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BJP will not remove quota, nor will it allow Cong to do so: Shah

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DEEPIKA PADUKONE INSPIRED SUMMER LOOKS!

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Ram Charan makes a splash in Chennai for Game Changer

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

Hindus and Muslims should vote for BJP to bring Hyderabad into the mainstream. Lotus should bloom in Hyderabad. For 40 years, Razakars' representatives have been sitting in Hyderabad. Free Hyderabad from Razakars. Nobody needs to fear. Nobody has guts to touch even one person of Hyderabad

-Amit Shah, Union Minister

P4

Vax that failed to shield?

Pharma giant's admission on side effects of its vax shakes up world

90% of Indians got Covishield jab

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a revelation that has shaken many parts of the world which is yet to recover from the ramifications of the Covid-19 pandemic, pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca has admitted that its widely used vaccine 'Covishield' can cause Thrombosis Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS), a serious condition suffered by some vaccine takers, with symptoms including blood clots and alarming platelet levels.

The company has claimed that Covishield causes TTS in "very rare cases". However, media reports suggest that it has downplayed the situation to stave off a flood of lawsuits. Going by legal challenges across the globe, AstraZeneca may have to eventually cough up millions of dollars in legal payouts. At least 90% of Indians are vaccinated with the AstraZeneca shot, which is produced by the Serum Institute of India under a licence.

Eminent epidemiologist Dr Raman Gangakhedkar has gone on record that

the risk of rare side effects is the highest after the first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine, but lowers with the second and is lowest with the third.

According to him, only seven to eight individuals out of every 10 lakh who received Covishield face the risk of experiencing TTS. "If a side effect has to happen, it will show up within the initial two to three months," Gangakhedkar added.

Gangakhedkar, who was the face of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) during government briefings on Covid-19, said: "Within six months of the launch of the vaccine, TTS was recognised as a rare side effect of the adenovirus vector vaccine. There is nothing new or change in understanding of the vaccine."

British-Swedish company AstraZeneca, along with Oxford, developed its Covid vaccine that is sold under brand names 'Covishield' and 'Vaxzevria', among others. The vaccine was initially rolled out in 2021, amid millions of deaths due to Covid-19 across the world.

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6 cr in TG, 8.6 cr in AP got Covishield jabs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As per the CoWin Dashboard, 174,94,17,978 doses of Covishield vaccine have been administered in India of total 2,20,68,66,587 doses. Of these, nearly 6 crore doses of Covishield were administered in Telangana. Of the total 7,76,28,443 doses of all vaccines administered 6,02,97,519 are Covishield in Telangana. Nearly 11,10,45,274 crore vaccines, including 8.6 crore doses of Covishield, were administered in Andhra Pradesh.



'Who would be responsible for heart attack deaths'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/VARANASI

A political row erupted on Tuesday over the issue of "side effects" of Covishield vaccine, with the Samajwadi Party alleging that the BJP took "commission" from the manufacturer of the Covid jab and the RJD accusing the Centre of administering "wrong" vaccine to people of the country.

Who would be responsible for people dying of heart attacks, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Uttar Pradesh Congress also attacked Modi over the issue and alleged that the PM has played with the lives of people. "Is this Modi's guarantee?" UP Congress chief Ajay Rai asked.

Continued on Page 2

Expert panel probe sought Plea in Supreme Court

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A plea was filed in the Supreme Court on Wednesday seeking constitution of a medical expert panel under the supervision of a retired apex court judge to examine any possible side effects and risk factors of the Covishield vaccine.

2

Modi photo disappears from CoWin certificates!

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Following AstraZeneca's admission in a UK court about Covishield's potential to cause TTS; many in India have been downloading and rifling through their vaccination certificates. While doing so, some took to X (formerly Twitter) to point out that Covid-19 vaccination certificates issued in India no longer carry a photograph of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "Modi ji no more visible on COVID Vaccine certificates. Just downloaded to check - yes, his pic is gone," wrote X user Sandeep Manudhane.



APEAPCET-2024 from May 16

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

APEAPCET-2024 will be conducted from May 16 to 23, as per the schedule released by the Andhra Pradesh State Council for Higher Education (APSCHE) of Common Entrance Tests on Wednesday. APSCHE Secretary Prof Y Nazeer Ahamed released the schedule.

For RCET, the CET will be conducted from May 2 to 5 and the hall tickets are being downloaded from April 10. APEAPCET-2024 will commence on May 16 and 17 for BiPC, and May 18 to 23 for MPC stream. The hall tickets can be downloaded from May 7. For ICET, the CET will be held on May 6, and the hall tickets can be downloaded from May 2.

For ECET, the exam will be on May 8 and the hall tickets can be downloaded from May 1. For PGECET, the CET will be from May 29 to 31 and the hall tickets can be downloaded from May 22.

Land Titling Act: Jagan hits back at Oppn

Says TDP responsible for inconvenience caused to pensioners

PNS ■ BOBBILI/PAYAKARAOPETA/ELURU

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has hit back at the Opposition for their smear campaign against YSRCP on the Land Titling Act. "They are spreading misinformation on the Land Titling Act. People were flooded with messages and IVRS calls regarding the same, and they are using every medium to tarnish Jagan's image. However, even in the remote villages, my true leadership qualities are recognised."

"The Act aims to provide land rights to individuals. The last time, the land surveys were conducted during British rule. Nowhere else in the country are land surveys being conducted on the scale we are witnessing, and over 15,000 surveyors operating across 15,000 Grama Secretariats. Due to past negligence, subdivisions were carried out with-



out proper measurements, leading to difficulties for the public in property transactions and legal disputes with revenue officials."

Addressing the public in Bobbili, Payakaraopeta, and Eluru, CM Jagan highlighted the schemes implemented by the YSRCP government including Rs 2.70 lakh crore as

DBT, providing 2.31 lakh government jobs and implementing 99 per cent of the promises made in the manifesto. "Government schools and children's education have changed like never seen before under the governance of YSRCP without bribes and discrimination. Continued on Page 2

Second signature on revoking 'land grabbing' Act: Naidu

'NDA will rule the State in a democratic manner'

PNS ■ CHIRALA

TDP chief Nara Chandrababu Naidu has promised that after coming back to power, his second signature will be on revoking the Land Titling Act. "Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is putting the State in reverse gear as he does not know how to drive," Chandrababu remarked.

He promised the BCs, who are the backbone of TDP, that he will always stand by them. The NDA government will certainly come to the rescue of the handloom workers and their families, he said.

"NDA will take the responsibility of ruling the State in a democratic manner by ending this dictatorial regime," Chandrababu said. "Not

even a single department is functioning as per norms under this Chief Minister. The services of the teachers are being used to guard the liquor shops."

The financial condition of the State is so pathetic that it is now under Rs 13 lakh crore debts and even the salaries of the government employees are not being paid on time. Revenue can be generated only by creating assets and CM Jagan is raising loans mortgaging the assets created during the TDP regime, he said.

"Had Amaravathi been completed, it would have become a centre for getting revenue to take up all kinds of welfare programmes."

2



Poll symbol: Setback to JSP in APHC

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

With just 10 days left for the general elections in Andhra Pradesh, the Jana Sena Party suffered a setback in the High Court on Wednesday regarding the use of the 'Glass Tumbler' as the election symbol. Jana Sena had filed a petition in the court challenging the Election Commission's decision to include 'Glass Tumbler' as a free symbol for independent candidates in constituencies where Jana Sena has not fielded any candidates.

Jana Sena's counsel YV Ravi Prasad argued that allowing the Glass Tumbler symbol for independent candidates in constituencies where Jana Sena is not contesting. The court ruled in favour of the Election Commission's decision on this matter.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission stated it will review the High Court's guidelines and determine further steps accordingly. The Jana Sena Party is contesting in 21 Assembly and two Lok Sabha constituencies in the upcoming elections.

BJP distanced itself from manifesto release?

Promises copied from YSRCP and Congress Manifesto

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The differences among the NDA allies - TDP, BJP, and JSP -- were exposed once again during the joint manifesto release on Tuesday, as the BJP leader's photograph was missing on the manifesto brochure.

Photos of only TDP supremo Chandrababu Naidu and JSP chief Pawan Kalyan were printed. Besides, the inordinate delay in releasing the manifesto led to another debate. BJP AP in-charge Siddharthnath Singh was the lone BJP leader who shared the dais; however, he refused to hold the



manifesto brochure during the media conference.

The message conveyed through the release of the common manifesto is that the Bharatiya Janata Party is not a part of it at all; it is just the Telugu Desam Party-Jana Sena manifesto.

2

Sharmila raises nine critical questions

Writes letter to Jagan Mohan Reddy; seeks clarifications

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) chief YS Sharmila Reddy has written a letter to the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Jagan Mohan Reddy asking for clarification on nine issues, under the name 'Nayana Nava Sandehalu'.

She demanded that Jagan Mohan Reddy clarify these doubts and then seek votes from the people. Sharmila wanted to know why the land distribution programme was stopped, whether the SC and ST sub-plan funds were diverted, and why 28 schemes were abruptly halted.

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Will Jagan's persona as a protagonist script his victory?

BY B KRISHNA PRASAD

Why do people watch movies? When people watch films their minds go on a magical adventure. They temporarily leave behind their mundane lives and enter a world of imagination, where anything is possible. Most action films give the viewer an adrenaline rush because they inspire you to envision yourself in the shoes of the protagonist of the movie.

Researchers believe that people's idolization of celebrities is rooted in their innate need for role models, with heroes and heroines fitting the bill. We look for inspiration and guidance, and these larger-than-life figures deliver. They become sym-

bols of hope, representing qualities like determination, creativity, and resilience. What if they are fictional characters? Their persona counts.

In a pucca commercial film, the hero thrashes the villain and his gang to secure justice to those they oppress. In these movies there is a clear division of clashing forces in society: the poor and the rich. While the rich are always portrayed as masters of exploitation, the poor are shown invariably at the receiving end. Since the numbers of the poor are always bigger, every film tries to end with the remarkable triumph of the leader who takes up cudgels for the poor and fights against their exploitation by the rich.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, though not

from the film world, has succeeded in cultivating this filmi scenario in the state with his own persona mirroring that of a super hero. Ground reports from across Andhra Pradesh suggest that the poor are increasingly siding with Jagan. They are feeling that he is one vs all. Far from being a normal political leader, Jagan has now grown to the level of a protagonist with hero-worship from disadvantaged sections as a corollary.

Jagan's strategy is simple. He has consistently portrayed himself as savior of the poor and marginalized sections, while single-handedly fighting the high and the mighty. His previous adventures, including differing with Sonia Gandhi as an upstart in the Congress, going to jail,



formation of a new political party, surviving for 14 long years, and finally winning the Chief Minister

post in his own right have contributed to his persona as a superhero.

In the classic film Patala Bhairavi, there is a hugely popular dialogue "Sahasam seyara dimbaka, Rajakumari varinchunura" (Take risk, the Princess will come to you). People admire an ordinary man showing great courage in adverse circumstances and appreciate qualities like fighting spirit in the face of odds, taking on all single-handedly, and not going back on one's word. Jagan has displayed all these qualities and more during his 20-year political career. His guts to take on Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, launching of a new regional party and winning a record 151 seats have made Jagan a self-made

leader as well as a hero in the political arena without anybody scripting it.

Remember, combined AP's former CMs NT Rama Rao and YS Rajasekar Reddy also displayed the same qualities in their political career. Both primarily showed courage beyond normal expectations to challenge the high and the mighty. The same quality in Jagan has put him on a high pedestal before the people today. In politics, every politician must be aware of one thing: what you are is not important as how you are being perceived. Jagan is now perceived as the one-man army fighting many forces -- TDP, JanaSena, BJP alliance, groups promoted by these parties, media houses, and sponsored

NGOs. He is single-handedly managing all the threats and moving forward with a clear vision to win a second term.

This has created a political scenario in the state where Jagan is on the one side and all the others are on the other side. Jagan is telling people that he has been cornered by the rich and sheer exploiters. Going by the swelling crowds at his election meetings, it appears that people are not just sympathetic towards him but are in awe of him. He is slowly instilling the one man vs all, hero vs villain analogy among voters. Going by the milling crowds at his campaign stops and the pervasive adulation for him, Jagan's return to power for a second term is clearly a denouement.



Araku braces for high-stakes battle between women leaders

PNS ■ PADERU

Araku, the sole Scheduled Tribe constituency in Andhra Pradesh, is getting ready for a big battle between two highly educated women leaders for the Lok Sabha seat in the upcoming elections. Representing the Telugu Desam Party (TDP)-led alliance is Kothapalli Geetha, as the first college-educated leader hailing from the region. Geetha's journey began with a stint as deputy collector, she secured a victory bid in the 2014 election and now she aims to retain her seat.

Her opponent, Chetti Tanuja Rani of the Yuvajana Sraniya Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP), introduces a fresh perspective to the political arena. With a wealth of experience as a practising physician as an epidemiologist at Paderu district hospital offers a distinct



Araku constituency, spread over Alluri Sitarama Raju and Parvathipuram districts, struggles with persistent underdevelopment in spite of its large population of 15.39 lakh voters. Limited access to healthcare and lack of experienced doctors remains a pressing concern, often forcing residents to undertake difficult journeys to Visakhapatnam for medical treatment.

advantage in the electoral race. Araku constituency, spread over Alluri Sitarama Raju and Parvathipuram districts, struggles with persistent underdevelopment in spite of its large population of 15.39 lakh voters. Limited access to health-

care and lack of experienced doctors remains a pressing concern, often forcing residents to undertake difficult journeys to Visakhapatnam for medical treatment. Having secured victory in 2014 and 2019, YSRCP boasts

a notable track record of implementing welfare schemes and leading development initiatives in the region. Rani underscores the importance of continuity by advocating for re-election to sustain these programs.

However, Geetha's tenure has been marred by controversy. Allegations of favoritism towards non-tribals and close ties to the mining industry have tarnished her reputation. Legal battles, including a conviction followed by a later relief from the high court, have cast a shadow over her campaign. Despite these challenges, Geetha's campaign has gathered attention for its unusual strategies, such as the deployment of women bouncers for personal security and the presence of 'female celebrities' in tribal villages, which have created curiosity among voters.

Parties gear up as election campaign reaches final stage

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

The Lok Sabha elections along with Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections have reached the final phase in the Telugu states as only 10 days are left for the election campaign. It may be recalled that the polling will be held in Telugu states on May 13. With the campaign of top-level leaders of all parties the political heat is beating the summer heat. Even though not able to read the public pulse in the Telugu states, the major political parties are confident of their victory in the elections.

In Telangana, the Congress, BJP and the BRS are fighting in the Lok Sabha elections. In Andhra Pradesh, YSR Congress, TDP-led alliance consisting of Jana Sena and the BJP, the Congress are fighting in the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections. Surveys conducted by various organisations on the elections in the Telugu states is creating confusion in the political parties.



In Telangana, the voice of surveys is almost the same about the Lok Sabha elections. But regarding Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections the survey organizations have revealed different opinions. Some organisations said that YSR Congress is going to win in the Assembly elections while some organisations said the TDP alliance is going to win. Despite what the surveys say, the fight between the political parties in the Telugu states has become interesting. The top leaders of various political parties are trying to divert the people towards their parties with their campaign.

In Telangana, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy of the Congress, BRS president K Chandrasekhar Rao and from the BJP, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, in addition

to local leaders are the key campaigners. In Andhra Pradesh, Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, TDP president N Chandrababu Naidu and Jana Sena president Pawan Kalyan are the key campaigners.

The elections in the Telugu states for BRS president KCR in Telangana and for TDP president N Chandrababu Naidu in Andhra Pradesh are very important, because personally, KCR and Chandrababu and also their parties' future is depended on the outcome of these elections. In Telangana, in the Lok Sabha elections, the fight is triangular between the Congress, BJP and the BRS.

In Andhra Pradesh, in the Assembly elections and in the Lok Sabha elections also, the main fight is direct between the YSR Congress and the TDP alliance.

Sharmila...

Continued from Page 1

She also questioned the removal of Dr BR Ambedkar's name from a foreign education scheme and the cessation of the land distribution programme. She said SC and ST youths could have made use of the study centres to prepare for competitive exams, but the non-release of funds led to the shutdown of those centres.

Furthermore, she raised concerns over the stalled SC and ST rehabilitation programme in Andhra Pradesh and asked why incumbent MLAs were denied tickets. She questioned why funds were not allocated to study circles and why an MLC involved in a delivery driver's murder is being supported.

She also referred to the increasing attacks, violence, and other crimes against SC and ST people, which resulted in an unprecedented increase in the crime rate in the State in 2021. These questions come amidst Jagan Mohan Reddy's campaign about his government's Navaratna (Nine Gems) programmes.

"After giving a detailed explanation to these questions, Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy can ask for votes from SCs and STs," she added.

Another employee dismissed for participating in poll campaign

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Guntur Municipal Corporation Commissioner and East Assembly Constituency Returning Officer (RO) Kirti Chekuri said that another contract employee was removed from service for participating in the election campaign on Wednesday.

She warned that strict action will be taken against government employees and APCOS employees who participate in the campaigns of political parties.

GMC Outsourcing Worker Garlapati Lakshmi, who participated in the campaign activities of the YSR Congress MLA candidate in Guntur East constituency, was dismissed from her duties.

The Commissioner and RO said that according to the Election Commission regulations, government employees, outsourced employees and workers performing duties in government organisations should not participate in any kind of political party meetings

and campaign activities. Public health worker Garlapati Lakshmi, who recently participated in the election campaign of YSRCP candidate in Guntur East constituency, was immediately dismissed from her duties under the 16th Sanitary Division 140 Ward Secretariat of the Municipal Corporation. Kirti Chekuri made it clear that those who violate the election rules will not be spared and everyone has to follow the rules.

Second...

Continued from Page 1

But now, the condition is so pitiable that people from Chirala and Bapatla have to go to either Hyderabad or Chennai to get their work done. The people of Andhra Pradesh are in such a miserable condition that they cannot say what their capital is," the TDP chief said.

Recalling the measures taken by him to complete Polavaram, he said that this Chief Minister is not utilising the water as the works were executed during the TDP regime. People are eagerly waiting for the polling day to vote for NDA, the TDP chief said, and stated that 10 per cent reservation will be provided for the economically weaker sections in upper castes.

MLC Varudu Kalyani terms TDP manifesto 'deceptive fiction'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

YSRCP MLC Varudu Kalyani has criticised the Telugu Desam Party's (TDP) manifesto, denouncing it as a collection of falsehoods and unfulfilled promises. At a press conference held on Wednesday, Kalyani likened the TDP's manifesto to a work of fiction designed to deceive the public. She accused the party of lacking the resolve to fulfil the commitments they made in their 2019 manifesto and compared TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu's political tactics to those of Joseph Goebbels, the notorious Nazi propagandist.

Kalyani highlighted Chandrababu's track record of unfulfilled promises, specifically pointing out the failure to deliver on commitments such as loan waivers for DWCR women and unemployment benefits. She urged the public, especially students in government schools, to be wary of placing their trust in the TDP manifesto, cautioning that voting based on its promises could lead to disappointment.

Furthermore, Kalyani questioned Chandrababu's silence on important issues like the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, accusing him of betrayal and



insincerity. She called on Chandrababu to engage with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on critical matters such as special status and the setting up of the railway zone in

Visakhapatnam. In contrast, Kalyani commended Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for his development initiatives, citing projects like the YSR Super Speciality Hospital and Kidney Research Centre at Palasa of Srikakulam and ongoing infrastructure developments in Bhogapuram Greenfield Internal Airport, setting up of seaports and fishing harbours. Kalyani attributed these initiatives to the creation of job opportunities and the reduction of migration from northern regions, underscoring YSRCP's commitment to meaningful progress.

BJP distanced itself...

