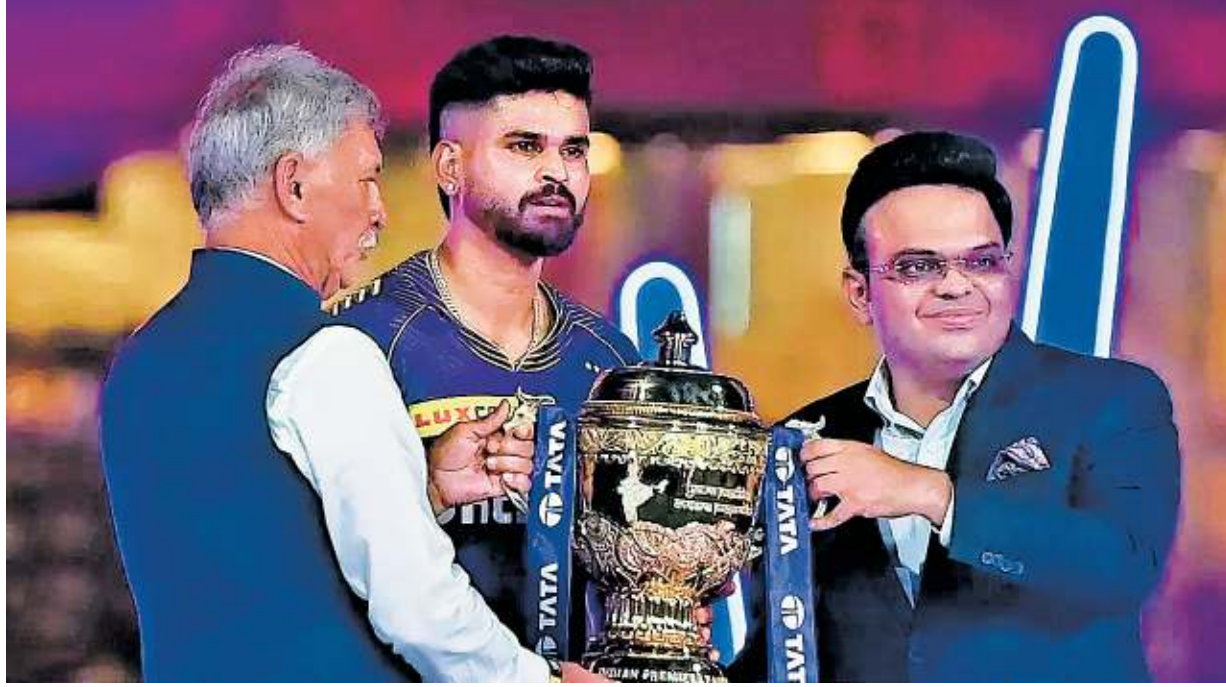
Tamil director Vikraman's son Vijay Kanishka starred in *Samudrakhani*, with Sarath Kumar and Gautham Vasudeva Menon in the lead roles of the film *Hit List*. Directed by SooryaKathir Kakkallar and K. Karthikeyan under R. K. Celluloids, filmmaker K. S. Ravi Kumar is producing the film. In the past, the first-look posters for this movie raised expectations for the movie. The teaser for this movie was launched by versatile hero Surya. Coming in the action, suspense, and crime genres, the teaser for this film was recently released and is impressing the audience. The trailer launch and pre-release event for this movie were held grandly, and the makers revealed that the film will be released on May 31. Actor Murali Mohan and Telangana Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad were the chief guests of the event. Along with them, producer-director K.S. Ravikumar, hero Vijay Kanishka, directors SooryaKathir Kakkallar and K. Karthikeyan, and Telugu release producers Srinivas Goud and Bekkam Ravindra participated in this event.

