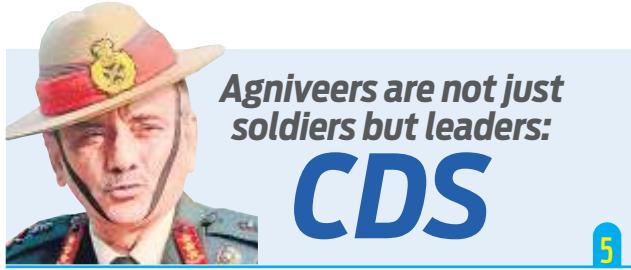




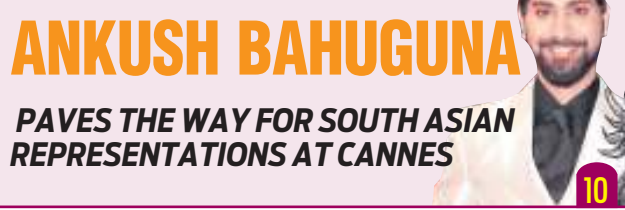
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**Agniveers are not just soldiers but leaders:**  
**CDS**



**ANKUSH BAHUGUNA**  
**PAVES THE WAY FOR SOUTH ASIAN REPRESENTATIONS AT CANNES**



**Jr NTR, Prashanth Neel's mega action**  
**EPIC IS ON!**

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
The pioneer

**The Congress government's paddy bonus is bogus. They cheated farmers by saying that they would give Rs 500 bonus only for fine variety rice. I demand the immediate withdrawal of the government's decision to pay bonus only for fine rice. The government should pay a bonus of Rs 500 for all types of paddy from this season. With the latest announcement by the ministers, it is clear that the TG Congress government has no sincerity towards farmers**

- Harish Rao, BRS MLA, TELANGANA P4

**DON'T MISS...**

**Foolproof security arrangements...**

NTR District Police Commissioner PHD Ramakrishna announced on Monday that 29 strong rooms have been established at Nimra and Nova Colleges to securely house the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). A three-tiered security system, including Central Forces, protects these strongrooms, ensuring foolproof security. In a media interaction, Commissioner Ramakrishna detailed the comprehensive security measures, which involve the deployment of the Armed Reserve, Civil Police, two Deputy Commissioners...

-PAGE: 3

**Men at higher risk of developing...**

Men with diabetes are at a higher risk of experiencing major health effects than diabetic women, a new research has found. Complications arising from diabetes such as diseases of the heart, leg, foot, kidney, and eye were observed more in men than women, regardless of how long they've had diabetes, according to researchers, which include those from The University of Sydney, Australia. The study included 25,713 people, all of them aged 45 years and above, and having either type 1 or type...

-PAGE: 5

**Shopping, banking facilities soon at...**

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation said on Monday that the Namo Bharat train commuters will soon get facilities like shopping, restaurants and banking at the stations. According to a statement, these facilities will be available at the commercial spaces within the premises of the stations near the entry and exit areas, enhancing passenger convenience, it said. Recently, Namo Bharat trains achieved the milestone of carrying one...

-PAGE: 8

**Salt less KKR take on Sunrisers...**

High-flying Kolkata Knight Riders and an unpredictable Sunrisers Hyderabad, teams that have built their IPL 2024 campaign on power-hitting, will look to outmuscle each other in Qualifier 1 here on Tuesday. If KKR were the first team to make IPL playoffs this year, SRH gave themselves a huge boost by inflicting a four-wicket loss on Punjab Kings on Sunday to eventually finish second with 17 points, ahead of Rajasthan Royals. While the two top teams from the 70-match league round have enjoyed some time...

-SPORTS

**POLL-RELATED VIOLENCE**

## 1,370 named accused in FIRs

■ SIT submits 150-page report to DGP ■ 124 arrested, 94 served with 41A notices

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Special Investigation Team (SIT) chief Vineet Brijlal met with state DGP Harish Kumar Gupta to submit a 150-page confidential report on the violence that occurred on polling day and during the post-poll period, which disrupted law and order in the districts of Palnadu, Tirupati, and Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh. A total of 33 cases have been registered, with 1370 individuals cited as accused in the FIRs. Out of these, 124 have been arrested, 1152 remain at large, and 94 have been issued notices under Section 41-A of the Cr.P.C.

In Anantapur, the SIT cited 728 accused, arresting 91, while 634 are yet to be apprehended, and 3 have been served with 41A notices. In Tirupati district, 61 accused were cited, with 14 arrests made and 47 still at large; no 41A notices have been served.

In Palnadu, 581 individuals were cited, 19 arrested, 471 remain to be apprehended, and 91 have been served with 41A notices.

Following the violence, the SIT was formed, consisting of 12 members, including 1 SP, 1 Additional SP, 4 DSP, and 7 Inspectors of Police, alongside a Legal Advisor. Four sub-teams were created, each

● The SIT includes 12 members, comprising senior police officials and a legal advisor, with four sub-teams deployed to the affected districts.

● The SIT reviewed investigations, identified lapses, and provided instructions for improvement. Special teams were formed to identify and apprehend the accused.

● DGP expressed satisfaction with the SIT's findings and directed further action to complete the investigations in coordination with the SIT team.



SIT chief Vineet Brijlal submitting a 150-page report to DGP Harish Kumar Gupta on Monday.

led by a DSP. Two teams were deployed to Palnadu, one to Anantapur, and one to Tirupati.

The SIT identified 33 cases across the three districts (Palnadu - 22 cases in 3 Assembly Constituencies within the limits of 8 Police Stations, Anantapur - 7 cases in 1 Assembly Constituency within 1 Police Station, and Tirupati - 4 cases in 2 Assembly Constituencies), focusing on the most severe incidents of violence on poll and post-poll days.

SIT sub-teams camped in the respective districts to thoroughly review the investigations, examine records, visit crime scenes, interact with investigating officers (IOs) and aggrieved parties, verify physical evidence and witness statements, ensuring the appropriate legal sections were applied, and confirm that all incidents were properly registered and that accused individuals were identified and arrested.

The SIT noted that many of these offences were extremely serious, involving large groups who pelted stones indiscriminately, posing a risk of serious injuries or death. The SIT identified several lapses in the investigations and issued clear instructions to the investigating officers for prompt compliance. Special teams were formed at the district level to identify and apprehend the accused.

During Raisi's term in office, Iran enriched uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels, further escalating tensions with the West as Tehran also supplied bomb-carrying drones to Russia for its war in Ukraine and armed militia groups across the region.

Meanwhile, Iran has faced years of mass protests against its Shiite theocracy over its ailing economy



The crash comes as the Middle East remains unsettled by the Israel-Hamas war, during which Raisi, who was 63, under Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei launched an unprecedented drone-and-missile attack on Israel just last month.

## Iran's Prez found dead at chopper crash site

PNS ■ DUBAI

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, the country's foreign minister and several other officials were found dead on Monday, hours after their helicopter crashed in a foggy, mountainous region of the country's northwest, state media reported.

The crash comes as the Middle East remains unsettled by the Israel-Hamas war, during which Raisi, who was 63, under Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei launched an unprecedented drone-and-missile attack on Israel just last month.

During Raisi's term in office, Iran enriched uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels, further escalating tensions with the West as Tehran also supplied bomb-carrying drones to Russia for its war in Ukraine and armed militia groups across the region.

Meanwhile, Iran has faced years of mass protests against its Shiite theocracy over its ailing economy

and women's rights — making the moment that much more sensitive for Tehran and the future of the country.

Khamenei hours later announced Iran's first vice president, Mohammad Mokhber, would serve as the country's acting president until elections are held.

State TV gave no immediate cause for the crash that occurred in Iran's East Azerbaijan province. Among the dead was Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, 60.

The helicopter also carried the governor of Iran's East Azerbaijan province, other officials and bodyguards, the state-run IRNA news agency reported.

Early Monday morning, Turkish authorities released what they described as drone footage showing what appeared to be a fire in the wilderness that they "suspected to be wreckage of helicopter."

## Vanga Geetha declares her admiration for 'Mega' family

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

With just a fortnight remaining until the much-anticipated declaration of Assembly election results in Andhra Pradesh, tensions are high among the contenders of the ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) and the

including party supremo YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, who has not hesitated to target Pawan Kalyan on both political and personal fronts. Similarly, Pawan Kalyan has refrained from personal attacks against Geetha, directing his criticisms towards the YSRCP as a whole. Even members of the Mega family, who have campaigned for Pawan Kalyan, have avoided direct jibes at Geetha.



**'Set aside politics, my family and I are great fans of brother Chiranjeevi, Pawan Kalyan, and the entire Mega family. I always have great respect for them.'**

National Democratic Alliance (NDA). June 4 is set to be the day when the political fates of these heavyweights will be determined, leaving both camps on edge. The spotlight is firmly on the Pithapuram Assembly constituency in East Godavari district, where a high-stakes showdown is unfolding between incumbent Kakinada MP and YSRCP candidate Vanga Geetha and the charismatic Jana Sena Party leader, Pawan Kalyan.

In a notable departure from the usual political mudslinging, Vanga Geetha has opted for a campaign focused solely on party-centric agendas, steering clear of personal attacks against her opponent, Pawan Kalyan. This stands in stark contrast to other YSRCP leaders,

A noteworthy turn of events unfolded a week after the polls when Vanga Geetha publicly expressed her admiration for the Mega family. In a surprising statement, she declared, "Set aside politics, my family and I are great fans of brother Chiranjeevi, Pawan Kalyan, and the entire Mega family. I always have great respect for them." Geetha emphasised her campaign's focus on issues rather than personal attacks, reaffirming her respect for the Mega family, including Naga Babu.

Vanga Geetha's political journey has been nothing short of intriguing, spanning various parties.

Continued on Page 2

## Narasaraopet gets new DSP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Election Commission of India appointed M Sudhakar Rao as the DSP of Narasaraopet on Monday. The EC has suspended a few police officers and new officers have been posted in the vacancies. The EC has issued orders appointing Ch Srinivas Rao as DSP of Gurajala. Bandaru Suresh Babu is appointed as Palnadu SP CI-1 and Shoban Babu as SP CI-2. K Ameer was appointed as Karampudi SI and M Pattabi as Nagarjunasagar SI.

It can be recalled that the EC has suspended a few police officers in the wake of violence in a few places in the state and new officers have been replaced in those vacancies.

## YSRCP spreading false info on atrocities in Palnadu: Lavu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The YSRCP leaders, responsible for the violent incidents in Palnadu district during the elections, are now spreading misinformation to shift the blame onto the TDP, stated Lavu Krishnadevarayalu, the TDP Lok Sabha candidate from Narasaraopet constituency, on Monday.

Addressing media persons, Krishnadevarayalu accused the YSRCP leaders of making unwarranted remarks and injecting caste-based narratives into the TDP campaign. He urged the Special Investigation Team (SIT) appointed



by the Election Commission to conduct a thorough investigation and uncover the truth.

"We have provided all necessary evidence to the SIT," said the TDP leader, clarifying that the suspended District Superintendent of Police, Bindu Madhav, has no connection with his family, contrary to the allegations made by YSRCP leaders. He called on the SIT to investigate these claims and publicly release the call data records between Madhav and any alleged parties.

"I am formally writing to the SIT, challenging anyone to provide evidence that either I or any of my family members have ever met with the SP," he asserted.

Continued on Page 2

## Over 57% voter turnout in fifth phase

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over 57 per cent voter turnout was recorded on Monday in 49 constituencies in six states and two Union territories in the fifth phase of the Lok Sabha election amid sporadic incidents of violence in West Bengal, besides EVM glitches at some booths in the state and neighbouring Odisha. While Maharashtra recorded the lowest voter turnout at 48.88 per cent, West Bengal recorded the highest polling percentage at 73.



Among other states, Bihar recorded 52.55 per cent turnout, Jammu and Kashmir 54.21 per cent, Jharkhand 63 per cent, Odisha 60.72 per cent, Uttar Pradesh 57.43 per cent and Ladakh 67.15.

According to the figures made

available by the Election Commission till 7 pm, the approximate polling percentage was at 57.38. Although voting time was till 6 pm, people already in queue by that time are allowed to vote.

Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla Lok Sabha constituency recorded a voter turnout of more than 54 per cent, already registering its highest polling percentage in almost four decades. The overall polling percentage of 54.21 this time is second only to the 58.84 per cent turnout the constituency saw in 1984.



## After Jagan & Naidu, Pawan Kalyan goes on foreign tour

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

After a whirlwind electioneering, some prominent leaders from Andhra Pradesh are currently on a break, scattered across diverse destinations, enjoying some much-needed relaxation.

Polls for the 175 Assembly and 25 Lok Sabha seats in the state were held on May 13 and the counting of votes will be taken up on June 4, nationwide.

YSRCP supremo and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy on May 17 left for a foreign tour with family.

Jagan, who is currently in Europe, is expected to return during the month-end, sources close to him said. The YSRCP chief contested from the Pulivendula Assembly segment in the recently concluded polls. Similarly, TDP supremo and Leader of the Opposition Nara Chandrababu Naidu also, along with his family left the country after the polls, Telugu Desam Party sources said.

Naidu will be coming back at the end of May. He may also undergo a health check-up in the USA during his vacation," they said.

Continued on Page 2

## 18 killed as vehicle plunges into valley in Chhattisgarh

PNS ■ KAWARDHA (CHHATTISGARH)



Seventeen women and a man were killed and four others injured when a mini goods vehicle they were travelling in plunged into a valley in Chhattisgarh's Kabirdham district on Monday, police said.

The accident occurred around 1.45 pm on Banjari Ghat near Bahpani village under Kukdur police station limits, an official said. The victims were returning after plucking tendu leaves from a forest in the vehicle meant for transporting goods, he said.

The vehicle skidded off the road, tumbled down considerably

and crashed onto the road below the valley, the official said.

After being alerted, a police team rushed to the spot and launched the rescue exercise, the official said. "Twelve women and a man were killed on the spot, while nine others sustained injuries and were shifted to a hospital, where five women died," Kabirdham Superintendent of Police Abhishek Pallava said.

## Prashant Kishor's U-turn on Andhra poll predictions raises many an eyebrow

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a notable shift from his earlier stance, prominent political strategist Prashant Kishor, renowned for his astute campaign methodologies, has opted for a more cautious approach regarding predictions for the upcoming assembly and Lok Sabha elections in Andhra Pradesh. Founder of the Indian Political Action Committee (IPAC), Kishor had previously made bold assertions about the potential electoral outcomes, particularly concerning the fate of the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) led by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Kishor's previous assertions, including forecasts shared with media outlets suggesting a significant decline in seats for the YSRCP, citing

alleged policy shortcomings. However, in a recent interaction with national news reporter Barkha Dutt, Kishor refrained from engaging in specific seat projections, underscoring the uncertainty of the political landscape. Responding to Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy's assertion that the YSRCP would secure more seats than in the 2019 elections, Kishor adopted a cautious tone, eschewing pre-



**"I am very cautious in predicting the exact number of seats any political party will win. In Andhra Pradesh, I can only say that Jagan is going to lose, and I don't want to predict the numbers."**

vious numerical forecasts. "I am very cautious in predicting the exact number of seats any political party will win. In Andhra Pradesh, I can only say that Jagan is going to lose, and I don't want to predict the numbers," he stated.