Continued from Page 1

The manifesto release programme was delayed by around four hours. According to reliable sources within the alliance, there was a significant reason for delay. Initially, a large photo of PM Modi was placed there. However, the BJP leaders criticised Chandrababu and Pawan, questioning why Modi's picture was there while he wasn't part of the manifesto. They warned against displaying Modi's photo on the flexis. Chandrababu and Pawan suffered another blow when the BJP leaders said they would not be attending the manifesto release event. Nevertheless, after much negotiation, the BJP leaders finally allowed State co-ordinator Siddharth Singh to attend the event. BJP State unit president D Purandeeswari was absent at the manifesto release programme.

'NDA manifesto is copy of YSRCP's welfare schemes'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP Vijayawada Central MLA candidate Vellampalli Srinivas has severely criticised the NDA alliance for copying YSRCP welfare schemes. He said that, Pawan Kalyan has no party and no identity as he hypothecated Jana Sena to Chandrababu Naidu.

Participating in the election campaign in the Vijayawada Central constituency on Wednesday, he said that many people had put their trust in Pawan supporting Jana Sena for the past 10 years. But Kalyan sold the trust of the leaders and cadres to Chandrababu by hypothecating JS and its flag to the TD chief, becoming a slave to him.

Srinivas asked Chandrababu if there was any difference between the manifestos in 2014 and

2024. He termed the TDP-JSP joint manifesto as nothing but a copy of Jagan Mohan Reddy's schemes as all of Jagan's welfare schemes have been added to it without any shame. He recalled that in 2014, Chandrababu promised a job to every house and further promised dole to the unemployed youth, but utterly failed to implement them. Chandrababu wants to cheat people again with false and impossible promises.

He will treat his manifesto as a scrap of paper, while Jagan Mohan Reddy honours the YSRC manifesto as Bhagavad Gita, Bible and Quran.

Vellampalli Srinivas said that the public believes that Jagan Mohan Reddy will implement the manifesto as he fulfilled 99 per cent of the promises of the 2019 election manifesto.

Land Titling Act: Jagan hits back...

Continued from Page 1

In 59 months, revolutionary changes are taking place in Andhra Pradesh," said Jagan. "Kurukshetra battle is going to take place in 13 days, and I request everyone to remember that these elections will decide the future of your house and the continuation of the schemes for the next five years. If you vote for Jagan in this election, all the schemes will continue, but if you vote for Chandrababu all the schemes will be over."

"The old man (Chandrababu) brazenly uses statements like 'What if Jagan is killed tomorrow?', if we ask questions like why people should vote for Chandrababu. But he is responding with such statements. What is the state of mind this man is going through?" asked CM Jagan.

"Grabbing chairs, backstabbing, lies, betrayal, and murders are the Chandrababu's politics," he added.

"Who killed his own father-in-law and many other important leaders like Vangaveeti Mohan Ranga, Dasarathram, and IAS Raghavendra of the TDP through conspiracies? Now, who is saying that there is nothing wrong with killing Jagan? That's what I am asking in front of you," said Jagan.

"Chandrababu, I will not die! In the last 59 months, the people of the State that I have supported with various welfare schemes will save their leader," asserted the CM.

"Chandrababu prevented people from getting their pensions at home. Nowhere in the world is the politics so miserable than Andhra Pradesh because of Chandrababu," said Jagan.

Displaying the TDP's 2014 manifesto pamphlet, which was sent to every home with the signature of three alliance partner leaders, he said, "Farmers' loan waiver of Rs 87,612, loan waiver for savings societies, Rs 25,000 deposit if a girl child is born under the Mahalakshmi scheme, and Rs 2,000 as unemployment benefits every month. Did any one of these things happen?"

Further the promises of three cents of land, BC sub plan with Rs.10,000 crore, Women Protection Force, develop the State on par with Singapore, and hi-tech city in all the districts were not fulfilled by Chandrababu, said Jagan.

"Again they are back to cheating again with promises like Super Six. We are at war with people who lie and deceive people."

Expert panel probe...

Continued from Page 1

It claimed that UK-headquartered pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca has said that its vaccine against COVID-19, which was made under licence in India as Covishield, could cause low platelet counts and formation of blood clots in "very rare" cases.

The application, filed by advocate Vishal Tiwari, also sought a direction to the Centre to compensate those who are severely disabled or have died because of any side effects of the vaccine administered to them during Covid.

It claimed AstraZeneca has accepted a link between the vaccine and Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome, a medical condition characterised by abnormally low levels of platelets and the formation of blood clots.

"After Covid-19, there has been increase in the cases of death due to heart attack and sudden collapse of persons. There have been number of cases of heart attack even in youngsters. Now, after the document filed in UK court by the developer of Covishield, we are compelled to think upon the risk and hazardous consequences of Covishield vaccine which have been administered to the citizens at a large number," the application said. It said the government is required to take immediate steps for the sake of safety and health of citizens and the issue has to be looked upon by the Centre on priority so that in future, no risk may occur regarding the health and life of Indian citizens.

Vax that failed to shield...

Continued from Page 1

In 2021, the 'rushed rollout' was criticised by many in the scientific community and questions were raised about the propriety of rushing vaccine administration. In just three years, AstraZeneca faces class action suits over claims that its vaccine caused serious injury or death in dozens of cases.

For, in legal documents submitted to the UK High Court in February, the pharmaceutical giant accepted that its COVID-19 vaccine "can, in very rare cases, cause TTS".

"It is admitted that the AZ vaccine can, in very rare cases, cause TTS. The causal mechanism is not known," the

company said in the document, which has since shaken the world due to its grave implications.

Curiously, the company added in the document: "Further, TTS can also occur in the absence of the AZ vaccine (or any vaccine). Causation in any individual case will be a matter for expert evidence."

Lawyers for the pharma giant, in a letter of response sent in May last year, had previously contended: "We do not accept that TTS is caused by the vaccine at a generic level". Hence, the pharma giant's recent statement is seen as a 'confession'.

Medical claims against the company According to media reports, the first case against the company was lodged by

Jamie Scott, father of two, who was 44 when he received the vaccine. Ten days after the jab, Scott complained of tiredness and started vomiting. Soon after, his speech got impaired, and he had to be taken to the hospital, where physicians diagnosed him with a suspected case of Vaccine-induced Immune Thrombocytopenia and Thrombosis (VITT). Although he survived the ordeal, he was left with a permanent brain injury.

Apart from the one relating to Scott, 51 other cases have been lodged against the company, with victims and grieving relatives seeking damages estimated to be worth up to £100 million (\$125.36 million).

'Who would be responsible for heart attack...'

Continued from Page 1

UK-headquartered pharma giant AstraZeneca has admitted that in "very rare cases", its COVID-19 vaccine, which is known as Vaxzevria in Europe and Covishield in India, can cause a blood clot-related side effect but the causal link is unknown, according to court papers being quoted in the UK media.

In India, the AstraZeneca vaccine was manufactured by the Serum Institute of India. Attacking the ruling BJP over the issue, SP national general secretary Shivpal Yadav said, "It has been exposed now that they have taken commission in vaccines too. Low

quality vaccines and medicines were given to the people," Shivpal Yadav was talking to reporters in UP's Etah.

Dimple Yadav, wife of SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, said people were "forcibly" administered Covid vaccines in the country.

"A donation of Rs 200-300 crore was taken (by the BJP) and they (company) were given permission to sell the vaccine. People were forcibly administered vaccines. The corruption in manufacturing the vaccine has come to the fore due to which people are dying now," said Dimple Yadav, who is the SP candidate from Mainpuri Lok Sabha seat.

"Akhilesh ji had said that we would not get the vaccine administered because till then the vaccine was not tested. Now, the number of heart attacks has increased in the country and people are suffering from serious diseases due to this haste," she told reporters in Etah.

The Daily Telegraph reported that in a legal document submitted to the High Court in London in February for a group action brought by 51 claimants, AstraZeneca admitted that the vaccine developed with the University of Oxford to protect against COVID-19 may cause Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS) in "very rare cases".

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Observers stress need to keep vigil on campaign spending

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

Special Election Expenditure Observers Saravana Kumar, Komal Jeet Meena, and Naveen Kumar Soni underscored the need for meticulous oversight of candidates' day-to-day campaign expenses and stressed the need for accurate record-keeping and timely reporting. Addressing the attendees during a District Coordination Committee held on Wednesday, the nodal officers highlighted the necessity of heightened checks, particularly as the final list of candidates vying for their seats approaches completion. They emphasised the necessity of ensuring transparency without causing inconvenience to the public. Stressing the importance of impartiality, expenditure observer Saravana Kumar urged election staff to meticulously document candidates' expenses, including campaign



materials, gifts, and other outlays. Notably, special attention was urged towards monitoring suspicious cash transactions, large deposits, and the sale and transportation of liquor. To facilitate transparency and accountability, various measures were proposed, including the publication of toll-free complaint

numbers across media platforms, intensified vehicle checks by flying squads and static surveillance teams, and stringent actions by the district excise department to curb the circulation of illicit liquor during the electoral process. Additionally, GST personnel were advised to extend

their scrutiny beyond tax-related matters, ensuring that bulk purchases intended for voter distribution are thoroughly examined. The meeting saw the presence of several officials, including CPO Prasanna Lakshmi, District Audit Officer Sultana, GST Assistant Commissioner Rani Mohan, and others.

Second phase of randomization of EVMs held transparently: DC

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector and District Election Officer V Prasanna Venkatesh has made it clear that the second phase of randomization



The second phase of randomization of EVMs was held in the presence of representatives of various political parties and election general observers Dr. Krishnakanth Pathak on Wednesday. According to the guidelines set by the Election Commission, the process of randomization of EVM machines was conducted in a transparent manner in the presence of representatives of political

parties, the Collector said. Randomization of EVMs has been completed in the seven assembly constituencies in Eluru district, the Collector said, adding that there are 1,744 polling stations in the Eluru Parliamentary Constituency

along with one additional polling station. District Revenue Officer D Pushpamani, Nodal Officer K Venkateswara Rao and District NIC Officer Sharma were among those who attended the programme.

Amid election fever, ganja trade takes center-stage

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As the election fervour escalates, ganja trade has emerged as a central issue, featuring prominently in political rallies where discussions about the drug are prevalent. The TDP-BJP-JSP alliance and the Congress have been relentless in their accusations against the YSRCP government, branding Visakhapatnam as the "ganja capital".

Leaders like TDP president N Chandrababu Naidu and AP Congress president YS Sharmila have pledged to eradicate ganja from the State, addressing the concerning rise in cannabis addiction. As the election approaches, the opposition intensifies its criticism, highlighting the alleged surge not only in ganja but also in heroin and cocaine availability. They criticised the government's failure to address fundamental issues like providing safe drinking water to villages.

Despite initiatives like Operation Parivartana aimed at curbing ganja supply, the problem persists, mainly from the Andhra Odisha Border (AOB). Enforcement agencies have seized huge quantities of ganja, notably the Sheelavathi variety, comprising over 60 per cent of the total seized. Various strains of cannabis, including Sheelavathi, Idukki Gold, Mysore Mango, and Malana Cream, hold different regional origins and flavours. However, Sheelavathi, predominantly sourced from the Eastern Ghats' Forest regions spreading over AOB, has become dominant in illegal drug markets.

Social activists G Srinivas and K Surendra highlight the dangerous shift of unemployed youth towards drug peddling, emphasising the urgent need to combat ganja abuse for the sake of the youth's future.

Food Safety officials raid Swiggy Instamart, expired food items seized

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Food Safety officials, on Tuesday midnight, conducted surprise raids on the Swiggy Instamart located near Alankar in Vijayawada and seized expired food items. Milk packets, Ice cream, biscuits, bread and other food items were seized.

Food Safety Officer Shaik Gouse Mohiddheen and Inspector Ramesh found that there was no licence for Swiggy Instamart. Also, this business has been happening for the past four months in Vijayawada. After receiving orders from people online, the Swiggy Instamart supplies these expired food items for them.

In a statement, Shaik Gouse Mohiddheen said that they filed a case against Swiggy Instamart for violating food safety norms.

YSRCP, Alliance manifestos disappointed: Shivaji

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) Vice-president Kolanukonda Shivaji here on Wednesday expressed disappointment at the election manifestos of YSRCP and the TDP-JSP-BJP.

Talking to the media here, he said that the TDP-JSP-BJP alliance failed to formulate a common manifesto satisfactorily. The BJP claimed that it is no way concerned with the manifesto released by the TDP-JSP, he pointed out. Shivaji doubted whether the BJP led Central government would cooperate with the alliance to implement the manifesto, if it is voted to power. "Will the BJP led Centre cooperate with the TDP-JSP to implement the manifesto? Without the cooperation of the

Central government, the state government can not implement the assurances of the manifesto. The way the BJP is responding to the common manifesto now raises doubts," the Congress leader stated.

There is vehement opposition against the BJP among the people of AP. Despite knowing the same, Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is indirectly cooperating to the BJP led Centre while Naidu aligned with the BJP.

"Neither the YSRCP nor the TDP-JSP mentioned the 'Special Category Status (SCS)' issue in their manifesto. If SCS is granted, industries will be established which helps the government to increase its financial resources," Kolanukonda Shivaji observed.

Police Observer conducts surprise inspection of inter-state check-posts



NTR District General Observer Narinder Singh Bali inspecting the polling station at Gollapudi near Vijayawada on Wednesday



NTR District Police Observer Preetinder Singh verifying the records at the Tiruvuru inter-State check-posts between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana States on Wednesday

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Election Police Observer for NTR district, Preetinder Singh, on Wednesday, conducted a surprise inspection of the inter-State checkposts between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, at Tiruvuru and Morusumilli. He verified the records at check-posts.

He gave strict instructions to the staff to prevent illegal transportation of money,

liquor, drugs, inducements, freebies, and other valuable goods.

Officials and staff who are deployed at the check-posts should conduct checking on both sides of moving vehicles. Money more than Rs.50,000 carried by the people without proper documents should be seized and higher officials should be informed, he said. Later, he instructed the staff to be vigilant round the clock

at all inter-State and inter-district check-posts. He made it clear that no vehicle should be exempted from checking.

Meanwhile, the General Observer for Mylavaram, Nandigama and Jaggayapet Assembly constituencies, Narinder Singh Bali, inspected polling stations at Gollapudi, Nallakunta, Jakkampudi, YSR Colony and Kothuru Tadepalli. He checked the lighting in the rooms,

drinking water facility, electricity, toilets, tents etc.

He requested all voters in the polling station limits to cast their votes. He explained the importance of voting and duties of the voters.

Later, Bali visited Dr NTTPS at Ibrahimpatnam and convened a meeting with officials. Vijayawada Rural Tahsildar Jahnavi and other officials accompanied Narinder Singh Bali.



Modern medical equipment donated to Visakha Eye Hospital

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a philanthropic gesture, the 1951 batch alumnus of Andhra Medical College, Dr Rednam Venkata Krishna Rao, made a significant contribution to the Visakha Government Regional Eye Hospital. Valued at Rs 41 lakh, the donation comprises modern medical equipment aimed at bolstering patient care and facilitating the training of postgraduate students. The donation is dedicated to the memory of Dr. In memory of Maddimishetti Amritavalli Thayaramma, an alumna of Andhra Medical College.

The highlight of the donation is the acquisition of a state-of-the-art surgical microscope, the OPMI LUMERA 300 STD with accessories, aimed at enhancing surgical precision and facilitating advanced procedures. This equipment is expected to significantly improve medical services at the hospital while also serving as a valuable resource for teaching surgical skills to postgraduate students. The official handover ceremony of this equipment took place in the presence of District Collector Dr. A. Mallikarjuna, underscoring the significance of this philanthropic endeavor.

Voters can avail of postal ballot facility during May 4-8: Collector

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The District Collector of Krishna, DK Balaji, has released the list of Postal Ballot Facilitation Centres for the Machilipatnam parliamentary constituency. Polling officials, employees, drivers, police staff, and videographers, among others, have been instructed to cast their votes through postal ballots at their respective Assembly constituency headquarters.

Those who have applied for postal ballots can vote from May 4 to May 6. If anyone is unable to vote on these days, they can cast their vote at the Returning Offices on May 7 and 8.

Eight facilitation centres have been arranged for casting votes through postal ballots in the



Krishna District Collector DK Balaji

Machilipatnam Lok Sabha constituency. For the voters of Gannavaram Assembly constituency, the facilitation centre is arranged at ZPHS (Boys), Gannavaram.

The facilitation centres for other Assembly constituencies:

Gudivada - VKRVNB Engineering College, Gudivada; Pedana - Vasavi Institute of Engineering and Technology, Nandamuru; Machilipatnam - Noble College, Machilipatnam; Avanigadda - Government Degree College, Avanigadda; Pamarru - SKRR ZPH School, Pamarru; Penamaluru - ZPHS, Penamaluru.

Another centre has been arranged at Panduranga Municipal Corporation High School, Chilakalapudi, for voters from other districts. The Collector has advised POs, APOs and MOs to cast their votes on May 4, while the OPOs can avail of the postal ballot facility on May 5. Police personnel, AVES, drivers, videographers, private individuals, and others can avail of the facility on May 6.

Women employees felicitated on International Workers Day

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

South Central Railway Women's Welfare Organisation (SCRWVO), Vijayawada, felicitated 12 Group-D women employees belonging to various departments on the occasion of International Workers Day, at Vijayawada on Wednesday.

Dr Varsha Patil, president, SCRWVO, stated that they conducted the felicitation programme to mark International Workers Day (May Day) and to express heartfelt gratitude and warm

appreciation towards the women employees for rendering invaluable and excellent services in ensuring smooth functioning and aiding in its day-to-day activities.

Dr Varsha Patil said that Group-D employees are the real heroes, who work behind the scenes to keep Indian Railways running smoothly. "The Group-D staff play a pivotal role in the image building of the Indian Railways and it is our responsibility to recognise the good work done by the staff and boost their morale," she said.

She highlighted the importance of May Day and said that it serves as a reminder of the long-standing fight for workers' rights, fair wages, and improved working conditions. Dr. Varsha Patil thanked the women employees for their tireless efforts and dedication towards their duty. The 12 Group-D employees were honoured with appreciation certificates and gifts for their hard work and commitment on the occasion. SCRWVO executive team and other officials were present.

Format C-1
(for candidate to publish in Newspapers, TV)

DECLARATION ABOUT CRIMINAL CASES
(As per the judgment dated 25th September court in WP (Civil) No 536 of 2011 (Public Interest & ors Vs Union of India)

Name and address of candidate: I VEERA VENKATA RUDRARAJU GIDUGU * son/daughter/wife of LATE SURYARAO, age 55 years, resident of D No 3-3-70/3, Krishna Rao Street, K Agraharam, Amalapuram - 533 201, Dr B R Ambedkar Konaseema Dist.,

Name of Election: General Election for the House of Lok-Sabha (Parliament)

Name of Constituency: 8 - Rajamahendravaram Parliament Segment

I VEERA VENKATA RUDRARAJU GIDUGU * son/daughter/wife of LATE SURYARAO, age 55 years, resident of D.No. 3-3-70/3, Krishna Rao Street, K Agraharam, Amalapuram - 533 201, Dr B R Ambedkar Konaseema Dist., a candidate for the above mentioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents:

Sl. No.	Pending Criminal cases			Details about cases conviction for criminal offences	
	Name of Court	Case No and Status of Case	Section(s) of Acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)	Name of court & date(s) of order(s)	Description of offence(s) & punishment imposed
1	II Additional Junior Civil judge cum Judicial First Class Magistrate, Mangalagiri	Cr NO 95 of 2024 on 22-02-2024 Pending investigation	151 crpc	Nil	Nil

Sd/-
Veera Venkata Rudraraju Gidugu

Format C-1
(for Candidate to publish in Newspapers, TV)

Declaration about criminal cases
(As per the judgment dated 25th September, 2018, of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No.536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)

Name and address of candidate: Magbool B S, Door No. 9-160-4, Madanapalli Road, Kadiri, Sri Sathya Sai District, Andhra Pradesh - 515 591.

