

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
 Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is running a government which he does not know when it will fall. BJP MLAs are not in touch with the Congress, but Congress MLAs are in touch with the BJP. Why should we be in touch with the Congress as nobody knows when the Congress government is going to fall.  
 - Alleti Maheshwar Reddy, BJP leader

**PM jabs INDIA bloc: Aims just 50 seats to save 'honour'**

**'LEARNING' THAT NAWAZUDDIN SIDDIQUI WAS CAST IN SECTION 108, I WAS COMPELLED'**

**Kajal Aggarwal bags key role IN KANNAPPA**

**DON'T MISS...**

**Heavy rain forecast for AP in next..**

A cyclonic circulation is currently positioned over Rayalaseema, extending up to 5.8 km above mean sea level, according to the Meteorological Centre. In its daily weather report, the Centre mentioned that a trough extends from south Chhattisgarh to the Comorin area, passing over the cyclonic circulation above Rayalaseema and adjoining north Tamil Nadu at 1.5 km above mean sea level. Furthermore, the Southwest Monsoon is expected to advance into the South Andaman Sea, parts of the Southeast Bay of Bengal...

**Delhi BJP issues 'chargesheet'..**

Ahead of the May 25 polls on seven Lok Sabha seats in the national capital, Delhi BJP on Friday issued a 'chargesheet' against its INDIA bloc rivals AAP and Congress, listing alleged scams and corruption involving the two parties that ruled the city for last more than two decades. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva along with other party leaders released the 40-page Hindi and English booklet titled "Congress and AAP - Partners in Loot", at the party office...

**India must ink addl FTAs, reduce..**

India needs to sign many more Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with other countries and reduce tariffs to compete with the rest of the world, Niti Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam said on Friday. Addressing the captains of the Indian industry at a CII Annual Business Summit, Subrahmanyam said the government should not protect any sector from competition. "I think we should be very, very confident about our capabilities about India actually being able to be competitive with the..."

**RCB and CSK clash for final playoff..**

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's fairytale resurgent run will be up against the might of five-time champions Chennai Super Kings and the weather gods when the two sides clash in an epic do-or-die match to decide the fourth and final team for the IPL play-offs, here on Saturday. Thursday's washout in Hyderabad meant that Sunrisers Hyderabad joined Kolkata Knight Riders and Rajasthan Royals as the three confirmed teams for the playoffs and the race is now for only one spot with two teams in fray...

**Stalker hacks woman, her daughter**

In a horrifying incident, a woman and her daughter were attacked by a stalker with a sword on Friday in Patur village of Vinjamur mandal. The victims, Sankranthi Poojita and her mother Santhi, sustained serious injuries and are undergoing treatment at the Government General Hospital (GGH). The accused, V Nagaraju, has been harassing Poojita for several months, forcing her to marry him. Despite Poojita rejecting his advances, Nagaraju continued to stalk her and threatened her with

**SIT to probe post-poll violence**

**ACTION-TAKEN REPORT TO BE SUBMITTED TO ECI FOR EACH CASE**



File Photo

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) will be established to investigate post-poll violence in Andhra Pradesh. The SIT will submit an action taken report to the Election Commission of India (ECI) for each case of violence. First Information Reports (FIRs) will be updated with additional appropriate IPC sections and other relevant statutory provisions.

Chief Secretary K S Jawahar Reddy and Director General of Police Harish Kumar Gupta appeared before Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar and two Election Commissioners in New Delhi on Thursday. The ECI had summoned the top officials to personally explain the administration's failure to contain post-poll violence.

Several incidents of violence were reported in Anantapur, Palnadu, and Tirupati districts during polling on May 13 and the following days. The Chief Secretary and DGP shared their assessment of negligence and lack of supervision by officials in violence-hit districts.

Based on their report, the Election Commission took action against 16 officials. It suspended Palnadu Superintendent of Police (SP) Garikapati Bindu Madhav and Anantapur SP Amit Bardar. The Commission also ordered the transfer of Palnadu District Collector Siva Sankar Lotheti and Tirupati SP Krishnakanth Patel. A departmental inquiry will be initiated against these officials.

Bindu Madhav assumed charge of Palnadu district as SP a month ago after the Election Commission transferred Y Ravi Shankar Reddy. Krishnakanth Patel had taken charge as Tirupati SP two months ago.

- CS and DGP summoned to New Delhi to explain the administration's failure to contain post-poll violence
- FIRs to be updated with additional appropriate IPC sections and other relevant statutory provisions
- CS and DGP cited negligence and lack of supervision by officials in the violence-affected districts
- ECI suspended 16 officials, and transferred Palnadu District Collector Siva Sankar Lotheti and Tirupati SP Krishnakanth Patel.
- Departmental inquiries to be initiated against the suspended officials
- The state government's report highlighted the failure of officials to prevent violence despite prior warnings
- The ECI directed the CS and DGP to ensure violence is not repeated and tasked all SPs with taking pre-emptive measures

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**No need for me to flee: Pinnelli**

PNS ■ NARASARAOPET

Macherla YSRCP MLA Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy has denied reports circulated by a section of the Press that he is absconding. Speaking to a news channel on Friday, Reddy clarified that he is currently in Hyderabad for personal reasons.

**Naidu orchestrated violence, says Sajjala**

**'YSRCP is poised for a big win'**



**CM on foreign trip with family**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy departed from Tadepalli late Friday night for an international trip. He is expected to return to his residence on June 1.

Accompanied by his wife YS Bharathi and daughters Harsha and Varsha, CM Jagan embarked on a special flight from Gannavaram airport. The details of the tour have not been disclosed due to security concerns.

Sources indicate that Jagan will first stay in London with his daughters before visiting France and Switzerland. He plans to return on May 31.

For the past five months, Jagan Mohan Reddy has been the primary campaigner for the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), conducting extensive campaigns



**Sajjala criticised TDP leader Chandrababu Naidu, stating that Naidu's campaign lacked confidence and relied heavily on negative tactics**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP general secretary Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy has reiterated his confidence in a landslide victory for his party in the recent elections.

Speaking to the media at the party's central office in Tadepalli on Friday, he said, "Look at the voting pattern. This is not an anti-government vote." Sajjala asserted that YSRCP is poised to retain power, bolstered by its traditional vote bank and the enthusiastic voter turnout.

Sajjala criticised TDP leader Chandrababu Naidu, stating that Naidu's campaign lacked confidence and relied heavily on negative tactics. In contrast, he noted that CM Jagan's campaign was robust and well-received by the people, expressing optimism about winning even in Naidu's stronghold of Kuppam.

He dismissed the notion that a higher polling percentage would hurt the ruling party, accusing Naidu of failing to promote credible welfare schemes like the so-called "Super Six."

Sajjala accused Naidu of orchestrating violence with the support of the Central government (BJP) by transferring certain officers, which led to unrest during and after the polls.

He criticised the Election Commission for not acting responsibly to prevent these incidents and called for the removal of biased officials.

He condemned the biased actions of the police, particularly the destruction of furniture and CCTV cameras at MLA

**THE SAME OLD STORY IN TRIBAL TRACTS**

**Woman delivers en route hospital in 'Doli'**

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

A pregnant woman from a remote village had to be carried on a makeshift stretcher

for over 5 km to reach medical help. Kushai, from Rega Punyagiri village, suffered back pain early Friday. Due to

poor roads, her family couldn't call an ambulance. Her husband, brother, and villagers used a traditional carrier called a 'doli' to take her through rough terrain. Tragically, Kushai gave birth to a baby boy in the forest during this difficult journey. The villagers, thankfully,

were able to help deliver the baby, named Pandanti Babu. They continued carrying Kushai until they reached a waiting ambulance at the foot of a nearby hill.

Doctors report both mother and baby are healthy. However, this incident highlights the lack of proper roads and healthcare facilities faced by tribal communities in the area. Local leaders are demanding the government take action to improve infrastructure and medical services.

Kushai's childbirth story underscores the daily struggles of these communities and the urgent need for better care.



**Kushai, from Rega Punyagiri village, suffered back pain early Friday. Due to poor roads, her family couldn't call an ambulance. Her husband, brother, and villagers used a traditional carrier called a 'doli' to take her through rough terrain.**

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# YSRCP demands action against Guntur DIG, other police officials

Raises concerns over worsening law and order situation in Palnadu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The YSRCP leaders have complained to the Election Commission, demanding the transfer of the Guntur range Inspector General of Police and suspension of the DIG Anantapur and the ASP Anantapur, for allegedly colluding with TDP. They also sought steps to restore normalcy.

The YSRCP leaders led by MLA Malladi Vishnu, MLC Lella Appi Reddy, former minister R Kishore Babu and others submitted their complaints to CEO Mukesh Kumar Meena on Friday.

The ruling party leaders conveyed concerns regarding the worsening law and order situation in the Palnadu region. They stated that despite the significant measures already taken by the Commission, including the suspension and transfer of



several key officials, the role and responsibility of the Guntur Range Inspector General of Police (IGP), Sarvashresth Tripathi, in these events cannot be overlooked. "Given the escalating violence and the apparent failure to maintain law and order, we request the immediate transfer of IGP Sarvashresth Tripathi and the appointment of an efficient officer to restore public

confidence and prevent further disturbances, especially as we approach the counting date of June 4," they said.

They claimed that Tripathi failed to control law and order by supporting TDP. YSRCP activists and supporters, including women, were forcibly taken from their homes, beaten, and tortured at police stations. The violence in the Palnadu Region in con-

stituencies like Macherla, Sattenapalli, Narasaraopet, and Gurajala where TD supporters engaged in violence and booth capturing, despite being within 25 kilometres of the IGP's range, shows the failure of Tripathi. They demanded the transfer of the IGP, along with the deployment of additional forces, to prevent further violence and ensure a fair counting process.

In the second complaint, they sought attention and urgent consideration of the need for further decisive action in response to the recent events that have gravely undermined the democratic process in the Tadipatri region. They pointed out the incident in which Kethireddy Pedda Reddy, the MLA of Tadipatri and a YSRCP candidate, was severely attacked on the day of polling. His convoy was halted, forcing him to proceed on foot.

# Apex court holds verdict on Kejri's plea against arrest

Allows him to move trial court for bail

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday reserved its verdict on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's challenge to his arrest by the ED in a money laundering case linked to the alleged excise scam but granted him liberty to move the trial court for regular bail.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta reserved its judgement after hearing senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi and Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, who appeared for Kejriwal and the Enforcement Directorate, respectively.

"Arguments heard. Judgement reserved. Notwithstanding the same, and without prejudice to rights and contentions, the appellant can

move the trial court for grant of bail in accordance with law," the bench said in its order.

The top court perused the case files and statements of the witnesses and accused recorded after October 30, 2023, the day senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia's bail plea was rejected. Sisodia is an accused in both the corruption and money laundering case linked to the alleged scam.

During the hearing, Raju claimed the probe agency has unearthed some personal chat messages between Kejriwal and some hawala operators.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who also appeared for the ED, said the alleged hawala operators have been arrested now and the chat messages have been recovered from them. Singhvi contested the

claim and said the allegation was being made to prejudice the mind of the court.

"Is this submission for the court or the media? Why was he suppressing this fact till now? The arguments are being made to create a doubt in the court's mind in the last minute," Singhvi told the bench.

Raju claimed the probe agency has got evidence about money having been sent from Andhra Pradesh to Goa through hawala channels to help with the Aam Aadmi Party's 2022 assembly poll campaign.

The bench questioned Raju whether this "evidence" was mentioned in the "grounds of arrest" recorded in writing and given to Kejriwal.

"The probe agency is not

supposed to share everything with the accused before the chargesheet," Raju replied, adding that sharing every material with the accused at the time of arrest will jeopardise the investigation, delay the trial and there will be chances of witnesses being influenced.

He said under the PMLA and CrPC, the investigating officer is not supposed to share everything about the "grounds of arrest" with the accused or else the accused will start challenging the material at every level and there will be hundreds of petitions before the court. The bench told the ASG, "How will then the accused defend himself or challenge his arrest, if complete material is not shared with him? How will he challenge those grounds?"

# ACA prepares for thrilling third season of APL

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Andhra Cricket Association (ACA) is all set for the third season of the Andhra Premier League (APL), building on the success of the previous two editions.

ACA secretary SR Gopinath Reddy has confirmed that six teams will compete this season: the Bejawada Tigers, Uttarandhra Lions, Godavari Titans, Rayalaseema Kings, Vizag Warriors, and Coastal Raiders. A total of 19 matches will be played, with Kadapa and Visakhapatnam serving as the host cities.

"The main purpose of the Andhra Premier League (APL) is to bring recognition to zone-level players. It is very gratifying that APL will be held on the lines of the Indian Premier League. We will be successful only if we develop from the roots," stated Gopinath Reddy.

The league is scheduled to commence on June 30, featuring a round-robin format in the group stage. Seven matches will be held in Kadapa, while Visakhapatnam will host twelve. A mini-auction took place in Visakhapatnam on Friday, resulting in the selection of 408 players across four categories. Six franchisees actively competed for these



players. During a media conference, ACA Secretary Reddy emphasised the goal of elevating Andhra players to international prominence through the APL.

He also revealed plans to expand the league to include venues in Mangalagiri for future seasons. The leadership of ACA President P Sarath Chandra Reddy has been instrumental in the successful execution of the league's first two seasons.

The six teams will consist of 120 players in total, with base prizes set at Rs 1 lakh for Category A, Rs 50,000 for Category B, and Rs 25,000 for Categories C and D. Additionally, the ACA has facilitated the emergence of new talent through

Rising Stars trials, with seven players earning spots in the league. APL Season-3 matches will be broadcast live on Star Sports Telugu and Star Sports First, anticipating an audience of around 30 lakh viewers. The ACA has implemented advanced software to store comprehensive player information, ensuring efficient management of the tournament.

Amid the excitement for APL Season 3, Nitish Kumar Reddy's record-breaking auction bid has been a highlight. The 20-year-old, recognized as a breakout star for the SunRisers in the ongoing IPL, was acquired by the Godavari Titans for a remarkable Rs 15.6 lakh.

# Botsa calls for smooth transition of power

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

State Education Minister Botsa Satyanarayana condemned the politicisation of the recent tragic incident at Kancharapalem in Visakhapatnam, urging against turning it into a tool for political agendas. The minister emphasised that the incident was unrelated to political affairs and cautioned against instigating violence for personal or political gain, especially in the peaceful Uttarandhra region.

Addressing the media people here on Friday, Botsa Satyanarayana stated that the counting of votes for the state elections is scheduled for June 4. Confirming YS

Jaganmohan Reddy's second-term swearing-in as Chief Minister on June 9 in Visakhapatnam, the minister called for a harmonious transition of power and urged all political parties to uphold the democratic process without resorting to violence.

Expressing concerns over recent riots coinciding with officer changes, Minister Satyanarayana called for thorough investigations before making abrupt decisions that could lead to unrest. He stressed the importance of scrutinising officer appointments based on their past experiences and track records, advocating for transparent administrative actions to maintain public trust. Regarding the uti-



Expressing concerns over recent riots coinciding with officer changes, Minister Satyanarayana called for thorough investigations before making abrupt decisions that could lead to unrest.

lization of Rushikonda buildings post-swearing-in, Minister Satyanarayana indicated that decisions would be made under the new administration. He refrained from commenting on internal party matters such as the cancellation of TDP Mahanadu, emphasizing the need for a stable government aligned with the state's interests.

In light of the evolving political landscape in Andhra Pradesh, Minister Satyanarayana underscored the necessity of maintaining peace, integrity, and accountability in governance. He expressed confidence in YSRCP's electoral success while cautioning against unrealistic expecta-

tions from opposition parties, urging a collective focus on state development. Raising suspicions about the motives behind decisions made by a retired IPS officer, the minister called for greater transparency in administrative actions and questioned the necessity of appointing retired officials, suggesting potential external pressures influencing such appointments.

As the state prepares for a new government and navigates through challenging times, Minister Satyanarayana's address serves as a reminder of the critical need for responsible leadership and a commitment to the welfare of the people.

# 85% Indians say climate change affecting them

Survey by Geneva-based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Eighty-five per cent of people surveyed in India say they are already experiencing the effects of climate change, and more than a third of them have either already moved or considered moving because of extreme weather events such as severe heat, droughts and floods.

Ninety-one per cent of 2,178 adults surveyed between September 5 and November 1 last year by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication and CVoter are "worried about global warming".

Eighty-five per cent of the people said they are already experiencing the effects of climate change.

Thirty-eight per cent had to go without enough clean drinking water for at least one day in the past year and 72 per cent experience electricity disruptions on a typical day.

Thirty-four per cent of the respondents said they have either already moved or considered moving because of extreme weather events such as severe heat, droughts, floods or others.

According to a report by the Geneva-



Weather-related disasters triggered over half a million (above five lakh) internal displacements in India in 2023 and around 2.5 million (25 lakh) in 2022

based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, weather-related disasters triggered over half a million (above five lakh) internal displacements in India in 2023 and around 2.5 million (25 lakh) in 2022.

Severe heat waves have impacted a large number of people in parts of India for three years in a row, affecting health, water availability, agriculture, power generation and other sectors of the economy.

Deadly floods left a trail of destruction in the Himalayan states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand last

year. A glacial lake outburst flood in Sikkim in October led to the collapse of a hydroelectric dam, killed more than 100 people, and affected more than 88,000.

According to the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication-CVoter survey, more than 70 per cent of people think global warming affects weather in their local areas and monsoons in India but only 64 per cent usually receive warnings ahead of an extreme weather event.

While 86 per cent of the respondents favour India's commitment to achiev-

ing net-zero carbon emissions by 2070, 78 per cent say the government should be doing more to address global warming.

Sixty-one per cent think India should augment the use of renewable energy while only 14 per cent think the country should expand the use of fossil fuels.

India accounts for nearly 18 per cent of the global population but uses only 6 per cent of the world's primary energy, according to the International Energy Agency.

However, due to its large population, India is currently the third-largest greenhouse gas emitter behind China and the US.

Research shows India is among the countries most vulnerable to climate impacts. Climate change has already begun to alter growing seasons in the country and, with around 50 per cent of its population engaged in agriculture and other climate-sensitive sectors, the damage to productivity and health is significant.

## No need for..

Continued from Page 1

"There is no need for me to flee from Macherla. I am in Hyderabad on personal business and will return to Macherla soon," he stated, condemning what he described as false propaganda against him. Earlier, some news channels reported that Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy and his brother, Venkatrami Reddy, were absconding out of fear of arrest in connection with recent violent incidents.

## SIT to probe...

Continued from Page 1

The poll panel directed the Chief Secretary and DGP to ensure such violence is not repeated, and tasked all SPs with taking pre-emptive measures to avoid such situations in the future.

The state government also requested the retention of 25 companies of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) for 15 days after

counting to control any possible violence following the declaration of results. The Commission decided to direct the Ministry of Home Affairs to retain the 25 CAPF companies in Andhra Pradesh for 15 days after counting. Most incidents occurred in the districts of Annamaya, Chittoor, and Palnadu, with a few incidents in Guntur, Anantapur, and Nandyal.

