



the pioneer

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Published From: VIJAYAWADA HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN

QUOTE OF THE DAY The pioneer

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been collecting 'AA' tax in the nation. PM is doing a false campaign saying that the Congress is collecting 'RR' tax in Telangana. Alliance government will come at Centre and Rahul Gandhi will become PM



Komati Reddy Venkat Reddy, TG Minister P4

Cong's hand is with enemies of India: Yogi Adityanath

5

ANUSHKA SEN 'CAN'T HELP, BUT FALL IN LOVE' WITH K-DRAMAS

9

Ashu Reddy says, 'My body is SUPER DELUXE'

P12

DON'T MISS...

Mudragada's daughter to work..

YSRCP leader Mudragada Padmanabham's daughter M Kranthi has vehemently opposed her father's statement and made it clear that she would strive for the election victory of Pawan Kalyan. In a video message here on Friday, Kranthi said that her father Mudragada Padmanabham dared to change his name to Padmanabha Reddy, if Pawan Kalyan won from the Pithapuram constituency and she strongly objected to his statement. "I could not understand my father Mudragada Padmanabham's concept of changing..."

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Cong tally to be all-time...

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday asserted that Congress tally in the Lok Sabha polls will be an "all-time low", as the grand old party would struggle to cross even the "half-century" mark in the hustings. He also mocked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's decision to contest from Uttar Pradesh's Rae Bareilly seat, "sensing defeat" in Kerala's Wayanad, where he is a sitting MP. Addressing back-to-back rallies in the Bardhaman-Durgapur and Krishnanagar...

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Seven Adani group firms say...

Seven out of the 10 listed firms of Adani group have received show cause notices from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for alleged violation of related party transactions and non-compliance with listing regulations, the companies said in their regulatory filings to the stock exchanges. While group's flagship Adani Enterprises Ltd, renewable energy firm Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) and city gas distributor Adani Total Gas Ltd said SEBI sent...

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RCB, GT eye must win to keep..

From a maths perspective, Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Gujarat Titans can still reach the IPL playoffs, but they need to ward off inner gremlins on Saturday to notch a mandatory win to keep that dream flickering. The Royal Challengers are the bottom-dwellers with six points from 10 matches, while the Titans are placed eighth with eight points from 10 matches.

However, the floundering outings of Chennai Super Kings and Delhi Capitals (10 points each) have fuelled the hopes of...

-SPORTS

Do not fall for Naidu's hollow promises, Jagan tells voters

SEEKS MANDATE FOR YSRCP TO CONTINUE WELFARE SCHEMES

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has asserted that the upcoming elections will chart the course of the State for the next five years. In a fervent address during the Narasapuram election campaign meeting in West Godavari district on Friday, Jagan Mohan Reddy emphasised the importance of continued welfare schemes, he cautioned the electorate against viewing the election as a mere choice of MPs and MLAs.

"Kurukshetra war is going to happen in the next ten days. If you vote for Jagan in this election, all the schemes will continue. If you vote for Chandrababu, it will be the end of the schemes," proclaimed CM Jagan, evoking the stakes of the electoral battle. He further questioned the efficacy of Chandrababu Naidu's leadership, challenging the people to recall any substantive contributions made by the former Chief Minister to the welfare of the State's impoverished people.

- Jagan questions Naidu's legacy of tangible benefits for the poor
- Highlights YSRCP's 59-month track record of welfare initiatives
- Emphasises agricultural support and healthcare provision
- Urges rejection of Naidu's unrealistic promises
- Highlights YSRCP's fulfilment of manifesto pledges
- Symbolically contrasts YSRCP's achievements with TDP's failures
- Criticises Naidu's neglect of pensioners' welfare
- Accuses Naidu of deceptive campaigning
- Contrasts YSRCP's substantial pension increases with TDP's record
- Terms election as a choice between genuine welfare and empty promises



In contrast, CM Jagan Reddy extolled the accomplishments of the YSRCP government in implementing a slew of welfare measures over the past 59 months. With a particular focus on agrarian support, the CM delineated various initiatives to bolster farmers' livelihoods, including Rythu Bharosa, e-crop assistance, and free crop insurance. Moreover, he highlighted the provision of free electricity and input subsidies as further testimony to the government's commitment to rural prosperity.



CM Jagan's impassioned addresses across Narasapuram, Pedakurapadu, and Kanigiri epitomise the high stakes of the upcoming election, terming it a decisive battle between competing visions for the future of Andhra Pradesh.



YS Sharmila: CM shielding Avinash

PNS ■ KADAPA

APCC president Y S Sharmila has said that she has no money to buy votes but she has a strong intention of serving people. YS Sharmila, along with YS Sunita, addressed an election meeting in Mydukur on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, she alleged that Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy had misused his Chief Minister post to protect YS Avinash Reddy in the Vivekananda Reddy murder case. Claiming that she has no money to distribute to buy votes, she said that she has love and affection to distribute. "Mydukur YSRCP MLA amassed huge wealth by indulging in red sander smuggling, illegal gravel and sand extortion. The Mydukur MLA also grabbed government lands," she slammed. The APCC President recalled

Plea against Kadapa MP bail dismissed by TG HC

The Telangana High Court on Friday dismissed a petition seeking the cancellation of anticipatory bail granted to Kadapa MP YS Avinash Reddy in the Vivekananda Reddy murder case. The petition was filed by Shaik Dastagiri, an accused-turned-approver.

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that YS Rajasekhara Reddy laid the foundation stone for the construction of the Rajoli reservoir.

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Alliance govt will speed up Veligonda Project: PK

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Jana Sena Chief Pawan Kalyan has expressed concern over the alleged neglect of the Veligonda project under the leadership of Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy. Speaking at a significant election rally in Giddalur, he vowed to prioritise the completion of the project swiftly if his alliance secures power.

During his address, Kalyan highlighted the potential benefits of the Veligonda project, emphasising its capacity to provide irrigation water to 3.36 lakh acres in 23 mandals of the Prakasam district and an additional one lakh acres in the Nellore and Kadapa districts. He reminded the audience of Reddy's unfulfilled promise to hold elections only after the project's completion.

Kalyan accused Reddy of exploiting the incomplete Veligonda project for electoral gains, asserting that the project's tunnels were inaugurated without water before the elections to sway votes. He stressed the urgent need to address the issue of fluorosis affecting residents in Ongole and Kanigiri, underscoring

the importance of completing the Veligonda project and ensuring water distribution to mitigate this problem.

Criticising the YSRCP government's allocation of substantial funds for electioneering instead of prioritising the completion of vital irrigation projects, Pawan Kalyan assured voters of his party's commitment to addressing key issues such as irrigation, drinking water, education, healthcare, and employment generation if they are entrusted with power.

Encouraging voters to support the alliance candidates, Pawan Kalyan expressed dismay over the alleged harassment of Jana Sena activists by YSRCP leaders and vowed to contest against the YSRCP MLA candidate in Giddalur.

In a separate gathering in Kaikalur, Kalyan condemned Chief Minister Reddy's purported intimidation tactics toward voters, urging them to reject such approaches. He called for support for alliance candidates Kamineni Srinivas and Putta Mahesh Yadav in their respective constituencies.



Naidu blames Chief Secy for pension delay

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief N Chandrababu Naidu expressed his dissatisfaction to Chief Secretary KS Jawahar Reddy on Friday regarding the prolonged delay in the distribution of social security pensions to deserving individuals.

Naidu raised concerns that this delay seemed intentional, aimed at inconveniencing citizens solely for the benefit of the ruling government. In a letter addressed to the Chief Secretary, Naidu strongly criticised the actions of govern-



ment officials, stating that they have to prioritise the welfare of the people, devoid of any partisan con-

siderations. He highlighted a memorandum issued by the Electoral Commission on April 2, emphasising the timely distribution of pensions to elderly, disabled, and widowed individuals without causing undue hardship. However, Naidu lamented that this directive was ignored, leading to long queues and unfortunate fatalities among beneficiaries last month.

Naidu further noted that similar challenges persisted this month, with pensioners enduring discomfort while visiting banks under the scorching sun to access their funds.

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97.91% of pensions distributed

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government released an amount of Rs 1,945.39 crores for disbursement of social security pensions to 65,49,864 beneficiaries in the State. Pension distribution started on May 1 and as of date, 64,13,200 pensions (97.91%) have been disbursed.

5 AP villages will be merged back with TG: Cong

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress's Special Manifesto for Telangana assured that the Congress would establish a Bench of the Supreme Court in Hyderabad, merge five Andhra Pradesh villages with Telangana and revive the Information Technology and Investment Region (ITIR) project in Hyderabad if the Congress came to power at the Centre.

The All India Congress Committee (AICC) in-charge of Telangana, Deepa Dasmunshi, released the manifesto along with the TG Minister for Information Technology and Industries, Duddilla Sridhar Babu, who is also the Chairman of the Manifesto Committee, Vem Narendar Reddy, an Advisor to the TG Government



and other Congress leaders.

The Congress promised to implement the commitments made to Telangana in the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act and 23 other promises in the manifesto.

Addressing the gathering, Sridhar

Babu said the manifesto has been released keeping in view the state's requirements. He said that if the Congress came to power at the Centre all promises would be fulfilled.

The party has promised to set up

a rail coach factory in Kazipet, the Bayyaram Steel Plant, a mining university, an Indian Institute of Management (IIM) in Hyderabad and a rapid railway system by the side of the Hyderabad-Vijayawada highway as committed in the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014.

Five villages around Bhadrachalam, Yetapaka, Pichukulapadu, Purushothapatnam, Kannayigudem and Gundala, which were merged with Andhra Pradesh after the bifurcation of United AP in 2014 will be merged with Telangana to develop the Bhadrachalam Sri Rama Temple. These villages were part of the seven mandals which were transferred to Andhra Pradesh by the BJP-led NDA Government to facilitate the construction

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Kotia dilemma: Will people vote in AP or Odisha?

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The decades-long territorial dispute over Kotia villages, nestled in the picturesque hills of Eastern Ghats along the border of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, has once again come to the fore during the ongoing general elections across the nation.

With territorial rights being claimed by both the states, the matter is currently in the Supreme Court. People of these villages enjoy dual voting status, granting them the unique privilege of casting their vote in both states.

Geographically situated between the Araku Lok Sabha constituency on the Andhra Pradesh side and Koraput on the Odisha side, the Kotia villages have become the

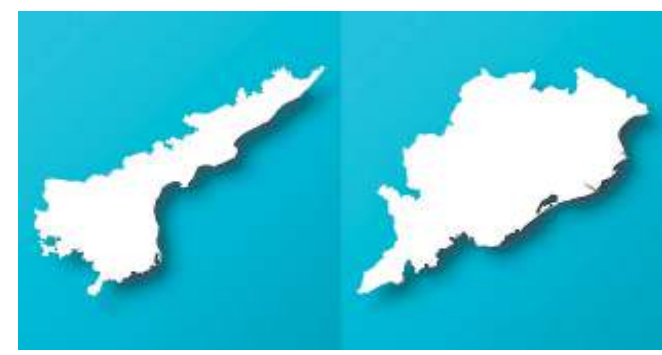
focal point of competition between the two states.

Both Andhra Pradesh and Odisha vie to extend various welfare measures to these 21 villages, each seeking to demonstrate its commitment to the well-being of the residents.

However, the upcoming challenge lies in the fact that the polling date falls on May 13 in both states, compelling voters to decide where to exercise their franchise.

AP and Odisha assembly elections are held simultaneously with Lok Sabha polls on May 13.

Underscoring the pressing need for a resolution to this impending crisis, the district officials of Parvathipuram Manyam district from the AP side and Koraput district on the other side have initiated



under nine Gram Panchayats. During the 2019 polls, the

Geographically situated between the Araku Lok Sabha constituency on the Andhra Pradesh side and Koraput on the Odisha side, the Kotia villages have become the focal point of competition between the two states.

talks for the smooth conduct of polls. According to C Vishnu Charan, Project Officer of Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) of Parvathipuram,

who is also the Returning Officer for the Saluru assembly segment under the Araku Lok Sabha seat, there are about 2700 voters in all those 21 habitations which come

authorities had set up polling stations outside the Kotia region due to the absence of a pucca government building. "These people have voter ID cards from both the states. The Odisha government has issued

the epic cards. AP government has also issued. So as long as the voting dates are on different dates, then it is not an issue. These people can go to Koraput's side and also our side, and they can vote twice," he said.

Most of the villagers have cast their ballots on both sides during local body elections.

A visit to any village gives a glimpse of signboards in Odia as well as Telugu. While the AP Girijan Cooperative Society office has Telugu signage, the Odisha counterpart will have their language. Thondangi Lakshmi, a resident of Doolbhadra said she was allotted a house by the Odisha government while the power line and free electricity were offered by AP. Doolbhadra also has two schools,

one in Odia medium and the other in Telugu. Two water tanks have been constructed by both states.

The villagers are free to collect free rice from both governments and when it comes to old age pensions, the Andhra government provides Rs 3000 while the other offers Rs 1000, the villagers said.

"If given a chance my family would like to be part of Andhra Pradesh," a villager of Nerla Valasa said. Gorla Satyavathi, Sarpach of Sarika village, alleged that during the local body elections in Andhra Pradesh in 2022, the Odisha police had created obstacles for voters who came to exercise their franchise.

A police official in the district said the villagers are free to approach any police station to file a complaint, if any.



Oppn's manifesto triggers a debate in AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The release of the election manifesto for 2024 by the TDP-JSP and BJP alliance has sparked widespread debate within political circles. The key points of contention include the feasibility of the promised initiatives and the proposed abolition of the Land Titling Act, which is currently inactive.

Critics attribute the Opposition's barrage of unfounded claims, led by TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu, to election anxiety, frustration, and a lack of accurate information. The manifesto's unveiling has led to confusion and scepticism among the population, as well as among employees and business owners. Estimates suggest that fulfilling the assurances outlined in the Opposition's manifesto would require significant financial resources, far surpassing the current allocations for existing YSRCP welfare programmes.



The BJP's decision to distance itself from the manifesto only added to the confusion, particularly regarding their stance on freebies, which they previously opposed citing concerns about dependency culture. Ironically, Chandrababu Naidu, who opposed free schemes from 2019 to 2023, has now made a U-turn, promising welfare schemes

Political analysts say it is unbecoming on the part of the TDP and Jana Sena to criticise YSRCP while it is the BJP-led Central govt which proposed the Land Titling Act

his tenure as Chief Minister yielding no such results, has drawn scepticism. Chief Minister Jagan's clarification, supported by RBI statements, highlighted the impracticality of Naidu's promises.

State government employees fear that the implementation of these schemes could result in delayed salaries and retirement benefits. There are also concerns about the government's revenue generation capabilities and its ability to meet its financial obligations to employees on time.

Critics question why Naidu, who criticizes the rising cost of essential commodities under CM Jagan's tenure, has not proposed measures to reduce prices. Additionally, concerns have been raised about potential tax hikes and price increases to offset the government's expenditure, further burdening the public.

The proposed free bus travel for women on APSRTC is estimated to cost approximately

YSRCP, TDP locked in keen fight

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

With around 3.60 lakh voters comprising both urban and rural, the Bheemunipatnam constituency in Visakhapatnam boasting one of the largest Assembly constituencies in North Andhra districts is brimming with political fervour as the election day draws closer.

Established in 2009 following delimitation orders, Bheemunipatnam has witnessed a political saga unfold over the years. Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao, who clinched victory in 2009 under the Praja Rajyam Party banner, later switched allegiance to YSRCP. On the other hand, Ganta Srinivasa Rao secured a resounding win in 2014 as a TDP candidate and served as the education minister. The 2024 election marks the third bid for Muttamsetti and the second for Ganta Srinivasa Rao in Bheemunipatnam. Both belonging to the influential Kapu community, heavily rely on Kapu votes, constituting a significant chunk of the electorate.

Ganta Srinivasa Rao has embarked on an extensive campaign trail, starting from



Annaram village, where he garnered substantial support in the previous elections. With the backing of Panchakarla Sandeep, Bheemunipatnam JSP in-charge, and Korada Raja Babu, Bheemunipatnam TDP in-charge, Ganta aims to sweep the majority in all wards. In contrast, Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao, a two-time MLA, boasts a firm grip on the constituency, bolstered by grassroots support and his daughter's position as a corporator. Aligned with YSRCP MP candidate Botcha Jhansi Lakshmi and garnering

endorsement from TV actors, Muttamsetti is leaving no stone unturned in his bid for re-election.

Bheemunipatnam, once a coastal suburb of Visakhapatnam, has emerged as a pivotal region, witnessing growth in tourism, the aqua industry, and the IT sector. Both parties promise development initiatives, with YSRCP envisioning the area's prominence under the prospective executive capital status for Visakhapatnam.

The long-standing land issue of Panchagramalu—encompassing Venkatapuram, Purushothapuram, Vepagunta, Advavaram, and Cheemalapalli—continues to disrupt the lives of residents despite decades passing. Although initiatives like GO no 578 were introduced during the TDP government's tenure, the problem remains unresolved, with subsequent administrations unable to provide lasting solutions. Furthermore, residents of Madhurawada, Kommadi, and neighbouring areas express distress over the proliferation of stray animals and inadequate street lighting.

AP in grip of freebie frenzy

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

With election campaigning by political parties reaching an all-time high, Andhra Pradesh is once again witnessing an uptick in freebies as a crucial strategy for garnering votes. This style, deeply inherent in Indian democracy, reflects a crucial initiative by political parties to swing public opinion through promises of welfare schemes and giveaways. Taking the lead in this electoral strategy is YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, who recently unveiled a vision-oriented manifesto filled with pledges of welfare schemes and freebies. Drawing upon the success of Navaratnalu schemes, which played a crucial role by giving a thumping majority in 2019, Jagan Mohan Reddy aims to extend financial support to diverse sectors.

Throughout Reddy's tenure, a significant amount of Rs

2,54,894 crore was distributed via Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) initiatives. Additionally, an extra Rs 1,70,873 crore was allocated to various schemes such as loans, scholarships, and subsidies. This sizable funding highlights the depth of Reddy's dedication to social welfare. Nonetheless, the temptation of giveaways extends beyond the YSRCP, with opposition leader and TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu also clinging to this strategy.