Name of political party : Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party
(Independent candidates should write "Independent" here)

Name of Election : General Elections HOP / APLA - 2024

Name of Constituency: 161 - Kadiri Assembly Constituency

I Magbool B S (name of candidate) a candidate for the above mentioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents:

Sl. No.	Pending Criminal cases			Details about cases conviction for criminal offences	
	Name of Court	Case No and Status of Case	Section(s) of Acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)	Name of court & date(s) of order(s)	Description of offence(s) & punishment imposed
1	Not applicable	Cr.No. 344/2023 of Kadiri Town Police Station	Sec.188, 341 r/w 34 IPC and Sec.3 of Public Property Damage Act; (1) Disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant; (2) Wrongful restraint; (3) Acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention; (4) Mischief of causing damage to public property.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

*** In the case of election to Council of States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of constituency.**

Note: (i) Details should be given separately for each in separate rows.
(ii) The matter in newspapers should be in font size of atleast 12.

Sd/-
Magbool B S

Sharmila says she will become Union Minister, if voted to power

PNS ■ KADAPA

APCC President YS Sharmila has claimed that she will become the Union Minister, if she is elected to Lok Sabha and the Congress led INDI bloc is voted to power at the Centre.

Addressing an election meeting in Badvel on Wednesday, she said that if the INDI Alliance is voted to power at the Centre and she is elected to Lok Sabha from Kadapa, she would be inducted into the Union Cabinet and she would strive to get Special Category Status to AP.

Questioning how YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will be the heir of YS Rajasekhara Reddy, Sharmila slammed that Jagan Reddy did not fulfill the aspi-



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like situation was created to prevent the arrest of Avinash Reddy in Viveka's murder case. She vehemently objected to giving ticket to Viveka murder case accused YS Avinash Reddy.

YS Rajasekhara Reddy and his brother YS Vivekananda Reddy were elected to Lok Sabha from Kadapa and now YSR daughter is contesting, she said and wooed the voters to elect her.

Addressing an election meeting in Jammalamadugu, she said that Jagan Reddy and Chandrababu Naidu are two eyes of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Jagan Reddy and Naidu compromised with the state interests and they have never demanded for SCS, she lashed out.

Addressing another election meeting in Porumamilla, she has claimed that there was a Rs 40 crore deal in the murder YS Vivekananda Reddy. "We believed YS Avinash Reddy's conspiracy in Viveka's murder, only after the CBI showed the evidence," she said, alleging that a curfew-

like situation was created to prevent the arrest of Avinash Reddy in Viveka's murder case. She vehemently objected to giving ticket to Viveka murder case accused YS Avinash Reddy.

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Jagan Reddy and Naidu compromised with the state interests and they have never demanded for SCS, she lashed out.



Bharat Ram calls upon people not to trust Naidu's manifesto

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

YSRCP MP and MLA candidate Margani Bharat Ram appealed to the people not to trust the assurances given by Chandrababu Naidu in the election manifesto.

Addressing a press conference here on Wednesday, Chandrababu Naidu tried to lure voters with false assurances in his manifesto. "Naidu has never fulfilled his assurances after coming to power. Naidu makes promises only to tempt voters and he forgets

after coming to power. People should not trust the assurances of Naidu and should not vote for the TDP," Bharam Ram said.

Bharam Ram pointed out that Naidu assured a complete agriculture loan waiver in 2014 but did not fulfill the same as assured. He was also assured of a DWCR loan waiver but failed to fulfill the same after coming to power, he criticised.

"Naidu differed with the BJP in 2018 and exited from the NDA. Now he again

joined the NDA. Though Naidu has forgotten this, the people of the state have not forgotten. Naidu has lost credibility," Bharat Ram lashed out.

The BJP also disowned the manifesto unveiled by Naidu, he recalled. He predicted the defeat of TDP in the forthcoming elections. RUDA Chairman R Surya Prakash Rao, party observer R Ramachandra Rao and city president Adapa Srihari were among those who were present.

Jagan Reddy was given one chance, but he misused it: PK

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

Jana Sena chief K Pawan Kalyan has said that YS Jagan Mohan Reddy asked the people to give him one chance to rule the state. Trusting him, the people have given him one chance but he misused it, he added.

Addressing a huge election meeting at Atchutapuram on Wednesday, Pawan Kalyan said on being given one chance to rule the state, Jagan Reddy ruined the state.



He criticized that the Jagan Reddy headed government is bringing the most controversial Land Titling Act which would create many problems to the land owners and described the Land Titling Act as 'Land Grabbing Act'.

Now fearing the anger of people on the controversial Land Titling Act, the YSRCP leaders are trying to put the blame on the Centre stating that the Act was brought by the Centre. "The YSRCP leaders have eyed precious land and

wanted to usurp them. That is why they are being a controversial act," he lambasted.

"We will take steps to curb the ganja menace within 100 days of assuming power. We will do justice to the SEZ farmers," he promised.

Underlining the need of putting the state on the development path, Pawan Kalyan wooed the voters to elect the alliance candidates. Pawan Kalyan assured of fulfilling all the promises of their election manifesto.

Severe heat wave conditions likely to prevail in R'seema



PNS ■ GUNTUR

Severe heat wave conditions are likely to prevail at isolated places in Rayalaseema during the next three days, Meteorological Centre said on Wednesday.

A weather report here, it said that heat wave conditions are likely to prevail at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and South Coastal Andhra Pradesh during the next three days. Thunderstorms accompanied by lightning are likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema on May 4 and 5. Hot, humid and uncomfortable weather is likely to prevail at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the same period.

Micro Observers' role is vital in conducting elections: DC

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari district Collector Sumit Kumar told the Micro Observers to play a vital role in conducting elections in a transparent manner.

A one-day training programme was organized for the Micro Observers in the Vishnu College auditorium here on Wednesday. Collector and district Election Officer Sumit Kumar, election general observers M Deepa and L Nirmal Raj addressed the Micro Observers.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector and District Election Officer Sumit Kumar told the Micro Observers, who attended the training programme, about the duties they have to perform to conduct the elections and gave them several instructions. He told them that the Central Election Commission is taking steps to conduct the general elections with utmost priority and transparency.

In the backdrop, the Central Election Commission has appointed IAS officers M Deepa and L Nirmal Raj as district election Observers. Also, the Micro Observers will have to perform their duties following the central election guidelines.

The Collector said that only banking and other Central



government employees have been appointed as micro-observers as per the rules of the Election Commission, adding that conducting of polling should be carefully examined without the contacts, relationships and involvement of local people and political leaders.

The Collector said that the details of their assignment of duties and at which polling centers they have to perform duties would be informed to the micro observers before the polling date. The District Collector suggested that every aspect of election duty should be carefully considered and carried out with diligence and

responsibility by following the things learned in the training program.

District Election General Observers M Deepa and L Nirmal Raj said that the micro observers attending the duties on the polling day should fearlessly perform their duties without being under any pressure. Before attending the election duties, they should have full awareness on all aspects related to the conduct of the polling process at the polling station. Nodal officer KCH Appa Rao and Lead bank manager Nagendra Prasad were among those who attended the training programme.

Hyd should be freed from Razakars: Shah

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Union Home Minister Amit Shah stated that Hyderabad should be freed from Razakar by people casting their votes to BJP candidate Madhavilatha. He said that the Razakar has been representing Hyderabad for the last 40 years. He appealed to the

people whether they may be Hindus or Muslims; they should cast their vote freely.

While participating in a road show in the Old City from Lal Darwaja Mahankali temple to Sudha Talkies on Wednesday night, Amit Shah said that there is no need to fear of anyone.



He said, "We will make Narendra Modi as PM for the third time. Ensure the victory of the BJP in 400 seats. No need to fear in Hyderabad. Nobody cares to touch others. Every voter should cast their vote on BJP's lotus button to ensure the victory of BJP candidate Madhavilatha."

SP inspects problematic polling stations



PNS ■ KAKINADA

Superintendent of police S Sathish Kumar on Wednesday inspected sensitive polling centers in China Jaggampeta and Thatiparthi villages of Gollaprolu mandal, which forms part of Pithapuram Assembly constituency.

He interacted with the people advising them on the need for exercising their franchise in a peaceful atmosphere. The SP assured them that adequate police bandobast was arranged to

ensure that no untoward incident takes place during the election.

The SP also interacted with the local youth on their problems. He later reviewed the situation in the Gollaprolu mandal and instructed the officials to take all steps to maintain law and order paving the way that voters use their voting right freely. The latter visited problematic polling stations at Snehapuram and Rameswaram in Pedapudi mandal.

Format C-1
(for candidate to publish in Newspapers, TV)

Declaration about criminal cases
(As per the judgment dated 25th September, 2018, of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)

Name and address of candidate: YEDUGURI SANDINTI AVINASH REDDY, S/o YS. Bhaskar Reddy, R/o D.No.3/9/76, Pulivendula Polymers, Near Venkatappa School Main Branch, Bakarapuram, Pulivendula, YSR Kadapa District - 516390.

Name of political party: YUVAJANA SRAMIKA RYTHU CONGRESS PARTY

Name of Election 21 KADAPA PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY GENERAL ELECTIONS 2024 (name of candidate), a candidate for the above mentioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents:

(A) Pending criminal cases

Sl. No.	Name of Court	Case No. and date	Status of case(s)	Section(s) of Acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)
1	Principle Special Sessions Judge for CBI Cases Nampally, Hyderabad, Telangana State	RC- (S)/2020/CBI/SC-III/ NEW DELHI, (crime No.84/2019) dated 15.03.2019, Pulivendula Police Station U/G, YSR District) SC.No.1/2023	For the compliance of U/Sec 207 Cr.P.C	Sec 120-B, IPC, Punishment for Criminal Conspiracy, Sec 302 IPC Punishment for Murder, Sec.201 IPC punishment for Disappearance of evidence of offence, or Giving false information to screen offender
2	Hon'ble Judicial Magistrate of 1st Class Mydukur. YSR District AP	Crime No.418 of 2018 dated 08.08.2018	Charge sheet is not filed	U/Sec 341 IPC Punishment for wrongful restrain, U/sec 188 of IPC disobedience to orders duly promulgated by public servants, and U/sec 34 of IPC acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention.

(B) Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences : NO

Sl. No.	Name of the Court and dates of orders	Description of offence & punishment imposed	Maximum punishment imposed
	NIL	NIL	NIL

House of people 21 Kadapa Parliamentary constituency

Sd/-
Yeduguri Sandinti Avinash Reddy

Format C-1
(for candidate to publish in Newspapers, TV)

Declaration about criminal cases
(As per the judgment dated 25* September, 2018, of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)

Name and address of candidate: RAGHURAMI REDDY SETTIPALLY, Door No.2/84-A, A. Nakkaladinne Village, Chapadu Mandal, YSR District, Andhra Pradesh.

Name of political party: YUVAJANA SRAMIKA RYTHU CONGRESS PARTY
(Independent candidates should write "Independent" here)

Name of Election: Legislative Assembly
Name of Constituency: 133 - Mydukur Assembly Constituency

I, RAGHURAMI REDDY SETTIPALLY, a candidate for the abovementioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents:

(A) Pending criminal cases

Sl. No.	Name of Court	Case No. and date	Status of case(s)	Section(s) of Acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)
1	Judicial Magistrate of First Class, Mydukur	FIR No. 436 dated 21.08.2018	Final Report filed	143, 186, 153, 353, 355, 506 r/w 149 of IPC
2	Judicial Magistrate of First Class, Mydukur	FIR No. 191, dated 22.06.2016	Final Report filed	189, 506 r/w 34 of IPC
3	STC No.1/2023, Spl. Court for the Trial of Criminal Cases relating to Elected M.P.s and M.L.As for the state of A.P.,	Crime No.8/2022, RPF, Kadapa	Trial started	146, 147, 172-A of Railways Act
4	Judicial Magistrate of First Class, Mydukur	FIR No. 418, dated 8-8-2018	Final Report filed	341, 188 r/w 34 of IPC

(B) Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences

Sl. No.	Name of Court & date(s) of order(s)	Description of offence(s) & punishment imposed	Maximum punishment imposed
1	Judicial Magistrate of First Class, Kadapa, 18-11-2014	Wrongfully restraining any person, fine of Rs.400/-	Fine of Rs.400/-

*In the case of election to Council of States or election to Legislative Council by MLAS, mention the election concerned in place of name of constituency

Note: 1. The particulars regarding criminal cases pending against the candidate shall be in bold letters.
2. The matter in newspapers shall be published in font size of at least 12.

Sd/-
Raghurami Reddy Settippally

INDIA CORNER

Coast guard exam paper leak gang busted in Kota, 6 held: Police

With the arrest of six people, police in Rajasthan's Kota have claimed to have busted a gang that was allegedly involved in the Indian Coast Guard exam question paper leak incident. The arrests were made on Tuesday. A car and mobile phones containing the question paper of the exam held on April 20 and April 22 as well as admit cards of aspirants were seized from the possession of the accused, police said. The gang used to charge anywhere between Rs 10 and Rs 15 lakh for leaking the paper and solving the questions through remote access, they added. The six accused were produced before a court on Tuesday and sent to police custody till May 5. On April 23, the Kota city police was tipped-off about suspicious people travelling in a car near the Rajrani Tower, IT Park. The police was also informed that the suspects were likely to be involved in the paper leak incident, Superintendent of Police (Kota city) Amrita Duhan said in a press release.



Four children drown while bathing in Saryu Canal in UP's Bahraich

Four children drowned while taking a bath in the Saryu Canal here on Wednesday, police said. The police identified the victims as Choini (10) her sister Mahi (14) along with Aanchal (12), and Rahul (13), residents of the same village. Kotawali Nanpara SHO Rakesh Kumar Singh said the children had gone to take a bath in the Saryu Canal in front of the Gram Sabha Girdharpur. "While bathing, all the children were swept away with the strong current of the canal," the SHO said. Following this, the police rushed to the spot and fished out the bodies of Choini and Aanchal on Wednesday afternoon. Rahul was rescued by the divers from the canal but he succumbed on his way to the hospital, he said. Mahi's body was also recovered later in the evening, he said. The bodies were sent for post-mortem. Further investigation is underway, he added.



Woman with no cash in hand contests LS polls in Odisha

A 25-year-old woman with no cash in hand and a bank deposit of only Rs 20,625 is contesting the Lok Sabha elections from Odisha's Koraput Lok Sabha seat, according to her affidavit. An art graduate, Pramila Pujari, was fielded by the Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist). "I don't have enough money to compete with wealthy candidates in the fray, but my confidence is high. I will have an impact in the election," Pujari said. A daily labourer by profession, she claimed that voters from her area would contribute to her campaign. Despite financial constraints, the SUCI(C) has arranged a vehicle for her campaign, Pujari said. "I will hold door-to-door outreach programmes and organise small gatherings across clusters of villages," she said. Pujari said she was associated with the party's student wing, the All India Democratic Student Organisation, since 2016.



BJP will not remove quota, nor will it allow Cong to do so: Shah

PNS ■ KORBHA

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said the Bharatiya Janata Party will never do away with reservations for Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Class, nor will it allow the Congress to do so. Congress' tactic was to lie repeatedly, he alleged, and advised its president Mallikarjun Kharge not to speak lies for the sake of the "family" (referring to Nehru-Gandhi family) as eventually he would be blamed for its loss in the Lok Sabha elections. Speaking at a rally at Katghora town in Chhattisgarh in support of Saroj Pandey, the BJP candidate from the Korba constituency, Shah accused Congress of nurturing terrorism and Naxalism to win elections. "Congress has one formula -- speak lies loudly, publicly and keep repeating them. They say if (prime minister Narendra) Modi gets majority



for the third term, he will scrap reservations. They circulated my fake video. We have been in power for ten years, Modi did not remove reservations, nor will he ever do it," the BJP leader said. The PM used his majority in Parliament to scrap Article 370 and ban triple talaq, construct the Ram temple in Ayodhya and introduce the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, he said. "I have come to give you Modi's guarantee that as long as there is even one BJP MP in

Parliament, we will neither remove the reservation for STs, SCs and OBCs, nor will we allow the Congress party to do so," the Union minister added. Targeting Congress president Kharge over his statement at a rally in Janjgir-Champa on Tuesday, Shah said, "Kharge ji says, if Modi comes to power, the poor will be destroyed. I want to ask Kharge ji, didn't 25 crore poor people benefit when they were brought out of poverty? Isn't giving ration to 80 crore poor people beneficial for the poor? Didn't the poor

benefit due to the construction of 12 crore toilets, giving of gas cylinders to our mothers, providing tap water in their homes and treating seven crore people (through health insurance)?" Why the Congress president was lying for the family, he further said. "Kharge ji, you do not know that they do not care for anyone....As Congress suffers a defeat on June 4 (when results of the Lok Sabha elections will be announced), the brother-sister duo will remain safe, but the 80-year-old Kharge ji will be blamed," Shah said, in apparent swipe at Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. If Modi gets another term as prime minister, Naxalism will be uprooted from Chhattisgarh in two years, the home minister vowed. Accusing the previous Bhupesh Baghel-led Congress government of encouraging Naxalism, he said after the BJP came to power, 95 Naxalites were eliminated.

Prez Murmu pays obeisance at Ram temple in Ayodhya

PNS ■ AYODHYA (UP)

President Droupadi Murmu paid obeisance and performed "aarti" at the Ram temple in Ayodhya on Wednesday. Before visiting the temple in the evening, Murmu took part in the Sarayu "aarti" and performed puja at the Hanumangarhi temple here. "President Droupadi Murmu had darshan and performed puja at Shri Hanuman Garhi temple, Ayodhya," the president's official X handle said in a post on the microblogging platform. Earlier in the day, the president was received at the Ayodhya airport by Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel. This was Murmu's first visit to Ayodhya since the newly-built Ram temple's consecration ceremony was held on January 22.



People don't know judges don't have weekend holidays: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said people who criticise that the apex court and high courts take long vacations don't understand that judges don't have holidays even on Saturdays and Sundays. The observation came from a bench of justices B R Gavai and Sandeep Mehta after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said those who criticise that top court and high courts take long vacations does not know how judges work. The issue of vacation came up after the apex court, which posted the West Bengal matter for arguments on Thursday, told both the sides that arguments be concluded before the apex court goes on summer vacation, which will commence from May 20. "All those who criticise that Supreme Court and high courts are on long vacations, they don't know how judges work," Mehta told the bench when it was hearing a lawsuit filed by the West Bengal gov-



ernment that has accused the CBI of going ahead with its probe without securing the prerequisite nod from the state. "People who criticise, they don't understand that we don't have holidays on Saturdays and Sundays. There are other assignments, conferences," Justice Gavai said. Mehta, who was appearing for the Centre in the West Bengal matter, told the bench that judges of the top court deal with 50-60 cases on a daily basis and they deserve vaca-

tion. "It is the toughest job in the country," senior advocate Kapil Sibal, who was also appearing in the matter, said. The bench said during vacations, the judges write judgements in cases heard by them. "Long judgements have to be written during vacations," the bench observed. It said the judgement in the matter can then be written during the summer vacation. "People who do not know the system, criticise it," Mehta said.