## Naidu ...

Continued from Page 1

Kethireddy Peddareddy's house, questioning their motives and demanding accountability from the Election Commission.

Regarding the upcoming counting of votes, Sajjala expressed confidence in the process but called for impartiality from the Election Commission. He suggested that Police Observer Deepak Mishra be removed to ensure a smooth counting process on June 4, alleging that some police officers acted as agents for the TDP.

Sajjala also rebuked the Opposition for writing misleading letters to the Governor concerning the upgrading of the e-office, which he claimed were baseless and intended to create confusion.

## Stalker hacks...



Continued from Page 1

violence if she did not reciprocate positively to his proposal for marriage. On Friday morning, Nagaraju barged into Poojita's house and renewed his marriage proposal. When Poojita once again refused, an enraged Nagaraju attacked her with a sword. Santhi,

who intervened to protect her daughter, was also hacked by the accused.

Following the attack, Nagaraju fled the scene. The police have formed special teams to apprehend the accused. An attempt to murder case was registered against Nagaraju under Section 307 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

## Riots after ..

Continued from Page 1

officers without sufficient knowledge of the local situations. This lack of preparedness led to violent incidents on polling day and the following day in Palnadu, Karampudi, Macherla, Kancherla, Tadipatri, Tirupati, Chandrahari, Anantapur, Krishna district, Narsipatnam, and other areas. The report indicated that these sudden transfers, from SP-level officers to Sub-Inspectors, were the primary cause of the unrest.

## Show-cause notice to govt PG doctors for violation of orders

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Director of Public Health and Family Welfare, Dr Padmavati, has said that disciplinary action will be taken against the PG doctors who violated orders. The doctors who completed PG courses under the in-service quota should serve in government hospitals for five years. However, a few doctors have violated this mandate.

In a release on Friday, Dr Padmavati stated that in-service doctors are obligated to serve the government for five years, as per the

agreement signed when they joined the PG courses. If they fail to fulfil this condition, they will be required to repay Rs 20 lakh, along with the salary allowances provided by the government.

She said that despite issuing several notices to the doctors who violated these rules, there has been no response. Dr Padmavati clarified that legal and departmental action will be taken against the civil assistant surgeons who have received the notices and fail to respond by June 15, as per existing regulations.

## CM on...

Continued from Page 1

in preparation for the 2024 elections. Notably, YS Bharathi also campaigned for her husband in the Pulivendula Assembly constituency. On May 16, Jagan interacted with the I-PAC team, which is serving as a political strategist for the YSRCP. The counting of votes will be held on June 4, and Jagan has planned a 15-day trip abroad.

Jagan's foreign trips often generate significant public interest. His vacation photos, especially those taken with followers at the airport, frequently go viral. This is partly due to his usual attire of a white shirt and khaki pants, which he changes to more colorful clothing while on vacation. Fans eagerly anticipate these wardrobe changes, as seen in the past when pictures of Jagan in jeans and a t-shirt became widely popular.

Jagan is visiting London, France, and Switzerland this time on his family vacation.

# Raw material shipment for VSP resumes at Gangavaram Port

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a relief for Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP), shipment of essential raw material from Adani Gangavaram Port Ltd (AGPL) has resumed, said an official on Friday. Shipment of raw materials such as coking coal, limestone and others, which are key for making steel, had been disrupted since April 12. Atul Bhatt, chairman and managing director (CMD), VSP, which is also known as Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL), thanked all the stakeholders for resolving the impasse which crippled the industry for more than a month. "Bhatt extended his heartfelt gratitude to all the stakeholders who played a crucial role in resolving the crisis of transportation of essential raw material from AGPL to RINL," a

press release from the steel plant said. He said their collective efforts have been instrumental in ensuring the continuity of RINL operations and sustaining economic growth in the region. On May 8, nearly 1,000 RINL employees marched to the nearby Gangavaram port to plead with its agitating employees to allow the shipments. Elated over the resumption, Bhatt noted the development helps in safeguarding the steel plant's assets and jobs. He also thanked the Indian Railways, Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA) and other entities for their support. Further, he highlighted that RINL is focused on ramping up production in a phased manner based on raw material availability and also minimising the losses suffered in the past one month due to the raw material crisis.



# Collector: Focus on post-poll vigil

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Election Officer and Collector Dr A. Mallikarjuna underscored the importance of efficient management in ensuring smooth post-election procedures during a meeting held at the Collectorate meeting hall on Friday morning. Addressing various pertinent issues, the focus of the meeting revolved around the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) to designate strong rooms post-polling, completion of essential technical processes, and other related matters. Dr Mallikarjuna underscored the rigorous security measures implemented to safeguard the integrity of EVMs containing deposited votes securely stored within designated strong rooms at Andhra University. Mallikarjuna highlighted that the sealing of these strong rooms was meticulously carried out on May 14th, 2024, with the process extensively documented through videography to ensure transparency and accountability. To bolster security, a sophisticated network of Closed-



**Dr Mallikarjuna noted that contesting candidates or their appointed agents have been granted the prerogative to inspect CCTV footage at specified intervals daily, escorted by police personnel and officials.**

Circuit Television Cameras (CCTVs) has been installed, diligently surveilling both the entrance and premises of the strong rooms. Complementing this electronic vigilance, a robust three-tier security perimeter has been established, comprising Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), State Armed Police, and Civil Police personnel. Moreover, control rooms have been set up in the outer ring to enhance supervisory capacity over the strong room enclosures. Monitors within these control rooms facilitate real-time monitoring of CCTV footage, ensuring constant vigilance over the sanctity of the electoral process. In adherence to transparency

and fairness principles, Dr Mallikarjuna noted that contesting candidates or their appointed agents have been granted the prerogative to inspect CCTV footage at specified intervals daily, escorted by police personnel and officials. During these inspections, stringent guidelines are to be observed, with any tampering strictly prohibited to maintain the integrity of the electoral process. Expressing satisfaction with the conduct of the general elections in the district, Dr. Mallikarjuna commended the

collective efforts of all involved and urged for continued cooperation during the counting process. He stressed the importance of security and instructed Returning Voting Officers (RVOs) to conduct daily reviews of security arrangements at the strong rooms housing the EVMs. Additionally, he emphasized regular communication with contesting candidates and adherence to Election Commission regulations regarding the timely delivery and secure handling of postal ballots. Measures were also discussed to segregate postal ballots from other districts for further processing. The District Election Officer advocated for the prompt resolution of any pending technical matters ahead of the counting process, emphasizing the significance of comprehensive training sessions to ensure the preparedness of officials and staff. Stressing coordination and preparedness, he cautioned against any disruptions during the result declaration and underscored the necessity of adequate staffing for a successful process.

# Kalyani condemns attacks on marginalised groups

**Calls them a direct assault on democratic values**

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

YSRCP women's wing working president and MLC Varudu Kalyani has vehemently condemned the recent surge in attacks targeting marginalised communities in Andhra Pradesh. Pointing fingers at the Opposition, particularly Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Kalyani labeled the assaults as a direct assault on democratic values. Speaking to the media on Friday, Varudu Kalyani said: "YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has aptly termed this struggle as a battle between the impoverished. It's disheartening to witness the poor being mercilessly targeted based on their affiliations." The rhetoric didn't spare Chandrababu Naidu, accusing him of orchestrating violence for political gains. Kalyani likened TDP to a group of thugs, highlighting instances of women being brutally assaulted simply for their political allegiance.



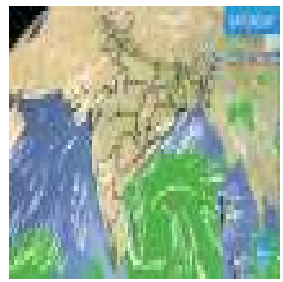
Among the numerous accounts of violence, Kalyani shed light on the case of Palamuru Rajakumari, a victim of TDP candidate Ayyannapatra's brutality. Rajakumari, a former volunteer in Jagan Mohan Reddy's government, was subjected to a vicious attack solely for her support of the YSR Congress Party. "Is it a crime to exercise one's democratic right? The TDP's actions reek of misogyny and desperation for power," Kalyani asserted. Further instances recounted included the harrowing ordeal of Vemula Sandhyarani and

the unjust detention of SC and BC women from Kothaganeshunipadu. Kalyani didn't mince words in condemning Chandrababu's track record of disrespect towards women, citing past instances of derogatory remarks and callous behaviour. The blame for the recent wave of violence was squarely laid at the feet of Chandrababu and Purandeshwari, with allegations of political machinations to disrupt the electoral process. As the State braces for the upcoming election results on June 4, Kalyani expressed confidence in the electorate's endorsement of the Jagananna government. Promising swift action against perpetrators of violence, she emphasised YSRCP's commitment to upholding democratic principles. "In our pursuit of justice, no one will be spared, regardless of their position or affiliation. The people have spoken, and their voices will be heard," Kalyani concluded.

# Heavy rain forecast for AP over next 24 hrs

PNS ■ GUNTUR

A cyclonic circulation is currently positioned over Rayalaseema, extending up to 5.8 km above mean sea level, according to the Meteorological Centre. In its daily weather report, the Centre mentioned that a trough extends from south Chhattisgarh to the Comorin area, passing over the cyclonic circulation above Rayalaseema and adjoining north Tamil Nadu at 1.5 km above mean sea level. Furthermore, the Southwest Monsoon is expected to advance into the South Andaman Sea, parts of the Southeast Bay of Bengal, and the Nicobar Islands around May 19. As a result, heavy to very heavy rain is likely at isolated places in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema over the next 24 hours. Thunderstorms with lightning and strong gusty winds of 40-50 km/h or 30-40 km/h are anticipated at isolated locations in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema over the next five days. Light to moderate rain or thundershowers are expected at many places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema over the next seven days. Rainfall was recorded at numerous locations across Coastal Andhra Pradesh and a few spots in Rayalaseema over the past 24 hours. The highest maximum temperature of 39.1 degrees Celsius was recorded in Kurnool, Rayalaseema. Meanwhile, normal life was disrupted in Vijayawada and Tirupati due to morning rain.



# WORLD HYPERTENSION DAY

# Awareness camp on 'Know your numbers'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

To mark World Hypertension Day, Vijayawada Divisional Railway Hospital organised an awareness programme on hypertension on Friday under theme 'Know Your Numbers', emphasising the importance of monitoring blood pressure regularly. Dr M Sowribala, Chief Medical Superintendent at the hospital, said that the theme of this year's World Hypertension Day is 'Know Your Numbers'. Dr M Jaideep, Additional Chief Medical Superintendent, Health and Family Welfare, welcomed the audience and briefed them on the importance of World Hypertension Day, its prevalence, and the



2024 theme. Dr T Ram Manohar, cardiologist, gave an audio-video presentation on the causes, symptoms, complications, treatment and prevention measures of hypertension. Dr. Manohar stated that following diet discipline, lifestyle changes, and practising meditation and yoga are the best ways to limit hypertension and stress.

Dr Nazeer Hussain, Consultant, Ophthalmology, gave an AV presentation on the effects of hypertension on the eyes and its treatment. Dr Bharathi, Nephrologist, gave an AV presentation on hypertension and kidney failure. She also answered various queries

raised by the participants. Addressing the gathering, Dr M Sowribala, CMS, emphasised the importance of prioritising health and wellness, especially for railway employees who work in demanding environments. The Railway Hospital organised a free health camp, where patients were screened for hypertension, ECG, random blood sugar, renal function tests and lipid profile tests to assess the comorbidities and complications. The hospital's medical team, led by Dr Sowribala, provided free consultations and check-ups to railway employees and their families.

**This year's theme is 'Know Your Numbers'**

# Man dies as car hits bike

PNS ■ KAKINADA

A motorcyclist was fatally knocked down by a speeding car on National Highway 216 near Moolasthanam Agraharam village in Alamuru mandal on Friday. Police identified the deceased as Barre Nagaraju (21) of Ryali village. He was on the way to a relative's house in Moolasthanam Indra colony and the accident took place while he was crossing the road divider.



# Pro-poor YSRCP will win: Kishore Babu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former Minister Ravela Kishore Babu has said that the election was a war between the poor and capitalists, and the victory will be of Bahujans. Addressing the media at the YSRCP central office on Friday, Kishore Babu said that people across Andhra Pradesh will give an overwhelming victory to YSRCP and YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, who are pro-poor. He said that under the rule of YSRCP, CM Jagan delivered an excellent democratic rule with the goal of welfare to the marginalised and once again it will be proved that Bahujans are with YSRCP. Pointing at the pro-Opposition alliance media, Kishore Babu said that they are

spreading false information that the increased vote percentage is against YSRCP, which is not true. He said that the increased voter turnout will favour YSRCP. The former minister said that the welfare schemes implemented by the YSRCP government led by YS Jagan Mohan Reddy during the past five years have received massive support from every section of the people across the State. Kishore Babu said that people do not believe in the false propaganda of the Opposition leaders including Chandrababu Naidu. They fear losing the elections, he added. Violent incidents have proved that some police officers are biased towards the alliance, said Kishore Babu.

# Saraswathi Malluvalasa conferred with Woman Exemplar Award

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a remarkable celebration of grassroots leadership, Saraswathi Malluvalasa from Vizianagaram has been honoured with the CII Foundation Woman Exemplar Award in the Micro Enterprise Category at the CII Annual Business Summit-2024 held in New Delhi on Friday. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the award. Each recipient was bestowed with a trophy, a certificate, and a cash prize of Rs 3 lakh. Saraswathi's journey is a testament to resilience and innovation. Confronting personal experiences of domestic violence and gender discrimination, she recognised the critical links between food insecurity, economic depen-



dence, and violence against women. In response, she founded the Millet Sisters, a pioneering network of small-scale women farmers aimed at securing food security and enhancing livelihoods. Her initiative has significantly boosted the income of over 20,000 women, embodying the 'five E's' of women's empowerment: Education, Economic Development, and Employment.

The CII Foundation's Woman Exemplar Programme is dedicated to identifying, recognising, and empowering grassroots women leaders to foster women-led development. The programme not only provides a national platform to highlight their work but also enhances their capabilities through training and

mentoring. By promoting these women on various platforms, the programme amplifies their social impact. With this prestigious recognition, Saraswathi Malluvalasa joins an illustrious network of over 120 Women Exemplars. These women are driving profound social change at the grassroots level, positively impacting the lives of three million people annually. The award underscores the critical role of women leaders in transforming communities and highlights the ongoing efforts needed to support and amplify their work across the nation.

**She founded 'Millet Sisters', a network of small-scale women farmers**



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# 255 people held in connection with post-poll violence

PNS ■ BAPATLA

The police arrested 255 people in connection with the post-poll violence which took place elsewhere in the district.

SP Vakul Jindal said in a statement here on Friday that the police had registered 36 cases against 284 people who were involved in the violent incidents after the polling. The police had arrested 255 people in connection with the violent incidents so far, the SP added, stating that 41 (A) CRPC notice was also issued in this regard.

The SP warned of stringent action against those who are involved in violent incidents. He said that police pickets were set up in vulnerable villages. Awareness is being created among the people on the stringent action the police would take if people create law and order problems.



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## APEAPCET: Candidates advised to reach exam centres early

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Prof Y Nazeer Ahammed, Secretary, Andhra Pradesh State Council of Higher Education (APSCHE), stated that APEAPCET 2024 (Andhra Pradesh Engineering Agriculture Pharmacy Common Entrance Test) for the MPC stream will be conducted from May 18 to 23.

In a statement issued by the APSCHE on Friday, Prof Nazeer said that according to the Meteorological Department of Andhra Pradesh, the State is likely to witness heavy rains over the next four or five days.

All candidates appearing for APEAPCET-2024 were advised to reach their allocated test centres well in advance to avoid any delays.

He reiterated that even a delay of one minute will not be permitted, and candidates will not be allowed to appear for the examination if they are late.

# EVM strongrooms provided 3-tier security cover: DC

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh has said that strong police security has been provided to the EVM strongrooms.

The Collector here on Friday inspected the security being provided to the EVM strong room, located on the CR Reddy Engineering College campus after signing in the register at the strong room.

The Collector also inspected the arrangements being made for the counting of votes. The Collector made some suggestions to RDO NSK Khajavali and other police officials on the arrangements to be made for the counting of votes on June 4.

Collector Prasanna Venkatesh also watched the images on the CCTV cameras installed in the EVMs in the control room. He told the police officials concerned that keeping in mind the security of the strong room, only personnel with relevant ID cards should be allowed. Later, the



Collector inspected how the postal ballots were preserved in the strong room.

He reviewed the security measures with the officers appointed at the level of DSP to supervise the security system. Municipal Commissioner S Venkata Krishna was directed to take steps to ensure cleanliness on the premises of the campus where the EVMs

were preserved.

The Collector said that a three-tier security was provided to the EVM strong room where the EVMs of seven Assembly constituencies were preserved. He said that the Central security forces, Armed Reserve forces and the local police are providing security to the EVM strong room around the clock.

# Officials directed to take steps to provide groundnut seeds to farmers

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

District Collector V Vinod Kumar has directed the officials concerned to take steps to provide groundnut seeds to the farmers in time. The Collector conducted a surprise inspection of the Rythu Bharosa Kendra located at Yeddulapalli village in Pamidi mandal on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, the District Collector said that all the arrangements for the distribution of groundnut seeds should be completed at the earliest. From May 18, the process of registration of farmers should be taken up, he told the officials, adding that the farmers should be informed to register at RBK.

As many as 100 quintals of seed groundnut has been stored in Yeddulapalli Rythu Bharosa Kendra. The offi-



cialists should prepare to store the necessary seed groundnut in all RBKs in the district. Necessary plans should be prepared for distribution of groundnut seeds to the farmers at the earliest," the Collector told the officials. The Collector inquired with the farmers about the raising of groundnut crops and knew their problems.

Later the Collector saw the groundnut crop of a farmer Pawan Kumar at the village. The Collector directed the agriculture officers to give the required advice to the farmers on adopting advanced techniques in raising crops. Agriculture JD Umamaheshwaramma and AP Seeds DM Subbaya were among those who accompanied the Collector.

# CS asks Collector to ensure foolproof security

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Chief Secretary KS Jawahar Reddy has directed District Collector Praveen Kumar to make foolproof arrangements for the counting of votes on June 4.

The Chief Secretary, CEO and DGP held a video conference with the Collectors and SPs of all districts on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Secretary said that because of violent incidents that took place after the polling in various districts, foolproof arrangements must be made for the counting of votes.

He told the Collector that the arrangements for counting of votes should be made following the guidelines of ECL. Strong security should be provided to the EVM strong rooms and the strong rooms should be under constant vigil of officials. The officials should continuously

## COUNTING OF VOTES



monitor the strong rooms through the CCTVs in the control room, the CS told the officials.

"The violence incidents which took place on May 14 and 15 should not take place anywhere during the counting of votes," the CS told the Collector.

DGP Harish Kumar Gupta said that action must be taken

under the relevant sections against channels, cable TV, social media and print media that propagate fake news, and if there is any doubt, they should talk to the relevant authorities and get an explanation, adding that Section 144 Cr.PC should be implemented.