FROM SETBACKS TO SUCCESS: SHREYAS IYER'S JOURNEY TO IPL VICTORY

PTI ■ KOLKATA

When Shreyas Iyer recreated Lionel Messi's famous World Cup celebration after lifting the IPL Trophy as Kolkata Knight Riders captain in Chennai, it was nothing short of an Argentina moment for the embattled Indian cricketer at an individual level. His central contract torn up a few weeks before the IPL besides a recurring back injury threatening to derail him, Iyer faced numerous challenges at the start of the year. He finally found a deep sense of triumph and vindication in this victory, much like Messi did after exorcising the ghosts of losing the 2014 final and winning the trophy for his country after a 36-year wait. For the two-time IPL champions, the wait lasted 10 years as Iyer sang a redemption song following a topsy-turvy start to the year. Little wonder then that he chose to imitate the man who knows all about rising from setbacks. So, Iyer, with the trophy in his hands, took a playful walk towards his teammates, quite

similar to what Messi did after the final against France in Doha, and handed the big prize to them. "I am hearing a lot about Gautam Gambhir, who has created a magnificent culture in the KKR team. But this guy (Iyer), I don't think he is getting enough credit," said the legendary Ian Bishop on Sunday as KKR defeated Sunrisers Hyderabad by eight wickets in a completely one-sided final to win their third IPL title. KKR may have got most of their runs from openers Sunil Narine and Phil Salt, but they played as a team and managed to come out winners in a dominant season, topping the table with two rounds to spare, and enduring just three losses in between. "It is hard to express how we are feeling right now. The wait was so long. We played like invincibles throughout the season. There is so much to cherish right now," said Iyer. It was a special feeling for his childhood and Mumbai coach Pravin Amre, who first tested his character by promoting Iyer to No.3 from No.7 in his



maiden Ranji season in 2014-15. Iyer returned with 153, his maiden first-class hundred in their match against Bengal at Eden Gardens in December 2014. "I challenged him in his entire

career (in Mumbai)...I knew how strong-willed he's and it was my job as a coach to challenge him. He always liked to take the challenge in a good stride. He is a good team man. In the last world cup, he scored 530 runs," Amre said.

"I always told him you just do whatever is in your hands, let the other people do their job, you just remain focus on what's in your hands," added Amre who first took him under his wings at the Shivaji Park Gymkhana.

By leading KKR into final, Iyer achieved the rare feat of playing the summit clash as captain of two different franchises in the IPL. The KKR skipper missed the last season because of a back injury that required a surgery

in London last year. He made a comeback in the Asia Cup and went on to become India's third leading run-getter after Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma in the last year's ODI World Cup. The year didn't start well for him though as he had a difficult outing in the home Test series against England and looked patchy scoring 140 runs in the first two matches before being left out for the final three Tests. It was learnt that he developed the recurring back problem, even though he was cleared by the Board medical staff. Iyer then became the centre of a controversy when he missed the Ranji Trophy for his home state Mumbai and went on to attend KKR's pre-season camp. Iyer, however, returned to play for Mumbai in the semifinal and final against Vidarbha where he scored a resolute 95 in the second innings of their 42nd Ranji triumph. The Board omitted him from the Grade B contract and BCCI secretary Jay Shah issued a stern warning asking players not to prioritise IPL over domestic cricket.

Under intense scrutiny, Iyer looked rusty at the start of the IPL and got out for a two-ball duck in their opener against SRH. He had some significant contributions later on but his efforts were all overshadowed by Narine and Salt's explosive batting. **CAPTAIN COOL:** However, Iyer personified "Captain Cool" and held the team's cause ahead of his individual milestones. He went on to become the fourth leading run-getter for KKR this season with 351 runs and two fifties. His best came against the crucial first qualifier against SRH when he anchored their tricky chase of 160 with an unbeaten 58. "The way he handled the team as a player is commendable. More than that, he is improving as a leader and the experts in the game are also appreciating his leadership qualities," Amre said. "I personally believe success is not an accident he has worked hard for this, handling the team. Yes, he had a good team under him but bringing the best out of everyone is important," he added.