Naidu, known for his past populist policies, has included freebies in his campaign promises for both the 2014 and 2019 elections. In the same vigour, Naidu launched TDP's 'Super Six' manifesto for the upcoming 2024 elections, strengthening this pattern and outlining commitments to diverse groups, such as monthly allowances for jobless youth and subsidies for farmers.

1,052 voters opt for home voting in NTR district

Postal voting from today, home voting to be held from May 7-9

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao has announced that the district administration is fully prepared to conduct postal ballot voting and home voting for the upcoming general elections, which are scheduled for May 13. Over 23,000 voters have opted for postal ballots, including vote from home, in the district, he said. Postal ballot voting will commence on May 4, while the home voting will be conducted from May 7 to 9, he added.

Collector Dilli Rao visited the Postal Ballot Facilitation Centre at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation Stadium in Vijayawada on Friday. Later, along with General Observers Manju Raj Paul and Narinder Singh Bali, he explained to the political party leaders the usage of postal ballots.

Speaking on the occasion, Dilli Rao said that the employees who are engaged in the general election duties can use their postal ballots. Additionally, 1,052 voters who are above 85 years or differently abled have opted for home voting, he said. For them, the home voting process will be conducted on May 7, 8 and 9, he added.

He explained that 6,191 Presiding Officers, 5,115 APOs and OPOs and others have



NTR District Collector Dr Dilli Rao, along with General Observers Manju Raj Paul and Narinder Singh Bali, explaining postal voting and home voting at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation Stadium in Vijayawada on Friday

opted for the postal ballots. Another 2,642 voters in other districts have also applied for the postal ballots, he added.

There are seven facilitation centres in the district for postal ballots, he said. For the Tiruvuru segment, ZPHS for Girls is the facilitation centre. For Vijayawada West, KBN College, Vijayawada Central - PB Siddhartha Arts and Science College, Mylavaram - Dr Lakireddy Balireddy Engineering College, Nandigama - KVR Degree College, and Jaggayyapet - JVV ZPH for Boys are the facilitation centres, he added.

Plea against Avinash bail dismissed by TG HC

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in the case and Justice K Lakshman had reserved orders on the petition last month.

The High Court also granted full-fledged bail to Avinash Reddy's father Bhaskar Reddy in the same case. He was earlier granted interim bail on health grounds. The court,

however, refused to grant bail to the other accused G Uday Kumar Reddy and Sunil Yadav.

Dastagiri had alleged threats and intimidation by Avinash Reddy's 'henchmen' to 'influence' his deposition in favour of the MP.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) also filed a counter to Dastagiri's peti-

tion, with its counsel arguing that Avinash Reddy wielded considerable influence and had managed to sway certain witnesses in the case.

The Central agency highlighted several complaints lodged by Dastagiri, alleging threats to himself and his family members, asserting that



moth rally from Jagadamba Centre to Purna Market. The streets reverberated with the beats of Mahesh Babu's songs as thousands of supporters danced and cheered, lending an electric atmosphere to the campaign.

The overwhelming acceptance of YSRCP candidates was palpable as locals poured out of commercial establishments, expressing solidarity with Botsa Jhansi and Vasupalli Ganesh Kumar, the

candidate for the Visakhapatnam Constituency. From thumbs-up gestures to heartfelt salutes, the streets were adorned with displays of support for the YSRCP candidates. Representatives of the Krishna Mahesh Babu fan association, including Gajula Venkatarao, Ramana, CH Apparao, Subrahmanyam, Rambabu, and many others, lent their voices to the cause, further amplifying the rallying cry for change.

Naidu blames Chief..

Continued on Page 2

Despite the existence of efficient systems capable of disbursing pensions within a day in rural areas, Naidu observed that beneficiaries were still required to collect their payments in person from secretariat staff members.

Suggesting a more practical approach, Naidu proposed that instead of relying on secretariat staff for personal notifications, these employees could directly distribute pen-

sion amounts to the beneficiaries.

He decried the current situation as a political manoeuvre, particularly highlighting the freezing of bank accounts due to inactivity and the additional burden placed on pensioners to fulfil Know Your Customer (KYC) requirements.

With over 65 lakh pensioners grappling with various obstacles, Naidu urged for a swift resolution to alleviate their suffering.

TODAY
ALMANAC
 Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha
 Tithi: Ekadashi: May 03 11:24 PM to May 04 08:39 PM
 Dwadashi: May 04 08:39 PM to May 05 05:42 PM
 Nakshatram:
 Purva Bhadrapada: May 04 12:06 AM to May 04 10:07 PM
 Uttara Bhadrapada: May 04 10:07 PM to May 05 07:57 PM
 Rahukalam: 9:02 AM to 10:37 AM
 Yamagandam: 1:48 PM to 3:23 PM
 Varjyam: 06:51 AM to 08:18 AM
 Gulika: 5:52 AM to 7:27 AM
 Amritakalam: 02:47 PM to 04:15 PM
 Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:47 AM to 12:38 PM
VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
 Forecast: Mostly Sunny
 Temp: 43°C
 Humidity: 50%
 Sunrise: 5:41 AM
 Sunset: 6:28 PM
 Updated: May 3, 2024 5:00 PM

Don't fall for Naidu's...

Continued on Page 1

Turning to healthcare, CM Jagan touted the transformative impact of the Aarogyasri scheme, which offers free medical insurance up to Rs 25 lakh, alongside ancillary provisions such as Aarogyasa Asara and the establishment of village clinics.

He underscored the administration's resolve to ensure that no citizen incurs debt for medical treatment under its watch. Expounding on the extensive service delivery network facilitated by village and ward secretariats, CM Jagan elucidated the far-reaching benefits accruing from the deployment of volunteers to facilitate access to government schemes and services. He emphasised the elimina-

tion of corruption and discrimination in the dispensation of services, heralding a new era of transparent governance. In a scathing attack on Chandrababu Naidu's tenure, CM Jagan lambasted the former chief minister's unfulfilled promises, pointing to the glaring disparity between rhetoric and reality. He cited examples such as the failure to deliver on unemployment benefits and housing schemes as emblematic of Chandrababu's governance shortcomings.

Echoing these sentiments in Pedakurapadu, CM Jagan exhorted the electorate to repudiate Chandrababu Naidu's hollow promises and embrace the transformative agenda espoused by the YSRCP.

5 villages merged with..

Continued on Page 1

of the Polavaram Project by Andhra Pradesh across the Godavari River. The Congress has promised to revive the ITIR project in Hyderabad. The project was approved by the Congress-led UP Government but was scrapped by the NDA Government.

Sridhar Babu said the project would generate employment for lakhs of people and would change the face of Telangana as the state would be able to attract huge investments. Other major promises are national project tag for the Palamuru-Rangareddy irrigation project, a regional office of the NITI Aayog in Hyderabad, establishment of new airports, the Ramagundam-Manuguru railway lane, four new Sainik schools, increasing the number of Kendriya Vidyalayas,

doubling of Navodaya schools, a National Sports University, establishment of the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), establishment of the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) and the National Aviation University.

The manifesto also promised the transfer of Central funds directly to gram panchayats as per the 73rd and 74th amendments of the Constitution.

Other promises are solar-based electricity generating systems for all houses, the Hyderabad-Bengaluru IT and Industrial Corridor, the Hyderabad - Warangal Industrial Corridor, the Hyderabad-Miryalaguda Industrial Corridor via Nalgonda, the Singareni

Industrial Corridor, an international standard cultural and entertainment hub, national festival tag for the Medaram Sammakka-Saralamma Jatara and a new dry port. Deepa Das Munshi said now people want Rahul Gandhi to become the Prime Minister.

"A Congress government was formed in Telangana. Five of the six guarantees are being implemented in Telangana. We have released the AICC manifesto titled 'Panch Nyay'. The Congress will win 14 seats in Telangana in the LS elections," she said.

YS Sharmila: CM shielding Avinash

Continued on Page 1

If the project had been constructed, it would have been providing irrigation water to over one lakh acres now. However, the project was not constructed. Chief Minister Jagan Reddy laid the foundation stone to divert the Kundu River water to the Telugu Ganga canal but the project works did not go forward, she regretted.

"Do we need those who made hollow promises?" she questioned. Alleging that Jagan Mohan Reddy pushed the state into debt, Sharmila said Jagan Reddy failed to bring SCS by exerting pressure on the BJP-led Centre. Jagan Reddy also deceived the people by not fulfilling the assurance of filling 2.35 lakh vacancies.

Jagan Reddy meted out injustice to the unemployed youths by announcing a mini-DSC instead of a Mega DSC, she criticised.

Stating that Jagan Reddy-headed government has failed on all fronts, Sharmila said Andhra Pradesh state has been made a hub for ganja and drugs. "This election is being held between justice and injustice," she said, asking the people to support justice.

Slain YS Vivekananda Reddy's daughter Dr YS Sunita said that Jagan Reddy has no right to use the image of YS Rajasekhara Reddy. Only YS Sharmila has the right to use the image of YSR, Sunita claimed.

She asked voters to elect YS Sharmila and only then the soul of Vivekananda Reddy would rest in peace.

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Keen tussle likely in Nuzvid

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A fierce battle is underway in the Nuzvid Assembly segment as the incumbent MLA Meka Venkata Pratap Appa Rao, representing the YSRCP, faces off against Penamaluru MLA Kollu Parda Saradhi, now with the TDP.

This showdown marks a rare clash between two sitting MLAs within the district, with Pratap Appa Rao seeking his fourth consecutive victory, while the TDP endeavours to reclaim its former stronghold. With 2,38,981 registered voters, comprising both genders across Nuzvid Municipality, Rural, Musunuru, Chatrali, and Agiripalli Mandals, this constituency holds significant sway in the electoral landscape. Historically, the TDP has



Both contenders bring formidable political legacies to the table, with Pratap Appa Rao boasting local roots and Saradhi hailing from a lineage of political influence.

enjoyed success in Nuzvid, winning the seat five times since its inception, though recent elections have favoured the YSRCP. The current contest gains added intrigue with former MLA Muddaraboyina Venkateswara Rao's unexpected withdrawal, reshaping the dynamics of the race. His departure prompted a surge in confidence within the

TDP camp, particularly for Saradhi.

Both contenders bring formidable political legacies to the table, with Pratap Appa Rao boasting local roots and Saradhi hailing from a lineage of political influence. The withdrawal of Muddaraboyina further intensifies the competition, with both sides leveraging familial ties and

party platforms to rally support.

While TDP sees Rao's departure as an opportunity, YSRCP remains buoyed by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's governance track record and welfare initiatives. As campaigning heats up, both camps are leaving no stone unturned to secure victory in what promises to be a closely contested battle.

Cigarettes worth Rs 38L seized

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Vigilance and Enforcement officials raided a godown in Vijayawada on Friday and seized banned cigarettes worth around Rs 38 lakh. The godown owner has been identified as Bobbilla Srinivas from Guntur.

Venkateshwar Rao, Inspector of vigilance and Enforcement, said that the raids were conducted in the 43rd division based on a tip-off. An illegal cigarette godown was found during the inspection. Officials took control of the warehouse and initiated an investigation.

A case has been registered and an investigation is on.

3,075 habitations to get water supply through tankers till June-end

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



Chief Secretary Dr KS Jawahar Reddy has directed the officials of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development and Municipal departments to take necessary measures to ensure that there is no problem with drinking water anywhere in the State. The CS instructed the officials to take up work under the Jal Jeevan Mission after the 13th of this month with the approval of the CEO. He reviewed with the officials that the water was filled with water and also reviewed the situation of drinking water supply in the urban areas with the officials of the municipal department.

CS Jawahar Reddy made it clear that fresh water should be supplied through tankers to the drinking water-stressed habitations in the state. He clarified that steps should be taken to ensure that there is no problem with drinking water anywhere in the rural and urban areas. He ordered water to be distributed through tankers to the water-logged habitations till the end of June. He made it clear to the PR and RD officials that after the election on the 13th of this month, necessary steps should

be taken to carry out the work with the approval of the Chief Electoral Officer of the state. Since the screening committee has approved the projects, he said that appropriate steps should be taken to carry out the work quickly.

PR and RD Principal Secretary Shashi Bhushan Kumar explained to the CS that 28,56,000 people were employed in the state on Thursday. He said that 281 habitations with drinking water problems are being supplied with good water through tankers. A total of 3075 habitations have been permitted to supply through tankers till June. He explained the summer action plan in drought-affected zones.

Varudu Kalyani slams Naidu and Pawan for personal attacks

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Women's Wing president of YSRCP and MLC Varudu Kalyani, accused Chandrababu Naidu and Pawan Kalyan of resorting to personal attacks and lacking substance in their criticism of Chief Minister Jaganmohan Reddy's governance. Speaking to the media people on Friday, Kalyani highlighted the growing support for CM Jagan's preparatory meetings and slammed Naidu and Pawan for allegedly being unable to tolerate this surge in popularity. She criticized the opposition's manifesto, labelling it as floundering, and condemned their strategy of resorting to personal insults against CM Jagan.



leader emphasized that personal attacks against CM Jagan would not be tolerated and urged Pawan Kalyan to recognize Jagan Mohan Reddy's leadership as the incumbent Chief Minister.

Kalyani underscored CM Jagan's achievements, highlighting the significant electoral victories the party has secured over the years. She defended Jaganmohan Reddy's governance record, citing advancements in ease of doing business and economic growth. Furthermore, Kalyani challenged Pawan Kalyan to take action against individuals involved in land grabbing and other criminal activities, questioning his silence on pertinent issues such as railway zone establishment and Visakhapatnam steel plant privatisation. Kalyani confidently asserted that CM Jagan's welfare and development initiatives would ensure his re-election in the upcoming 2024 elections, dismissing the opposition's criticisms as lacking substance.

Referring to a recent event in Visakhapatnam, Kalyani expressed disappointment in Pawan Kalyan's failure to address his contributions during the 2014-2019 government tenure and instead opted for divisive rhetoric. The YSRCP



Children's heart surgeries performed successfully

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In all, 15 heart surgeries have been successfully performed by Heart & Brain Institute, Andhra Hospitals, in association with Healing Little Hearts, UK, from April 29 to May 4, which is the 29th paediatric cardiac surgical camp.

Dr Andrew Parry, Consultant Paediatric Cardiac Surgeon from Bristol, United Kingdom, performed 15 free heart surgeries along with the Andhra Hospital cardiac surgical team led by Dr Sai Ram, Dr Dorothy Lidbetter, Consultant Cardiac Intensivist, Dr Orjiti Banerji, Cardiac Intensivist, Kochurani Sebastian, Hayley Fitzpatrick and Alexandra Taylor from Bristol, UK, and Dr Sai Ram from Andhra Hospitals.

Dr PV Ramana Murthy, Managing Director, said that

the team has performed very complex heart surgeries for conditions like aorta-pulmonary window with Interrupted aortic arch, obstructive total anomalous pulmonary venous connections TAPVD, mitral valve (parachute) repair, Tetralogy of Fallot, PA banding etc. He said that their success rate was nearly 99 per cent, which was possible only because of the team effort of the paediatric cardiology team led by Dr Vikram Kudumula, the cardiac surgical team and paediatric intensive care team from Andhra Hospitals, and the UK team. He also said their children's heart institute team has been successfully performing children's heart surgeries regularly for the past nine years. So far, they have successfully performed more than 4,000 cardiac surgeries and interventions.

Banks turn into battlefields for pension withdrawals

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Pensioners across various districts are facing a harrowing experience while attempting to withdraw their pensions from banks. What should have been a straightforward process turned into a day of anguish and frustration for many elderly citizens. The issue stemmed from the government's decision to deposit pension funds directly into bank accounts, a departure from the previous practice of disbursing pensions at secretariats. While this move aimed to streamline the process, it inadvertently created a tide of difficulties for pensioners.



Reports flooded in from various districts, detailing the plight of elderly individuals standing under the scorching sun, enduring long queues and bureaucratic hurdles just to access their rightful pensions. The ordeal didn't end with the wait; once inside the banks, pensioners were met with a variety of challenges. Some were turned away due to incomplete paperwork or unfulfilled KYC requirements, while others faced deductions

from their pension amounts for ATM charges, SMS fees, and maintenance costs, leaving them with significantly reduced funds. Others faced bureaucratic misleadings, with bank officials directing them back and forth between branches without a clear resolution. The frustration among pensioners reached its peak as they lamented the government's lack of consideration for their difficult situation. Many voiced their grievances, expressing how they relied solely on these pensions for their livelihood and how the added complications posed significant hardships. Adding fuel to the fire, accusations flew as the opposition party, YCP, accused the ruling government of deliberately causing distress to pensioners for political gain. YCP candidates seized upon this issue during their election campaigns, alleging that the government's actions were aimed at undermining their party's support base. In response, the Election Commission intervened, directing that pensions should not be distributed through partisan channels.

Bangar Raju, a resident of Thatchetlapalem, expressed his dismay, stating, "I am living on a pension. Do we deserve this kind of difficulty at this age? It is very unfair for the government to do this." Muthyalamma from NAD Kotha Road, echoed similar sentiments, sharing her frustration at the lack of clarity regarding pension distribution locations. The situation boiled down to a simple yet profound question: why subject vulnerable pensioners to such unnecessary hardship? As pensioners returned home empty-handed, their disillusionment with the system was palpable. The government's promise of convenience through direct deposit had instead transformed into a nightmare for those who could least afford it.

Balayya hits out at Jagan in Vizag roadshow

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Film actor and Hindupur MLA Nandamuri Balakrishna, criticized the current government led by Jaganmohan Reddy, calling for democratic change in the upcoming elections. He highlighted various grievances against the ruling party's policies and actions. During his speech at a roadshow in the city, Balakrishna denounced the Jagan-led government's approach, accusing them of unjustly grabbing land and exploiting resources for personal gain. He specifically pointed out alleged corruption involving sand mining and the sale of substandard liquor, implicating the ruling party in these practices.

He praised the leadership of Chandrababu Naidu within the TDP and urged voters to support candidates aligned with the alliance for the betterment of Andhra Pradesh.



Furthermore, Balakrishna condemned the government's failure to complete key projects

like Polavaram and its imposition of heavy financial burdens on the people through increased electricity charges, petrol prices, and taxes. He warned against what he perceived as a deteriorating state of governance, suggesting that the government was willing to resort to oppressive measures to maintain its control. Expressing scepticism towards the ruling party's promises and actions, Balakrishna reminded the constituents of the legacy of Telugu Desam Party (TDP) founder NT Rama Rao, emphasising the need for leaders committed to the welfare of the people. He praised the leadership of Chandrababu Naidu within the TDP and urged voters to support candidates aligned with the alliance for the betterment of Andhra Pradesh.