CEO Mukesh Kumar Meena said that the EVM strong rooms should have double lock, and three-tier security, adding that the checking and supervision should be conducted by the local police force at the main entrance at the EVM strong rooms.

The second layer of security at the strong room should have state armed forces personnel. Those who are assigned counting duties should be allowed in the counting halls, the CEO said, adding that if the officials want to inspect the strong room, they should sign in the register and enter their details. Barricading must be erected for the counting of votes.

District Collector Praveen Kumar said that three-tier security had been provided to the strong rooms located on the campus of Sri Padmavathi Women's University. All required steps are being taken for the counting of votes to ensure that no untoward incident takes place on the day.

# 14 trains cancelled due to maintenance

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Due to Traffic maintenance works over Vijayawada Division, South Central Railway cancelled 14 trains.

The details of the trains are: 07466 Rajahmundry Visakhapatnam 26/05/2024 to 04/06/2024, 07467 Visakhapatnam Rajahmundry 26/05/2024 to 04/06/2024, 17219 Machilipatnam Visakhapatnam 27/05/2024 to 03/06/2024, 17220 Visakhapatnam Machilipatnam 28/05/2024 to 04/06/2024, 17249 Tirupati Kakinada Town 17/05/2024 to 03/06/2024, 17250 Kakinada Town Tirupati 17/05/2024 to 04/06/2024, 17239 Guntur Visakhapatnam 27/05/2024 to 03/06/2024, 17240 Visakhapatnam Guntur 28/05/2024 to 04/06/2024, 17243 Guntur Rayagada 27/05/2024 to 03/06/2024, 17244 Rayagada Guntur 28/05/2024 to 04/06/2024, 12861 Visakhapatnam Mahbubnagar 19/05/2024 to 03/06/2024, 12862 Mahbubnagar Visakhapatnam 20/05/2024 to 04/06/2024, 22702 Guntur Visakhapatnam 27/05/2024 to 04/06/2024 on days of service and 22701 Visakhapatnam Guntur 27/05/2024 to 04/06/2024 on days of service.

# 1,589 tortoises seized, 2 held

PNS ■ PARVATHIPURAM

The forest officials seized 1,589 tortoises while being transported illegally in a mini-truck at Hoshpet in Rampachodavaram mandal in ASR district on Friday and arrested two persons.

Divisional Forest Officer Karanakar told the media that the officials were checking vehicles at the check post. They found a mini-truck with onion loads. They also found 20 gunny bags in the mini-truck. On suspicion, they opened the bags and found 1589 tortoises in the bags. The tortoises were being transported to Odisha from Ramachandrapuram in Konaseema district.

As the tortoises were stuffed in bunny bags, 163 tortoises died due to suffocation while the rest were alive.

# Call for increased public awareness of fire safety

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Regional Fire Officer D Niranjana Reddy underscored the importance of fire safety awareness at the installation ceremony of the new office bearers of the Fire and Security Association of India (FSAI) Visakhapatnam Chapter held on Friday. He highlighted the need for quicker reporting of fire incidents, stating that informing the fire department within minutes could significantly reduce damage.

The ceremony saw the installation of Er R Ramakrishna Rao as the new Chapter president, K Kumar Raju as secretary, and CWC members. Reddy himself chaired the programme, with Dr HN. Das (Associate Director, NSTL), FSAI Regional Director South S Prasad Raju, and Leela Prasad (Founder president) as guests of honour. Dr G Sambasiva Rao of Sravan Shipping was awarded for his company's exemplary fire safety prac-



tices. The event also saw calls for increased focus on fire safety awareness programmes.

FSAI national president V Srinivas Vulluri urged the Visakhapatnam Chapter to conduct more targeted programmes for various groups, aligning with the association's mission of creating a 'Surakshit Bharat' (Safe India). He emphasised programmes for industries, multi-storey residential complexes, and women's safety initiatives through a dedicated committee. S Ranga Raju, FSAI Regional Director, South, highlighted the importance of involving local industries, especially Visakhapatnam's

many PSUs and private companies. He also stressed the need for more interaction with residents through fire safety and security awareness programmes in apartments.

The newly installed Chapter president, Er R Ramakrishna Rao, spoke about FSAI's partnership with government bodies and private associations in fire safety and security measures. He emphasised increasing membership by involving industries like pharmaceuticals, hospitality, and high-rise building residents and builders. He also shared plans for conducting fire safety and security seminars in the coming years.

# District Health Dept launches campaign to combat hypertension

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In recognition of World Hypertension Day, the Visakhapatnam District Health Department (VDHD) launched a comprehensive campaign to raise awareness and promote early detection of hypertension. The campaign's centerpiece is a month-long initiative offering free blood pressure screenings at all health centres within the district. Dr P Jagadiswara Rao, District Medical and Health Officer (DMHO), emphasised the programme's significance, stating, "Early diagnosis and preventative measures are crucial for mitigating the complications associated with hypertension."

Dr Rao highlighted the often-asymptomatic nature of high blood pressure, underlining the importance of regular screenings. Early detection and management can prevent serious health consequences such as heart disease, stroke, and kidney problems.



The VDHD campaign extends beyond screenings. Dr. Samatha, RBSK Coordinator for Visakhapatnam, emphasised the importance of World Hypertension Day as a platform to promote preventative measures. "The campaign aims to empower individuals to take charge of their health through consistent blood pres-

sure monitoring and adherence to prescribed medications when necessary."

The VDHD's multifaceted approach includes public awareness initiatives, workshops, and educational seminars alongside the free screenings. Medical professionals, healthcare workers, and others actively participated in the launch event.

# 'TG govt will make roads accident-free'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that Telangana roads will be made accident-free, Roads and Buildings (R&B) Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy directed officials to control accidents on the Hyderabad-Vijayawada highway.

He asked officials to control accidents by displaying signboards, controlling speed, constructing six-lane roads, developing junctions and providing underpasses. Service roads will be constructed on both sides of the road and other steps to minimise accidents will be taken up.

The Minister said that the Regional Ring Road (RRR) would become a game changer and that the government is taking steps to complete the RRR as soon as possible.



Venkat reviewed conditions on the 17 black spots on the Hyderabad-Vijayawada National Highway in the secretariat on Friday and the safety measures required in these

areas were discussed. The Roads and Buildings Department has identified many accident-prone areas and has explained the safety measures to be followed in

black spot areas through sign boards, controlling speeding and constructing six-lane roads in some places.

The officials told the Minister about the 17 black spots where the maximum number of accidents were taking place. They are Choutuppal, Pedakaparthi, Chityala, Kattanguru, Inupamula, Takumatla, Jangaon Cross Roads, Eenadu Junction, Durajpally Junction, Mukundapuram, Akupamula, Komarabanda Cross Roads, Katakmgudem, Mella Cheruvu, Srirangapuram, Ramapuram Cross Roads and the Nawabpet Junction.

R&B Department ENC Ganapathi Reddy, National Highways Regional Officer Razak and others attended the review meeting.

# TV actor Chandu Challa commits suicide

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Television serial actor Chandu Challa committed suicide in Alkapur Colony within Narsingi police station limits on Friday. Chandu acted in many serials along with Trinayani. He is survived by his wife Shilpa Prema and two children. He got married in 2015. He is said to have had an extra-marital affair with television serial actress Pavitra Jayaram who recently died in a road accident. Currently, Chandu was acting in Radhama Pelli and Kartika Deepam serials. The police are investigating the reasons behind his suicide.

# Man nabbed for cheating Indian students in US

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Cyber Crime Police arrested a 28-year-old Andhra Pradesh resident named Kanolla Ashok Kumar in the case of cheating Indian students who were studying in the USA on the pretext of offering 10 per cent discount of semester fee. Along with Ashok, an USA resident Tarun and a resident of Delhi named Waqar used to work in different consultancy agencies who send students to the USA for studies and have access to such students' databases, whereas the accused contacted them and cheated the Indian students.

The fraudsters collect semester fee from the victims into their own bank accounts

and fraudsters used to pay the university fee using their credit or debit bank cards. Then the status of the semester fee payment used to be shown as paid. But after some days, the fraudsters applied for charge back when the fee payment status used to be shown as not paid. Thus the fraudsters cheated the Indian students studying at USA universities.

On a complaint received from a victim, a resident of Trimulgherry, Hyderabad, stating that the fraudsters cheated his son to the tune of Rs 4,38,599, the police filed a case under 66(C), (D) ITA Act-2008 and 419, 420 IPC. After the arrest of the accused, police seized his mobile phone.

# Cong MLAs are in touch with BJP, says Maheshwar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Commenting that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is running a government that does not know when it will fall, BJP leader Alleti Maheshwar Reddy said that BJP MLAs are not in touch with the Congress, but Congress MLAs are in touch with the BJP.

Maheshwar Reddy said that they will reveal how many Congress MLAs are interested in joining the BJP very soon.

Replying to a question on Friday, Maheshwar said that there is no need to answer the allegations of Congress leaders like the Komatireddy brothers and T. Jagga Reddy. "Why should we be in touch with the Congress as nobody knows when the Congress government will fall? I am condemning the allegation of Congress leaders that BJP MLAs are in touch with the Congress," Maheshwar said.



INDIA CORNER

### Poster with death threats to Mamata, Abhishek appear in Howrah

A poster with death threats to West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee and her nephew, party's general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, appeared in Uluberia in West Bengal's Howrah district on Friday, police said. The poster, handwritten in green ink on a piece of white cloth, was recovered from a construction site in Fuleswar area of Uluberia where Lok Sabha elections will be held on May 20. The poster written in Bengali read: "I will kill Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Abhishek by hitting them with a car. Everyone will light the lamps after that. I have a secret letter." The poster was found hanging on a stack of bricks. "It is not yet clear what the secret letter meant. It could be a prank. We have to find out whether a single person or a group was involved in it," the police officer said. The police have started an investigation into the matter, he said.



### Four convicted in 2021 murder of Tihar Jail inmate

A special court has convicted four persons in connection with the 2021 killing of a Tihar Jail inmate which was investigated by the CBI, officials said Friday. Srikanth Rama Swami was bludgeoned to death by four inmates on May 14, 2021. The officials said the conviction comes within 10 months of framing of charges on July 11, 2023. The CBI had taken over the probe on the orders of the Delhi High Court. Swami's sister had approached the HC seeking a CBI probe into the killing. After a thorough probe, the CBI had filed a charge sheet in a court here. Swami, who was an undertrial prisoner facing charges of murder and robbery among others was bludgeoned to death by four inmates, the officials said. The CCTV cameras on the premises were allegedly malfunctioning and there was no recording of the incident, they said.



### Very heavy rain forecast: Avoid visiting Ooty from May 18-20, says Collector

The Nilgiris district administration on Friday said very heavy rains have been forecast from May 18-20 here and asked people to "avoid" visiting the hilly tourist attraction during this period. District Collector M Aruna said the India Meteorological Department has issued an "orange alert" forecast, meaning very heavy rain of 6 cm-20 cm on May 18, 19 and 20. "Those coming here should have all the required protection. If possible you can avoid travelling here during this period, she told reporters after chairing a meeting with officials of the Revenue, Police and Fire and Rescue Services department on rain preparedness. She said all the departments concerned were on standby. Nearly 3,500 disaster response personnel and required equipment including earthmovers were on standby. About 450 temporary shelters have also been kept ready and people have also been asked to stay indoors.



## PM jabs INDIA bloc: Aims just 50 seats to save 'honour'

PNS ■ FATEHPUR (UP)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday took a jibe at the Congress saying its aim is to win just 50 seats so that it could save its "honour", and he also mocked Rahul Gandhi for contesting the Lok Sabha polls from Rae Bareilly instead of Amethi which he lost to the BJP's Smriti Irani in 2019. Addressing an election rally here, the prime minister also claimed that INIDA bloc has been defeated in the first four phases of elections itself and its "disappointed" workers have now stopped leaving their homes for poll-related activities. Modi said he had predicted that Rahul Gandhi would not dare to contest from Amethi and this has turned out to be true. "The further news is that to



save its honour, the Congress has now launched Mission 50. The target of the Congress is to get 50 seats in the entire country by any means," he said. The Congress recorded its worst-ever performance in the Lok Sabha polls in 2014, winning just 44 seats. Its performance improved slightly in 2019 when it won 52 seats. Taking a swipe at the SP and the Congress, Modi said, "The

dreams of 'panja' (Congress's poll symbol) and 'cycle' (SP's poll symbol) have shattered 'khata-khat, khata-khat'. Now they are planning for post-June 4 as to who should be blamed for the defeat 'khata-khat, khata-khat'. And, someone was telling me that tickets for foreign trips have also been booked 'khata-khat, khata-khat'." Congress leader Rahul

Gandhi has used the phrase "Khata-khat khata-khat" to claim that a fixed stipend would flow into the accounts of poor women if his party comes to power. "All the qualities of the Congress and the SP match with each other. They both are dedicated to 'parivarvaad' (dynastic politics). Both are in politics for corruption. They can do anything to please their vote bank. Both (of them) promote criminals and mafia, and both, the SP-Congress, are equally sympathetic to terrorists," Modi said. Intensifying his attack on the two INDIA bloc partners, Modi said, "The SP-Congress think that they will achieve what they want by dividing our society. The 'shahzaade' of the Congress is dreaming of putting a lock on the Ram temple (in Ayodhya)."

### Himachal BJP expels two rebel leaders

PNS ■ SHIMLA

The BJP in Himachal Pradesh on Friday expelled Rakesh Choudhary and former minister Ram Lal Markanda for six years after it failed to persuade them to withdraw their assembly poll nominations as Independents. Markanda and Choudhary have been expelled from the primary membership of the BJP for six years with immediate effect, state BJP chief Rajiv Bindal said in a statement issued here. The efforts of BJP went futile and both the leader have not withdrawn their nominations. May 17 was the last day to withdraw the nominations. After revolt in Congress, six Congress MLAs had voted in favour of the BJP Rajya Sabha nominee Harsh Mahajan on February 27. Two days later, they were disqualified for defying a party whip to be present in Vidhan Sabha and vote in favour of the government.

### BBC DOCUMENTARY CAST SLUR ON INDIA

## Delhi HC judge recuses from hearing plea for damages

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A judge of the Delhi High Court on Friday recused himself from hearing a plea by an NGO seeking damages from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), claiming its documentary "India: The Modi Question" casts a slur on the country's reputation and makes false and defamatory imputations against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Indian judiciary. Justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani said he was recusing himself but did not assign any reason for it. The court said the petition be listed before another bench for hearing on May 22 subject to orders of the Acting Chief Justice. The high court had earlier issued notice to BBC (UK) and BBC (India) on the plea filed by Gujarat-based NGO Justice



On Trial. The plea has said BBC (UK) is the national broadcaster of the United Kingdom and has released the news documentary -- "India: The Modi Question" -- which has two episodes and BBC (India) is its local operations office. It said the two episodes were broadcast in January 2023. The petitioner has sought damages of Rs 10,000 crore in favour of the NGO and against the defendants on account of the "loss of reputation and goodwill caused to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, the Government of India, the Government of the State of

Gujarat as it was during the period of the Gujarat Riots, and also the people of India". The documentary relates to the 2002 Gujarat riots when Modi was the state's chief minister. The government had banned the documentary soon after it was released. The plaintiff organisation, which says it is a society registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 and also registered as a Public trust under the provisions of the Bombay Public Trust Act, 1950, has filed the suit for damages. The NGO has also filed an Indigent Person Application (IPA) which enables an indigent person to file a lawsuit. It has contended that the documentary contains content which casts a slur on the reputation of the country and also makes false and defamatory imputations.

## Delhi BJP issues 'chargesheet' against Congress, AAP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the May 25 polls on seven Lok Sabha seats in the national capital, Delhi BJP on Friday issued a "chargesheet" against its INDIA bloc rivals AAP and Congress, listing alleged scams and corruption involving the two parties that ruled the city for last more than two decades. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva along with other party leaders released the 40-page Hindi and English booklet titled "Congress and AAP: Partners in Loot", at the party office. No immediate reaction was available from the AAP or Congress on the allegations. "For the first 15 years, the Congress, and now in the last 9 years, the Delhi government (run by AAP) has inflicted harm on the people of Delhi," the charge sheet read charged. It is unfortunate that the Aam Aadmi Party, born out of anti-corruption movement, has its senior leadership in jail or facing charges of corruption, it said. Sachdeva said there was a long trail of scams of AAP government in Delhi related to

excise policy, health, education, panic buttons in the buses, Delhi Jal Board among others. He also slammed Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal over alleged assault on AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal by his close aide Bibhav Kumar. "We believe Bibhav Kumar may get shelter in Punjab," Sachdeva said and demanded the Delhi Police take action in the matter. Vijender Gupta, BJP MLA and chairman of the "charge sheet committee," claimed that the document was completely based on "facts." "This charge sheet is a document exposing both the Congress and AAP," he said. The "charge sheet" was divided into sections, including the jailing of the AAP in the "liquor scam," Chief Minister's "Sheeshmahal," nine years of "corruption," their siding with "anti-national" forces, the "anti-Hindu" face of AAP, its "failed" education model, and its "failure" to clean Yamuna. The BJP had swept Lok Sabha polls in 2014 and 2019 winning all the seven seats in Delhi with huge margins.



### Pollution in Delhi to be priority of INDIA bloc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Friday said that the India bloc is going to form government and its priority would be working on five environmental issues, including pollution in air and Yamuna river, in the national capital. During a press conference over at DPCC office here in central Delhi, Ramesh said that if you look at the metropolitan cities across the world, Delhi would be among the most polluted city. "India Alliance is going to form the government, and it will give priority to the five issues related to environment, including air pollution, afforestation of Aravalli, reviving Yamuna Action Plan," he said. However, when he asked about the questions regarding AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal's alleged assault at the CM resident, Ramesh refused to comment on it saying that the press conference was held for environmental issues only.