Starc produced ball of the IPL, Narine best player for KKR: Hayden

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Former Australia batter Matthew Hayden has termed Mitchell Starc's outstanding away-swing to Abhishek Sharma in the IPL final as the "ball of the IPL" while describing Sunil Narine as the "best player" for triumphant Kolkata Knight Riders. Shreyas Iyer's rampant KKR, who were unstoppable throughout the 17th edition of the IPL, crushed Sunrisers Hyderabad in the summit clash by eight wickets to add a third trophy to their cabinet on Sunday. "The moment that ball bowled to Abhishek Sharma came out of Mitchell Starc's hands, it was game over. It was destined to be the best ball of the IPL - an absolute peach at a time when it was so important," Hayden told Star Sports Cricket Live. Former England batter Kevin Pietersen said Starc's ability to get his wrist position right towards the end of IPL and cranking up extra pace along with Narine's all-round ability bolstered KKR. "Mitchell Starc was averaging around 136-137 kph during the majority of the season. But in the last two weeks he has gone above 140 kph and that is his average. He is bowling fast," Pietersen said. "We never saw him swing the ball for the first seven, (or) maybe even eight weeks of this tournament. (But) in the last few weeks, he has got his wrist in a good place and started to swing the ball back," he added. Pietersen was lavish in praise of Narine, saying that the KKR veteran gave his critics a perfect reply. "I was one of the most vocal



critics at the start of the tournament saying I didn't like Sunil Narine at the top of the order, due to his inconsistency. He would typically hit a six and then get out, disrupting the momentum," Pietersen said. "However, this season he has been consistent. He has thought like a batter, batted like a batter and got the runs of a batter. He has averaged more than many batters and his strike rate has been phenomenal. He has played both sides of the wicket exceptionally well." "We don't need to say much about his bowling - he is an out-and-out superstar. His ability to change his action and still produce such impressive numbers is quite something. He is the heart and soul of this outfit," Pietersen said. Former India batter Ambati

Rayudu, meanwhile, credited KKR captain Iyer, coaching staff as well as the team's domestic talent for coming together. "Shreyas Iyer has been tremendous in terms of leading KKR, and we should give him a lot of credit. He was not in the best of forms with the bat, but still, the way he has used his resources, is commendable," Rayudu said. Rayudu said a huge tally of runs from an individual is not as crucial as the others contributing collectively. "That is exactly how teams win the IPL. We have seen this over the years; it is not the orange cap that wins you the IPL, but it is the contributions from 4-5 batters with 300-400 runs each - that is what gets you to the finals," he added.

PTI ■ CHENNAI

After resisting the lure of lucrative private leagues for almost a decade because of his commitment towards the "Baggy Green," Australian pacer Mitchell Starc has hinted that he might quit one format to make room for more franchise cricket in his schedule. While the 34-year-old didn't specify the format he intends to give up, it is likely to be ODIs considering that the next 50-over World Cup is in 2027. Starc, who was bought for a record 24.75 crore by Kolkata Knight Riders, was magnificent in the business end of the tournament. He ended up with 17 wickets, including five in the two knock-out games, to engineer a dominant title triumph for the Shah Rukh Khan-owned team. To a query from PTI as to how he would take it up from here after his best year in franchise cricket, Starc hinted that T20s could gain prominence in his roster. "For the last nine years, I

Starc hints at quitting one format to open doors for more franchise cricket

certainly prioritised Australian cricket. I have pulled out often to have a chance to give my body a break and spend some time away from cricket with my wife as well, so that's certainly been where my head has been for last nine years," Starc said after his match-winning 2/14 in the IPL final against Sunrisers Hyderabad. "Moving forward, I am certainly close to the end of my career than the start. One format may be dropped off as there is long time till next World Cup and whether that format drops off or not, that will open doors for a lot of franchise cricket," the "King of Swing" said. He mentioned that this year's IPL will help him in preparing for the T20 World Cup in West Indies starting June 1. "...That's the other side of



benefit of being here, some amazing players in an amazing tournament and great lead up to WT20 and success has been fantastic. It is great that a lot of players are in good position heading into the World Cup," he said. He is hopeful of turning up for KKR even next year. "I don't know the schedule exactly but I have thoroughly

enjoyed and hope to be back next year and hopefully, seen in purple and gold again." **PITCHES IN WINDIES WON'T RESEMBLE IPL TRACKS:** Starc, like many others, agreed that the Impact Player rule led to tall scores in the IPL and the World T20 won't witness insane totals like 270. He said he foresees more help for spinners from worn-

Can cricket make inroads in baseball loving America?

