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ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్ ఓటర్లకు నా సందేశం



AR వీడియో కోసం QR CODE స్కాన్ చేయండి

ఆనందాల — ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్



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సంస్కరణల సారథి... సామాన్యుల పెన్నిధి

మన జగనన్నను గెలిపించుకుందాం...



ఫ్యాన్ గుర్తుకే మన ఓటు



Monday Mirchi

WHAT IS JAWAHAR'S SECRET SAUCE?

The question uppermost in the minds of those in the corridors of power in Andhra Pradesh is: "How did CS Jawahar Reddy escape the wrath of the Election Commission of India". At a time when top officials are being transferred at the drop of a hat, and when even Director-General of Police KV Rajendranath Reddy has been forced out, the Chief Secretary managed to stay put in his place. As reported in this column, Jawahar Reddy has been following the rule book. It is a different matter that it would have angered Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy for various reasons. So, it looks like the Election Commission could go soft on the official. As the CS has been left untouched, there are whispers about the powerful lobby backing him. The ECI has transferred 12 IAS and IPS officers in the last one month, removing them from election duties.

CM KEEPS HIS CARDS CLOSE TO HIS CHEST

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy seems to be keeping his cards close to his chest when it comes to dealing with senior officials who had run-ins with him before the Assembly elections, but who have been allowed to continue in their positions under the new dispensation. For instance, questions have been raised over Navin Mittal continuing as Telangana CCLA Commissioner even under the Congress government. For, Revanth, as Opposition leader before the Assembly polls, had several tussles with Navin. When scribes pointedly asked Revanth about it, the CM did not come up with an answer. All he indicated was that "it's about timing". On Finance Secretary Ramakrishna Rao, who too has been continuing in the same position under the new regime, the CM merely said that the official had been on leave for a long time. However, the corridors of power are abuzz with grapevine that there will be a reshuffle, though it is unlikely that Navin would be pushed into the loop line.

WHAT IS THE BHAVISHYA OF BHAVESH MISHRA?

About a month ago, the Telangana government had sent out signals that an IAS officer is under scanner in a forest land grab case. For newbies, the Supreme Court had found fault with an affidavit filed without official sanction by former Bhupalpally collector in support of the ownership claim of an individual over 106 acres of land in the Kompally forest in the district. The parcel of land, worth Rs 380 crore, was given to the private individual apparently overruling objections raised by the Forest Department. Now, the whispers in the corridors of power are about the bhavishya of Bhavesh Mishra, a 2015 batch officer who had filed the affidavit, post elections.

'CAT' RESCUES A 'LION' JUST IN TIME!

Those who indefatigably pursue their goals in spite of a plethora of obstacles often achieve success. What if their moments of glory

are going to be brief? They do know the value of their short and sweet victory. Senior IPS officer of Andhra cadre AB Venkateswar Rao, who has been under suspension for the last four years under the YSR Congress government, has got a reprieve on the verge of his retirement. The official, who had remarkable clout in the erstwhile Telugu Desam Party regime, had been suspended twice. He launched a legal battle against his suspension. The update on this is that the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) has overturned the suspension of AB Venkateswar Rao (referred to as a 'lion' in official circles for his courage of conviction) and directed the state government to reinstate him with immediate effect. Post elections, the state government may act on the directive from CAT. Meanwhile, official circles are wondering how ABV made it just 20 days before his retirement. He may or may not get a chance to work before that day, but he can surely rest with the satisfaction of winning against the state government and vindicating his position. In cricketing terms, he may be 'retired', but not 'retired hurt'.

WILL LAND TITLING ACT OPEN A CAN OF WORMS?

The political scene in Andhra Pradesh has taken a turn for the worse with opposition leaders cornering the state government on the Land Titling Act (LTA), which, if enforced, could open a can of worms. Matters came to a head after retired IAS officer PV Ramesh posted a message on X (formerly Twitter) that he himself was a victim of LTA even before the Act came into force in Andhra Pradesh. Ramesh, who was a special chief secretary to Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, stated that officials of the Revenue Department had turned down his request for mutation of lands owned by his parents at Vinnakota village in Gudlavalleru Mandal of Krishna district. The RDO simply returned the documents posted by Ramesh without even having a look at them. "My right over the lands owned by my parents was denied before the Act became operative. If this is my position as an IAS officer who has served the State for 36 years, it is not difficult to imagine the plight of common farmers", he observed nailing the prickly Act.

INFORMING EC OR DIRECTING THE POLL BODY?

Transfers of officials at the behest of the ECI are common before polls. But what beats official circles is that opposition leaders are not only complaining against officials and seeking their transfers, but also suggesting who should be posted in place of the officials moved out. A little bird told us that the opposition alliance has BJP in the bloc only to get some advantage during the elections by ensuring transfer of officials perceived to be pro-government and that opposition leaders have been successful in their move.

-- Yours truly

Caste, religion and socioeconomic factors shape AP voter preferences

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As the people of Andhra Pradesh are ready to witness voting as a festival of democracy, the State bears testimony to the complex interplay of caste, religion, and socioeconomic factors shaping voter preferences. The political landscape in AP is deeply entrenched in caste affiliations, with each community exhibiting distinct voting patterns. While SC, ST, and Christian minorities predominantly favour the YSRCP, the BC community leans towards the TDP-JSP alliance due to perceived neglect by the

ruling party and historical allegiance to the TDP.

Among OC groups, except for the Reddy community staunchly supporting the YSRCP, the majority tend to favour the TDP-JSP alliance. Notably, the Kapu community, which played a significant role in the 2019 elections, is now rallying with the TDP-JSP group, influenced by factors like Pawan Kalyan's appeal. Government employees, disillusioned by delayed salaries and unmet demands, are inclined towards the TDP-JSP alliance, viewing it as a viable alternative. Conversely, the

state's unemployed population harbours discontentment towards the YSRCP for its failure to address job creation, signalling potential support for the opposition.

With a substantial number of first-time voters, the youth segment emerges as a crucial demographic. Propaganda portraying Jagan's governance as welfare-centric, rather than developmental, resonates with youth, driving support towards the TDP-JSP alliance. Economic concerns, particularly among the middle class, fuel dissatisfaction and translate into support for the same alliance. While a

significant portion of Jagan's vote bank remains intact, comprising Reddy, SC, ST, Christian, and Muslim minorities, other sections like the lower economic class and farmers also show strong support for him. However, close to 40% seem to be aligned with the TDP-JSP-BJP alliance, comprising Kamma, Kapu, other OC, BC, and employees. The remaining 22% of voters are crucial in determining the election outcome.

Various factors, including caste, religion, socioeconomic status, and governance performance, influence voting behav-

iour. However, assuming uniform patterns within specific demographics oversimplifies the complex reality. Inducements like money and liquor further complicate the analysis, making it challenging to predict individual voting choices. Understanding the intricate dynamics of Andhra Pradesh's political landscape is imperative for political parties vying for power. As they seek to sway public opinion and secure electoral victories, acknowledging the multifaceted nature of voter preferences becomes crucial in navigating this dynamic electoral terrain.

Telangana to go for LS polls today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

After a high decibel campaign, including by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and top leaders of Congress and BRS, the stage is now set for polling on Monday to elect 17 Lok Sabha members from the state in a single phase.

The Election Commission has also made arrangements to conduct a bypoll for the Secunderabad (Cantonment) Assembly seat to be held tomorrow.

A contingent of 73,000 civil police personnel, 500 sections of the state special police, 164 companies of central armed police forces, three companies of Tamil Nadu police, 2,088 officials from other departments and 7,000 home guards have been deployed as part of security measures, the Telangana DGP office said.

'Vizianagram ready for high voter turnout'

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

All arrangements have been made to ensure 15,62,921 voters to come forward to exercise their franchise in Vizianagram district, said District Election Officer and collector S Nagalakshmi. Towards this initiative, Nagalakshmi has conducted thorough inspections of the polling arrangements, having embarked on extensive field visits over the past few days. In addition to overseeing logistical aspects, Nagalakshmi has ensured that polling staff are well-versed in their duties through comprehensive training programs.

Awareness conferences have been conducted, particularly in sensitive areas, to instill confidence among voters. Stringent measures have been taken to guarantee minimum infrastructure facilities at all polling centers, with special attention paid to distribution centers to facilitate smooth operations. Nagalakshmi informed that



post-polling procedures have also been meticulously organized, with reception centers established at key locations for the collection of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and polling materials. The EVMs will be securely stored in designated strong rooms until the counting of votes on June 4.

In terms of voter demography, Nagalakshmi highlighted that the district comprises 15,62,921 registered voters, including 7,70,805 males, 7,92,038 females, and 78 third-gender voters. A total of 77

candidates are contesting across seven assembly constituencies, with an additional 15 candidates vying for the Vizianagar Parliament seat. To ensure inclusivity and accessibility, 11 Model Polling Centers have been established, each catering to different demographics and talents within the district.

Moreover, all 1847 polling centers have been equipped with essential infrastructure facilities mandated by the Election Commission, including provisions for drinking water, sanitation, lighting, and accessibility ramps. Special provisions have been made for differently-abled and elderly voters, with the deployment of wheelchairs and Braille templates at polling stations. Comprehensive efforts have been made to distribute voter slips, with assistance camps set up at polling stations to aid those in need.

A considerable workforce comprising 2290 Presiding

Officers, 2306 Assistant Presiding Officers, 9065 Additional Polling Officers, and 13,661 Polling Staff, alongside reserve personnel, has been deployed across the district. Extensive transportation arrangements involving 226 designated routes, RTC buses, mini-buses, and additional vehicles have been implemented to facilitate the movement of personnel and materials.

Special attention has been given to problem areas, with heightened surveillance and security measures, including the deployment of web cameras and Micro Observers to monitor the election process, ensuring transparency and accountability. District Collector Nagalakshmi has appealed to all eligible voters to responsibly exercise their democratic rights. She particularly encouraged first-time voters to actively participate in the electoral process, emphasizing the importance of their contribution to shaping the democratic landscape.

Rs 1.50 cr in cash seized in Vizag

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Even as all arrangements are in place for the conduct of polls on Monday, Rs 1.5 crore in cash was seized at Pandurangapuram in Visakhapatnam on Sunday. According to reports, the cash was seized by the district flying squad while it was being carried in a car in Pandurangapuram, Visakhapatnam. The persons, who were carrying the amount, fled the

scene. The flying squad handed over the cash to the three town police and the latter swung into action to trace the persons who were carrying the amount. This was the third incident of cash seizure in the city. While Rs 67 lakh was seized in the Visakhapatnam South constituency, over Rs 7 crore was seized in the Visakha North in the last week. Meanwhile, City Commissioner of Police A Ravishankar has sought cooperation from the public to conduct elections in a free and fair manner.

The CP said elaborate bandobast arrangements were made in tune with the guidelines issued by the Election Commission. Prohibitory orders under Sections 144 and 30 were in force in the surrounding areas of the polling stations, he said advising the staff to be vigilant without giving any room for complacency. Ravishankar exhorted the staff to be courteous towards voters and extend them all help. It is learnt that the contesting parties started the distribution of money among voters on Saturday night.

PNS ■ PARVATHIPURAM-MANYAM

District Collector and District Electoral Officer Nishant Kumar confirmed that the entire electoral apparatus is fully mobilised for the upcoming elections scheduled for Monday, with all necessary arrangements in place. The movement of essential equipment and materials required for the smooth conduct of the elections has been completed.

From the early hours of Sunday morning, officers and staff designated for election duties have congregated at the distribution centres across the region to collect their requisite materials. With appointment documents in hand, they received the nec-

essary supplies destined for their assigned polling stations. The administrative setup has divided the region into sectors for efficient management, with 33 sectors designated in Parvathipuram, 35 in Palakonda, 44 in Kurupam, and 32 in Salur.

Nishant Kumar informed that the Distribution centres have been established in key locations such as the Government Junior College and Government Degree College in Salur, along with other constituency centres in Parvathipuram, Palakonda, and Kurupam. Here, the process of distributing Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) was meticulously carried out under the supervision of Returning Officers and election



observers. The commencement of EVM distribution at 6:30 am marked a significant milestone, ensuring a seamless process.

Nishant Kumar, along with other officials including Joint Collector SS Shobika and various Returning Officers, oversaw the entire process. Monitoring efforts were dili-

gently executed to ensure that all arrangements were in place, including provisions for breakfast, lunch, and accommodation for staff at the polling centers. A total of 7,83,440 eligible voters are expected to exercise their franchise in the upcoming elections. The distribution comprises 3,82,589 male vot-

ers, 4,00,779 female voters, and 72 individuals belonging to the third gender category. Constituency-wise, Palakonda leads with 1,95,020 voters, followed closely by Kurupam with 1,94,114 voters. Parvathipuram with 1,89,817 voters, and Saluru with 2,04,489 voters.

To ensure the safety and security of the electoral process, a substantial workforce has been deployed, including 6,600 personnel, 1,150 policemen, and six companies of the central police force. As the region prepares for the polling day, a sample voting procedure will be conducted in the presence of agents before the commencement of the polling process at seven o'clock in the morning.

Politicos plan to go on summer holiday after polls

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

Tired of campaigning for almost one month in the hot summer, the leaders are making plans to go on a summer vacation with their family members to take rest for some days after the polling is over. Polling will be held in Telangana for 17 Lok Sabha seats and in Andhra Pradesh for 175 Assembly and 25 Lok Sabha constituencies on Monday. After the polling the candidates will be busy collecting the data about booth-wise

polling details to assess their victory chances. After that the candidates are planning to go for summer vacations with their family members to the places like Ooty, Kodaikanal and others to chill in the summer.

Some candidates are planning to go to foreign countries where their relatives are staying. To declare the election results there is more than 20 days time. The results will be declared on June 4. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy sought approval to go to London from May 17 for a week.

Jagan, who is on conditional bail in the disproportionate assets case registered by CBI requires court's permission to go to foreign countries.

But Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has no such chance to take rest for some days after the polling in Telangana. Being a national star campaigner of the Congress, he has to campaign in the states where polling is scheduled in the fifth phase. Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhathi Vikramarka and other senior Congress leaders also have to campaign in other states after

the completion of polling in Telangana.

BRS president and former chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao will take rest at his farm house. There are no plans as of now for TDP supreme and former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu. Mainly, the contesting candidates will go with their families to take rest for some days. By the last week of this month, they will return to their native places and will be busy with selecting the polling agents and others in the counting of votes.

In Telangana in the Lok Sabha elections there is triangular fight between the Congress, BJP and the BRS. According to political sources, in a majority of the Lok Sabha constituencies there will be a tight fight between the Congress and the BJP. In Andhra Pradesh in the Assembly as well as in the Lok Sabha elections, there will be face to face fight between YSR Congress and the TDP alliance. These elections are likely to decide the political future of BRS in Telangana and TDP in Andhra Pradesh.

5,458 buses provided for...

Continued from Page 5

Moreover, in response to significant influxes from Hyderabad to Vijayawada, additional special buses have been operated to accommodate the surge in traffic. District officials are closely monitoring bus stations to facilitate the provision of special services in alignment with passenger needs. Furthermore, APSRTC has

introduced a proactive measure to address passenger demands by encouraging individuals awaiting transportation to the same destination to contact the election cell at 9959111281 in the RTC central office. Upon receiving such requests, APSRTC will coordinate with district authorities to arrange special buses, informed MD Dwaraka Tirumala Rao.



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మేం నమ్ముతాం... నిన్నే జగన్!



అవ్వతాతల ఆత్మీయ మనవడు

ఒకటో తేదీనే ఇంటి దగ్గరే తంచనుగా పింఛను ఇచ్చి మమ్మల్ని ఆదుకున్నాడు, ఇక పైనా మా మనవడే మాకు దిక్కు

మేం నమ్ముతాం నిన్నే జగన్

అక్కవెల్లెమ్మలకు సోదరుడిగా...

అక్కవెల్లెమ్మలను అక్కన చేర్చుకున్న సోదరుడై... అమ్మ ఒడి, ఆసరా, చేయాత, ఈబీసీ నేస్తం, కాపునేస్తం, సున్నావడ్డీ, ఇళ్ల పట్టాలు, ఇళ్లు, నామినేటిడ్ పదవుల్లో 50% ఇలా ఎన్నో ఇచ్చి మా కాళ్ల పై మేం నిలబడేలా చేసిన మా అన్న జగన్

మేం నమ్ముతాం నిన్నే జగన్

రైతులకు అన్నీ తానై...