In a separate address, M Sribharat, a candidate for the Visakhapatnam Lok Sabha seat, underscored the importance of coalition candidates winning with a significant majority to effect meaningful change. He criticized the ruling party's alleged obstructionism and emphasized the need for elected representatives to prioritize the welfare of the people over partisan interests. Sribharat also advocated for better opportunities for higher education graduates, condemning their exploitation for political gains and stressing the

importance of job creation. He cited the previous TDP government's track record of job creation as evidence of the coalition's commitment to development and welfare.

Additionally, PVGR Naidu (Ganababu) highlighted the need for a united opposition to challenge the ruling party's dominance, emphasizing the importance of effective representation in Parliament for the people of Visakhapatnam. He called on voters to support educated and capable candidates who understand the needs of the region. Alliance candidate for Visakhapatnam North Assembly constituency Vishjukumar Raju of BJP urged voters to reject the ruling party and support alliance candidates for a better future for the state and its children.



TTD gears up for summer rush at Tirumala

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

During the monthly Dial your EO programme at the TTD Administrative Building in Tirupati on Friday, EO AV Dharma Reddy shed light on crucial pilgrim initiatives tailored for the summer rush and forthcoming festivals slated for May in Tirumala and other TTD sub-temples.

In light of the anticipated surge in summer visitors, the recommendation letters for VIP break darshan have been suspended, now reserved exclusively for protocol VIPs. To ensure the comfort of pilgrims, provisions such as food, butter-milk, drinking water, breakfast, and medical facilities are being continuously supplied along the queues and compartments.

To alleviate the scorching summer heat, shelters, coolants, and carpets have been installed in the temple precincts and other high-traffic areas frequented by devotees. Additionally, the grounds are regularly sprinkled with water for added relief.

Temporary resting sheds have been erected in Narayangiri Gardens and surrounding temple areas for pilgrims to unwind.

HEATWAVE IN R'SEEMA LIKELY OVER NEXT 3 DAYS

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The Meteorological Centre has issued warnings of impending heatwave conditions at isolated locations in Rayalaseema over the next three days. Similar conditions are anticipated in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh within the next 48 hours, followed by South Coastal Andhra Pradesh on May 4 and 5.

Hot and humid weather is forecasted for isolated areas in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh from May 5 to 7, while the discomfort is expected to extend to South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema on May 6 and 7. Additionally, thunderstorms, accompanied by lightning and gusty winds ranging from 30 to 40 kmph, may occur at isolated spots in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema over the next five days, and in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh from May 4 to 7. Light rain or thundershowers are anticipated at one or two locations in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema within the next seven days, and in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh from May 4 to 9.

Dry weather is expected to persist in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next 24 hours. The trough from south Chhattisgarh to south Tamil Nadu is currently positioned from south Chhattisgarh to Rayalaseema across Telangana at 0.9 km above mean sea level.

TICKET CHECKING

BZA Division achieves recording earnings

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In yet another unprecedented feat, Vijayawada Division, South Central Railway, has achieved the highest-ever ticket-checking earnings of Rs.7.96 crore in April. Narendra A. Patil, Divisional Railway Manager, said that this is the highest-ever earning recorded in a month in the history of Vijayawada Division.

Rs 7.96 crore was collected in April



He added that the previous highest was Rs.7.36 crore registered in March and during April, 44,249 cases of ticketless travel were registered and a penalty of Rs.4.25 crore was realized; 51,271 cases of irregular travel were recorded and a fine of Rs.2.79 crore was collected from passengers. As many as 548 cases of pas-

sengers travelling with unbooked luggage were also fined in April, bringing in a fine of Rs.1 lakh. In other cases, a fine of Rs.91 lakh was realised.

Rambabu Vavilapalli, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, congratulated the ticket-checking staff for their impressive performance during the month. He asked the ticket-checking staff of Amenities Depot to attend to the needs of passengers and be courteous, prompt and vigilant while on duty.

The Senior DCM also appealed to the passengers purchasing the reserved Tatkal/normal journey tickets at PRS counters to compulsorily carry the original counter ticket, else it would be treated as irregular travel and full fare shall be released from the passengers.

He also recommended the usage of the UTS mobile app and ATMs in promoting digital, paperless and cashless transactions to avoid last-minute rushes, and queues for a hassle-free ticketing experience.

Narendra Patil complimented the ticket-checking team and Commercial Department Officers for achieving this exemplary feat. He also congratulated the entire Commercial Department for their continuous efforts in curbing ticketless and irregular travel. The DRM said that Vijayawada Division has been continuously undertaking intensive ticket-checking drives to curb unauthorised travel and curtail any inconvenience to the bonafide rail passengers.

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: **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 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	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.Ps and M.L.As for the state of A.P., RPF, Kadapa	Crime No.8/2022,	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

Ambedkar & reservations: A betrayal from Nehru to Rahul

I have been wondering whether there is any other parallel in the world to the condition of Scheduled Castes in India. I cannot find any. And yet, why is no relief granted to the Scheduled Castes? Compare the concern the Government shows over safeguarding the Muslims. The Prime Minister's whole time and attention is devoted to the protection of the Muslims. I yield to none, not even to the Prime Minister, in my desire to give the Muslims of India the utmost protection wherever and whenever they stand in need of it. But what I want to know is, are the Muslims the only people who need protection?"

If I had told you that this was a statement made by a Member of Parliament (MP) when the Congress was in power and asked you to guess its author, most of you would have con-

cluded that it must be an MP from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Who else would accuse the Congress - which put the word 'Secularism' in the Preamble to our Constitution - of playing communal politics? Who else would accuse the Congress party and its Prime Minister of putting one minority community, especially the Muslims, above everyone else in the country, including the Scheduled Castes? Doesn't this sound eerily similar to what Prime Minister Modi had accused the Congress of doing only recently, especially about Reservations?

Yet, you would be wrong. The above quote is an excerpt from Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar's speech on 10th October 1951, explaining why he resigned from Jawaharlal Nehru's Cabinet as India's first Law Minister. Dr BR Ambedkar, fondly called

Not only Jawaharlal, but decades later, Rajiv Gandhi, Nehru's grandson, expressed similar opposition in the Lok Sabha on reservations. This time, it was on reservations for the OBCs (Other Backward Classes) based on the Mandal Commission report. Under Indira and Rajiv, the Congress put the report in cold storage for a decade.

Babasaheb Ambedkar, is revered across India for his prime role in drafting our Constitution and incorporating affirmative action in the form of Reservations for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) into our Constitution.

Dr Ambedkar's fight for equal rights and opportunities, especially for SCs, STs and women, put him in the crosshairs of Jawaharlal Nehru and his descendants, who took over the Congress. The Congress, which became the personal fiefdom of the Nehru

dynasty, could never pardon Babasaheb for exposing Nehru. Congress saw to it that Babasaheb Ambedkar lost from the Bombay North Central constituency in the first elections to the Lok Sabha after the adoption of our Constitution, conducted in 1951-52 and again in the by-poll from Bhandra constituency in 1954. The grudge the Congress held for Babasaheb becomes evident when we realise that it took the BJP-supported VP Singh government to unveil Babasaheb's portrait in Parliament and honour him with the Bharat Ratna.



KISHORE POREDDY

What explains the Congress's antipathy towards Dr Ambedkar? Is it his success in introducing reservations? It appears so. Please look at this excerpt from Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's letter to the country's chief ministers. "I dislike any kind of reservation, more particularly in services. I react strongly against anything

which leads to inefficiency and second-rate standards. I want my country to be a first-class country in everything. The moment we encourage the second-rate, we are lost."

Not only Jawaharlal, but decades later, Rajiv Gandhi, Nehru's grandson, expressed similar opposition in the Lok Sabha on reservations. This time, it was on reservations for the OBCs (Other Backward Classes) based on the Mandal Commission report. Under Indira and Rajiv, the Congress put the report in cold storage for a decade. Finally, the BJP-supported VP Singh government implemented the report, giving 27% reservations in government jobs to OBCs despite Rajiv's efforts to stall the move. Rajiv raised multiple arguments, including that society needed more time to be ready, the report was unscientific, and only a few among the

OBCs would corner all benefits and much more.

However, Rajiv's real reason for opposing reservations for OBCs seems to be that it did not include religion-based reservations for minorities. He said: "Sir, the fact of the matter is that minorities have not got their due. The fact of the matter is that by playing games with this reservation, they have deliberately blocked the minorities from getting any benefit. The Prime Minister should answer how he is going to help the socially and educationally backward minority communities."

The Congress calls the BJP communal on the reservations issue because the BJP has consistently sided with Dr Ambedkar and fiercely rejected religion-based reservations. Narendra Modi extended the gambit of reservations by providing an additional 10% to the Economically Backward

Classes (EBC), irrespective of religion.

On the other hand, the Congress, from Nehru to Rahul, consistently maintained a dual stance. They opposed reservations and simultaneously advocated religion-based reservations to benefit minorities, especially Muslims. Yet, the Congress, through propaganda, had convinced many to believe that they were the true inheritors of Dr Ambedkar's legacy and supporters of reservations for those who faced discrimination under the Hindu caste system. With the advent of the internet and social media, their propaganda will not survive for long. It will be exposed, just like the fake, doctored video they created of Home Minister Amit Shah in an attempt to portray the BJP as against reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs.

(The author is BJP TS spokesperson.)

I am committed to welfare of V'wada people: Kesineni Nani

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

"I have a dream for the development of Vijayawada and the welfare of its people. With the support of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, I believe I can make this a reality. Besides, I have plans to get more funds from the Central government by using my reputation. When I joined YSRCP, I spoke about my dream projects and their importance to YS Jagan Mohan Reddy," said sitting MP and Vijayawada Lok Sabha YSRCP candidate Kesineni Srinivas alias Nani.

Addressing a Meet the Press programme held at the Vijayawada Press Club in Vijayawada on Friday, MP Nani exuded confidence of registering his hat-trick win from Vijayawada. Also, he said there would be no need to conduct a campaign for his victory. However, he is visiting all seven Assembly constituencies in the Vijayawada Lok Sabha segment.



Vijayawada YSRCP candidate Kesineni Srinivas (Nani) speaking at a Meet-the-Press organised by Press Club in Vijayawada on Friday (Photo: Ch. Vijaya Bhaskar)

"There is no doubt at all that YSRCP would win all seven Assembly segments and Vijayawada Parliamentary constituency. The Opposition TDP would suffer a second defeat. YSRCP will win all 175 MLA seats and play a pivotal role at the Centre," he said.

Further, he said that his dream projects would be materialised with the cooperation of the State and Central govern-

ments. He stated that he is not ready to disclose his dream project's details.

"I don't wish to gain anything from the government except for the necessary permissions to carry out my dream projects. My Jenda and agenda is the development of Vijayawada," he added. Furthermore, he said he had done a lot for the development of Vijayawada and the welfare of the people with the

collaboration of Tata Trust.

He said that the Vijayawada-Nagpur Greenfield Express Highway was sanctioned and the land acquisition was completed. It will be completed within one-and-a-half years. The new Greenfield Express Highway would cut the journey time from 18 hours to 13 hours. Also, West Bypass (National Highway-16) will be completed in six months and then, they will concentrate on the East Bypass, he said. He said the Metro Rail Project would not be viable for Vijayawada, and was against it.

He said that former MPs who represented Vijayawada, including TDP's Gadde Rama Mohana Rao, have faced no corruption allegations. However, the present candidate Chinni has a criminal history. So, he decided to defeat him. MP Nani explained various cases registered against Chinni. Also, Chinni has given false information in his election affidavit, he said.

Mudragada's daughter to work for PK's win

PNS ■ KAKINADA

YSRCP leader Mudragada Padmanabham's daughter M Kranthi has vehemently opposed her father's statement and made it clear that she would strive for the election victory of Pawan Kalyan.

In a video message here on Friday, Kranthi said that her father Mudragada Padmanabham dared to change his name to Padmanabha Reddy, if Pawan Kalyan won from the Pithapuram constituency and she strongly



objected to his statement. "I could not understand my father Mudragada Padmanabham's concept of changing his name if Pawan Kalyan wins the election. Mudragada Padmanabham's admirers and followers are also opposing his statement," she claimed.

Mudragada Padmanabham's admirers and followers are also opposing his statement," she claimed.

Kranthi slammed Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy as using her father Mudragada Padmanabham to abuse Pawan Kalyan. After the election, Jagan Mohan Reddy will ignore him, she stated. Mudragada's daughter made it clear that she would strive hard for the win of Pawan Kalyan in the Pithapuram constituency.

It may be mentioned here that two days ago Mudragada

Padmanabham dared to change his name to 'Padmanabha Reddy' if he could not ensure the defeat of Pawan Kalyan in the Pithapuram constituency.

Interestingly, Mudragada Padmanabham responded to his daughter's statement, objecting to his challenge of changing his name. Mudragada said: "My daughter is not my property after marriage as she belongs to her mother-in-law. I do not fear anyone and I will remain a servant of Jagan Mohan Reddy forever.

Modi imposed 'AA tax': Komatireddy Venkat

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Ministers Komatireddy Venkat Reddy and Dudilla Sridhar Babu said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been collecting 'AA' tax (Ambani-Adani tax) across the nation.

Addressing the media during Congress Graduates MLC candidate Theenmar Mallanna's nomination filing programme R&B Minister Venkat said that Modi is engaging in a campaign of lies by saying that the Congress is collecting 'RR' tax in Telangana.

He said that the KCR's BRS would cease to exist after Parliament elections and that KCR's general health and mental condition might not be good as he is speaking differently.

He said that voting for the BRS is nothing but dropping it in the Musi River and that a coalition government will take over at the Centre with Rahul Gandhi as the PM.

IT Minister Sridhar Babu



said that it is ridiculous for Modi to say that a 'RR' tax is being imposed on Telangana. He said that Modi and Ambani taxes are being imposed on the nation and that all medals would go to the NDA for corruption.

Sridhar Babu criticised Modi for levelling allegations against the Congress government in Telangana as it took over just four months ago.

He said that the Congress would certainly implement all the guarantees and provide a corruption-free admin in Telangana.

AP Red Cross sets up 'cool shelter'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In all 26 districts of Andhra Pradesh, the district branches of India Red Cross (IRCS) have responded to the call given by its Dr Sridhar Reddy, chairman, IRCS, AP SB, and erected family tents at strategic and vulnerable locations like Government General Hospitals, government offices, and e-Seva kendras as a cool shelter for people.

Every Red Cross shelter is provided with cool water and in some places, ORS packets are being distributed to combat dehydration and sun

stroke. These Red Cross services at public places are attracting the public.

AP Red Cross pressed into service Mobile Water Kiosk in Vijayawada town from Friday in view of the scorching heat. The heatwaves added to the high temperatures have made lives miserable for the people on roads. The Mobile Water Kiosk is serving cool water from 11 am to 5 pm in the city.

BVS Kumar, State Coordinator of AP Red Cross Blood Banks and Projects, has said that this will continue for two months across the State.



SRM-AP hosts 'Academia-Social Sector Dialogue'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Easwari School of Liberal Arts, SRM University-AP, hosted the highly anticipated Academia-Social Sector Dialogue event, aiming to foster collaboration between academia and the social sector. The event brought together experts, social actors, scholars, practitioners, and students to engage in insightful discussions about the intersection of education and social sector development.

The event, convened by Prof Vandana Swami, brought together a distinguished array of social sector leaders, academicians from various States across India, deans, faculties, and students. It was a day of enlightening discussions and



knowledge exchange, aiming to bridge the gap between academia and the social sector.

Prof Vishnupad, Dean of Easwari School of Liberal Arts, expressed satisfaction over the event's outcomes, stating, "We

are delighted to have facilitated this enriching exchange between academia and the social sector. The discussions were not only insightful but also generative, paving the way for potential future collabora-

tions between students and social sector organisations that can bring about positive change in the society."

A highlight of the event was the keynote speech by Amitabh Behar, Global Executive

Director of OXFAM. Behar's insights sparked discussions among attendees, leading to reflection and action-oriented dialogue on caste, gender, and economic inequality. This prompted introspection and dialogue on the responsibilities of civil society in addressing these urgent issues.

Prof Vandana Swami, Professor, Easwari School of Liberal Arts, remarked, "Academia-Social Sector Dialogue epitomises SRM University-AP's ethos of excellence, innovation, and social responsibility. It serves as a testament to the university's unwavering dedication to shaping future leaders who are not only academically proficient, but also socially conscious and empathetic global citizens."

Steps underway for conduct of polls on May 13: Collector

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh has made it clear all arrangements have been made to conduct polling for the Assembly and general elections to be held on May 13.

Senior Deputy Election Commissioner Nitish Vyas held a video conference with the election officials including the Collectors and SPs of all districts on Friday and reviewed the measures being taken to conduct the elections peacefully, maintain law and order, control the election expenses of the candidates and to control the smuggling of goods affecting the voters.

The District Collector and



District Election Officer Prasanna Venkatesh said that all arrangements have been made for conducting the elections in a peaceful environment transparently on May 13.

Speaking on the occasion, District Collector Prasanna Venkatesh said that drinking water facilities, first aid centres and other infrastructure facilities were being provided in the 1,744 polling centres set up in the district because of summer. Extensive arrangements were

made for the voters in the district to freely exercise their right to vote in a peaceful atmosphere.

SP D Mary Prasanthi, Election General Observers Krishnakant Pathak, SA Raman, Police observer T Sridhar, Election Expenditure observers T Jordan Bootia, P. Kirinarayan, Meshram Gaurav Madhukar, District Revenue Officers Pushpamani were among those who attended the video conference.

Home voting begins in various districts

PNS ■ NELLORE

Casting of votes by people above 85 years of age and the differently-abled began in various districts on Friday.

In Nellore district, an elderly person above 85 years of age cast his vote from his home as the officials made arrangements at Pothireddy Palem village in Kovur mandal. He dropped the ballot paper in the ballot box at his house. The election officials monitored the casting of votes from the home process. In Nellore district, 1,712 differently-abled voters and voters above 85 years of age would cast their vote at their homes. The casting of votes from home would be continued till



May 5, election officials said. In Eluru district, 87 elderly voters cast their vote on Friday from their homes. The

casting of votes from home began in Denduluru constituency on Friday. Joint Collector B Lavanya Veni said. She monitored the casting of votes from home in four mandals in the Denduluru constituency. The voters who submitted Form 12-D seeking to cast votes from the homes were provided the facility. The casting of votes from home would continue on May 4 also, she added.