Emphasizing the commonality of ambitious claims in political rhetoric, Kishor highlighted the propensity of leaders, including Chandrababu Naidu, Amit Shah, Rahul Gandhi, and Tejaswi Yadav, to assert optimistic seat projections. He

also drew attention to the typical resilience exhibited by party leaders, who often refrain from conceding defeat even in the face of early setbacks during polling.

In light of the potential consequences of inaccurate predictions, Kishor acknowledged the risks associated with his assertions, noting the potential for backlash. However, he suggested that accountability would ultimately fall upon the political actors themselves, rather than solely upon prognosticators like himself. With the political landscape in flux and the elections approaching, Kishor's recalibrated approach underscores the intricacies and uncertainties inherent in electoral forecasting, emphasizing a cautious and nuanced perspective amidst shifting dynamics.



# YSRCP for action against TDP men

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP leaders lodged complaints with Special Investigation Team (SIT) chief Vineet Brijlal, urging stringent action against TDP leaders and activists for their alleged involvement in poll violence, and against police officials who they claim colluded with the TDP alliance.

A delegation of YSRCP leaders, including Ministers Ambati Rambabu and Jogi Ramesh, former Ministers Pemi Venkataramaiah (Nani) and Ravela Kishore Babu, MLAs Malladi Vishnu and Kayle Anil Kumar, MLC Lella Appi Reddy, and Party Legal Cell State President Manohar Reddy, met with SIT Chief Vineet Brijlal to express their concerns.

The YSRCP leaders accused G Bindu Madhav, who served as Additional Superintendent of Police in Palnadu, of favouring the TDP. They claimed Madhav,



along with Inspector General of Police Sarvashresth Tripathi, intimidated subordinate officers to support TDP activities.

They alleged that both officers instructed field officers not to act against TDP members, leading to uncontrolled violence.

Minister Ambati Rambabu stated that collusion between some police officers and TDP leaders resulted in violent

of the TDP's election strategy.

Rambabu highlighted an incident where TDP supporters allegedly destroyed CCTV cameras at the house of YSRCP MLA Kethireddy Pedda Reddy in Anantapur. He criticized the filing of false cases against YSRCP members and called for an investigation into the call data of Circle Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors in the affected areas.

Minister Jogi Ramesh accused TDP leaders, including Chandrababu Naidu, of trying to manipulate the election process due to a lack of public support, resulting in violent attacks.

Former Minister Ravela Kishore Babu claimed that TDP operatives forcibly expelled BCs, Dalits, and minorities from villages to prevent them from voting for YSRCP. Both leaders demanded strict action against those responsible for the violence and alleged atrocities.

# 'Review meetings in every 15 days'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna District Collector DK Balaji has stated that he would conduct a review meeting every 15 days to discuss the programmes that are being implemented by various departments in the district. Officials were advised to be ready with all reports regarding their respective departments.

The review meeting on Agriculture and allied departments was held at his chamber in Machilipatnam on Monday. Before the meeting, Krishna District Agriculture Officer (DAO) N Padmavati explained the preparations for the upcoming Kharif season. The department is all set to supply seeds and fertilisers to farmers to commence the season, she said. Also, District Horticulture Officer J Jyothi explained the extent of horticulture crops. Collector Balaji said that the Kharif season will commence in the first week of June and all departments should make elaborate arrangements to start agricultural activities.

# Atchennaidu demands withdrawal of cases against Vizag BJP leader

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) State unit president, Atchennaidu, has called for the immediate withdrawal of FIRs registered by the Visakhapatnam police against certain media personnel and BJP candidate Vishnukumar Raju. Naidu claims these actions were taken with the connivance of YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leaders.

In a letter to the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), with copies sent to Avinash Kumar, the Principal Secretary in charge of the State in the Election Commission of India (ECI) in New Delhi, the State Director General of Police (DGP), the special general observer of the poll panel, and the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), Naidu argued that these FIRs amount to an attempt to muzzle press



freedom. Naidu praised the poll panel's previous interventions, noting that stern measures had successfully curbed post-poll violence to some extent. He condemned a recent incident in Kancharapalem, Visakhapatnam, where two women were grievously injured for not voting for the YSRCP. According to Naidu, media personnel were attacked by YSRCP leaders while reporting on the incident. Instead of taking proper action against the attackers, the local police, allegedly in collusion with YSRCP leaders, diverted the issue by filing cases against the journalists. Naidu also noted that Vishnukumar Raju, the BJP candidate from the Visakhapatnam (North) Assembly segment, condemned the attack on the women during a media conference, for which he, too, was subjected to an FIR.

# 1,370 named...

Continued from Page 1

IOs were instructed to file memos in the concerned courts to add appropriate legal sections to the existing ones, collect digital evidence such as CCTV footage and videos, arrest the accused, and file charge sheets promptly. During their field visits, the SIT received representations from various aggrieved persons and verified the facts for further necessary action.

After submitting the confidential detailed report and discussing the SIT's findings, the DGP expressed satisfaction. The DGP further directed the concerned District SP, DIG, Anantapur, and IG, Guntur to take the necessary actions to complete the investigations in coordination with the SIT team.

# CS inspects progress of Bhogapuram airport works

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

In a move aimed at expediting the construction of the Bhogapuram International Green Field Airport, Chief Secretary KS Jawahar Reddy visited the site on Monday and emphasised the importance of adhering to the project timeline.

Reddy conducted a comprehensive inspection of the ongoing construction activities, meticulously examining the progress of the terminal building, runway, air traffic control centre, and other critical infrastructure components. He further reviewed the airport's blueprints during a meeting with representatives from GMR, who provided detailed insights into the construction methodologies.



Expressing satisfaction with the project's progress to date, Reddy commended the efforts of all personnel involved. Accompanying the Chief Secretary during the inspection were District Joint Collector K. Karthik, RDO MV Suryakala, Tashildar Shyam Prasad, GMR International Airport Limited

CEO Manomai Roy, Project Head BHA Ramaraj, and other relevant officials. This focus on accelerated construction signifies a significant step forward in realizing the vision of Bhogapuram International Green Field Airport as a key hub for regional and international air travel.

# Structural stability certificate must for hoardings

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar conducted a crucial meeting with display agencies, Town Planning staff and Planning Secretaries at the new VMC Building's meeting hall on Monday, to discuss the regulation of hoardings.

Swapnil Pundkar emphasised the importance of ensuring that all hoardings meet quality standards to withstand cyclonic winds. It will be possible only by obtaining a structural stability certificate.

Every hoarding must have a structural stability certificate. Agencies without this certification are required to obtain it within 10 days. No agency is permitted to display any hoarding, regardless of size, in public places or on the rooftops of homes, whether

# Hoardings must meet quality standards to withstand cyclonic winds: Municipal Commissioner



Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar addressing a meeting in Vijayawada on Monday

with advertisements or empty frames, without this essential certificate, he said. Furthermore, Planning Secretaries have been instructed to issue notices to all agencies lacking a structural stability certificate within

the stipulated 10 days and to remove all unauthorised hoardings. The Commissioner also warned that violations would result in legal action under the Disfigurement of Public Properties Act.

Chief City Planner GVGSV Prasad, Deputy City Planners Jubin Cheeran Roy and Chandra Bose, ACPs Jagadeesh and Mohan Babu, BOs, and various Planning Secretaries attended the meeting.

# AP Chambers seeks intl cargo facility with cold storage

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry Federation (AP Chambers) has welcomed the announcement by Air India of a new direct flight between Vijayawada and Mumbai. The AP Chambers also continues to advocate for the establishment of an international cargo facility with cold storage at Gannavaram Airport.

AP Chambers president Potluri Bhaskara Rao stated that the organisation has consistently provided suggestions to the Airports Authority of India (AAI) and Vijayawada Airport authorities for the airport's development and improved flight connectivity to major destinations. He recalled that the AP Chambers had previously submitted proposals to various airlines, including Air India, Indigo, and Akasa Air, to connect Vijayawada with key cities across the country. He highlighted the longstanding demand for a direct flight between Vijayawada and Mumbai, noting that the Chambers had formally requested several airlines to establish this connection.

Bhaskara Rao emphasised the significance of the new direct flight to Mumbai, explaining that it will facilitate easier travel for entrepreneurs and strengthen trade relations between Vijayawada and Mumbai. He pointed out that Mumbai, being an international hub, will also streamline international travel for passengers from Vijayawada, saving them both time and money.

In response to these efforts, Air India recently announced the launch of a direct flight connecting Vijayawada and Mumbai. Bhaskara Rao expressed gratitude to Air India for scheduling a Boeing flight from Vijayawada to Hyderabad in the mornings, which has been beneficial for local travellers. Bhaskara Rao also highlighted the high demand for an international cargo facility at Vijayawada Airport, given the substantial export of perishable goods from the region. He stated that establishing a cargo facility with cold storage would greatly benefit local exporters of fresh produce and expressed hope that this long-standing request would soon be realised.

ASHA workers, more than 13,000 ANMs, and 10,032 CHOs to be involved in this programme and make it successful. Krishna Babu said that per the new policy, the birth certificate is necessary for all and the public should be made aware of its importance. All DM&HOs in the State should take responsibility for this. After childbirth, Superintendents of all Government General Hospitals and Secondary Health Hospitals should issue birth certificates and sign in the concerned register, he instructed.

He added that per the Amended Registered Birth and Death Act, of 2023, a

# YSRCP spreading false info...

Continued from Page 1

Krishnadevarayalu also highlighted that TDP leaders had requested enhanced security at all polling stations to ensure voters could cast their ballots without hindrance, noting that complaints had been lodged regarding 300 sensitive booths.

He reported that YSRCP leaders had attacked him and his vehicles and urged the SIT to investigate these incidents as well, as complaints have already been submitted to the election authorities. "We will personally meet with the SIT chief to lodge a complaint and demand a comprehensive inquiry," he said, adding that he plans to file a defamation case against those spreading misinformation.

# After Jagan & Naidu, Pawan...

Continued from Page 1

He also visited Shirdi and offered prayers at the Sai Baba temple before embarking on the voyage. The TDP leader is contesting from the Kuppam Assembly constituency. Jana Sena founder and actor Pawan Kalyan also left for a foreign country after the polls and is expected to return in a couple of days, party sources said while refusing to share details. Kalyan contested from Pithapuram Assembly segment.

Naidu's son Lokesh, along with his family is also currently on an international tour. He is contesting from Mangalagiri Assembly seat from where he lost in 2019. The YSRCP contested in all 175 Assembly seats and 25 Lok Sabha segments in the state.

As part of a seat-sharing deal among NDA partners, the TDP was allocated 144 Assembly and 17 Lok Sabha constituencies while the BJP contested from six Lok Sabha and 10 Assembly seats. The Jana Sena fielded candidates in two Lok Sabha and 21 Assembly seats.

# Meritorious tribal SSC students struggle to secure Inter seats

PNS ■ PARVATHIPURAM

Tribal students in the Manyam district are facing formidable hurdles in accessing intermediate education despite achieving commendable scores in their Class X examinations. The scarcity of seats in Gurukul Residential Junior Colleges under Parvathipuram and Seethampet ITDAs compounds the issue, disproportionately affecting tribal students.

This academic year, more than 3,000 tribal students showcased outstanding performance in their 10th standard exams within the two ITDAs, with many surpassing the 550-mark threshold. Regrettably, there are merely eight Gurukula Residential Junior Colleges in the district, with an anticipated intake capacity of 2,060 students. Consequently, only half of the eligible students, totalling

1,030, secured seats this year. The predicament is exacerbated as these colleges offer limited seats, particularly in the coveted MPC and BPC departments, amounting to only 640 students. Consequently, many students are compelled to opt for the CEC group due to seat shortages. Moreover, the allocation of mere 40 seats in Peddamadi Junior College under Seethampet ITDA and an additional 40 in Bhadrugiri and P Konavalasa College under Parvathipuram ITDA exacerbates the issue, necessitating arduous commutes for tribal students.

Amidst this backdrop, the notification for admissions to Inter this year has been released by Gurukula Residential Junior Colleges, with counselling scheduled for May 22. However, with over 3,000 tribal students potentially vying for seats and limited options available, the spectre of many being left with-

out a placement looms large. Addressing this pressing concern, Nagabhushanam, former convener principal of Gurukul Residential Junior Colleges in Seethampeta, stressed the imperative for immediate action, advocating not only for an increase in existing seats but also for the establishment of new gurukuls.

Responding to the issue, D Manjulaveena, Director of Intermediate Education, acknowledged the seat shortage and assured that project officers are actively investigating solutions, reiterating their commitment to serving tribal students to the fullest extent. The plight of tribal students underscores the urgency for systemic reforms to ensure equitable access to intermediate education, affirming the need for concerted efforts to address this critical issue.

**TODAY**  
**ALMANAC**  
Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha  
Tithi: Trayodashi: May 20 03:59 PM to May 21 05:39 PM  
Chaturdashi: May 21 05:39 PM to May 22 06:48 PM  
Nakshatram:  
Swati: May 21 05:46 AM to May 22 07:46 AM  
Rahukalam: 3:26 PM to 5:02 PM  
Yamagandam: 8:59 AM to 10:36 AM  
Varjyam: 11:50 AM to 01:34 PM  
Gulika: 12:12 PM to 1:49 PM  
Amritakalam: 10:14 PM to 11:58 PM  
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:47 AM to 12:38 PM  
**VIJAYAWADA WEATHER**  
Forecast: Partly Cloudy  
Temp: 37°C  
Humidity: 66%  
Sunrise: 5:35 AM  
Sunset: 6:33 PM  
Updated: May 20, 2024 5:00 PM

## BIRTH & DEATH CERTIFICATES

# DM & HOs asked to create awareness on new system

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Health, Medical and Family Welfare Department Special Chief Secretary MT Krishna Babu has stated that all District Medical & Health Officers (DM & HO) should take steps to create awareness among the people on the issuing of birth and death certificates as per the new system that was implemented on October 1, 2023. Krishna Babu was speaking at a training programme organised for DM&HOs, Birth and Death Registration Officers and all State-level officers on a revamped CRS software, at Murali Fortune in Vijayawada on Monday.

He said that the Registrar General of India revamped the portal by bringing various changes to the earlier one, for the convenience of the State governments. On the new CRS portal, births and deaths are registered online in regional languages. He said officials should create awareness among the people on the revamped system through the extensive network in the Health, Medical and Family Welfare Department. He directed all 43,000



Health, Medical and Family Welfare Special Chief Secretary MT Krishna Babu addressing the State-level training programme on the revamped CRS software in Vijayawada on Monday

ASHA workers, more than 13,000 ANMs, and 10,032 CHOs to be involved in this programme and make it successful. Krishna Babu said that per the new policy, the birth certificate is necessary for all and the public should be made aware of its importance. All DM&HOs in the State should take responsibility for this. After childbirth, Superintendents of all Government General Hospitals and Secondary Health Hospitals should issue birth certificates and sign in the concerned register, he instructed.