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Cricket, a popular pastime in the United States in the mid 1800s, makes a big-ticket return to North American shores through the T20 World Cup but will it be able to leave an impression on the local audience that knows little to nothing about the gentleman's game? Cricket globally is driven by India but the International Cricket Council sees huge potential in the American market and claims there are already 30 million fans that follow the game in the massive country. The T20 showpiece is also seen as a major stepping stone to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, where cricket will make a comeback after 128 years when the big event kicks off on June 1. A total of 16 games will be played across three venues - New York, Dallas and Lauderdale - with a majority of 55 matches scheduled in the Caribbean including the knock-outs. Day three of the competition will have South Africa and Sri Lanka battling it out in New York, where the first ever international cricket game was held between USA and Canada back in 1844. It was a phase when the sport was played widely across America

before a much faster alternative in Baseball gained prominence during the Civil War in the 1860s. "... (T20) it's entertainment and that's what people look for. That's what Americans look for, you know, they want entertainment," says legendary West Indian Brian Lara, one of the most recognisable cricketers in the world but someone who admits that he could walk around Miami without getting a second look. "You know, you speak to an American and I've done that many times and they'd say 'you play a game for five days and then you end up in a draw? What's that all about?' So it's, it is difficult," he explains the challenge of selling Test cricket to an American, who might just warm up to the shortest format though. A couple of weeks of international cricket in an alien land will not be enough to evoke long-lasting interest from the local audience and to ensure the game grows beyond the South Asian and Caribbean expat community, the stakeholders will need more time. For a beginner, cricket can be rather complex to understand especially when one is introduced to "third man", "fine leg" or "deep mid-wicket", some of the terms used for the many field placements in the game.



The ICC is pulling out all stops to engage with the American audience, whether it is getting eight-time Olympic gold-winning sprinter Usain Bolt on board as

the World Cup ambassador or promoting the event at the recent Formula 1 race in Miami. To distract the average American household from the world of

baseball, NFL and NBA, cricket will need to grow at the grassroots level. "I surely think the game can grow in the USA. When you have

presence in a country people start gravitating towards it and want to know more about," Bolt, who belongs to the cricket-loving Caribbean, told PTI in a recent interview. The Americans have surely one reason to follow the event. Their team, mainly made up of players from South Asian and Caribbean heritage, will be making its World Cup debut. Venu Pisike, head of USA Cricket, reckons the ICC event will bring much-needed awareness around the game but eventually, it is the lure of taking part in the 2028 Olympics that will draw masses to the sport. "So far, cricket is predominantly an expats' game, but with the marketing and promotion activities during the World Cup, there is some momentum and the World Cup will definitely boost the opportunities to expand the game in the USA," said Pisike. "Definitely, the World Cup is bringing a lot of awareness and then the opportunity for cricket to be in the Olympics, that will definitely attract the community because the US is a huge sports country. "Olympics is the prime area where all the sports bodies are focusing on since cricket is going to Olympics, that will actually

give more opportunities to expand the sport between the World Cup and the Olympics," added Pisike. The USA squad picked for the tournament makes up for a bunch of semi-professionals who rely on full-time jobs to run their families. That will have to change if the sport is to appeal to a broader audience in America, believes India-born USA squad member Nisarg Patel. "Ultimately what needs to change in the USA is that an American kid in a high school needs to see a future in the game. There are so many sports in America, the country is built on Olympic medals. "For cricket to succeed, we need to show them there is a career out of playing cricket," said the spinner, who works full-time with a medical research company in Los Angeles. The start of Major League Cricket last year, the sport's first professional league in the country, was a big step in that direction. However, to capture the imagination of people in a country with an already crowded and developed sporting landscape, would be a gargantuan challenge for the ICC and other stakeholders.