In West Godavari district, District Election Officer and Collector Sumit Kumar said that differently-abled voters and voters above 85 years of age started casting their votes from their homes and special arrangements were made for voting, he stated.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

School for scandal

With special focus on pro-Palestine protests, several global universities have turned into activism hubs

As more students join anti-Israel protests in countries like the US, England, France and elsewhere, it has spawned a debate regarding the role of educational institutes in shaping political ideologies and influencing global opinion, as well as the question of whether students should get involved in politics. The phenomenon of anti-Israel protests on campuses cannot be viewed in isolation; it reflects broader geopolitical undertones and social movements. However, the specific targeting of educational institutes as platforms for such protests raises important questions about the purpose of universities and their responsibility to foster constructive dialogue versus perpetuating bigotry. One aspect of this development is the clash between freedom of speech and the promotion of inclusivity and diversity. Anti-Israel protests, if not conducted respectfully and with a focus on dialogue rather than confrontation, risk alienating certain student segments. That said, it is also a fact that pro-Israel demonstrations were first witnessed in certain universities of esteem in the US. As Israel launched an offensive in Gaza, a parallel campaign started in these varieties, allegedly at Israel's behest and funding. Indeed, pro-Israel sentiment has been high in the US as well as in Europe; everyone remained tightlipped when Israel indulged in human rights violations in Gaza. Thus, the latest anti-Israel demonstrations are more of a reaction to that. Besides, even Israelites are now fed up with the ongoing war; they are rallying against Netanyahu and his policies towards West Asia in general and Palestine in particular.



As a Sanskrit saying goes: "Ya vidya sa vimuktaye"

(Education liberates)." Since it is a universal truth, this liberation must manifest itself in the conduct of students. No denying the logical boundaries of any dissent and that violence has no role in such demonstrations. The students must focus on their studies, which is what they are supposed to primarily do on college campuses. But it would be rather an anti-thesis of education if they are not aware of what is happening around them and if they fail to react to correct any wrongdoings around them. It is equally true, they can't remain unaffected by the social milieu around them. Back home, let us not forget it was essentially a student movement under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan that opposed the Emergency. During the struggle for Independence, many leaders quit colleges and jumped into the freedom movement. Bhagat Singh, on the issue of students joining politics, wrote: "Was (the students of England and Germany) quitting colleges and going to war not politics? Where were the preachers then; why didn't they ask those students to study? Only the efforts of students and youth have brought independence to any country which is now free..." The words are prophetic and inspiring; one wishes his essay could be read aloud in the western universities.

PICTALK



Farmers harvest wheat at a village near the Indo-Pak border, on the outskirts of Jammu

Nothing 'gentlemanly' in Chinese diplomacy



BHOPINDER SINGH

China's recent outcry over the alleged breach of 'Gentleman's Agreement' with the Philippines reveals a profound irony, given the history of its coercion and deceit

There is a huge amount of insincerity and gall involved in the Chinese complaint that the Philippines had torn up the bilateral 'Gentleman's Agreement' between Beijing and Manila. While the term 'Gentleman's Agreement' has an implicit assumption of 'trust' as a fundamental tenet besting a relationship, which may otherwise not be legally binding — to even imagine that there has been any element of 'trust' between these two sparring countries, is to put oneself up to ridicule.

Much of the tensions in the countries around the South China Seas originates from an expansionist instinct in China that seeks to coerce, intimidate and dominate the region with creative, wholly unique and untenable concepts like the 'nine dash line' (called out by the International Court of Justice, Hague, as illegal). But it is not just the Philippines but also other regional countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Taiwan, Brunei etc., that are up in arms over Chinese belligerence. Recent events have seen optics like the Philippines charging China in the International Court of Justice, Hague (and winning the plea), dangerous military exercises to assert competitive territorial counterclaims, ramming and shooting with high-pressure water cannons at Filipino boats, disruption to freedom of navigation, denying access etc., hardly the backdrop to assume the word 'trust' between two constantly slug-fisting nations.

But the make-believe posturing and incredibly 'cry wolf' terms like 'Gentleman's Agreement' are an age-old Chinese norm, whenever anyone has stood up to expose its bullying and relentless expansionism. The Chinese through their conduct have unilaterally made a mockery of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The Chinese have further upped the ante by dredging up sand to create artificial landmass e.g., around the restive Spratly Islands. This is enough to station a Military base replete with fighter planes and missiles and even anchor its fleet of so-called "unsinkable aircraft carriers". All



this has been done with sheer impunity and disregard towards any neighbouring countries' territorial claims, sense of security, or socio-economic concerns. Dupliciousness and attempting to checkmate (by force or lure) any emerging force that could challenge the Chinese juggernaut is met with its patent falsehoods, sneaky 'salmi tactic' encroachment, or even brazen show of force. In the late 70s, the Chinese were more concerned about the Soviet Union, than with the United States of America. Beijing had counterintuitively started engaging with Washington DC to align it towards its side as it went about preparing to attack Vietnam. Chinese Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping on a trip to the United States had told US President Jimmy Carter, "The child is getting naughty, it is time he got spanked".

Soon thereafter, China attacked Vietnam in a war that is recalled in Vietnam as Chien tranh chong banh truoiung Trung Hoa (War against Chinese expansionism!) The physical military superiority in favour of the Chinese PLA notwithstanding, most independent military historians acknowledge the bloody nose inflicted by the plucky, war-experienced and pugnacious Vietnamese forces that led to



EVEN EARLIER IN THE 1950s, THE CHINESE LAID THE TRAP FOR NEHRU'S COMPLACENCY WHEN CHINESE PREMIER ZHOU ENLAI REFUSED TO CONTEST NEHRU'S RIGHTFUL INSISTENCE ON AKSAI CHIN BY ACCEPTING THAT CHINA HAD NO CLAIM ON IT

a rupture between China and Vietnam, that still lingers subliminally.

Even earlier in the 50's, the Chinese laid the trap for Nehru's complacency when Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai refused to contest Nehru's rightful insistence on Aksai Chin by accepting that China had no claim on it. But Zhou would renege and contradict his earlier position by later claiming that Aksai Chin was already under the Chinese - they had surreptitiously built a road, while still playing naive and ingenuous, all along.

Like all bilateral agreements that the Chinese are always willing to relegate to the bins, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence was put to the same fate. In yet another act that would soon become a standard Chinese practice over the years, the Chinese cartographical interpretation was revised with newly usurped territories and claims.

This template of dubious expansionism led to the 1962 Indo-China War and ensured unsettled status in the region with the Chinese 'updating' their official maps with new territories and new names. That same principle has been applied to sovereign maritime issues in the South China Seas and the ongoing tussle with the Philippines has its roots in the history of China's insatiable expansionism and unbridled

ambition to assert its hegemony.

Propaganda in the highly controlled media of China has been elevated to a fine art. Filipino Defence Secretary was quick to rebut the same by clarifying that he was, "not aware of, nor is it a party to, any internal agreement with China" and that his department had, "not had any contact with any Chinese Government officials since last year". The Chinese have been deft with wordsmithing in order to lay the blame for ongoing tensions in the Philippines by first invoking an alleged 'promise', which then became a 'Gentleman's Agreement' and have most recently morphed into a 'new model' and finally 'internal understanding'.

Gen Jonathan Malaya, of the Philippines National Security Council, put it bluntly, "The propaganda masters are clearly working overtime in Beijing to sow discord and division in our country". But unfortunately for the Chinese, there are fewer takers for their position by the day and there never was, or is, anything 'Gentlemanly' about Chinese diplomacy, for decades.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

KASHMIR'S PATH TO NORMALCY

Madam — Apropos the news article, "AFSPA repeal: A step towards Naya Kashmir," published on May 3, this is my response. The Union Home Minister's contemplation on AFSPA removal in J&K reflects a pivotal shift in the Government's approach towards the region. Amidst heightened security concerns and the promise of Naya Kashmir, the discourse on AFSPA underscores a nuanced balance between security imperatives and democratic values. While AFSPA has historically provided essential tools for security forces, its contentious history and instances of misuse necessitate a critical reevaluation. The Supreme Court's intervention in 2016 highlighted the need for accountability and checks on its implementation. As J&K transitions post-Article 370, the call for AFSPA's removal gains traction, signalling a maturation in the security landscape. With decreased terror incidents and improved governance, the time seems ripe for a phased withdrawal of AFSPA, bolstering confidence and fostering socio-political normalcy. Ultimately, the decision demands a holistic understanding, prioritising both security imperatives and civil liberties. A judicious approach, rooted in the aspirations of Naya Kashmir, holds the key to a peaceful and prosperous future.

Jiya Patel | Ahmedabad

PRESS FREEDOM IS VITAL

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Upholding the Fourth Estate in Digital Age," published on May 3, this is my response. Press freedom stands as an indispensable pillar of democracy, safeguarding our right to knowledge and accountability. Today, amidst the tumult of misinformation and Governmental pressures, World Press Freedom Day gains renewed significance. It's a reminder of the arduous battles journalists face worldwide, risking their safety to uncover truths and expose injustices. From the historical struggles during emergency periods to contemporary challenges amplified by digital landscapes, the essence remains

Deceptive digital dangers



Apropos the news article, "Time to curb fake videos in elections," published on May 3, this is my response. The emergence of 'deepfake' technology in political campaigns signals a disturbing trend toward digital deceit. The recent case involving Union Home Minister Amit Shah underscores the potential harm of manipulating videos to spread false narratives. Such malicious acts not only undermine the integrity of elections but also sow seeds of discord in society. The ease with

which these fake videos can be created using advanced technology raises concerns about the erosion of trust in media and public discourse. Moreover, the implications for national security, as highlighted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, cannot be overlooked.

While technological advancements have undoubtedly brought convenience, they also pose significant risks, particularly in cyberspace. Cybersecurity must evolve to address these ever-changing threats, with stringent measures implemented to combat the spread of misinformation and safeguard democratic processes. As citizens, we must remain vigilant against the proliferation of deepfake videos and advocate for robust measures to counter such deceptive practices. Only through collective efforts can we mitigate the dangers posed by digital manipulation and preserve the integrity of our democratic institutions.

Kavya Singh | Kolkata

unchanged: a free press is the bedrock of societal integrity.

However, the journey towards press freedom is far from smooth. Nations like India, with its vibrant media, often find themselves entangled in debates over freedom's extent. The quote by Advani echoes the enduring struggle against undue influence and censorship. Governments must respect press freedom, for civil society to advocate relentlessly and for media organisations to uphold ethical standards unwaveringly. On this day, we salute the bravery of journalists who persist in the face of adversity, reaffirming our commitment to preserving the cornerstone of democracy: a free and independent press.

Dhruv Gupta | Jamshedpur

NATURE'S ARTISTIC SYMPHONY

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Travel Across Enchanted Landscapes," published on May 3, this is my response. 'Paradise Regained' at Palette Art Gallery beautifully intertwines artistic mastery with a profound reverence for nature. The exhibition, curated by Uma Nair, serves as

a poignant tribute to Earth Month, showcasing the diverse interpretations of landscapes by ten exceptional artists. Each artwork is a testament to the artist's deep connection with nature, from Sanam Narayanan's fantastical realms to Umesh PK's multilayered odes. Paramjit Singh's vibrant oil paintings and Sanket Viramgami's intricate miniatures offer unique perspectives, while Jayashree Chakravarty and Sumesh Kamballur capture the essence of specific regions with captivating detail.

The exhibition not only celebrates the beauty of nature but also serves as a reminder of our responsibility to protect it. Through their art, the artists convey a message of environmental stewardship, urging viewers to appreciate and preserve the planet's beauty for future generations. 'Paradise Regained' is more than just an art display; it's a call to action to cherish and safeguard the paradise we call home.

Eshaan Kapoor | Delhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Leveraging NCERT textbooks for CUET

The textbooks offer varied resources for Common University Entrance Test aspirants, from fundamental concepts to advanced topics



SANTOSH ANAND

The Common University Entrance Test (CUET) is a key gateway for students aspiring to secure admission to undergraduate programmes in various Central and other Participating Universities/Institutions/Organisations across India. Balancing the assessment of core competencies and subject knowledge, CUET presents both challenges and opportunities. As students gear up for their CUET 2024 journey leveraging a crucial resource: your NCERT textbooks is a very good idea.

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NCERT textbooks

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at the end of each chapter in NCERT textbooks. Practice is crucial for reinforcing learning and identifying areas that need further revision.

Supplementary Resources: While NCERT textbooks form the core of your study material, supplement your preparation with reference books, online resources and mock tests to broaden your knowledge and enhance problem-solving abilities. NCERT textbooks offer a wealth of resources for CUET aspirants, from fundamental concepts to advanced topics. By incorporating them into your study strategy and using them effectively, you can enhance your preparation, boost confidence and maximise your chances of success in the CUET 2024 Exam. ExamFactor stands by to support your CUET journey. Remember, dedication, a strategic approach and the solid foundation provided by NCERT textbooks can empower you to progress from basic to advanced levels in your CUET preparation.

(The author is a Head Content, ExamFactor; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN PROTECTING OUR DIGITAL WORLD

Cybersecurity is all about safeguarding trust, privacy and business interests



SHAINY SHARMA

With the proliferation of connected devices, cloud computing and various other digital platforms, the attack surface of the threats ranging from individual hackers to organised cybercriminal groups has expanded significantly. In the age, where technology pervades every facet of our lives, the importance of cybersecurity cannot be over stated and with the advent of technology, it has been deemed to have the emergence of new threats.

Cybersecurity measures, such as encryption, access controls and data loss prevention, help prevent unauthorised access, theft and misuse of confidential information. In an era of widespread digital connectivity, maintaining privacy, safeguarding personal information and communications from unauthorised surveillance, identifying theft and invasive data collection practices are crucial not only for individuals but for organisations too. The motto 'Protecting our digital world' is a responsibility we all share. Cybersecurity researchers cover a wide range of topics be it understanding the tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) of cyber adversaries or focusing on developing methodologies, tools and best practices to integrate security into the software development lifecycle; are aimed at addressing current and emerging challenges in protecting digital assets and infrastructure. Cybersecurity researchers investigate software and hardware vulnerabilities to understand their root causes.

Safeguarding cybersecurity is imperative across all sectors of work be it business or education. Cybersecurity is integral to national security and defence strategies, as cyber threats pose risks to sovereignty, economic stability and public safety in shaping India's economic growth and global competitiveness, particularly in the realm of cybersecurity, the Indian Government has implemented various initiatives and policies such as Cyber Surakshit Bharat; Cyber Swachhta Kendra and many more to combat the cybersecurity challenges in India. These initiatives are aimed at generating awareness about the latest cybercrimes, detection and removal of malicious programs from devices and ultimately combat cyber threats by creating a secure cyber ecosystem.



The digital landscape is constantly evolving, with cyber threats becoming more sophisticated and pervasive. Cybersecurity measures, including threat detection, incident response and vulnerability management help identify, mitigate and contain cyber threats such as malware, phishing, ransomware and denial-of-service attacks.

Effective cybersecurity will build trust and confidence among stakeholders, including customers, partners, investors and the public at large. By demonstrating a commitment to cybersecurity best practices and compliance with regulations, organisations enhance their reputation and credibility in the digital marketplace.

The need for cybersecurity has increased due to the evolving threat landscape, technological advancements, digital transformation initiatives, regulatory requirements, geopolitical tensions and societal reliance on digital technologies. Cybersecurity is not just about safeguarding the data rather it's about safeguarding trust, privacy and freedom in the digital age. It requires a comprehensive and proactive approach involving technology, policies, education, collaboration and investment to address the evolving challenges posed by cyber threats. One needs to stay vigilant, informed and proactive in keeping online space secure. Strong passwords, regular updates and staying cautious of phishing attempts are just a few steps toward cyber resilient community. Despite advancements, cybersecurity does face a lot of challenges, including the constant evolution of cyber threats, the shortage of skilled cybersecurity professionals and the global nature of cybercrime.

(The write is an educator; views are personal)

Global tapestry and impact of terrorism



SUDHIR HINDWAN

In an era marked by geopolitical upheavals and regional conflicts, the spectre of terror looms large, transcending borders and threatening stability on a global scale

At a time when the world political landscape is dealing with a number of regional conflicts such as Israel-Palestine, Russia-Ukraine, skirmishes in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran, trans-national terrorism has hogged the limelight world over during the last few years. Similarly at the domestic level terror organisations from across the border have unleashed a wave of terror in Kashmir to attract attention from the media to upturn the diminishing morale of the mercenaries. Seen in this recent perspective are the latest sinister designs of the terror forces in different parts of the world whether in Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Red Sea, Israel, Palestine, Scandinavian Countries, Central Asia or Russia. In the past few days, the insurgency has resulted in numerous killings of innocents and the martyrdom of several Army soldiers in different parts of Jammu and Kashmir on the domestic front in India.

International terrorism, though comparatively less in volume than the domestic variety, has crossed all limitations despite increased Government efforts to combat it. Much blood, if not ink, has flowed since terrorists struck the World Trade Centre and Pentagon in the US This was followed by an upsurge in terrorist activities across the globe. Repeated terror attacks over the years sometimes after a brief lull have not only exposed the security and intelligence network but also robbed confidence of modern nations in controlling the menace.

Whether terrorism is unleashed at the local, regional, national or international level, it cannot survive for long without international support and collaboration. In a globalised world, the matrices of power turn on the highly visible, inequalitarian structure of the international economy and as such inter-relations between socio-economic conditions in different parts of the world are becoming more and more obvious. At another level, the post-Cold War international political-economic order is still a victim of the power game that was thrust on the world by the then-big powers. Many seasoned international experts on violence and terror are of the opinion that the power network woven by the hegemonic might in the entire West Asian region has provoked the ire of the opposition forces in almost every State where they had an interest-based relationship. Thus, as societies globalise and curtains of opacity are raised through increased inter-societal interaction at the international level, people in under-developed countries are holding the big powers responsible for their inferior socio-economic positions. The Cold War Era leading to interference in crucial areas such as Afghanistan, South-East Asia, Gulf and Latin American countries has resulted in the development of peculiar trends that provided breeding grounds for terrorist activities. Talibanisation of Afghanistan would never have taken place had the powerful nations handled the situation well in the beginning.