He added that per the Amended Registered Birth and Death Act, of 2023, a

birth certificate is needed to prove the place and date of birth. It is required to be admitted to educational institutions, for driving licences, marriage registrations, appointments in the State and Central government departments, and to get a passport, Aadhar cards and others.

Furthermore, he said that Gram/Ward Sachivalaya staff should conduct the issuing of birth and death certificates more effectively. Also, he directed GGH and Secondary Hospital Superintendents to reveal the cause of death in the prescribed format. Also, they should guide all private hospital management in this regard, he said. He said that along the lines of facilitated downloading of the COVID-19 vaccine certificate digitally, the birth certificates can be downloaded at any time anywhere. The officials who participated in the State-level training programme will give their feedback, and it would be more useful to improve the system, he explained. Public Health and Family Welfare Director Dr Padmavathi, Commissioner Dr S Venkateswar, and Director Census Operations Bala Kiran were also present.

# Vanga Geeta...

Continued from Page 1

Starting with the Telugu Desam Party, she later joined the Praja Rajyam Party (PRP) founded by Megastar Chiranjeevi in 2008. Her victory in the 2009 elections from Pithapuram on a PRP ticket was followed by a transition to the Congress after the party's merger with the PRP. Finally, in 2019, she aligned with the YSRCP, emerging triumphant as the Lok Sabha member from Kakinada.

As the countdown to the election results continues, all eyes remain riveted on the fiercely contested Pithapuram constituency. Here, political strategies intertwine with personal affection towards the Mega family icons, shaping the outcome of this gripping electoral battle.

# Iran's Prez found ...

Continued from Page 1

The coordinates listed in the footage put the fire some 20 kilometres south of the Azerbaijan-Iranian border on the side of a steep mountain.

Footage released by the IRNA early Monday showed what the agency described as the crash site, across a steep valley in a green mountain range. Soldiers speaking in the local Azeri language said: "There it is, we found it."

Condolences started pouring in from neighbors and allies after Iran confirmed there were no survivors from the crash.

Pakistan announced a day of mourning and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a post on X that his country "stands with Iran in this time of sorrow." Leaders of Egypt and Jordan also offered condolences, as did Syrian President Bashar Assad. Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev said he and his government were "deeply shocked" — Raisi was returning on Sunday after travelling to Iran's border with Azerbaijan to inaugurate a dam with Aliyev when the crash happened.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan conveyed his condolences. Russian President Vladimir Putin, in a statement released by the Kremlin, described Raisi "as a true friend of Russia." Khamenei, who had himself urged the public to pray Sunday night, stressed the business of Iran's government would continue no matter what.

Under the Iranian constitution, Iran's vice first president takes over if the president dies, with Khamenei's assent, and a new presidential election would be called within 50 days.







# No doubt, it is Modi who is going to come to power again

Some pseudo-intelligentsia and the intelligentsia belonging to the Left parties have been playing second fiddle to the Opposition propaganda, unleashed in a big way, predicting that it is impossible for Narendra Modi-led BJP to come to power for the third time in a row.

The Opposition parties have been slinging mud on Modi, alleging that Modi is on the defensive and nursing fear of electoral defeat. The propaganda had taken place in 2019 too. The Opposition contended that the Congress is in a revival phase and Opposition parties have been growing stronger. But, the BJP won majority of the Lok Sabha seats in many states in 2019 too. The Opposition parties have been dubbing BJP winning the largest number of seats in 2019 as a negative factor for the 2024 elections. But, they have no rea-

sons to substantiate why the BJP would not be able to get more seats in the current elections, compared to seats it won in 2019, and why BJP failed to expand to new states.

Moreover, the Opposition parties have no confidence to say how many seats the BJP is going to win in each State. In 2014, there was a clear anti-UPA wave. But, the people believed in Narendra Modi going by the record of Modi fulfilling his promises to the people. Their confidence in Modi grew stronger in 2024. The people have begun to believe that the Centre is getting fortified under the strong leadership of Modi and it would uphold the self-respect of the nation.

Take the example of UP; antagonists to the Congress brought down curtain on the false propaganda that backward classes and minorities

**The Opposition parties have no confidence to say how many seats the BJP is going to win in each State. In 2014, there was a clear anti-UPA wave. But, the people believed in Narendra Modi going by the record of Modi fulfilling his promises to the people. Their confidence in Modi grew stronger in 2024. The people have begun to believe that the Centre is getting fortified under the strong leadership of Modi and it would uphold the self-respect of the nation.**

will stand united and throw their support to the Samajwadi Party-Congress combine. These two parties contested jointly in 2019 too. Then also the Opposition parties harped on BCs, Dalits and Minorities unitedly trouncing the BJP. But, the BJP polled more number of votes and won more seats in 2019 compared to the votes polled to it in 2014 and seats

won by it in 2014. A glance of the results pouring in constituency-wise indicated that the BCs and Dalits had voted for the BJP. The double-engine car of Modi at the Centre and Yogi Adityanath in UP implemented many development programmes in the past five years. Modern UP has been evolved with the development of expressways, roads and rail routes. The



Y SATYA KUMAR  
BJP National Secretary

number of airports in UP increased to 10 from the earlier two. Mafia violence has been totally checked and law and order has improved. Benefits of welfare schemes have been trickling down to the people, irrespective of their caste or creed.

Majority of the people are jubilant over the construction of Varanasi corridor and building of Ram temple in

AYODHYA. Will these help BJP to augment its number of seats held by it or reduce their number? Why should people give their vote to Samajwadi-Congress combine? In fact, what was its achievement? A peeved Rahul Gandhi, who tasted defeat at the hands of Smriti Irani in Amethi in the last elections, took recourse to contest this elections from his mother's constituency. Is it not shameful?

Not only in UP, but also across Bihar, Uttarakhanda, Haryana, Gujarat, Himachal, Assam, Delhi, Telangana, Bengal and other states, the wind is favourable for the BJP and there is no sign of it showing any letup.

A political analyst went on record stating that the people of Gopal Ganj in Bihar, which is said to be the strong fortress of Rashtriya

Janata Dal, resorted to sloganeering that they will bring back the party to power which brought Ram Lalla to the temple (Jo Ram Ko Laayehai, ham unkolayenge). The people knew how Laloo Prasad Yadav, his spouse Rabri Devi and corruption indulged in by his relatives put the State backwards by several decades.

It was the BJP that won the highest number of seats and maximum votes in Bihar in the last two Lok Sabha elections. ABP-C-Voter joint survey predicted that NDA will win more than 50% of the total LS seats in Bihar. In fact, 69% of the people surveyed want to see Narendra Modi as the PM, the survey indicated.

In fact, such an opinion was not limited to Bihar alone, but to the majority

people of the country, who are happy with the Modi's rule. In fact, more than 50% of the women of the country have decided to unilaterally vote for Modi. BCs, SCs and Adivasis find no other leader greater than Modi. This is attributed to the social welfare programmes implemented by Modi reaching closer to people now than in 2019. These sections constitute Modi Cabinet and BJP State-level leadership.

Ever since Narendra Modi came to power, the number of voters to the BJP is augmented by 15 crore. Since the people are faithful towards Modi's leadership, the BJP has decided to make electoral promises to the people in the name of "Modi Ki Guarantee".

Who is skeptical about Modi-led NDA securing the highest number of LS seats? Certainly the people are not skeptical about it.

TRULY SPEAKING

## Kakani condemns dragging him into Bengaluru rave party row

**PNS ■ NELLORE**

Minister for Agriculture Kakani Govardhan Reddy has condemned dragging him into the Bangalore rave party controversy and an impartial comprehensive investigation into the party and the participants.

Talking to the media here on Monday, the Minister made it clear that he had nothing to do with the car which was

found at the rave party and he did not know the owner of the car. The car which was found at Electronic City in Bangalore, had a sticker of MLA. The MLA sticker was also a Xerox copy, he clarified. He said that he would complain to the Karnataka police for using an MLA sticker with his name without his knowledge.

"I did not know about the car, which was found at a rave



party and the owner of the car. It is not proper to drag me into the issue for only the trivial reason that the car has the MLA sticker. The car was registered in the name of Tummala Venkateswara Rao and belonged to Vijayawada and I did know who he was" the Minister made it clear.

Kakani alleged that the TDP leaders launched a malicious campaign against him. The Bangalore narcotics police

registered a case and began an investigation, he said and appealed to the police to carry out an impartial inquiry and book the culprits. The investigation by Narcotic police would expose who was behind the rave party, he added.

Commenting on the election results, Kakani Govardhan Reddy exuded confidence that the YSRCP would register a landslide victory and come to power again.

## Collector warns of stringent action against illegal sand quarrying



**PNS ■ ELURU**

District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh warned of stringent action against illegal sand extractors and announced that vigil at sand reaches would be augmented by installing CCTVs.

The Collector, accompanied by Superintendent of Police D Mary Prashanthi and other officials, inspected the sand reaches at Rudrakota, Dacharam, Vanjaram and Ibrahimpet sand reaches in Kukkunur and Velerupadu mandals on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Prasanna Venkatesh said that sand mining should be carried out only in the permitted sand reaches in the district. "The mining at unauthorized sand reaches is a crime and criminal cases will be registered against those who ille-

gally mine and transport sand," he warned.

The Collector directed the officials to install CCTVs to prevent illegal mining and transportation of sand at Rudrankota 1 and 2 reaches, Dacharam, Vanjaram and Ibrahimpet sand reaches in Kukkunur and Velerupadu mandals in the scheduled areas of the district and to keep a special vigilance with the staff.

The Collector directed the Police, Mines and SEB officials to lay special vigil to curb the illegal mining and transport of sand anywhere in the district and ordered them to seize the vehicles involved in the illegal mining of sand and transportation and register criminal cases against the persons involved.

The Collector inquired about the details of illegal mining and transportation of

sand from the local people at Rudrakota and Ibrahim Pet sand reaches. He told the villagers that the illegal mining and transportation of sand would not be tolerated under any circumstances.

He ordered the officials to lay continuous surveillance with CC cameras and personnel at every sand reach in the scheduled areas of the district to register cases against those involved in illegal mining and transportation of sand and to seize the vehicles.

The Collector asked the villagers to inform about the illegal sand mining and transportation to the revenue, police and VROs. Joint Collector B Lavanya Veni, ITDA project officer Suryateja, SEB Additional SP N Suryachandra Rao and other officials were among those who accompanied the Collector.

## Farmers urged not to obstruct ONGC activities



**PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM**

West Godavari district Collector Sumit Kumar assured of doing justice to the farmers and appealed to them not to obstruct the activities of ONGC.

The Collector held a meeting with the farmers of Sitaramapuram South, Yerramshettivari Palem and Rustambad and assured them of doing justice as the ONGC laid pipeline through their fields.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that everyone should contribute to the development and that it is not proper to block the ONGC project without understanding.

The Collector made it clear that the lands adjacent to the road along the route of the pipelines would be surveyed and the actual owners would be identified and assured of doing justice by negotiating with the ONGC officials.

"About 3.20 km of pipelines

will be laid on the three-and-a-half m wide road. The pipeline route has been identified as government land. Funds of Rs 45 lakh for the development of villages will be sanctioned by the ONGC at the rate of Rs 15 lakh per village for the three villages where the ONGC pipelines will be laid," the Collector stated.

He said that the ONGC officials were asked to remove the pipelines immediately after the completion of the project, adding that the purchase and sale of land along the route of the pipelines would be done without any difficulty.

The Collector clarified the doubts of farmers in the meeting. The villagers accepted the proposals made by the Collector regarding the laying of the pipeline by the ONGC through the fields. Joint Collector CV Pravin Aditya, DRO J Uday Bhaskar Rao and ONGC officials were among those who attended the meeting.

## Attacks on women should be condemned by all: APWC chief

**PNS ■ GUNTUR**

Andhra Pradesh Women's Commission (APWC) Chairperson Gajjala Venkata Lakshmi has said that all should condemn the attacks on women by a political party for not voting for the party.

Attacks on women for not voting for their parties had never happened in the State earlier, she said in a statement here on Monday. The SC and BC women of Kothaganeshunipadu village have taken to the notice of the APEC chairperson about the attacks, carried out against them by activists of a political



party, by submitting a representation.

Responding to the complaint of the women, the APCC's chairperson wrote a letter to the Collector and SP of Palnadu district directing them

to protect the women of Kothaganeshunipadu village. She also asked the Collector and SP to take stringent action against those who assaulted the women for not voting for their party.

Venkata Lakshmi said that the women at Kottaganeshunipadu were confined for 24 hours and tortured. However, later they escaped from their clutches and took shelter in a temple, she said. This kind of intimidation deprives the right to vote, she lamented. She alleged that the women in the state are angry against the attitude of Chandrababu Naidu as he is instigating his cadre.

## Congress bonus is bogus, declares Harish

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

BRS MLA Harish Rao lashed out at the Telangana government criticising its decision to pay Rs 500 as bonus only for fine quality rice. He demanded that the government should withdraw the decision and pay Rs 500 bonus for all varieties of paddy.

Harish said in a statement on X, "The Congress government in TG has reneged on one more election promise. The Congress government promised a monthly allowance of Rs 4,000 to the unemployed, but they did not keep their word. Today they cheated farmers regarding bonuses. As part of its six guarantees, the

Congress had promised to buy the entire rice produced by farmers with a bonus of Rs 500 per quintal. After coming to power they changed their word. While farmers are ready to sell their paddy and are waiting for the bonus, it is sad that the government announced that it will pay bonus only for the thin variety paddy and that too only from the next season."

"About 90 per cent of paddy cultivated in Telangana is coarse. There is good demand in the market for thin rice. The market price for thin rice is much higher than the minimum support price. But coarse rice does not command so much value. So the bonus should be given to coarse



paddy cultivators. This is nothing but deceiving farmers. After the latest announcement by ministers, it is clear that the Congress admin has no sincerity towards farmers," Harish said.

He said that it has become clear that the promises made

by the Congress during elections were made with the malicious intent of coming to power and were not meant to ensure the welfare of farmers.

"I would like to remind you that the government has not yet implemented the promise to pay Rs 15,000 per acre as farmer assurance assistance and Rs 12,000 as financial assistance for agricultural labourers. Even the Rs 2 lakh loan waiver scheme has not been implemented. I demand the immediate withdrawal of the government's decision to pay bonus only for fine variety paddy. I request the government to pay a bonus of Rs 500 for every quintal of paddy from this season," he said.

## Malika Garg takes charge as Palnadu district SP

**PNS ■ NARASARAOPET**

Malika Garg here on Monday took charge as Superintendent of Palnadu district.