### MALIWAL ASSAULT CASE

## Bibhav fails to appear before National Commission for Women

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar did not appear before the National Commission for Women (NCW) on Friday in connection with the alleged assault on AAP Rajya Sabha member Swati Maliwal. When an NCW team along with Delhi Police again went to serve him notice on Friday, the occupants of the house refused to accept it. The NCW, in a post, said "Officers of the NCW, along with the ACP of Civil Lines, New Delhi, attempted to serve a Notice of Hearing to Mr. Bibhav Kumar at his residence. When the occupants of the house refused to accept the notice, the officers affixed it on the gate of his residence. The hearing is scheduled for 18th May, 2024, at the NCW Office." The NCW also tagged photos from outside Kumar's home where they pasted a fresh notice. Earlier, NCW chief Rekha Sharma said a team of the commission had gone on Thursday as well to Kumar's residence to serve him a notice, but he was not at home. "Kumar's wife refused to receive the notice. My team has gone to his residence again today with police and if he does not appear (before NCW) by tomorrow, then we will go

### Kejriwal's aide attacked me with full force: AAP MP Maliwal in FIR

AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal was "kicked and slapped seven to eight times" allegedly by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar at the former's official residence, and "did not relent" despite her asking him to stop, according to the FIR registered by the Delhi Police. In the FIR regarding the alleged assault on her, Maliwal also claimed that Kumar hit her with "full force again and again" but no one came to her rescue. She also alleged that despite telling Kumar that she was menstruating and in pain, he did not budge. The FIR quotes Maliwal as saying that this "is one of the most difficult times of my life" and "the pain, trauma and harassment has been mind-numbing". "... I am also having difficulty in walking," she said in the FIR. Maliwal, who earlier served as the chief of Delhi Commission For Women, said her situation is "exacerbated by the fact that having worked all my life for women issues and having helped lakhs of women get justice," she "ended up being brutally beaten by a person whom I know for long". personally to inquire," Sharma told reporters. She also said she would meet Maliwal. "I was telling Swati ji on Twitter (now X) to speak up, but I think she was traumatised because this incident happened at her (party) leader's house... an MP, who has always raised issues concerning women, was beaten. "Despite our differences, we have always stood by each other... once she feels a bit better, I will personally meet Swati. I hope she is better now, but I understand it would take time for her to come out of the trauma," the NCW chief said. On Kejriwal's silence on the

issue, Sharma said it shows that he does not care about anything. "This is an indication that he is taking Bibhav with him. Instead of supporting a woman, he is supporting a perpetrator. He distributes freebies in the name of women, but when a woman is being beaten in his house, he turns a blind eye and takes no action against the man responsible," she said. "Kejriwal has clearly chosen his side, which is with Bibhav," she added. While the police are conducting a probe, Sharma said, the NCW will also send its inquiry team.

## 'BJP govt fulfilled Ladakh's 70-year dream, will win poll'

PNS ■ KARGIL

Roads have reached where they never had before and there is water in every home, says BJP's Ladakh election in-charge Vikram Randhawa, confident the "drastic changes" in the lives of the people in the region will reap electoral dividends and give the party a hat-trick in the polls. He said the BJP government fulfilled Ladakh's 70-year dream of becoming a union territory and added that people won't be "ungrateful". "People of Ladakh go with the nation. The dream that people of Ladakh had to get a union territory was fulfilled by Narendra Modi ji in 2019. Definitely we are going to the people with this," Randhawa told PTI as Ladakh gets ready to vote on May 20 in the fourth phase of the general elections. This is the first Lok Sabha election since 2019 when the government abrogated Section 370 and bifurcated the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

"In five years, since the abrogation of Article 370, drastic changes have happened in Ladakh in terms of development. Even a layperson says roads have reached where they had never reached before, and water supply has reached every home under Jal Jeevan Mission," he said. "Many such schemes have benefited people of Ladakh, and they cannot be thankful. Zojila tunnel, on which many dreams were just empty promises, was fulfilled by the Modi government." Talks over the demands of the people of Ladakh will continue, Randhawa added. The charter of demands of the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) includes safeguards under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution and statehood. The Sixth Schedule deals with provisions for the administration of tribal areas in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. "Modi ji sees all Indians from the same perspective. He said he's not prime minister but 'Pradhan Sevak'.



### HINJILI AND KANTABANJI ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES

## Odisha CM Naveen faces migration issues

PNS ■ HINJILI/KANTABANJI (ODISHA)

Located at a distance of about 350 km from each other, Hinjili and Kantabanji assembly constituencies of Odisha share two commonalities - both hold migration as the key issue and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik as the BJD candidate. Though local voters talk about infrastructure development, lack of job opportunities plague the two rural constituencies for several years. Though there is no official data on the number of migration from these two places, unofficial estimates say more than a lakh people have left

their homes in Hinjili and Kantabanji in search of jobs in Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and other states. While Kantabanji is in the western region of Odisha, Hinjili is in the southern part of the state. However, the ruling BJD claimed that the rate of migration has drastically come down in Odisha. These migrant workers are now in high demand as political parties bring them back to their homes to cast votes in the Odisha elections. "We had to return from Surat in Gujarat to cast votes in Hinjili as our family lives here.



Unless we cast our votes, the local Sarpanch may deny us free rice or other such benefits being availed from the government," said Santosh Gouda (35), a migrant worker. Similar is the story of other migrant workers. Each migrant worker is paid train fare and meal allowance of Rs 500 to

return to the village and cast votes. Gouda said, adding that all parties including BJD, BJP and Congress adopt this approach to raise their vote share in the elections. Patnaik has been elected from Hinjili assembly segment since 2000. "It is our pride that our MLA is the Odisha Chief Minister. During the 24 years, he has improved certain infrastructure but has not solved the basic problem of migration. Had there been sufficient work here, why should our husband, brother and son go to another state in search of jobs," said Bilasini Behera, of Sheragada area under Hinjili

assembly segment. During Patnaik's tenure Hinjili, a small rural pocket, has become a municipality. Now it has sub-divisional hospital, rural industrial park, skill development centre, fire stations, Harabhangi irrigation project, drinking water supply for every household but migration is still a problem. However, despite infrastructure development, Hinjili has its problems. Large-scale migration and lack of cold storage for farmers are some of the problems in the segment. Hinjili is basically an agrarian economy where its residents mostly undertake vegetable cultivation.

## Terrorism started to consume those who long practised it: Jaishankar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Asia is witnessing new tensions in land and sea as agreements were dishonoured and rule of law disregarded while terrorism has started to consume those who have long practised it, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Friday, amid China's military continuing posturing along the frontier in eastern Ladakh and Pakistan's support to cross-border terrorist activities. In an address at an event hosted by the CII, Jaishankar also talked about the power of currency and how "threat of sanctions" are deployed in the



"toolbox" of global diplomacy, in remarks that came days after the US warned of punitive measures after India and Iran sealed a deal on the Chabahar port. Jaishankar extensively delved into the consequences of the Ukraine conflict, escalation of violence in West Asia

and disruption of logistics in view of the geopolitical tensions, sanctions, incidents of drone attacks in the Red Sea and climate events. "The world is experiencing a 3F crisis of fuel, food and fertilisers. In Asia, new tensions have emerged in land and sea as agreements are dishonoured and rule of law disregarded," he said at the annual general meeting of the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII). "Terrorism and extremism have started to consume those who have long practised it. In many ways, we are actually going through the perfect storm," he said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Hot as Hades

The Indian Meteorological Department has forecast severe heatwave, leading to high health risk

As if the scorching sensation on the skin and mercury's validation of the heat and humidity were not enough, the Weatherman has issued a stark warning for north-west India, forecasting a severe heatwave with a high health risk over the next week. The announcement comes as temperatures continue to soar, posing significant challenges to people's wellbeing and safety. With temperatures likely to reach alarming levels, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) advisory underscores the urgency for residents, authorities and healthcare providers to take proactive measures to mitigate their impact. Heatwaves are characterised by prolonged periods of excessively high temperatures, often accompanied by high humidity levels, which can exacerbate the risk of heat-related illnesses and even fatalities. Northwest India, comprising States such as Rajasthan, Gujarat, Punjab, Haryana and parts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, is particularly susceptible to extreme heat events due to its geographical location. Prolonged

exposure to high temperatures can lead to various ailments, including exhaustion, heatstroke, dehydration and cramps. Vulnerable populations – such as the elderly, children, pregnant women and those with pre-existing health conditions – are at heightened risk during such extreme weather conditions. Heat-related illnesses can manifest swiftly and escalate rapidly, necessitating prompt medical attention. Symptoms such as dizziness, nausea, rapid heartbeat, confusion and fainting should not be taken lightly. Of course, one cannot fight Nature but one can always be prepared to minimise its ill effects.



To mitigate the adverse effects of the IMD forecast, it is essential to launch comprehensive public awareness campaigns to educate residents on the risks and preventive measures of heatwaves. As a thumb rule, those living on pavements and in shanties are at bigger health risk. Establishing cooling centres with air conditioning, fans and hydration facilities will provide critical relief to the vulnerable population. Encouraging people to stay hydrated and seek shelter in cool, shaded areas during peak heat hours is vital. The old system of *piyaus* is long gone; instead, now only bottled water is available. The Government must set up water kiosks so that people can get free, clean drinking water on the go. Additionally, urban planning strategies that incorporate green spaces, tree cover and reflective surfaces can mitigate the urban heat island effect and enhance thermal comfort in urban environments. During summers, water scarcity and power cuts turn things worse. The authorities must ensure that load shedding is kept to a minimum and clean drinking water is available; otherwise the chances of outbreak of waterborne diseases are high. As northwest India braces for a severe heatwave, prioritising public health and safety is paramount. The IMD forecast serves as a crucial reminder to remain vigilant, stay informed and make concerted efforts to mitigate the risks. We have braved many adversities; this too will pass!

## PICTALK



Participants at the 'Run For Vote' marathon for the Lok Sabha election awareness, in Shimla

## Assault most foul for kindness to animals



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

The man who savagely assaulted a young girl who was feeding stray dogs in Delhi must receive exemplary punishment

According to a report in the *Free Press Journal*, a young girl, Manisha Solanki, who feeds 150 stray dogs daily, was abused, harassed, beaten with a stick and left bleeding and crying in pain in Raghbir Nagar in North Delhi on May 14, 2024. The man, who reportedly attacked her, works in a roadside shop. He is also said to have savagely attacked the dogs who were quietly and peacefully eating the food she had brought. At least one dog was severely injured as the stick had nails attached to it.

The police, who have lodged an FIR following a complaint by the girl's father, need to follow up the matter vigorously and ensure that exemplary punishment is handed out to the culprit. The report that the stick had nails attached to suggest indicates that the intention was not just to hit but cause the maximum amount of pain. Also, the report that Manisha Solanki was doing no more than pleading with the man not to attack the dogs who were just peacefully eating, suggests that the person is utterly vicious by disposition. Such men are a threat to society and have to be regarded as such by the police. This is not the first incidence of its kind. In July, 2021, a 28-year-old woman was assaulted in East of Kailash by a mother-daughter duo. For the same reason, a woman was savagely beaten in Delhi's Sunlight Colony May, 2018. These are just two examples; others can be cited. Besides being assaulted, those who feed and care for stray dogs in India are also abused and harassed. It is often argued that this is because stray dogs bite and feeding ensures that their numbers grow. What is not realised is that there has been a steep fall in the number of dog bites in recent years. According to a report in *The New Indian Express* (dated December 3, 2023), by Jitendra Choubey, over 75 lakh cases of dog bites were reported in India in 2018; the figures were over 72 lakh in 2019, 46 lakh in 2020. It was over 17 lakh in 2021 and 21.8 lakh in 2022. Another report by Nikhil Ghanekar in *The Indian Express*



(dated March 27, 2024) cites data tabled in Parliament by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare showing an increase to 27.8 lakh in 2023. Despite being higher than the preceding two years, the figure of 27.8 lakhs marks a massive decline from that of over 75 lakh recorded in 2018.

Besides, the accuracy of these figures has been a subject of scepticism. A report (dated March 19, 2024) by Shainu Mohan in *The New Indian Express* cited N. Jayachandran, an animal rights activist and a former member of the Kerala State Animal Welfare Board, as describing the figures of dog bites as inaccurate and saying that there were no specific details and even scratches by cats were recorded as dog bites. Doubts about the reliability of the existing figures of dog bite cases, is implied in the communication dated March 7, 2024, from the Union Government's Directorate-General of Health Services (DGHS), to State Governments asking them to provide quality data on animal bites from all public health centres, community health



KONRAD LORENZ (1903-1989) WROTE IN *MAN MEETS DOG*, 'THE WHOLE CHARM OF THE DOG LIES IN THE DEPTH OF THE FRIENDSHIP AND THE STRENGTH OF THE SPIRITUAL TIES WITH WHICH HE HAS BOUND HIMSELF TO MAN'

centres, district hospitals and tertiary care facilities with inclusion of specific details regarding bites by pet and stray dogs. Of particular significance is the directive to avoid multiple entries of the same animal bite victims by maintaining separate records for new and follow-up patients in the animal bite exposure register. The suggestion is clear: there have been duplications. In many cases, pet and not stray, dogs have been responsible. Reliable figures for the whole of India do not exist. The ones that are available clearly underline this point. According to a report by Anuradha Kher in *The Times of India* of May 24, 2004, Sassoon Hospital at Pune had recorded as many as 3,185 dog bite cases until May that year. She quoted Namdeo Patil, the hospital's medical officer, as saying that pet dogs were responsible for 70 per cent of the cases.

That the percentage of bites by stray dogs continues to be very high and one needs accurate statistics regarding their involvement, is clearly reflected in the DGHS's communi-

cation directing that the cases of pet dogs biting people be separately recorded.

Unfortunately, people who assault, abuse and harass those who feed and care for stray dogs do not realise this. They are emotional cripples brimming with hatred. Notwithstanding their aggression, the number of people looking after stray dogs is increasing all over India. Twenty years ago, one rarely saw people feeding them or vaccinating them on the streets.

Today, one sees them in most neighbourhoods. This is hardly surprising given the nature of dogs. Konrad Lorenz (1903-1989) wrote in *Man Meets Dog*, "The whole charm of the dog lies in the depth of the friendship and the strength of the spiritual ties with which he has bound himself to man." Lorenz, ethnologist and ornithologist and recipient of the 1973 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine along with Nikolaas Tinbergen and Karl Von Frisch, should know.

(The author is Consulting Editor, *The Pioneer*. The views expressed are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## BATTING FOR HIGHER POLLING

Madam — Apropos the news article "Sachin, IPL legends bat for higher polling," published on 17 May, this is my response. It's intriguing to see the Election Commission leveraging cricket legends like Sachin Tendulkar and IPL stars to drive voter turnout. This strategy, pairing the beloved sport with civic duty, could significantly boost engagement, especially among young voters. With the heatwave and general voter apathy threatening participation, such innovative outreach is crucial.

The integration of voter awareness messages into various digital platforms and services, from PhonePe to Swiggy, shows a commendable effort to reach people where they are most active. The collaboration with these companies and the BCCI during the IPL season represents a novel approach to a persistent issue. Encouragingly, the turnout in the recent phases shows an upward trend, suggesting these initiatives might be making an impact. This extensive, multi-platform campaign underscores the importance of every vote, aiming to strengthen our democratic process. It's a robust example of how popular culture and technology can be harnessed to foster civic responsibility.

Sahil Yadav | Lucknow

## STRATEGIC PORT PARTNERSHIP

Madam — Apropos the news article "India and Iran sign Chabahar Port Pact," published on 17 May, this is my response. The recent long-term contract signed by India for the Shahid Beheshti Port Terminal in Chabahar marks a significant milestone in Indo-Iranian relations. This agreement underscores the strategic importance of Chabahar as a key gateway for India into Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan. The port's development, first envisioned in 2003, highlights India's consistent efforts to establish robust trade routes and enhance regional connectivity. Despite the changing political landscape and varying degrees of focus from successive Indian Governments, the Modi administration's renewed push has revitalized the project.

## Modi-Yogi powerhouse



Apropos the news article "Modi filing nomination boosts BJP morale," published on 17 May, this is my response. As an avid newspaper reader, it's clear that Prime Minister Modi's nomination in Varanasi has electrified the political scene, highlighting Uttar Pradesh's critical role in national politics. The dynamic part-

nership between Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is undeniably a force to reckon with. Their joint presence in Varanasi not only bolstered the morale of BJP supporters but also underscored their confidence in securing a strong mandate in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Uttar Pradesh, with its 80 Lok Sabha seats, remains the epicentre of Indian electoral politics. The BJP's ambitious target of sweeping the State again, fueled by Modi's national appeal and Yogi's governance track record, sets a formidable challenge for the opposition. The development strides made under Yogi's tenure, particularly in law and order and economic growth, resonate with the electorate. Despite the unpredictability of elections, the Modi-Yogi duo's sustained popularity suggests a potential repeat of their past electoral successes, reinforcing their influence over the political landscape of both UP and the nation.

Vanshika Kumari | Roorkee

Priyank Sharma | Bhopal

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SKILLS

Madam — Apropos the news article "The rising significance of skills in learning," published on 17 May, this is my response. Every era leaves its mark on language,

reflecting its emotions and trends. From renaming departments to emphasising skills in education, societal shifts shape vocabulary. While some debate the elevation of skill, it's undeniable that skills underpin all relationships, from parent-child bonds to professional interactions. Today, degrees in skills offer new avenues for earning and learning, reshaping the landscape of education.

Yet, this evolution prompts a reevaluation of traditional degrees and curriculum structures. To truly understand and integrate skills into education, a fundamental overhaul is necessary, starting with revisiting teacher training programs. This blend of philosophical reflection and practical action serves as a pivotal point for further discourse and implementation. Ultimately, recognising the centrality of skills enriches both education and livelihoods, expanding the horizons of learning and earning.

Siya Sood | Amritsar

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## Gifting power to the underserved children

Collaborative efforts aid underserved kids facing resource scarcity and socio-economic gaps, enabling education access and job market success

Underserved children face multifaceted challenges - limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, lack of access and opportunity to holistic education and socio-economic disparities. As a result, these children are left without the life skills and leadership skills necessary to thrive in today's rapidly evolving job market. According to the UNICEF Global Framework on Transferable Skills, an estimated 825 million children are expected to leave school without the basic skills necessary for work and life by 2030. To tackle this issue effectively, it's imperative to embrace innovative approaches to skill-based learning. One such approach involves incorporating experiential learning opportunities into the curriculum. Research indicates that life or leadership skills cannot be taught in a traditional classroom environment but are inculcated when children experience situations, reflect upon them and make changes to their behaviour and habits. Team sports, the arts and free play are considered the best mediums to create these experiential



learning environments. The dynamic and often ambiguous nature of work in the 21st century demands a greater emphasis on teaching essential life skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication and financial literacy. Another essential life skill is developing emotional resilience, especially for children dealing with hardship and difficulty. Children growing up in poverty experience stress, trauma and uncertainty. Communication skills are another important component in determining the course of one's personal and professional life journey. Through activities involving team sports, music, role-playing, public speaking and collaborative projects; children acquire the confidence and abilities. Life skills training has been proven to be the most powerful antidote to reducing

intergenerational poverty since it equips children to overcome the odds stacked against them and become productive and responsible adults capable of taking care of themselves and the world around them. They can not only ensure that their families are no longer in the same socio-economic situation, but they also become powerful role models for their communities, encouraging others to believe in the prospect of a better future and take concrete steps toward realising it. Close collaboration between education institutions, non-profit organisations, Government agencies and local community stakeholders will allow resources, expertise and networks to be pooled to design and implement effective programs. By working together, these stakeholders can identify the specific needs of underserved communities and tailor educational initiatives to address them. Whether it is a customised curriculum, setting up a training centre, apprenticeships or mentorship; collaborative efforts can have a transformative impact on bringing change to skill devel-

opment at scale. There is ample evidence to suggest that in developing countries, entrepreneurship is an essential ingredient to economic empowerment. In addition to generating employment through large companies, encouraging individuals and small businesses to thrive is equally important. By instilling principles of innovation, creativity, risk-taking and resilience, entrepreneurship education equips individuals with the tools to identify problems, develop solutions and pursue their aspirations with confidence. Closing the gap in skill-based learning opportunities in underserved children requires a holistic approach that addresses the systemic barriers to education and economic empowerment. By fostering collaboration, promoting experiential learning and prioritising the development of essential life skills, we can create a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape where every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential. (The writer is the founder of *Enabling Leadership*; views are personal)



RAVI SONNAD





## FIRST COLUMN FINDING DIVINE INSPIRATION

One must explore the intricacies of karma and surrender to a higher power



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

I was looking out one very cold morning in January when it was raining lightly also. What I saw inspired me greatly. One woman, not appearing well off was walking purposefully holding her child oblivious of the rain falling. What struck me was the beauty of the Lord's creation. This woman, not so fortunate in material terms, had still something very precious - a soul in the form of a dear child. She would be able to accept all her hardships in the hope that her dear child would look after her in her later years. What is the message from the Lord? That He punishes but never condemns anyone. Ultimately, reformation is the goal of all punishments. What else? We should follow God's example. All those placed lower than us have already been punished. Be very kind and generous towards them. It is not for us to compound their misery with ill behaviour. We will be punished for sure if we do that. If anything, those, who personally serve us due to their unfortunate circumstances, should be treated with respect in addition to giving them reasonable remuneration.