రైతు భరోసా ఇచ్చి, ఆర్థికీలు పెట్టి, ధాన్యం కొనుగోలుతో కష్టాలు లేకుండా చేసి, ఇన్పుట్ సబ్సిడీ, ఉచిత పంట బీమా, పంట రుణాలు... ఇలా మాకేం కావాలన్నా అన్నీ ఇచ్చి వ్యవసాయాన్ని పండగ చేశాడు.

మేం నమ్ముతాం నిన్నే జగన్

బీసీలకు వెన్నుగా...

తోకలు కత్తిరిస్తామన్న పెత్తందారుల పీదమణిచి, వెనకబడిన కులాలకు దన్నుగా నిలిచి, అధికారంలో సగభాగమిచ్చి సమాజంలో మమ్మల్ని తలెత్తుకు తిరిగేలా మార్చిన మా అత్యబంధువు మా జగన్.

మేం నమ్ముతాం నిన్నే జగన్

మైనార్టీల హితైపి

మా మైనార్టీలకు వెన్నుగా దన్నుగా నిలిచి, షాదీతోఫా అందించి మా బిడ్డల జీవితాల్లో వెలుగులు నింపి, హాజ్ యాత్రకు తోడ్పాటునిచ్చాడు. ముస్లిం రిజర్వేషన్ల రక్షణ కోసం నడుం బిగించిన ఏకైక నేత మా జగన్..

మేం నమ్ముతాం నిన్నే జగన్

దళితులకు దన్నుగా...

మాకు ఉపముఖ్యమంత్రి పదవులిచ్చి, మా ఆత్మ గౌరవాన్ని ఘనంగా నిలిపి, విజయవాడ నడిబొడ్డున అంబేద్కర్ ఆశయాన్ని ఆకాశమెత్తు నిలబెట్టి, మా జీవితాలను మార్చిన మా బిడ్డ జగన్.

మేం నమ్ముతాం నిన్నే జగన్

విద్యార్థులకు ప్రియమైన మేనమామ

మా జగన్ మామయ్య విద్యాదీవెన, విద్యా కానుక, వసతి దీవెన, విదేశీ విద్యాదీవెనలిచ్చి, నాడు-నేడుతో మా బడి భాగు చేసి, ఇంగ్లీషు మీడియం చదువులు చెప్పించి, ట్యాబులిచ్చి, IFPలతో డిజిటల్ బోధన చేసి, గోరుముద్దతో మా కడుపు నింపినాడు. ఇక పైనా మాకు అన్నీ ఇస్తాడు.

మేం నమ్ముతాం నిన్నే జగన్

యువతకు ఆశాదీపం

స్వాతంత్ర్యం వచ్చినప్పటి నుంచి ఎన్నడూ జరగని విధంగా 59 నెలల కాలంలోనే ఏకంగా 2.31 లక్షల ప్రభుత్వ ఉద్యోగాలిచ్చి మా ఆశలకు ఊపిరిలూదినోడు.. మా ఉపాధికి ఆశాదీపకుడైనోడు.. మా జగన్.

మేం నమ్ముతాం నిన్నే జగన్

వాలంటీర్లతో పాలన విప్లవం

ప్రజలకు ప్రభుత్వానికి మధ్య వారధిగా మమ్మల్ని తీర్చిదిద్ది, ఉన్న ఊర్లో మా గౌరవాన్ని పెంచి, మా ఊరి ప్రజలకు సేవచేసే భాగ్యం కల్పించిన మా జగన్.

మేం నమ్ముతాం నిన్నే జగన్

కులవృత్తులకు వెన్నెముకగా...

నేతన్నలకు అండగా, మత్స్య కారులకు భరోసాగా, నాయా బ్రాహ్మణులకు చేయాతగా, రజకులకు వెన్నుదన్నుగా; కుమ్మరి, కంసాలి, వడ్డెర, వడ్డంగి, గీత కార్మికులు వంటి సకల వృత్తులు, సమస్త కులాలకు పెద్దదిక్కుగా నిలిచాడు మా జగన్

మేం నమ్ముతాం నిన్నే జగన్



సంస్కరణల సారథి... సామాన్యుల పెన్నిధి

మన జగన్ నన్ను గెలిపించుకుందాం...

ఫ్యాను గుర్తుకే మన ఓటు



Krishna, NTR dists gear up for polls

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna and NTR districts are fully geared up for the general election polling scheduled on Monday. Authorities in both districts have finalised all preparations to oversee the polling across 14 Assembly constituencies, including the prominent Machilipatnam and Vijayawada Lok Sabha segments. Voting will commence promptly at 7 am and conclude at 6 pm.

Polling staff have already reached their designated polling stations in the respective assembly constituencies of both districts, accompanied by Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs), and other necessary polling materials, ahead of the election day. A total of 3,560 polling stations have been set up to accommodate approximately 32,43,537 eligible voters across the two districts.

Under the directives of Andhra Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Mukhesh Kumar, Election Officers cum Collectors of both districts are aiming for an 85% voter turnout in both urban and rural areas. In the past two elections, the voter turnout in the NTR district has not surpassed 80%.

In the 2019 elections, the average voter turnout was 77.14%, while it was 76.64% in the 2014 elections. Conversely, Krishna district witnessed higher voter participation with an average of 83.70% in the 2019 elections and 83.48% in the 2014 elections. Therefore, the administrations of NTR and Krishna districts are targeting an average voter turnout of 85% this time.

Efforts are being made by authorities to minimize the need for repolling by ensuring strict vigilance at all polling stations to prevent any untoward incidents. Security arrangements for the general



election are being closely monitored by Krishna District Collector DK Balaji, Superintendent of Police Adnan Nayeem Asmi, NTR District Collector Dr. S Dilli Rao, and Police Commissioner PHD Ramakrishna.

207 candidates in fray

According to reports from the Election Commission, a total of 207 candidates are contesting across the Machilipatnam and Vijayawada Lok Sabha segments, as well as the 14 Assembly constituencies. Vijayawada Central constituency has the highest number of contenders with around 20 candidates, except for the Nuzvid and Kaikaluru segments.

In contrast, the Paruru assembly constituency has the least number of candidates with 8 contestants in the district. Notably, 15 candidates are vying in the Machilipatnam Lok Sabha segment and 17 in the Vijayawada Parliamentary constituency.

NTR Dist: 17.04 lakh voters, 1,792 polling stations

A total of 1,792 polling stations have been arranged across all seven assembly constituencies within the Vijayawada Lok Sabha segment in the NTR district to facilitate voters in casting their ballots. According to the final electoral roll,

Vijayawada Lok Sabha constituency comprises a total of 17,04,077 voters, with 8,73,427 female voters and 8,30,650 male voters. Among the seven assembly constituencies, the Mylavaram segment has the highest number of voters, with 2,81,732 individuals, including 1,44,892 female voters and 1,36,840 male voters. Accordingly, 296 polling stations have been set up in the district.

Similarly, the Vijayawada Central constituency has 2,77,724 voters (Male-1,34,829, Female-1,42,895) and 267 polling booths have been arranged. The Vijayawada East segment comprises a

total of 2,70,624 voters, with 1,32,441 male voters and 1,38,183 female voters, and 298 polling stations have been established.

Additionally, Vijayawada West has 2,55,963 voters (Male-1,26,634, Female-1,29,329) and 267 polling stations, Tiruvuru (SC) has 2,07,190 voters (Male-1,01,994, Female-1,05,196) and 234 polling stations, Nandigama (SC) has 2,05,480 voters (Male-99,398, Female-1,06,082) and 222 polling stations, and Jaggayapet assembly constituency has a total of 2,05,364 voters, with 98,463 male voters and 1,06,888 female voters. The Elections Commission has arranged 222 polling stations for these voters.

Krishna dist: 15.39 lakh voters, 1,768 polling stations

According to the final electoral roll, Krishna district, encompassing the Machilipatnam Lok Sabha segment, has approximately 15,39,460 eligible voters, including 7,46,332 male voters and 7,93,128 female voters. The Penamaluru assembly constituency holds the highest number of electors in the district, totalling 2,94,928, with 1,42,349 male voters and 1,52,579 female voters. Consequently, 306 polling stations have been established.

Similarly, the Gannavaram segment has 2,79,954 voters, comprising 1,34,226 male voters and 1,44,816 female voters. Additionally, Avanigadda has 2,12,331 voters (Male-1,04,568, Female-1,07,763), Gudivada has 2,04,271 voters (Male-97,710, Female-1,06,561), Machilipatnam has 1,96,680 voters (Male-94,788, Female-1,01,892), Pamarru has 1,84,632 voters (Male-89,422, Female-95,210), and the Pedana segment has a total of 1,67,564 voters, with 83,008 male voters and 84,556 female voters.

Despite 230 complaints lodged, YSRCP files fresh complaint with EC

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP leaders lodged a formal complaint with the Election Commission, urging action against TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu, a vernacular online channel, and a vernacular newspaper on Sunday for allegedly resorting to verbal abuse and tarnishing the reputation of Chief Minister and YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, which they claim is a clear violation of election regulations.

MLA Malladi Vishnu, YSRCP Legal Cell State president Manohar Reddy, and party grievance cell president Narayana Murthy jointly filed the complaint, providing evidence to support their allegations before election officials. Vishnu accused Chandrababu Naidu of making personal and derogatory remarks against Chief Minister YS Jagan during campaign meetings in Chittoor and Nandyala, employing abusive language that violates the model code of conduct. He noted that despite lodging previous complaints with the EC regarding Naidu's objectionable language, no change in behaviour has been observed. Furthermore, he highlighted the publication of manipulated images of Jagan Reddy by a vernacular daily, demanding criminal action against such acts. In addition, Vishnu stated



that a complaint has been filed against a vernacular digital channel for broadcasting a false survey targeting CM Jagan and the YSRCP. Despite lodging a total of 230 complaints with the EC, Vishnu expressed disappointment at the lack of firm action from the commission.

Manohar Reddy echoed Vishnu's sentiments, asserting that numerous complaints have been lodged with the Election Commission concerning the alleged misconduct of the NDA

alliance. However, he lamented the absence of any action taken by the commission. Reddy pointed out discrepancies in the commission's response, citing instances where action was taken against police personnel following the involvement of actor Allu Arjun, yet no such action was taken when actor Ramcharan campaigned in Pithapuram. Reddy concluded by urging the Election Commission to demonstrate impartiality in addressing their grievances.

V'WADA BUS STATION BURSTING AT ITS SEAMS

LONG WAIT FOR VOTERS TO REACH NATIVE PLACES

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Ahead of the election day, many voters settled in Hyderabad and other Telangana districts have faced severe problems due to the lack of sufficient number of RTC buses to go to their respective native places in Krishna, West Godavari, West Godavari and other districts to cast their votes. On Sunday, many people reached the PNBS in Vijayawada from Hyderabad to go to their native villages. They waited for several hours at the bus station. The RTC authorities failed to operate special bus services for the passengers to go to their vil-

lages. As a result, the PNBS was packed with bus commuters who came from Hyderabad and other Telangana districts. Passengers expressed unhappiness over the inaction of RTC. Without prior information, how the authorities cancelled the bus services, they asked.

The APSRTC failed to operate special bus services to various destinations of Krishna, East, West and other Uttarandhra districts. As a result, bus commuters staged a protest on the premises of the PNBS on Sunday. On the other hand, a large



queue line was seen at the reservation counters. However, the RTC suspended 48 long-distance bus services without informing. They displayed the

list of cancelled bus services on the premises of the PNBS. Many bus commuters scolded the RTC officials for not arranging special services.

Instead of arranging special services, they cancelled many services, they lamented. Meanwhile, TSRTC has arranged more special bus services to Hyderabad from Vijayawada. RTC authorities are unhappy over this.

243 buses allotted to Election Commission: RTC

Meanwhile, Andhra Pradesh Public Transport Department (APPTD) NTR District Officer MY Danam stated that in view of the general election polling, the RTC has allotted 243 buses to the election commission to

transport the election staff and material.

Also, he said that they have arranged 20 additional bus services from Hyderabad to Vijayawada. Also, another 20 bus services will be operated from Vijayawada to Rajamahendravaram, he added. He said that after the completion of the election process, the RTC would arrange 100 special bus services on May 13 and another 100 services on May 14 for the convenience of the passengers in the NTR district. The number of special bus services will be increased based on the passengers' rush, he added.



The rush of passengers at PNBS in Vijayawada on Sunday, in view of Parliament and Assembly elections. Photo: Ch. VIJAYA BHASKAR

Bunny booked for poll code violation

PNS ■ NANDYALA

The Andhra Pradesh police booked a case against popular Telugu actor Allu Arjun here for allegedly violating the Model Code of Conduct during the silent period in the run-up to polls, said an official on Sunday.

Nandyala district Superintendent of Police K Raghuvendra Reddy said Arjun allegedly came in a rally to Nandyala YSRCP Assembly constituency candidate S Ravi Chandra Kishore Reddy's home on Saturday.

"We have registered a case against Allu Arjun for violating the MCC by going to a rally during the silent period," Raghuvendra Reddy told PTL, noting that up to 300 fans came on motorcycles.

The case was registered on Saturday under IPC Section 188, he said.

The 'Pushpa' actor waved to a large crowd from a balcony

with the YSRCP candidate and also posted a message on 'X' in his favour.

"Grateful to the people of Nandyal for the warm reception. Thank you, Silpa Ravi Reddy (YSRCP candidate) garu, for the hospitality. Wishing you the very best in the elections and beyond. You have my unwavering love and support," said Arjun in the post on 'X' on Saturday.

Nandyala SP said that the case will be further investigated. Interestingly, Hyderabad-based Arjun, whose

ancestral place is Palakollu town in Andhra Pradesh's West Godavari district is a close relative of Janasena founder and actor-politician Pawan Kalyan.

Janasena, TDP and BJP are NDA alliance partners, who are taking on YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led YSRCP in the elections. The state goes to the polls on May 13.



Betting rampant in Krishna

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Gannavaram and Gudivada Assembly constituencies in Krishna district have become a hot topic across the State with candidates offering huge amounts of money to voters. Candidates of both the ruling party and the Opposition are competing with each other in offering money for votes. When the Silent Period started, major political party leaders and cadres distributed money and freebies to the voters. However, election

observers or the police have taken no action in this regard.

According to the voters, YSRCP and TDP candidates were distributing money (Rs.500 notes) to all the voters in Gannavaram and Gudivada segments. Leaders of both parties visited every house and distributed money after verifying their voter slips.

As per the information, they distributed Rs.3,000 to Rs.5,000 to each voter based on demand. They have com-

pleted the money distribution programme in Gannavaram.

Meanwhile, voters approached ward and booth conveners in all villages and towns seeking money. Those who did not receive any directly called the party leaders and demanded money. Compared to other Assembly constituencies in the erstwhile Krishna district, money distribution is rampant in Gannavaram and Gudivada constituencies.

On the other hand, political leaders, people's rep-

resentatives and common people are very much interested in betting on election results. The betting amounts range from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 1 crore. Punters mainly focus on who will form the government, the number of seats, winning candidates, and the margin.

Additionally, they put bets on locally polled vote leads. Despite election observers and vigilance teams keeping vigil in villages and towns, money distribution and betting continue unabated.

'Rice cards, ration cards won't be accepted as ID proofs'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao has clarified that rice cards and ration cards are not identified by the Election Commission of India (ECI) as the ID proofs to cast votes. Rao also urged the voters not to bring their mobile phones to the polling booths.

In a press briefing here on Sunday, the Collector advised the voters not to carry rice cards and ration cards when they go to the

polling stations. "Voters should not argue with the polling staff over this matter," he said.

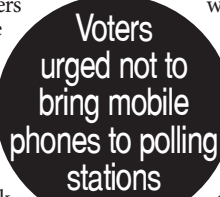
He said that the ECI has identified 12 types of ID proofs -- MGNREGA, bank or post office passbook, voter ID, Aadhaar card, driving licence, passport, smart card issued by RGI under NPR, PAN card, service cards with photographs, pension documents

with photographs etc. The Collector added that mobile phones are strictly prohibited in polling booths. So, the voters should cooperate with the police and polling staff, he said.

On the other hand, Collector Dilli Rao condemned the false news spreading on the social media regarding the marking ink on fingers. The ink is supplied by

the ECI, and it is not available anywhere else, he added. Also, he urged the voters to cast their votes as early as possible. No voter should wait until the evening to cast their votes, he added.

Meanwhile, he assured that the district administration would provide a chance for all voters who are in the queue line to cast their votes. If there are voters in the queue lines after 6 pm, they will be given coupons, he explained.