The consequences of the failure to diagnose this social disease (terrorism) at the early stage can be pernicious for the various countries. The strategies of imposing arms and economic sanctions on the so-called rogue nations during the last few years have been counter-productive



THE STRATEGIES OF IMPOSING ARMS AND ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON THE SO-CALLED ROGUE NATIONS DURING THE LAST FEW YEARS HAVE BEEN INEFFICIENT AND RATHER HELPED THESE NATIONS TO GAIN INTERNATIONAL SYMPATHY

and rather helped these nations to gain international sympathy. Although the hope of a permanent solution to the problem of terrorism is still far away, one hopes that the powerful nations will develop a more mature understanding of the phenomenon of terrorism that has assumed alarming proportions. The rapid international transportation and use of sophisticated weapons like AK 47 assault rifles and plastic explosives (RDX) have helped to facilitate the expansion of terrorist networks around the world. Besides, the new suicide squads of terrorists have left the entire security apparatus of the affected States in a State of shock. The recent incidents cannot be viewed in isolation.

A leading anti-terrorism expert, Mr Brian Jenkins, believes that though more articulate and multiplied effort by the police and intelligence can tell us about a possible terrorist attack, there is still confusion over whether such a mechanism is successful in dealing with terrorists driven by fundamentalism. Gradually, religion is becoming the main motivating force for terrorism across the globe. There is a growing nexus between terrorists and internationally organised crime networks. Mr. Alison Jamieson, a British analyst on organised crime and political violence, commented that the distinction between terrorism and organised crime has become very blurred recently.

An Italian organised crime expert, Professor Ernesto, says: "The terrorist's goal is an ideological one,

while organised crime's goal is financial, but the instrument is the same.

They both need money and arms". In Sri Lanka, the Tamil Tigers engage in drug trafficking to finance their struggle, in north-eastern India guerrillas kidnap tea planters and hold them to ransom to help fund their fight for independence. In Chechnya, the secessionists were heavily involved in drug distribution.

These days terrorists are more confident than ever before of their access to the vulnerable points before carrying out any of their attacks and they plan their attacks in a heroic manner for the justification and fulfilment of a cause that they think is just. Thus, they attempt, by their acts, to inspire and manipulate fear to achieve a variety of purposes. For effective administrative measures, various sources of terrorism must be found first. There is a need for a truly effective preparedness programme at the Government level.

First, we must know about the people involved in terrorist activities and their motivations.

Dealing with a terrorist incident and mitigating its consequences need to be carefully thought out. Sufficient data about the terrorist-hit area could be of immense use. Intelligence should be able to provide information about terrorist targets, timing and site in advance. But the Government alone cannot do much to stop it. Individuals and groups can make a significant contribution towards improving the general security

environment. On the other hand, there is a need for sophisticated security procedures that can go all the way from airport screening to the border area.

Some kind of positive programmes which can alleviate the frustration of terrorists can prove effective. There is also a need to promote open institutions, including political institutions to absorb the ethnic, religious and political pressure and allow terrorists to vent their feelings in a proper way. This will change their mind and thus encourage them to settle their differences in a peaceful way. Since present-day terrorists are very well organised and more professional than their counterparts a decade ago, new concepts of safety and security should arise. A vigilant and assertive police and paramilitary network should replace the old one. There is an apprehension that with the availability of biological and chemical weapons, terrorists could start their campaign with a renewed vigour.

No civilised political system can progress until terrorism is wiped out, but terrorism cannot be eliminated unless there is a political solution. The need of the hour is the political will to solve problems that generate terrorism. The States affected by terrorism should open up avenues for a negotiated settlement of disputes and exhibit genuine willingness to resolve long-festering problems.

(The author, a recipient of the Bharat Gaurav award, is a professor and expert on strategic affairs; views are personal)

Saffron cultivation: Replicate Poonch's success story

The Government must extend comprehensive support to farmers, fostering significant opportunities for saffron production in similar regions

In the heart of the border district Poonch in Jammu and Kashmir, amidst the rugged terrain and lush valleys, a quiet revolution is underway - the cultivation of saffron. "For the past 5 years, we have been conducting trials of saffron and a year ago, we took the plunge into full-scale cultivation. The results? Astonishing! Our efforts were supported by School of Biotechnology at the University of Jammu, who provided us a generous grant of INR 10 lakhs. With unwavering support from Professor Jyoti and the expertise of the university's scholars, including PhD student Tahil Bhatti and SDO, Horticulture, Mohammad Fareed from Poonch, we started to explore saffron cultivation in Poonch,



BHARTI DEVI

uncovering the untapped potential of saffron production in the region," shared 35-year-old farmer Ajaz Ahmad from Bayla village, in Mandi tehsil, bordering Poonch. He has made a name for himself as a saffron farmer in the region, moving away from traditional farming over the past few years. In this research, Ajaz found that saffron production can be done in abundance in areas

like Surankote, Arai, Fatehpur, Bayla, Mandi and Mendhar of Poonch. The environment and soil here are almost similar to those in the regions of Jammu and Kashmir where saffron production takes place. Saffron holds the esteemed title of being one of the world's most prized spices. Known as "Kong" in Kashmiri, "Jafran" in Urdu and "Kesar" in Hindi, it is derived from the delicate threads of fragrant flowers. Historically, its cultivation has been confined to specific regions within the Union Territory. While some cultivation occurs in Kishtwar, the Pampore region of Kashmir reigns as its primary producer, renowned for its superior quality. Commanding a premium price, Pampore saffron fetches around 3 lakh rupees

per kilogram. It takes an astonishing quantity of flowers - approximately 160 to 180 - to yield just one gram of saffron. Moreover, a kilogram of this precious spice requires the harvest of about half a million flowers.

Ajaz Ahmad highlights the shifting agricultural landscape in Poonch, noting a traditional focus on seasonal crops like maize. However, he observes a gradual change in mindset among local farmers, with growing enthusiasm for saffron production. "We have procured saffron seeds from Pampore and Kishtwar districts of Kashmir. Now, my desire is that after Pampore and Kishtwar, Poonch becomes the third largest center for saffron production in Jammu and

Kashmir," he said. He advocates for Governmental support in the form of security measures rather than subsidies, citing the comparatively high cost of saffron seeds. Ajaz emphasises the need for crop protection from wildlife, particularly bears that frequently ravage fields, suggesting that fencing could mitigate such risks and safeguard farmers' livelihoods.

It can be easily understood that extensive efforts are required for saffron production. In India, saffron cultivation begins in June and July, while in some regions, it starts in August and September. Flowering usually begins in October. Apart from India, saffron cultivation is mainly done in Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Iran and China. 80 per cent of

the world's total saffron production is concentrated in Spain and Iran alone. For the farmers involved in its production, it is nothing less than a boon because its price in the market ranges from 3 to 3.5 lakh rupees per kilogram. The allure of saffron extends to both men and women who actively engage in its cultivation. Shamim Akhtar, a 35-year-old farmer from Bayla, shared, "I've been cultivating saffron for several years now and the results have been rewarding. However, the construction of a road through our land resulted in crop damage. Nonetheless, my passion for saffron cultivation remains strong. Despite facing financial constraints to procure seeds, I aspire to continue with this endeavor."

Farmer Abdul Samad from the same village, however, has another concern on his mind. He is worried about agriculture being affected by changing environmental conditions. He explains that due to changing weather patterns, there has been a decrease in saffron production in Kashmir in recent years. It requires rainfall between 1000 to 1500 millimetres, which has decreased and untimely snowfall has had a negative impact on the soil, resulting in reduced saffron production.

Kashmir, which previously yielded up to 15 tons of saffron annually, has seen this output dwindle to 8 to 9 tons, a worrying trend. Despite this setback, Kashmiri saffron remains highly valued for its medicinal properties, known

to alleviate blood pressure and migraines and find use in beauty products. The central Government's attention to Kashmiri saffron is evident through initiatives like the National Saffron Mission (NSM). Aimed at bolstering saffron production and enhancing the socio-economic status of Kashmiri residents, the NSM has notably benefited saffron farmers. Additionally, various other Government schemes also promote saffron cultivation. However, for farmers to swiftly reap the benefits of these programs, they must be executed on a larger scale, given the increasing enthusiasm for saffron cultivation.

(The writer is a grassroots writer from Poonch, J&K. Charkha Features)

MONEY MATTERS

MRF net profit rises 16% to Rs 396 crore in Q4; revenue up at Rs 6,349 cr

Tyre maker MRF on Friday posted a 16 per cent increase in its consolidated net profit at Rs 396 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2024. The company had reported a net profit of Rs 341 crore for the January-March quarter of the preceding fiscal. Revenue from operations rose to Rs 6,349 crore in the last fiscal as against Rs 5,842 crore in 2022-23. For the entire financial year ended March 2024, the tyre maker said its net profit stood at Rs 2,081 crore as compared to Rs 769 crore in FY23. Revenue from operations increased to Rs 25,169 crore in FY24 as compared to Rs 23,008 crore in FY23. The company said its board has recommended a final dividend of Rs 1,941 per share of Rs 10 each. The company has already paid two interim dividends of Rs 31 per share each time for the financial year ended March 2024. The total dividend for the financial year ended March 2024 works out to Rs 2,001 per share of Rs 10 each.



JSW Infrastructure Q4 net profit jumps 9% to Rs 329 crore

JSW Infrastructure on Friday reported a 9 per cent increase in consolidated net profit to Rs 329 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2024. The company had clocked a profit of Rs 302.26 crore in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal, the company said in a BSE filing. Its consolidated total income increased to Rs 1,200.30 crore for the fourth quarter against Rs 973.20 crore in the year-ago period. The total expense also rose to Rs 782.93 crore in the quarter under review from Rs 677.77 crore a year ago. The company handled cargo volumes of 29.3 million tonne in the fourth quarter up 9 per cent year-on-year. The board of the company has recommended a dividend of Rs 0.55/share. JSW Infrastructure Ltd, a part of the JSW Group, is India's second-largest private commercial port operator.



Mia by Tanishq on expansion mode; sets up four retail stores in TN

Jewellery brand Mia by Tanishq from the diversified conglomerate Tata Group has inaugurated four new stores in Tamil Nadu under its expansion exercise, the company said on Friday. Marking the inaugural, the brand has offered discounts of up to 20 per cent on Mia's range of products till May 5. The company has inaugurated three new stores with one each in Kellis, Adyar, and Velachery in Chennai and another in Tiruppur district, a company statement here said. "Last year, we unveiled 12 new Mia by Tanishq standalone stores in Tamil Nadu and were delighted by the overwhelming response. We are opening four new stores between yesterday and today in Chennai (3 Tiruppur (1)," said Business Head, Shyamala Ramanan, Mia by Tanishq. "Mia understands the needs of the women of today and how they are looking at jewellery that is an extension of their personality."



Apple logs strong double-digit growth in India

CEO says incredibly exciting market

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Apple grew at a strong double-digit rate in India, hitting a new March quarter revenue record in an "incredibly exciting market", even though the tech titan's overall quarterly revenue declined 4 per cent. Apple's India showing earned praises from CEO Tim Cook who described the market here as a "major focus" and said Apple is working on the entire ecosystem from developer to the market to operations. The top honcho said he is "very pleased" with the growth numbers. "We did grow strong double-digit (in India). And so we were



very, very pleased about it. It was a new March quarter revenue record for us. As you know, as I've said before, I see it as an incredibly exciting market and it's a major focus for us," he said in India specific call-outs during the company's Q2 earnings.

Apple's India showing earned praises from CEO Tim Cook who described the market here as a "major focus" and said Apple is working on the entire ecosystem from developer to the market to operations. The top honcho said he is "very pleased" with the growth numbers.

Cook further added, "In

terms of the operational side or supply chain side, we are producing there; from a pragmatic point of view, you need to produce there to be competitive." The Cupertino-based iPhone maker has set revenue records in more than a dozen countries and regions. These include, among others, March quarter records in India, Latin America and the Middle East, as well as Canada, Spain, and Turkey. On Apple's India report card, Cook said the company has both operational things going on and go-to-market, alongside various initiatives.



India's mining sector grows by 7.5% in FY24

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's mining sector grew by 7.5 per cent in FY24, with production of iron ore and limestone recording high growth during the year, an official statement said on Friday. For the month of March, the index of mineral production was 1.2 per cent higher year-on-year at 156.1. Production of iron ore was at 277 million metric tonne (MMT) in 2023-24 against 258 MMT in 2022-23, registering a growth of 7.4 per cent.

Sensex tumbles 700 points amid broad-based selloff

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex plummeted over 700 points to sink below the 74,000 level and Nifty retreated from a record high on Friday as investors pared exposure to telecom, capital goods and tech stocks. Heavy selling pressure in Reliance Industries, L&T and HDFC bank counters also pulled indices down, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 732.96 points or 0.98 per cent to settle at 73,878.15 after soaring 484.07 points earlier in the day. From its intra-day high of 75,095.18, the benchmark tanked 1,627.45 points to the day's low of 73,467.73. The NSE Nifty also declined 172.35 points or 0.76 per cent to 22,475.85. The benchmark hit a record 22,794.70 in the early trade, up 146.5 points or



0.64 per cent. From the Sensex basket, Larsen & Toubro, Maruti, Reliance Industries, Nestle, Bharti Airtel, UltraTech Cement, Kotak Mahindra Bank and JSW Steel were among the major laggards. Bajaj Finance climbed nearly 1 per cent higher. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has lifted restrictions on Bajaj Finance on sanctioning and disbursement of loans through eCOM and Insta EMI Card, the company said in a regulatory filing on Thursday. In November last year, the central bank directed Bajaj Finance to stop sanction and disbursement of loans under its two lending products -- eCOM and Insta EMI Card -- due to the company's non-adherence to the extant provisions of digital lending guidelines.

Strong sales propel Godrej Properties to record profit in Q4

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Realty firm Godrej Properties on Friday reported its highest-ever quarterly profit as earnings jumped 14 per cent annually to Rs 471.26 crore in the March quarter, spurred by better income and strong housing sales. Its net profit stood at Rs 412.14 crore in the year-ago period. Total income rose to Rs 1,914.82 crore in the fourth quarter of FY24 from Rs 1,838.82 crore in the year-ago period, Godrej Properties, part of business conglomerate Godrej Group, said in a regulatory filing. During the 2023-24 fiscal, the company's net profit increased to Rs 725.27 crore from Rs 571.39 crore in the preceding year. Total income rose to Rs 4,334.22 crore in FY24 from

Rs 3,039 crore in 2022-23. In an interview with PTI, Godrej Properties Ltd Executive Chairperson Pirojsha Godrej said, "It (2023-24 fiscal) was a great year overall, whether you look at launches, sales, collection from customers, business development, deliveries of projects, cash flow and profit. We are really excited to see the kind of momentum in the business." He expected housing demand to sustain in the coming years. To tap this demand, Pirojsha said the company has lined up launches of multiple projects across Delhi-NCR, Mumbai-Metropolitan Region (MMR), Bengaluru, Pune, and Hyderabad markets. Godrej Properties would acquire land parcels for future development and also step up deliveries of projects.

Seven Adani group firms say received SEBI show cause notices

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Seven out of the 10 listed firms of Adani group have received show cause notices from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for alleged violation of related party transactions and non-compliance with listing regulations, the companies said in their regulatory filings to the stock exchanges. While group's flagship Adani Enterprises Ltd, renewable energy firm Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) and city gas distributor Adani Total Gas Ltd said SEBI sent

notices of their parent or holding company controlled by conglomerate's chairman Gautam Adani, ports company Adani Ports & Special Economic Zone, Adani Power, electricity transmission firm Adani Energy Solutions, and commodities firm Adani Wilmar said they have received SEBI notices. Making the disclosure as part of notes to their respective January-March quarter and 2023-24 financial results statements, all the firms in almost identical statements said there is no material non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations and



no material consequential effect. However, auditors of the companies, except those for Adani Green Energy, Adani Total Gas Ltd and Adani Wilmar,

issued a qualified opinion on the financial statements, implying that the outcome of the SEBI investigation may have a bearing on the financial statements in the future. The conglomerate's cement companies ACC and Ambuja Cement said they have not received any notice from SEBI on the matter and there was no open matter relating to them and any non-compliance of applicable regulations. Its media unit NDTV did not say anything about receiving SEBI notices. The SEBI notices are part of a probe that followed US short-seller

Hindenburg Research making damning allegations of corporate fraud and stock price manipulation against the Adani Group in January 2023. Though Adani vehemently denied all allegations, the report triggered a stock rout that wiped out about US\$ 150 billion of the group's market value at its lowest point. Most of the group stocks have bounced back as the ports-to-energy conglomerate plotted a comeback strategy. A show cause notice is not an indictment and seeks an explanation from entities as to why legal action should not be taken against them.

Good Capital plans to invest US\$ 25 mn in Indian AI startups this fiscal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mauritius-based venture capital firm Good Capital on Friday said it plans to invest USD 25 million, about Rs 200 crore, in Indian AI startups this fiscal. The investment will be made from the corpus of US\$ 50 million Good Capital Fund II, which is expected to be used by 2027. "The total fund is US\$ 50 million which is planned to be used by 2027. Out of which Good Capital is deploying US\$

25 million in AI startups empowering intermediaries and plans to deploy this by 2025," Arjun Malhotra, General Partner at Good Capital said. "Investing in technology products solving India-centric problems, the firm has announced plans to invest US\$ 25 million in AI startups by FY25. These investments will primarily target sectors such as cleantech, e-commerce, edtech, healthtech, SaaS, and deeptech," Good Capital said.