FIRING OUTSIDE SALMAN KHAN'S HOUSE

Accused 'ends life' in police custody

PNS ■ MUMBAI

A 32-year-old man arrested in the case related to the firing outside Bollywood actor Salman Khan's residence here allegedly hanged himself in the police lock-up on Wednesday, an official said. Anuj Thapan, the deceased, was accused of supplying weapons to the shooters who opened fire outside Khan's residence in Bandra on April 14 and arrested by the Mumbai crime branch. He hanged himself with a piece of bedsheet in the toilet of the first-floor lock-up, located in the crime branch's building inside the police commissioner's office compound in south Mumbai, the official said. The incident came to light at 1 pm when a crime branch official noticed that Thapan was in the toilet for a long

time. When the door was forced open, he was found hanging from the toilet's window, the official said. He was rushed to the nearby state-run Gokuldas Tejpal hospital where he was declared dead during treatment, the official said. There were five other accused in the lock-up at the time of the incident. Two co-accused of Thapan in the firing case had been taken out for investigation, the official said. Thapan and Sonu Kumar Bishnoi (32) were arrested by a crime branch team from Fazilka in Punjab on April 26. The two had allegedly supplied weapons to shooters Sagar Pal and Vicky Gupta for firing at Salman Khan's residence. As per the police, the duo visited Panvel near Mumbai on March 15 to deliver two country-made pistols and 38 live rounds to Pal and Gupta.



Leftist trade unions demand eight-hour workday

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Leftist trade unions on Wednesday demanded strict enforcement of the eight-hour workday at a gathering to mark the International Workers' Day. Left Front chairman Biman Bose was present at the flag hoisting ceremony at the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) state headquarters here on the occasion. During a congregation at the Shahid Minar grounds here, the unions emphasised the importance of maintaining an eight-hour workday for labourers, expressing concerns over potential efforts to extend daily working hours. They advocated for preserving the dignity of labour by guaranteeing eight hours of rest, eight hours of recreation, and eight hours of work each day. Addressing the gathering on the occasion, CITU West Bengal state president Subhash Mukherjee urged upon workers to make informed choices in the Lok Sabha polls, stressing the need to halt the privatisation of government entities. He emphasised the importance of generating employment within Bengal to prevent migration to other states in search of work.

Himanta has 'secret understanding' with Ajmal: Priyanka

PNS ■ DHUBRI (ASSAM)

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday alleged that Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has a "secret understanding" with AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal just like the BJP has with AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi in Telangana, both aimed at defeating the grand old party. Addressing an election rally at Balajan in Dhubri district, she alleged that "mafia raj" prevails in Assam and charged the CM with being involved in multiple scams in the state.

She also hit out at the BJP on the sexual abuse allegations against Karnataka MP Prajwal Revanna and said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought votes for him and did not stop him from leaving the country. She was campaigning for Congress MLA Rakibul Hussain, who is contesting the Lok Sabha elections from Dhubri, a bastion of AIUDF. He is locked in a triangular contest with sitting MP Ajmal and BJP-backed AGP candidate Zayed Islam, a former MLA. "BJP and AIUDF have taken



local politics to a different direction. Both parties have a secret understanding. Assam CM, in an interview, said that Badruddin wanted him to be the CM from his heart," Vadra said.

"They did the same thing in Telangana by allying with Owaisi so that they could divide Congress votes. Wherever we are strong, Badruddin has put up AIUDF candidates only because he wants the BJP to win," she claimed. She also questioned whether any developmental work has been done by Ajmal in Dhubri despite being a Lok Sabha MP for three terms. "He (Ajmal) himself says that he is a businessman. He is doing only business with you, not politics and service. Wherever he is seeing profit, he

is going there," Vadra said, accusing Sarma of favouring Ajmal's perfume business by tweaking state policies. "Both PM Narendra Modi and Himanta are running governments for the billionaires. Modi, Himanta, Badruddin Ajmal -- all are the same. They want elections to be fought on any issue other than people's issues," she claimed. Lashing out at the BJP-led government in the state on the law and order situation, Vadra alleged, "There is a mafia raj in Assam. Mafias are operating in land, supari (betel nuts), sand, coal and various other sectors.

Bomb hoax at schools: IS angle suspected, Delhi Police to probe

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The anti-terror unit of Delhi Police has started investigations into the bomb threat email sent to over 130 schools in the Delhi-NCR region, as the initial probe hinted at a deeper conspiracy by a terror group during the Lok Sabha elections, officials said on Wednesday. A case has been registered under relevant sections of law for offences like conspiracy and threat by the Special Cell and a dedicated team formed to conduct the investigation, an official said.

"The matter is related to national security. It needs a deeper probe," the official said. In a scare of unprecedented scale, over 130 schools in the Delhi-NCR area received an identical bomb threat by email early Wednesday, triggering mass evacuations and searches as panic-stricken parents rushed to pick up their children. The threat was declared a hoax as "nothing objectionable" was found during searches, the police said. According to the police officer, the email ID from which the threat was sent is 'sawarim@mail.ru'. Sawarim is

an Arabic word extensively used by the terror outfit Islamic State (IS) in their propaganda videos over the past several years, the official said. "Kill them wherever you meet and drive them out of the places from which they drove you. There are many explosive devices in the school..." reads the identical email sent to all schools. The officer said that the email also contained "ayatay (verses) of the holy Quran". The investigators are looking into the timing angle too as the country is in the midst of Lok Sabha elections, he said.

QUESTIONS EVM CREDIBILITY

Mamata raises concern over sudden rise in voter turnout

PNS ■ FARAKKA/BAHARAMPORE

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday criticised the Election Commission for the "delay" in releasing the final voter turnout figures for the initial two phases of the Lok Sabha polls. She also expressed concern over the sudden increase in polling percentages during those phases. Addressing two back-to-back rallies in minority-dominated Malda and Murshidabad districts, Banerjee accused the Centre of neglecting the state as it has a high percentage of minority and backward communities. The commission made public the voter turnout of the first two phases of polling, which were held on April 19 and April 26, on Tuesday evening. According to the EC, a voter turnout of 66.14 per cent was recorded in the first and 66.71 per cent in the second phase of the ongoing Lok Sabha polls. "The EC gave a figure of polling percentage immediately after the elections. But yesterday, I came to know about the sudden jump in final voter turnout by nearly 5.75 per cent, which is worrying. The

percentage has increased in places where voting was not in favour of the BJP. There are lots of doubts and the commission must address it," she said. "There are apprehensions of manipulation of results by the BJP as several EVMs were missing for a long period," she said while addressing a rally at Farakka in Murshidabad district. The TMC supremo said the sudden spike in poll percentage is not just "disturbing" but also raises "serious apprehensions about the credibility of EVMs". "The details of EVM makers should be made public by the Election Commission as the BJP can stoop to any level to win elections," she said. Voting for the general elections is being held in seven phases, with the remaining phases scheduled for May 7, May 13, May 20, May 25, and June 1. The counting of votes will take place on June 4. Both the TMC and the BJP have claimed that panic has set in the opposite camps sensing defeat in the first two phases. Referring to BJP as a "Jumla" party only interested in "publicity" by making false promises, she said, "Did any citizen of this country get Rs 15 lakh in their bank account as promised during the 2014 election campaign?"



Study examines genetic basis for blood pressure

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than 2,000 regions on the human genome have been found to influence an individual's blood pressure and, in turn, their risk of developing hypertension, according to a new research. Genomics is the study of an individual's entire genetic make-up, including the inter-relationships between genes, which are segments forming DNA that resides inside human cells. Data from more than a million people were analysed to discover regions on the genome, including over a 100 new ones, linked to blood pressure. The international study, led by

Queen Mary University of London, UK, is published in the journal Nature Genetics. "Our study found additional genomic locations that together explain a much larger part of the genetic differences in people's blood pressure. Knowing a person's risk for developing hypertension could lead to tailored treatments, which are more likely to be effective," first author Jacob Keaton, staff scientist at the National Human Genome Research Institute's (NHGRI), US, said. Several of the newly discovered genome locations were found to be within genes important for iron metabolism. The researchers said this



result confirmed previous findings that high levels of accumulated iron could contribute to developing cardiovascular disease. High blood pressure is known to run in families, which

points to heredity. This means that a genetic component is involved in one developing the condition, in addition to environmental conditions, such as consuming diets high on salt, lack of exercise, smoking and

stress, the team explained. A consistently high blood pressure can damage the heart and blood vessels, increasing a person's risk for cardiovascular disease, stroke and other conditions. As part of their analysis, the researchers calculated a polygenic risk score to predict an individual's blood pressure and risk for hypertension. The score is arrived at by considering all of the person's genomic variants conferring risk for hypertension. The team said the scores reveal clinically meaningful differences between people's blood pressure. "We are making our polygenic risk scores data publicly available. There are many differ-

ent potential applications of genetic risk scores, so it will be exciting to see how our blood pressure scores can be used to address more clinically relevant questions in the future," last author Helen Warren, a senior lecturer in statistical genetics at Queen Mary University of London, said. "Our results provide new resources for understanding biological mechanisms and importantly new polygenic risk scores for early identification and stratification of people at risk for cardiovascular diseases," Patricia Munroe, a professor of molecular medicine at Queen Mary University of London, said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Scare visits schools

A bomb threat directed at nearly 100 schools in Delhi-NCR serves as a wake-up call for all of us

Amid an unanticipated cloud of fear, nearly 100 schools in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR) sent students home early Wednesday upon receiving a bomb threat via email. The police conducted thorough searches, but found nothing suspicious. The scare has sent shockwaves through the community, leaving parents, educators and students grappling with a harrowing reality: The threat of terror is no longer a distant concern but a chilling presence in our midst. The sanctity of schools, once regarded as a safe haven for learning and growth, has been compromised. As we confront this sobering reality, it is imperative that we do not succumb to despair but unite in resilience and resolve. Foremost, we must commend the swift response of school authorities and law enforcement agencies in addressing these threats. Their coordinated efforts have undoubtedly helped reassure people. More importantly, our intelligence agencies need to put their act together; they are the ones who should have seen it coming.



We do not have enough specific information to process at the moment and no clue about the intention or the identity of the perpetrator(s); we don't know if it was a real threat or just a mischievous element playing mind games, but such threats cannot be taken lightly, especially when human lives are at risk. The threat emails, reportedly emanating from a Russian IP address, were well-planned and coordinated. Shooting in the US schools is rather rampant; Indian schools are much safer and should stay that way. All we have to do is be vigilant.

Also, this small win should not lull us into complacency. We must remain vigilant and proactive in fortifying the security infrastructure of our educational institutions. Beyond bolstering physical security, we must also invest in fostering a culture of vigilance and preparedness within our school communities. Educators play a pivotal role in equipping students with the knowledge and skills to recognise and respond to potential threats. Empowering students with safety protocols and encouraging open dialogue can go a long way in mitigating the impact of terror-induced anxiety. It is equally important that we address the root causes of such terror acts. Socio-economic disparities, marginalisation and ideological extremism often serve as fertile breeding grounds for radicalisation. By addressing these underlying issues through comprehensive social policies and inclusive education, we can strive towards building a more resilient and harmonious society. It is equally important to remain calm and not panic. In times of crisis, it is easy to succumb to fear and division. However, we must remember that our strength lies in our unity and resilience. Now more than ever, we must stand in solidarity with one another, refusing to be cowed by the forces of terror. Together, we can create a future where every child can pursue their education without fear and where schools are not battlegrounds but beacons of hope and enlightenment.

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PICTALK



Participants during a State-level bullock cart race at Thegur, in Chikkamagaluru

Democracy, economics and governance



BK JHA

The confluence of elections, electioneering and the economy demands meticulous examination and rethinking to make the system work flawlessly

As India goes ahead with its 18th General Elections, the nation finds itself at a crossroads of democracy, economics and governance. The elections, spanning 44 days from April 19 to June 1, are poised to be the lengthiest in Indian history, reflecting both the enormity of the task at hand and the significance of the decisions to be made. Against the backdrop of a burgeoning economy, evolving political landscapes and pressing social challenges, the intersection of elections, electioneering and the economy warrants scrutiny. The magnitude of election expenditures provides a glimpse into the economic dynamics surrounding the electoral process. According to the Centre for Media Studies (CMS), the anticipated expenditure for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections is staggering, surpassing Rs 1.35 lakh crore. This figure, more than double the amount spent in 2019, indicates to the monumental scale of electoral spending in the world's largest democracy.

With a projected voter base of 96.6 crore, the per-voter spending is estimated at around Rs 1,400, signifying both the financial investment and the democratic imperative of ensuring widespread participation. However, it's worth noting that the Election Commission's expenditure is expected to constitute only a fraction of the total outlay, pointing towards the diverse economic activities spurred by the electoral process. The Election Commission tirelessly strives to facilitate universal suffrage across the nation. Recognising the pivotal role of public figures in shaping civic consciousness, the Commission enlisted the famed actor Rajkumar Rao as its 'national icon' to galvanise youth engagement and voter turnout as the country approaches the general elections. Rao's portrayal of a dedicated poll officer in the acclaimed film 'Newton', a poignant exploration of electoral challenges in a Naxal-affected region, resonated deeply with young voters. However, despite the cinematic depiction of electoral fervour, the anticipated



'Newton effect' has yet to materialise in voting patterns in two phases so far. Nonetheless, the indomitable spirit of election officers persists, as they traverse treacherous terrain and surmount logistical obstacles to ensure the integrity of the electoral process. Electioneering acts as a catalyst for various sectors of the economy, fostering growth and employment opportunities across the spectrum. From hospitality and transportation to textiles and advertising, the ripple effects of political campaigns are palpable. As political parties vie for voter attention, rallies, events and promotional activities proliferate, injecting vitality into local economies and stimulating demand for goods and services. Moreover, the advent of digital campaigning has revolutionised the electoral landscape, with professional agencies employed to enhance brand visibility and engagement. The economic dividends of such strategies are evident, as digital platforms emerge as potent tools for political communication and mobilisation. Amidst the fervour of electoral competition, political manifestos serve as blueprints for



ELECTIONEERING ACTS AS A CATALYST FOR VARIOUS SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY, FOSTERING GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS THE SPECTRUM

governance, delineating policy priorities and economic agendas. The contrasting visions articulated by major political parties underscore the divergent approaches to addressing pressing socio-economic challenges. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), buoyed by its track record and incumbent status, advocates for policy continuity and fiscal consolidation. With Prime Minister Narendra Modi's emphasis on infrastructure development and economic reforms, a BJP-majority Government is poised to prioritise private investment and fiscal prudence, thereby fostering economic stability and growth. Conversely, the Indian National Congress or INDI Block champions a progressive agenda focused on job creation, social welfare and agrarian reforms. Proposals such as Government-led employment initiatives, minimum support price guarantees and education loan waivers underpin the Alliance's commitment to inclusive growth and equitable development. While political rhetoric often dominates electoral discourse, the economic imperatives transcending partisan lines merit attention. Issues such as

water scarcity, climate change and unemployment pose formidable challenges to India's socio-economic fabric, necessitating concerted action beyond the electoral cycle. The water crisis in cities like Bengaluru serves as a poignant reminder of the urgent need for sustainable resource management and climate resilience. Yet, the conspicuous absence of these issues from political manifestos is very disheartening. There is an urgent need for non-partisan dialogue and policy discourse on environmental sustainability and socio-economic resilience. As India embarks on its electoral journey, the confluence of elections, electioneering and the economy offers both opportunities and challenges. While the democratic process catalyses economic activity and political discourse, the imperatives of inclusive and sustainable development transcend electoral cycles. By transcending electoral exigencies and embracing a shared vision of progress, India can realise its aspirations for a vibrant democracy and a prosperous future for all.

(The author is Delhi-based senior journalist. Views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DOMESTIC TRAGEDY

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Man gets life imprisonment for murdering teenage Indian wife in London," published on April 30, this is my response. The news of Sahil Sharma's sentencing for the murder of his wife, Mehak Sharma, is a heartbreaking reminder of the devastating consequences of domestic violence. The brutal act not only robbed Mehak's family of a beloved daughter but also shattered their sense of security and left them grappling with irreparable grief. The fact that the tragedy unfolded within the confines of their own home, supposedly a place of safety, adds another layer of horror to the ordeal. Mehak's mother's poignant statement encapsulates the profound anguish and emptiness left in the wake of such a senseless loss. While the legal proceedings may offer some semblance of justice, they can never fully assuage the pain inflicted upon the victim's loved ones. It serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need for greater awareness, support and intervention in cases of domestic violence to prevent similar tragedies in the future.

Aadhya Chawla | Chandigarh

GLOBAL IMPACT OF BHARAT

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Covid handling changed world's perception of India: EAM," published on April 30, this is my response. India's growth trajectory under the spotlight! External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar reflects on India's changing perception abroad, citing COVID management and Chandrayaan-3 as game-changers. He highlights how decisions made domestically resonate globally, showcasing India's significance on the world stage. From bringing citizens home during crises to enhancing the value of the Indian passport, India's actions garner international attention. Jaishankar underlines India's technological prowess and socio-economic

Technological deception



Apropos the news article, "Telangana CM summoned in Shah fake video case," published on April 30, this is my response. In today's complex political landscape, technology's role in shaping narratives is undeniable. The recent controversy surrounding doctored videos

of key political figures underscores the urgency of addressing misinformation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's acknowledgement of this issue highlights the importance of responsible information sharing in the digital age. However, the entanglement of political parties in this web of deceit further exacerbates the situation. The involvement of law enforcement, as seen with the Delhi Police's actions, signals a crucial step towards accountability. Yet, the broader implications of such manipulation on societal harmony cannot be overstated. Platforms like 'X' and social media giants must cooperate fully in identifying and curbing the spread of fake content. Ultimately, restoring trust in our democratic processes necessitates collective vigilance and decisive action against those seeking to sow discord through technological deception.

Arya Sundaram | Chennai

advancements, attracting global interest in investment and exploration. The narrative shifts from India being a concern to being a source of support, showcasing its resilience and diplomatic agility. With a focus on domestic performance, Jaishankar emphasises infrastructure development and socio-political systems, which captivate foreign fascination. India's journey from a developing nation to a global player exemplifies its potential and allure on the international stage, echoing the sentiment that Bharat indeed matters.

Kabir Oberoi | Mumbai

DIVINE SYMBOLISM UNVEILED

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Astroturf | Mother calls for full alert against evil forces," published on April 28, this is my response. The intricate symbolism of the goddess's accessories reveals profound insights into the cosmic order and human existence. The conch shell, echoing the primal sound of creation, signifies the source energy that initiates and sustains all life.

Meanwhile, the lotus flower, emerging from murky waters unstained, embodies purity and detachment amid creation's diversity. The goddess's eight weapons, contrasted with her two creative symbols, underscore the perpetual struggle against malevolent forces. This juxtaposition reflects the omnipresence and potency of negativity, urging constant vigilance and defensive action. Demons, depicted in surreal forms, serve as metaphors for internal and external threats, reminding us of the deceptive allure and insidious nature of evil. In essence, the divine imagery prompts contemplation on the balance between constructive creativity and vigilant defence in navigating life's complexities. It emphasises the importance of spiritual awareness and moral integrity in combating adversities while upholding the cosmic order.

Devansh Khatri | Jaipur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Post-poll path for infra financing!

Modi 3.0 plans to bolster infrastructure creation post-election by expanding the infrastructure financing ecosystem

In the interim budget for FY25, infrastructure outlay was increased by 11.1 per cent to 11.11 lakh crore, including Rs 2.78 lakh crore for the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) and Rs 2.55 lakh crore for the Railway Ministry. Post-poll, the plan for a full-fledged budget for FY25 will look to raise Rs 25000 crore of finance through green bonds - higher than Rs 20000 crore raised through green bonds in FY24. That going ahead private investment will be a big driver of infrastructure development, is evident from the National Investment & Infrastructure Fund (NIIIF) plan to raise USD 1 billion for its second Private Markets Fund (PMF). The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is likely to invest nearly USD 125 million. NIIIF manages over USD4.9 billion of equity capital commitments across its four funds- Master Fund, PMF, Strategic Opportunities Fund and India-Japan Fund.



raise a whopping Rs 60,000 crore in FY 25 through monetisation of Toll Operate Transfer (TOT) highways and NHAI InvIT. In FY 24, Rs 38334 crore was raised from ToT, InvIT and project-based financing. It is significant to mention that under the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP), an ambitious target of raising Rs 1.08 lakh crore has been fixed for FY25. The share of privately funded highways in the overall award of projects in FY25 is expected to meet the Government's target of 10 per cent. NHAI has drawn up a plan to develop 53 listed highways worth Rs 1.2 trillion through BOT. The

years. This will free up NHAI's resources for development in the highways sector.