Heavy rain, gales hamper polling arrangements

PNS ■ KADAPA

Heavy rain accompanied by gales hampered the polling arrangements in Pulivendula on Sunday.

A large number of government staff gathered on the JNTU campus to collect their polling equipment including EVMs. Heavy rain accompanied by gales uprooted the tent.

The government staff rushed to safety. However, sometime later they were shifted to their respective polling stations along with the polling equipment in RTC buses.



ASR dist hopes for smooth polls after decades of violence

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

After nearly two decades of fear and intimidation, the residents of Alluri Sitharama Raju (ASR) district will vote on May 13 with newfound confidence. Formerly plagued by violence orchestrated by Left Wing

Extremists of the CPI (Maoist), the district is now witnessing a remarkable transformation as residents prepare to exercise their voting rights without fear. Traditionally, elections in ASR district have been marred by violence, deterring tribal inhabitants from visiting polling stations due to threats from Maoist insurgents. However, a shift is

evident this time, with even residents from once Maoist-dominated villages such as Pedabayalu, Injari, G. Madugula, GK Veedhi, and Chintapalli demonstrating resilience against Maoist intimidation.

Kaniti Rmanayya, a resident of Pedabayalu mandal, expressed his elation, stating, "I have not voted for the last 20 years. But now our villages are free from the Maoists, and we will be going to the polling station to celebrate the biggest festival." Once an integral part of the Visakhapatnam district, the ASR district has historically been a breeding ground for



LWE activities, characterized by dense forests and limited accessibility. However, recent infrastructural developments have facilitated greater accessibility, eroding the Maoists' stronghold. Improved road networks and increased cell phone coverage have significantly trans-

formed the landscape, according to district officials.

Security forces comprising CRPF, Greyhounds (AP), and Special Operations Group (Odisha) have made significant strides in dismantling Maoist strongholds along the Andhra-Odisha border. Encounters with

security forces and large-scale surrenders have considerably weakened the Maoists, leading to a decline in recruitment and an increase in the reach of welfare schemes to tribal communities.

Despite the considerable reduction in Maoist presence, law enforcement remains vigilant, leaving no room for complacency. Superintendent of Police Tuhin Sinha affirmed, "Though the presence of Maoists has come down drastically, we are not leaving any scope for a breach in the peace and giving them a chance to make a reentry."

With 1,021 polling stations,

610 of which are identified as LWE-sensitive, security measures have been intensified in accordance with Election Commission of India (ECI) guidelines. DIG Vishal Gunni reassured the public of heightened security protocols, underscoring the commitment to ensuring a safe and democratic electoral process in the ASR district. As the ASR district prepares for peaceful elections, the narrative of fear and intimidation propagated by Maoist insurgents seems to be fading, paving the way for a democratic celebration of freedom and empowerment among its residents.



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QUOTE OF THE DAY



The Congress is trying to win elections with money. A huge amount of money has been dumped in Karimnagar. The Congress admin is following the path of the BRS government. It is a case of old wine in a new bottle.

The Congress is giving Rs 1,000 for every vote and half a bottle of liquor to 15 lakh people. This is trampling asunder rules to buy votes and win. It is killing democracy.

- Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Karimnagar BJP candidate

P8

Camila Cabello teams up with Lil Nas X for new track
He Knows

NURTURING
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Payal's crime investigative thriller Rakshana racing FOR RELEASE

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Election Date: **13th May, 2024**

Chief Electoral Officer
Andhra Pradesh

चुनाव का पर्व
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DON'T MISS...

Bunny booked for poll code violation...

The Andhra Pradesh police booked a case against popular Telugu actor Allu Arjun here for allegedly violating the Model Code of Conduct during the silent period in the run-up to polls, said an official on Sunday. Nandyala district Superintendent of Police K Raghuvveera Reddy said Arjun allegedly came in a rally to Nandyala YSRCP Assembly constituency candidate S Ravi Chandra Kishore Reddy's home on Saturday....

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Distribution of polling material

All arrangements are in place for the conduct of elections in Rajahmundry as the installation of EVMs and other polling equipment has been completed. District Collector Madhavilatha inspected the distribution of polling material and dispatching to the respective polling stations on the campus of SKVT College here on Sunday. Talking to the media on the occasion, the Collector said that there are 1,577 polling stations in the seven Assembly constituencies in the EG district.

-PAGE: 8

GT face formidable KKR in must...

Shubman Gill's return to form will provide a big boost to Gujarat Titans as they square off against table-toppers Kolkata Knight Riders in their must-win IPL game here on Monday. Gill roared back into form with his fourth IPL hundred to keep GT's slim playoff hopes alive with a comfortable win against Chennai Super Kings at home in their last outing. Gill and Sai Sudharsan's twin centuries were the cornerstone of the hosts' huge total and their role will be crucial once again as they face KKR, which has become the first team to qualify for the playoffs. As many as seven teams are still in the race for the playoffs.

-SPORTS

OVER TO VOTERS IN AP TODAY

Steps taken for peaceful voting across 175, Assembly and 25 LS segments: CEO Meena

Number of new EVMs deployed	1.60 lakh
Number of polling stations in State	46,389
Number of problematic polling centres	12,438
Number of candidates contesting 25 LS seats is	454
Number of candidates contesting 175 Assembly seats is	2,387
Number of voters in State	4,14,01,887
Transgender	3,421
Male	2,03,39,851
Female	2,10,58,615

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Chief Electoral Officer, Mukesh Kumar Meena, affirmed that all preparations have been meticulously arranged for the seamless execution of the 2024 general elections across 175 Assembly segments and 25 Parliamentary constituencies in the state. Election materials have been duly received and dispatched to respective polling stations, with EVMs undergoing thorough scrutiny upon receipt from the election

authorities. Addressing the press on Sunday afternoon, Meena assured that all polling personnel would be stationed at their designated centres by 7 pm. A comprehensive security arrangement, inclusive of police forces from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka alongside central forces, has been mobilized. Meena highlighted the implementation of webcasting to monitor the situation at polling centres statewide, with specialized applica-

tions deployed to track voting percentages in real time. He emphasized that stringent action would be taken against any attempts to impede voters from other locations. Instances of voter manipulation reported through the vVIGIL app have been promptly addressed, ensuring a fair electoral process. Efforts are underway to encourage urban voters to exercise their franchise, with a concerted drive to achieve maximum voter turnout. Underlining the Election

Commission's (EC) mandate for peaceful elections, Meena disclosed that 74 per cent of polling stations are equipped with webcams for surveillance both inside and outside the premises. The Poll Data monitoring system is rigorously monitored through a dedicated application, with an unprecedented number of Police Observers and General Observers appointed by the EC. 'Indelible ink available only through ECI' CEO Meena issued a stern warn-

ing against misinformation circulating on social media alleging a conspiracy to disenfranchise voters by marking their fingers with indelible ink at home. He clarified that indelible ink is exclusively manufactured by the government and is solely available through the Election Commission of India (ECI). Any claims of its availability elsewhere are baseless. Meena cautioned that stringent action would be taken against any illicit use of alternative inks.



58,900 cops deployed in AP: DGP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In preparation for the upcoming general elections scheduled across Andhra Pradesh on Monday, DGP Harish Kumar Gupta affirmed that the Andhra Pradesh Police Department has implemented comprehensive security measures. Alongside the state police, personnel from CAPF, NSS, NCC cadets, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu police, as well as retired and ex-service police officers, have been mobilized for election duty. DGP Harish Kumar Gupta provided a breakdown of the deployed personnel, revealing that a total of 58,948 civil police personnel have been assigned, comprising 45,960 from the AP State Police (including civil, AR, and Home Guards), 3,500 from the Karnataka State Police, 4,500 from the Tamil Nadu Police, and 1,622 Home Guards, with an additional 3,366 staff from various departments and on deputation. Under the armed forces' umbrella, 92 platoons from the APSR, 295 platoons from CAPF, and 18,609 personnel from other forces have been deployed. Furthermore, 3,010 individuals from the NCC, 13,739 from the NSS, 1,614 ex-servicemen, and 246 retired police personnel have been enlisted to ensure the smooth conduct of the elections.



5,458 buses provided for polling staff

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

APSRTC has provided 5,458 buses for transportation of polling officials across various districts in the State. This assistance accounts for approximately 55 per cent of the total scheduled buses of RTC, as stated by APSRTC MD Ch. D Tirumala Rao. In an announcement on Sunday, the MD highlighted that from May 8 to 12, APSRTC had deployed 1,066 special buses from Hyderabad and 284 special

buses from Bangalore, supplementing the regular services seamlessly catering to passengers commuting from neighbouring states to exercise their voting rights in our region. Special bus services have been organised from Vijayawada to several key destinations such as Visakhapatnam, Rajahmundry, Tirupati, Nellore, Kakinada, Eluru, Ongole, and Guntur, based on passenger demand.....

Space industry offers tremendous opportunity for pvt players: ISRO

PNS ■ KOCHI

ISRO Chairman S Somanath has said the Indian space industry is offering a tremendous opportunity to the private sector in the country as a new area of growth and development. He said the union government envisages the space sector in the country to become a 9 to 10 billion dollar industry in the next 5-10 years from the current levels of 2 billion dollars. Somanath was speaking after unveiling the carbon reduction initiative of SFO Technologies, the flagship company of the NeST Group, in a function here on Saturday, a company release said. He also said that 400 private sector companies have benefited from the technology developed by ISRO for its various missions. Companies like SFO Technologies are well positioned to take further advantage of the new policy initia-



Somanath was speaking after unveiling the carbon reduction initiative of SFO Technologies, the flagship company of the NeST Group, in a function here on Saturday, a company release said.

tives in the space sector by the government of India. "The Indian space industry is offering a tremendous opportunity for the private sector in the country as a new area of growth and development," the ISRO chief added. Besides planting a sapling at the NeST Hitek Park to mark the occasion, Somanath also unveiled a replica of Chandrayaan at the campus highlighting the cooperation of SFO Technologies and ISRO.

He interacted with the NeST engineers and management team later. The Carbon Reduction initiative of the NeST Group is in tune with the United Nations' objective of achieving a 50 per cent reduction by 2035 and zero emissions by 2040, the release said. SFO Technologies has close association with ISRO for many years, it said adding that the two have worked in multiple programmes

such as the RF sub-systems for Chandrayaan and Aditya Missions, manufacturing of Antenna Systems, and Cryogenic Engine Control Systems for launch vehicles. NeST Group Chairman N Jehangir said discussions are on with ISRO for various projects including the ambitious 'Gaganyaan' mission, aiming to carry human beings to the space for the first time. SFO Technologies and NeST Group are committed to protecting the environment and reducing carbon emissions, said Althaf Jehangir, CEO and Executive Director, SFO Technologies, Hardware and Manufacturing. He also said that they have signed agreements with multiple partners to create a model of being a socially responsible organisation by minimising carbon pollution. Nazneen Jehangir, CEO and Executive Director, Nest Digital, also spoke on the occasion, the release added



Rain threatens to play spoilsport in parts of AP

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The Meteorological Department on Sunday forecast rainfall for parts of Andhra Pradesh on election day (May 13), accompanied by lightning and gusty winds. It has predicted thunderstorms and gusty winds ranging up to a speed of 50 km per hour (kmph) in parts of North Coastal Andhra Pradesh (NCAP), Yanam, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh (SCAP) and Rayalaseema. Similar weather has been predicted for three more days from May 14.

"A cyclonic circulation lies over south interior Karnataka and neighbourhood at 1.5 km above mean sea level," said the Meteorological Department in a release. Further, it observed that lower tropospheric southerly and south westerly winds are prevailing over Andhra Pradesh and Yanam. Mid-summer showers cooled Vijayawada, Undavalli, Tadepalli and other places in the vicinity today. According to the Meteorological Department, Amaravati witnessed 15 mm rainfall on Sunday.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Wild card

The interim bail to Kejriwal for campaigning adds yet another layer to an already intricate election

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who had been under judicial custody for 50-odd days after the Enforcement Directorate named him in the multi-crore liquor scam, has made a wild card entry as a participant in electioneering. Known for his dynamic role as the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader, his sudden release from incarceration injects a new fervour into an intense electoral situation, particularly impacting the BJP's strategies and reinvigorating the Opposition campaign. As expected, Kejriwal has come down heavily on the ruling party, accusing it of subverting democracy and misusing law-enforcement agencies to imprison the Opposition leaders on one pretext or the other. Interestingly, he also now claims that the BJP's senior leaders are being sidelined and India is being pushed into a "one nation, one leader" paradigm. The situation is indeed ominous for the BJP; Kejriwal's absence had provided it with a temporary advantage to consolidate its support base without facing the AAP challenge in certain regions where it holds influence and sway. Kejriwal's return, however, resumes the battle in earnest and necessitates a reassessment of campaign strategy.



The BJP must now recalibrate its outreach efforts to counter AAP's influence, especially in Delhi, Punjab and Haryana (The polling in Gujarat has already concluded). The party poses significant challenge to the BJP with its anti-corruption and populist policies. Though he is not the proverbial all-powerful leader, Kejriwal has the ability to galvanise support, particularly among urban voters and the youth, and his presence significantly boosts the prospects of the Opposition's INDIA bloc. With the voting percentage remaining consistently low and several Supreme Court decisions going against it, the BJP must find new ways to take on its challengers. The party leaders have reached out to satraps Sharad Pawar and Uddhav Thackeray in Maharashtra ahead of Phase IV, but the latter have not responded positively to the BJP's overtures. In the light of these developments, the BJP must intensify its efforts to consolidate its support base and mitigate the potential impact of Kejriwal's resurgence. It must rely upon Modi's oratorical skills, aggressive campaigning, targeted messaging and new alliances to win in crucial constituencies. It is time for the BJP to capitalise on its nationalistic agenda and developmental initiatives to appeal to voters, presenting itself as the party best equipped to lead India forward. For the Opposition, Kejriwal's release offers hope and a renewed sense of purpose. By leveraging public dissatisfaction with the status quo, working to heighten the feeling of anticumbency among the electorate and raking up issues of public concern such as corruption, inflation and unemployment, the Opposition can cobble up a more cohesive and effective campaign. Given the unpredictable nature of voter preferences, it is hard to tell what resonates with them. They may act emotionally at times but they are not foolish, are they?

of both the PPP and PML-N brought in and 'selected' Imran Khan's PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) as the face of governance, even though the strings were pulled by the Generals from neighbouring Rawalpindi. But what they hadn't bargained for was the seriousness and immaturity with which the vainglorious Pathan from Mianwali would start imagining his own prowess. Imran mistakenly thought he had outgrown the need to remain beholden to the Pakistan 'establishment', and that was to be his undoing. A reluctant, screaming, and shouting Imran Khan was ousted from power and the much discredited and familiar faces from the past, ushered in. It was an important lesson in Pakistani politics. When the tide turns, any political force that appeals to the Generals, can stage a comeback. Except perhaps Imran Khan, who dug his heels and refused to learn from history. His cadre perpetuated the 'May 9' riots and plunder that spared no one - not even the 'no-go' zones of cantonments or residences of Generals. The Pakistani 'establishment' did what it does better - care two-hoots for the popularity of Imran Khan and attacked his party, people and infrastructure. While Imran is arguably

Pakistani military tightens grip

Imran Khan's confrontational stance against the military establishment seems to be leading to his own downfall. Khan's defiance has only served to further isolate him



BHOPIINDER SINGH

American scholar, Stephen Cohen, notes in his article title Pakistan: Army, Society and Security, "There are armies which guard their nation's borders, there are armies which are concerned with protecting their own position in society, and there are armies which defend a cause or an idea. The Pakistan Army does all three". Even though it is a Military that has never won any war (1947-48, 1965, 1971 or 1999) and is struggling miserably to contain elements of religious extremism from across the Durand Line - it remains the last institution that hasn't succumbed to the curse of puritanism that is eating into the already moth-eaten Pakistan. It can be argued that besides the Pakistani Military, the two other pieces of the ruling troika i.e., civilian politicians and the clergy, have failed the sovereign, far more. Counterintuitive as it sounds, the Pakistani 'establishment' (read, Military), despite all its manipulations is still the best bet to protect the Pakistani State from imploding.