My next example is the mind - a faculty given to us to think, will and feel. It has a double use. This mind can dream of anything far from reality. It can help us to do very difficult tasks and it can make us feel very good also. Lord Krishna describes, "A person, having consciousness unattached to external sense objects, enjoys that happiness within, which is extraordinary. He, having consciousness linked to the Brahman, experiences eternal bliss." (*The Bhagavad-Geeta 5.21*) Now the opposite role of the mind. It can make one highly depressed even in the most opulent surroundings.



The strongest man can feel completely helpless like Arjuna did who was depressed, affected by compassion and thus suffering; his eyes were full of tears. (2.1) Lord Krishna had to preach to him to bring him around. He did, "My delusion has been dispelled by Your mercy; my memory has been restored. I, free from doubt, am composed." (18.73) God is very kind to us human beings. It is up to us to make proper use of this faculty, which is subtle and very powerful, much more than our bodies can be. God has guided us in great detail how to make the best use of it. Most everyone feels that good times can continue indefinitely. What is the reality? They don't, because we bring from our past life/lives both good and bad karmaphalas. Their manifestations are destined. No one has only good Karmaphalas, because, then, such a person would have qualified for liberation. Therefore, both good and bad ones keep on maturing. What happens then to one who has a faulty expectation when bad times come? He or she becomes highly depressed, sad, etc. with no preparation to deal with them. God has provided a solution, which is to take His shelter. This will ensure God's help to deal with bad times. Pains/sufferings will become tolerable and one will not break down. God's help to those, who preach God's message is almost unlimited. Why? Because, "He, who will preach this supreme knowledge amongst. My devotees will be doing highest devotion towards Me." (18.68) Many highly advanced preachers have travelled to the West and spread God's consciousness. They have gained great success thanks to God's support to them.

I will cite one more example of God's magnificent creation. We all suffer due to our egos and others causing us lots of botheration. But there is one superb use of this faculty of ego if we take shelter from God. Lord Krishna tells Arjuna, "Having My consciousness, you will cross all impediments by My 'kripa' (grace). But if you will not heed on account of the feeling of being the doer (egoist), you will perish." (18.58) As mentioned earlier, God can and will help if we can drop our false sense of ego. (The writer is a spiritual guide; views are personal)

# Reflections on the end of a 30-year war



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

Amidst scenes of unspeakable horror and relentless violence, the echoes of past atrocities resonate, urging a deeper understanding of the human cost of conflict

Fifteen years ago, on a day like today, the final bullet was fired, bringing an end to the 30-year-long war in Sri Lanka. The harrowing memories we witnessed have become a thing of the past, but their echoes still reverberate in our minds. However, I don't intend to offer a political analysis; instead, I aim to reflect on the unimaginable suffering endured by fellow human beings in this troubled land. Pain was not unique to the location where this brutal war took place, nor was any specific community singled out for oppression. The entire country, in various ways, was haunted by enemies in different forms. In my memory, there's a chilling scene that's deeply ingrained, a moment of unspeakable horror from my childhood innocence. At just six years old, I held tight to my mother's hand, driven by morbid curiosity like the others in our village who gathered hastily. Together, we witnessed the grim sight of a half-charred corpse, a stark reminder of the darkness plaguing our land. The overpowering smell of death overwhelmed us, defying our feeble attempts to shield ourselves from its grip. By the roadside, where our community thrived, lay the lifeless body of a man, his agonising death a haunting echo of the brutality lurking in the shadows. As the fire consumed his flesh, the echoes of his cries pierced the night, mourning a future stolen by merciless hands. To this day, the identity of his attackers remains a mystery, their cruelty matched only by their cowardice. In their relentless pursuit of violence, they showed no regard for the family he left behind, extinguishing life with a cold indifference that sends shivers down the spine.

That fateful day remains a solemn reminder of the darkness within the human heart, a stark acknowledgement of life's fragility in a world torn by chaos and despair. The sight of a skull, once full of life, now a grotesque symbol of agony, serves as a testament to the depths of human cruelty. Its gaping maw and charred teeth tell of the unspeakable suffering endured by its unfortunate owner — a chilling reminder of the atrocities committed by those in power. Illuminated by a burning tyre, this macabre scene exposes the brutality of oppressors who sought to crush dissent with an iron fist. Yet, this is just one episode in the chaos that engulfed Sri Lanka during the second uprising of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP). The horrors of that time still linger in my mind, a grim reminder of the generation born into a world besieged by violence and despair. For the parents of this generation, survival was the sole pursuit, each day a desperate struggle against the spectre of death. To stand with the State was to invite the wrath of revolutionaries who lurked in the shadows, waiting to mete out their brand of justice in the dead of night. Conversely, to align oneself with the revolutionaries was to invite swift and merciless retribution from the State apparatus, which spared no effort in its quest to crush dissent with utmost brutality. This was the grim reality that defined an era — a reality where horror knew no bounds and mercy was but a distant memory.

In the Sinhalese-dominated areas of the country, flames of rebellion raged unchecked, while in the north and east, where Tamils and Muslims held sway, the spectre of terror loomed large, casting a pall of fear over all who dared to defy the status quo. In this fractured landscape, where lines of ethnicity and ideology blurred in



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the face of unrelenting violence, the suffering of innocent lives knew no bounds.

In the crucible of my high school years, the Tamil Armed groups, notably the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), cast a long shadow over the land, their reign of terror reaching its zenith. Following the peace talks convened in Thimpu, Bhutan, the LTTE embarked on a ruthless campaign to assert their dominance, ruthlessly eliminating rival Tamil factions that dared to challenge their authority. Even those groups previously supported by the central Government under the leadership of Indira Gandhi and the State Government of Tamil Nadu were not spared from their wrath, as the LTTE sought to establish itself as the sole arbiter of Tamil interests.

Concurrently, amidst this bloody power struggle, the LTTE unleashed a wave of terror aimed at forcibly displacing Sinhalese and Muslim communities from the Northern peninsula, affording them scant hours to abandon their homes and livelihoods. Many Muslims scrambled to escape the impending violence, seizing whatever means of transportation they could find to flee to Government-controlled territories, where they hoped to find sanctuary from the chaos engulfing their homeland. Among these displaced individuals emerged tales of resilience and triumph, as some managed to rebuild their lives, ultimately ascending to positions of prominence as successful businesspersons and influential politicians. Yet, these stories of triumph are tempered by the grim reality of displacement and loss, serving as poignant reminders of the human cost exacted by the unrelenting tide of conflict and upheaval.

The reign of terror orchestrated by the LTTE unfolded with chilling precision, sparing none who dared to oppose its fascist ideology. Beginning with the systematic elimination of rival armed factions, the LTTE's campaign of violence soon expanded to target not only other

ethnic communities but also Tamil intellectuals who dared to advocate for political solutions and the right to self-determination. Rajani Thiarangama, a revered intellect and champion of Tamil rights, met a tragic end at the hands of LTTE militants in Jaffna—stark evidence of their ruthless intolerance of dissenting voices.

In my discussions with her father, A Rajasingham, years later in Colombo, the heartbreaking tale of his daughter's untimely demise offered a glimpse into the insidious tactics employed by the LTTE to silence its critics. This chilling account serves as but one example of the lengths to which the LTTE would go to impose its will upon the Tamil people, resorting to violence and coercion to enforce compliance. As the ranks of Tamil intellectuals dwindled, the LTTE turned its sinister gaze towards a new target: the recruitment of children into its ranks. Thousands of innocent youths were forcibly torn from their families, subjected to relentless indoctrination and thrust onto the battlefield, their tender frames bearing the weight of weapons far beyond their years.

Tragically, some would be groomed as suicide bombers, indiscriminately targeting politicians and unarmed civilians alike in a twisted bid for supremacy. As a war reporter, I witnessed the grim reality of child soldiers within the LTTE and its breakaway faction; some of them were even unable to hold their weapons properly. Many of them were malnourished, their skeletal frames visible and for them, attending school was a dream that never came true.

The horrors unleashed by the LTTE knew no bounds, wreaking havoc upon innocent lives while lining the pockets of those who profited from the chaos. Even in distant Western nations, Tamil communities were subjected to extortion and intimidation, coerced into financing the LTTE's reign of terror under threat of violence or retribution against their loved ones back home. Despite damning reports by organisations

like Human Rights Watch exposing these atrocities, the truth was often overshadowed by pro-LTTE propaganda, whitewashing the brutality of their so-called "liberation struggle." Consequently, those who fought against this unimaginable terror of tyranny were blamed. That is why, understanding this brutal reality and the plight Tamils were forced to endure is essential homework before succumbing to prejudice.

War came to an end in May 2009, after a prolonged conflict that lasted for over three decades. Since then, numerous discussions have been held regarding the identification and condemnation of those actively involved. In the aftermath, countries have rapidly developed, logistics have been enhanced and connectivity has tremendously improved. Simultaneously, thousands of ex-LTTE members have been rehabilitated and reintegrated into society, with some even marrying Sinhalese individuals. However, the victory over terror has not been wisely utilised to address systemic issues within the State structure. Excessive politicisation and the exploitation of this "victory" for personal gain by certain parties have undermined social responsibilities.

The Government's failure to effectively respond to false allegations regarding casualties and mission details has had lasting repercussions. Many misconceptions and fabricated stories, propagated by vested interests aiming to distort the true nature of this brutal period, have further complicated matters. Regrettably, there is a glaring absence of discussions on safeguarding peace and averting the recurrence of past atrocities. There is no meaning in celebrating 'victory' over the loss of human lives, but rather in building a national conscience to unite everyone towards a common goal, where peace is a precious gem cherished by all, to safeguard for generations to come.

(The writer is a Sri Lanka journalist and author; Views are personal)

# The changing face of Indian philanthropy

The stage is set for a monumental leap forward in the philanthropic movement, heralding an era of 'More, Sooner and Better Giving'

India has always been a nation with a deeply ingrained concept of philanthropy. This ethos has given rise to many philanthropists, who have contributed immensely and helped build and support many of the great institutions of modern India. The Tata's being the foremost example of such modern Indian Philanthropy.



AMITABH JAIPURIA

Today, philanthropy in India stands at a transformative juncture in terms of both, the quantum and the quality of giving. According to Knight Frank's wealth report for 2023, the number of Ultra-High Net Worth Individuals (UHNIs), in India will grow by over 58 per cent in the next five years. India has seen the rise of many Unicorns in the past decade and is poised to see a

rise of another ~150+ unicorns in the next few years, indicating a massive wealth surge. This is fortuitous as the demands on philanthropists for greater philanthropy will only increase which we hope will be met with a surge in philanthropic giving as well. UHNIs are redefining the giving landscape in India—they are now more actively engaged in the giving process, dedicating time to ensure their wealth dri-

ves substantial systemic improvements. Amit & Archana Chandra, Ashish Dhawan, Ajit Isaac, Harsh Mariwala, Kris Gopalakrishnan, Romesh and Sunil Wadhvani, Desh Deshpande and Vikrant Bhargava are a few of the great examples of new-age philanthropists, developing a portfolio of philanthropic initiatives including institution building and systemic change projects. This trend is only going to accelerate. Another key trend to emerge is the gradual reduction in the average age of philanthropists. These younger and newer donors, representing both current family benefactors and first-generation wealth creators, are breaking through traditional barriers with innova-

tive and disruptive approaches to giving and are branching out to address issues beyond the historically favoured domains of healthcare, education and livelihoods. The emerging tribe of NextGen philanthropists coupled with the next generation of grassroots organisations driven by young, committed and tech-savvy professionals is set to transform the giving landscape in the coming years. The proportion of technology entrepreneurs is also increasing and these philanthropists have given more generously when compared to other sectors. While they account for about 8 per cent of overall wealth in the space, their philanthropic contribution makes up nearly 35 per cent of all giving-Azim Premji, the Infosys

founders, Rohini Nilekani, Shiv Nadar, the Kamath brothers, Subroto Bagchi and Sanjeev Bikhchandani are great examples of new age Philanthropists from the Tech sector. There's also a growing sensitivity to privilege among the younger generation of family donors and they are increasingly putting that privilege to work. Some of them are also carving out professional paths dedicated to philanthropy. However, despite the many positive trends in UHNI giving in India, challenges remain. First, there's an urgent need for India's UHNIs to increase the relative proportion of their giving. The current rate of giving doesn't match the pace of wealth accumulation. The 2023 India Philanthropy

Report by Bain & Company indicates that excluding contributions from Wipro's founder Azim Premji, UHNI donations fell by 5 per cent in fiscal year 2022 even as their wealth increased by over 9 per cent. Also, when compared to their peers in the United States, the UK and China, Indian UHNIs contribute significantly less relative to their wealth, in some cases, giving is lower by as much as a 10x factor. Second, philanthropic causes are becoming more diverse and varied, as some causes become more urgent like climate change and humanitarian crisis while traditional causes—education, healthcare, poverty alleviation and livelihoods—remain at the top of the agenda. Philanthropic capital is also increasingly being

tapped to address newer and often neglected causes in India such as sports, arts and culture and mental health amongst many others. Therefore, prioritising and allocating appropriate philanthropic capital to causes becomes crucial. Third, UHNIs need to engage themselves more in philanthropy by giving more time and effort. They also need to collaborate more with other philanthropists to pool their resources—money, time and effort—and take on more ambitious projects, create greater institutions and experiment with newer models to make a difference. They also need to experiment to see how technology can be leveraged to transform and scale services and service delivery in almost all areas, particularly in educa-

tion, healthcare, skilling and climate change. This transformation will also be aided by a new compact between the donor and the donee that is based on greater mutual respect and sees greater participation by all stakeholders in the decision-making processes for where, how and when resources get deployed and how the impact is measured. We can expect 2024 to be a milestone year for the philanthropic movement in India with More, Sooner and Better Giving than ever before. Personal philanthropy can play a unique catalytic role in helping resolve many challenges in India, the time is now. (The writer is CEO Accelerate Indian Philanthropy a Philanthropic initiative; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

### JSW Steel Q4 net profit falls 65% to Rs 1,322 crore

JSW Steel has posted a 65 per cent fall in consolidated net profit at Rs 1,322 crore for the March 2024 quarter impacted by raw materials costs and some other expenses. It had clocked Rs 3,741 crore net profit during the fourth quarter of the last fiscal, the company said in an exchange filing on Friday. The company's total income also fell to Rs 46,511.28 crore from Rs 47,427 crore in January-March FY23. During the period under review, its expenses stood at Rs 44,401 crore, as against Rs 43,170 crore a year ago. Among the expenses, the cost of raw materials consumed by the company surged to Rs 24,541 crore from 23,905 crore in the January-March FY23. While "other expenses" increased to Rs 7,197 crore from Rs 6,653 crore in the year-ago period. In FY24, the net profit rose to Rs 8,973 crore from Rs 4139 crore in FY23. The income for the full year stood at Rs 1,76,010 crore, up from Rs 1,66,990 crore. The board of directors of the company announced a final dividend of Rs 7.30 for FY24.



### Rupee rises 17 paise to close at 83.33 against US dollar

Rupee appreciated 17 paise to close at 83.33 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, on positive domestic markets and expectations of some fresh foreign inflows. Reports of selling of US dollars by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) also supported the rupee, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.50 and touched an intraday high of 83.32 and a low of 83.50. The domestic unit finally settled at 83.33 (provisional), a rise of 17 paise from its previous close. On Thursday, the rupee had settled at 83.50 against the US dollar. "We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on strengthening of the US dollar amid hawkish Fed speak and weak Asian and European markets. However, a positive tone in domestic markets may support the rupee at lower levels. Any fresh FII inflows and/or RBI intervention may support rupee at lower levels. US\$-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.20 to Rs 83.70," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.



### Kia introduces vehicle lease programme in partnership with Orix

Kia India on Friday said it has tied up with Orix auto infrastructure services to introduce a new ownership experience programme. The company has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Orix 'Kia Lease'. The initiative aims to enhance brand accessibility and offer customers another option to own Kia without any maintenance, insurance, or resale hassle, Kia India said in a statement. The first phase of the initiative has been launched in Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai, Bengaluru and Pune, it added. "The leasing model is a global megatrend, gaining momentum in India too. This model resonates particularly well with new-age consumers seeking flexible mobility solutions at appealing price points," Kia India Chief Sales Officer Myung-sik Sohn said. With an industry forecast projecting 100 per cent growth over the next 4-5 years, the company anticipates its leasing service will outpace the industry growth average on account of better product range and service offerings, he added.



## India must ink addl FTAs, reduce tariffs NITI Aayog CEO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India needs to sign many more Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with other countries and reduce tariffs to compete with the rest of the world, Niti Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam said on Friday. Addressing the captains of the Indian industry at a CII Annual Business Summit, Subrahmanyam said the government should not protect any sector from competition. "I think we should be very, very confident about our capabilities about India actually being able to be competitive with the rest of the world," he said. India has just one insurance company among the world's top 50, while there are only two banks in the list of global top 100, Subrahmanyam said. "I think we should go for very low tariffs. India should



India has just one insurance company among the world's top 50, while there are only two banks in the list of global top 100, Subrahmanyam said.

sign many more FTAs," he said. Asserting that Indian companies can be on a par with their counterparts of the rest of the world, Subrahmanyam said, "We should not try to pro-

tect anybody. Sectors that have protected themselves end up getting more ambassador cars." Subrahmanyam noted that the Indian industry and services will grow and will live up

to the potential only if "we trade more". He also cautioned against protectionism and highlighted the need for India to get into global value chains (GVCs) to boost exports and secure supply chains. "Let wind come from all sides, from multiple doors, multiple windows. The breeze will blow outwards also," he said. The Niti Aayog CEO also called for greater private capital into the sector. "I think private investment in infrastructure is not there. We need to come up with new models and arrangements in which private capital is enticed into investing in infrastructure. That will also require a lot of improvements in contract management, dispute resolution, and in fast-tracking our legal processes," he said.