Talking to the media on the occasion, she said that she would give priority to the counting of votes in a peaceful atmosphere on June 4. She said that Andhra Pradesh has earned a reputation in maintaining law and order in the country and the same should be upheld.

During the election the law and order went out of order in some areas, she said, adding that all required steps would be taken to maintain the law and



order situation efficiently in the district.

She warned of taking stringent action, if the law and order is violated whoever they are. She also warned the police officials of action if they indulged in indiscipline.

## ECI guidelines should be followed during counting of votes: DC



**PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY**

District Collector K Madhavi Latha instructed the election officials and staff to strictly follow the guidelines of the Election Commission of India during the counting of votes on June 4 and complete preparations at the earliest.

The training programme was held for the officials and staff who will take part in the counting of votes. Speaking on the occasion, she said that mobile phones are not allowed in the counting hall and the ROs con-

cerned will have to carry out strict checks.

The Collector said that no vehicles are allowed inside the premises of Nannaya University. However, four AC buses are being arranged near the main entrance for the counting officials and staff, she said and directed the officials to prepare a plan for the counting of votes from 5 am onwards on June 4.

"No one, except the counting staff, should be allowed in the counting area. Only the mobile phone of the returning officer can be taken into the counting

hall and through them the information has to be given roundwise on the counting," she stated.

In the official communication department, a hotline with high-speed internet connection computer and a hotline should be set up for immediate information to the Chief Electoral Officer, she told the officials stating that along with seating arrangements for officials and staff, STD, fax, printer & internet facility should be provided and a senior officer should be appointed for their

supervision.

Madhavi Latha said it is important to take adequate care to make the observation room, phone, fax, internet, TV, protocol team and staff available. Media Center, Special Hall and Internet facility should be made available in the counting hall. Escort media groups should be formed to observe the counting process and they should be allowed only for a short period to the allotted place, he said.

The Collector said that mobile phones can be allowed

up to the media centre. She added that loudspeakers for public communication room announcements, computer facilities, and Excel sheets should be provided in the counting centre, adding that adequate staff should be deployed to collate information on the Encore site.

The returning officer concerned should appoint a designated officer for round-wise details and provide information to the media department through each round, she told the officials.



INDIA CORNER

### Rs 35 lakh cheque fraud in Arunachal, man held in Assam

Arunachal Pradesh police arrested one person from Assam on the charge of forging a cheque for Rs 35 lakh, a senior police officer said here on Monday. It is alleged that the accused somehow managed to get a leaf from the chequebook of a person, who is an account holder in a PSU bank branch in Itanagar, forged his signature and transferred the money to a private bank in Assam's Biswanath Chariali. The account holder lodged a complaint with the police regarding the unauthorised transfer in February, following which an investigation was initiated. Capital Superintendent of Police Rohit Rajbir Singh said. One person was arrested in Guwahati in this connection on May 18. The SP said that investigations revealed that a cheque leaf was missing from the chequebook of the complainant. The police also found a letter pad in the arrested man's possession, which he used to practise forging the signature of the complainant, Singh said.



### Man gets life term for killing wife, mother-in-law in Odisha

A court in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district on Monday sentenced a 50-year-old man to rigorous life imprisonment for killing his wife and mother-in-law in 2019. Mayurbhanj district additional sessions judge Satyanarayan Patra also imposed a fine of Rs 50,000 on Purna Chandra Mohanta, and in case of default, the convict has to remain in jail for another six months, said Krushna Chandra Das, additional public prosecutor. The court pronounced the judgement after examining the statements of 13 witnesses and medical reports, he said. Due to a family dispute, Purna Chandra killed his wife Mamata and mother-in-law Sunati Mohanta with an axe on June 17, 2019 in Khuntapal village under the Moroda Police station limits in the district. Both died on the spot, he said. Based on an FIR lodged by Purna's brother-in-law, the police registered a murder case and arrested the accused.



### Mercury again breaches 47 degrees Celsius Delhi

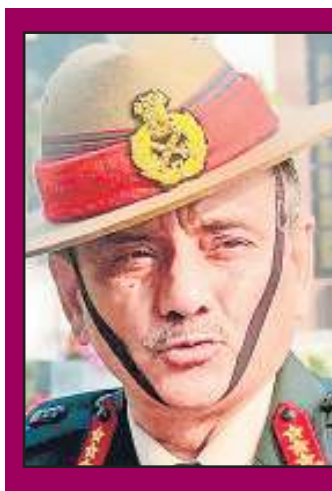
Temperatures in several parts of Delhi again breached the 47 degrees Celsius mark on Monday, with the weather office issuing a 'red alert' for the next five days due to heatwave to severe heatwave conditions in the national capital. The searing heat pushed the city's peak power demand to its highest for May, while the Delhi government directed the schools that have not closed for summer vacations to do so with immediate effect. Delhi has been seeing a steady rise in temperature in recent days, culminating in the highest temperature recorded this summer on Sunday when the overall temperature reached 44.4 degrees Celsius. Saturday's temperature was 43.6 degrees Celsius, up from 42.5 degrees Celsius on Friday. On Monday the national capital experienced the second-highest maximum temperature, 3.7 degrees above normal. Najafgarh recorded a high of 47.4 degrees Celsius on Monday.



# Agniveers are not just soldiers but leaders: CDS

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan on Monday visited the Maratha Light Infantry Regimental Centre in Belagavi to address the Agniveers, as they embark on their military journey, an official said. In his address, he underscored the noble purpose of military service and its pivotal role within the military framework. He said the Agniveers are not only soldiers but also leaders, innovators and defenders of the nation's sovereignty. In a statement, the Defence PRO said, "Addressing the evolving nature of warfare, he underscored the complexity and unpredictability of future conflicts to include cyber warfare, Artificial Intelligence and asymmetric threats which are now an integral part of the battlefield." He also spoke about technology integration and continuous learning and mentioned that in addition to staying abreast



**He underscored the complexity and unpredictability of future conflicts to include cyber warfare, Artificial Intelligence and asymmetric threats which are now an integral part of the battlefield**

with the latest advancements, there is also a need to showcase innovative approach towards combat. He expressed his gratitude for the commitment made by Agniveers by choosing the armed forces as a profession which is a testament to their exceptional duty towards the

nation. The CDS acknowledged the personal challenges faced by the soldiers and their families and the hardships they endure while operating in challenging environments. He assured that despite the challenges, the Agniveers will find their journey immensely

rewarding and each step, will lead to their personal growth and deep sense of pride in serving the nation. The CDS lauded the Regimental Centre and the team of instructors for creating a conducive environment for training and ensuring that best of the training is being imparted to the Agniveers. He also emphasised the critical role of professional instructors in shaping the future of the armed forces. Chauhan also emphasised that the quality of training directly impacts the operational readiness and urged to be honest towards it. He encouraged Agniveers to continue striving for excellence, to uphold the values of integrity and honour, and to serve as role models for their peers. He also stressed upon the importance of remaining steadfast in their commitment to nation building and to make a positive impact, the statement added.

### HC restrains BJP from publishing ads violative of poll code

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Monday issued an injunction restraining the BJP from publishing advertisements that violate the election Model Code of Conduct (MCC) until June 4, the day the Lok Sabha election process ends. The court, in an injunction order, also restrained the BJP from publishing advertisements mentioned in the TMC in its petition claiming unverified allegations against it and its workers. A single bench of Justice Sabyasachi Bhattacharyya restrained the BJP from publishing advertisements in any form of the media which is violative of the MCC till June 4 or until further notice. The court observed that a perusal of the newspaper advertisements annexed by petitioner TMC evince that those are in violation of the MCC. It also criticised the Election Commission (EC) for not addressing the complaints promptly, especially with most phases of the Lok Sabha elections already completed.

### India to participate in G-7, Ukraine peace summits: PM

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

India will participate in all important summits that promote the agenda of global peace, security and development, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said while referring to invitations to him to attend the G-7 meeting and the Ukraine peace summit next month. In an interview, the prime minister said India will "resonate the voice of the Global South" at these summits to shape the global discourse and advance the vision for human centric development and a prosperous and peaceful world. "The level of participation will be the factor of timing, logistics and parallel commitments," Modi said in response to a question on whether he will be attending the two multilateral gatherings. Italy is hosting the G-7 Summit meeting from June 13-15, while the Ukraine peace summit will be held in Switzerland from June 15-16. Modi said the invitations



**"The level of participation will be the factor of timing, logistics and parallel commitments," Modi said in response to a question on whether he will be attending the two multilateral gatherings**

extended to India to attend the summits were an acknowledgment of its significance and contribution to international affairs. "These reflect the robust global engagement that we have in keeping with our philosophy of Vasudhaiva

Kutumbakam (the world is one family)," the prime minister said. "India will be participating in all important summits that promote the agenda of global peace, security and development," Modi said.

### WRITES TO MHA SEEKING FCRA PROBE

## ED alleges over Rs 7-cr foreign funding to AAP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has written to the Union Home Ministry alleging the Aam Aadmi Party, which rules Delhi and Punjab, has received more than Rs 7 crore foreign funds in contravention of the FCRA, official sources said Monday. The federal probe agency sent the communication after it recovered some documents and emails during a drug-linked money laundering probe against former Punjab AAP MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira and some others. The probe was launched in 2021 and Khaira was arrested by the ED that year. He is now with the Congress party. Official sources said the ED had sent a detailed communication to the Union Home Ministry in August last year, underlining the alleged violations by the AAP and categorising these instances as contravention of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) and the

Representation of the People Act. It is understood that the ED recently shared some fresh inputs in this case with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). Sources said the ED found the AAP received overseas donations of about Rs 7.08 crore till now and they allegedly "mis-declared and manipulated" the identities and nationalities of the foreign donors apart from some other details. The agency has also informed the MHA about the verified names of the donors, their nationalities, passport numbers, amount donated, mode of donation and bank account number of the donor, receiver, billing name, address, phone numbers, email, time and the date of donation and payment gateway used, the sources said. Some fundraising events held by the AAP through its overseas wing volunteers in the USA and Canada between 2015 and 2016 are reported to have been made in alleged violation of the FCRA, the agency told the ministry.



### EXCISE SCAM

## ED seeks judicial custody for Kejriwal after he surrenders on June 2

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The ED on Monday sought extension of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's judicial custody after he surrenders on June 2 in an excise policy-linked money-laundering case. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) moved the application before Special Judge for ED and CBI Kaveri Baweja, seeking 14-day judicial custody for Kejriwal when he surrenders on June 2, claiming that the period of judicial custody granted earlier ends on Monday. Kejriwal is out on interim bail till June 1 following an order of the Supreme Court, which has directed him to surrender on June 2. The ED, meanwhile, told the court that there is sufficient evidence against Kejriwal and co-accused, Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) leader K Kavitha, to put them on trial in the case. The central probe agency made the submission in support of its supplementary charge sheets filed against both the politicians. The judge will continue hearing the ED's arguments on the point of taking cognisance of the charge sheets on Tuesday.

## No cabinet reshuffle on cards post LS polls: K'taka CM

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said a cabinet reshuffle is not on the cards. He also predicted that the Congress will get between 15 and 20 seats out of 28 Lok Sabha seats in the state. The chief minister also dismissed the BJP's allegations that the five guarantees implemented by the state government would be discontinued after the elections. "We are not thinking of any cabinet reshuffle after the Lok Sabha elections," Siddaramaiah said during the 'Meet the Press'

event organised by the Press Club of Bangalore. The Congress will go by the directions of the high command, he said. Siddaramaiah predicted that the Congress would win a minimum 15 seats and maximum 20 seats out of 28 Lok Sabha seats in Karnataka, and ridiculed former chief minister and BJP leader B S Yediyurappa's claim that the saffron party would win all 28 Lok Sabha seats. Accusing the BJP of spreading lies that the five guarantees of the Congress government would be stopped after the



election, the chief minister said the schemes will not be discontinued for any reason. "For no reason we will discontinue any guarantee

schemes. People have blessed us for five years. So long as their blessings are with us, these guarantees will not stop," he said. The chief minister also clarified that there is no dearth of funds for development funds in the state. "The BJP is lying that the state's treasury is empty due to the guarantees. Let them lie but it should be close to the truth. What they are talking is the height of lies," Siddaramaiah said. He said that BJP state chief B Y Vijayendra and the Leader of Opposition in the Karnataka

Assembly R Ashoka do not understand economics, due to which they are lying that the treasury is empty. Siddaramaiah also lashed out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for allegedly spreading lies about reservation for Muslims. "Modi is telling another lie that we will take away the reservation from the backward communities and give it to the Muslims. This is an outright lie," he said. Citing Chinnappareddy Commission report, Siddaramaiah said Muslim reservation has been in place in the state for 30 years.

## After June 4, Rahul Gandhi will have to take out 'Congress Dhundo Yatra': Shah

PNS ■ HISAR (HRY)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said after June 4, Rahul Gandhi will have to take out a "Congress Dhundo Yatra" as the grand old party will not even get 40 seats in the ongoing Lok Sabha polls. After addressing a rally in Haryana's Karnal, Shah kept up his attack on the Congress on various fronts at another public meeting in Hisar, where he campaigned for the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Lok Sabha poll candidate, Ranjit Singh Chautala. Asking the gathering if it wants to know the results after

four phases of polling in the general election, Shah said the BJP, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has already secured majority with more than 270 seats. He asserted that after the three remaining phases of polling, the saffron party's tally of seats will go past 400. "Shehzadon, damadon-wali Congress will not even get 40 seats," Shah claimed. Pointing out that the "shehzada" (prince) of the Congress, "Rahul baba" (Rahul Gandhi), had taken out the "Bharat Jodo Yatra", he said, "After June 4, Rahul baba will have to take out the 'Congress

Dhundo Yatra'. The Congress will not be seen even with binoculars," he said. The Lok Sabha poll results are scheduled to be declared on June 4. Shah said Modi's "Vikas ka Kamal" is blooming everywhere in Haryana. He said for the voters, on one hand there is Congress, during the rule of which scams worth Rs 12 lakh crore took place, and on the other hand there is Modi, who also served as the Gujarat chief minister for years and no one could level an allegation of corruption involving an amount of even "25 paise" on him.

### NOT RK MISSION OR BHARAT SEVASHRAM

## Mamata says she criticised monks who indulged in politics

PNS ■ ONDA/PANSKURA

Praising the Ramakrishna Mission and Bharat Sevashram Sangha for their philanthropic work, West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee on Monday said she was not against any institution but criticised one or two persons for indulging in political activities despite being monks. Banerjee had on Saturday alleged that some monks of the two

The chief minister also praised Bharat Sevashram Sangha, saying that it works for the people and that they also love her. "I had spoken about Kartik Maharaj, he did not allow Trinamool Congress agent to sit (at a polling booth) in Rejinagar," Banerjee said. Claiming that the Bharat Sevashram Sangha monk from Murshidabad district was working for the BJP, she accused him of instigating people when clashes between two groups happened at Rejinagar a few weeks ago. "If he wants to do BJP, he can, but should do it wearing its badge," she said, alleging that he was earlier aligned with Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury. Recounting her gestures for the Ramakrishna Mission in the past, Banerjee said that she saved Swami Vivekananda's house in Kolkata from getting sold off by getting the Kolkata Municipal Corporation to acquire it.