Adani Green Energy Q4 net profit declines 39% to Rs 310 cr due to rising expenses

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) on Friday posted a 38.85 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 310 crore for the March quarter, mainly on account of increased expenses. Its net profit was Rs 507 crore in the January-March period of the preceding 2022-23, the company said in an exchange filing. During the fourth quarter of FY24, the company's total income fell to Rs 2,806 crore from Rs 2,977 crore a year ago. The company's expenses surged to Rs 2,379 crore during the period under review, as against Rs 2,053 crore in the year-ago period. In a separate statement, the

company said its operational capacity grew at 35 per cent year-on-year to 10,934 MW with greenfield addition of 2,848 MW renewable capacity, including 2,418 MW solar and 430 MW wind projects. With this, AGEL became the first company in India to cross the 10,000 MW renewable energy capacity. A G E L ' s 10,934 MW operational portfolio will power more than 5.8 million homes and avoid about 21 million tonnes of CO2 emissions annually. The sale of energy increased 47 per cent year-on-year to

21,806 million units in FY24, primarily backed by strong capacity addition, consistent solar CUF (capacity utilisation factor) and improved wind and hybrid CUF. The revenue from power supply rose 23 per cent to Rs 1,575 crore from Rs 1,941 crore earlier. Adani Green Energy Ltd Chief Executive Officer Amit Singh said, "We have deployed the first 2 GW of the 30 GW of renewable capacity under construction at Khavda in just 12 months of breaking ground. "Our highest capacity addition of 2.8 GW in FY24

demonstrates our strong execution capabilities, and we are confident of continuing the momentum." The company aims to commission at least 5 GW of hydro-pumped storage projects by 2030, and set a higher target of 50 GW RE capacity by 2030, which will contribute towards India's non-fossil fuel capacity target of 500 GW, he said. AGEL further said it has commenced construction work on its first hydro pumped storage project (PSP) of 500 MW on the Chitravathi river. The project is located at Peddakotla in Sri Sathya Sai district of Andhra Pradesh. The existing reservoir will act as the lower reservoir and the upper reservoir is to be developed.

LEPTOS ESTATES ENTERS INDIA

Making dreams of a Mediterranean holiday home come true

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Dr Reddy's launches generic anti-bacterial drug in US Leptos Estates, a six-decade, family-run, real estate and property development firm that builds and sells residential, commercial and holiday residences including premium apartments and luxury villas in Greece and Cyprus, has finally marked its entry into the Indian market. Over the past 64 years, the firm has sold 25,000 sophisticated, environment friendly and aesthetically designed properties to homeowners worldwide including in China, Russia, Africa and the Middle East. Helmed by the second-generation real estate industry stalwart Mr. Pantelis Leptos, Leptos Estates, has now turned its focus on the Indian market offering prospective Indian home buyers and investors an opportunity to invest in property in Cyprus and Greece with the added advantage of

securing Permanent Residency (PR) of both countries. Prospective Indian homeowners interested in Cyprus can get a PR with a minimum property investment of Euro 300,000 + VAT; while for Greece a PR can be acquired with a minimum property investment of Euro 250,000 with 0% VAT (valid until end of 2024). "We can't be more excited to

have Indian families explore the local culture of Greece and Cyprus from the comfort of their own homes in these beautiful destinations. The Indian market offers a huge potential for us as well as for prospective Indian home buyers and investors. We look forward to seeing the people of this country not only own some of the most stunning European properties but also

secure their permanent residency in the process!" said Mr. Pantelis M. Leptos, Co-President of Leptos Group of Companies. Cyprus has always been a popular choice among foreign investors due to the high-quality of life it offers, year-round sunshine and natural beauty. For investors, ease of doing business and investment incentives make it a lucrative destination both to live in and to do business in. A selection of Leptos Estates properties eligible for a Cyprus Permanent Residency are Venus Gardens — a unique residential resort with hilltop homes located just a short walk from the Paphos coastline and the blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea; Coral Sea Villas — 63 state-of-the-art freehold-detached seafront villas situated in one of the most sought-after locations in Paphos; and Limassol Park — luxury apartments just 12 minutes from the sea and surrounded by landscaped gardens.



Dr Reddy's generic anti-bacterial drug out in US

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Dr Reddy's Laboratories on Friday said it has launched a generic medication, used to treat a wide variety of bacterial infections, in the US market. The company has launched Doxycycline Capsules (40 mg) in the US market, the Hyderabad-based drug maker said in a statement. The company's product is a therapeutic generic equivalent of Oracea capsules (40 mg) approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA). Shares of the company on Friday ended 0.71% up at Rs 6,332.85 apiece on the BSE

Sebi gives nod to CARE Ratings' arm to offer ESG ratings

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi has given approval to CARE Ratings Ltd's subsidiary CARE ESG Ratings to provide environmental, social, and governance (ESG) ratings. Such ratings will enable the issuers to discern steps for the betterment of their sustainability performance. Having received the registration under the Sebi (Credit Rating Agencies) Regulations on May 2, 2024, CARE ESG Ratings Ltd will commence its ESG rating activity, according to a statement issued by CareEdge Group on Friday.

"With the use of ESG ratings, a sustainable growth journey of businesses can get an independent viewpoint. A business can now assess its relative position and take action to strengthen its sustainability policies & practices. Investors and stakeholders have adopted new perspectives

on ESG-based reporting, and performance, both domestically and internationally," Mehul Pandya, MD and Group CEO of CareEdge, said. Last month, Sebi gave clearance to ICRA's subsidiary Pragati Development Consulting Services Ltd and Crisil's entity Crisil ESG Ratings & Analytics to offer ESG ratings. In 2023, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) amended its regulations pertaining to credit rating agencies, whereby ERPs can be allowed to register with the regulator under the CRA (Credit Rating Agencies) norms.



'The Broken News empowers audiences to speak up', affirms Shriya

In the era of misinformation and sensationalism, the launch of *The Broken News S2* is sparking conversations from all over. Shriya Pilgaonkar, who portrays the pivotal character of Radha Bhargava, shares her insights on how the show encourages viewers to question the authenticity and ethics of journalism. She also sheds light on how the series has empowered people to break their silence and speak up, as they now understand the harsh realities of the media industry.

Shriya expressed, "People who were often reluctant to share their thoughts before are now having conversations about the two sides of journalism. I feel that after watching this show, it will encourage you to ask questions. Our show, has already achieved this more boldly. It is crucial in today's era that people discuss those who spread fake news. The hallmark of a good film or show is that it not only entertains you but also nudges you to ask questions, and this show does exactly that. It teaches you to be more vocal."

The second season of *The Broken News* promises an exciting ride as Radha Bhargava seeks revenge against Dipankar Sanyal (Jaideep Ahlawat), her rival from a competition news channel.



MURDER IN MAHIM, starring Ashutosh Rana and Vijay Raaz, on May 10

JioCinema is all set to launch yet another original series, *Murder in Mahim*, on May 10th. The series is a social commentary that explores the chilling murder mystery and the underbelly of Mumbai, highlighting the reconciliation of a lost friendship between Peter (Ashutosh Rana) and Jende (Vijay Raaz). Adapted from a critically acclaimed book by author Jerry Pinto, the gripping series is helmed by Raj Acharya and created by Tipping Point Films and Jigsaw Pictures. It also stars talented actors Shivani Raghuvanshi and Shivaji Satam in pivotal roles.

Commenting on his role, Ashutosh Rana shared, "When it's about complex roles, I'm the most excited. Peter is one such character. *Meri koshish humesha yeh hi rehti hai ki main kuch alag karun, ek alag look mein* (I always try to do something different, in a different look). Peter's inner struggle amid the complexities of the murder investigation allowed me to add depth to the character. It is not just a profound murder mystery; it's layered with so many significant plots that mirror the social stigmas around caste, gender, and sexuality with rare sensitivity."

Meanwhile, Vijay Raaz also shared, "The most fascinating aspect of Jende's character is the various shades of his persona. My effort was to bring a humane touch to this character, which is evident in the investigation scenes, but at the same time, there is aggression on the personal front, which comes out in front of his family. So, it was exciting to etch out the emotional arc of my character and bring an entire gamut of emotions to screen."

Akshay Oberoi joins Varun and Janhvi in Sunny Sanskari ki Tulsi Kumari

The highly anticipated comedy rom-com *Sunny Sanskari ki Tulsi Kumari* just got a whole lot brighter with the addition of talented actor Akshay Oberoi to its star-studded ensemble cast. Joining the likes of Varun Dhawan, Janhvi Kapoor, Sanya Malhotra, and Rohit Saraf, Akshay Oberoi is set to bring his charisma and comic timing to the silver screen in this eagerly awaited film. According to the reports, he'll be playing one of the main supporting leads. It's a pure family entertainer with romance in its backdrop, much like the kind of films that Shashank Khaitan has made over the years.

Under the banner of Dharma Productions, *Sunny Sanskari ki Tulsi Kumari* is poised to be a laugh riot, blending humour and romance in a way that will resonate with audiences of all ages. The film is helmed by Shashank Khaitan, and Akshay is making his debut with this banner. The film is slated to release next year, in 2025.



what's brewing?

Delbar Arya approached for Bigg Boss OTT 3

Actress Delbar Arya is one of those names in the industry who is arousing fame with her hard work and dedication. And now that the *Bigg Boss* season is all set to approach, many names are coming up for *Bigg Boss OTT season 3*, and one name is Actress Delbar Arya.

Delbar Arya, who has worked in numerous Punjabi movies and Hindi music videos, has caught the attention of *Bigg Boss OTT* producers, who believe she would be an excellent addition to the show's lineup. The grapevine is buzzing with rumours that popular Punjabi actress is all set to enter the *Bigg Boss OTT* house. Sources close to the actress have revealed that she is currently in talks with the show's makers and is inclined towards participating in the reality show.

A close source informed us that "*Bigg Boss OTT* is soon to be released, and the casting for it is going on in full swing, and actress Delbar has been approached for it by the makers. Delbar, who has never done any reality show ever, is in mind to give a nod to this reality show, and she is in talks with the makers; discussions are at an advanced stage, and she might be seen as one of the *Bigg Boss* contestants soon." It is also rumoured that she was approached for the previous season of *Bigg Boss OTT* but couldn't make it due to her prior commitments. When contacted by

Delbar Arya over her participation, she remained tight-lipped and did not respond or confirm anything about her participation. The prospect of seeing the 'Punjabi Kudi' in the *Bigg Boss* house has left many eagerly awaiting the new season.



Barkha Singh to break away from her girl-next-door characterisation

Recently, Barkha Singh posted an image on her social media where she is seen channeling her boss-lady attitude. The actress' different avatar has already done the rounds on social media, and with these pictures, one can surely say that Barkha can break stereotypes with a different character if she plays one in her upcoming projects.

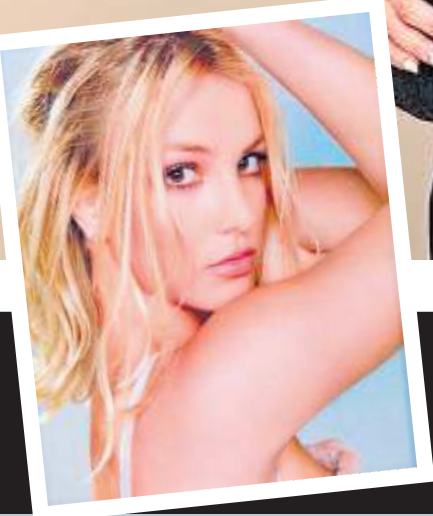
In the series of pictures shared by Barkha, her look is catching attention, and even with the projects that she has picked up, she is all set to explore different shades and genres, breaking away from her girl-next-door mould. She is the newest entrant in *Criminal Justice Season 4* and a few other projects that are being shot yet to be announced. It would be interesting to see Barkha's versatility come to play again on screen, where one would find different shades being explored by her characters.

However, with recent glimpses we see on her social media and upcoming projects, it is evident that she is finally all set to serve us a platter full of bold and flawed characters.



STANDALONE

The world premiere of *Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes* took place in Hollywood, which kicked off with a cavalcade of apes on horseback walking the red carpet.



Britney Spears denies reports of a fight with BF and 'says' mom was involved

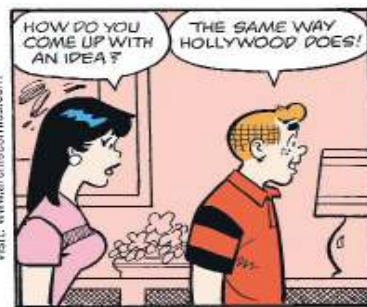
Britney Spears' current state has everyone concerned. The pop sensation was involved in a violent dispute with her lover, which led to her leaving a hotel in what witnesses described as a "terrible condition." The 42-year-old was caught leaving the upscale Hollywood hotel, the Chateau Marmont, in Los Angeles. An emergency personnel responded to the call, reporting that a female had been hurt. According to reports, the *Gimme More* singer got into a furious dispute with her boyfriend, Paul Richard Soliz, which turned physical after they parted in the hotel. According to eyewitnesses, Spears left her hotel room disheveled, prompting an ambulance to arrive.

"She may have injured her leg in the process." Now, refuting the rumours, Britney has shared a note on Instagram. She wrote, "Just to let people know... the news is fake !!! I would like respect at this time for people to understand I am getting stronger everyday!!! Truth sucks so can someone teach me how to lie??? Goddesses out there, I'm reaching my higher power and furthermore, I hope you guys are too !!! I need a new toothbrush right now" "PS... I need an espresso !!! PSS... Not sure why I feel the need to share this... I guess I'm just a girl and I'm on my period so I'm bitchy ... shit !!! I also twisted my ankle last night and paramedics showed up at my door illegally. They never came in my room but I felt completely harassed. I'm

moving to Boston !!! Peace," Britney Spears added. In another post, she shared two videos of her severely swollen ankle and discussed how she had fallen and twisted it. In the last frame, she posted a picture of her lawyer, Mathew Rosengart, and expressed her gratitude. The side note read, "I know my mom was involved !!! I haven't talked to her in 6 months and she called right after it happened before the news being out !!! I was set up just like she did way back when !!! I wish I had grandparents !!! I can't stand her !!! I honestly don't care I will say it !!! Psss this man is wonderful !!! He's like a father to me and he got me through last night !!! I adore you and admire you mister Mathew !!!"

FUN

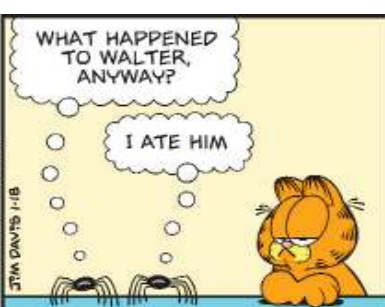
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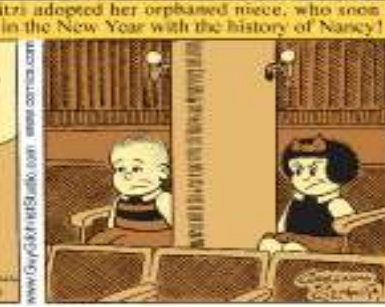
CALVIN AND HOBBS



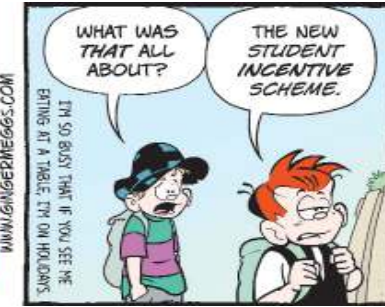
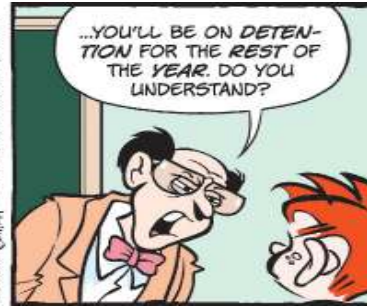
GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



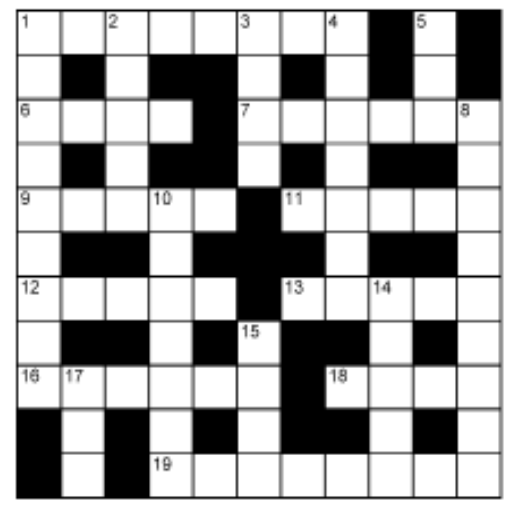
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Air-holes in your nose
- 6 Become larger
- 7 A spider's trap
- 9 Speaks
- 11 The body's pump
- 12 Uncles' wives
- 13 Took away illegally
- 16 Hot coals left from a fire
- 18 Meat from a cow
- 19 Unexpectedly, without warning
- 4 Topic
- 5 A chopping tool
- 8 An insect that flutters by
- 10 Baby cats
- 14 Sea
- 15 Second-hand
- 17 A month

DOWN

- 1 A frightening dream
- 2 Small seat without a back
- 3 A feeling that makes you want to scratch



SUDOKU

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Yesterday's solution

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

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.

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

A Hyderabadi to the core makes entrepreneurial mark

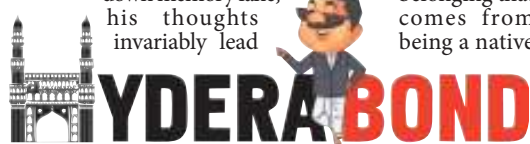
SUBODHINI PUROHIT

Hailing from a family deeply rooted in Hyderabad's rich tapestry of culture and heritage, Syed Aijazuddin is a visionary entrepreneur. With a career spanning over 25 years in the insurance sector, he embodies the essence of the city's enduring spirit. From the cobblestone streets of the old city to the gleaming towers ofHITEC City, he carries within him the legacy of generations past, infused with a passion for excellence and a drive for success. Hyderabad is a vibrant melting pot where food, restaurants, and IT converge to create a dynamic and unparalleled urban experience, he says. "I was born and raised in Hyderabad, where I completed my undergraduate studies. Later, I moved to Italy to pursue higher education and further my career. After completing my studies there, I returned to India in 2005. My family has been residing in Hyderabad for generations." Home is not merely a place on a map; it's an intricate mosaic of memories, emotions, and belongings. He expresses,

"Hyderabad holds a special place in my heart, like a sanctuary on earth. Despite travelling extensively, I've never found another place that offers the same sense of love and peace as Hyderabad does. It truly stands apart in its unique charm and warmth."

In the vibrant amalgams of Hyderabad's offerings, its culinary delights stand as crowning jewels, and among them, biryani reigns supreme. He continues to share, "Even my clients, hailing from distant corners of the globe, are captivated by the allure of Hyderabad's biryani. Their conversations brim with admiration for this iconic dish, and their praise is a testament to its transcendent flavours and aromatic splendour. Eagerly, they express their desire to partake in this culinary pilgrimage, to taste the essence of Hyderabad through its most celebrated gastronomic delight."