The energy sector is getting a big green private investment boost. REC Limited, a leader in the power sector in India has availed a SACE-covered green loan for JPY 60,536 billion to finance eligible green projects. In the power sector, besides the airport, Adani Enterprises is firming up its plans to plough USD 1 billion into these businesses. It is in advanced talks with several investors in the US and Europe to raise USD 1 billion for its Solar Panel business and Mumbai Airport. The company, which is enhancing its focus on green energy, raised USD 750 million through bonds in 2022. The investors and Indian corporates engaged in infrastructure development are banking on political and policy continuity for the fructification of the ambitious plan for infra financing push.

(The author is a veteran journalist; views are personal)



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It's high time to introduce spiritual learning to save our future generations



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

All of us daily read, in newspapers, about one or the other major problem causing grave suffering to a large segment of society or mankind as a whole. These problems are classified as economic, social, political, racial, administrative, etc. and attempts are made to find solutions to them from the respective areas of human knowledge. The unjust treatment of industrial or farm labour, unfair treatment of under-privileged, bride-burning, ill-treatment of women, inhuman treatment because of racial prejudices or casteism, bonded labour and abject poverty are only some problems on the long list, the top of which is the problem of armament race that threatens the very existence of humankind.

Economic and social reforms, diplomatic negotiations, political declarations and legal enactments are only some of the measures that have been adopted to solve these and other problems over the years. Even such an august body as the U.N. also has addressed itself to some of these problems through its various organs. Though all these various efforts have borne some fruit, the problems at the core remain unsolved and there has been no satisfactory and lasting solution to resolve them. The question, therefore, remains: "What are these problems due to and how can these be solved or eliminated?"

A thorough analysis would lead us to the conclusion that all these problems are directly and indirectly caused by the absence or lack of goodwill or good motives. People generally lay emphasis on creative intelligence, scientific development, courage and life full of pleasures but, it is usually forgotten that, if there is no good motive, science and intelligence may be used to promote means of mutual destruction, courage may be employed for killing and pleasures may be gained in evil ways. Hardly is it realised that if there were goodwill towards all, there would be no armament race, no racial prejudice, no bride-burning, no exploitation, no poverty and no injustice to the labour class, for goodwill is the very antithesis of all these.



Without goodwill, conferences end in bickerings, assemblies achieve nothing, resolutions are considered mere scraps of paper, economic remedies cannot prove effective and legal acts or social reforms cannot bring the desired change. The second factor essential to solving the problems of mankind is to consider the inherent worth of human personality. We must realise that every human individual is to be revered and is not to be treated as a means for the gratification of the desires of another. No one has to be degraded, for another person's benefit, to the level of material goods and chattels or machines and tools or dolls and playthings but has to be regarded as a person. If this principle of giving respect to every being is applied in our daily lives, there would be no slavery, no bonded labour, no exploitation of the working class, no poverty, no bride-burning and no ill-treatment of one by the other based on the difference in race, religion or caste.

The ultimate and lasting solution of problems lies, without doubt, in education that develops these two qualities in men and women and such an education cannot but be moral and spiritual. Trillions and Billions are spent every year by various Governments and non-Governmental agencies on solving social, economic, political, administrative and other problems without achieving the goal of ending exploitation of all sorts and thus ending class conflict, conflict, family conflict and other kinds of conflicts. This is mainly because we only talk of conflict resolution without real and practical moral and spiritual education. It's high time that the Governments and the people in power realise this and seriously do something about it & save our future generations from devastation.

(The writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist, views are personal)

Plug leakages in fertiliser subsidy

The real reason behind the leakage is control of the MRP at an artificially low level. Dubious players have a huge incentive to divert and rake in the moolah



UTTAM GUPTA



As part of the 100-day agenda of Modi 3.0, the Government intends to administer fertiliser subsidies more effectively and cut down on leakages and diversions to build on the success of neem-coated urea. It intends to conduct a pilot in a few districts on a modified version of the direct benefit transfer (DBT) that seeks to establish a linkage between the land holding of a farmer and nutrient consumption. A proposal in this regard mooted in 2020 is being resurrected. To make urea - a widely used fertiliser that supplies primary nutrient nitrogen or 'N' and constitutes nearly half of India's total fertiliser consumption - affordable to farmers, the Union Government controls its maximum retail price (MRP) at a low level unrelated to the cost of production/import and distribution, which is much higher. The excess cost over MRP is reimbursed to the manufacturer/importer as a subsidy which varies from unit to unit depending on its cost. The MRP of urea is kept unchanged (today's price is more or less the same as in 2022) even as all cost escalations are absorbed by raising the subsidy.

In the case of fertilisers supplying phosphate or 'P' and potash or 'K' which constitute the other half (call them non-urea fertilisers), there is a 'uniform' subsidy on a per nutrient basis for all manufacturers under the Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) Scheme. They are free to fix MRP but need to reduce it to the extent of subsidy. Even as the subsidy remains unchanged, rising costs mean ever-increasing MRPs. The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (DoAC) - in consultation with states - assesses the requirement of fertilisers for each cropping season - kharif (April to September) and rabi (October to March).

The Department of Fertilisers (DoF) prepares an agreed supply plan to cover all the urea requirements from domestic production and import. The states allocate all of the urea arrivals and track disbursement up to the district level.

The DoF has developed a mobile and a web application - a mobile Fertiliser Monitoring System (m-FMS) that provides information



AT A FUNDAMENTAL LEVEL, LEAKAGES ARE INHERENT IN THE WAY THE ADMINISTRATION OF FERTILISER SUBSIDIES IS DESIGNED. THE GOVERNMENT ASKS MANUFACTURERS TO SELL FERTILISER AT A LOW PRICE — A PRICE IT THINKS FARMERS CAN AFFORD

on stock, sale and receipt of fertilisers till the last retail point. The total expenditure on fertiliser subsidy - on both urea and non-urea fertilisers put together - is around Rs 200,000 crore annually. Now, when the Government talks of leakage and diversion, we are reminded of the Economic Survey 2015-16 which said as much as 24 per cent of the subsidy is spent on inefficient producers, 41 per cent is diverted to non-agricultural uses including smuggling to neighbouring countries and 24 per cent is consumed by larger, presumably richer farmers. That leaves a tiny 11 per cent going to small and marginal farmers who constitute the vast majority i.e. nearly 86 per cent of the total number of farmers.

At a fundamental level, leakages are inherent in the way the administration of fertiliser subsidies is designed. The Government asks manufacturers to sell fertiliser at a low price - a price it thinks farmers can afford. Having sold at this price, the latter claims from the former an amount equal to the excess of the cost of supply over it as a subsidy. The subsidy could have been given to the farmer directly say, by depositing the money in her bank account. But, for decades, successive Governments have preferred to route it through manufacturers.

Having to deal with a handful of manufacturers instead of crores of farmers (that would have been the case if the subsidy were to be given to them directly), they have found this arrangement convenient. But, there is a big negative to it. Since the subsidy is embodied in the MRP (albeit low), the subsidised fertiliser product must reach the farmer and be used only for growing the crop. If it doesn't reach, then the benefit of subsidy is enjoyed by the person who grabs it.

After leaving the factory or the port (in case of imported stuff), fertiliser

travel a long distance moving by rails/roads to reach storage points in the district and further movement to retail outlets for sale to the farmers.

In the initial years of the fertiliser pricing and subsidy scheme (it was introduced in 1977 for urea and 1980 for other fertilisers), manufacturers were given the bulk of the subsidy on the 'dispatch' of the material from the factory. In due course, the Government shifted to disbursing 95 per cent of the subsidy to urea producers and 85 per cent to producers of non-urea 'on receipt of material at a district's railhead point/approved godown' (balance 5 per cent/15 per cent was paid on confirmation of sales to farmers by states).

In March 2018, the Government made disbursement of subsidies to manufacturers conditional upon actual sales to farmers and these getting registered on point-of-sale (PoS) machines. But, this by itself offers no guarantee as a diversion can still happen at the retail level all the more because anybody - including non-farmers - can buy any quantity through PoS machines. All that he needs to do is to furnish his unique identity or Aadhaar number.

Meanwhile, in 2015, the Government issued an order mandating all manufacturers/importers to neem-coat all of the urea supplies. The logic was simple. Upon neem coating, it is rendered unfit for use in chemical industries; hence the manufacturers/dealers will have no incentive to divert. But, this would happen only when coating is done. This is where the rub lies. Policing of a mammoth quantity across the length and breadth of the country is well-nigh impossible.

Now, apart from barring non-farmers from purchasing subsidised fertilisers, the Government wants to

link the purchase of fertilisers with the size of the land the farmer owns. The motive behind this is to make sure that her purchase is capped at the quantum required for growing the crop only; and that she doesn't get away with excess and make money from selling at a much higher price (albeit for industrial use). The farmers' land/crop data will be loaded on her biometric card. When she goes to the retailer to purchase her requirement for the season, the PoS machine will register the number of fertiliser bags that correspond to the data embedded in the card.

The retailer will deliver this number, not what she demands orally. The idea has massive appeal. But, making it work poses a daunting challenge.

The Government will need to have data - on land holding, crops grown, nutrient status of the soil etc on over 140 million farm households. Apart from ensuring 'full coverage', it will have to focus on the 'accuracy' of the data as well the 'accuracy' of the calculation as any incorrect figure or miscalculation could result in either shortfall or excess delivery of bags. Further, this data has to be updated on real-time basis to account for the impact of changes in the weather/rainfall on fertiliser requirements. This apart, the Government is missing the woods for the tree.

The real reason behind leakage is control of the MRP at an artificially low level. When urea sells at one-tenth the cost of supplying it, dubious players have a huge incentive to divert and rake in a moolah. They will do every bit to circumvent the rules resulting in the misuse of subsidies. The way forward is to end control on fertiliser prices and let the subsidy be given 'directly' to the farmers using DBT mode.

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

The idea of rotating PMs is as ridiculous as it is impractical

INDIA bloc leaders face sharp criticism for it and are cautioned against the perilous consequences of such a move

Leaders of INDI Alliance who are struggling to save secularism, pluralism and the Constitution from the shackles of Fascist, Communalist and BJP should bear in mind that Indians are not village idiots. The move to have a new Prime Minister every year for the five-year tenure of the next Lok Sabha is a sure recipe for disaster. One is at a loss for words to explain what would happen to this country in the eventuality of M K Stalin, Supriya Sule, Mamata Banerjee, Mallikarjun Kharge/Rahul Gandhi, Akhilesh Yadav and Tejaswi Yadav become Prime Minister even for one day. The post of Indian Prime Minister is not something that could be played around as per the whims and fancies of politi-



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

cians who do not have any links with the grassroots-level electorate of the country. Indira Gandhi, who ruled the country for almost 15 years was a creation of the media and she had an edge over others because she was a woman. There was a more competent woman at that time and her name was Tarkeshwari Sinha. The modern Indian history, altered and tampered with by Left historians may not have

much information about the lady, a postgraduate in economics from the London School of Economics who rose through the Congress cadre and became the deputy finance minister of the country during the tenure of Jawaharlal Nehru. Sinha had no political godfathers and it was almost certain that she would have reached the top position if she had not earned the wrath of the Royal Family of New Delhi. Even Indira Gandhi was not free from basic human natures like jealousy and inferiority complex. Sinha was the glamour girl of yesteryears and was at home in Hindi and Queen's English.

With the passing away of Nehru, Sinha was left all alone and there was no one to prop up the lady who stood for free

enterprises while the Nehruvians were pontificating mixed economy and socialism and crony capitalism. Many leaders in the undivided Congress party were the right persons for the top job. Over the decades, the Congress disintegrated and degenerated and the likes of Devkant Barooah and Arjun Singh emerged as power brokers and wheeler-dealers. We had Pranab Mukherjee, a politician and gentleman, whose erudition and leadership qualities were heads and shoulders above others.

But top leadership never trusted or liked Mukherjee, Madhava Rao Scindia, Rajesh Pilot or Jeetendra Prasada who were all right people for the right job. Congress became weaker by the day and the

Grand Old Party ended up as a doormat for the likes of the DMK, RJD, AAP and even a letterhead organisation by the name of MDMK and its leader Vayyapuri Gopala Samy (Vaiko). Before the 1990s, Congress used to dictate terms to the above-mentioned outfits regarding the seats it would allocate to them. Now it is the other way round. Lalu Prasad Yadav and his family would decide the number of seats to be contested by the GOP from Bihar while the Samajwadi Party leaders would have the last word in the seats to be contested by it.

The roadshow held by Rahul Gandhi at Wayanad as a precursor to his filing nomination was a harbinger of the annihilation of the Congress Party. Rahul Gandhi, the

great-grandson of Jawaharlal Nehru who described the Muslim League as a dead horse in 1952, was forced not to display the party flag throughout the rally or even when he filed the nomination papers. That was the price dictated by the Sultans of Malappuram and the scion of Congress Party had no other option other than accepting their condition.

One is reminded of the great Malayalam novel Oru Deshathinte Katha (The Story of a Locale) written in 1971 by S K Pottekkat. This autobiographical novel was honoured with the Jnanapeetha Award in 1982 and remains one of the ten best novels written in Malayalam. This novel tells the story of Sreedharan and the village Athiraniyappadam where

he grew up. One of the characters in this great work is Kunhikkelu Melan, a scion of the Kelancherry Family, the locale's biggest and most powerful clan. This family-owned thousands of hectares of land, many hills, mountains and even forests. Kunhikkelu Melan, born with a silver spoon in his mouth squandered the entire property for wine and women. When he was left with nothing other than the castle of Kelancherry, he started selling the doors and windows of the ancestral home to meet the expenses for his sundowners. "Doors and windows are installed to save the house from robbers and dacoits. If there is nothing valuable in the house, what is the use of doors and windows," Melan told the villagers when he was asked

why he was selling off the chattels.

India needs a good, sincere and honest leader and we are willing to accept dictatorship to a certain level. Xi Jinping, Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump, who enjoyed limitless power did not end up as despots. Richard Nixon, Margaret Thatcher, Charles De Gaulle, Francois Mitterrand and even Fidel Castro were loved by our Opposition leaders despite the aversion of these leaders to democracy and secularism. A politician should aspire for power. There is nothing abnormal in it. But he should have the ability and capability to occupy that position.

(The writer is special correspondent with The Pioneer; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

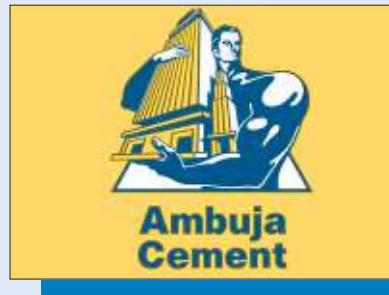
Uttar Pradesh pips Tamil Nadu in monthly GST revenue collections

Uttar Pradesh has overtaken Tamil Nadu in terms of monthly GST collections by recording a 19 per cent increase in tax revenues in April. According to official data, the GST collections in Uttar Pradesh grew 19 per cent to Rs 12,290 crore in April 2024, becoming the fourth largest contributor after Maharashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat.



Ambuja Cements posts profit at Rs 1,525.78 cr; revenue at Rs 8,894 cr

Adani Group firm Ambuja Cements Ltd on Wednesday reported a consolidated net profit at Rs 1,525.78 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2024. The company had clocked a net profit of Rs 763.30 crore in the January-March quarter a year ago, the company said in a regulatory filing.



Vedanta Group planning to invest US\$ 20 bn in 4 years: Agarwal

The Vedanta Group is targeting an investment of US\$ 20 billion across all its businesses in India over the next four years, its Chairman Anil Agarwal said on Wednesday. The investments will be focused on technology, electronics, and glass businesses apart from the other activities that the group is engaged in, Agarwal told reporters here.



AE to open one-million sq feet campus in Gurugram

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Global payments company American Express on Wednesday announced it will open its nearly one-million square feet campus in Gurugram, Haryana. The company has additional facilities in Gurugram as well as in Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, and Pune.

'Record GST mop-up reflects robust eco, audit efficacy'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The record Rs 2.10 lakh crore GST collection in April is a reflection of the robust economy and effectiveness of audit and scrutiny by the tax department, tax experts said on Wednesday.



The record mop-up also raises hopes for the next round of tax reforms after the new government comes to power, they added. Experts said the collection is a testimony to higher self-compliance and better enforcement measures. Also, increased consumer spending on purchases of air conditioners and beverages to beat the summer heat has aided the record collection.

ed after the formation of the new government, the growth (in GST collections) may be further accelerated. It may also enable the government to make bolder decisions like rate rationalisation or

Experts said the collection is a testimony to higher self-compliance and better enforcement measures. Also, increased consumer spending on purchases of air conditioners and beverages to beat the summer heat has aided the record collection.

"While some part of the increased collections is attributable to the financial year-end upswing, it is also reflective of the significant improvements in GST compliance by businesses," Mani said. PwC India Partner Pratik Jain said that with the next wave of GST reforms expect-

bringing other products, such as ATF and natural gas, under the GST ambit. A panel of state finance ministers is already examining the proposal for the rationalisation of GST rates and slabs. It is expected that there could be some forward movement in

mop-up from northern states like Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi etc. "The GST collection in April month has traditionally been higher, given that it reflects the economic activity in March, which is the last month of the fiscal year," Prabhakaran said.

India, Maldives hold talks to enhance trade cooperation

PNS ■ MALE

India on Wednesday said it looked forward to strengthening bilateral economic cooperation with the Maldives as its envoy held discussions with a senior minister of the archipelagic nation.



Mohamed Saeed, Maldives' Minister of Economic Development and Trade, met with Mune Mahawar, Indian High Commissioner to the archipelago nation on Tuesday. The meeting comes weeks after India allowed the export of certain quantities of essential commodities for the year 2024-25 at the request of the Maldivian government and ahead of the May 10 deadline imposed by President Mohamed Muizzu for the complete repatriation of 88 Indian military personnel from his country.

enhancing India-Maldives economic cooperation. Earlier on April 5, displaying a strong commitment to supporting the human-centric development in the archipelagic nation, India said the request to allow export of certain quantities of essential commodities for the year 2024-25 was being done "under a unique bilateral mechanism" under which the quotas for each of these items have been revised upwards.

Adani Power Q4 net profit dips 48% to Rs 2,737 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Adani Power Ltd on Wednesday reported a 47.78 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit to Rs 2,737.24 crore for the March quarter on account of increased expenses. Its net profit was Rs 5,242.48 crore in the January-March period of the preceding 2022-

23, the company said in an exchange filing. During the fourth quarter, the company's total income was Rs 13,881.52 crore against Rs 10,795.32 crore a year ago. The expenses stood at Rs 10,323.58 crore in the period under review compared to Rs 9,897.60 crore in the year-ago period. However, for the entire FY24,

the company's net profit almost doubled to Rs 20,828.79 crore from Rs 10,726.64 crore registered in FY23. In FY24, the company's income rose to Rs 60,281.48 crore against Rs 43,040.52 crore in FY23. Its expenses increased to Rs 39,489.97 crore in FY24 from Rs 35,365.82 crore in the preceding fiscal

Domestic PV sales growth flat due to high base effect, elections

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Passenger vehicle sales in India kicked off on a flat note in new fiscal 2024-25 with 3.38 lakh units sold in April, impacted by high base effect and muted demand due to the ongoing general elections. Dispatches of passenger vehicles from manufacturers to dealers were at 3,38,341 units in April 2024 as compared to 3,32,468 units in the same month last year, a growth of 1.77 per cent with major players Maruti Suzuki India, Hyundai and Tata Motors reporting marginal growth in their domestic wholesales.