### Sensex climbs over 250 pts on buying in Reliance, M&M

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty closed higher on Friday as buying in index majors M&M, Reliance Industries and ITC helped the indices rebound from early lows. The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 253.31 points, or 0.34 per cent, to settle at 73,917.03. The NSE Nifty advanced 62.25 points, or 0.28 per cent, to 22,466.10. M&M was the biggest gainer on the Sensex chart, rising 5.97 per cent, followed by JSW Steel, Ultra Cement, Kotak Bank, ITC and NTPC. Reliance Industries gained 0.73 per cent to close at Rs 2,871 apiece. In contrast, TCS, HCL Tech, HUL, Nestle Industries, Bajaj Finserv, Wipro and Infosys were among the losers.

## TESTING PREPAREDNESS FOR DISRUPTIONS NSE, BSE to conduct special trading session today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) and BSE will conduct a special trading session in the equity and equity derivative segments on Saturday to check their preparedness for handling major disruptions at the primary site. The special live trading session will have an intra-day switchover from the primary site (PR) to disaster recovery (DR) site. There will be two sessions - the first from 9:15 am to 10 am from the PR, and the second from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm from the DR site. During the special session, all securities, including those on which derivative products are available, will have a maximum price band of 5 per cent. Securities already in the 2 per cent or lower price band will continue to be available in



the respective bands. "Exchange shall be conducting a special live trading session with intra-day switch over from Primary site to Disaster Recovery site on Saturday, May 18, 2024, in equity and equity derivatives segments," the exchanges stated in separate circulars. Earlier, NSE and BSE conducted similar trading sessions on March 2. These sessions are being conducted based on specific

discussions with markets regulator Sebi and their technical advisory committee with a view to assessing the preparedness of market infrastructure institutions like exchanges to handle any unforeseen event impacting their operations and restore operations from the DR site within the stipulated time. Typically, switching to the DR site is done to ensure business continuity in the case of a major disruption or failure at the primary site.

### SPIC Q4 net loss at Rs 29 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Southern Petrochemical Industries Corporation (SPIC) on Friday posted a net loss of Rs 29.18 crore for the fourth quarter of 2023-24. The company had reported a net profit of Rs 23.53 crore a year ago. Total income fell to Rs 132.46 crore during January-March 2023-24 from Rs 676.34 crore in the same period a year ago, a company statement said. For full fiscal year 2023-24, SPIC logged a net profit at Rs 87.91 crore as against Rs 284.44 crore profit in the previous year. Total income dropped to Rs



1,962.16 crore from Rs 2,849.45 crore a year ago. "Due to heavy rain and flooding in Tuticorin, the company's plant at Tuticorin was shut down for 77 days in the last quarter, which led to reduced turnover and net loss in the quarter," SPIC said. The company has made claims with insurance companies for the 'Loss of Profit' and the claims will be recognized on receipt basis, it said. SPIC Chairman Ashwin Muthiah said the financial results were impacted by various factors, including severe floods in December.

### Eldeco Housing Q4 profit declines 22% to Rs 12 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Eldeco Housing & Industries Ltd has posted a 22 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit at Rs 11.69 crore for the quarter ended March. Its net profit stood at Rs 14.90 crore in the year-ago period. Total income increased to Rs 51.56 crore in the fourth quarter of the 2023-24 fiscal from Rs 41.99 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year, according to a regulatory filing on Thursday. During the 2023-24 fiscal, the company's net profit fell to Rs 33.85 crore from Rs 44.36 crore in the preceding year. Total income declined to Rs 122.26 crore last fiscal from Rs 140.64 crore in the 2022-23 fiscal. Commenting on the results, the company's

Chairman & Managing Director Pankaj Bajaj said, "Lucknow real estate market continues to be strong. The trends of premiumisation and consolidation of the market in favour of bigger and branded developers have gathered momentum in Lucknow too." "The fiscal year 2024 was a significant year for us on two counts - One, we received our highest-ever bookings in terms of sales value and two, we were



finally able to break the logjam of fresh land bank acquisition and add to our project pipeline," he said. In terms of bookings, Bajaj said the total area booked during the last fiscal year jumped to 7,82,413 square feet in terms of area and Rs 388 crores in terms of value. "Both the numbers are the highest in the company's history," he highlighted. With planned launches in FY25, Bajaj said the company would be able to match or exceed the record sales in the last fiscal year. Eldeco Housing and Industries Ltd. is engaged in the promotion, construction, development and sale of townships, residential and commercial properties. The company was founded in 1985 and is based in Lucknow, India. It is part of the Eldeco Group, which has a presence in most states of North India.

### India's spice export may fall 40%: FISS



PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

The Federation of Indian Spice Stakeholders (FISS) on Friday said India's spice export may decline nearly 40 per cent in FY25 if the issue of ethylene oxide or EtO contamination in spices meant for exports is not addressed at the earliest. The statement came against the backdrop of Hong Kong and Singapore banning the sale of popular brands MDH and Everest after detecting carcinogenic chemical ethylene oxide in their products, leading to a mandatory recall from shelves. In 2023-24, India's spice exports totalled USD 4.25 billion, accounting for 12 per cent share of global spice exports. "Lot of exporters have orders on their hands and they have been halted to an extent after that episode. As per our estimate, spice exports could be affected by 40 per cent of the

volume this year if the issue is not resolved quickly," said Tejas Gandhi, Secretary of FISS, an association of nearly 600 spice traders, exporters and farmers from across the country. Addressing a press conference on the issue, FISS Chairman Ashwin Nayak said that misinformation is being spread about EtO, which according to him, is widely used across the world and Indian firms are exporting EtO-treated spices to the US for nearly 30 to 40 years now. "EtO is not a pesticide which is directly sprayed on crops. EtO is an gaseous agent used only by approved organisations to remove or control harmful microbiological and bacterial elements from the spices, such as E. coli, coliform, aflatoxins and yeast. This is a widely used technique in most parts of the world," Nayak told reporters.



### Kesoram chairperson Manjushree Khaitan dies

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The B K Birla Group on Thursday announced the death of Manjushree Khaitan, the chairperson of Kesoram Industries Limited. Khaitan, 68 died in her Kolkata home following a brief illness, leaving behind a legacy of exceptional leadership and philanthropy, group officials said. Having joined the Kesoram Board in October 1998, Khaitan assumed the role of chairperson in July 2019, following the demise of her father, industrialist B K Birla. Khaitan's commitment extended beyond the boardroom to the field of education, the group said in a statement.

### BEML Ltd bags order worth Rs 250 cr from Northern Coalfields for dump trucks

PNS ■ BENGALURU

BEML Ltd has secured an order worth Rs 250 crore from Northern Coal Fields Limited (NCL) for the supply of 28 units of BH100 rear dump trucks, the company said on Friday. The BH100 rear dump truck is engineered to transport payloads of up to 100 tonnes, specifically designed for the

efficient handling of overburden and coal in mining operations, they said. In a statement, BEML Ltd said, "The dumpers will be maintained under a Guaranteed Spare Parts contract for a period of five years, ensuring uninterrupted service and operational efficiency. The BEML BH100 rear dump truck is renowned for its robust design, advanced features, and

operational efficiency, making it a preferred choice in the mining industry." Designed to transport payloads of up to 100 tonnes, the BH100 is ideal for heavy duty mining operations, particularly for handling overburden and coal. Engineered for fuel efficiency, the BH100 helps reduce operational costs while maintaining high performance levels, it said.

### RBI nod for Pradeep Natarajan as IDFC FIRST Bank's Director

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of Pradeep Natarajan as Whole Time Director on the Board of IDFC FIRST Bank, the private sector lender said. "RBI...has accorded its approval to appoint Pradeep Natarajan as Whole Time Director, designated as Executive Director of the bank for a period of three years,"



IDFC FIRST Bank said in a regulatory filing on Thursday. The bank further said it will take the necessary steps to complete the formalities for the appointment of Natarajan as Executive Director.

## Tesla 'silent'; yet to communicate its India plans

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

US electric carmaker Tesla is 'silent' and yet to communicate its India plans to the government under the new EV policy, an official said on Friday. American tech billionaire Elon Musk, who was scheduled to visit India on April 21-22, had postponed his visit at the last moment citing "very heavy Tesla obligations". Musk, CEO of electric carmaker Tesla, was also slated to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the visit. "They (Tesla) are just silent.. the (EV) policy was always



meant for everybody," the official said when asked whether the company has communicated its plans to

the government. The commercial decisions are announced by the companies, the official added.

An e-mail query sent to Tesla remained unanswered. Earlier in April, he confirmed his visit to India in a post on X saying, "Looking forward to meeting with Prime Minister @NarendraModi in India." In June last year, Musk met with Modi during the latter's US visit and stated that he planned to visit India in 2024 while expressing confidence that Tesla would enter the Indian market soon. His proposed visit had raised expectations that he would announce plans for Tesla to set up shop in the country, along

with his satcom venture Starlink. It was expected that Musk would announce plans for Tesla to set up its manufacturing unit in India and investments for the same that could be billions of dollars and the way forward for selling Tesla electric cars in India at the earliest. Not just electric cars, he is also eyeing the Indian market for his satellite internet business Starlink, for which regulatory approvals are awaited. Musk had in the past called for import duty reduction in India to be able to sell Tesla cars in the country.

## DGFT to identify, align best global practices in trade finance

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) is evaluating best global practices in trade finance and identifying regulatory reforms to align India's future needs to propose comprehensive solutions, Joint DGFT Tirumala Venkatesh said on Friday. Over 2.5 lakh bank realisation certificates (BRCs) have been self-generated under the revamped eBRC system, which was soft launched last November, enhancing the ease of doing business, he said. "We are conducting a trade finance study at DGFT. The objective is to identify global best practices and benchmark, identify latest trends and technologies and future trends, identify institutional policy



and regulatory reforms related to aligning the future needs of the country in the area of trade finance and propose comprehensive solutions with a road map for implementation," Venkatesh said. Highlighting the huge opportunity for growth in trade finance, he said a framework to capture flow of data for

export credit needs to be created to provide policy makers with adequate data. Addressing an ASSOCHAM Summit on Trade Finance, Sanjeev Singh Senior Adviser, Niti Aayog, said, "Banks have been proactively going out on a limb to support trade. "Niti Aayog is working towards the vision of India in 2047 and beyond. A report on export preparedness index in 2022 shows that the top 10 states account for 85 per cent of our exports and the top 10 commodity groups out of India accounts for 80 per cent of our exports." He said the mandate for development is not only about rapid development, it is about inclusive development, and we are reaching out to every corner of the country.



## Rakul kickstarts shooting for *De De Pyaar De 2*

*De De Pyaar De* celebrated its fifth anniversary recently. Now, the fans of the romantic comedy and its leading lady, Rakul Preet Singh, have a reason to rejoice! With much anticipation, the actress is all set to feature in the sequel titled *De De Pyaar De 2*, as she gears up to grace the silver screen once again alongside superstar Ajay Devgn.

The announcement of Rakul's return to the franchise has sent waves of excitement among movie buffs, who fondly remember her impeccable performance in the first film. *De De Pyaar De* entertained audiences with its unique storyline and refreshing portrayal of modern relationships. Rakul's portrayal of Ayesha, a strong-willed and independent woman caught in a love triangle, struck a chord with viewers, earning her widespread acclaim.

As the sequel gears up, anticipation is at an all-time high. With *De De Pyaar De 2*, expectations are soaring as viewers eagerly anticipate the on-screen magic between the duo.



### STANDALONE

For her 5th year at the esteemed Cannes Film Festival, Masoom donned a green gown by international designer Victoria Beckham, which is seamed along the hips and gathered with a ring at the front to create the illusion of an hourglass shape. Made from a slinky stretch-satin jersey for a body-hugging fit, it has lightly padded shoulders and a skin-baring open back.

## Acting legend Tony Leung will head the jury at the 37th TIFF

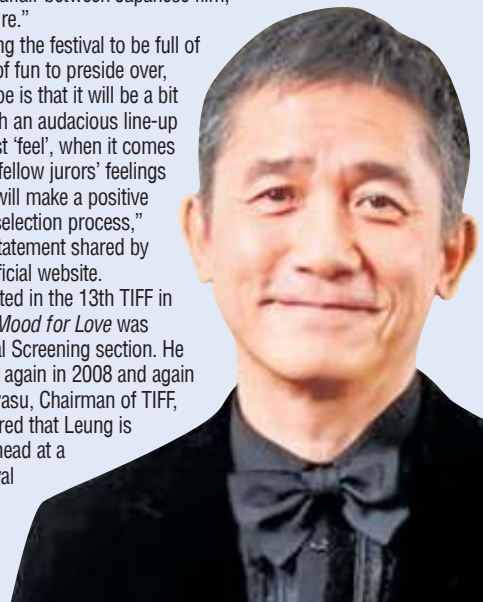
Hong Kong acting icon Tony Leung will serve as the president of the International Competition Jury at the 37th Tokyo International Film Festival. Leung, known internationally for his collaborations with Wong Kar-wai on films such as *In the Mood for Love*, *Chungking Express*, *Happy Together*, and *2046*, and for movies such as *Lust*, *Caution*, the *Internal Affairs* series, and Marvel's *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*, is returning to the festival after delivering a masterclass at last year's edition.

The actor, one of the most influential actors from Asia, has won an extensive list of awards throughout his storied career, including the best actor trophy at the Cannes Film Festival for *In the Mood for Love* and the Golden Lion Lifetime Achievement Award at the Venice Film Festival.

Leung, 61, said he is "immensely honoured" to be on the jury at TIFF as he grew up watching classic Japanese movies in Hong Kong, and they "were the start of a great love affair between Japanese film, people, and its culture."

"I'm already expecting the festival to be full of surprises and a lot of fun to preside over, I'm sure. What I hope is that it will be a bit of an adventure, with an audacious line-up of quality films. I just 'feel', when it comes to judging; trusting fellow jurors' feelings as well as my own will make a positive contribution to the selection process," the actor said in a statement shared by the festival on its official website.

Leung first participated in the 13th TIFF in 2000, when *In the Mood for Love* was shown in the Special Screening section. He attended the festival again in 2008 and again in 2023. Ando Hiroyasu, Chairman of TIFF, said they are honoured that Leung is serving as the jury head at a time when the festival is "enhancing its presence as a leading film festival in Asia."



## Vikrant-Mouni starrer *Blackout* will stream on June 7

The makers released the first poster for Vikrant Massey and Mouni Roy's upcoming thriller *Blackout*, which also stars comedian-actor Sunil Grover. *Blackout* is filmmaker Devang Shashin Bhavsar's directorial debut.

"Iss kahani ke sabhi patra ki life ke lag chuke hai...! Thoda detail me jaane ke liye (The lives of all the characters in this story are at stake...! To go into some detail) just #WaitAndWatch," 11:11

Productions wrote alongside the poster shared on Instagram. Vikrant and Mouni appear frightened in the poster, while Sunil Grover smiles and clutches a spade. Saurabh Ghadge and Karan Sonawane, on the other hand, sit in a red automobile and appear perplexed. *Blackout*, produced by Jyoti Deshpande and Niraj Kothari, will be available on JoCinema starting June 7. Devang Bhavsar, Abbas Dalal, and Hussain Dalal co-wrote the film.

## Benny Blanco reveals not being aware of dating Selena Gomez on their first date

Selena Gomez has had a passionate relationship with Benny Blanco for a long time. The music producer recently revealed details about his relationship with the singer, including what happened on their first date.

However, this has not gone over well with netizens, who appear to feel sorry for the *Single Soon* singer. Selena's name has been linked to a number of people in recent years, the most intense of which is her connection with Justin Bieber. Last year, she was linked to the *Chainsmokers*' Drew Taggart, *The Bear*'s Jeremy Allen White, and *One Direction*'s Zayn Malik. However, Selena debunked every allegation and disclosed her relationship with Blanco. She confirmed the news in December, and according to sources, they have been seeing each other since mid-2023.

In his recent interview with Howard Stern, Benny

Blanco revealed he had no idea he was on a date with Selena Gomez on their first date. He recalled, "When we went out on our first date, I didn't even know it was a date." Benny also addressed the marriage proposal question in the interview. Further speaking of their first date, the music producer added, "She was like, 'Hey, you want to hang out?' And I was like, 'Yeah.' We go, and we hang out, and I remember we were talking—and she's such a forward person—she's the coolest, the nicest, the sweetest."

Benny Blanco added, "I remember sitting there, and she's like, 'Well, I would have worn something different for this date.' And I was like, 'What? We're on a date?'" Blanco shares that he and Selena Gomez have been dating since at least July last year, and he calls her his 'best friend.'

## Sandrine Bonnaire joins forces with Jackie Shroff for *Slow Joe* biopic

Produced by Isabella Sreyashii Sen and Olivier Dock, co-CEOs of Singapore production house Hazelnut Media, the highly anticipated biopic *Slow Joe* receives a significant boost as celebrated French actress and director Sandrine Bonnaire steps into the director's chair.

Collaborating with iconic actor Jackie Shroff, Bonnaire brings her unparalleled expertise to helm this captivating cinematic journey chronicling the life of the late Indian

musician Joseph Manuel Da Rocha, affectionately known as Slow Joe. Bonnaire's directorial prowess, coupled with Shroff's magnetic performance, promises to deliver a poignant and authentic portrayal of Slow Joe's remarkable story. Born in Mumbai, Slow Joe's legacy transcends borders, making him a fitting subject for this Singapore-France-India co-production.

"Joseph Manuel Da Rocha's story is

moving and extraordinary, demonstrating that it's never too late to overcome adversity and achieve your dreams. I am truly excited to be a part of this film with its talented cast and cannot wait to begin filming," said Bonnaire.

As Jackie gears up to play the lead role of *Slow Joe*, this collaboration with Sandrine Bonnaire marks a significant milestone in his illustrious career as he continues to push the boundaries of his craft.