## Men at higher risk of developing problems because of diabetes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Men with diabetes are at a higher risk of experiencing major health effects than diabetic women, a new research has found. Complications arising from diabetes such as diseases of the heart, leg, foot, kidney, and eye were observed more in men than women, regardless of how long they've had diabetes, according to researchers, which include those from The University of Sydney, Australia. The study included 25,713 people, all of them aged 45 years and above, and having either type 1 or type 2 diabetes. Through surveys, the partici-

pants were followed up for 10 years for major health problems developed because of diabetes. The responses were then linked to their medical records. The researchers found that 44 per cent of the men experienced a cardiovascular complication, including stroke and heart failure, compared to 31 per cent in women. The findings were published in the 'Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health'. Further, 25 per cent and 35 per cent of the men were found to develop conditions of leg/foot and kidney, respectively, as compared to 18 per cent and 25 per cent of the women, respectively. Problems of the



leg/foot included ulcers and bone inflammation, while those of the kidney included chronic disease and failure. Overall, the researchers found that diabetic men were 51 per cent more likely to develop heart problems than

diabetic women. Men with diabetes were also found to be 55 per cent and 47 per cent more likely to develop complications in the kidney and leg/foot, respectively. However, regarding the overall risk of developing eye complications, the team found little difference between men and women. Of the participants, 57 per cent of the men developed these conditions, while among women, 61 per cent developed them. Men were found to have a 14 per cent higher risk of developing sight-threatening eye disease diabetic retinopathy. "Men had a 1.5-fold increased risk of cardiovascu-

lar disease (CVD), lower limb, and kidney complications, and risk of diabetic retinopathy was 14 per cent greater in men than in women. These findings are reflected in the ~1.4 times higher 10-year rates for CVD, lower limb, and kidney complications in men compared with women," the authors wrote. The researchers said that while rates of developing complications because of diabetes rose in tandem with the number of years lived with the metabolic disease for both men and women, the sex-based differences in complication rates persisted. As a possible explanation, the researchers point-

ed out that the men in the study were more likely to have well-known risk factors. Men, in general, may also be less likely to make lifestyle changes, take preventive medications, or get health checks to lower their risks, they suggested. Being an observational study, no causal factors could be established, the researchers said. They also acknowledged a lack of information on potentially influential factors, such as diabetes medications and glucose and blood pressure levels. The authors said that even though men with diabetes are at a higher risk of developing complications, these rates are high in both men and women.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## The PoK hobgoblin

In election season, BJP leaders intensify campaign for PoK integration with India

If it is election season in India, can references to Pakistan be far behind? In 2019, it was Pulwama and the resultant surgical strikes. This time, an IAF convoy came under terror attack in the Poonch area on May 4, following which Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) made a rather late entry into the poll narrative. The call for reclaiming PoK is being given wide currency by the BJP; its top leaders are making bold assertions on the issue. Senior party leaders Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and Himanta Biswa Sarma have all recently underscored the BJP's commitment towards integrating PoK with India. To begin with, Amit Shah made a striking declaration, asserting that India will take PoK as it "belongs to us". The statement is seen as a bold political promise, aligning with the BJP's long-standing position on PoK. Then, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma echoed the sentiment, adding that the move is not merely aspirational but a realistic objective under the current Government. Then came Rajnath Singh's slightly different approach,



focusing on the human rights situation in PoK. Singh called on international bodies to take cognisance of the rights violations in the region. These statements during the ongoing polls are clear indication that the BJP wants to draw people's attention to this long-pending issue. They also underline the party's strategic use of PoK as a rallying point in the lead-up to the elections, aiming to consolidate support among nationalist segments.

Indeed, the situation in PoK is not good. The locals there are demanding greater autonomy and political rights, more self-governance and local control. They are also concerned about rights abuses and restrictions on civil liberties, calling for the protection of their basic rights, freedom of expression and an end to political repression. Additionally, economic development is a major issue, with calls for better opportunities, improved infrastructure, healthcare and education, along with increased investment to drive regional growth. But can India intervene in PoK matters and reintegrate it in our territory is another question. Unfortunately, such statements often cross borders and have unintended ramifications on the other side. Domestically, it may serve to galvanise the party's core supporters and assert the BJP's strong stance on national security and territorial integrity. It is also likely to influence electoral dynamics, with the party hoping to leverage this narrative to bolster its performance in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. Internationally, these statements may further strain India-Pakistan relations, potentially escalating tensions in an already volatile region. The call for international intervention on human rights grounds adds a new dimension to the discourse, potentially inviting global scrutiny and diplomatic engagements which India has been avoiding ever since this issue started. These remarks are more driven by poll expediency and election rhetoric rather than the Government's stated policy. These statements could exacerbate regional tensions and complicate diplomatic efforts.

### PICTALK



People show their inked finger after casting their vote during the fifth phase of Lok Sabha elections, in Ladakh. PTI

## Museums are pillars of culture and education

Museums play an essential role in preserving the history of human civilisation, offering tangible evidence of our existence and activities throughout time

Museums play an indispensable part in understanding the history of human civilisation. It is proof of our existence on this planet and material evidence of human activity carried out during our lifetime. Understanding the diverse cultural tapestries that make up human history helps build more inclusive societies. Museums come in various types, each focusing on different aspects of human knowledge, culture and the natural world, like Art museums, history museums, natural history museums, science museums, military and war museums, aviation and space museums, etc. This range of purposes results in a remarkable diversity of museums in terms of their form, content and function. The history of museums is a fascinating journey that reflects humanity's evolving ways of collecting, preserving and interpreting objects of significance. The concept of collecting valuable or significant objects dates back to ancient civilisations. In ancient Greece, for instance, temples often housed collec-



tions of art and artefacts dedicated to the gods. The word "museum" originates from the Greek "mouseion," a term used to describe a place dedicated to the Muses, the goddesses of the arts and sciences. The concept of the public museum began to take shape in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Many consider the Ashmolean Museum, which opened in 1683 at Oxford University, as the first public museum of its kind. The founding of the British Museum in London in 1753 was a watershed moment in the evolution of museums worldwide. Numerous national museums were founded in the 19th century, frequently serving as emblems of cultural identity and national pride. The history of museums in India is deeply intertwined with the country's rich cultural and historical legacy. The colonial period saw the estab-

lishment of the first formal museums in India. The British East India Company and other colonial powers began collecting artefacts, often to showcase their conquests and understand local cultures. The Indian Museum in Kolkata, founded in 1814, is the oldest museum in India and one of the earliest in the world. It was established by the Asiatic Society of Bengal and housed collections that ranged from geological to archaeological artefacts. Post-independence, the National Museum under the Ministry of Culture was established in Delhi in 1949. It houses a vast collection of artefacts representing over 5,000 years of Indian history. It was a significant step towards preserving and showcasing India's cultural heritage. To propagate science and develop scientific temper, the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM) was established on April 4, 1978. Today, it administers 26 Science Centres/Museums spread across the country and is considered the world's largest network of science centres/museums. Museums not only play a vital

role in education and research, serving as repositories of knowledge, culture and history; but also in the conservation and preservation of the region's cultural heritage. Their contributions extend beyond simply displaying artefacts; they provide immersive learning experiences, support scholarly research and engage the public in various educational activities. Museums offer interactive exhibits that engage visitors in hands-on activities. These interactive elements make learning more engaging and memorable, helping visitors, especially children, to grasp complex concepts in science or history through experience. Museums also act as centres of active research. Researchers in archaeology, anthropology, biology and art history rely on museum collections for their studies. Much breathtaking research in science, especially on paleogenomics, was done using the artefacts from museums.

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



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

# Communal friction must end now

Despite facing criticism, Modi's tenure has seen minimal communal clashes, emphasising the importance of mutual understanding for communal harmony



PRAFULL GORADIA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the hectic campaigning for the current Lok Sabha elections has asked the Muslim community to seriously introspect; he has also exposed the Congress of endlessly pampering their notions of separateness. As expected, he has been pilloried for doing some blunt speaking.

No honest political observer can deny that Prime Minister Modi's administration has been free of communal clashes, except the Delhi riots of 2020. Earlier, this used to be a regular feature. The only other communal clashes have been over the abduction of cows. Hindus detest the killing of cows and oxen. In the 16th century, the Mughal emperor Akbar banned the killing of cows, because it offended Hindu sentiments.

In the 20th century, the Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Hind, founded by Maulana Azad advised Muslims to avoid killing cows as it offends Hindus. An unwritten clause of the Partition of India was that those Muslims who wanted to stay back in post-Partition India shouldn't do anything to offend Hindu sentiments. Qaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah had clearly stated in his Lahore speech of March 22, 1940, that "Hindus and Muslims are very different and cannot exist in the same country". Dr BR Ambedkar endorsed this view in his 1941 book Thoughts on Pakistan that an exchange of population should be organized on the Turko-Greek lines in 1923, under the auspices of the League of Nations. Jinnah, Ambedkar and Dr Rajendra Prasad endorsed this view. Rajendra Babu, India's President from 1950 to 1960, had written India Divided, wherein he proposed that Muslims who couldn't emigrate to Pakistan could be specially permitted to stay back, not as citizens but as aliens with visas.

Jinnah and other League functionaries in 1946 and 1947, had repeatedly demanded an exchange of population. Their views were published in the Dawn, newspaper Jinnah (now published in Karachi but initially printed in Delhi). Sir Feroze Khan Noon, later Pakistan's first prime minister, threatened in



April 1946 that if Hindus took an obstructive attitude to population exchange, Muslims would re-enact the murderous orgies of Genghis and Halaqu Khan. Iftikhar Husain, the Nawab of Mamdot, in December 1946 said he supported an exchange of population because many Muslims wanted to settle in Sindh. Ismail Chundrigar, later Pakistan's sixth prime minister, said that the British had no right to hand over Muslims to a subject people over whom they had ruled for 500 years. Shaukat Hayat Khan, son of Sikandar Hayat Khan, said the exchange of population was an integral part of the demand for Pakistan. Ismail Mohammed, a Muslim Leaguer from Madras said that Muslims were in the middle of a jihad. Similar were the views of Raja Ghazanfar Ali, who was later Pakistan's food, agriculture and health minister.

To the extent that Professor M Mujeeb, Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia University in Delhi met the Turkish representative to the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization (UNO), the latter was surprised and asked Mujeeb, "How are you representing India? I thought all Muslims went away to Pakistan". The point here is that all



THE INCUMBENT GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN BOLD ENOUGH TO BRING IN SOME REFORMS, HOWEVER LIMITED. INSTANT VERBAL DIVORCE HAS BEEN ABOLISHED AND EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AND INITIATIVES HAVE BEEN EXPANDED TO INCLUDE MUSLIM GIRLS

clashes or friction between the two communities ought to have been put finally at rest. They would have been so but for the insertion of Articles 25 to 30 into the Constitution of India by the Leftist followers of the country's first PM Jawaharlal Nehru. They wanted a substantive vote base for their great leader. This explains why a Uniform Civil Code was made a non-justiciable part of the Constitution. While zamindaris and jagirdaris were abolished, waqfs, which have been nationalized in many Islamic countries, were left untouched. Every other aspect of the separateness of the community's separate identity, like Urdu, polygamy, instant verbal talaq, etc., was not only not touched but continuously pampered. Madrasas, which foster a parallel and obscurantist education system, continue to thrive, preaching sectarianism and schism, to the detriment of their community. The present Government has been bold to bring in some reforms, however limited. Instant verbal divorce has been abolished and educational facilities and initiatives have been expanded to include Muslim girls. The womenfolk of the community, who have benefitted from these reforms, are being suspected of voting for a Hindu party in these elec-

tions. Islam accords priority to the ummah (community) over the vatan (country). There can be no denying that former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had said that Muslims have "first claim over our national resources" and he would have no hesitation in allotting 15 per cent of resources to them. During his regime, he appointed no less than five commissions to 'enquire' how and why Muslims in India were disadvantaged and what should be done to pull them up. Qutbuddin Aibak captured Delhi in 1192 AD and thereafter, one Muslim dynasty after another ruled Delhi till 1857, i.e., a total of 665 years before they were erased by the British Crown. With such a long rule, has any Government asked why the community is backward and needs a lift-up? Is taqlid (orthodoxy) in preference to ijihad (re-interpretation) the reason for this? Does the neglect of women also further this state of near-perpetual backwardness? Who is answerable for these crimes of omission? Is the present prime minister, the first Indian leader to ask these uncomfortable questions, in any way answerable for this?

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha; views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### ECONOMIC HARDSHIPS PERSIST

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Economic crisis takes a backseat in elections," published on May 20, this is my response. In this dance of democracy, scarce resources are rambling up election tempos. The focus shifts from core issues like employment to distractions like religious and cultural symbols. Despite being touted as the fifth-largest economy, India faces grim realities: high unemployment, displacement due to conflicts in Manipur and agrarian distress. Political promises of increased reservations appear futile without sufficient job creation. The International Labour Organisation highlights severe forced labour issues, questioning India's progress. With inflation soaring and trade deficits widening, the economic situation remains dire. Public-sector job cuts and reliance on self-employment indicate systemic failures. To truly uplift the marginalised and revitalise the economy, a robust public sector and equitable competition with the private sector are essential. Would politics support such a transformation?

Kunal Singh | Patiala

### THE TRUMP SYNDROME

Madam — In US politics, Donald Trump was not the cause of a democratic crisis of faith. He just rode to power on it. Once in control, he leveraged the same disillusionment that helped him into office. Debasing democratic norms and abusing tall institutions led to the subversion of democratic systems. This Trump syndrome of relentless polarisation, which spawns apathy and disconnect in the polity, is seen creeping into nations across the globe to keep the political brew on a boil. Scandals and crises would shake voters' faith in the political system occasionally, but an engineered schism and dysfunction in the polity with agenda-driven governance turned corrosive.

Universally, people feel that democracy is failing because the Governments it produced were unable or unwilling to address their greater concerns. In the ongoing

### Combating wildlife trafficking



YouTube highlights a troubling trend. It's alarming that tech-savvy wildlife traffickers exploit YouTube's vast user base to market and sell protected species, such as parakeets, rare turtles and pangolins. This underscores a significant challenge: the intersection of advanced technology and traditional crime. Despite YouTube's policies against animal abuse, the persistence of these videos suggests enforcement gaps.

Apropos the news article, "YouTube happy hunting ground for wildlife traffickers," published on May 20, this is my response. Reading about the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) taking down over 1,100 YouTube videos linked to illegal wildlife trade is both reassuring and deeply concerning. On one hand, it's encouraging to see concerted efforts to tackle this digital menace. However, the sheer volume of such content on a major platform like

The WCCB's proactive steps, involving volunteers and "WILD NET," show progress in wildlife crime control through digital tools. Stronger tech-enforcement collaborations are vital for effective monitoring and policy enforcement. As we applaud the WCCB's efforts, we must also recognise the ongoing battle against a lucrative and persistent illicit wildlife trade that adapts as quickly as we counter it.