Embarking on a journey down memory lane, his thoughts invariably lead



him back to the hallowed halls, as he says, "My school days at All Saints High School, are etched in my memory as some of the most cherished moments of my life. It was a time filled with laughter, learning, and boundless camaraderie. As a student, I eagerly participated in dramas and plays, immersing myself in the vibrant world of storytelling and performance. These experiences not only enriched my education but also forged lifelong friendships and nurtured a sense of creativity and self-expression. Looking back, I am grateful for the remarkable journey that my school in Hyderabad provided."

He said, "Being rooted in Hyderabad has been instrumental in shaping my career journey. The inherent sense of belonging that comes from being a native



of this city has instilled in me profound confidence and a network of invaluable connections. With Hyderabad as my home base, navigating through the city's bustling landscape has been seamless, laying a strong foundation for establishing my startup. Here, I've set up my headquarters, boasting a talented pool of engineers who fuel our growth and innovation. Moreover, Hyderabad's strategic location offers unparalleled logistical support and connectivity, making it an ideal hub for businesses, particularly in the IT sector.

Indeed, Hyderabad stands as a beacon for prominent IT companies, leveraging its conducive environment, robust infrastructure, and skilled workforce to thrive on both regional and international scales."

From savoury street food to upscale eateries, Hyderabad caters to every palate with its rich medleys of flavours. Simultaneously, it stands as a hub for the IT industry, with cutting-edge companies driving forward technological advancements and global innovation, he says. "It's a city that embodies the essence of diversity, where every corner boasts a new gastronomic adventure and every street is lined with the promise of innovation. Simultaneously, it stands as a hub for the IT industry, with cutting-edge companies driving forward technological advancements and global innovation."

With its vibrant streets teeming with

life, Hyderabad offers a sensory feast for all who wander its thoroughfares. From the tantalising aromas wafting from its countless eateries to the awe-inspiring sights of its historic landmarks, every corner of the city tells a story of its rich past and promising future. He recalls, "Hyderabad is a city of contrasts, where its myriad delights often overshadow any grievances. While the bustling crowds can sometimes be overwhelming, the city is undergoing significant development under the diligent eye of the government. The culinary scene remains a constant source of joy, offering delectable delights at every turn. Moreover, Hyderabad's rich history is proudly displayed through its iconic landmarks such as Charminar, Birla Mandir, and the majestic Golconda Fort, captivating visitors with their architectural splendour and historical significance."

In the bustling metropolis of Hyderabad, where the past gracefully intertwines with the present, every street corner tells a story of its own. Amidst the vibrant varieties of culture and heritage, however, lies a common challenge, he continues. "However, amidst the charm lies the challenge of navigating the city's congested roads, particularly during the morning rush hour. Yet, the government's efforts to enhance infrastructure and connectivity offer hope for smoother travel in the future. Despite this inconvenience, Hyderabad's allure remains undeniable, enchanting residents and visitors alike with its vibrant culture, rich heritage, and enduring charm."

THIS WEEK FOR OUR HYDERABOND SEGMENT, THE PIONEER CONNECTS WITH ENTREPRENEUR SYED AIJAZUDDIN, SHARING HIS LOVE FOR HYDERABAD.

ANUSHKA SEN 'CAN'T HELP, BUT FALL IN LOVE' WITH K-DRAMAS

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Anushka Sen has undeniably gained a great fan following with the waves she has created in the filmy world. The young star, who is currently gaining much traction for her recent series, *Dil Dosti Dilemma*, speaks to *The Pioneer* about being a part of the series, creating ripples in Korean cinema and more.

Anushka's meteoric ascent to fame has taken many in the film business by surprise and also created ripples in Korean cinema. She has gone viral on social media, believe it or not. With her heartwarming depiction of friendship, love, and self-discovery, actress Anushka Sen is winning over young adult audiences with her Prime Video series *Dil Dosti Dilemma*, which is now receiving a ton of attention. Her portrayal of the vivacious character Asmara in the web series, which debuted on April 25, has captivated both spectators and critics with her talent and charisma.

"There were some surprising elements that I didn't expect when I was going through the script," she says in an exclusive Zoom interview with us. "Overall, the script was way more interesting than any other script that I read. To bring nuances to the screen, you must always be present on the sets to fully immerse yourself in the mood. We also performed 'improv'. There were a ton of scenes that were performed spontaneously without consulting anyone and weren't even mentioned in the screenplay. I'm overjoyed to see that the filmmaker has included my spontaneous observations in the series."

In her series, which is set against the backdrop of a traditional neighbourhood, her character takes an unexpected turn as she finds herself submerged in a world that is different from her normal settings. She goes on to say, "I also find great significance in the ideas that we have learned about in the series. Ever since I was a little child, I have always been a 'family girl' and like travelling with my parents. The dynamics of my family are very significant to me! We need to discuss cultural identity."

Anushka Sen received a ton of positive feedback from fans as soon as the web series teaser was released. They even called her by her character's name, Asmara, which says a lot about the level of excitement Sen's "Anushkians" had for her part in the show. "The challenge came up when there was this scene where my

character had to showcase the distant relationship with her 'nani,' she says in the interview. "I wasn't able to sense it! On the other hand, People were learning how to confront injustice, according to my feedback."

With *Dil Dosti Dilemma* out, her portrayal of Asmara, which oozes charm and genuineness, is receiving immense positive feedback from critics. One of the top portals stated that her performance truly makes an impression, while another highlighted how her self-assured acting guides her and how her real-life identity lends credibility to her role. She has undoubtedly won many over with her sensitive and realistic portrayal of the character!

Going forward, Anushka Sen has been achieving the Korean dream that all girls who have loved K-pop are destined to have, as we all know. The actress was cast in a travel show, a movie, and a Korean drama. Anushka recently rejoiced to announce that she has been named the "Honourary Brand Ambassador of Korean Tourism" too. Regarding the same, we inquire, "I have been working in the Korean film industry for nearly a year and a half, I am representing my nation abroad. Is there anything more exquisite than this? Right now, the affection has only doubled. I'm playing an assassin for the first time in my Korean debut. One schedule has been completed, and the other is still waiting to go on floors. What I love about my job is that I am talking about all cinema, regardless of which country I belong to or what language I speak. Despite being Indian, I can't help but fall in love with K-dramas. I saw that several Koreans were absolutely enamoured with Shah Rukh Khan while I was in Korea. These are actually the real deals! I can't quite put into words how I feel about being called a young worldwide star by everyone. I find it really inspiring! This emphasises the value of cross-cultural communication even more."

"Every morning I receive positive responses," she stated about her extensive social media presence. "It is fantastic to have folks on my following list who have followed me since I was a young child. Even though I'm only 21 years old, I want to make the most of my platforms and numbers. In addition to providing entertainment, I'd like to raise awareness."



Rappers become well known thanks to hip-hop in regional languages!

India, a melting pot of cultures, has long been a native of diverse artistic expressions. In recent times, one genre that has notably surged to prominence in the country's music landscape is rap.

The ascent of rap music to mainstream success has been unprecedented. Renowned artists like Badshah, Raftaar, and Honey Singh have seamlessly integrated rap into Bollywood, crafting chart-topping hits that mash up urban beats with classical Indian music. This fusion has not only propelled these artists to stardom but has also provided a platform for aspiring talents to showcase their skills to a wider audience. The integration of rap into Bollywood signifies a shift in the perception of Indian music, heralding an era of experimentation and innovation.

Hip-hop music has seen impressive growth in recent years, emerging as the fourth most streamed genre in the nation on platforms like Spotify, according to reports. This surge, however, isn't uniform across the country. Instead, various regions are carving out their own distinct styles within the genre, nurturing local talent, and fostering a strong sense of community. As awareness of hip-hop grows, brands are stepping up to support artists. Initiatives such as *Mic Check* and *Rap 91* are being promoted to showcase hip-hop artists from all corners of the country. These initiatives feature a mix of established names and emerging talents, ensuring that hip-hop takes center stage in India's music scene.

From KRSNA to Brodha V, artists across the nation are infusing their music with local languages, dialects, and cultural influences. This regional diversity adds depth to the Indian rap culture, celebrating the country's rich heritage while pushing artistic boundaries. As the global hip-hop phenomenon gains traction, Indian rap artists are making their mark on the international stage. Influenced by icons like Tupac and Eminem, Indian rappers initially gravitated towards English lyrics before embracing regional languages. Their narratives resonate deeply with Indian audiences, addressing societal issues often overlooked by mainstream media.

Looking ahead, the future of Indian rap appears promising. With growing acceptance and recognition, rap has transcended age and socio-economic barriers, captivating audiences across the nation. The proliferation of rap battles, music festivals, and



online platforms underscores the burgeoning community's appetite for authentic voices and innovative sounds.

With streaming platforms bridging the gap between regional and mainstream rap, artists are poised to make a significant impact on the global hip-hop scene. As rap culture continues to evolve and redefine itself, it reaffirms the power of creative expression to transcend boundaries and foster unity.

In conclusion, the journey of rap culture epitomises the transformative power of art. From its humble beginnings to its current mainstream status, rap has emerged as a potent medium for social commentary and cultural celebration. As rap continues to thrive, it promises a future brimming with creativity, diversity, and unbridled potential. So, let the beats resonate, the verses flow, and witness the extraordinary evolution of rap culture in India.

(The author, Ankit Khanna, is the founder and CEO of AK Projects, and also the co-founder of Kalamkaar Music.)



RCB, GT EYE MUST WIN TO KEEP PLAYOFF HOPES ALIVE

PTI ■ BENGALURU

From a maths perspective, Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Gujarat Titans can still reach the IPL playoffs, but they need to ward off inner gremlins on Saturday to notch a mandatory win to keep that dream flickering.

The Royal Challengers are the bottom-dwellers with six points from 10 matches, while the Titans are placed eighth with eight points from 10 matches.

However, the floundering outings of Chennai Super Kings and Delhi Capitals (10 points each) have fuelled the hopes of these two teams of sneaking into the middle tier of the points table and from there to the knockouts.

But both RCB and GT will know that keeping their own house in order is a better option than depending on other teams to stay afloat as the IPL group stage is entering its business end.

In that context, the Faf du Plessis-led side will feel a tad more confident than their opponents after registering wins in their last two matches.

They have also found new heroes across these two games - Will Jacks powered his way to a match-winning century against GT, while Cameron Green finally lived up to his tag of all-rounder with crucial runs and wickets against Hyderabad.

RCB would hope for an encore from them at the home venue as well. At the top, Virat Kohli continues to be a run-making presence as he recently became the first batter to go past 500-run mark in this edition of the IPL, and RCB will certainly like a few more from his willow.

However, the Royal Challengers will ask for some more consistency from their bowlers. The likes of Mohammed Siraj, who has been drafted into India's T20 World Cup squad, Yash Dayal, Karn Sharma and Swapnil Singh were on the money against SRH. But against



TEAMS (FROM):

GT at Ahmedabad, they returned to their profligate ways, allowing them to whittle a 200-run total.

They will have to tidy up their act at the unforgiving M Chinnaswamy Stadium, as despite all their inconsistencies GT have the tools to punish them.

But to the Titans' dismay, those tools have malfunctioned more often than not, and it aptly mirrored in their two successive defeats against Delhi Capitals and RCB. Shubman Gill and Bhardwaj Sai Sudharsan have run an exclusive store of runs for Gujarat, amassing over 700 runs between them.

Other than them, the likes of Wriddhiman Saha, David Miller, Rahul Tewatia, Vijay Shankar and Shahrukh Khan have not managed to even touch 200 this season, imparting a brittle look to GT's middle and lower order.

Their bowling group too has been vastly underwhelming, and none reflected it more than Rashid Khan. The star spinner has taken just eight

wickets across 10 matches while giving eight runs an over, a significantly higher economy rate than his overall 6.7 in IPL since 2017. In IPL 2023, Rashid had given away 8.24 runs an over but the Afghan took 27 wickets from 17 matches. This year, the wicket column too remained barren.

The pace bowlers offer a similar storyline. In the absence of Mohammed Shami, who is recuperating after a surgery, the Titans' most experienced duo of Umesh Yadav and Mohit Sharma have gone for plenty.

Mohit has taken 10 wickets in as many matches, the highest so far this season for GT, but leaked nearly 11 runs an over, while Yadav's economy stands at 10.5 for seven wickets.

The back-up options such as Sandeep Warrier, Noor Ahmad, R Sai Kishore and Azmatullah Omarzai too have not covered themselves with glory either, conceding way too many runs for minimal returns.

RCB: Faf du Plessis (c), Glenn Maxwell, Virat Kohli, Rajat Patidar, Anuj Rawat, Dinesh Karthik, Suyash Prabhudessai, Will Jacks, Mahipal Lomror, Karn Sharma, Manoj Bhandage, Mayank Dagar, Vijaykumar Vyshak, Akash Deep, Mohammed Siraj, Reece Topley, Himanshu Sharma, Rajan Kumar, Cameron Green, Alzarri Joseph, Yash Dayal, Tom Curran, Lockie Ferguson, Swapnil Singh, Saurav Chauhan. GT: Shubman Gill (c), David Miller, Matthew Wade, Wriddhiman Saha, Kane Williamson, Abhinav Manohar, B. Sai Sudharsan, Darshan Nalkande, Vijay Shankar, Jayant Yadav, Rahul Tewatia, Noor Ahmad, Sai Kishore, Rashid Khan, Joshua Little, Mohit Sharma, Azmatullah Omarzai, Umesh Yadav, Shahrukh Khan, Sushant Mishra, Kartik Tyagi, Manav Suthar, Spencer Johnson, Sandeep Warrier, BR Sharath.

My role is to carry on till 14th over so that Klaassen gets license to play freely: Nitish

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Entrusted with the task of shepherding Sunrisers Hyderabad's middle-order, young Nitish Reddy has been doing the job with aplomb at a time when he is seen by many as a future India all-rounder, thanks to his ability to bowl lively medium pace.

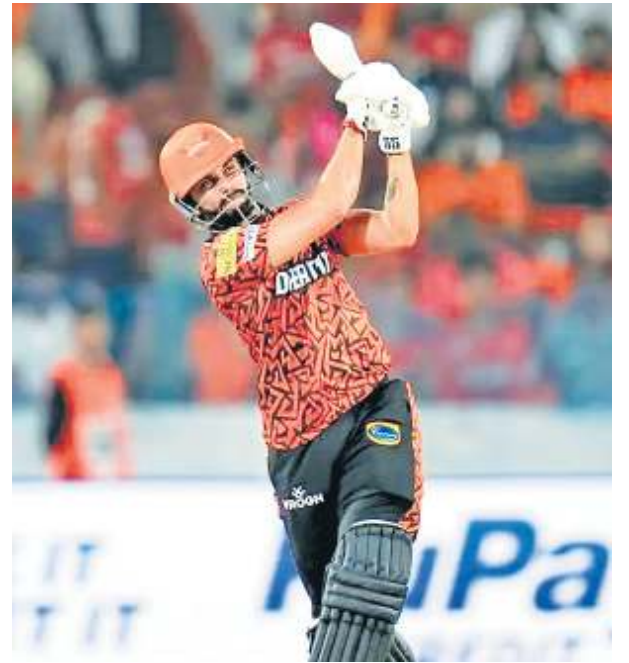
Opting to bat in the IPL game against table-toppers Rajasthan Royals here on Thursday, Reddy (76 not out) and Travis Head (58) produced explosive fifties, while Heinrich Klaassen made an unbeaten 19-ball 42 to power SRH to 201 for three. Experienced seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar then did the star turn with a sensational final over as SRH pulled off a heist, stunning RR by just one run in a last-ball thriller to keep their playoff hopes alive. Nitish, 20, stated that his role was to rebuild the innings after quick wickets.

"From the last two matches, we are losing quick wickets and I have to go. My role is to carry on till the 13th and 14th over so that Klaassen gets a license to bang. There is no point in Klaassen and Samad coming early, but not getting to score freely," said Nitish at the post-match press conference.

The all-rounder hailed Bhuvneshwar after the veteran pacer bowled a brilliant final over to help Hyderabad seal a dramatic win.

Nitish said he was hopeful that Bhuvneshwar would be able to defend 13 runs in the last over. "I was looking at who was going to bowl. When I saw Bhuvneshwar was going to bowl, I got the confidence that he was going to pull it off."

"During his prime, he had done it so many times. I did not think we were going to



win. I thought either we'd lose or tie. But that last-ball wicket, I felt so happy," Nitish said. During his explosive knock, Nitish smashed RR's in-form Yuzvendra Chahal for two fours and two sixes in the 13th over. Nitish said that he backed himself to attack the seasoned leg-spinner. Reddy also said the victory against RR, following losses to Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Chennai Super Kings, is important. "Beating RR will boost our confidence, they are at the top of the points table," he concluded.

NOT IN MY BEST FORM: PARAG: Rajasthan Royals batter Riyan Parag returned to the top five in the Orange Cape race after striking his fourth fifty of the season. The 22-year-old Parag slammed 77 off 49 balls but could not help his side chase down the target set by SRH.

Despite his breakout season with the franchise, Parag said he was not in his best form since he could not finish the game. "I got a lot of areas to improve. I am not in my best form, I would have finished the game otherwise. I got a lot of areas to perfect. I try to learn from my mistakes and not repeat them. Is it my best innings? No. I would say that if I get a hundred," Parag told reporters. The Assam player said the loss was "dramatic," adding that his team made a few errors. "It is never good to end on the losing side. We did a lot of things right. We will focus on them more rather than dwelling on our mistakes. We are at a good position in the points table. Just one bad game I guess. "We made a few errors in two-three overs and it cost us the game. That is how T20 is, IPL is," he said.

OTHER SPORTS

Swiatek returns to Madrid Open final by beating Keys

AP ■ MADRID

Iga Swiatek cruised to a straight-sets semifinal win over Madison Keys to reach the Madrid Open final and a rematch against No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka. Top-ranked Swiatek beat No. 20 Keys 6-1, 6-3 and will next face the defending champion Sabalenka, who rallied to overcome No. 4-ranked Elena Rybakina 1-6, 7-5, 7-6 (5).

The Madrid Open is the only high-profile European clay-court title that Swiatek is yet to win.