### FUN

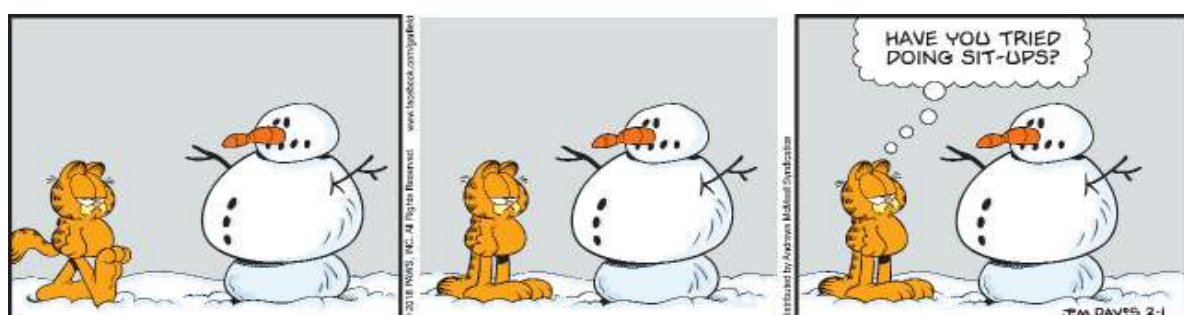
#### ARCHIE



#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



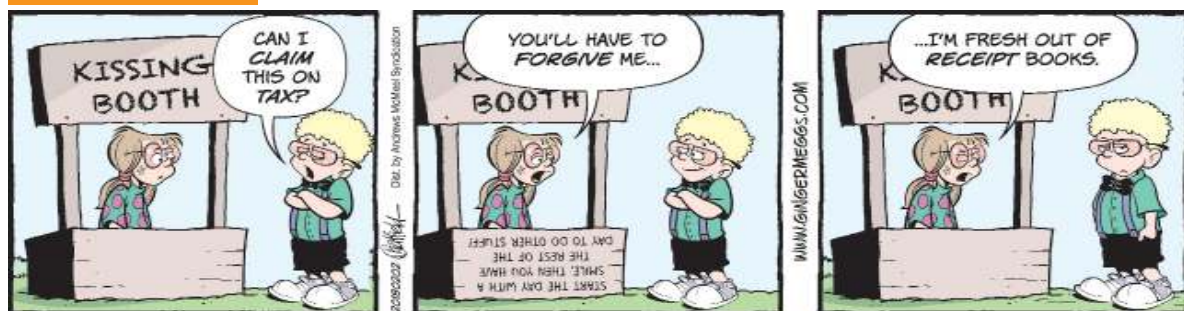
#### GARFIELD



#### NANCY



#### GINGER MEGGS



#### REALITY CHECK



#### SPEED BUMP



#### CROSSWORD



#### SUDOKU



**Yesterday's solution**

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

**Rules**

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

#### ACROSS

- Don't jump out of a flying aeroplane without this
- A compass direction
- Time of darkness
- Decays
- A large seal-like animal with whiskers and long tusks
- Sampled by mouth
- Where Peruvians live
- Places where people live
- Parts of a sentence
- Vegetable growers
- A large striped wild cat
- Make longer by pulling
- Paper hankies
- Unkindly made fun of a person to annoy them
- Where Samoans live
- Mistake
- A brother or sister born on the same day as you

#### DOWN

- Grown-up
- A throbbing pain
- A building for an aeroplane





Creating a musical atmosphere to aid several mental health conditions, Dr. Shambhavi Das has been creating much awareness about music therapy in Hyderabad. This week, *The Pioneer* connects with her as she shares her association with and love for the city.

## 'The cultural preference in Hyderabad leans heavily towards Carnatic music'

SUBODHINI PUROHIT

**D**r. Shambhavi Das, an Indian classical singer and music therapist, has dedicated her career to helping individuals with ADHD, autism, bipolar disorder, and other mental health conditions.

Hailing from Allahabad (now Prayagraj), Hyderabad marks the second chapter of her journey, where she embarked on the path of music therapy. Here, she met her guru, Vidushi Rajam Shankar, and learned through the Gurukul Parampara tradition. Taking us through it, she explains, "Living with her, I began with chakra activation and furthered my understanding of vibrations, saphthswaras, and the connection between music and the vibrations of chakras. My career in autism therapy started under another guru, Dr. Meenakshi Ravi. Thus, my connection with Hyderabad deepened during my music therapy learning period, and I also established my clinic there."

The city has shown acceptance of new treatments, cultures, and people from various walks of life. She reveals that Hyderabad has shown significant acceptance of holistic treatments like music therapy. The city's residents, especially those dealing with autism, exhibit a commendable level of patience, allowing the therapy to progress over the typical 16-20 sessions.

This patience and trust in the treatment are more pronounced in Hyderabad compared to other cosmopolitan cities. Rooted deeply in their traditions, the people of Hyderabad place a strong trust in music therapy. She also conducted workshops in hospitals and says, "While hospitals may not fully accept music therapy, they are open to giving it time and paying attention to its developments and impacts."

In Hyderabad, she initially faced a language barrier while learning Telugu. Navigating the city, making contacts, and conducting research and workshops were more straightforward. However, she noticed distinct differences in how people approach treatment in these two places. She continues, "In Gurgaon, there is less patience; people are eager to try new things but often lack persistence. The residents here are modern and inclined towards innovation, whereas in Hyderabad, the people were simpler and more grounded, which contributed to a successful career for me. In contrast, Delhi seems to have a culture of showmanship, which I find quite different from the straightforward nature of Hyderabad."

The time that she got to spend with her guru was one of the fondest memories she recalls from Hyderabad. During this period, she learned the invaluable practice of chakra activation. Before this, she had no knowledge of chakras, which led her to delve deeply into reading and understanding

them. She shares, "I also have cherished memories of working with autistic children, some of whom were incredibly intelligent. Their love and affection inspired me to organise more workshops and programs, focusing on rhythmic stimulation and meditation. I also conducted sessions for their parents, teaching them about chakra activation. These sessions helped parents learn how to address specific issues, and many reported a decrease in their anxiety."

Likes and dislikes are often from personal perspectives and sometimes due to interaction with locals. "I appreciate the simplicity and acceptance I found in Hyderabad," she says. "However, one aspect I disliked was the limited embrace of Hindustani music. The cultural preference leans heavily towards Carnatic music, which, while understandable, presented a challenge for me as a Hindustani musician. This rigidity in cultural preferences is something every tradition has, but it did make it harder to introduce and integrate Hindustani music into the local scene."

The city of Hyderabad has something to offer everyone, she says on a concluding note, adding, "I was keenly interested in music therapy, and in Hyderabad, I met my Gurus. I am grateful for the amazing people I met there. I had no relatives there, so I was inclined to take the path without anyone to demotivate or hinder."

## 'Learning that Nawazuddin Siddiqui was cast in Section 108, I was compelled'

PNS| HYDERABAD

**F**rom the gripping drama of *Operation Mayfair* to the deep melodies of *Sajna* with AB Rockstar, Yahhve Sharma's presence emanates charisma and depth. Yahhve, who is not limited to a particular genre, recently captivated fans with the devotional song video *Pawan Bhakti De De Ram*, demonstrating her flexibility too. And now, she's soon going to star alongside the renowned Nawazuddin Siddiqui in the upcoming film *Section 108*.

Well, the process of selecting roles is a deeply personal journey for actors, and it's they who decide it by looking into various aspects such as character depth and script narrative. However, when she discovered the electrifying cast of the movie, she wasted no time in seeking out the director. She reveals, "When I first learnt that Nawazuddin Siddiqui was cast in the film, I immediately felt compelled to meet with the director and producer. I've always wanted to work with Nawazuddin Siddiqui, and when I read the script's narrative, I was captivated by the slightly negative role."

The movie's title is enough to capture the audience's attention, serving as the first point of contact between the audience and the film because. She explains, "The movie revolves around a pivotal law known as *Section 108*, which states that if someone goes missing for seven years, they are legally considered dead, prompting insurance payouts to their nominee. Arbaaz Khan vanishes, causing Nawazuddin to investigate. Being sent by the insurance company to check the case isn't a trap, as many people use the law to make bogus claims."

Her role, just like a coin with two sides, provides depth, allowing her to effectively traverse its difficulties, she continues. "In the film, I play a girl from a modest Jaipur family who travels to Mumbai, only to discover her monthly pay is insufficient for subsistence. My part is complex, portraying two opposing sides: the ordinary girl striving to make ends meet and the beautiful persona she adopts when money enters the scene, causing her to become embroiled in #MeToo charges."

Transforming sensitivity into glam requires some training, and so, "I enrolled in acting classes with Ashish Pathode to hone my skills. He taught me to give dialogues with an uninterested demeanour, which is not a characteristic I possess in real life. I learned to manage my voice through dictation and breathing exercises, as well as how to effectively halt and continue lines. During my first class, I asked the director to speak with Ashish sir about my character. While I was naturally good at showing simplicity and fragility, we worked hard to capture the character's stylish and attitude-laden side."

The character's backstory is important in understanding the film and its plot. She explains, "The film features a prequel that dives into the back story of my character, showing her beginnings and how she becomes engaged in the events shown. With no clear finish, the film purposely leaves the audience in suspense, ending with a question mark rather than a definitive resolution, tempting viewers to speculate what might happen next."

She notes that experience working with filmmakers changes the whole character since collaboration with directors reveals the actual shade of personality. "Working with the director, was a fantastic experience. Prior to filming, I would approach him to discuss and clarify the

scene, and he would painstakingly explain the complexities of both the situation and my role. Shooting began on February 5, but I was summoned to the set on February 1, where the director introduced me to the other actors and shared insights into the screenplay. He had a serious approach to his goal while making everyone feel comfortable and at peace throughout the process."

"The performance and direction were commendable, and while our sets did not rival Sanjay Leela Bhansali's, they were still grand in scale. The film is brilliantly shot, and viewers can expect lots of twists and turns to keep them wondering at all times, unable to predict what will happen next," concludes the supporting actress.

ACTRESS YAHHVE SHARMA, WHO WILL SOON STAR ALONGSIDE NAWAZUDDIN SIDDIQUI IN THE UPCOMING FILM SECTION 108, GETS CANDID WITH THE PIONEER DISCUSSING HER CHARACTER, INSIGHTS ON THE CONCEPT OF THE FILM, AND MORE.



## Discover your fertility power with the key benefits of testing before 30



**T**he present times represent a fast-paced world, where lifestyle choices and environmental factors profoundly impact our overall well-being. This being said, the importance of prioritising women's reproductive health cannot be overstated. A research indicates that the fecundity of women begins to decrease significantly around the age of 30, with a more rapid decline observed after 37. Factors like stress, depression, anxiety, weight gain, and fatigue, further amplifies these challenges in their reproductive journey. For some women, the idea of fertility testing may seem premature, as they are not actively planning for a baby.

However, the increasingly sedentary lifestyle in modern times has necessitated undergoing a fertility check among women before turning 30. Following this proactive approach helps women gain valuable insights into their reproductive health and, accordingly, take preventive measures against various health issues that could potentially impact fertility and their overall quality of life.

### The declining fertility trend and its complex causes

As per reports, 50% of women with PCOS face infertility and the rate of primary infertility reaches up to 15% of the population. Unhealthy dietary habits, sedentary lifestyles, smoking, and alcohol consumption are just a few contributors to this alarming trend.

Moreover, the presence of endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) in everyday products, such as water bottles, food packaging, electronic devices, personal care products, and cleaning supplies, has further intensified the issue. These hormone-hijacking chemicals are known to interfere with our hormonal balance and potentially lead to reproductive health issues like polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), ovarian cysts, and uterine fibroids in women.

### Why early detection is important?

Testing early allows you to detect any underlying fertility issues sooner rather than later. Identifying potential problems early can help women take early precautions and timely interventions

and effectively address health conditions (like PCOS/PCOD, uterine fibroids, thyroid, etc.) to maintain optimal health and well-being.

### Establishing a baseline and monitoring changes

Knowing your fertility status at a younger age provides a valuable baseline for comparison as you age. This information can help one to understand how their fertility changes over time, empowering them to make informed decisions about family planning. Regular fertility checks can also help identify any concerning trends or changes that may require further attention, allowing for timely interventions.

### Opting for timely intervention

If any hormonal or fertility issues are identified through early testing, there is more time to explore and implement appropriate interventions. Lifestyle changes, medications, or procedures may be more effective when initiated earlier, potentially increasing the chances of successful fertility preservation or treatment. This way, it can significantly improve the outcomes of any necessary interventions.

### Reduced stress and informed decision-making for family planning

Undergoing fertility testing before your 30s can ease anxiety and uncertainty about future fertility prospects. With a clear understanding of women's reproductive health, they can proactively plan for their desired family goals, whether that involves planning for pregnancy immediately or exploring options like egg freezing for later use. The knowledge is crucial to empower you to make informed choices that align with your personal and professional goals while considering your reproductive timeline.

As we steer an increasingly complex fertility landscape, prioritising early fertility testing emerges as a cornerstone of informed and empowered reproductive health management. By taking decisive action today, we pave the way for a future where fertility challenges are met with resilience and proactive solutions.

(The author, Sakshi Bakshi, is the Director of EPIA.)



# RCB AND CSK CLASH FOR FINAL PLAYOFF BERTH AMID RAIN THREAT

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's fairytale resurgent run will be up against the might of five-time champions Chennai Super Kings and the weather gods when the two sides clash in an epic do-or-die match to decide the fourth and final team for the IPL play-offs, here on Saturday. Thursday's washout in Hyderabad meant that Sunrisers Hyderabad joined Kolkata Knight Riders and Rajasthan Royals as the three confirmed teams for the playoffs and the race is now for only one spot with two teams in fray -- CSK and RCB. Boasting of a better net run-rate and more points, defending champions CSK (13 points, NRR 0.528) start favourites at a venue where

they have lost to the home side only once in eight matches. RCB has 12 points and a net run-rate of 0.387. However, what has heightened the drama surrounding the game is the forecast of rain. A washout will take CSK through to the playoffs, while RCB will need to win by at least 18 runs or chase the target with about 11 balls to spare. The odds are therefore stacked against the home side, which is the most in-form unit in the tournament's final stretch. They've staged a spectacular comeback, securing five straight wins after enduring a six-match losing streak. Orange Cap holder Kohli has been in phenomenal form with three fifties in last five innings as he is poised to ignite the field with yet another stellar show. They will hope that skipper Faf

du Plessis is back among runs, having capped single digit scores in his last two outings. In the middle order, Rajat Patidar and Cameron Green have both showcased compelling form. Mahipal Lomror and Dinesh Karthik would be looking to make the most out of the Chinnaswamy track, which is typically a good batting wicket. As for RCB's bowling, Yash Dayal has been their star, bagging the most wickets this season. Lockie Ferguson, Mohammed Siraj, Green, and Swapnil Singh face a formidable task ahead. Will Jacks, who has impressed with the bat, is a part-time spin bowling option. But it will be interesting to see if he is utilised on this track. For CSK, Ruturaj Gaikwad has been the team's top run-scorer this season and is expected to



STAGE SET FOR EPIC FACE-OFF

give them a fine start. Fellow opener Rachin Ravindra is also back among runs and he along with Daryl Mitchell will be expected to lift the top order. They will hope that Shivam Dube gets back into his rhythm. He has failed to score in his last four outings. In bowling, pacer Srimangal Singh and Tushar Deshpande have done a neat job after they missed their premier trio of Mustafizur Rahman, Matheesha Pathirana and Deepak Chahar. The inspiring presence of Mahendra Singh Dhoni will continue to be a factor for the side but it remains to be seen how big a role he is able to play given some nagging injury concerns. **TEAMS (FROM):** RCB: Faf du Plessis (c), Glenn Maxwell, Virat Kohli, Rajat Patidar, Anuj Rawat, Dinesh

Karthik (wk), Suyash Prabhudessai, Will Jacks, Mahipal Lomror, Karn Sharma, Manoj Bhandage, Mayank Dagar, Vijaykumar Vyshak, Akash Deep, Mohammed Siraj, Reece Topley, Himanshu Sharma, Rajan Kumar, Cameron Green, Alzarri Joseph, Yash Dayal, Tom Curran, Lockie Ferguson, Swapnil Singh and Saurav Chauhan. **CSK:** Ruturaj Gaikwad (c), Rachin Ravindra, Ajinkya Rahane, Daryl Mitchell, Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Sameer Rizvi, MS Dhoni (wk), Maheesh Theekshana, Tushar Deshpande, Shardul Thakur, Shaik Rasheed, Moeen Ali, Nishant Sindhu, Mitchell Santner, Ajay Jadav Mandal, Prashant Solanki, Mukesh Choudhary, Srimangal Singh, RS Hangargekar and Aravelly Avanish.

## OTHER SPORTS

### When Chhetri sounded out Virat Kohli before retirement announcement

PTI ■ NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

As Sunil Chhetri sat contemplating how he would break his retirement plans to the world, he knew there was one man who would understand what exactly he was going through and Virat Kohli did not disappoint the iconic Indian football captain. The 39-year-old Chhetri, the most capped India footballer with 150 matches to his credit and the country's top-scorer with 94 goals, will hang up his boots after the World Cup qualifying match against Kuwait on June 6 in Kolkata. Chhetri's announcement came on Thursday, driven by, what he described as, rather inexplicable instincts. And he chose Kohli as one of his confidantes before going public with his decision. "I did talk to Virat Kohli before my retirement decision, he is very close to me. I discussed with him because we both understand that we would know this thing exactly the way it is," Chhetri said in an online media interaction from Bhubaneswar where he is currently part of a national camp for the World Cup qualifiers. "The ups and downs of sports, this part of retirement, we do understand that the other person would understand," he added, trying to describe in words the deep bond they have shared over the years. Earlier on Friday, Kohli had acknowledged the communication from Chhetri and stated that his fellow Delhiite was at peace with the decision.



"He (Chhetri) is a really great player. He actually messaged me as well informing that he's going to do that. But I would actually say I felt like he is at peace with the decision," Kohli said in a short video interview on his IPL side Royal Challengers Bengaluru's 'X' page. "I have become very close with him over the years and I wish the best. He is a lovely, lovely guy." Chhetri and Kohli have often spoken about each other fondly with the former stating that they share jokes and also some deep and meaningful chats whenever they catch up. "...It just hits the right note," Chhetri had stated in an earlier interaction. Kohli was among the first to offer support to Chhetri when he made an emotional plea to fans to show up for the national footballers during the 2018 Hero Cup in Mumbai. Kohli later described Chhetri as "a man I can call a true friend." "Very grateful for the friendship we have skip," he had stated on Chhetri's

birthday in 2022. **VAMIKA HAS STARTED BATTING: KOHLI:** Kohli, besides talking about Chhetri, also informed that his daughter Vamika has recently started swinging the bat but said he would never force his kids to take up cricket. Kohli and his actor wife Anushka Sharma recently also welcomed a son, Akaay after the birth of Vamika in 2021. "My daughter picked up a bat and she is really enjoying swinging the bat. But it's their choice," he said. RCB are currently placed sixth in the IPL standings with 12 points from 13 games and will take on defending champions Chennai Super Kings in a must-win match here on Friday. RCB made a remarkable comeback with five straight wins after enduring a six-game losing streak to stay afloat in the play-off race. "The month of May has been very good. We found a ray of sunlight. We are glad that we have made the fans happy again," Kohli said of their fightback.