Neha Gupta | Delhi

phase of political asphyxiation, the disillusioned electorate is dispirited to defend a system that has failed to champion its cause. Worse, it could be more than ever before that ballots may no longer be the sole guarantee of true democracy. Apathy towards democracy is a gateway to larger unrest.

R Narayanan | Mumbai

### CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT

Madam — Various things on earth now feel the effect of climate change. Due to climate change, it has been seen that the negative impact on the mental health of people has increased. This research has been published in the journal "Lancet Neurology." Fluctuations in temperature are now affecting brain diseases as well. I recently read in the news that the severity of diseases like cerebral palsy and encephalitis is increasing. Cases of cerebral palsy are also increasing due to the rise in nighttime temperatures. Overall, the scope of climate change is becoming very large. Due to the increase in temperature, various birds and animals have also start-

ed to be affected. It is time for them to go to human settlements for drinking water. All this is happening due to many things. It seems that more than 5 million trees have been cut in India only from 2018 to 2022. This was recently stated in the report "Nature Sustainability." According to this report, most trees have disappeared in Telangana and Maharashtra. It has come to light that big trees have been cut down to expand agriculture in many areas. The remaining trees are also affected by forest fires and fungal infections. One factor that mitigates overall temperature rise is the current state of the tree. The temperature rise will affect many things and many cities near the sea are also likely to go under water. The increase in temperature should be stopped by humans. Otherwise, it seems that he will have to face many problems and the Government should also take measures for this.

Shantaram Wagh | Pune

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## FIRST COLUMN ADDRESSING EMOTIONAL IMBALANCE IN SOCIETY

Independence is not possible without education in emotional self-control



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Today, whether you open a newspaper or tune into a news channel, you are almost guaranteed to encounter reports of crimes ranging from petty thefts to dacoity, murder, terrorism and sexual offences. Crime is alarmingly on the rise. This surge in criminal activity to a variety of factors, each adding to the growing sense of unease in our society. Giving the rationale behind this frightening phenomenon, they explain that some cases are due to the motive of money, others due to rage, hate, enmity and revenge and yet others due to odious discrimination based on caste, religion, ethnicity, culture or nationality or due to business rivalry or professional jealousy. However, they do not go into the common root cause of all these multifarious manifestations and motives of crime. As a result, they fail to address themselves to the real problem and to remedy the worsening and threatening situation. So, it would be correct to say that, in reality, there is no other problem but that people do not know and eradicate the roots of the tree of all problems and, instead, they try to get rid of some of its branches only. Of course, no one can deny that in a society where corruption and criminal tendencies have become strongly entrenched and where the virus of crime has entered and spread into the whole body of society, it has become difficult to breathe the pure air of freedom or liberation from worry, fear and tension and, despite lack of able-bodied military men and police and trained and thoughtful investigating officers, life is neither safe from ruffians nor Governmental apathy. Everyone is fed up with the delaying tactics of those whose job is to facilitate rather than obstruct. Everyone is tired of the corrupt ways of everyone who can do something good and gracious but who, in practice, is doing the reverse.



But still, everyone is doing, more or less, what he or she considers distasteful, disdainful, obnoxious or horrible. If we go deep into this problem, then we will find that emotional disturbance is the origin of all disturbances. Yes! emotional imbalance or instability of the mind is the forerunner of all imbalances and instabilities. Emotional imbecility is the mother of all kinds of anarchy, deviant behaviour and crime — big or small. It is a lack of emotional intelligence that is at the back of every kind of waywardness, wanton behaviour and vicious tendencies.

In this context, let us understand that like and dislike are the natural tendencies in all men and women. But liking for a particular gender may become so irresistible as to grow into -lust and dislike for certain persons may become so strong as to grow into deep hatred and, in the case of these emotions going berserk, people may, one day, find that they have landed in jails. So, when we talk of emotional maturity or control, what we mean is that we have to have a measure of discipline or control over our tendencies of inclination and aversion, liking and disliking or love and hate so that these natural tendencies enable us to keep the company of what is good and salubrious and keep away from what is bad and harmful.

When we refer to emotional intelligence, we, refer to our sound judgment as to what are the things or who are the persons with which or with whom we should associate and what or who are of the opposite kind so that we may ward them off. But, alas! Most men and women miss that education that trains emotions or develops emotional potential positively. As long as this continues to happen, we will have a society where crimes are rampant and where people live in a State of tension with the push and pull of criminal tendencies pounding their minds. But what else is the means of emotional training than spiritual education? Our struggle for independence will remain incomplete unless people are educated to have emotional self-control.

(Writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist; views are personal)

# Celebrating the power of cultural diversity



RAJDEEP PATHAK

As Nobel laureate Desmond Tutu once articulated, our differences underscore our mutual interdependence, highlighting the profound value of cultural diversity

The "World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development", celebrated annually on May 21st, stands as a beacon of hope in a world often marred by conflicts stemming from cultural, religious and socio-economic differences. In such a situation of growing discord, dialogue emerges as a powerful tool for fostering understanding, cooperation and ultimately, development. Dialogue serves as the cornerstone of development in a world, characterized by its diversity. The 1984 Nobel Peace Prize winner from South Africa and Theologian Desmond Tutu had eloquently stated, "We are different so that we can know our need for one another," thus necessitating the essence of cultural diversity - an opportunity to learn, grow and empathize with others.

UNESCO established the "World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development" in response to the 2001 terrorist attack that destroyed the Bamiyan Buddha statue in Afghanistan. In December 2002, the United Nations General Assembly officially designated May 21st as this day. The 2002 Universal Declaration recognized the need to "Enhance the potential of culture as a means of achieving prosperity, sustainable development and global peaceful coexistence".

Moreover, with 89% of all current conflicts in the world occurring in countries with low intercultural dialogue, to forge effective cooperation and sustain peace, strengthening intercultural dialogue becomes a necessity. Further, according to UNESCO data (https://www.un.org/en/observances/cultural-diversity-day), the cultural and creative sector is one of the most powerful engines of development worldwide. It accounts for more than 48 million jobs globally - almost half of which are held by women - representing 6.2% of all existing employment and 3.1% of global GDP. It is also the sector that employs and provides opportunities for the largest number of young people under the age of 30. However, the cultural and creative sector still does not have the place it deserves in public policies and international cooperation. Thus, in a bid to change this, in September 2022, delegations from 150 States gathered in Mexico for MONDIACULT 2022 - the largest world conference devoted to culture (in the last 40 years) - where they unanimously adopted the historic 'Declaration for Culture' affirming 'culture' as a 'global public good' and calling for it to be integrated "as a specific goal in its own right" in the Development Agenda beyond 2030.

But what exactly are the concepts of diversity and inclusion along with culture? Diversity encompasses the intentional and inclusive gathering of individuals from various backgrounds, encompassing differences in race, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, age, educational background and this list can go on. It emphasizes the importance of bringing these diverse identities together to interact positively and contribute to a shared environment. Inclusion goes beyond merely acknowledging and respecting each person's distinct experiences and identities. It requires fair treatment and widespread recognition. It means embracing and appreciating these differences as essential



THROUGHOUT HISTORY, NUMEROUS INSTANCES UNDERSCORE THE TRANSFORMATIVE POTENCY OF DIALOGUE IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION. ONE SUCH EXAMPLE IS THE GANDHIAN MODEL OF 'NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION'. MAHATMA GANDHI ADVOCATED 'SATYAGRAHA' AGAINST OPPRESSION

elements for the progress and well-being of all.

Thus the 'World Cultural Diversity Day', commemorating the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, also emphasizes four key objectives. First, it advocates for policies fostering the creation, production and dissemination of diverse cultural goods and services. Secondly, it encourages initiatives facilitating a balanced exchange of cultural products while enhancing the mobility of artists and cultural professionals. Thirdly, it promotes sustainable development policies and international aid programs that embrace cultural integration. Lastly, it underscores the importance of aligning international and national legislation with human rights and fundamental freedoms, ensuring the preservation and flourishing of cultural diversity worldwide. All this is because, 'Cultural Diversity', drives development, not only economically, but also personally.

Simultaneously, 'Dialogue' also transcends geographical and cultural boundaries, catalysing cross-cultural understanding and cooperation. As Rumi, the 13th-century Persian poet, poignantly expressed, "The wound is the place where the Light enters you," a profound insight underscoring the potential for growth and enlightenment that arises from engaging in dialogue, even amidst adversity.

In today's complex landscape, dialogue emerges as an urgent necessity, given the multitude of global challenges like climate change, economic disparity and geopolitical tensions. Martin Luther King Jr.'s timeless words, "Injustice any-

where is a threat to justice everywhere," emphasize the interconnectedness of human experiences and the pivotal role of dialogue in addressing systemic inequalities in this landscape.

Engaging in dialogue, not only enhances self-awareness but also fosters profound connections with others. For instance, movements like 'Black Lives Matter', sparked by tragic incidents like George Floyd's and Breonna Taylor's deaths, underscore the imperative of dialogue in combating systemic racism and police brutality. Meaningful conversations among communities, law enforcement agencies and policymakers are essential for driving substantial reforms and promoting racial equity.

Throughout history, numerous instances underscore the transformative potency of dialogue in conflict resolution. One such example is the Gandhian model of 'nonviolent communication'. Mahatma Gandhi advocated for 'Satyagraha' or truth force, advocating peaceful resistance against oppression. His commitment to dialogue and nonviolence inspired millions, to follow the path of non-violence against the might of British colonial rule. Through nonviolent protests, civil disobedience and constructive dialogue, Gandhi showcased the power of dialogue in effecting profound social and political change. His method challenged colonial oppression's legitimacy, spurring a global movement for civil rights and social justice, across the country and inspiring others worldwide. Gandhi's legacy underscores dialogue's enduring potential in resolving conflicts and advancing justice worldwide.

CEO of the East African Centre for Human Rights, Judith Oloo, writing for "The Standard" in her article "The World Day of Cultural Diversity: Children's role as carriers of culture" (standard media.co.ke), lays importance on the role of children as torchbearers of cultural diversity. She says that children, "As participants in and carriers of our culture... are a critical part of our population - the future of our societies". According to her, culture profoundly shapes children's development, influencing emotional, social, physical and linguistic growth from birth. Customs, beliefs and practices surrounding food, art, language and religion play significant roles. Recognizing this, professionals working with children, such as social workers and child rights advocates, must grasp these influences to bring about a change. In today's world, addressing global challenges requires collaborative approaches rooted in dialogue and mutual understanding. According to the UN, "Three-quarters of the world's major conflicts have a cultural dimension. Bridging the gap between cultures is urgent and necessary for peace, stability and development."

Each of us has a role in fostering understanding to cultivate thriving communities. It's crucial to recognize how culture, in its various diversified forms, enriches discourse and contributes to sustainable development across different realms - social, environmental, economic and so on. Is it then not the time for us to at least sit across the table and start communicating?

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

# Outrage over superstar Mammooty's alleged Jihadi ties

The controversy has ignited a fierce political debate and exposed deep-seated tensions within Kerala's political landscape

The disclosure by Mohammed Sharshad, a Chennai-based businessman, who is also a CPI(M) activist, that Malayalam cinema's "super mega star" Mammooty has shocked the secular, liberal and democratic political leaders of Kerala. The CPI(M), CPI and Congress leaders have come out openly against the Sangh Parivar for portraying Mammooty as a Jihadi. The disclosure about Mammooty's links with Jihadi organisations was made by a Muslim youth, a local leader of the CPI(M). The first person to attack Sangh Parivar about the report about Mammooty's Jihadi links was K T Jaleel MLA, a former CPI(M) minister and former president of the banned SIMI. Jaleel is famous for his



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

speeches and writings that India could be liberated only through Islam. Then other ministers took up the issue and it has caused ripples in Kerala. Mammooty, who was a below-average student during his college days is an Arabic graduate from Maharaja's College Ernakulam. While he was a student, Prof Ummer was the head of the Arabic Department and it was the latter who set the question papers

and valued the answer sheets. No Arabic student has failed in BA Arabic examination in Maharajas College those days. The title super mega star reminds one of the age-old adage in the land of the blind, the one-eyed is the King. Mammooty is no match for his counterparts in Hindi movies or Hollywood.

Being a Jihadi or communalist is not a crime. The issue here is that one who questions the organized bargaining capacity of the Muslim community becomes persona non grata in Kerala. Leaders who were bold enough to point out the hidden agenda of the Muslim political and spiritual leaders ended up in dustbins. EMS Namboodirippadu tops the list of such persons who

were decimated by the Islamist leaders. Before the 1991 assembly elections, there was a suggestion from certain CPI(M) leaders like E K Nayanar and M V Raghavan (both left to meet Marx, Lenin and Stalin) that the party should ally with the Muslim League. But Namboodirippadu was quick to retort that the Muslim League should get rid of its name and flag (that resembled the Pakistani national flag) to be considered an ally. Leaders of the Muslim League became furious and they saw to it that Namboodirippadu was cut to size and the CPI(M) removed him from the coveted position of general secretary in 1992. The next to earn the wrath of leaders of the Muslim community was A K Antony who was the chief minister during the

period 2001 to 2004. The 2003 Marad beach massacre that saw the slaughtering of eight Hindu fishermen by Islamic radicals happened during Antony's tenure. Antony was for an investigation by the CBI but made a hasty retreat as Muslim League leaders throttled the move. But he warned the League leaders openly that the organized bargaining power of communal outfits would not be entertained by his Government. This hurt the Muslim League leadership who asked the Congress High Command to remove Antony from the chief minister's post at the earliest. That's how Antony tendered his resignation post-2004 Lok Sabha polls and moved over to New Delhi. V S Achuthanandan, a widely respected leader of the

CPI(M) was sworn in as chief minister in 2006 after the assembly election. Achuthanandan was always against any kind of communalism and fanaticism. During a press meeting in the national capital in 2010, Achuthanandan said that Love Jihad was a reality. "The Muslim fundamentalists have an agenda to convert Kerala into a Muslim majority State within the next two decades," he had said.

Though the CPI(M) lost the 2011 elections by a whisker, the party returned to power in 2016 making use of the goodwill enjoyed by Achuthanandan all over Kerala. The highway from Kasaragod to Thiruvananthapuram was dotted with larger-than-life-size

posters of Achuthanandan giving an impression that he would be the automatic choice of the CPI(M) as chief minister after the election. But Pinarayi Vijayan, whose pictures or posters were conspicuously absent, was nominated as chief minister by the party's leadership and since then the former has become the uncrowned king of Kerala. Achuthanandan was sidelined not because of the influence wielded by the Muslim community in the CPI(M).