Partho Banerjee told reporters in a virtual interaction. "We have started on a very high base this year...Right now the country is going



through elections and there is a model code of conduct...During the elections the markets are a little muted. Once elections are over, I think we will be seeing a different market," he said. He further said, "Till the month of June I think things will be more or less like this and after June maybe we will see revival in the market." Maruti Suzuki's total domestic passenger vehicle sales were

1,37,952 units compared to 1,37,320 units in the year-ago period. Similarly, Hyundai Motor India's domestic wholesales saw an increase of 1 per cent to 50,201 units last month from 49,701 units in the year-ago period. Hyundai Motor India COO Tarun Garg said the PV industry's growth seen in April was a reflection of what was estimated in beginning of 2024 of about an overall low single-digit growth. "It is more because of the high base effect of the last two years and not necessarily a slowdown," he said in a virtual interaction, adding the inquiry levels and booking were at similar levels to the last year. With the improvement in the supply chain, the overall order book of the industry has reduced, Garg said.

Honda Cars reports 42% rise in sales at 10,867 units

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Honda Cars India on Wednesday reported a 42 per cent increase in total sales at 10,867 units in April. The company had sold 7,676 units in April 2023, Honda Cars India said in a statement. Last month, the automaker sold 4,351 units in the domestic market and 6,516 units in overseas locations. The company had registered sales of 5,313 units in the domestic market and exported 2,363 units in April last year. "Our planned production volumes in April were lower due to the switchover of Elevate and City production to six-airbag standard variants and the dispatches were aligned accordingly," Honda Cars India Vice President (Marketing & Sales) Kunal Behl said.

Markets may extend rally on strong domestic economy: Analysts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Markets may continue their winning run in May after registering gains in the past three months as investors' sentiment are upbeat amid India's promising growth prospects, the current government's potential re-election in the ongoing polls and robust participation from domestic investors, analysts said. The 30-share BSE Sensex had declined 0.67 per cent in the month of January this year. However, markets charted a strong recovery path from February onwards. In February, the BSE benchmark climbed 1.04 per cent,

while it jumped 1.58 per cent in March. In April, the bellwether index advanced 1.12 per cent. "Overall, the markets are anticipated to maintain their upward trend, backed by robust inflows and participation from both domestic institutions and individual investors. "Going forward, if the corporate earnings of the remaining companies display a positive sentiment then the markets are likely to continue their bullish sentiment," Arvinder Singh Nanda, senior vice-president of Master Capital Service Ltd, said. "Positive market sentiment is

anticipated to persist if the Middle East tensions lessen, earnings remain steady, and the Chinese economy continues to move towards resurgence," Nanda added. "Markets have surged to record highs due to various factors. Firstly, the positive market sentiment, driven by strong prospects for the Indian economy, has bolstered investors' confidence. "Expectations of imminent rate cuts have further encouraged investors to buy Indian stocks despite recent corrections. We forecast the Nifty 50 to maintain a positive bias, considering historical trends of rallies during general election



years and projecting a gradual ascent," Suman Banerjee, CIO of hedge fund Hedonova, said. The BSE Sensex hit its all-time peak of 75,124.28 on April 9 this year. The index breached the historic 75,000 mark for the first time on the same day. On April 10, the 30-share BSE benchmark settled above the 75,000 mark for the first time.

Maruti Suzuki expects revival of small car segment

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Maruti Suzuki India expects a revival of the small car segment in the domestic market by 2026-end or 2027, after suffering from affordability issues and onslaught from SUVs, according to a senior company official. The small car segment, which had once dominated the Indian total passenger vehicles market, accounts for less than 30 per cent at present. The company is hopeful that the resurgence seen in the two-wheeler market, which has also witnessed decline since 2018-19, will have a positive impact on small car sales as well. "The SUV segment's contri-

bution has gone up to 53.6 per cent of total (passenger vehicle) industry as a result of which the contribution of the small (car) segment has gone down a little bit further," Maruti Suzuki India Senior Executive Officer, Marketing & Sales, Partho Banerjee said in a virtual interaction. There has been a "steep increase in the prices of hatchbacks" due to a variety of reasons, including regulations related to safety and emissions standards but the "affordability" of small car buyers has not increased to that extent, he added.



"As a result, there has been a drop in the contribution of the hatchback segment but our take is that this hatchback segment will again come back...we expect that, maybe by 2026-end or 2027 we will again be seeing a growth in the hatch segment and this market will revive," Banerjee said. While affordability remains a "major challenge" at the moment, he said the small car

segment can take positives from the revival seen in the two-wheeler sales. "There is a revival in the two-wheeler segment. We have seen in the past that whenever there is a revival in the two-wheeler industry, with a lag it comes to the four-wheelers also. That is why we are very hopeful that we are going to see an upside in the hatch segment," Banerjee added.

"The SUV segment's contribution has gone up to 53.6 per cent of total (passenger vehicle) industry as a result of which the contribution of the small (car) segment has gone down a little bit further," Maruti Suzuki India Senior Executive Officer, Marketing & Sales, Partho Banerjee said in a virtual interaction.

Iffco gets nod to launch 2 more nano tech fertilisers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Fertiliser major Iffco, which introduced nano liquid urea and nano liquid DAP, on Wednesday, said the central government has approved its two new products nano liquid zinc and nano liquid copper for the launch. These two products would help in mitigating deficiencies of zinc and copper in agriculture crops and boost productivity. In a post on X, Iffco Managing Director US Awasthi said, "IFFCO's Nano Technology-based innovations are making a mark on the agriculture sector. Glad to share that IFFCO's new innovation IFFCO Nano Zinc (Liquid

and IFFCO Nano Copper (Liquid) has been notified by the Government of India, @AgriGol for a period of 3 years." FCO (Fertiliser Control Order) approval has been granted for both these products. "Zinc is a crucial micro-nutrient for the enzyme functioning in plants and it is very important for plant growth and development. Zn deficiency in plants is one of the major concerns globally," Awasthi said. Similarly, he said, copper is required for many enzymatic activities in plants and for chlorophyll and seed production. Deficiency of copper can lead to increased susceptibility to diseases.



DGCA deregisters bankrupt Go First's 54 planes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aviation watchdog DGCA has deregistered all the 54 planes leased by Go First, days after a court allowed lessors to take back their aircraft from the bankrupt airline. Boggled down by financial turbulence and engine woes, budget carrier Go First stopped flying in May last year and is undergoing an insolvency resolution process. Foreign lessors that have leased planes to the airline had moved the court to take back the aircraft. Against this backdrop, the Delhi High Court on April 26

directed the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to forthwith process the applications filed by the lessors for deregistration of 54 planes. The high court had also said the process shall be done in not later than five working days. A senior official at the regulator on Wednesday confirmed that all the 54 aircraft of the airline have been deregistered. Some of the notices deregistering Go First's aircraft were uploaded on the DGCA website. An A320 plane, having registration number VT-WJL, was deregistered on April 29.

Blake Lively and Justin Baldoni dazzle crowd with *It Ends With Us*

The first look at the highly anticipated drama *It Ends With Us*, starring Blake Lively and Justin Baldoni, has finally arrived, and fans are giddy with anticipation. People have been waiting for the film's first look, or at least a teaser and trailer, ever



since images of the couple's passionate kiss during filming appeared on social media. The actor posted a number of stunning photos on Tuesday.

For those who don't know, it's the movie version of Colleen Hoover's critically acclaimed book of the same name. The forthcoming drama will be distributed by Sony Pictures Releasing, with Justin serving as director. The film was produced by Saks Picture Company, Wayfarer Studios, and Columbia Pictures. Blake

plays Lily Bloom, a 23-year-old florist who develops feelings for Justin's 30-year-old neurosurgeon, Ryle Kincaid.

In addition to Blake Lively, Hasan Minhaj, and Justin Baldoni, Jenny Slate will play important roles in the film. Colleen Hoover's work is one of the most well-known, having sold over 8.6 million print copies in 2022. On Tuesday, Justin posted a carousel of images from the film on his Instagram account. The post contains the first glimpses of each character, the first of which features Ryle and Lily gazing longingly into each other's eyes.

Numerous likes and comments were left on Justin Baldoni's tweet, revealing Blake Lively and other cast members' first looks from their movie *It Ends With Us*. The release date of the movie has been disclosed by the actor/director in the post's caption. Though most fans have responded favourably to the first look post, those who have read the novel are shocked that he chose to play Ryle rather than Atlas.

Manoj's hot-blooded new poster from *Bhaiyya Ji* is out now

Following the release of an epic first single, *Baagh Ka Kareja*, and an early teaser, the makers of *Bhaiyya Ji*, starring Manoj Bajpayee, have confirmed the action drama's release date and unveiled a striking new poster.

Sharing the details on social media, Bhanushali Studios Limited captioned the post, "Pratishodh ka nivedan lekar aa rahe hain Bhaiyya Ji, 24th May se aapke nazdeeki cinema-gharon mein. #BhaiyyaJi #DesiSuperstar #MB100" *Bhaiyya Ji*, an action-thriller-drama directed and written by Apoorv Singh Karki, is sure to keep viewers on the edge of their seats. The fascinating plot and impressive ensemble, which includes Zoya Hussain, Jatin Goswami, Suvinder Vicky, and Vipin Sharma, have drawn attention to the film since its teaser release.



The film

promises to present an engaging story full of action and drama, centered around a man who defends his family and seeks retribution for wrongs done to his loved ones. Writing the script for *Bhaiyya Ji*, Deepak Kingrani has pledged to infuse the film with a nostalgic quality by bringing back the beauty of '70s and '80s Hindi cinema. The movie is scheduled to be released on May 24.

Crew saw Dwayne 'peeing in water bottles to save time': Sources

Dwayne Johnson began his career as a WWE wrestler. In the next film, *Red One*, The Rock will co-star with Chris Evans, another hot Hollywood star. The legendary on-set behaviours of the Black Adam star have reportedly contributed significantly to the film's production budget, as revealed by a recent article.

Mary Elizabeth Ellis and Lucy Liu are also in the film. It is based on a Hiram Garcia original story and was directed by Jake Kasdan. In collaboration with Seven Bucks Production, Dwayne and Chris are producing their action movie through Amazon MGM Studios. Insiders have reportedly accused him of arriving late for the *Red One* filming, which raised the movie's budget by at

least \$50 million. The Rock was not only late, but the staff also said they saw him pee in water bottles to save time. "On set, away from his trailer, if he needs to pee, he doesn't go to the public bathroom," one of the insiders stated. He urinates in a Voss water bottle, which needs to be disposed of by his crew or a PA.

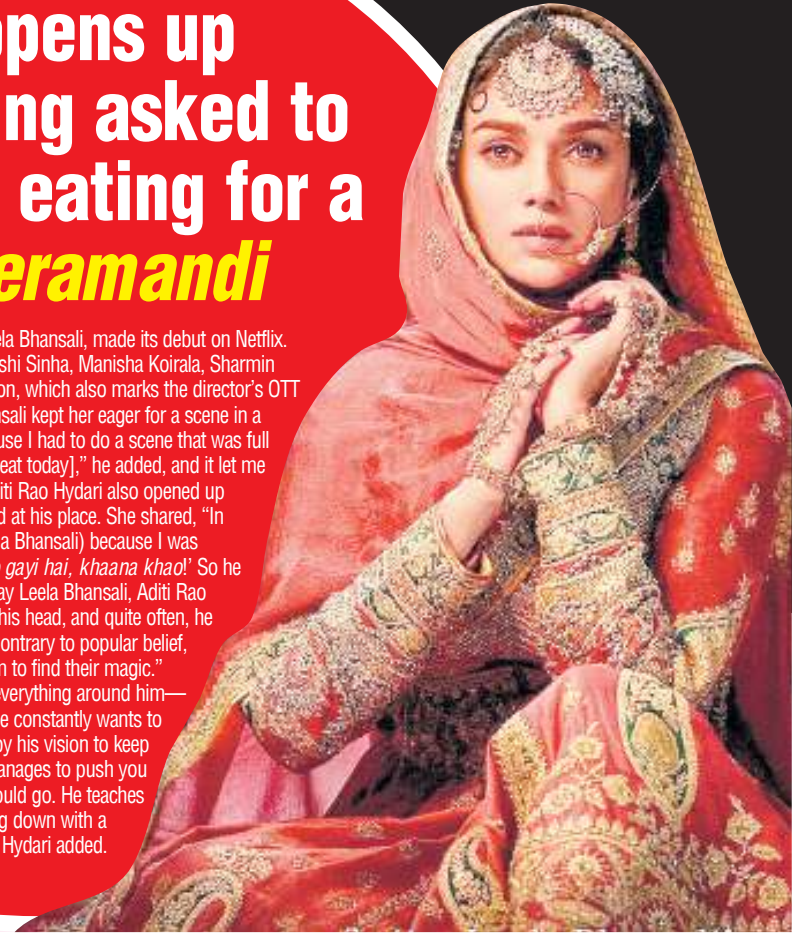


Another insider explained, "It was a f-king disaster." One insider stated, "Dwayne truly doesn't give a f-k." Speaking of Dwayne Johnson's lateness and lack of professionalism on the *Red One*'s set, a source quipped, "The only thing Dwayne was consistent at was being chronically late." Contrary to that, two sources close to the production told the media outlet that, on average, he was no more than an hour late to set.

Aditi Rao opens up about being asked to refrain from eating for a day in *Heeramandi*

Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar, directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, made its debut on Netflix. Important characters are played by Aditi Rao Hydari, Sonakshi Sinha, Manisha Koirala, Sharmin Sehgal, Richa Chadha, and Sanjeeda Sheikh in the production, which also marks the director's OTT debut. Aditi Rao Hydari talked about how Sanjay Leela Bhansali kept her eager for a scene in a recent interview. "One day, Sanjay sir kept me hungry because I had to do a scene that was full of fire," the actress claimed. "Aaj khana mat khana [don't eat today]," he added, and it let me understand the injustice that was burning inside of me. Aditi Rao Hydari also opened up about the time when the director offered her amazing food at his place. She shared, "In between the lockdowns, I went to meet him (Sanjay Leela Bhansali) because I was missing him. The first thing he said was, 'Kitni patli ho gayi hai, khaana khad!' So he fed me." Sharing her experience of working with Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Aditi Rao Hydari expressed, "There's always music playing in his head, and quite often, he gives it to his actors as well when he's directing. Contrary to popular belief, he gives his actors a lot of space. He wants them to find their magic."

"He's (Sanjay Leela Bhansali) so inspired by everything around him—human emotion, art, music, dance—that he constantly wants to better himself. So the team is inspired by his vision to keep running with him. He effortlessly manages to push you where you didn't believe you could go. He teaches you without actually sitting down with a danda," Aditi Rao Hydari added.



Rupali Ganguly enters politics, joins BJP

In front of the approaching Lok Sabha elections, actor Rupali Ganguly joined the BJP on Wednesday at the Delhi headquarters of the political party. Anil Baluni and Vinod Tawde, the leaders of the party, were also present. Ganguly praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his work, saying, "PM Narendra Modi is the one personality that attracts everyone towards the BJP."

"His working style, personality, and the way he has taken our country towards development, every Indian wants to join 'Modi Sena' and

contribute to the country, and I also felt the same, and hence I joined the BJP," she told reporters. Also addressing the media post about joining the party, the actor said, "When I see this Mahayagya of development, I feel that I should also take part in this. I need your blessings and support so that whatever I do, I do it right and good," she said.

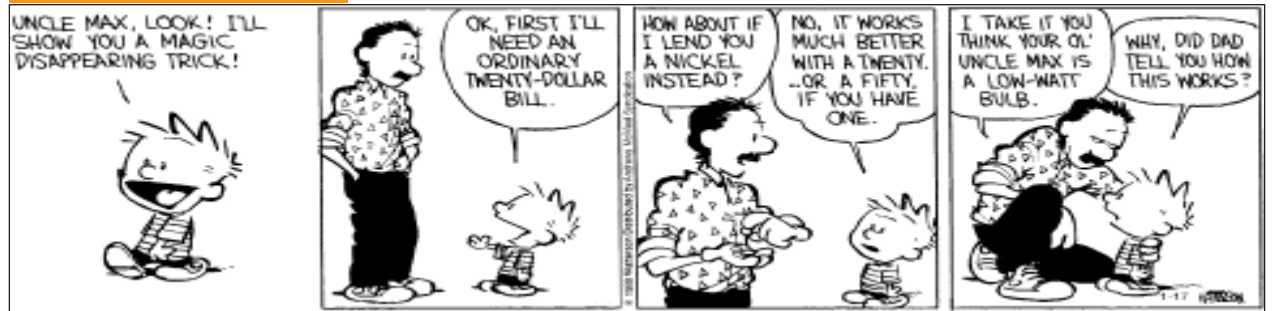


FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



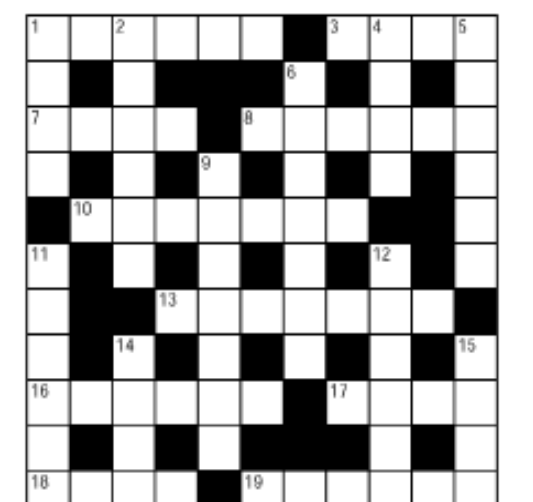
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- An eight-legged creature
- Small mark
- Opposite of succeed
- Well-mannered
- Spectacles
- Largest
- A stringed instrument
- Floppy
- Uncommon
- An imaginary fire-breathing monster

DOWN

- Not in danger
- A frozen drip
- Twosome

SOLUTION



GINGER MEGGS



Investing in skills by delivering opportunities in hospitality



SHIKHA DUGGAL

The Indian School of Hospitality and Sommet Education is delighted to announce a pioneering collaboration to unveil the Indian Talent Development initiative. The Sommet Education Foundation was in charge of this project. This initiative seeks to give youngsters chances for career advancement in the booming hospitality sector by investing in their skill sets.

Anouck Weiss, executive vice president of The Sommet Education Foundation, tells us exclusively about the initiative when we ask him about its progress. He begins, "The initiative was inspired by the urgent need to enhance skill development and employability among India's youth, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This is in line with the goals of the Sommet Education Foundation, which are to inspire young people to pursue jobs in the expanding global hospitality industry and to empower them through education."

One of the industries that is expanding the fastest is hospitality, which offers plenty of job and career options. So, he further adds, "One of the biggest issues facing society at the moment is youth unemployment and education. By eliminating injustice and discrimination, we hope to ensure that every one of our talents has the chance to realise their greatest potential. Our employees' success shouldn't be based on their nationality, origin, or level of education."

The initiative, however, overcomes the difficulties faced by underprivileged people by offering scholarships to enroll in ISH's specialised culinary programs, according to Kunal Vasudeva, co-founder of ISH. This immediate assistance removes financial barriers, and the partnership with Accor opens up more industrial opportunities by ensuring employment and practical training! The project deliberately seeks out people from different socioeconomic backgrounds to promote diversity and social inclusion. This strategy enhances the diversity of viewpoints within the hospitality staff, in addition to promoting the growth of the sector. Through esteemed international relationships,

The Pioneer brings to you The Indian Talent Development initiative, seeking to give young, opportunities in the hospitality industry, by connecting to Anouck Weiss in this exclusive chat.

such as those with École Ducasse and Les Roches, it considerably improves its training and immersive learning experiences. It also offers its culinary students access to top-notch knowledge and techniques, resulting in an outstanding culinary arts education. In a similar vein, their students will benefit from state-of-the-art hospitality management training. Through these partnerships, sponsored students are guaranteed an international education, equipping them with the skills necessary to succeed as leaders in the world's hospitality sector. The initiative comprises pre-qualified employment contracts and three months of on-the-job training at Accor properties to guarantee a smooth transition from training to the workplace. This ensures that students are well-prepared and confident!