### Shooter Manu Bhaker continues to dominate Olympic Selection Trials

PTI ■ BHOPAL

Olympian Manu Bhaker displayed complete dominance in 10m air pistol Olympic Selection Trials (OST), shooting a superb score to overcome the challenge of Asian Games medallist Esha Singh here on Friday. Bhaker, coached by the legendary pistol marksman Jaspal Rana, shot a superb 241.0 in the third OST to push back the challenge of Esha (240.2) and Rhythm Sangwan (220.3) at the MP State Shooting Academy ranges. Surbhi Rao (199.3) and Palka (179.1) were fourth and fifth respectively. Manu's performance is all the more creditable as she came

into the 10m air pistol trials on the back of a superb showing in the 25m sports pistol trials. The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) is conducting a series of four trials in pistol and rifle to select the squad for the Paris Olympics. The top-three scores in the trials along with Paris Olympics quota points will count towards the selection of the Indian squad for the Summer Games. The range, however, was set on fire by Naveen in men's 10m air pistol OST T3 final, as he shot a 246.8, 0.3 points more than the existing world record, to emerge victorious. Sarabjot Singh (242.4) was a distant second, while Arjun Singh Cheema (218.8), Varun



Tomar (197.3) and Ravinder Singh (176.9) were third, fourth and fifth respectively. Ramita Jindal emerged winner in women's 10 air rifle finals (Trial 3), posting 252.6 to edge past Olympian Elavenil Valarivan (252.1). Nancy was

after coming through two shoot-offs for the top podium finish against Divyansh Singh Panwar. Both ended on 252.5. Arjun Babuta (229.9) was third, while world champion Rudranksh Patil and Sandeep Singh were third and fourth respectively. India No. 1 and world record holder Sift Kaur Samra returned a splendid 593, while Olympian Anjum Moudgil shot a modest 588 as the duo dominated the qualification round (Trial 4) in the 50m rifle 3-positions event. Nishchal (587), Shriyanka Sadangi (580) and Ashi Chouksey (577) were third, fourth and fifth respectively going into the finals to be played on Saturday.

### New skipper Salima ready for European leg of Pro League after SA lessons

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Indian women's hockey team's new captain Salima Tete hopes to utilise the "valuable lessons" learnt from the recent home series against South Africa to make a fresh start in the European leg of the FIH Pro League, beginning in Antwerp, Belgium on Wednesday. Under former skipper Savita Punia, India managed just two wins from eight matches in the first leg held in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela to slip to sixth spot in the nine-team standings. The midfielder from Jharkhand was handed over the captaincy baton, while Navneet Kaur was named her deputy ahead of the friendly series against South Africa at the SAI south centre here

earlier this month. India won the series 4-2. "As the captain of the Indian women's hockey team, it's a great honour to lead our talented squad into the European leg of the FIH Pro League," Salima said before leaving for Antwerp on Friday. "We are determined to showcase our best performance and make our nation proud on the international stage. The recent series against South Africa has taught us valuable lessons, and we are eager to apply them as we face formidable opponents



in Europe. With teamwork, dedication, and a fighting spirit, we aim to leave a mark in every match we play." India will face Argentina in Antwerp on Wednesday in

their first match of the European leg. This leg of the league will unfold in Belgium and England, with Antwerp hosting the matches till May 26, while London will host the matches from June 1-9. In the six-match friendly series against South Africa held from May 3 to 11, India won the first three games 1-0, 5-1, and 3-1 respectively. However, the visitors mounted a strong comeback in the fourth 2-2 (2-4 SO win) and fifth 1-1 (3-1 SO win) matches. In the final game of the series, India won 4-3 in the shootout

following a 1-1 tie at the end of regulation time. Vice-captain Navneet said she is committed to support her Salima and the team to achieve success. "Being appointed as the vice-captain is both a privilege and a responsibility. Alongside our captain, Salima Tete, I am committed to supporting and motivating our team members to give their all in every game. "The recent series against South Africa showcased our resilience and determination, and we carry that momentum into the upcoming challenges in Europe," she said.

### Please let us compete in Paris, we need mental peace before Olympics: Women quota winners

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Paris Games quota-winning women wrestlers on Friday pleaded with the national federation not to subject them to selection trials, saying that every single step they take and every little thing they do from now on will have a bearing on India's medal chances at the Olympics. Anshu Malik, India's first female wrestler to reach the senior World Championships final in 2021, said all they need now is "mental peace" to prepare for the Games. If selected, it will be 22-year-old Anshu's second shot at an Olympic medal, having competed at the Tokyo Games. She had exceeded expectations by locking a quota in women's 57kg category as a 17-year old but lack of big-stage experience meant that she crashed out in the first round. However, the attacking wrestler from Nidani village has made tremendous progress since then, winning a historic Worlds silver and four Asian Championships medals. She missed the Asian Games due to a knee injury she



suffered during the Asian Championships last year and fears that putting her body under pressure so close to the Games may spoil her preparations. "We have to be very, very careful with every little thing we do. We are cautious in every single step we take from here on. I have competed at a number of competitions in the recent past, international events, nationals, trials and then the Qualifiers, so I am not required to be assessed on fitness through trials," Anshu told PTI from Tokyo where

she is training these days. "We need mental peace before the Olympics. Already two months is too less a period to prepare. At this stage, every single day counts. We plan our training on a weekly basis and if I am called to India for trials, it will disrupt plans and affect medal chances. "I also want to go to Europe for an international training camp from June 10 but I can't finalise that because of uncertainty around the trials. We need to strategise bouts with rivals but how will I do that if I prepare for the trials

and not for the Olympics?" she asked. The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) has called its selection committee meeting on May 21 in Delhi to decide on the trials criteria. Nisha Dahiya (68kg) and Reetika Hooda (76kg) are among the five women wrestlers who have secured quotas for India. "I am still recovering from the weight-cut at the qualifiers, if again we undergo trials, it will affect our body. We have to complete with elite wrestlers and need to plan well, but if

keep thinking about trials, how will we strategise," said Nisha, who trains at Satywan's akhada in Rohtak. "In Bishkek, I got caught in crossing (Nordic system) and did not get enough points and the wrestler who I had beaten qualified. I was pretty sure that I will qualify in Istanbul. I am competing in 68kg for many years now, so I knew who my rivals could be and wrote down around 20-22 rivals, who I was expected to clash with and started watching their bouts. "I was well-prepared. I expected China to win, for me China is the strongest rival, though I have beaten her." After securing the quota, Nisha has not met her family in Panipat. "I came straight to my training centre from Istanbul. I did not want to lose time and focus, so began training here. I did not allow even my parents to come here. We will meet now only after the Olympics." According to the criteria explained earlier, it was said that the wrestlers, who finished in the top-four at the last trials will compete against each other and the winner from the group will fight it out with the quota winner.

### Arjun Erigaisi loses to Nikolas Theodorou in Sharjah Masters chess

PTI ■ SHARJAH

Indian Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi was stunned by Nikolas Theodorou of Greece in the second round of Sharjah Masters chess tournament here. Erigaisi, however, bounced back to register a victory over Nikolzi Kacherava of Switzerland in the third round that puts back his status as world number eight in live ratings. It was not an easy day for the Indian contingent. Aravindh Chithambaram was the pick of the lot as he carved out an exceptional victory with white pieces. The two-time national champion, who is based in Chennai, got the better of Muradli Mahammad of Azerbaijan to be the only Indian in the leading group. Important and Indian results after Round 2: Nikolas Theodorou (GRE, 2) beat Arjun Erigaisi (1); Vasily Ivanchuk (UKR, 1) lost to Arjun Tabatabaei (IRI, 2); Temur Kuybokarov (AUS) lost to Vladimir Fedoseev (2); Hans Moke Niemann (USA, 2) Jahongir Vakhidov (UZB, 1); Muradli Mahammad (AZE, 1) lost to Aravindh Chithambaram (2); Marcin Krzyzanowski (POL, 2) beat Abhimanyu Mishra (USA, 1); Volodar Murzin (FID, 2) beat P Iniyan (1); Salem A R Saleh (UAE, 2) beat Shreyas Royal (ENG, 1); Parham Maghsoodloo, Parham (IRI, 1.5) beat S P Sethuraman; Denis Kadric (MNE, 1) drew with S L Narayanan (1); Nihal Sarin (1)



drew with Mikheil Mchedlishvili (GEO, 1); B Adhiban (1) drew with Raunak Sadhwani (1); Shant Sargsyan (ATM, 0.5) lost to Sankalp Gupta (1.5); David Gavrilescu (ROU, 0.5) lost to Abhimanyu Puranik (1.5); Maurizzi Marcandria (FRA, 1) drew with D Harika (1); Bibisara Assaubayeva (KAZ, 0.5) lost to Aditya Mittal (1.5); Madaminov Mukhiddin (UZB, 1) drew with Abhijeet Gupta (1); Dedic Bogdan-Daniel (ROU, 1) beat Bharath, Subramaniyam (0); Yilmaz Mustafa (TUR, 0.5) drew with Pranav Anand (0.5); Raja Rithvik (0.5) drew with Leon Luke Menodnonca (0.5); Eltaj Safarli (AZE, 1) beat Aditya Samant (0); V Pranav beat Alisher Suleymenov (UZB).

# KAJAL AGGARWAL BAGS KEY ROLE IN KANNAPPA

The dynamic duo of Vishnu Manchu and Kajal Aggarwal, who captivated audiences as siblings in the film *Mosagallu*, are set to reunite once again on the silver screen for a grand venture - *Kannappa*. With this project poised to be Vishnu Manchu's most ambitious undertaking yet, Kajal Aggarwal is slated to play a significant role, adding depth and intrigue to the narrative of this monumental film.

*Kannappa* boasts a stellar ensemble cast that includes industry stalwarts such as Mohan Babu, Prabhas, Akshay Kumar, Mohan Lal, and Sarathkumar. With Akshay Kumar having already

completed his portion of filming and Prabhas recently joining the team, audiences can anticipate a cinematic spectacle like no other, as these powerhouse performers grace the screen together.

This highly anticipated Pan-India film, produced by the illustrious Mohan Babu and helmed by director Mukesh Kumar Singh, is nearing completion of its shooting schedule. *Kannappa* promises to be a visual extravaganza, immersing viewers in the captivating tale of a valiant warrior turned devout disciple of Lord Shiva - *Kannappa*. Vishnu Manchu, known for his versatility and dedication, brings this legendary character to life with passion and reverence, captivating audiences with his portrayal.

As Telugu cinema continues to make waves on the global stage, it is a moment of immense pride as the teaser of *Kannappa* is set to be unveiled at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival on May 20th at 6 PM. This landmark event signifies the growing recognition and acclaim garnered by regional cinema, showcasing the industry's boundless creativity and innovation on an international platform.

With anticipation building and excitement mounting, *Kannappa* promises to be an unforgettable cinematic experience, blending stellar performances, breathtaking visuals, and a captivating storyline that transcends borders and captivates hearts worldwide.

## Makers deny casting director's involvement in MB-Rajamouli film

Recent speculations regarding the casting of SS Rajamouli and Mahesh Babu's much-anticipated project, *SSMB 29*, have been put to rest by the film's production house, which has refuted claims of casting director Viren Swami's involvement.

Reports had surfaced suggesting that Viren Swami, a well-known figure in the industry, had joined the team of *SSMB 29* and was tasked with finding a parallel lead alongside superstar Mahesh Babu.

However, the production house has categorically denied these rumours, asserting that Viren Swami is not associated with the project in any capacity.

In an official statement released to the media, the production house addressed the circulating reports, stating, "It has come to our notice that a prominent publication has published an article regarding the casting of SS Rajamouli and Mahesh Babu's project. We want to clarify that, contrary to what is stated in the article, Mr. Viren Swami is not involved in any part of our film in any way."

The statement went on to reassure fans, affirming that all official announcements regarding the project will be made directly by the production house when deemed necessary. This clear stance aims to dispel any confusion and urges fans to await official updates from reliable sources.

As anticipation continues to mount for *SSMB 29*, fans are advised to refrain from giving credence to unverified rumours and instead await official announcements from the production team. With SS Rajamouli at the helm and Mahesh Babu in the lead, expectations for the film are sky-high, making it all the more crucial to rely on authentic information regarding its casting and development.

As the industry eagerly awaits further updates on *SSMB 29*, fans can rest assured that any significant announcements regarding the project will be communicated directly by the production house, ensuring clarity and transparency throughout the filmmaking process.

## Jr NTR's team clarifies on court case

Rumours swirled within Tollywood circles, alleging that actor Jr NTR had sought legal recourse from the Telangana High Court concerning a property dispute in Jubilee Hills. Reports indicated that Jr NTR had purportedly purchased a 681-square-yard plot in 2003 from Sunku Geetha Lakshmi, who was accused of fabricating documents and leveraging the property for loans from multiple banks.

Following a ruling by the Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT) in favour of the banks, purported attempts were made to seize the property, prompting Jr NTR's purported engagement with the High Court. However, the actor's team swiftly issued a press statement to counter the allegations. The statement clarified that Jr NTR had sold the property in question in 2013, urging media outlets to abstain from linking him



to the ongoing dispute.

"In response to the news published concerning Mr. NTR, we would like to clarify that the said property was sold by Mr. NTR in the year 2013. We request you to refrain from using Mr. NTR's name in any reporting regarding the said property, read the team's official statement.

Despite the clarification, the news stirred widespread discourse across social media platforms. Meanwhile, on the professional front, Jr NTR is actively involved in the much-anticipated film *Devara*, helmed by acclaimed director Koratala Siva.



## Dubbing commences for LAGGAM

Producer Venugopal Reddy is bankrolling the film *Laggam*, directed by Ramesh Cheppala. The film aims to capture the essence, fun, love, and excitement of marriage culture, and it is expected to be a topic of widespread discussion. Director Ramesh Cheppala believes this film will be remembered forever.

Having completed its shoot, the film has moved to Prasad Lab for dubbing. Veteran actor Rajendra Prasad has started his dubbing sessions, and Sai Ronak, the film's lead, along with the crew, is also involved in the process.

The film features an ensemble cast including senior artists Rohini, LB Sriram, and many others. The story, screenplay, dialogues, and direction are all handled by Ramesh Chappala, with music composed by Charan Arjun. The editor is Bonthala Nageswara Reddy, and the cinematography is by Balreddy R Krishna. Lyrics are written by Kasarala Shyam and Sanjay Mahesh Varma, with choreography by Ajay Shivasankar.



## Suriya launches Hit List teaser

Tamil director Vikraman's son Vijay Kanishka is making his debut as a lead actor with the film *Hit List*, whose teaser was unveiled by actor Suriya on Friday.

The film, also starring Samuthirakani, Sarath Kumar and Gautham Vasudev Menon is directed by Surya Kathir Kakkallar, and K Karthikeyan.

Bankrolled under R.K. Celluloids banner by K.S. Ravi Kumar, the film is an action, suspense, crime genre movie whose teaser seems to have impressed the audience already. The present audi-

ence is mostly attracted by crime and suspense genre movies, hence, this movie is also getting into the same genre. After watching the teaser, actor Suriya expressed, "The teaser is very good and I hope the movie will be even better. I definitely wish this film to give good success to Vijay Kanishka and his team."

## DIRECTOR PAWAN KUMAR MAKES HIS ACTING DEBUT AS A HERO

Pawan Kumar Kothuri made his directorial debut with the film *Merise*, which won appreciation as a wholesome entertainment. The writer and director is now testing his luck as a hero with his second directorial venture titled *Average Student Nani*. Apart from playing the lead role, writing and directing the movie, Pawan Kumar is also producing it under his banner Sri Neelakanta Mahadeva Entertainments LLP.

The makers started the promotions of this youthful love, action, and family entertainer by unveiling its first look poster on Friday. The bold and intense first-look poster shows the intimacy of the lead pair - Pawan Kumar and Sneha Malviya. Sahiba Bhasin and Vivvya Santh are the other heroines in the movie.

On the technical front, Sajeesh Rajendran handles the cinematography, while Karthik B Kodakandla renders music and Uddhav SB is the editor.

Further details about the film will be revealed soon.



## Choreographer Subhash Sarikonda turns director

Renowned choreographer Subhash Sarikonda is all set to make his directorial debut in the world of cinema, marking a significant milestone in his illustrious career. The talented choreographer, known for his impeccable dance sequences, is now set to showcase his prowess behind the camera as well.

Adding to the excitement surrounding this prestigious project is the inclusion of music director Leander Lee Marty, who previously collaborated with the legendary Prabhu Deva in the acclaimed film *Musasi*. Marty's expertise in crafting captivating melodies promises to elevate the cinematic experience of Sarikonda's directorial debut to new heights.

As anticipation mounts for further details about this upcoming venture, fans and cinephiles eagerly await to witness Subhash Sarikonda's transition from choreographer to director and the magical musical compositions of Leander Lee Marty.

## PRABHAS' MYSTERIOUS POST SPARKS SPECULATION

In the realm of celebrity surprises, just before the release of their films, many stars have a knack for leaving fans intrigued with mysterious social media posts. Superstar Prabhas is no exception. On Friday, he shared something enigmatic on his Instagram story that has set tongues wagging and sparked widespread speculation among fans.

The post in question featured some text that reads: "Darlings! Finally, someone very special is about to enter our life. Wait *Cheyandi*." Naturally, this cryptic message has led to various theories circulating among fans, including speculation about Prabhas introducing his girlfriend to the world or even hinting at his own marriage.

Reports suggest that the post is actually related to the promotions of his highly anticipated film *Kalki 2898 AD*. Speculation is rife that the team is gearing up to introduce a new character in the upcoming days, hence the mysterious tease.

Directed by Nag Ashwin, the movie features an impressive ensemble cast comprising Deepika Padukone, Amitabh Bachchan, Kamal Haasan, Disha Patani, and more. Drawing inspiration from Hindu mythology, the film centers around a contemporary interpretation of Lord Vishnu's avatar.



## Kanguva has biggest war sequence with 10,000 people!

The extraordinary teaser of *Kanguva* has left the entire nation raving about it. The film from Studio Green, starring Suriya Sivakumar, has created a stir with every asset coming out. From the original content, thrilling background score, and execution, it immediately takes you into the world that makers are going to bring. Undeniably, it has everything that makes it a film of international standards. While everything about *Kanguva* itself sets the excitement to the peak, the one major attraction that piqued attention was the historic and war backdrop shown in posters and teasers. It can't be denied that *Kanguva* is nothing less than a

phenomenon that audiences have never experienced before.

The makers have left no stone unturned to ensure a cinematic spectacle for a global audience, and in their biggest attempt, they have pulled off the mammoth war sequence. As seen in the teaser, the film is filled with some terrific war sequences, and the story is set in two time periods, among which one is the prehistoric era.

In exciting details, a source close to the production shared an insight about the epic war sequence that makers had shot. The source said, "The makers, Studio Green, along with director Siva and the entire team, have worked on every aspect of the war sequences to do justice to the theme and subject. The film has the biggest war sequence, featuring Suriya Sivakumar, Bobby Deol, and more than 10,000 people."

The source further added, "Right from the action, stunts, and visualization of the entire war episodes, everything is being done under international expertise with an aim to deliver cinematic grandeur."

*Kanguva* is undoubtedly one of the most ambitious films coming this year. It promises a raw, rustic, and new visual experience for audiences with human emotions, powerful performances, and never-before-seen action sequences on a massive scale. The film features cinematography by Vetri Palanisamy and music by 'Rockstar' Devi Sri Prasad. Studio Green has partnered with top distribution houses to release the film on a massive scale worldwide. The film's release is planned for the second half of 2024.