The ire of the Muslim League and community leaders also claimed the political career of G Sudhakaran, a CPI(M) minister who was disliked by the district-level leaders of Alappuzha (all belonging to the Muslim community) from where he hails. PC George, the

seven-time legislator who had defeated both the LDF and the UDF in assembly elections was made to bite the dust in his home turf of Poonjar for lambasting Love Jihad and the role of various Islamist outfits in this operation. For more than four decades, George was a secular leader acceptable to the Muslim community. But when he pointed out the plight of the victims of Love Jihad, George became an enemy of humanity and the entire Muslim community voted against him in the 2021 assembly election. This is Kerala's brand of secularism. Caveat Emptor would be the ideal word of caution for those daring to question the Islamic outfits.

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



MONEY MATTERS

### SII commences shipments of malaria vaccine 'R21/Matrix-M' to Africa

Vaccines manufacturer Serum Institute of India (SII) on Monday said it has started exports of 'R21/Matrix-M' malaria vaccine to Africa as part of the global fight against the disease. Developed in collaboration with the University of Oxford and Novavax's Matrix-M adjuvant, the R21/Matrix-M vaccine is the second malaria vaccine to be authorised for use in children in malaria-endemic regions, SII said in a statement. The initial shipment is being sent to the Central African Republic (CAR), followed by other African countries such as South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo in the coming days, it added. In total, 1,63,800 doses of the 'R21/Matrix-M' malaria vaccine have been specifically allocated for the CAR region, of which only 43,200 doses have been dispatched on Monday from SII's facility in Pune. The shipment of the 'R21/Matrix-M' malaria vaccine to Africa marks a momentous milestone in our collective fight against this life-threatening disease.



### Oil India posts 18% rise in Q4 net profit; announces 1:2 bonus share

State-owned Oil India Ltd (OIL) on Monday reported an 18 per cent rise in net profit in the March quarter on the back of higher prices of crude oil. The consolidated net profit of Rs 2,332.94 crore in January-March -- the fourth quarter of the 2023-24 fiscal year -- compared with Rs 1,979.74 crore earning in the same period of the previous financial year, according to a stock exchange filing by the nation's second biggest state-owned oil and gas producer. Higher oil prices led to a 16 per cent rise in turnover to Rs 10,375.09 crore. Earnings from crude oil produced and sold rose 18 per cent but the same from gas dropped 16.5 per cent on lower prices. For the full 2023-24 fiscal (April 2023 to March 2024), net profit fell 29 per cent to Rs 6,980.45 crore. OIL said its board approved issue a 1:2 bonus issue (one free share for every two held).



### Uber gets licence to operate buses in Delhi

Ride hailing app Uber has received an aggregator licence by the Delhi Transport Department to operate buses in the national capital under the Delhi Premium Bus Scheme, the company said in a statement. Delhi becomes the first state to award a licence for bus operations and Uber becomes the first aggregator to be granted a licence under the Delhi Premium Bus scheme, the statement said. "Following a successful pilot programme, where we witnessed significant demand for buses, we are thrilled to officially introduce the convenience of Uber rides to buses in Delhi," Uber Shuttle India head Amit Deshpande said. Customers will be able to pre-book seats on their preferred route by choosing the 'Uber Shuttle' option on the Uber app. The formal launch of Uber Shuttle, a bus service tailored for daily commuting needs, brings to fruition a pilot programme that was initially tested in Delhi-NCR and has been operational in Kolkata since last year under an MoU with the West Bengal government, as per the statement.



## Govt plans to ensure adequate coal stock at thermal plants

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The coal ministry has planned extensively to ensure adequate stock of dry fuel at all thermal power plants ahead of monsoons in order to meet increased demand for electricity. During monsoons, coal availability gets impacted due to rains.



According to official sources, in a recent sub-group meeting with state power generating companies at the level of inter-ministerial committee of coal, power and railways, it has been observed that adequate stock of coal is available at all thermal power plants (TPPs) in

the country. Coal supply and logistics issues are discussed and resolved on weekly basis through sub-group meetings. This year, coal production is growing at 7.26 per cent over

last year, source said, adding that thermal power generation is growing at 8.78 per cent and rake supply is growing at 8.45 per cent. Adequate transportation arrangements are in place to meet enhanced demand of

coal for increased need of thermal power for the growing economy, they said.

Total stock of coal as on May 15, 2024 at pit-head and on transit to TPPs is 147 million tonnes (MT) compared to 117 MT on the same day last financial year, showing a growth of 25 per cent.

Coal stock at TPPs as on May 15, 2024 stood at 45 MT, 29 per cent higher than the stock of 34.83 MT on the corresponding date of last year.

Coal India Ltd (CIL) which accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal production has pithead stock of 85 MT, which is 30 per cent higher compared to last year.

## GenAI both an enabler and destructor: Report

Companies wary of AI-fuelled malware, phishing

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

GenAI presents dual prospects of possibilities and peril, and a large majority of cybersecurity leaders from around the world are wary of its negative impact, a global survey has found.

A staggering 93 per cent respondents of the survey conducted by CyberArk said they anticipate negative impact from AI, with AI-powered malware and phishing topping the list.

CyberArk's 2024 Identity Security Threat Landscape Report -- which surveyed 2,400 cybersecurity leaders across 18 countries -- found that "cyber debt continues to build with GenAI the rise of machine identities, and increasing third



and fourth-party risks".

The report said about 99 per cent of organisations take help of AI in cybersecurity defence initiatives. However, it also predicted "an increase in the volume and sophistication of identity-related attacks, as skilled and unskilled bad actors also increase their capabilities, including AI-powered malware and phishing".

A total of 93 per cent respondents, it said, anticipate AI-powered

tools to create cyber risk for their organisations in FY25. "In the last 12 months, 9 of 10 organisations were victims of a breach due to a phishing/vishing attack. These types of attacks will be harder to detect as AI will automate and personalize the attack process," it said.

Altogether, 93 per cent of Indian organisations had two or more identity-related breaches in 2023, it said.

"Looking at the year ahead, organisations can expect to be affected by data leakage from compromised AI models, AI-powered malware, and phishing," it added. The report further raised concerns around the burgeoning circulation of deepfakes, especially with elections around the corner.

"Get ready for a pivotal and unsettling Decision 2024 as over 4 billion voters prepare to elect leaders in over 60 countries -- and AI-powered deepfake campaigns become the weapon of choice for anyone wanting to influence election outcomes," it said. The report also named machine identities as a vulnerable source of risk, "ready to be exploited by bad actors with AI-powered ability to execute at scale".

## FSIB to interview candidates for SBI Chairman post today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

FSIB, the headhunter for directors of state-owned banks and financial institutions, is scheduled to interview eligible candidates for the post of SBI chairman on Tuesday, sources said.

Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB) will interview the eligible MDs of the bank to select a replacement for Dinesh Khara, who will be superannuating on August 28, when he turns 63, the upper age limit for the SBI Chairman position. As per the convention, the chairman is appoint-

ed from a pool of serving managing directors of SBI, the country's largest lender.



FSIB would recommend the name and the final decision would be taken by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

FSIB is headed by Bhanu Pratap Sharma, former secretary of Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT). The members of the government-appointed selection panel are Financial Services Secretary, Department of Public Enterprises Secretary and an RBI Deputy Governor.

Other members of the headhunter are Animesh Chauhan, former chairman and MD of erstwhile Oriental Bank of Commerce, RBI's executive director Deepak Singhal, and Shaileendra Bhandari, former MD of erstwhile ING Vysya Bank

## India has sufficient domestic tyre capacity

Imports must not be liberalised: ATMA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has sufficient tyre manufacturing capacity and imports should not be liberalised about sectors in which through FTAs by way of duty concessions, industry body Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association said on Monday.

The automotive tyres rank at the forefront of those sectors where domestic manufacturing capabilities can render imports unnecessary, Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association

(ATMA) has communicated to the Centre.

This was in response to the government seeking feedback about sectors in which India has capabilities to be self-reliant so that upcoming FTAs could be drafted while safeguarding the interests of domestic industry, ATMA said in a statement.

The industry body has pointed out that imports should not be liberalised through FTAs by way of duty concessions.



## 'Realty sentiment index up; positive outlook for next 6 mths'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Real estate developers and financial institutions are bullish on growth in the Indian real estate sector, as the current sentiment index improved during January-March with high optimism for the next six months, according to Knight Frank-NAREDCO.

High economic growth and strong property demand are key factors for the improvement in their sentiments.

Real estate consultant Knight Frank and realtors' industry body NAREDCO on Monday released the Real Estate Sentiment Index Q1

2024 (January-March) report, which is based on a survey



from supply-side stakeholders, showing an unprecedented surge in market confidence among the supply side of real estate.

The Current Sentiment Index Score improved to 72 against 69 in the preceding quarter. The Future Sentiment

score also saw an uplift, climbing from 70 in October-December 2023 to 73 in January-March 2024.

"This positive trajectory reflects stakeholders' sustained optimism regarding the Indian economy, and the enduring demand in the real estate market," the consultant said.

The quarterly report provides a comprehensive analysis through a primary survey of current and future sentiments in the real estate sector, considering the economic climate and funding availability as perceived by supply-side stakeholders and financial institutions.

## ULIP offers huge opportunities to states: DPIIT Secy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP) offers huge opportunities for states to enhance their logistics frameworks, a top government official said on Monday.

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh encouraged all states to actively leverage ULIP and drive forward a seamless, efficient and inclusive logistics sector across India.

The platform was launched on September 17, 2022, as part of the national logistics policy.

## Govt to hold 2nd meet with stakeholders to issue draft guidelines for new EV policy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Heavy Industries will hold a second round of meeting with stakeholders in a "month or two" to issue draft guidelines for the new electric vehicle (EV) policy that has been framed to attract global automakers like Tesla to set up manufacturing operations in India, a senior official said on Monday.

Automakers wishing to avail of incentives under the policy will have to invest afresh as per the new norms, and old investments will not be considered, the official said.

This has been told to

Vietnam's electric carmaker Vinfast, which in February this year had said it would invest US\$ 500 million (Rs 4,000 crore) in Tamil Nadu over a period of five years, according to the official.



In a significant move aimed at revolutionising the EV landscape in India, the government approved the Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Electric Passenger Cars in

India (SPMEPCI) on March 15, 2024. The first stakeholders' meeting was held in April in which an advisor representing Tesla -- The Asia Group (TAG) -- had also attended.

"We have got a lot of representations. We have studied them so maybe in a month or two we may have the second consultative meeting. The task before us is to issue guidelines," the official explained.

Stating that the government wants to issue them through a consultative process, the official said, "We will make the draft guidelines and will circulate those amongst the possible applicants and again call a consultative meeting."

## Kalpataru Projects Int'l bags SAR 3.4 bn contracts from Aramco

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Kalpataru Projects International Ltd on Monday said it has bagged three contracts worth 3.4 billion Saudi Riyal (SAR) from Aramco to expand gas supply network in Saudi Arabia.

In March, Kalpataru Projects International Ltd (KPIIL), formerly Kalpataru Power Transmission, announced that it received a Letter of Intent (LoI) from Saudi Arabia's energy major Aramco, for carrying out EPC work for three packages

of the third expansion phase of the Master Gas System Network (MGS-3) in the country.

The company signed the three contracts for a contract value of SAR 3.4 billion (presently equivalent to Rs 7,550 crore) on Sunday, KPIIL said in a regulatory filing.

The scope of work covers the laying of over 800 km of lateral gas pipeline.

The MGS-3 aims to expand the existing gas network to provide gas supply to various industrial consumers in the region.

## India Inc gets inked; corporate leaders vote for stable govt

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Captains of industry, including bigwigs from the house of Tatas, Ambanis and Birlas, joined fellow citizens in the financial capital to vote on Monday in the fifth phase of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections.

The half a dozen Lok Sabha seats in Mumbai were along 13 constituencies that voted in the fifth and last phase of elections in Maharashtra.

Development and good

governance, and the need to accelerate economic growth, were mentioned as key issues influencing voting choices by business leaders while exercising their constitutional right at polling booths in the metropolis.

Some, like finance industry veteran Deepak Parekh, also spoke about the challenges like the long wait times faced by people at booths, pointing out that the delay in sweltering heat may dissuade voters to step out of their homes and cast their ballot.

Voting centres in tony neighbourhoods of south Mumbai started witnessing queues from very early in the morning, with Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekaran being

among the first of the India Inc leaders to exercise their franchise.

Polling across the Lok Sabha seats in Mumbai started at 7 am. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das voted with family members at a school near his official residence in south Mumbai, while richest Indian Mukesh Ambani, who resides a few blocks away, turned up at the same school later in the evening with his wife Nita and son Akash in tow.

Noted industrialist K um a r Mangalam Birla ecstatically told reporters that his 19-year-old younger daughter Advaitesha also cast the vote for the first time along with him and her elder sister Ananya.

With Mumbai known for voter apathy, many industry leaders appealed to electors to come out in large numbers and exercise their franchise to choose their Lok Sabha representatives.

Billionaire founder of the online beauty portal Nykaa, Falguni Nayyar, termed polling both as a right as well an obligation and listed out a slew of factors which influenced her vote.



## Shopping, banking facilities soon at Nammo Bharat stations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation said on Monday that the Nammo Bharat train commuters will soon get facilities like shopping, restaurants and banking at the stations.

According to a statement, these facilities will be available at the commercial spaces within the premises of the stations near the entry and exit areas, enhancing passenger convenience, it said.

Recently, Nammo Bharat trains achieved the milestone of carrying one million passengers to their destinations. In light of the increasing number



of passengers each day, the availability of these facilities within the premises of the stations will further enhance passenger convenience, the statement said.

The NCRTC said the commuters of the corridor will

soon enjoy amenities such as shopping, dining at restaurants, food outlets and banking services in addition to fast and comfortable travel on the Nammo Bharat trains.

The NCRTC has invited bids for commercial spaces at sta-

The NCRTC said the commuters of the corridor will soon enjoy amenities such as shopping, dining at restaurants, food outlets and banking services in addition to fast and comfortable travel on the Nammo Bharat trains.

tions on the operated section of the corridor to provide these amenities. In the first phase, bids have been invited for spaces at Sahibabad, Guldhar and Duhai stations. The last date for bid submission is June 4. Bid documents can be viewed on the NCRTC website, it stated.

Currently, the Nammo Bharat train services operate at eight stations along the 34-km section between Sahibabad and Modi Nagar North. The process for opening commercial spaces at other stations within this operated section will commence soon, it stated.

At the Sahibabad station, a built-up area of around 165 square metres in the entry and exit block adjacent to Vasundhara and the Sahibabad industrial area is available for bidding. Similarly, at the Guldhar station, a built-up area of around 145 square metres offers an attractive opportunity for commercial establishments such as restaurants, food outlets, shopping outlets, banks and offices, it said.

At the Duhai station, there are two commercial spaces available for bidding at entry/exit Pocket A and Pocket D, around 140 and 135 square metres respectively, the statement said.