Sponsored individuals are chosen based on their commitment to a hospitality vocation, potential, and financial necessity. To provide those selected the best chance of success, the selection procedure looks for persons who have a significant interest in culinary arts but lack the resources to pursue further study in the field. "All of the resources required for their studies, including tuition and access to cutting-edge facilities, will be provided to sponsored students. In addition, they will gain from practical training, industry professional mentorship, and an organised career path made possible by their network after graduation. The Sommet Education Foundation backs the project and counts on its extensive worldwide resources as well as long-standing dedication to and experience with high-quality training. It sets itself apart with 400 programs ranging from short-term hospitality vocational training to management and executive academic courses, spread across a global network of five highly regarded education institutions spread across ten countries.

This innovative method equips students to take the lead and succeed in the fast-paced hospitality sector. Transversal curricula include sustainability and responsible tourism, and universities encourage students' and graduates' ethical behaviour. This promotes awareness and the adoption of sustainable practices in the worldwide hospitality industry."

The initiative is expected to have a substantial, long-term positive impact on the prospects and standards of India's hospitality industry. The program intends to assist in the expansion of the industry and improve its contribution to the economy and community at large by developing competent professionals and leaders.



Deepika Padukone inspired summer looks!

From beachy waves to straight and chic hairstyles, summer is all about experimenting and flaunting your beautiful locks for a fun reset. Deepika Padukone's hairstylist, Yianni Tsapatori shares a round-up of four iconic hairstyles inspired by Deepika Padukone.

Yianni Tsapatori shares, "My style has always been a bit different as my forte is playing around with natural textures and creating unique hairstyles that compliment various hair types. Throughout my professional hairstyling career, I have been extremely mindful of protecting hair health by using the right tools and technologies. The hair care range aligns with my professional ethos as it helps to create multiple looks without causing extreme heat damage to the hair. The four Deepika looks can be easily recreated in the comfort of your home with the airwrap multi-styler. A must-have tool across seasons, and especially for some interesting spontaneous, minimalist, and comfortable hairstyles during summer."

Loose waves

You cannot go wrong with versatile and effortless loose waves. A trendy and easy way to style your hair whether you're heading to a casual gathering or a formal event, this look effortlessly elevates your elegance.

To achieve this look:

Start with towel-dried hair and attach the Coanda smoothing dryer, a multi-functional attachment that quickly prepares hair for styling.

Select the drying mode and choose the high speed and high heat to pre-dry your tresses to 70%.

Attach the firm smoothing brush to create a smooth blow-dry finish.

Select the high speed and high heat to smoothen out the frizz.

Now apply your favourite hair styling product and divide your hair into sections for effortless styling.

Attach the 30 mm long barrel to create voluminous curls and waves in both directions. Set the airflow direction to curl outwards from the left side of your face.

Wrap a section of your hair and hold it in place until dry. Set the curl with a cold shot for 5-10 seconds and slowly let go of the curl.

Next, change the airflow direction for the other sections of hair and repeat on the other side. Now run your fingers through your hair for a tousled look and you are done.

Old Hollywood Waves

Create beautiful, tousled waves to effortlessly embody a classy, chic, and relaxed vibe. Pair with a black outfit and stunning jewellery for an elegant look that's timeless and effortlessly glamorous.

To achieve this look:

Start with towel-dried hair and attach the smoothing dryer. Select the drying mode and pre-dry the tresses to 70% dry.

Attach the soft smoothing brush, known to

create a smooth blow-dry finish. Choose the medium speed and medium heat. Smooth out frizz.

Divide hair into 3 sections. Dived your back hair section further into 5 parts.

Attach the 40mm long barrel that will create voluminous curls and waves for longer hair.

Change the airflow direction to the left and choose the high speed and high heat.

Introduce the left section of your back hair to the barrel at mid-length and set with a cold shot for 5-10 seconds. Slide down to release the curl.

Change the airflow direction to the right and repeat for the right section.

Set your curls with a fixing spray and gently loosen your curls for the final look.

Big, bouncy blowout

For a chic brunch with your friends, opt for a glamorous style with big, bold curls.

Showcase your stunning curly hair by leaving it down and accentuating it with sparkling hair accessories such as a headband, tiara, or hairpins.

To achieve this look:

Start with towel-dried hair and attach the smoothing dryer and select the drying mode.

Pre-dry your hair to 80% dry.

Attach the volumising brush, known to create a smooth blow-dry finish.

Choose the high speed and high heat and smooth from roots to ends in sections until dry.

Attach the smoothing dryer that smoothes and hides flyaways.

Select smoothing mode and choose the high speed and low heat.

Start at the front left of the parting, glide from roots to ends, and repeat around the head. Add hair accessories such as stick-on pearls on a few front pieces of your hair to amp up your look.

Straight and chic

The classic straight, sleek hairstyle never goes out of style. Elevate this everyday look with the Airwrap multi-styler and keep your hair silky and frizz free until you wash it. Add hair accessories to add more flair.

To achieve this look:

Start with towel-dried hair and attach the smoothing dryer and select the drying mode.

Pre-dry your hair to 80% dry.

Attach the soft smoothing brush, known to create a smooth blow-dry finish. Choose the high speed and high heat and smooth from roots to ends in sections until dry.

Attach the smoothing dryer that smoothes and hides flyaways. Select smoothing mode and choose the high speed and low heat. Start at the front left of the parting, glide from roots to ends, and repeat around the head. Add hair accessories such as stick-on pearls on a few front pieces of your hair to amp up your look.



'I, to date, get anxious when my videos don't work'

TEJAL SINHA

Versatile artiste and creator, Harshita Gupta has had quite a challenging journey with a lot of ups and downs, which has led her to where she's been today. Her career began as a radio jockey, and she is currently producing comedic content.

Not something that she had preplanned; content creation had happened accidentally to her. Recalling her days back then, she shares, "I was a radio jockey, and there came this whole digital way where we started going digital, and my boss was like, 'You are supposed to do it', and it was around 2017. It was all about digital being the new shift and the new game. I was a very camera-conscious person because there were body issues and a lot more things in life ever since childhood."

She was not comfortable, and the only reason she chose radio was that no one would have to see her. "I have to speak in an empty room. It was like a perfect setup for me. Now for me to come in front of the camera was like me opening up to the world. But then my boss said, 'If you want an appraisal, you'll have to do it. So it was like 50 percent of it was radio and 50 percent of it was digital. And that's how I started making videos in 2017. Obviously, I was unnoticed for three years, but the only thing was that I never gave up. Even when nobody was watching me, I was constantly making content.'"

As she went on to recall the days of her self-confidence, she shared, "I was in my school, and there were a lot of people who had comment-

ed on my body. There were a lot of nasty comments that I got to hear. These comments used to pinch me so much that I used to come home and cry. And because of that, you know, my confidence had gone so low. I was very confident in my talent, though. One of the reasons I chose radio was that I was confident. I can speak. I had content to speak. I just didn't want to show my face."

In fact, this was just one of the examples. In another incident, she recalls, "There was this aunt of mine whose daughter had thyroid, and she passed on a comment and said, 'Chalo koi toh hai, meri beti ko competition dena.' It was like, dude, what do you mean by that? You know, that thing literally went so deep in my mind that when I was asked to make a video, all these things just flashed back in my mind. It was like, what if I put it on social media and people would say bad things about me? People will start saying it again in those comments on my post. but it was okay."

It was then that she somehow accepted it and began doing intense workouts for two long years with a rigorous diet. However, over time, she shares that it is through social media that she has gained immense confidence.

During her journey and transition from RJ to content creation, there was a day that actually brought her into a much bigger picture when one of

the videos went viral. She recalls, "We generally say that virginity ki FD karaenge kya and mai pre-marital ke pro thi. I was like, it's okay to have sex before marriage, and the video was just about that. It went viral like crazy. I don't think there was even one meme page that took up that video, and everyone gave me credit. They all started tagging me, and within a day, I was stuck at 35k an year and posted that video. My follower count straight up went to 50k+ in a day, and after that video, my followers reached 85k in a day. I was like, 'If this is what you wanted to say, I would have made the video before itself.'"

Comedy has been something that comes very naturally to her. However, there have been times when she ends up having a creative block in her mind. Initially, "I used to get a lot of guilt when I used to take a break. And this happens to everyone because there is no creator who can work continuously without getting exhausted or having any kind of creative blockage. So for the first time, I experienced this creative blockage! I simply just panicked. I was like, 'This is my career, and how can I get a creative blockage?' 'How am I not getting the idea?' I should be getting the idea. This is my everyday work, but then I read about it and saw a few interviews. I saw that it's common that, as you know, creative people do get the blockage, they do get exhausted, and they do need a break. Initially, it took me a while to take a break. They said that I was going to lose those people and thought that people would stop liking me. I will not be able to create content. There is a lot of self-doubt that came in within me."

People say that numbers are not important to them. However, she, on the other hand, shares, "Numbers are very important. You go to a brand. They would obviously not prefer someone who has 10K followers and tell them that they make amazing content; nobody would even care about that creator. The people who were saying that numbers are not important the day they don't get the numbers would be the ones who sit and cry and get anxiety attacks, to be honest. It has happened to the best of us. I personally know a lot of friends who have experienced that. I still get anxious when my videos don't perform. It's been seven years now. I have, you know, accepted all these things and have moved on. It's all about accepting that you are having creative blockage, and then you can do things you know, like meet friends or go shopping. It's not about you; at the moment, you can just not get anxious, saying, 'How is it going to happen? You just need a break.'"



Influencer and content creator Harshita Gupta, who has embarked on a whole different journey in her career, has gained immense traction on Instagram. In an exclusive chat with The Pioneer, she discusses her journey and much more.



SRH seek perfect chase against RR

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

An erratic Sunrisers Hyderabad would look to fix their chasing troubles and get their campaign back on track when they host the high-flying Rajasthan Royals in the Indian Premier League here on Thursday.

A lot more is at stake for the Sunrisers than the Royals, who have virtually qualified for the playoffs.

In ominous form till few days back, SRH dropped out of the top four on the points table after suffering back-to-back losses against wooden spooners Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Chennai Super Kings where they failed to chase down totals.

With five wins and four losses, the 2016 champions sit on the fifth spot with 10 points. The Pat Cummins-led side's top and middle-order batters have failed collectively while chasing, forcing head coach Daniel Vettori to admit that the

idea of going all out with the bat in the second innings might not be the right thing to do. SRH have breached the 250-run mark thrice this season but all while batting first. In contrast, they haven't managed to chase a total in excess of 200 even once.

"We have been successful setting totals and now we have to look at how well we are in chasing," head coach Vettori had conceded after the loss to RCB. "We're pretty well-suited to chasing, but it hasn't really come off yet. So yeah, it is something (we need) to work on," skipper Cummins had said after he lost to CSK.

SRH are too dependent on the explosive starts provided by Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma. And, while the duo gets going it's great but when they flop, SRH will want to do a better job at re-building their innings.

It's also about time Aiden Markram steps up and justifies his spot in the playing XI, having had an underwhelming



season thus far. Runaway leaders Rajasthan Royals, on the other hand, will look to continue their near flawless run.

The inaugural edition's champions have shown they are perfectly equipped to compete anywhere.

They are perched atop the table with 16 points -- four points ahead of second placed Kolkata Knight Riders. They are all but through to the knockout stage. The Royals boast of a formidable top order, comprising Jos Buttler, Yashasvi Jaiswal, and skipper Sanju Samson, with all three of them in good nick.

The West Indian duo of Shimron Hetmyer and Rovman Powell and youngsters Riyan Parag and Dhruv Jurel have also shown they can hit top gear.

They have an equally potent bowling attack comprising Yuzvendra Chahal, the experienced Trent Boult, Avesh Khan and Sandeep Sharma.

THE TEAMS (FROM):
Rajasthan Royals: Sanju Samson (c), Jos Buttler, Shimron Hetmyer, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Dhruv Jurel, Riyan Parag, Donovan Ferreira, Kunal Rathore, Ravichandran Ashwin, Kuldeep Sen, Navdeep Saini, Sandeep Sharma, Trent Boult, Yuzvendra Chahal, Avesh Khan, Rovman Powell, Shubham Dubey, Tom Kohler-Cadmore, Abid Mushtaq, Nandre Burger, Tanush Kotian, Keshav Maharaj.
Sunrisers Hyderabad: Pat Cummins (c), Abdul Samad, Abhishek Sharma, Aiden Markram, Marco Jansen, Rahul Tripathi, Washington Sundar, Glenn Phillips, Sanvir Singh, Heinrich Klaasen (wk), Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mayank Agarwal, T. Natarajan, Anmolpreet Singh, Mayank Markande, Upendra Singh Yadav (wk), Umran Malik, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Shahbaz Ahmed, Travis Head, Jaydev Unadkat, Akash Singh, Jhathavedh Subramanyam.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Australia fast bowler Brett Lee feels Lucknow Super Giants did not manage Mayank Yadav's injury well, suggesting that the young tearaway pacer was brought back to IPL action prematurely after being sidelined due to abdominal soreness.

The 21-year-old Mayank developed abdominal soreness during LSG's match against Gujarat Titans on April 7. That was his third IPL game, and he impressed one and all with his express pace and two Man-of-the-Match awards.

He made a comeback in LSG's win against Mumbai Indians in Lucknow on Tuesday but walked off the field without completing his fourth over after an injury scare.

LSG coach Justin Langer said the young pace sensation is feeling "sore in the same spot" that kept him out of action for almost three weeks, while captain KL Rahul that added Mayank had complained of slight pain in his sides.

Lee, one of the game's most feared fast bowlers, laid the blame on the LSG top management and medical staff.

Mayank getting injured in first game on comeback has to directly be on LSG leadership: Lee



He said Mayank's initial injury would have required four to six weeks to heal, much more than the time period the youngster spent at

the sidelines before being brought back. "A side strain or whatever they're calling it, normally takes at least four to six weeks

to even come right. We don't know the depths of how big a strain it was but for somebody who is pushing the limits of his body by bowling 150

kmph, that's not good management at all," Lee said in a JioCinema release.

"His first game coming back and getting injured, has to directly be on the leadership and the medical staff of the Lucknow Super Giants." The 47-year-old Lee, who took 310 wickets from 76 Tests between 1999 and 2008, sympathised with Mayank, saying he should have got the right advice.

"The only person who has to pay this price is this poor young guy Mayank, who is just electric. Everyone in the IPL has loved seeing what he's brought... You wish he got the right advice, so he doesn't have to go through and absorb this."

"Now, it's most probably going to mean that he's going to miss out on the World Cup if there's an injury that might come up."

At the Ekana Stadium in Lucknow on Tuesday, Mayank walked off the field after bowling the first ball of

his fourth over having taken one wicket for 31 runs. He was returning to action after missing five games.

Mayank made a sensational start to the IPL by taking six wickets in his first two games before getting injured.

He was later seen engaging in a conversation with India and MI pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah.

Former India batter Suresh Raina said Mayank must have got some valuable insight on how to manage injury.

"It was a fantastic gesture from Jasprit Bumrah to talk to the youngster. He has so much experience. When (Mayank) meets him, he will learn so much from Bumrah's words about looking after an injury. It's not easy to return from an injury and take wickets," Raina said.

"Team doctor Vaibhav Daga has worked with the BCCI before and helped Bumrah return to fitness as well. When Mayank bowls more with the red ball and white ball, I want to see him in Test matches when we play in Australia, England, or New Zealand."

"We haven't seen pace like this in India for a while. The tips Bumrah gives him now will one day be invaluable."



Pandya and all other MI players fined for slow over rate offence against LSG

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Mumbai Indians captain Hardik Pandya has been fined Rs 24 lakh after his team's second slow over-rate offence in the Indian Premier League during their match against Lucknow Super Giants here. All the other players, including the Impact Player, were each individually fined either Rs 6 lakh or 25 per cent of their respective match fees, whichever is lesser.

MI lost the match by four wickets at the Ekana Stadium on Tuesday.

"Mr Hardik Pandya, Captain, Mumbai Indians has been

fined after his team maintained a slow over-rate during Match 48 of the TATA Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 against Lucknow Super Giants on April 30, 2024," the IPL said in a statement.

"As it was his team's second offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over-rate offences, Pandya was fined INR 24 Lac.

"The rest of the members of the Playing XI, including the Impact Player, were each individually fined either INR 6 Lac or 25 per cent of their respective match fees, whichever is lesser," it added.

OTHER SPORTS

I want to be on that flight to Paris, says Krishan Pathak

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Krishan Pathak finds himself in a bizarre situation. He will have to battle it out with his friend and mentor PR Sreejesh for the lone goalkeeper's slot in India's hockey squad for the Paris Olympics.

In Olympics, a country can carry only a 16-member squad as against 18 players in other tournaments, and that restriction often forces the coach to sacrifice one goalkeeper to include another player in a different position. It happened in the Tokyo Olympics as Sreejesh did the custodian's duty during India's bronze-winning run, while Pathak watched the action from the gallery.

But this time, Pathak is not ready to give up the slot without a fight.

"The coach hasn't told us the team composition for the Olympics. My aim is to be ready 100 percent when

the call comes. There is a healthy competition going on within the squad to earn a place in the Olympics-bound team.

"Every player feels that he can be part of that squad. I am no different, and I want to be on that flight to Paris," Pathak told PTI during the team's training camp at the SAI centre here.

Pathak shares a deep connection with Sreejesh. In fact, the veteran was India's goalkeeping coach during the 2016 junior World Cup, where Pathak showcased his talent to a broader world for the first time.

The 27-year-old insisted that the competition for an Olympic berth has not affected their personal equation.

"It's dream for me to work with and play alongside Sree bhai. We are very comfortable with each other. We share a lot of information, especially when one of us commits mistakes. We point that out to each other.



"Whenever I commit a mistake, he will come and tell me what went wrong and how to rectify it. Similarly, I will do that when Sree bhai makes a mistake. We have a great bonding between us - on and off the field," detailed Pathak.

The immediate assignment in front of

him is the FIH Pro-League matches, starting at Antwerp, Belgium from May 22. India will face some top-flight teams like Germany and Belgium in that tournament. Pathak wanted to assert his claim for an Olympic berth through some strong outings in the Pro-League.

"We've played eight Pro-League matches in Ranchi and Rourkela. Now, we have some more Pro-League matches coming up ahead of the Olympics. We will meet some of those teams in the Olympics too. That familiarity will help us.

"As a goalkeeper, I will look to source as much knowledge from the Pro-League matches about our possible opponents in the Olympics," he added.

The Kapurthala man was all praise for Indian national team coach Craig Fulton, saying that the South African is helping the players to achieve their optimum potential ahead of the quadrennial showpiece.

"When he spots a weakness, he starts working on it immediately. He hates wasting time. When we went to Australia recently, our attack and defence were not working as we lost the series 0-5.



Tom Lockyer is at peace with prospect of retirement

AP ■ LUTON (ENGLAND)

Tom Lockyer, the Premier League player who suffered an on-field cardiac arrest earlier this season, says he is "at peace" with the prospect of having to retire from the sport.

The Luton captain had a defibrillator fitted after collapsing during a game against Bournemouth in December. He had previously collapsed seven months earlier during a game at Wembley Stadium because he suffered atrial fibrillation.

The 29-year-old Lockyer, who recently became a father for the first time, has not given up

hope of resuming his playing career. But he accepts that may not be possible.