Despite vile attempts by unhinged politicians and the clergy to fan divisive passions on the lines of sectarianism, regionalism, or ethnicities - the disciplined and 'monolith' construct of the Pakistani Military inherited from the British Raj integrated its diversities in Balouch Regiment, Frontier Force Regiment, Punjab Regiment, Sindh Regiment et al. Few derelictions like General Zia-ul-Haq or Hamid Gul aside, the institution was relatively westernized, moderate, and inclusive. It zealously protected its ways and interests with disproportionate budgetary allocations and ensuring that it always had the right of the way, formally or informally. It chose dispensations without harbouring any ideological preferences and brazenly chose and dropped those who didn't toe the line. It didn't really care about optics of contradiction and shifting preferences, as it chose between the Bhuttos PPP (Pakistan People's Party) and Sharif PML-N (Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz) with impunity. In 2018, the 'establishment' tired



of both the PPP and PML-N brought in and 'selected' Imran Khan's PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) as the face of governance, even though the strings were pulled by the Generals from neighbouring Rawalpindi. But what they hadn't bargained for was the seriousness and immaturity with which the vainglorious Pathan from Mianwali would start imagining his own prowess. Imran mistakenly thought he had outgrown the need to remain beholden to the Pakistan 'establishment', and that was to be his undoing. A reluctant, screaming, and shouting Imran Khan was ousted from power and the much discredited and familiar faces from the past, ushered in. It was an important lesson in Pakistani politics. When the tide turns, any political force that appeals to the Generals, can stage a comeback. Except perhaps Imran Khan, who dug his heels and refused to learn from history. His cadre perpetuated the 'May 9' riots and plunder that spared no one - not even the 'no-go' zones of cantonments or residences of Generals. The Pakistani 'establishment' did what it does better - care two-hoots for the popularity of Imran Khan and attacked his party, people and infrastructure. While Imran is arguably

the most popular leader and the Bhuttos and Sharifs the most despised, it is the latter who are in power, courtesy the Pakistani Military. The obstinate Imran has boxed himself into a corner by pivoting his credentials to grandstanding against the Pakistani Military, and that denies him the realistic chance to return. His only chance to succeed with his current strategy is the Pakistani Military were to become irrelevant, but such a hypothetical situation would also make the survival of Pakistan as a sovereign state, untenable. Faultlines deepen with the Military mouthpiece Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) insisting that dialogue with PTI is only possible if it "earnestly apologises publicly in front of the nation". It added for good measure that PTI must adopt "constructive politics" and avoid, "politics of anarchy". Clearly it would be suicidal for PTI to stoop so low after much theatric defiance and acceptance of its role would scar PTI with anarchial and unpatriotic attributions (as despite history, Pakistani Military remains the beacon of patriotism, in Pakistani consciousness). This showdown with railing words between the Military and PTI also counters the accusations of 'false-flag operation', as alluded to by the



A RELUCTANT, SCREAMING, AND SHOUTING IMRAN KHAN WAS OUSTED FROM POWER AND THE MUCH DISCREDITED AND FAMILIAR FACES FROM THE PAST, USHERED IN. IT WAS AN IMPORTANT LESSON IN PAKISTANI POLITICS

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PTI. It seems the Pakistani Military is hell bent on making PTI and Imran pay dearly for daring to challenge the 'establishment', and this recent precondition for thawing relationship was meant to harden the divide and make it impossible for PTI/Imran to soften stand.

As if on cue, the Pakistani Military is making efforts to normalise its relations with the historical ally, the United States of America (as the same was specifically targeted by Imran Khan). It also acts as a hedge against Chinese support, and it strengthens equations with Arab Sheikdoms, concurrently. As it is, the bloody battle ensuing currently for the Pakistani Military is with the Afghanistan based Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), on whom Imran Khan or 'Taliban Khan' was particularly accommodative. Clearly there is no upside for the Pakistani State to retain the belligerence and extremist stand as championed by Imran Khan in his hustings, and therefore all such policies, PTI infrastructure, and Imran Khan personally must become the sacrificial goat. Imran has none, but himself to blame for the same.

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

PICTALK



India Gate lit in red to raise awareness on World Thalassemia Day, in New Delhi

PTI

Empowering working mothers financially

The crucial role of insurance in hedging uncertainty and financial planning for working women cannot be overstated

Mothers' Day is a truly special day to celebrate the amazing women who have played an irreplaceable role in our lives. Amidst the daily balancing act of career aspirations and family responsibilities, the critical need for securing their financial future often takes a back seat. Despite the gradual increase in insurance buyers, the proportion of women availing themselves of this essential protection remains disproportionately low. This underscores not only a gap in workforce demographics but also highlights a pervasive perception among women that life insurance is not a pressing necessity. Mothers be it working professionals or homemakers are the unsung heroes of many households. The working mother adeptly managing both professional commitments and familial duties while the homemaker juggles varying responsibilities within the home to ensure that their families are taken care off. They serve as pillars of strength, providing unwavering support and love to their



LALITHA BHATIA

families. However, amidst the daily whirlwind of activities, the critical aspect of ensuring financial protection for their loved ones can sometimes be sidelined.

In the realm of financial planning, term insurance emerges as a silent yet formidable shield, offering comprehensive protection against life's uncertainties. Unlike other forms of insurance, term insurance provides pure protection coverage, ensuring that in the unfortunate event of the policyholder's demise during the policy term, their beneficiaries receive the predetermined sum assured. Safeguarding the Future: For working mothers, term insurance holds paramount importance in safeguarding the future well-being of their loved ones. It acts as a safety net, ensuring that in the absence of the primary breadwinner, the family's financial needs are adequately met.

Whether it's covering daily expenses, children's education, or servicing outstanding debts, the lump sum payout from a term insurance policy alleviates financial burdens, allowing the family to maintain its standard of living and pursue future aspirations. One of the key advantages of term insurance is its flexibility and customization options, enabling working mothers to tailor their coverage according to their specific needs and financial goals. By accurately assessing their family's lifestyle, expenses, outstanding debts, and long-term aspirations, mothers can determine the optimal sum assured that adequately addresses their loved ones' requirements. Life is inherently unpredictable, and while no one likes to dwell on worst-case scenarios, prudent planning for the unexpected is paramount, especially for working mothers. Term insurance provides peace of mind, knowing that irrespective of life's uncertainties, their family's financial security remains safeguarded. Whether it's ensuring continuity of education, preserving the family

home, or securing a comfortable retirement for aging parents, term insurance empowers working mothers to plan for the future with confidence and assurance. With the constant rise in inflation rates, retirement planning has become increasingly critical, especially for working mothers. It's essential for them to secure their finances before retiring. One effective method is to opt for a term insurance plan with a maturity benefit. This allows them to accumulate a substantial corpus over time, providing a lump sum amount upon maturity, thus ensuring financial stability during retirement. Whether women are achieving greater financial independence or assuming primary roles in caregiving and household management, it's crucial that they recognize the importance of securing their future. They must take proactive measures to align their savings and financial protection with their evolving needs and responsibilities. (The writer is an insurance professional; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POLITICAL TURMOIL

Madam — Apropos the editorial "Testing Times," published on 11th May, this is my response. In Haryana, politics has become a chess game of checkmates who intend to play foul with one another. Consequent to support withdrawn by three independent MLAs, the ruling BJP Government has turned into a minority. JJP has submitted a letter to the Governor's office seeking the floor test for the Saini-led BJP Government.

In this era of political upheaval, JJP is embroiled in party discord. The news of its three MLAs indirectly supporting the BJP is going viral. In defeating the BJP, the chances of JJP breaking up are becoming stronger. At present, it is not only the time of litmus test for the BJP but the opposition parties are self-indulgent in the dirty game of condemnation and their lust for power has forced them to join hands besides leaving ideological differences aside.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

CENSORSHIP IN CINEMA

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Aamir Khan says he was unsure about censor board passing 'Sarfarosh' over mentions of Pak, ISI," published on May 11, this is my response. Aamir Khan's revelation about the challenges faced during the making of "Sarfarosh" sheds light on the censorship climate of its time. The film's bold portrayal of India-Pakistan tensions, despite concerns, resonated with audiences, earning both critical acclaim and commercial success. Naseeruddin Shah's reminiscence of Pakistani admiration for his role underscores the film's impact beyond borders. The behind-the-scenes anecdotes, like the censorship of the goat scene, offer intriguing insights into filmmaking challenges. Director John Matthew Matthans secrecy surrounding the film's theme adds to its mystique. Moreover, the actors' reflections highlight the film's significance in their careers, with Sonali Bendre expressing gratitude for a role that show-

Palestine's struggle



Don't you know that the Palestinians, who were evicted by Israel from their land with the help of America, will not get their own country even in this 21st century? Seeing the suffering and pain of Palestinians, my doubt had changed into belief that, there is no justice anywhere in this world. Be it the United Nations or the International Court of Justice, no one has any right to end injustice. Only one law rules on this earth, and that is 'Might is Right' or 'my way or

highway". Now see, it has been 79 years since the UN was established.

The UN General Assembly's recent resolution advocating Palestine's full membership highlights the international community's ongoing efforts to address the long-standing conflict and ensure the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and statehood, despite the lack of progress in the peace process. The Arab and Palestinian-sponsored resolution, which left the world body with 25 members absent, was approved by the bloc of 143 by 9 votes. The United States, along with Israel, Argentina, Czech Republic, Hungary, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, and New Guinea, competed against Papua and opposed it. The overwhelming majority vote will still deny Palestine full membership. Yes, Palestine will now attend some meetings. In some departments of the UN, its officers can be appointed.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

cased depth. Overall, "Sarfarosh" stands not only as a compelling thriller but also as a testament to cinema's power in addressing complex socio-political issues.

Kiara Sharma | Mumbai

BOUNDLESS HUMAN POTENTIAL

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Traits of a Successful Person," published on May 11, this is my response. Every morning, as I delve into the pages of the newspaper, I find myself drawn to stories that transcend mere information—they ignite a spark within, nudging me to ponder the essence of human existence. The narrative about embracing our fullest potential resonates deeply, reminding me that life is an odyssey from the ordinary to the extraordinary. The analogy of muscles resonates profoundly—the notion that our minds, like muscles, require constant stretching to grow and adapt. It's a call to action, urging us to embrace challenges as catalysts for personal evolution. The tale of Rahul Bajaj's sons repurposing scrap from INS Vikrant for scooters exemplifies this ethos. It's a testament to the power of

audacious ideas and the willingness to venture into the unknown. Moreover, the concept of the Universe conspiring in our favour strikes a chord of optimism. It's a belief in the interconnectedness of all things, where positive thoughts manifest into tangible outcomes. This aligns with the philosophy of shouldering responsibility with a 'YES MIND', fostering synergy and abundance within teams. At its core, it's about cultivating a mindset of abundance, gratitude and unwavering faith in a higher power. Whether we attribute it to divine intervention or the cosmic dance of energy, the essence remains the same: the power of positive thinking shapes our reality. As I set down the paper, I carry with me a renewed sense of purpose—a reminder to harness the boundless potential within and embrace life's journey with open arms. For in the pursuit of greatness lies the true essence of being human.

Kabir Mehra | Hyderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN POLL RHETORIC: ETHICS TAKE A BACKSEAT

Politicians' spiritual claims and secular pledges belie their true motives



VINOD BEHL

In the heat and dust of national elections marked by the fiercest poll slugfest, we are seeing the ugly face of humanity with ethics getting a big hit. On the face of it, politicians of all hues flaunt their spiritual and secular credentials, making rounds of religious shrines and swearing by the secular constitution. But their public discourses in election rallies and conduct are to the contrary as they take to deception and false narratives with truth being a major casualty. With their poisonous outbursts, they display their unholy behaviour as they don't hesitate even to resort to character assassination to run down their opponents. In this digital age, the rampant use of AI makes matters even worse.

Today in the poll arena where money and muscle power have become a byword, we see dignity, honesty, and nobleness giving way to greed, dishonesty, wickedness and immorality. Seeing the ever-increasing trend of 'turncoats' and election engineering by political parties, we find that society is being divided on the lines of caste, community and religion, with impunity.

Truly speaking, the problem with us is that we humans are in a mad race for power and material possessions. This weans us away from spirituality. So overwhelming is the influence of materialism that we even forget our true identity as 'Spiritual Beings' (a constituent of Super soul /Divine Soul- God). Instead, we consider the physical body and all material assets associated with it as our identity. Blinded by the glitter of materialism, our true nature- purity and nobility gets completely overshadowed and we end up embracing sinfulness. And then we don't mind going to any length in selfish-



ness, cheating, corruption and criminality for material gains and to fulfil ulterior motives. Our intoxication of wealth and power leads to moral bankruptcy, robbing us of happiness and peace.

We may have wealth and high positions. But what's its use if it comes at the cost of our moral values and ethics? Such material success is devoid of bliss. Humans are a crown creation among all species on this planet earth and we have been given this rare birth with a mission to know God and become one with Him. The oneness of God leads to the oneness of humanity. Once that self-realization dawns on us, our negative tendencies gradually give way to divine attributes. Maintaining the purity of our soul leads us to become true human beings, real and everlasting happiness and peace come into our lives when we stay connected with One God, the powerhouse of love, happiness and peace and learn to maintain a balance between spirituality and materialism.

In the midst of heated national elections characterized by intense political rivalry, we witness a disturbing erosion of ethics and morality. Despite politicians' outward displays of spiritual and secular values, their actions tell a different story as they resort to deceit and character assassination for electoral gains. As money and power dominate the political landscape, principles like dignity and honesty are overshadowed by greed and immorality. Political tactics based on division along caste, community, and religious lines further fragment society. Fundamentally, humanity's relentless pursuit of power and material wealth has distanced us from our spiritual essence. We often prioritise material possessions over our true identity as spiritual beings, leading to moral degradation and a pursuit of selfish gains at any cost. However, true fulfillment lies in aligning with our spiritual nature and connecting with the divine, which fosters unity and genuine peace.

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

AMU breaks the gender barrier

Professor Naima Khatoon's historic appointment as AMU's first woman V-C in over a century represents a significant milestone for gender equality in Indian academia



AKHTARUL WASEY



Fortunately, Professor Naima Khatoon has been appointed as the Vice Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, a moment long-awaited by the Aligarh community. Professor Khatoon's journey within AMU has been extensive, having served previously as the Principal of the Women's College. Her association with the university spans an impressive 46 years, beginning as an outstanding student who consistently excelled in her examinations. Graduating with a doctorate in Psychology in 1989, Professor Khatoon's rise to the Vice Chancellorship on April 22, 2024, a testament to her dedication and academic prowess.

An interesting facet of her appointment is the transition from her husband, Professor Muhammad Gulrez, who held the position of Acting Vice Chancellor prior. Professor Gulrez is recognised for his significant contributions to West Asian Studies and has displayed exemplary integrity and resilience during his tenure. Professor Khatoon's administrative journey within AMU includes noteworthy positions such as Chairperson of the Department of Psychology and Director General, Superintendent, Provost and more.

Her appointment as Vice Chancellor also holds historical significance, marking her as the second Muslim woman to hold such a position at a Central University. This achievement follows Dr. Najma Akhtar's appointment as the first Muslim lady Vice Chancellor at Jamia Millia Islamia five years prior. The legacy of women's Leadership at AMU traces



HER STRATEGIC APPOINTMENTS, SUCH AS THAT OF PROFESSOR ANWAR MASUD ALAVI AS PRINCIPAL OF THE WOMEN'S COLLEGE, REFLECT HER COMMITMENT TO ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND DIVERSITY WITHIN THE INSTITUTION.

back to its inception, with Begum Sultan Jahan being the university's first elected Chancellor in December 1920.

Professor Khatoon's contributions to the field of Psychology are well-documented, with six books and 31 papers, earning acclaim both nationally and internationally. Her academic pursuits have taken her across the globe on various academic assignments, enriching her perspective and expertise. Beyond her scholarly achievements, Professor Khatoon's adeptness in administrative roles underscores her capability as a leader to steer AMU towards greater heights of excellence.

Recognising in the evolving landscape of education, there is a pressing need to boost departments offering professional and technical education while also introducing emerging disciplines. Professor Khatoon's leadership is expected to facilitate the successful launch of these new programmes. Additionally, there is a call to establish new centres for regional and area studies, building upon the foundation laid by previous leaders like Professor Abdul Aleem.

Her strategic appointments, such as that of Professor Anwar Masud Alavi as Principal of the Women's College, reflect her commitment to academic excellence and diversity within the institution.

It is anticipated that Professor Naima Khatoon will leverage the expertise of the internationally renowned scholar, Professor Abdur Raheem Kidwai, Honorary Director of the K. A. Nizami Centre for Quranic Studies. Professor Kidwai, besides being a Professor of English, has earned acclaim for his critiques on the translations of the Quran into English and other languages. The Department of Islamic Studies and the Faculty of Theology at AMU hold the potential to evolve into Think Tanks for Muslims worldwide. Aligarh Muslim University, known not only for its academic excellence but also as a centre of Muslim culture and Civilisation can reshape the narrative. Indian Muslim faculty Members specialising in Islamic Studies and Sunni and Shia theology dedicated to nation-building and community welfare. They are well-positioned to provide guidance grounded in scriptures and to serve as beacons of harmony and unity within the Indian Muslim community.