"It was a pretty clean performance and really solid game from myself," she said. "I'm happy with everything." It will be the third final of the year for Swiatek after titles in Indian Wells and Doha. "I'm happy that we can play a final against the top players," Swiatek said. "It shows consistency. For sure it's going to be a challenge, whoever it's going to be, and a tough match. I will be ready. I will focus on myself"



Sabalenka, who needed three sets to defeat Swiatek in the Madrid final last year, is into her third Madrid final after ending Rybakina's 16-match clay-court winning streak. "I was just trying to fight for every point," Sabalenka said. "I was hoping that I'll have opportunity to turn this match around, and yeah, super happy that I was able to do that." Keys said she was disappointed but there were "a lot of really

great things to take from the tournament" in the Spanish capital. "It's been a while since I have won four matches in a row. Lots to build on. It's obviously great momentum going into Rome next week," she said. "It's obviously only my fourth tournament back after the shoulder injury, so to do so well here and to be able to play some tough matches and have some three-set matches and be

physically 100% still and being able to look forward to Rome and hopefully play some good tennis there is a huge positive."

MEDVEDEV INJURED: Daniil Medvedev retired from his quarterfinal match after losing the first set 6-4, sending the 31st-ranked Jiri Lehecka into a semifinal against 35th-ranked Felix Auger-Aliassime. No. 4-ranked Medvedev needed treatment on his upper right leg while leading 3-2, complaining about having trouble moving to his right. He also needed treatment at 4-3, and after Lehecka broke serve in the ninth game to win the set, Medvedev decided not to continue. "It's never easy in a match like this," Lehecka said of Medvedev's retirement. "If I were to choose the way how to win this match, it wouldn't be like that. So of course, it's never easy to see your opponent struggling, but at that moment, you just need to focus on yourself, trying to get the maximum level out of yourself."

Klopp says he has no problem with Salah after touchline spat

AP ■ LIVERPOOL (ENGLAND)

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp insisted Friday his spat with Mohamed Salah has been "completely resolved," saying his long history with the star forward ensured there was no lasting damage to their relationship.

Klopp and Salah were involved in a touchline confrontation during the 2-2 draw at West Ham on Saturday. When Salah was asked after the game to comment on the incident, the Egypt international was heard saying: "There's going to be a fire today if I speak." Nearly a week later, Klopp said the matter was a "non-story." "There's no problem," said Klopp, who was speaking ahead of Liverpool's home match with Tottenham in the Premier League on Sunday. "If



we wouldn't know each other for that long, I don't know how we would deal with it but we know each other for that long and respect each other too much that it's really no problem." The incident happened as Salah was preparing to come on as a substitute, having been selected on the bench for the second time in three games.

After strong 2023, Indian athletes hope to make impact in World Relays

PTI ■ NASSAU (BAHAMAS)

A 15-member strong Indian Athletics contingent will look to make an impact in scenic Nassau and hope to qualify for the Paris Olympics in three events when the two-day World Athletics Relays Bahamas 24 commences here on Saturday. The Indian men's 4x400 relay team has been making waves of late, coming up with impressive performances at the 2021 Olympics in Tokyo and following it up by challenging the USA's aura of invincibility at the World Championships in Budapest last August.

The team then lived up to the billing by clinching gold at the Hangzhou Asian Games with a tremendous run of 3:01.58. On a high following those superb performances last year, India would be hoping to reset the national and Asian record of 2:59.05 seconds set by the quartet of Mohammed Anas Yahiya, Amoj Jacob, Muhammad Ajmal and Rajesh Ramesh in Budapest. The quartet will, however, have to work really hard to achieve that feat, given that its best this season is only 3:05.71 seconds, which is nearly four seconds adrift of their gold medal-winning performance in Hangzhou. As per the World Relay format for Paris, the two top teams in each heat on Saturday will advance to the final a day later. They will also secure Paris 2024 Olympic

quotas in the process. The Olympic lane seeding positions will be decided in the finals on Sunday and those will also be competing for medals. All the other teams will compete in an additional round on Sunday where the top-two teams in each heat will also qualify for Paris. India will be fielding teams in men's, women's and mixed 4x400m, with the men's quartet the best placed to qualify for Paris based on their performances last year. India has sent an eight-member men's 4x400m relay team here, including the Asian Games gold-medallist quartet of Amoj Jacob, Muhammad Anas Yahiya, Muhammad Ajmal and Rajesh Ramesh. The squad also includes 2018 Jakarta Asian Games mixed relay gold medallist Rajiv Arokia, Noah Nirmal Tom, Yashas Palaksha and Avinash Krishna Kumar. Amoj, Arokia Rajiv, Nirmal and Anas had also competed at the Tokyo Olympics, where they put up a commendable performance but missed out on a place in the final by a whisker on way to setting an Asian record of 3:00.25. India has also entered a seasoned seven-member squad for the women's 4x400m relay event, led by multiple Asian Games gold-medal winner MR Poovamma. The squad also has the Hangzhou Asian Games silver medal-winning team of Vithya Ramraj, Aishwarya Mishra, Prachi and Subha Venkatesan.

AP ■ LONDON

Tottenham's hopes of qualifying for the Champions League are getting thinner by the day. By falling 2-0 at Chelsea on Thursday, Tottenham slumped to a second loss to a London rival in the space of four days in the Premier League - after a 3-2 home defeat to Arsenal in the north London derby on Sunday. In between those losses came confirmation that England will have just four places in next season's expanded Champions League, and not five. That's another blow to Spurs, who are fifth and stayed seven points behind fourth-place Aston Villa with one game in hand. They still have to play Liverpool and Manchester City in their remaining four games so it is looking increasingly unlikely they will close the gap to Villa. "We lacked belief and conviction in our game," Tottenham manager Ange Postecoglou said. "I don't know if it's low confidence but we're not playing with the mindset we need to play the football we

Tottenham Champions League hopes hit further by 2-0 loss at Chelsea in Premier League

want to and that's something I have to look at." Headed goals by Trevoh Chalobah in the 24th and Nicolas Jackson in the 72nd were enough for Chelsea, which could yet salvage a place in one of the minor European competitions from what has been an underwhelming Premier League campaign for a squad assembled at a cost of more than \$1 billion. Chelsea climbed above West Ham and into eighth place, two points behind Newcastle and three behind Manchester United in sixth. It's likely that two of those three teams will be playing in either the Europa League or Europa Conference League next season. Chelsea manager Mauricio Pochettino said it was the best feeling he had had all season about his team. "It's the moment, after 10 months, that we start to realize how we compete," Pochettino



said. "It showed we're doing things well. "We showed it's not about names. It's about being competitive." Pochettino, however, didn't sound convinced he had the

backing of Chelsea's American owners to be around next season. "It's difficult to see I am under scrutiny and judgment every week," he said, adding: "We'll see if I have time to build after

today." Tottenham has now won just one of its past 34 away league games against Chelsea, making it one of the most one-sided top-flight fixtures. The sole victory came in 2018, when Pochettino was in charge

of Spurs. Chalobah got on the end of a free kick by Conor Gallagher to loop a header over Tottenham goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario and into the net to give Chelsea the lead. It was a 15th goal this season conceded from a set piece by Spurs and that is becoming a major issue under Postecoglou. Jackson, who had a shot partially saved by Vicario and subsequently cleared off the line by Micky van de Ven in the first half, eventually got his goal when he was quickest to react after Cole Palmer's free kick rebounded out off the crossbar. Jackson did well to head the ball over two Tottenham defenders who were retreating toward their own goal line. Tottenham is six points clear of Man United and might have to settle for a fifth-place finish, which would earn a spot in next season's Europa League.

Akshay Kumar wraps up shooting for *Kannappa*

Actor Vishnu Manchu is working ambitiously for his dream project, *Kannappa*. The first look of the movie, unveiled on the auspicious day of Mahashivaratri, received a thumping response. The presence of several pan-India stars makes this one of the most anticipated movies.

It is known that Akshay Kumar, who is playing an important role, joined the shoot a few days ago. Meanwhile, the actor wrapped up his part of the shoot. Vishnu disclosed the news and also shared a picture with the Bollywood superstar.

Sharing his experience, Vishnu wrote, "What a shoot it has been with @akshaykumar. Learnt. Laughed. And now missing the action. Looking forward for many more. #Kannappa." *Kannappa* is poised to be a cinematic

spectacle, delving into the story of a courageous warrior turned devout follower of Lord Shiva, *Kannappa*, whose unwavering faith continues to inspire across generations. Vishnu Manchu, renowned for his versatility and dedication, embodies this legendary character with fervor and reverence.

Produced by Mohan Babu and directed by Mukesh Kumar Singh, the movie has a stellar cast featuring Mohan Lal, Prabhas, and Sarathkumar in pivotal roles.

The shoot for this pan-India project reached the final stages.



tollywood

THALAPATHY69 TO GO ON FLOORS SOON

There is a lot of ongoing buzz about *Thalapathy69*. Although no official confirmation has been made yet, it has been confirmed by sources that the film is on and director H. Vinoth will be directing it. We heard on Friday that the script work is nearing completion and casting finalisation looms large on the horizon. We were further informed that an announcement about the film is slated for June, and shooting is expected to commence in August or September. The countdown to this cinematic spectacle has begun in earnest.

Under the visionary direction of H. Vinoth, whose previous works have earned critical acclaim and box office success, *Thalapathy69* promises to be a game-changer in Tamil cinema. Known for his deft storytelling and gripping narratives, H. Vinoth's collaboration with superstar Thalapathy Vijay has set expectations soaring sky-high.

Adding to the anticipation is the musical genius of Anirudh Ravichander, whose soul-stirring compositions have become synonymous with blockbuster hits. With Anirudh at the helm of the music department, fans can expect nothing short of chart-topping melodies and foot-tapping beats that will elevate the cinematic experience to new heights.

While the cast remains shrouded in secrecy, the promise of an ensemble that befits the grandeur of the project has fans eagerly awaiting casting announcements. With casting updates promised in the near future, the excitement only continues to build. With shooting scheduled to commence in September or August, and a slated release in the second half of 2025, fans can expect a cinematic extravaganza from this duo.

Time set for *Gam Gam Ganesha's* 2nd single

Actor Anand Deverakonda is coming up with different films now. Especially after the massive success of the cult hit *Baby*, the actor is being extra cautious about the movies he is choosing. While a few films are in the works for him, *Gam Gam Ganesha* is the next big film that is coming from the actor.

This time too, the actor's film is being directed by a debutante. Uday Shetty is making his directorial debut with this film, which is being produced by Kedar Selagamshetty and Vamsi Karumanchi under the Hy-Life Entertainment banner. *Gam Gam Ganesha* marks Anand Deverakonda's first foray into action movies. The movie is set for a grand theatrical release on the 31st of this month.

Meanwhile, the makers announced on Friday that they will release the second single from *Gam Gam Ganesha* at 12:06 PM on Saturday. This song is a romantic love duet featuring Anand Deverakonda and Pragathi Srivastava. As an exciting release from Tollywood this summer, expectations are high for *Gam Gam Ganesha*.



Lakshmi Kataksham set to hit theatres on May 10

Anticipation mounts as *Lakshmi Kataksham*, a satirical gem from Mahathi Entertainment, gears up for its theatrical release on May 10. Produced by U. Srinivasula Reddy, B. Nageswara Reddy, Waheed Sheikh, and K. Purushottam Reddy, the film's dialogue poster and trailer have already struck a chord with audiences, promising a riotous blend of drama and comedy. Delving into the murky waters of electoral politics,

Lakshmi Kataksham presents a scathing commentary on the system, where voters brazenly auction their votes, leaving politicians at their mercy. This unique premise has captured the

imagination of viewers, setting the stage for an unforgettable cinematic experience.

Amidst the fervour of elections sweeping through the two Telugu states, *Lakshmi Kataksham* emerges as a refreshing satire, offering a humorous take on the electoral circus. With a U/A certificate in hand, the film is primed to entertain audiences of all ages.

The ensemble cast, featuring Vinay, Arun, Deepti Verma, Charisma Srikar, Hari Prasad, Sai Kiran, and Amari, infuses life into the quirky narrative, while the technical brilliance of the crew elevates the film to new heights.



Jitender Reddy trailer stokes high expectations

Muduganti Creations presents *Jitender Reddy*, a compelling political drama directed by the acclaimed filmmaker Virinchi Varma, renowned for his romantic comedies such as *Uyyala Jampala* and *Majnu*. Under the adept production of Muduganti

Ravinder Reddy, the film ventures into uncharted territory, delving into true events from the 1980s. Rakesh Varre, recognised for his performances in *Baahubali* and *Evarikee Cheppoddu*, not only takes on the lead role but also marks his prowess as a

producer, following the success of *Pekamedalu*. Joining him are talented actors Vaishali Raj, Rhea Suman, Chhatrapati Shekhar, Subbaraju, and Ravi Prakash in pivotal roles.

The unveiling of first look posters, glimpses, and teasers has already sparked immense anticipation among audiences. With the release of the trailer, expectations have soared to unprecedented heights. *Jitender Reddy* narrates the inspiring journey of a man, deeply committed to societal welfare since his formative years. From emerging as a leader in college elections to confronting the injustices perpetrated by the police and Naxalites, *Jitender Reddy's* unwavering resolve serves as the cornerstone of the narrative. Against the backdrop of 1980s college politics and the evolution into realpolitik, the film promises an enthralling saga of courage and resilience. Scheduled for release on May 10th, the trailer offers a tantalising glimpse into the gripping tale that awaits. While Virinchi Varma's directorial repertoire predominantly comprises love stories, the transition to an action-driven narrative like *Jitender Reddy* has sparked curiosity among viewers. Yet, the trailer hints at Varma's potential to infuse the story with a fresh perspective, leaving audiences intrigued.



SATYA RELEASE DATE IS HERE!

Under the banner of Sivam Media, producer Siva Mallala presents *Satya*, an emotional drama directed by the talented Vaali Mohandas. The film, set to hit screens on May 10, unfolds a poignant narrative about a son's selfless journey in a society that values giving back to every child. Starring Hamaresh and Prarthana Sandeep in leading roles, *Satya* promises to tug at the heartstrings of audiences across Telugu states.

The film's first song, released by Think Music, has already garnered praise for its emotional depth and resonant melodies, setting the stage for a captivating cinematic experience. With the Censor Board awarding the movie a 'U' certificate, *Satya* is poised to enchant viewers of all ages. Expressing his enthusiasm for the upcoming release, producer Siva Mallala remarked, "We've spared no effort in bringing *Satya* to fruition swiftly. We're geared up for a grand release across Telugu states on May 10." Director Vaali Mohandas echoed Mallala's sentiments, expressing confidence in the film's potential to strike a chord with Telugu audiences and elevate his directorial career to new heights.



Ashok Galla, in a magical melody

The first single *Yeamayinde*, a magical melody from Ashok Galla's next film, with Arjun Jandiyala, and Lalithambika Productions' Devaki Nandana Vasudeva was unveiled on his birthday.

Superstar Krishna's grandson and Mahesh Babu's nephew, Ashok Galla, will be seen in a mass and action-packed role in his second movie, *Devaki Nandana Vasudeva*. The film directed by Arjun Jandiyala of *Guna 369* fame is a family and action entertainer laced with spiritual elements. Creative director Prasanth Varma of *HanuMan* fame provided the story for the movie, while popular writer Sai Madhav Burra penned the dialogue. Somnineni Balakrishna, an NRI (film distributor), is producing the movie as *Production No. 1* of Lalithambika Productions. Nallapaneni Yamini presents it.

After teasing with the promo for the first single, *Yeamayinde*, they unveiled the lyrical video on Friday. Bheems Ceciroleo rendered a magical melody with foot-tapping beats. The song penned by Suresh Gangula is all about the protagonist, who is deeply in love with his girl and follows her everywhere to express his feelings for her. Eshwar Dathu's singing makes this song even more special, as he spectacularly croons the lyrics. The song gets better once you listen to it multiple times. Ashok Galla looked buoyant, and his dances were cool. The love track is beautiful, and so is their chemistry in the song. The visuals captured by Rasool Ellore are so refreshing. *Yeamayinde* is an instant hit.

Alongside Rasool Ellore, Prasad Murella is the lensman for the movie, which is mounted on a large scale with a grand production design. Tammiraju is the editor of the movie.



Ashu Reddy says, 'MY BODY IS SUPER DELUXE'

Big Boss fame and social media influencer Ashu Reddy is soon going to be seen in the film *Yevam*, where she will be seen in a different and bold role. *Yevam*, in which she is playing a key role, says "Na Body Super Deluxe" (my body is super deluxe). It is to be awaited and seen why she has said this. Her first look from the film was released on Friday, in which she appears stunning. Directed by Prakash Dantuluri, the film also stars Chandini Chowdary, Vashishta Simha, Jai Bharat, and

Ashur Reddy. Navdeep and Pawan Goparaju are the producers.

Recently, the makers released the first look of actress Chandini Chowdary from the film, whose caption made the audience think. Now, the statement by Ashu shows that this film is going to be very different, and the writing of it is done in an interesting way. On the technical front, it has cinematography by SV Visveshwar, music by Keertana Seshu and Nilesh Mandalapu, and editing by Sujana Addusumilli.

Patang is a fun-filled entertainer with a unique vibe of its own

Sports comedies are rare to come by. *Patang*, starring Pranav Kaushik, Preethi Pagadala and Vamsi Pujit in lead roles, is one such film with a bunch of lovable characters. Producers Vijay Sekhar Anne, Sampath Maka, and Suresh Kothinti, on Thursday, hosted the film's teaser launch event in Hyderabad. Cinematic Elements and Rishan Cinemas had sensational Director Buchi Babu Sana as the chief guest. Doing the honours, the *Uppena* and *RC16* director conveyed his best wishes to the team. He visibly found the teaser appealing.

Director Praneeth Prattipati has handled the genre by understanding its nuances thoroughly. That's what the teaser

shows. The teaser paints *Patang* as a rollicking, youth-centric romp set in a lively urban backdrop (read 'mana' Hyderabad). "They say wars were fought for love. Can't you fly a kite for me?" begins a young lady, kicking off the playful banter. This light-hearted challenge sets the tone for a journey filled with camaraderie among men, squabbles with elders, and cute tiffs. From reveling in the joys of life to uproarious laughter and sweet romance aplenty, the teaser promises a delightful blend of heartwarming bonds and the adrenaline rush of competition. We are surely in for a feel-good flick. The film's post-production works are ongoing. Its release date is yet to be announced.