"I've made no secret saying I would love to return to football, but ultimately it would have to come down to someone who's a cardiologist or a specialist who has done full research into what has gone on and if it could happen again, because we've got a little girl now and she takes priority," Lockyer told BBC Radio Wales.

"I would love to play football again, of course I would, it's my life but if it's the case that I can't, then I'm at peace with that as well.

PTI ■ CHENNAI

A Grandmaster much before the title was officially bestowed on her by FIDE recently, Indian chess player R Vaishali has revealed that there was a time she was unsure of being able to achieve the feat but managed to pull through owing to a good support structure.

Vaishali completed the requisite 2500 ELO points Llobregat Open tournament in Spain to become only the third Indian woman after Koneru Humpy and Harika Dronavalli to become a GM.

However, the title was officially given to her only recently following the FIDE Council meeting during the Candidates Tournament in Toronto last month. "After completing the (Women's GM) title, I knew it would be changed to GM someday. I did not think about the title so much," she told PTI

Happy that the title is finally out: R Vaishali on officially becoming GM

in an interview.

"Yeah, it took some time to get it official, but I'm happy that the title is finally out. I was okay with it (the delay)," she added.

The 22-year-old is basking in the glory of her solid performance in the Candidates tournament, where she won five consecutive games to finish joint second.

She became a Woman Grandmaster in 2018 after completing her final norm during the Riga Technical University Open in Riga, Latvia.

Having had to wait six years to finally earn the GM tag, Vaishali said she became a bit unsure of the GM tag after her ratings stagnated due to lack of com-



petition during the COVID 19 pandemic.

"In between, I could not play any tournament for two years due to the (COVID-19) pandemic. But, I was working throughout, trying to improve my game. I completed my

International Master (IM) cycle post-pandemic (in 2021)," she recalled.

"Although I was improving my game slowly, my rating became stagnant. There were some low moments when I felt I might not get the title, but people

believed in me and helped me to attain it," she said.

Vaishali is the elder sister of R Pragganandhaa, the 18-year-old who has been making waves for quite a while. Together, they became the first brother-sister duo to qualify for Candidates' event this year.

Talking about her relationship with Pragganandhaa, Vaishali stated, "We talk a lot about our games, which is natural since we have been playing together since our childhood.

"He helps me a lot with my game. It's great to have such a strong player at home with whom I can discuss more about the game at any time."

When asked about the support

she and her brother get from their parents, Vaishali described them as their "biggest strength".

"Our parents are the biggest strength for both of us. My mother accompanies us to our tournaments on most of the occasions. She takes care of almost everything, and we just keep focusing on our game," she revealed.

"Our father takes care of things like logistics, planning and finances. In fact, both of them take care of most of our needs, which indeed helps us focus more on our game. Really grateful to them."

Away from chess, Vaishali is currently pursuing the PG Diploma course in Human Resource Management.

However, she has no qualms admitting that she has no academic aspirations and is focused on professional chess with this month's Women's Masters in Norway being her next assignment.

'Last few minutes of *Aa Okkati Adakku* will be high on emotions'

K. RAMYA SREE

After a hiatus from comedy films, actor Allari Naresh is set to tickle the funny bones of audiences once again with his upcoming project, *Aa Okkati Adakku*. Directed by Malli Ankam and featuring Faria Abdullah as the female lead, the film marks a refreshing shift for Naresh, who has recently been associated with message-oriented movies. The movie is set to hit big screens on May 3.

In an interaction with the Hyderabad media, Naresh shed light on his journey and the inspiration behind his latest venture. Clarifying any connection to his father's film of the same name, he expressed, "We explored various titles, including 'Match Fixing', but given the comedic nature of the film, *Aa Okkati Adakku* felt most appropriate."

Reflecting on his career trajectory, Naresh noted the poetic irony of portraying a lead role in a film that shares its title with his debut as a child artist. "Life truly comes full circle," he remarked with a smile.

Delving into the storyline, Naresh revealed the premise of the film, which revolves around a settled protagonist facing marital pressure due to societal norms. He shared, "The hero in the movie is settled, but he fails to get marriage proposals because of age issues, and when people used to bug him about the marriage update, he would say, *Aa Okkati Adakku* and that's how we came up with the title."

"This was supposed to be released before *Naa Saami Ranga*, but it took some time. I shot parallelly for both films. I have been listening to stories from comedy genre films, but I wanted to do a full-length comedy film only if I liked the story because the audience perspective has changed over time. They are expecting witty stories. It was then that I came across this story," added the actor.

Discussing the evolution of comedy in cinema, Naresh emphasised the

importance of aligning with audience expectations. "Comedy films today require witty narratives. In addition to comedy, this film also has a message about the scams that happen in the name of marriage. No one has discussed such a concept in movies so far. I got connected to the story and the message it says. It was based on a couple of incidents on how people were cheating each other in the name of marriage," he asserted, underscoring the film's unique blend of humour and social message on marriage scams.

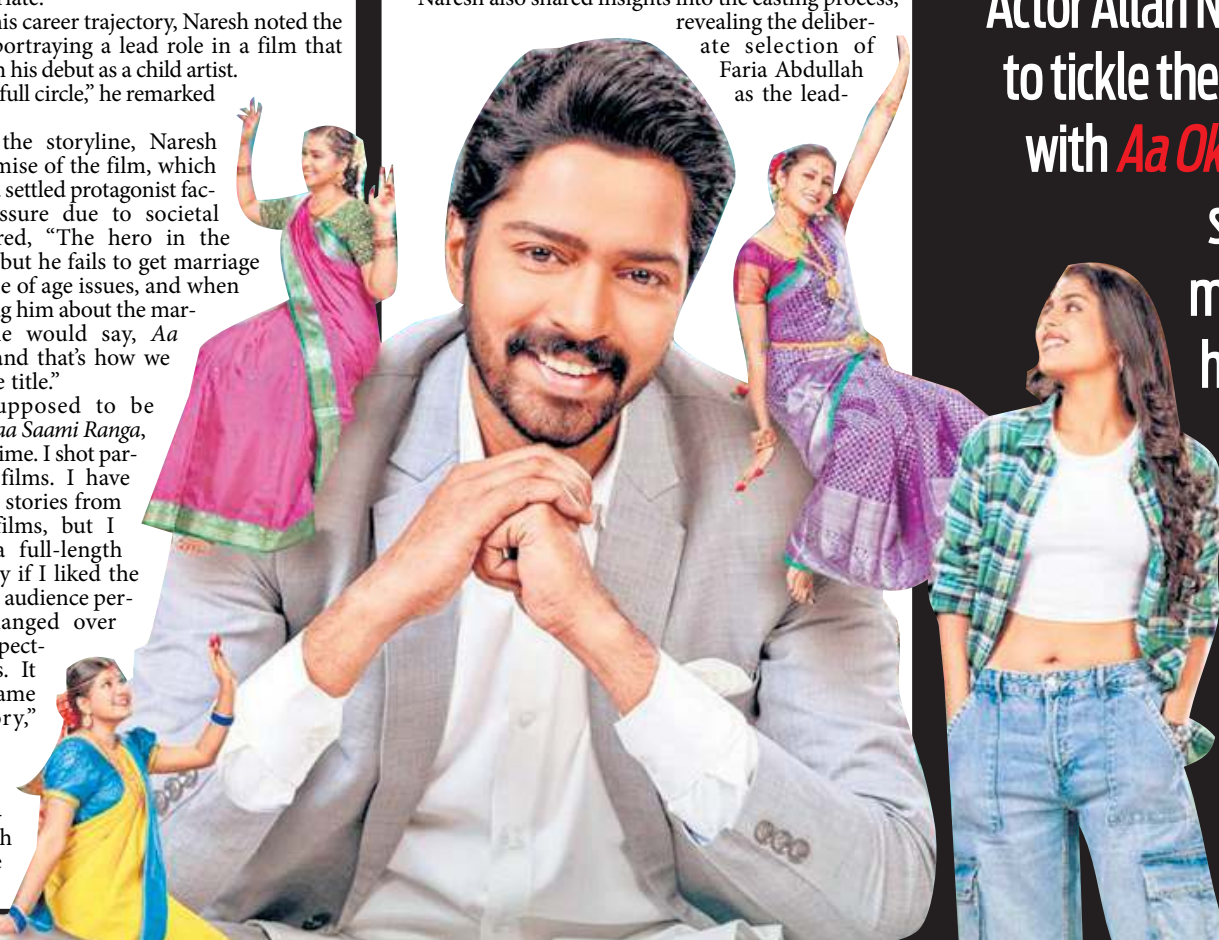
While the film promises abundant laughter, Naresh hinted at a poignant climax, suggesting a deeper emotional resonance. He shared, "While the whole film will be high on entertainment, the last few minutes will be high on emotions. There are many people who want to get married, but there are also people who wish they were not married. This film is for them."

Naresh also shared insights into the casting process, revealing the deliberate selection of Faria Abdullah as the lead-

ing lady to ensure on-screen chemistry and compatibility. "We were looking for a heroine who matches my height, and the chemistry must be good on screen. Even Malli Ankam wrote the story thinking of Faria Abdullah only."

As he returns to his comedic roots, Naresh expressed his joy in reprising the genre, noting its recent resurgence with quality content. "Comedy films, when backed by strong content, continue to resonate with audiences," he affirmed, expressing optimism for the film's reception. Lastly, with *Aa Okkati Adakku*, Naresh aims to entertain audiences while delivering a subtle yet impactful message, staying true to his legacy of blending humour with social relevance.

Actor Allari Naresh, all set to tickle the funny bones with *Aa Okkati Adakku*, speaks to the media here, as he sheds light on his journey and the inspiration behind his latest venture.



Pushpa Pushpa celebrates the uncommon journey of a common man

1st May, celebrated globally as International Labour Day, marks a special day this year as we welcome a new reason for celebration. *Pushpa's* story of a common labourer ruled our hearts when he burst onto the screens with *Pushpa The Rise* and now he is back to rule as the celebratory song of 'Pushparaj' was released on Wednesday in six languages to become the new anthem of ambition. The lyrical video that gives glimpses of the film titled *Pushpa Pushpa* is already creating waves all over the internet.

The video displays the power of brand *Pushpa*, which was teased in with the 'Hand of Pushpa' teaser, launched last week, setting audiences into a frenzy. The launch of the song puts *Pushpa's* stamp of authority on the world of entertainment with a scintillating hook step and brings alive the craze of 'Pushpisms', which have

become pop culture since the release of *Pushpa: The Rise*. Icon Star Allu Arjun proves once again why he is the star who cuts across every language and every border across the nation and rules our hearts and minds.

Music director Devi Sri Prasad, who won a National Award for the music of *Pushpa 1: The Rise*, has again created a heart-throbbing number. The groovy tune of the song is definitely an earworm and is set to top the music charts for days to come. The lyrics and the upbeat music are no less than a catalyst for the audience's overwhelming anticipation for

the film's release. The song is released in Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, and Bengali. Devi Sri Prasad has roped in popular singers like Nakash Aziz, Deepak Blue, Mika Singh, Vijay Prakash, Ranjith Govind, and Timir Biswas to sing the respective versions of the song. The music of *Pushpa 2: The Rule* is released all over by T Series.



Naveen Chandra honoured with Best Actor Award for *Month of Madhu*



In a tale that intertwines talent and lineage, Sukriti Veni Bandreddi, daughter of acclaimed director Sumukar, has secured the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award for Best Child Artist. Her stellar performance in the heartwarming film *Gandhi Thatha Chettu* has garnered widespread acclaim, culminating in this illustrious recognition.

Directed by her father, *Gandhi Thatha Chettu* has already left an indelible mark on the cinematic landscape, earning accolades at numerous film festivals. The narrative, rich with emotion and depth, promises to captivate audiences upon its imminent release for public viewing.

Sukriti is currently studying in

Grade 8 at the International School of Hyderabad. The film has been screened and awarded at many international film festivals in the past. At the Dubai International Film Festival and the Indian Film International Festival, Sukriti won awards in the Best Debutante Child Artist category.

In a testament to the depth of talent within the industry, actor Naveen Chandra has been honored with the Best Actor award for his compelling portrayal in *Month on Madhu*. His nuanced performance resonated deeply with audiences and critics alike, solidifying his status as a formidable talent in the realm of cinema.

Adding another feather to the cap of excellence, director Ajay Bhupathi of *Mangalavaaram* fame has been lauded for his exceptional cinematography. His visionary approach behind the lens has elevated the cinematic experience, earning him esteemed recognition at the Dadasaheb Phalke Awards.



Trailer for sci-fi thriller *Darshini* unveiled, set for May release

Excitement fills the air as the trailer for the much-anticipated science-fiction thriller *Darshini* was unveiled today. Produced by Dr. LV Suryam and directed by Dr. Pradeep Allu, this upcoming cinematic venture promises an enthralling journey into the realms of sci-fi. Starring Vikas and Shanti in lead roles, the film is set to hit theaters in May, eagerly awaited by fans of the genre. Under the banner of V4 Cine Creations, *Darshini* marks the maiden voyage into the film industry for its producers, who bring with them a wealth of knowledge and experience from their backgrounds as professors and scholars. Their dedication to the craft of cinema shines through in every frame of this ambitious project. The trailer unveiling ceremony was graced by senior producer KL Damodar Prasad, who shared his excitement about

the film's unique concept and narrative depth. Reflecting on his encounter with the *Darshini* team two and a half years ago, he praised their passion and vision for bringing this sci-fi thriller to life. Lead actor Vikas, acknowledging the challenges faced during production, lauded the dedication of the director and his fellow colleagues, underscoring their collective efforts to deliver a compelling cinematic experience.

As the release date draws near, anticipation continues to build for *Darshini*, with industry insiders and fans alike eagerly awaiting its arrival on the silver screen. With a blend of comedy, emotion, and romance, this sci-fi thriller promises to captivate audiences and leave a lasting impression in the annals of cinema.



Arambam trailer promises riveting cinematic experience



The anticipation surrounding the forthcoming emotional thriller *Arambam* has surged to new heights with the release of its captivating first look poster. Produced by Abhishek Viti under the esteemed AVT Entertainment banner, this cinematic venture is spearheaded by director Ajay Nag. Featuring a stellar ensemble cast including Mohan Bhagath, Supriya Satyanarayan, Bhushan Kalyan, Ravindra Vijay, Laxman Meesala, Bodepalli Abhishek, Surabhi Prabhavati, and more, *Arambam* presents a tale woven with intrigue and emotion, promising an immersive cinematic journey. Today marked a significant milestone as the makers unveiled the theatrical trailer, offering audiences a glimpse into the enigmatic world of *Arambam*. The

trailer plunges viewers into a gripping narrative, following the journey of a bold young man as he navigates through the shadows of injustice and conspiracy, embarking on a daring escape from captivity. With its rich visuals, compelling storyline, and powerful score, the *Arambam* trailer sets the stage for an enthralling cinematic experience. From the depths of confinement to the heights of liberation, the trailer introduces audiences to the pivotal characters and their intertwined destinies. Behind the scenes, the film boasts a talented crew, with Srinjith Yerramilli lending his musical prowess as the music director and Devdeep Gandhi Kundu capturing the essence of the narrative through his masterful

cinematography. As the excitement builds for the theatrical release, the makers of *Arambam* promise a thrilling treat for movie lovers, inviting audiences to immerse themselves in the gripping tale unfolding on the big screen. With its blend of suspense, emotion, and intrigue, *Arambam* is poised to leave an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of cinema enthusiasts.

Standalone

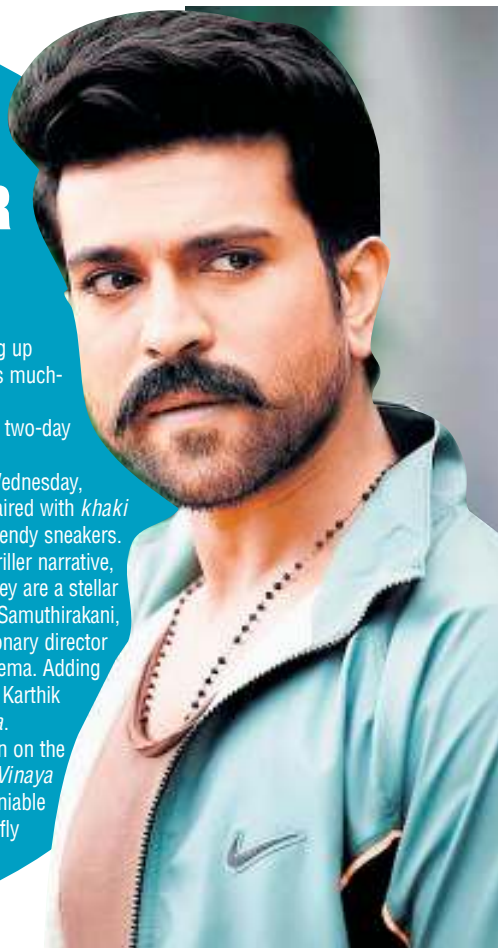
Actor Navdeep's astounding transformation into the character of Mouli has left fans in awe with its newly released video glimpse. The actor's remarkable transition is nothing short of extraordinary, promising an enthralling cinematic experience for audiences. In the glimpse, Navdeep's mass avatar as Mouli is a sight to behold, showcasing his dedication and versatility as an actor. The movie will soon grace theaters; however, a release date is yet to be finalised.



RAM CHARAN MAKES A SPLASH IN CHENNAI FOR GAME CHANGER SHOOT

Tinseltown's heartthrob, Ram Charan, has landed in Chennai, stirring up excitement among fans as he gears up to shoot sequences for his much-anticipated film, *Game Changer*. Sources close to the actor confirmed that Ram Charan reached Chennai for a two-day shoot of *Game Changer*, directed by S Shankar.

Ram Charan made heads turn as he made his way through the airport on Wednesday, exuding effortless charm in a casual ensemble. Sporting a crisp white shirt paired with khaki pants, he added a touch of flair with a stylish baseball cap, sunglasses, and trendy sneakers. *Game Changer* is set to redefine the genre with its Telugu political action thriller narrative, featuring Ram Charan in a new avatar. Joining him on this exhilarating journey are a stellar cast, including Kiara Advani, Anjali, S. J. Suryah, Jayaram, Sunil, Srikanth, Samuthirakani, and Nassar. Helming this cinematic extravaganza is none other than visionary director S. Shankar, renowned for his groundbreaking contributions to Indian cinema. Adding depth to the narrative is the creative genius of acclaimed filmmaker Karthik Subbaraj, known for his masterpieces *Pizza* and *Jigarthanda*. For Ram Charan and Kiara Advani, *Game Changer* marks a reunion on the silver screen, following their collaboration in the 2019 release *Vinaya Vidheya Rama* directed by Boyapati Srinu. With their undeniable chemistry and talent, audiences can expect sparks to fly once again as they share the screen in this highly anticipated venture.



Coolie makers land in soup as Ilayaraja complains!

Renowned music composer Ilayaraja has taken legal action against the makers of the upcoming film *Coolie* for unauthorised use of his music in the title teaser. Directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj, the film stars superstar Rajinikanth in the lead role.

The teaser for *Coolie* was recently unveiled by the producers, Sun Pictures. However, it has stirred controversy as it features a recreated version of Ilayaraja's iconic song *Va va pakkam va* from the film *Thangamagan*, without obtaining the composer's consent. In response to this infringement, Ilayaraja has sent copyright notices to Sun Pictures, highlighting

the violation of the Copyright Act of 1957. The notices also draw attention to director Lokesh Kanagaraj, accusing him of repeated instances of unauthorised use of copyrighted material.

Sun Pictures is yet to respond to the legal notices from Ilayaraja, and the matter remains unresolved. Meanwhile, fans and industry insiders await further developments regarding this copyright dispute, which has sparked debate within the Tamil film fraternity.