The AMU Jama Masjid stands out as perhaps the only mosque, besides the Kaaba and the Prophet's mosque, where both Sunnis and Shias offer congregational prayers. This model of fraternity should be emulated across India. Nigerians should take the lead in promoting better understanding and unity among

various schools of thought. Aligarhians take pride in the fact that the first educational institution to impart modern knowledge was established at Aligarh. The election of a Muslim woman as Vice Chancellor of AMU, following in the footsteps of Professor Najma Akhtar, underscores this legacy. Professor Naima Khatoon, who has recently assumed office, brings with her impeccable academic credentials and a commitment to faith. Her success will undoubtedly bring honour to AMU and our nation. The appointment of the first female Vice Chancellors at both AMU and JMI reflects the evolving landscape of our country. Asrarul Haq Majaz, the author of the AMU Tarana (Anthem), an eminent Urdu poet, had expressed the hope that women would one day be the catalysts for social transformation. This hope is gradually being realised. It is heartening to note that Professor Khatoon, in addition to her academic achievements, embodies this spirit as a practising Muslim woman. We extend our best wishes to Professor Khatoon and fervently pray for her remarkable progress.

(The writer is Professor Emeritus, Jamia Millia Islamia & Former Vice Chancellor, Maulana Azad University, Jodhpur; views are personal)

Indian troop withdrawal marks regional paradigm shift

India's strategic redeployment of troops from the Maldives reflects evolving alliances and diplomatic shifts in the Indian Ocean region

In a move that underscores the evolving dynamics of regional geopolitics, the recent withdrawal of Indian military personnel from the Maldives has sparked discussions about the future of Indo-Maldivian relations. This strategic redeployment, marked by the departure of the final batch of Indian troops stationed in the archipelago, comes amidst shifting alliances and diplomatic recalibrations in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).



SANTOSH MATHEW

The name "Maldives" is believed to have originated from the Sanskrit words "Mala" (meaning 'garland') and "dvipa" (meaning 'island'). Together, they form "Maladvipa", which translates to 'garland of islands'. This name reflects the unique geography of the Maldives, which is an archipelago consisting of numerous coral islands grouped in a chain formation in the Indian Ocean. Over time, the name evolved into "Maldives" in English. The Maldives, a nation comprising 1,192 coral islets strategically positioned across key east-west international shipping routes, has historically been a significant partner for India in its maritime

security endeavours. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Neighbourhood First Policy" and the broader framework of "Security and Growth for All in the Region" (SAGAR), India has sought to deepen its engagement with its maritime neighbours, including the Maldives. However, the tenure of President Mohamed Muizzu has witnessed a series of policy shifts, with the Maldives increasingly gravitating towards China while seeking to reduce dependence on India across various sectors, including healthcare, food security and defence cooperation. President Muizzu's "India Out" campaign during the presidential election last year signalled a departure from the traditionally close

ties between the two countries. The concern over the Maldives falling into China's debt trap diplomacy is indeed significant. As the Maldives seeks investments and infrastructure development, it must carefully navigate its relationships with external partners to avoid potential pitfalls. While Chinese investments can offer growth opportunities, they also come with the risk of indebting the nation and compromising its sovereignty. The withdrawal of Indian military personnel, comprising more than 80 troops responsible for operating helicopters and an aircraft gifted by India, symbolizes a tangible manifestation of this evolving relationship. Muizzu's insistence on the

complete repatriation of Indian troops by the May 10 deadline underscores his administration's commitment to reshaping the Maldives' foreign policy orientation. Simultaneously, the Maldives' burgeoning engagement with China, evidenced by recent agreements on military equipment and training, adds a layer of complexity to the regional dynamics. While the Maldives retains its sovereignty to pursue partnerships that align with its national interests, the strategic implications of deepening ties with China amidst heightened Indo-Pacific tensions warrant careful consideration. From India's perspective, the withdrawal of military personnel from the Maldives

reflects a pragmatic response to the evolving geopolitical landscape. The decision to respect the Maldivian Government's request for repatriation underscores India's commitment to upholding the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of its neighbours. Moreover, the withdrawal process, facilitated through four rounds of meetings of the India-Maldives High-Level Core Group, highlights the diplomatic maturity and bilateral dialogue mechanisms that underpin Indo-Maldivian relations. Despite divergent policy trajectories, both countries have demonstrated a willingness to engage constructively and find mutually beneficial solutions.

Looking ahead, the recalibration of Indo-Maldivian relations presents opportunities for both countries to reevaluate their strategic priorities and explore avenues for collaboration in areas of mutual interest. Whether it involves maritime security cooperation, economic partnerships, or regional connectivity initiatives, the foundations of the Indo-Maldives relationship remain resilient amidst evolving geopolitical realities. As the Indian military withdrawal from the Maldives marks the closing of one chapter, it also heralds the beginning of a new phase in bilateral relations-one characterized by adaptability, pragmatism and a shared commitment to fostering stability and prosperity in the Indian

Ocean Region. Amidst the vast expanse of the Indian Ocean lies the Maldives, Asia's smallest nation and South Asia's only archipelago. The Maldives' pivot towards China raises concerns, but a shift towards closer ties with India presents a win-win scenario. Embracing India offers strategic stability, economic growth and cultural affinity, fostering a robust Indo-Maldives partnership. By aligning with India, the Maldives secures regional harmony and safeguards its sovereignty while India gains a trusted ally in the Indian Ocean, reinforcing mutual interests and prosperity for both nations.

(The writer is an associate professor, views are personal)

Why should there be a change of Constitution?

Can they change the Constitution of India? Why should they change it? Will they destroy democracy and the federal character of our nation? During the current elections, the Constitution of India has been discussed in popular 'narrative', calling for either its retention or removal as the country's basic statute. It was never a 'subject' of campaign with the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress within the INDIA block.

In this context, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on 11th May 2024 said: "If voted to power, the saffron party will change the Constitution". She further said that it was an 'idea' that will be a sin and people of the country would not allow it. In the name of religion, dividing brothers, and sisters is a sin. It is sin to create confusion and mislead people in the name of religion. In the name of religion weakening democracy and people, and saying that they will change the Constitution is a sin. This Constitution was written by our elders with their struggle and blood. This Constitution was not written by Modiji. People of this country wrote it."

At least two serious attempts were made to 'destroy' the structure of the Indian Constitution. First it was during the Emergency -- 1975-77, when the then Congress government almost created a 'Mini-Constitution' through a problematic amendment. And, now the BJP is talking about the Constitution and is finding it hard to deny allegations that it is set to change the country's basic statute substantially if the party get 400 seats in the LS elections. So, this has become a major issue before the people of India. They apprehend a danger and see the need to fight to protect our democracy. For voters, this is the agenda now: vote to secure our Bharath Constitution as constructed by Ambedkar's team during 1950.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh questioned recently: "I want to ask the parties promising religion-based reservation, why are you fooling people? I want to ask to Congress and

RJD party that if you have courage then do not do politics by throwing dust in the eyes of the public, do politics by looking the people in their eyes." He has assured people that the BJP government will never change the Constitution or end reservation. He asserted that there was no question of changing the Preamble to the Constitution.

Recently, BJP parliamentarian Anantkumar Hegde said that the party needs 400 seats to "change the Constitution" and "if the Constitution has to be amended -- the Congress fundamentally distorted the Constitution by forcefully filling unnecessary things in it, especially by bringing in laws that were aimed at suppressing the Hindu society -- if all of this has to be changed; it is not possible with this (current) majority."

Quoting the PM, he said: "Ab ki baar 400 paar, why 400? ... We have two-thirds majority in Lok Sabha, (but) in Rajya Sabha we don't have two-thirds majority. We have a small majority. In state governments,

we do not have an adequate majority". This 'guarantee' has caused a serious controversy and apprehension among voters.

Changing the 'social' part of the Preamble

The 42nd Amendment changed the description of India from a "sovereign democratic republic" to a "sovereign, socialist secular democratic republic", and also changed the words "unity of the nation" to "unity and integrity of the nation". But it was changed in the 42nd Amendment. They added some more words to the Preamble. It was called a Mini-Constitution.

The 43rd and 44th Amendments repealed the 42nd Amendment's provision that Directive Principles take precedence over Fundamental Rights, and also curbed Parliament's power to legislate



economic structure in the Constitution.

The Supreme Court, on Jan 2008, rejected a PIL plea that sought the removal of the word 'socialist' from the Preamble. In the plea, an NGO wanted the word to be struck off the Constitution, saying that it was not a part of the original Constitution that had been drafted by Dr B R Ambedkar. While rejecting this petition, the then Chief Justice K G Balakrishnan said... "It is a facet of democracy. It has not got any definite meaning. It gets different meanings in different times."

The petition also sought to strike down the RPA (Representation of People Act), according to which political parties were forced to swear fealty to socialism in order to be recognised. The petition also claimed that the addition of the word during the Emergency was tantamount to re-writing the Constitution.

The Parliament was given unrestrained power to amend any parts of the Constitution, without judicial review. This



essentially invalidated the Supreme Court's ruling in *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala* in 1973.

People should come to rescue

Whenever dictators sought to destroy the structure of Constitution and worked against democracy, people came to rescue. Now the same need has arisen to fight dictators who have assumed absolute powers.

Justice Chandrachud (senior) said: "In other words, Parliament cannot, under Article 368, expand its amending power so as to acquire for itself the right to repeal or abrogate the Constitution or to destroy its basic and essential features. The donee of a limited power cannot by the exercise of that power convert the limited power into an unlimited one."

Its again the duty of the voters and people of India generally including youth to protect our federation and unity. This is the question before people, voters in India now.



against "anti-national activities". The 42nd Amendment also added a new section to the Article on "Fundamental Duties" in the Constitution. The new section required citizens "to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood among all the people of India, transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities."

BR Ambedkar was opposed to declaring India's social and

Distribution of polling material inspected

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

All arrangements are in place for the conduct of elections in Rajahmundry as the installation of EVMs and other polling equipment has been completed.

District Collector Madhavilatha inspected the distribution of polling material and dispatching to the respective polling stations on the campus of SKVT College here on Sunday.

Talking to the media on the occasion, the Collector said that there are 1,577 polling stations in the seven Assembly constituencies in the EG district. She said that there are 16,23,000 voters in the district.

Required basic amenities have been provided to all polling stations in the district, she said, adding that a webcasting facility has been provided to some polling stations.

Collector Madhavilatha stated that 375 problematic polling stations were identified in the district for which Micro observers have been deployed and webcasting has been installed.

All arrangements have been made at polling stations in which voters can cast their vote in a peaceful environment, she added. She described the poll day as a democracy festival day and appealed to all to exercise their franchise on May 13.



41,993 young voters exercising their franchise for first time: DC

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

District Collector Praveen Kumar has said that 41,993 young voters are going to exercise their franchise for the first time in the elections in the district. The Collector inspected the EVMs and polling material in a polling station Sullurpet on Sunday. Talking to the media on the occasion, he said that 41,993 voters are under 18-19 years of age and they would cast their vote for the first time.

He said that in the seven Assembly constituencies in the district, there are 18,12,980 voters and the Collector appealed to the voters to cast their vote without fail.

He said that out of the total 18,12,980 voters, 8,83,330 male voters and 9,29,466 women voters while there are 184 transgender voters. He said that there are 2,45,205 votes in Gudur (SC)

Assembly constituency, 2,42,610 voters in Sullurpet Assembly constituency, 2,43,582 voters in Venkatagiri constituency, 3,15,159 voters in Chandragiri constituency, 3,02,503 voters in Tirupati Assembly constituency, 2,48,536 voters Srikalahasti constituency and there are 2,15,385 voters in Satyavedu (SC) constituency.

CRIME BEAT

Woman, her son run over by train while crossing track

PNS ■ NELLORE

A woman and her son were run over by a train while they were crossing the railway track at the local station on Sunday.

Police said that the deceased Butta Subhashini (55) was working as an Anganwadi worker at Chaganam village in Saidapuram mandal.

She was allocated election duty in a polling station in Kavali. She came to Kavali from her native village to attend the election duty.

When the deceased Subhashini was crossing the railway track, a train was approaching her which she did not notice. Her son, the deceased Vijay (19), rushed towards her mother, who was in the middle of the railway tracks at the time, to alert her. However, by that time, the

train ran over the mother and her son, killing them instantaneously. The railway police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH for postmortem.

Meanwhile, the colleagues of the deceased anganwadi worker told the media that their native village Chaganam is located 120 KM away from Kavali. The officials, keeping in view her age, should have allocated her election duty near her native village. The indifference of officials led to the death of Subhashini and her son Vijay, they said.

10-year-old girl knocked down by tractor

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

A 10-year-old girl was fatally knocked down by a tractor when she was going on her bicycle at Nachuvuri Centre here on Sunday.

Police said that the deceased girl Dundi Padmapriya was studying 5th class and was attending Karate classes being organized in the park. When she was going to attend karate class on her bicycle, a paddy-laden tractor knocked her down, killing her instantaneously. The police registered a case and shifted the body to the GGH for postmortem.

3 women drowned in River Gowthami

PNS ■ AMALAPURAM

In a tragic incident, three women drowned in River Gowthami when they were going to Venkateswara temple at Vadapalli village in Atrayapuram mandal in Konaseema district on Sunday.

Police said that the deceased women Koppireddy Yesamma (60), Karri Sunita (16) and Saluri Satya Ananta Lakshmi (40) belonged to Chilakalapadu village.

They were going to

Venkateswara temple located at Vadapalli in Atrayapuram mandal. When they were crossing the Gowthami River to reach the temple, they drowned in the river. The bodies were fished out of the river. One of the deceased Karri Sunita passed 10 th class recently and was preparing to join a college.

Atrayapuram SI S Srinivas registered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH for postmortem. Telugu Desam party leader Bandaru SanjivIT consoled the bereaved families at the hospital.



Rs 6.30 L in cash seized

PNS ■ NARASARAOPET

The police seized Rs 6.30 lakh when the cash was being distributed to the voters at Vepakampalli village in Karempudi mandal in the district on Sunday.

Police said that on a tip-off, a police team rushed to the village and found some activists, belonging to a political party, were distributing money to the voters at the village. The police seized Rs 6.30 lakh and held activist Mahesh.



Two killed in accident on NAD flyover

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Two persons died on the spot and another sustained severe injuries when the motorbike on which they were going met with an accident on the NAD flyover in Visakhapatnam on Sunday. According to reports, the accident occurred when the speeding vehicle hit the retaining wall of the flyover and fell off it. The youth were returning from a birthday celebration party when the accident occurred, it is learnt.

The deceased were identified as Thanavarapu Kumar

and A Pavan Kumar. The injured youth was admitted to King George Hospital (KGH). The airport police registered a case about the incident, and are investigating it.

Despite clear instructions that only heavy vehicles should use the NAD flyover, several people, particularly the youth, have been ignoring the rule, as is the case in this accident. Autorickshaws and two-wheelers have been prohibited on the flyover to check accidents. Sign boards have been put up on the flyover, sending the message clearly.

Eluru District Collector inspects polling equipment

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh has said that all arrangements have been made for conducting polling tomorrow in the district.

The Collector inspected the polling equipment distribution centre on the campus of the Government Junior College and monitored the dispatch of equipment to various polling stations.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that the polling would begin at 7 am in 1744 polling stations in the district. He said that there are seven Assembly segments in the district which were divided as 193 sectors to conduct elections and EVMs and VVPATs were dispatched to the respective polling stations.

Collector Prasanna Venkatesh said that over 16,000 security personnel and four thousand district police have been deployed on polling duty. The APSRTC provided buses to take the election staff and equipment to the respective polling stations, he stated.

"On May 13, at 5:30 am, a mock polling will be conducted in the polling stations to check the polling equipment and the polling begins at 7 am across the district. Two EVMs will be kept ready at Sector Officers as stand-by to be used if any EVMs develop technical trouble during the polling," the Collector said.

If any EVM gives trouble in any polling station during the polling, within 20 minutes a new EVM would be installed in



the place of the troubled EVM, the Collector made it clear.

"There are 415 problematic polling stations in the district and live telecasting has been provided to the polling stations to monitor the polling process constantly," he added, stating that a live webcasting facility has been provided to 1069 polling stations.

The Collector said that 15,615 voters used the postal voting facility and 896 voters used the home voting facility in the district. Collector Prasanna Venkatesh called upon voters to exercise their franchise in the election.



Collector invites voters to 'Festival of Democracy'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna District Collector DK Balaji has invited all 15,39,460 voters to the 'Festival of Democracy' in an innovative way.

In this connection, Collector Balaji released a press release in Machilipatnam on Sunday. As per the invitation, Balaji asked voters never to miss an opportunity to cast votes.

In his invitation, the collector printed a quotation "Today is the day to make a difference" and requested them to utilise their votes. Also, in his invitation, collector Balaji printed 12 types of identity proofs recognised by the Election Commission of India (ECI) for the benefit of voters.

Congress distributing money & liquor in Karimnagar: Sanjay

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP candidate in Karimnagar LS constituency, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, said in a video message that the Congress is distributing Rs 1,000 for every vote and half a bottle of liquor in Karimnagar.

He asked what the ECI was doing when leaders of the ruling party were distributing money and liquor.

Complaints were made on the 'C-Whistle' app, but no action was taken, but those who were distributing money were being given information about the complaints, he said.

Sanjay said that in Karimnagar, the Congress is trying to win with money and that a huge amount of money has been dumped in the constituency.

"The Congress government is following the policy of the BRS government. It is a case of



ensure that elections are held peacefully. Strong steps should be taken to ensure that voters can exercise their right to vote freely in a peaceful environment. We request ECI officials to take strict action against those who are watering down the spirit of democracy by distributing liquor and money," he said.

Sanjay said that the Congress is distributing money and liquor door to door. "When Rs 1,000 and half a bottle of liquor are being distributed for every vote what is the ECI doing," he said.

If complaints are filed on 'C-Whistle', will the EC protect the culprits using that information without taking action against them, Sanjay said.

He warned that BJP workers will prepare an action plan if the distribution of money and liquor is not stopped immediately.

1,920 liquor bottles seized

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

The police seized 1,920 liquor bottles while being brought to AP from Odisha at Kuntibhadra village in Pathapatnam constituency on Sunday. Police said here on Sunday that on a tip-off, a police team conducted a vehicle search and found 40 carton boxes containing 1,920 liquor bottles in a van.

The liquor bottles were being brought to AP from Odisha illegally to distribute during the polling day.

The seized liquor bottles were worth more than Rs 5 lakh, police said. After noticing the police, those who were illegally transporting the liquor bottles fled the scene.

Jay-Z admits cheating on Beyoncé, blames it on childhood troubles



Jay-Z, the hip-hop tycoon famed for his bravado, admitted to infidelity in his marriage to Beyoncé, which caused a stir in Hollywood. In an exclusive interview with Dean Baquet for The New York Times, Jay-Z acknowledged cheating on his wife Beyoncé when the couple was still married, blaming it on childhood troubles. The rapper had an impassioned 35-minute conversation regarding his song *The Story of OJ* from his album *4:44*, followed by his marriage and other themes. He said in a heartbroken and apologetic tone, "The hardest thing is seeing pain on someone's face that you have caused and then having to deal with yourself." He goes on to explain his coping approach and how hard he fought to keep his connection with Beyoncé, empathising with her grief. "You have to survive, so you go into survival mode. What occurs when you go into survival mode?" Jay Z expressed regret, saying, "You shut down all emotions." As the conversation progresses, he explains why he cheated. "So, even with women, you'll shut down emotionally and be unable to connect. In my situation, it's really deep. And then everything happens, including infidelity." The *Renegade* singer even hinted that he and his wife might have split up permanently due to the guilt and pain he felt after cheating on her. However, after multiple rounds of treatment and a consistent effort to repair his marriage, the two overcome the challenge and remain one of the most incredible power couples in the entertainment industry. The rapper and Beyoncé had planned to collaborate on an album but instead elected to make solo albums. "We treated our art almost like a therapy session. We started making music together. And then the music she was creating at the time was more advanced. So her album came out instead of the joint album we were working on."



Camila Cabello teams up with Lil Nas X for new track *He Knows*

Camila Cabello, the *Señorita* singer, released her new track *He Knows*, with Lil Nas X. The song comes soon after the pop sensation resorted to social media to promote the debut of her fourth solo album, *C, XOXO*, along with the cover image, which shows the singer with recently bleached blonde hair licking a blue lollipop and beaming into the camera. Cabello and Lil Nas X made an appearance on the Met Gala green carpet on May 6, announcing the release of their new song. This song follows her previous hit, *I Luv It*, and is the first single from her highly anticipated new album. The music video for the song depicts the contributors dressed spectacularly for the Met Gala. The song is a lighthearted but sensual single in which Cabello, 27, teases a cat-and-mouse game with an infatuated suitor, singing over the catchy clapping beat, "I think he knows / When I play with him like that / When I say it to him like that / Have my way with him like that / I think he knows (he knows)." According to a recent interview, she enjoyed the album-making process and was satisfied with the results. Before making this record, she remixed Stromae's *Mon Amour*. "I hopped into the booth and wrote something on my own," she told the outlet. The *Señorita* singer revealed the concept for her future album. She noted that the inspiration for the song comes from building relationships and friendships, going on dates, and doing everyday activities. "[I became an] experience junkie." "It was my 'year of yes,'" she stated. Her album, *C, XOXO*, will be released on June 28.

George to possibly collab with Chris Hemsworth for *Thor 5*

After receiving criticism for *Thor: Love and Thunder*, Taika Waititi is said to be leaving the Thor franchise for good. He directed *Ragnarok* before the 2022 calamity. Despite an ensemble cast, the movie failed to excite audiences. The cast included Natalie Portman, Christian Bale, and Russell Crowe. Tessa Thompson reprised her role as Valkyrie. Hemsworth apparently blamed himself for the film's failure by acting too goofy and failing to do his job properly! Ahead of the theatrical release of *Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga*, director George Miller sat for an interview, where he expressed his affection for Chris Hemsworth and addressed the possibility of collaborating with him for *Thor 5* if the opportunity arose. Miller confessed, "I would work with Chris on anything. I really would. He's a wonderful actor. He's got the full range of all the skills." George Miller went on to say, "You have to be athletic and physically fit. However, you must also be athletic emotionally and intellectually in order to take on these very, eventually, difficult roles. So I was quite fortunate with all of my cast members, particularly the way Anya and Chris complemented each other. Especially towards the end of the month." Meanwhile, Marvel hasn't said anything regarding Chris Hemsworth's probable *Thor 5* film. Previously, Taika Waititi stated that the film needs a more powerful adversary than Cate Blanchett's Hela from *Ragnarok*. *Thor: Love and Thunder* has grossed \$760.9 million worldwide and is available on Disney+.

OSCAR-WINNING ROGER CORMAN PASSES AWAY AT 98



Roger Corman, the Oscar-winning 'King of the Bs' who helped turn out such low-budget classics as *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Attack of the Crab Monsters* and gave many of Hollywood's most famous actors and directors early breaks, has died. He was 98. Corman died Thursday at his home in Santa Monica, California, his daughter Catherine Corman said Sunday in a statement. "He was generous, open-hearted, and kind to all those who knew him," the statement said. "When asked how he would like to be remembered, he said, 'I was a filmmaker, just that.'" The roots of Hollywood's golden age in the 1970s can be found in Corman's films. Jack Nicholson made his film debut as the title character in a 1958 Corman quickie, *The Cry Baby Killer*, and stayed with the company for biker, horror, and action films, writing and producing some of them. Other actors whose careers began in Corman movies included Robert De Niro, Bruce Dern, and Ellen Burstyn. Corman's directors were given minuscule budgets and often told to finish their films in as little as five days.

When Howard, who would go on to win a best director Oscar for *A Beautiful Mind*, pleaded for an extra half day to reshoot a scene in 1977 for *Grand Theft Auto*, Corman told him, "Ron, you can come back if you want, but nobody else will be there." Corman got his start as a messenger boy for Twentieth Century Fox, eventually graduating to story analyst. After quitting the business briefly to study English literature for a term at Oxford, he returned to Hollywood and launched his career as a movie producer and director. Despite his penny-pinching ways, Corman retained good relations with his directors, boasting that he never fired one because "I wouldn't want to inflict that humiliation." Some of his former underlings repaid his kindness years later. Coppola cast him in *The Godfather, Part II*, Jonathan Demme included him in *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Philadelphia*, and Howard gave him a part in *Apollo 13*.



FUN

ARCHIE



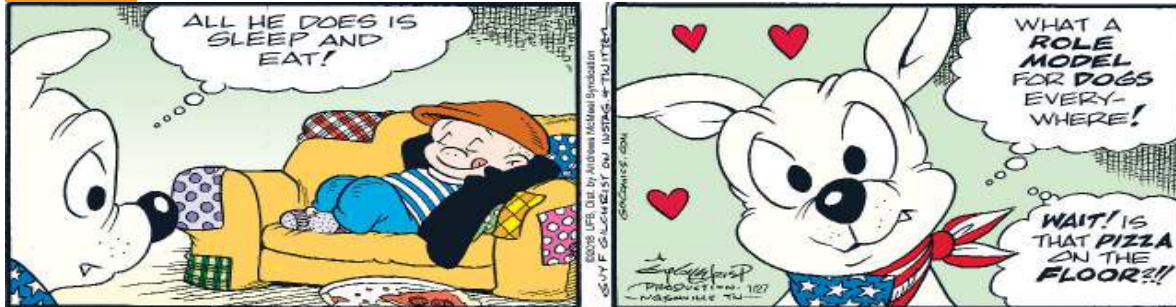
CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



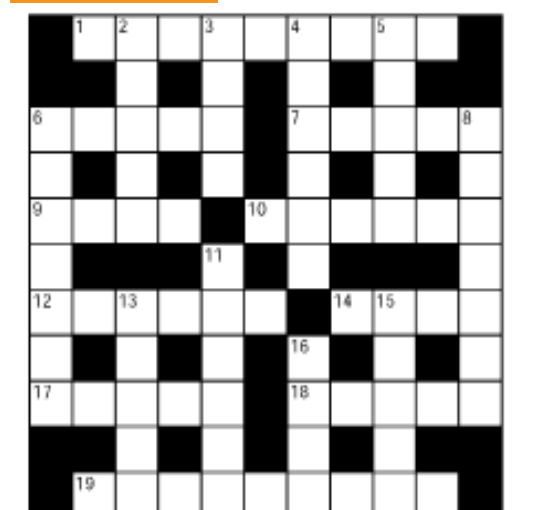
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

ACROSS

- People who carve statues
- Use your brain
- Straps held by a jockey
- Not difficult
- Say again
- Put this sachet in a teapot
- This insect flies at night
- The number of sides on an octagon
- A round thing with spokes
- Know by sight
- Watch plays here
- A soft type of bag for carrying books
- A design pricked into skin
- Have a quarrel
- Follows orders
- A graceful water bird

DOWN

- Strips of fried potato
- Find pleasant
- Changed direction
- Lift up



Deepak Tijori: The genuineness of new faces proved advantageous in *Tippsy*



Actor and filmmaker Deepak Tijori, who is currently in talks for the recently released film *Tippsy*, gets candid with *The Pioneer*, sharing some deets about the concept, the challenges of bringing in newbies, and more.

SUBODHINI PUROHIT

Deepak Tijori, the star who has always had a sneaky tendency to outdo the leading man with his supporting roles, be it as Balu in *Aashiqui* or Shekhar Malhotra in *Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikander* is currently in news for the recently released *Tippsy*.

"Recognising an underserved audience—women in cities who enjoy bachelorettes just as much as men—I set out to bring their experiences to light in metropolitan regions," begins the star on a brighter note. Instead of a normal Bollywood wedding film, Tijori wanted to make an enjoyable thriller film inspired by classics like *Khuladi* and *Khel Khel Mein*. The idea came from thinking about the difficulties that girls endure at bachelorette parties, which led to the creation of *Tippsy*.

An abbreviation of Tanya, Iris, Pony, Selene, and Yami, where each letter embodies the essence of the main characters, the title captures their unique quirks and backgrounds. The title represents a sense of fun and adventure, which aligns with the bachelorette. Overall, "The title is catchy and profound, establishing the tone for the film's themes of camaraderie, adventure, and urban nightlife exploration."

Turning obstacles into triumphs, despite initial issues, the determined cast overcame them through rigorous workshops and assistance. "One of the primary hurdles we had was the women's minimal experience in significant playing parts, which could impair their ability to handle complex situations and emotions. Kainaat, for instance, went above and beyond by employing Sunita Ji, a well-known instructor, to perfect her portrayal of a *Haryanvi* girl. Working directly with the actresses to increase their confidence and comfort in their roles was critical. Furthermore, utilising the freshness and genuineness of new faces proved advantageous. Highlighting their talents and personalities in advertising materials sparked audience interest and excitement, thanks to the team's inventive marketing methods."

Recognising the practical obstacles of working with newcomers, he revealed that they had scheduled an extensive pre-production period to do rehearsals and

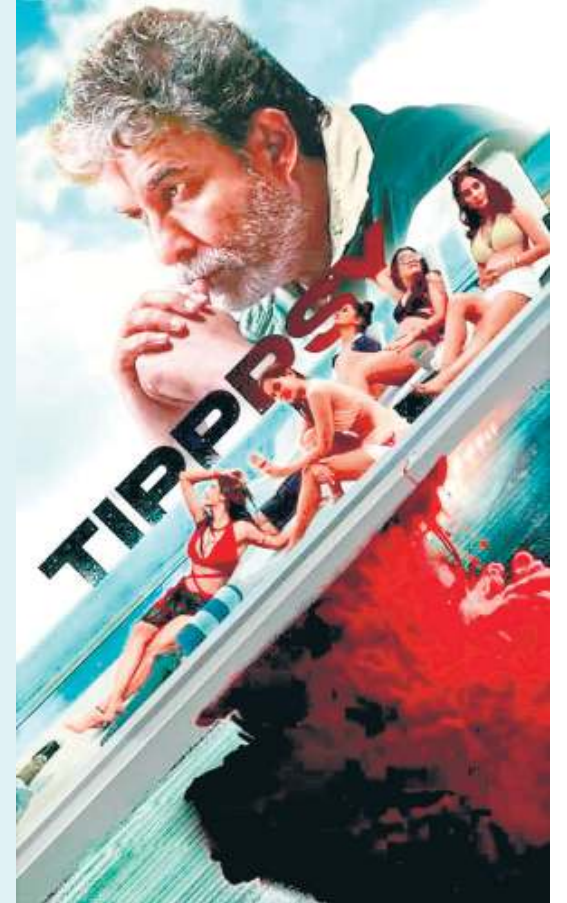
workshops. Throughout the production, "The actresses were given clear advice and support to ensure they understood the filmmaking process and their roles. Creating a supportive and collaborative environment on set was critical. Consider the probable challenges that these new actresses may confront in the production setting, encouragement of open communication and feedback resulted in a smoother production process. To address the need for character development, we scheduled sessions in which the actresses could discuss their characters' motives, backgrounds, and relationships. Providing feedback and constructive criticism helped them improve their performances."

In the film, each character has a backstory; some are resilient or peacemakers, complementing one another and filling the space of each and every emotion. Tanya emerges as the key figure, her complicated backstory turning her into a relatable heroine. Her journey from affluent heiress to encountering unforeseen obstacles explores themes of resilience and progress.

Deepak, as a filmmaker, was looking for spontaneity, and thus, he chose newcomers to bring out their personalities and experiences on screen through the portrayal of their characters. He says, "When casting actresses for the main characters, I focused on finding individuals who could authentically bring the characters to life on screen. I searched for spontaneity in their performances, avoiding actors with preconceived notions or dominant previous roles that could overwhelm the characters. Choosing newbies allowed them to fully embody the spirit of Tanya, Iris, Pony, and Selene, resulting in a true and unfettered portrayal of each character's personality and experiences."

The goal for *Tippsy* was to provide an engaging experience while still conveying an important message to the viewers. "This is a 'Who did it?' thriller about the hazards of nightlife and celebrations. The fundamental concept I want viewers to understand is 'party hard, but be vigilant.' It underlines the significance of remaining cautious while drinking and partying, shedding emphasis on the dangers of being uninformed or influenced by others in such situations. By combining this cautionary story with an exciting thriller plot, my goal is to leave audiences entertained while also making them more aware of their surroundings in similar situations."

Looking ahead, the *Aashiqui* star anticipates excit-



ing advancements in the film industry, particularly in casting and storytelling. As technology and platforms become more accessible, he shares, "The industry is changing to be more inclusive and diverse. This transition is expected to open up additional chances for rising talent, encouraging new voices and viewpoints. Casting will prioritise authenticity, looking for actors that offer distinct attributes to their roles, regardless of background or experience. In storytelling, there will be an increasing desire for new storylines that question norms and appeal to a wide range of viewers. Filmmakers will explore new genres, styles, and forms, pushing boundaries and exploring unknown territory. The future of storytelling will be influenced by technological breakthroughs such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), which provide immersive experiences that blur the barrier between fiction and reality. Overall, the film industry's future seems optimistic, with a focus on originality, diversity, and the discovery of new storytelling routes that fascinate and engage audiences throughout the world."

Nurturing your baby's delicate skin

RASHMI BHUMIREDDY

New mothers, particularly those who have given birth to their first child, are eager to learn about the best items for their newborn. However, due to the varied range of baby care items and the seemingly limitless amount of information, there needs to be more understanding among new mothers, leading to misguided decisions.

To tackle this issue, Dr. Sumanlatha Guntupalli, who has pursued a doctorate in pharmaceuticals, set up a startup called Meechu, which exclusively offers baby care products that are perfect for their skin without the use of any harsh chemicals or ingredients.

Speaking to *The Pioneer*, sharing the inspiration behind starting the baby care brand, she begins on a brighter note: "It is rooted with the primary concern of mothers about their baby's safety and personal care. Many mothers rely on advice from their parents, friends, and neighbours, when selecting these products for their babies.

However, the reality is that they don't have clarity on what they want exactly or which of the products is suitable for their baby's skin. Blindly trusting advertisements and international brands, including a well-known brand that promotes the notion that using their soap can lighten a baby's complexion, reveals a widespread tendency. Despite my attraction to such brands, I discovered that the soap promoted is unsuitable for delicate baby skin—it's merely a toilet soap. Many individuals are drawn to premium international brands, only to cease usage when issues arise with the ingredients."

It is an escape from these myths. As a

formulation scientist, she too fell prey to these misconceptions during her first child's upbringing. However, upon entering her second pregnancy, she embarked on thorough research to ensure she provided babies with properly formulated, safe products.

She says they are not organic or ayurvedic; instead, they are meticulously scientifically formulated and rigorously tested to ensure they are suitable for baby skin and maintain the natural built-in texture without adverse effects. "Each product features a pH-5.5-adjusted formulation, matching the pH of our skin for optimal compatibility. Behind each product formulation lies proven scientific research, demonstrating evidence of their harmlessness and absence of adverse reactions, ensuring they are entirely safe for delicate, tender skin. We also prioritise safety by offering FDA-approved and scientifically tested products," she shares, adding, "When we introduced baby wipes and diapers at a renowned nationwide chain of children's specialty hospitals, we began receiving inquiries from parents just two weeks after the launch."

In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, Dr. Sumanlatha Guntupalli, a formulation scientist and founder of Meechu, takes us through her inspiration and journey of starting baby-friendly products for your babies' sensitive skin.



Like many startups, she too encountered common challenges such as managing manpower, addressing customer suggestions, and navigating financial constraints. However, in their case, "Additional hurdles arose in the form of transportation and space constraints, which significantly impacted our profit margins. Finally, after tackling various challenges, we have successfully launched a comprehensive baby care range comprising nearly 55 SKUs, including soaps, lotions, and creams."

WE Hub, which has been an aid to many budding entrepreneurs, was so for her too. And sharing her experience, she says, "The *Launch Pad* program at WE-Hub has been immensely valuable. Whenever I have faced branding challenges or needed to connect with industrialists, they have consistently offered exceptional solutions. Additionally, being a part of *Nenu Super Women* through WE-Hub has been a game-changer. Not only has it garnered positive publicity for my venture, but it has also opened doors to potential investments."

On the concluding note, she shares, "My vision is to establish a nationwide presence across every market in India by 2026, ensuring that our products are easily accessible to all parents. Our mission is to provide the best and safest products for babies, prioritising their health and well-being above all else. We aim to become the go-to brand for baby care essentials in every corner of the country."



Debunking myths about WOMEN & AGING

Many individuals develop assumptions about aging, what it's like to be "old," and how being older will affect them. However, as we get older, we must recognise both the benefits and drawbacks of aging. According to research, most people may assist protect their health and mobility as they get older by adopting or maintaining healthy behaviours and lifestyles. But again, there have been number of myths and misconceptions surrounding women and aging:

Myth: Anti-aging products can halt the aging process entirely

Fact: While numerous products endorse anti-aging benefits, it's important to understand their limitations. No product, no treatment, or no procedure can stop aging altogether. Many products promise to do so, but remember that every product has limitations. Though many such products can be effective in making you look younger temporarily by reducing the appearance of aging signs such as wrinkles and fine lines, none of them work long-term. Instead of seeking the miracle cure for aging forever, adopt an integrated approach to skin and body health. That included living a healthy lifestyle, such as eating a balanced diet, drinking enough water, exercising regularly, keeping your stress levels in check, and protecting your skin from sun damage.

Myth: Sunscreen is only necessary during sunny days

Fact: Many people mistakenly believe sunscreen is only necessary on sunny days. However, ultraviolet (UV) radiation can penetrate clouds and reach the Earth's surface, impacting skin even on seemingly overcast days. Regular sun exposure, regardless of the weather, contributes to premature aging and increases your risk of skin cancer. UV rays can

penetrate the deeper layers of your skin, causing damage that accumulates over time. To maintain healthy, youthful skin, consistent sun protection is crucial. Snow reflection and cloud penetration can expose you to harmful UV rays, even in the winter.

Myth: Aging is solely predetermined by genetics

Fact: Genetics plays a major role in aging, but lifestyle choices also significantly impact how we age and feel. What we consume does reflect on the skin. Thus, one should binge on fresh fruits and vegetables, packed with nutrients, to fight free radicals that damage skin cells. Regular exercise is equally crucial. Improved circulation from physical activity delivers nutrients to the skin and removes toxins. Exercise also boosts mood with endorphins, contributing to a youthful appearance and overall well-being.

Myth: Anti-aging products can make you look decades younger

Fact: Anti-aging creams can minimise wrinkles and lines, but it is crucial to understand that aging is a complex process influenced by genetics and lifestyle. These products target visible signs like wrinkles and age spots, not deeper issues like collagen loss or hormone shifts, and have limited control over age reversal.

Myth: Expensive anti-aging products are more effective than affordable ones

Fact: The cost of anti-aging products does not necessarily reflect their effectiveness. While some high-end brands may command premium prices, the true measure of a product's efficacy lies in its ingredients.

(The author is Dr. Shireen Furtado, Senior Consultant, Medical and Cosmetic Dermatology, Aster CMI Hospital.)



GT FACE FORMIDABLE KKR IN MUST WIN IPL GAME

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Shubman Gill's return to form will provide a big boost to Gujarat Titans as they square off against table-toppers Kolkata Knight Riders in their must-win IPL game here on Monday. Gill roared back into form with his fourth IPL hundred to keep GT's slim playoff hopes alive with a comfortable win against Chennai Super Kings at home in their last outing. Gill and Sai Sudharsan's twin centuries were the cornerstone of the hosts' huge total and their role will be crucial once again as they face KKR, which has become the first team to qualify for the playoffs. As many as seven teams are still in the race for the playoffs. While Rajasthan Royals (16) and Sunrisers Hyderabad (14) are well-placed at second and third position, three teams -- CSK, Delhi Capitals and Lucknow Super Giants -- are at 12 points each. GT and Royal Challengers Bengaluru are at 10 points and can reach a maximum of 14 points. With a negative net run-rate, GT's chance are the least and it will take a miracle for the former champions to sneak into the top four. However, one thing is clear,



GT will once again have to play out of their skin and register big wins to keep their mathematical chances alive. GT's bowling has lacked teeth this season with the pacers inconsistent and spinners leaking runs. But the bowlers did manage to snap three CSK wickets in the first three overs in their last outing. Mohit Sharma's variations and knuckle balls were effective and Rashid Khan's

guile also stood out and they would hope for another good outing. But it will again boil down to the top-order batting, which has failed to fire in the last few games before Gill and Sudharsan came up with sensational tons en route a record 210 opening stand. KKR, on the other hand, need just one win in their remaining two games to seal a top-two finish after they

qualified for the playoffs with an 18-run win over Mumbai Indians in a rain-hit game last night. Sunil Narine (461 runs & 15 wickets) has carried the team with his all-round brilliance, while fellow West Indian Andre Russell has been another impactful player with 222 runs and 15 wickets this season. Leg spinner Varun Chakaravathy with 18 wickets in his kitty has been in a good

rhythm. Phil Salt too has gotten the team sensational starts but has been off the boil a bit in the last three innings. Others such as Angkrish Raghuvanshi and Ramandeep Singh have also stepped up when needed as the two-time champions emerged as the most consistent team this season. The venue has proved to be batter-friendly and has witnessed some high-scoring

games. GT has beaten KKR twice in the last three meetings but the hosts can't lower their guard as it was here where Rinku Singh had given them a nightmare when he slammed Yash Dayal for five successive sixes in the final over last year.

Teams (from): **Kolkata Knight Riders:** Shreyas Iyer (c), KS Bharat (wk), Rahmanullah Gurbaz (wk), Rinku Singh, Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Sherfane Rutherford, Manish Pandey, Andre Russell, Nitish Rana, Venkatesh Iyer, Anukul Roy, Ramandeep Singh, Varun Chakaravathy, Sunil Narine, Vaibhav Arora, Chetan Sakariya, Harshit Rana, Suyash Sharma, Mitchell Starc, Dushmantha Chameera, Sakib Hussain, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Gus Atkinson, Allah Ghazanfar and Phil Salt. **Gujarat Titans:** 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 and BR Sharath.



KKR's Varun Chakaravathy made things difficult for MI batters: Brett Lee

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Varun Chakaravathy's ability to be consistently among wickets for Kolkata Knight Riders drew praise from former Australian tearaway bowler Brett Lee, who said he made life difficult for Mumbai Indians batters in a rain-shortened low-scoring game. Chakaravathy bowled miserly and took two wickets for 17 runs as KKR won by 18 runs to become the first team to seal an IPL playoff berth on Saturday. Chakaravathy (18 scalps) is the third-highest wicket-taker so far this season behind MI's Jasprit Bumrah and PBKS's Harshal Patel, both of whom are on 20 wickets. "He bowled beautifully. He made efforts to pick the hard length, he banged the ball short in the wicket which did not allow the batsmen to get underneath the ball and

made the cross-bat shots difficult," Lee told JioCinema on Sunday. Former Royal Challengers Bengaluru high-performance director Mike Hesson said KKR batter Venkatesh Iyer seems to be relishing punishing the Mumbai Indians bowlers. Venkatesh has struck two half centuries this season and came close to striking a third before he was dismissed on 42 (21 balls) as he emerged the highest run-getter on both sides at the Eden Gardens on Saturday. "He seems to love playing against Mumbai Indians. He got hit on the knee earlier but that did not seem to stop him. He timed everything beautifully, batted with a strike rate of over 200 and when everybody else was struggling because of the seaming ball, he played a match-winning hand," said Hesson.

We win together, we lose together: Rana reveals KKR winning mantra

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The key to Kolkata Knight Riders' success this season lies in their players' newfound ability to support each other through highs and lows, something that was "missing" over the past two years, feels the team's vice-captain Nitish Rana. The two-time former champions became the first team to seal the playoff berth with a facile 18-run win over Mumbai Indians in a 16-over rain-interrupted IPL match at Eden Gardens on Saturday. This was the first time since 2021 that KKR made the last four stages. "We win together and we lose together; that's the dressing room environment we have. It's very

important to place hands on each other's shoulders, and I feel it was missing for the last one to two years," Rana said in the post-match media interaction here. With this win, they have consolidated their position atop the standings with 18 points. With two games to go, KKR are now well-placed for a top-two finish. The big reality check for KKR had come against Punjab Kings who smashed South Africa's record of the highest successful run-chase by gunning down 262 with eight balls to spare in an IPL fixture at Eden Gardens on April 26. "We felt really bad that day. I was witness to the dressing room, only three-four ate dinner that night," he recalled.



Rana, who led the side the previous season in regular skipper Shreyas Iyer's absence, made a comeback from a finger injury after missing their last 10 matches. Having scored a crucial 23-ball 33 on his return, the lefthander said he had anxiety pangs and had a sleepless night. "To be honest I was not able to touch the bat for 20-22 days because of the injury. Then slowly it started falling into place. I used to play innings in my mind. "I couldn't sleep the whole night yesterday. It seemed I'm playing the first IPL match of my life. I slept only around 7.30-8 am such was the anxiety. "It seemed I was playing my first match, you have to increase your

hunger to do well. Luckily I had that thing in me," he said. Lacked momentum: Piyush Chawla For Mumbai Indians, who are already out of the playoff race, this was their ninth loss as they end their forgettable season facing Lucknow Super Giants on May 17. Veteran leg-spinner Piyush Chawla blamed it on their lack of momentum this season. "T20 is about momentum, and we didn't get that momentum right from the beginning. Some days we bowled well, but our batting didn't click, and sometimes our batters did well, but the bowlers ended up leaking runs," Chawla said. "As a unit, we have failed in a few games, and we have to accept that

as a team. We have a brilliant lineup, but things didn't fall into place. "Today also, we started off brilliantly, but that spell of (Sunil) Narine and Varun (Chakaravathy) actually made the difference. You have to give credit to their bowlers," he added. The 35-year-old, who has played 191 matches in the IPL in four different franchises including KKR, feels it's not over for him yet. To a query if he would be back in action next season, Chawla gave a cheeky reply. "You tell me, if I should be playing with the way I'm bowling? If you have given your permission, of course I will see you somewhere next time," he signed off.

OTHER SPORTS

We are working to be in best shape possible for Paris: India men hockey captain

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The Indian men's hockey team has identified areas that "needed attention" following its whitewash by Australia in the five-Test series and is ready for the tough European leg of the Pro League, said skipper Harmanpreet Singh on Sunday. Last month, India, the Tokyo Olympics bronze medallists, lost all their matches to the Kookaburras, raising doubts about their preparations for the Paris Games later this year. But drag-flicker Harmanpreet said the squad has done a lot of high-intensity training and the confidence in the side continues to grow. "We are in the last stages of an intense training block right now. The team has worked on the areas we felt needed attention after the tour of Australia," said Harmanpreet in a Hockey India release. "Soon, we will head to Europe to play some essential matches in the Pro League 2023/24 to test ourselves against some tough opponents like Argentina, Belgium, Germany, and Great Britain. "The chemistry in the squad continues to grow and with only 75 days left for the Paris Olympics we are working to be in the best shape possible," he added. India will begin their Olympic campaign against New Zealand on July 27. The other teams in Pool B are Belgium, Australia, Argentina, and Ireland. Pool A comprises the



Netherlands, Germany, Great Britain, Spain, South Africa, and hosts France. India vice-captain Hardik Singh said the experience of stalwarts like goalkeeper PR Sreejesh and former captain Manpreet Singh has come in handy while preparing youngsters for the Summer Games. "The team is leaving no stone unturned in our endeavour to change the colour of our previous medal and clinch gold at the Olympics this time. We have players like PR Sreejesh and Manpreet Singh who could be playing their fourth Olympics along with quite a few players who could be playing their third Olympics, including our captain. "Their experience has been instrumental in moulding some of the younger players we have in the squad right now. Only 75 days remain for the Paris Olympics and we cannot wait to begin our Olympic journey," added Hardik.

Praggnanandhaa beats Carlsen but remains third in Superbet chess

PTI ■ WARSAW

India's R Praggnanandhaa scored yet another victory over world number one Magnus Carlsen of Norway to keep himself afloat even as Wei Yi of China stretched his lead to a massive 2.5 points in the Superbet rapid and blitz chess tournament, a part of the Grand Chess Tour. With nine rounds still to come in the blitz event, Wei Yi has amassed 20.5 points with seven wins on the first day of blitz. Ending the day with 7.5 out of a possible nine, Yi, seems like a man possessed and unless a hurricane hits him, is poised to win the first leg of the Grand Chess Tour.

Carlsen, on 18, is a distant second at this point and the main reason behind that is Praggnanandhaa, who has been beating the world number one often these days in the faster version of the game. Praggnanandhaa, however is far behind the leaders with 14.5 points which makes it literally a two-horse race for the title. In fourth spot is Arjun Erigaisi on 14 points while Duda Jan-Krzysztof of Poland is right behind him on 13. Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan stands sixth on 12.5, a full point clear of Vincent Keymer of Germany and the eighth spot is now



taken by early leader Kirill Shevchenko of Romania with 11 points. Anish Giri of Holland improved a little to be ninth on 10.5 while the blitz remained a cause for worry

for world championship challenger D. Gukesh who is languishing at the last spot with 9.5 points in the USD 1,75,000 prize money tournament. Carlsen notably mentioned

that his nervous system had collapsed following his second-round loss against Praggnanandhaa and Gukesh, Arjun ensured he remained in contention for a podium finish. Losing to Wei Yi and Carlsen, Arjun scored five wins and two draws in his other games and will be optimistic on the final day of the event. Final results rapid: 1. Wei Yi 20.5; 2. Magnus Carlsen 18; 3. R. Praggnanandhaa 14.5; 4. Arjun Erigaisi 14; 5. Duda Jan-Krzysztof 13; 6. Nodirbek Abdusattorov 12.5; 7. Vincent Keymer 11.5; 8. Kirill Shevchenko 11; 9. Anish Giri 10.5; 10. D.Gukesh 9.5.

Deeksha sets new Indian record

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian track athlete K M Deeksha set a new national record in the women's 1500m while Avinash Sable finished second in men's 5000m event at the Sound Running Track Fest in Los Angeles. The 25-year-old Deeksha finished third in the final on Saturday after running the distance in 4:04.78, bettering the previous record of 4:05.39 set by Harmilan Bains in 2021 at the National Athletics Championships in Warangal. Deeksha's previous personal best was a 4:06.07 set in the final of the National Inter-State Athletics Championships at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar in 2023, where she upstaged Bains to win gold. Deeksha who is from Amroha, UP has been part of the MP Athletics academy for the last five years training



under coach S K Prasad. Parul Chaudhary ran 15:10.69s in the women's 5000m to finish fifth. Parul narrowly missed out on improving her national record while compatriot Ankita ended 10th with a time of 15:28.88. Sable finished second in the men's 5000m with a time of 13:20.37 and not his pet 3000m steeplechase event,

and in the same event, Gulveer Singh ran a 13:31.95. Sable's 5000m national record time is 13:19.30. Kartik Kumar ran the last lap in 62sec in the men's 10000m but that could only fetch him a second-place finish. He clocked 28:07.66s. This is a World Athletics Continental Tour bronze level event.

Messi plays through a scare, Inter Miami rallies past Montreal 3-2 for fifth straight win

AP ■ MONTREAL, (AP)

Lionel Messi played the entire game despite a first-half injury scare, Benjamin Cremaschi broke a tie in the 59th minute and Inter Miami overcame an early two-goal deficit to beat Montreal 3-2 on Saturday night for its fifth consecutive Major League Soccer victory. Luis Suarez got his 11th goal of the season for Inter Miami, and Matias Rojas scored off a free kick. Jules-Anthony Vilsaint and Bryce Duke scored for Montreal (3-5-3). Inter Miami (8-2-3) extended its unbeaten streak to seven matches (5-0-2) despite Messi being held without a goal or an assist for the first time in his nine MLS appearances this season. Inter Miami is 7-0-2 in those nine games; one of its losses came against Montreal in March, a game where Messi didn't play. Playing in Canada

for the first time, Messi briefly left late in the first half after some sort of issue with his left knee after being fouled by defender George Campbell. The eight-time Ballon d'Or winner as the world's best player went down immediately, holding his knee and writhing in pain. Inter Miami's medical staff went onto the field to treat Messi, who got up after about two minutes and walked to the Miami sideline. He was not subbed out, which allowed him a chance to return moments later. And for whatever reason, the match changed in that moment. Inter Miami was down 2-0 when Messi got hurt; it was 2-1 when he returned and tied moments after he got back onto the field. Rojas scored off a free kick - one that Messi would have ordinarily taken - to get Inter Miami on the board, and Suarez tapped in a

goal off a corner kick late in first-half stoppage time. Suarez became the third player in MLS history to score 11 goals in his first 800 minutes of a season, joining Mamadou Diallo (11 in 2000) and Ola Kamara (11 in 2021). The go-ahead goal came when Rojas sent a ball into open space and Cremaschi ran it down - then made a second effort to nudge the ball just clear of two defenders and into the net for a 3-2 lead. Messi had two chances in the final minutes to extend the lead, both narrowly missing. Hundreds of fans greeted Inter Miami when the team arrived at its hotel Friday night and Montreal, in part because of Messi joining Major League Soccer last summer, sold out its 15,000 season tickets for the first time since the club joined MLS in 2012. Messi has scored in 31 countries.

VD will play a Rayalaseema rural boy in VD14

Vijay Deverakonda has lately announced two new films, which will be helmed by Rahul Sankrityan and Ravi Kiran Kola. The film, starring Rahul Sankrityan, is set between 1854 and 1878. The freshly unveiled concept poster immediately captured people's attention. Rahul previously collaborated with Vijay Deverakonda on the movie *Taxiwala*.

According to the latest reports, Vijay Deverakonda will play a dual character in this film. It is expected that Vijay will appear as a warrior in one of the parts. According to the concept poster, the film is about the legend of a cursed region. *VD14* is the tentative title!

In an interview, director Rahul revealed that Vijay will appear in a role as a rural boy for the first time. The actor, who has portrayed mostly city characters up to this point, will take on a new avatar. "You'll see Vijay in this with an entirely different avatar—as a person from the countryside, namely from Rayalaseema," said the director.

Allu Arjun lands in legal trouble for violating poll code of conduct!

Thousands of people gathered on the road after Tollywood actor Allu Arjun was arrested by the police in Nandyal, Andhra Pradesh, on Saturday to meet YSRCP MLA Silpa Ravi. For those who are unaware, Silpa Ravi is running for re-election from Nandyal, the same day as Andhra Pradesh's 25 Lok Sabha seats are up for election. On the final day of campaigning, Allu Arjun paid the MLA a visit to express his support. The actor waved to the large throng that was screaming "Pushpa, Pushpa" when he appeared on the balcony alongside his wife Sneha Reddy, Silpa Ravi, and the MLA's family. Many of his admirers congregated outside the mansion as soon as they heard about his arrival in hopes of seeing their idol. A complaint under Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code, which deals with disobedience to an order duly promulgated by a public servant, has been filed by the nearby Two Town police station. Since Section 144 of the Election Code and Section 31 of the AP Police Act applied, charges were brought against both the MLA and the actor.

Meanwhile, Allu Arjun dropped a picture from the gathering. The caption on the post read, "Grateful to the people of Nandyal for the warm reception. Thank you, @SilpaRaviReddy garu, for the hospitality. Wishing you the very best in the elections and beyond. You have my unwavering love and support!"



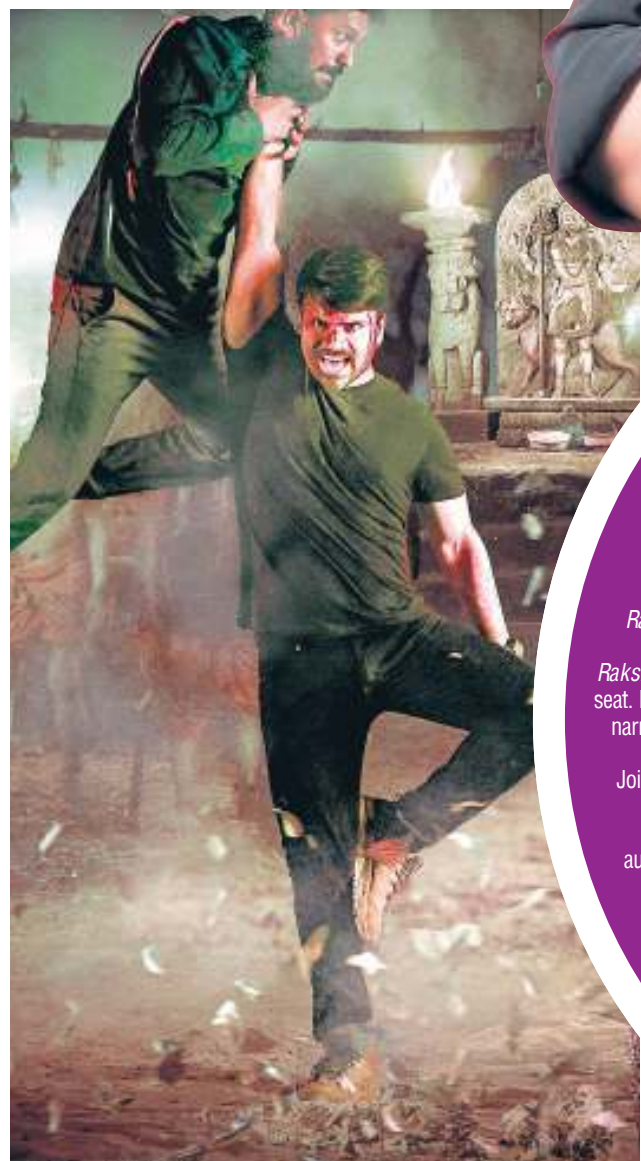
Shivam Bhaje: First look has Ashwin Babu showing his explosive rage

Shivam Bhaje has quite a divine ring to it. And that's the title of Ashwin Babu's upcoming movie, directed by Apsar and produced by Maheswara Reddy of Ganga Entertainments, which is making its debut. The film's first look was released on Saturday. In the title poster, Lord Shiva's imagery is indicated. And now, we see Ashwin Babu in his *raudra* form, baying for the blood of villains. He is seen single-handedly holding a heavy-bodied goon and attempting to cast him away. Seen in the poster is also a trident and the idol of a powerful divine. Action, thrills, and sentiment can be expected from the movie.

Ashwin, who has previously done *Hidimbha* and *Raju Gari Gadhi*, is gearing up for the movie's release in June. *Shivam Bhaje* has already completed its shoot.

Starring Bollywood actor Arbaaz Khan in a key role, the film has Digangana Suryavanshi as the heroine. The makers said that Hyper Aadi, Sai Dheena, Murali Sharma, Brahmaji, and Tulasi have key roles. Devi Prasad, Ayyappa Sharma, and comedian Shakalaka Shankar will also be seen.

Vikas Badisa and Dasaradhi Shivendra of *HanuMan* fame are the film's music director and cinematographer, respectively. The latter recently won the Best Cinematography Award at the Dadasaheb Phalke Film Festival.



KANNAPPA'S INTERESTING UPDATE ON THE WAY



Vishnu Manchu, who is delighted with the way his upcoming movie *Kannappa* is progressing, has now announced that an exciting update is going to be out today. As revealed by Vishnu, each update from *Kannappa* is trending on social media. Particularly, Prabhas' update trended on top on Twitter for nearly 18 hours. He also disclosed that Prabhas picked another character after listening to the story, rather than what he was offered. Vishnu was also content with the decision, and the team made a few changes to the character, keeping the stardom of Prabhas in mind. The actor requested movie buffs stop assuming about the characters of all the actors, as they are planning back-to-back updates.

It is known that the magnum opus *Kannappa*, which is being mounted on a large canvas, stars an ensemble cast, including Prabhas and Akshay Kumar in special roles. Mohan Babu, Mohan Lal, and Sarathkumar will be seen in pivotal roles in the movie produced by Mohan Babu Manchu and directed by Mukesh Kumar Singh.

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.

Payal's crime investigative thriller Rakshana racing for release

Payal Rajput is renowned for going to any extent to stun all movie lovers with her sensational performances on the big screen. Her recent films speak volumes about her talent. Get ready for an adrenaline-pumping experience as the immensely talented Payal Rajput steps into the shoes of a formidable police officer in the highly anticipated crime thriller *Rakshana*. Known for her bold and captivating performances in films like *RX100* and *Mangalavaaram*, Payal Rajput is all set to mesmerise audiences with her portrayal in this gripping project.

Rakshana promises to be a gripping crime investigative mystery drama that will keep you on the edge of your seat. Inspired by a real-life incident involving a police officer, the film adds an authentic and intense touch to its narrative. Payal Rajput devoted extensive efforts to preparing for her role, portraying a female police officer with natural and realistic finesse.

Joining Payal Rajput in this stellar cast are Roshan and Manas, who play pivotal roles in the film. Director and producer Pradeep Thakore ensures that *Rakshana* maintains unparalleled production values, guaranteeing a visually stunning and immersive experience. The film's title poster, unveiled on the auspicious occasion of Sri Rama Navami, has already generated immense excitement with its intriguing design and Payal Rajput's intense gaze.

Rakshana marks a significant departure from Payal Rajput's previous roles, showcasing her versatility and acting prowess as she tackles the role of a police officer for the first time in her career. The post-production work is currently in progress, and the team is gearing up for a grand release in the near future.

With *Rakshana*, Pradeep Thakore aims to present audiences with a captivating and thrilling cinematic experience, establishing her as a versatile actress in a new light. Movie lovers are waiting eagerly to enjoy Payal Rajput's performance on the big screen in *Rakshana* when the film releases in an extravagant manner!



VEERA DHEERA SOORAN TO HAVE A PREQUEL: REPORTS

Actor Vikram has unveiled a new poster for his next film, *Veera Dheera Sooran: Part 2*, which shows him riding a motorcycle alongside Dushara Vijayan. The 62nd film of Vikram's career features the actor as a department store owner, as the poster says. It also mentions that the film is under production. The directors are apparently filming *Veera Dheera Sooran* in Thenkasi. SU Arun Kumar directs the film, which also stars SJ Suryah, Suraj Venjaramoodu, and Siddiqua. For the first time in his career, Vikram is partnering with Arun Kumar, widely renowned for his work on *Sethupathi* and *Chithira*. Previously, it was reported that the Vikram film would be released in two parts, with the second half hitting theaters before the first. CS Balachander created the art direction, GV Prakash Kumar composed the music, Prasanna GK edited it, and Theni Eswar shot the cinematography. Riya Shibu is producing the picture under the name HR Pictures. So, the teaser and new posters released on the same day both have the phrase "Part-2," implying that the film will also have a prequel. Chiyaan Vikram was most recently seen on screen in Mani Ratnam's magnum opus, *Ponniyin Selvan-I* and *Ponniyin Selvan - II*. With the release date of Gautham Vasudev Menon's film *Dhurva Natchathiram* remains unknown, the actor's next project is *Thangalaan*.

'diMAAKIKIRIKIRI' teaser update from Double iSmart on May 15

The time has come to ignite the *iSmart* madness with a double impact. Here comes the 'diMAAKIKIRIKIRI' update from the highly anticipated Pan India film *Double iSmart* in the crazy combination of dynamic director Puri Jagannadh and Ustaad Ram Pothineni. The teaser of this explosive mass action *dhamakedhaar* entertainer will be unveiled on May 15, on the special occasion of Ram's birthday.

The teaser announcement poster presents Ram in a power-packed avatar with a face mask on. Dressed in a tiger stripe shirt and torn jeans, Ram is seen holding a cigarette in one hand and firecrackers in another. He is seen giving a stern gaze in the poster, which assures a 'diMAAKIKIRIKIRI' teaser.

The shoot of this high-budget entertainer, which is the second installment of *iSmart Shankar*, recently took place in Mumbai, with the prominent cast participating in it. As the team is planning to release the movie soon, they will come up with back-to-back updates.

Double the action, double the mass, and double the entertainment are guaranteed in the sequel, which is being mounted prestigiously. Ram Pothineni underwent a stylish makeover for the movie, where Sanjay Dutt will be seen in a mighty, powerful role.



Melody Brahma Mani Sharma, who gave some sensational music to Puri Jagannadh in several movies, including *iSmart Shankar*, is scoring the music for *Double iSmart*. The cinematography is handled by Sam K. Naidu and Gianni Gianneli.

Double iSmart, in the deadly combination of Ram and Puri, is being produced by Puri Jagannadh and Charmme Kaur under the banner of Puri Connects.

Double iSmart will be released in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, and Hindi languages.

PELLI CHOOPULU MAKERS' NEXT TITLED AMMA

Big Ben Cinemas, known for producing successful films like *Pelli Choopulu*, *Dear Comrade*, *Dorasani*, and *Annappurna Photo Studio* under the direction of producer Yash Rangineni, has announced *Amma* as their production number 7. The announcement was made yesterday on the occasion of Mother's Day. RJ Swetha PVS is making her directorial debut with this film, which opens with an emotional thriller story. The title poster was released during the *Amma* movie announcement. This poster, designed with a photo of a cage and a bird against the background of Amma's photo, is intriguing. *Amma* promises to be a new emotional thriller movie with a focus on motherly sentiment. More details about the movie will be revealed soon.