# what's brewing?

## YAMI & ADITYA WELCOME BABY BOY

Yami Gautam, an actor, and her filmmaker husband, Aditya Dhar, have embraced parenthood. The couple has had a baby boy. They announced the news in an Instagram post, stating they had named him Vedavid. The couple kicked off the week on a positive note by spreading the wonderful news. They posted a collaborative post with the following note: "We are happy to announce the arrival of our beloved son, Vedavid, who blessed us with his birth on the auspicious day of Akshay Tritiya. Please shower him with all of your blessings and love." The post came with a heartwarming caption. "We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the

exceptionally dedicated and wonderful medical professionals at Surya Hospital, especially Dr. Bhupender Awasthi and Dr. Ranjana Dhanu, whose expertise and tireless efforts made this joyous occasion possible," the couple wrote in the joint post. "As we embark on this beautiful journey of parenthood, we eagerly anticipate the bright future that awaits our son. With every milestone he achieves, we are filled with the hope and belief that he will grow to become a beacon of pride for our entire family as well as our beloved nation," they concluded, ending with folded hands and a heart emoji.



## Jerry Bruckheimer opens up about Johnny Depp's return to Pirates of the Caribbean franchise

Johnny Depp won several hearts for his portrayal of Captain Jack Sparrow in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise. However, his court trial against Amber Heard and domestic abuse claims forced Disney to dismiss him from the series. There has been a lot of speculation surrounding his alleged comeback in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* 6 film. Austin Butler, who starred in *Dune 2*, was recently mentioned as being considered for the revival.

Amidst all of this, series producer Jerry Bruckheimer has disclosed that he spoke with Depp about appearing in the film. The actor has appeared in all of the films in this franchise and is an integral component of it. It is one of Hollywood's highest-grossing franchises, with Johnny receiving the majority of the credit for his outstanding performance. Keira Knightley and Orlando Bloom played prominent roles in the first

three films, and they returned for a brief appearance in *Dead Men Tell No Tales*. In a new interview, *Pirates of the Caribbean* producer Jerry Bruckheimer discussed whether Johnny Depp could reprise his role as Jack Sparrow if he had his way. Jerry responded, "If it were up to me, of course. I enjoy having Depp. He's an excellent actor and a good friend..." He has always wanted Depp to return to the franchise, but he does not have complete control over the situation. However, he stated that he had discussed it with Depp. *The Pirates of the Caribbean* 6 producer continued, "I've certainly spoken to him, but we'll see what happens." Meanwhile, a few days ago, a source indicated that Disney wanted Austin Butler to feature in both the prospective reboot and the *Hercules* live-action movie. Butler has received a lot of notice for his outstanding performances in films such as *Elvis* and *Dune: Part Two*.

## Demi Moore revealed her role demanded nudity in The Substance

Movie star Demi Moore said the vulnerability required for her role in the body horror film *The Substance*, which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival, was both demanding and exciting. Moore stars as Elisabeth, an aging TV fitness instructor a la Jane Fonda who signs up for a mysterious medical regime called *The Substance* that promises to create the perfect version of herself, played by Margaret Qualley of *Drive-Away Dolls*. The role requires Moore, 61, to be completely naked as well as transform into a deteriorating old woman through prosthetics.

"All of it at different times had moments that were challenging," she told in an interview. "The level of vulnerability that this role called for on all the different levels—emotionally, physically—was as demanding as it was exciting because it was really pushing me to step out of my comfort zone," said Moore. Critics were positive on Moore's performance, with entertainment website Variety calling it "nothing short of fearless" and The Hollywood Reporter praising how she "imbues her character with a visceral desperation."

This year's festival marks the first time in more than a quarter-century that Moore, who became a sex symbol through films like *Striptease* in the 1990s, was at the festival. For Qualley, 29, having to portray the so-called perfect version of a woman's body was a weird experience. "She is meant to be perfect, but she's probably the least beautiful character I've ever played because she's heartless," she said. French director and writer Coralie Fargeat said that her goal was to explore women's toxic relationships with their bodies and how they are taught that their worth is tied to their appearance.



## Kainaat Arora to star in a rape-revenge drama alongside Jaya Prada

Kainaat Arora is all set to star in a gripping new project titled *Fatima* alongside the legendary Jaya Prada. This upcoming film is a high-octane rape-revenge drama that promises to captivate audiences. Kainaat's powerful and glamorous screen presence was particularly highlighted in her recent release, *Tippsy*. Building on this momentum, she has swiftly moved on to *Fatima*, where she will share the screen with Jaya Prada, an icon of Indian cinema.

Expressing her enthusiasm for the project, Kainaat stated, "*Fatima* is far from your typical narrative; it's moving. Working with Jaya, ma'am, has been a dream come true. She was incredibly supportive on set, helping me refine my performance and teaching me subtle techniques to better convey emotions. I truly enjoyed every moment of working with her."

The film, directed by Sanjeev Rai, also stars Hiten Tejwani.



## AR Rahman launched doc-feature Headhunting to Beatboxing at Cannes

The Bharat Pavilion at the 77th Cannes Film Festival witnessed a momentous occasion as Academy Award-winning composer AR Rahman unveiled the first look and teaser of his latest venture, a groundbreaking feature documentary titled *Headhunting to Beatboxing*, directed by Rohit Gupta.

*Headhunting to Beatboxing* directed by Rohit Gupta and produced by AR Rahman, explores the fascinating journey of rhythm and sound, tracing the evolution of music across cultures, tribes, and generations. From the ancient traditions of headhunting tribes to the musical renaissance in the state, the documentary promises to take audiences on an immersive and enlightening musical anthropological odyssey.

"Music has this transformative power to change a society and to connect and bring relevance to existence. *Headhunting to Beatboxing* is a celebration of this universal rhythm that unites humanity in its diverse expressions. We look forward to the start of its film festival journey, and what better than Cannes, which celebrates cinema, to make the first announcement on the film?" said AR Rahman, expressing his enthusiasm.

The film marks Rahman's second major foray into the realm of filmmaking as a producer, following his earlier pro-



duction *99 Songs*, which premiered at the Busan International Film Festival. His vision behind the project stems from a desire to celebrate the universal language of music and its transformative power to transcend boundaries.

*Headhunting to Beatboxing* has been directed by Rohit Gupta and produced by AR Rahman, with Abu Metha, Adam J. Greig, Theja Meru, Rohit Gupta, Sheila Houlahan, and Rohit Daas serving as executive producers.

## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



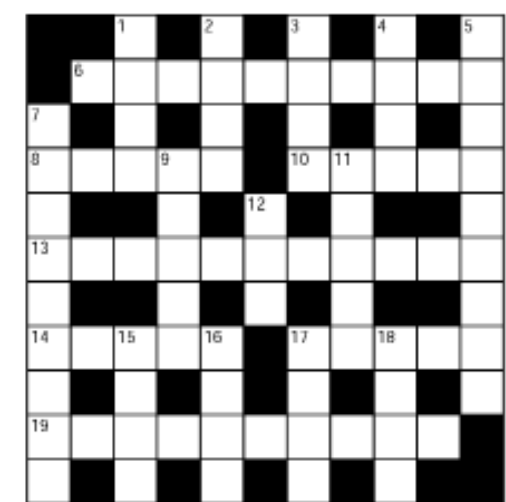
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### NANCY



### SUDOKU

Yesterday's solution

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

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.

### GINGER MEGGS



### ACROSS

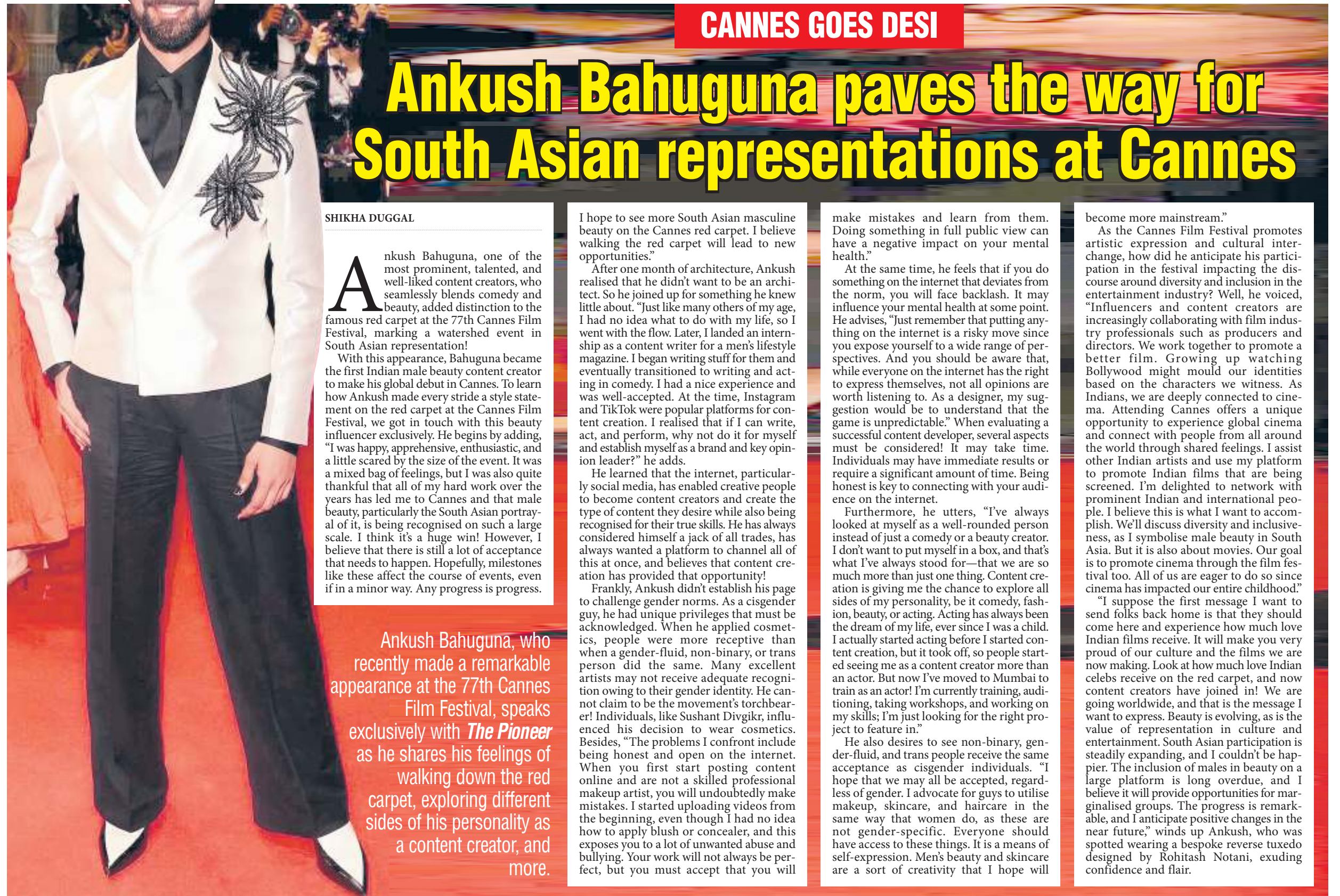
- 6 Intentional; on purpose
- 8 Weary
- 10 Frequently
- 13 Scary
- 14 Go in
- 17 A baking ingredient
- 19 Turned from liquid into vapour
- 9 A big bird of prey
- 11 Last
- 12 A place where pigs are kept
- 15 A salty drop of water from your eye
- 16 An area in a house
- 17 A young horse
- 18 Bake things in here

### DOWN

- 1 Close by
- 2 Discover
- 3 Someone who has done something very brave
- 4 Sprinkle this on food
- 5 People aged 13 to 19
- 7 Went rigid







## CANNES GOES DESI

# Ankush Bahuguna paves the way for South Asian representations at Cannes

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Ankush Bahuguna, one of the most prominent, talented, and well-liked content creators, who seamlessly blends comedy and beauty, added distinction to the famous red carpet at the 77th Cannes Film Festival, marking a watershed event in South Asian representation!

With this appearance, Bahuguna became the first Indian male beauty content creator to make his global debut in Cannes. To learn how Ankush made every stride a style statement on the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival, we got in touch with this beauty influencer exclusively. He begins by adding, "I was happy, apprehensive, enthusiastic, and a little scared by the size of the event. It was a mixed bag of feelings, but I was also quite thankful that all of my hard work over the years has led me to Cannes and that male beauty, particularly the South Asian portrayal of it, is being recognised on such a large scale. I think it's a huge win! However, I believe that there is still a lot of acceptance that needs to happen. Hopefully, milestones like these affect the course of events, even if in a minor way. Any progress is progress."

Ankush Bahuguna, who recently made a remarkable appearance at the 77th Cannes Film Festival, speaks exclusively with *The Pioneer* as he shares his feelings of walking down the red carpet, exploring different sides of his personality as a content creator, and more.

I hope to see more South Asian masculine beauty on the Cannes red carpet. I believe walking the red carpet will lead to new opportunities."

After one month of architecture, Ankush realised that he didn't want to be an architect. So he joined up for something he knew little about. "Just like many others of my age, I had no idea what to do with my life, so I went with the flow. Later, I landed an internship as a content writer for a men's lifestyle magazine. I began writing stuff for them and eventually transitioned to writing and acting in comedy. I had a nice experience and was well-accepted. At the time, Instagram and TikTok were popular platforms for content creation. I realised that if I can write, act, and perform, why not do it for myself and establish myself as a brand and key opinion leader?" he adds.

He learned that the internet, particularly social media, has enabled creative people to become content creators and create the type of content they desire while also being recognised for their true skills. He has always considered himself a jack of all trades, has always wanted a platform to channel all of this at once, and believes that content creation has provided that opportunity!

Frankly, Ankush didn't establish his page to challenge gender norms. As a cisgender guy, he had unique privileges that must be acknowledged. When he applied cosmetics, people were more receptive than when a gender-fluid, non-binary, or trans person did the same. Many excellent artists may not receive adequate recognition owing to their gender identity. He cannot claim to be the movement's torchbearer! Individuals, like Sushant Divgirkar, influenced his decision to wear cosmetics. Besides, "The problems I confront include being honest and open on the internet. When you first start posting content online and are not a skilled professional makeup artist, you will undoubtedly make mistakes. I started uploading videos from the beginning, even though I had no idea how to apply blush or concealer, and this exposes you to a lot of unwanted abuse and bullying. Your work will not always be perfect, but you must accept that you will

make mistakes and learn from them. Doing something in full public view can have a negative impact on your mental health."

At the same time, he feels that if you do something on the internet that deviates from the norm, you will face backlash. It may influence your mental health at some point. He advises, "Just remember that putting anything on the internet is a risky move since you expose yourself to a wide range of perspectives. And you should be aware that, while everyone on the internet has the right to express themselves, not all opinions are worth listening to. As a designer, my suggestion would be to understand that the game is unpredictable." When evaluating a successful content developer, several aspects must be considered! It may take time. Individuals may have immediate results or require a significant amount of time. Being honest is key to connecting with your audience on the internet.

Furthermore, he utters, "I've always looked at myself as a well-rounded person instead of just a comedy or a beauty creator. I don't want to put myself in a box, and that's what I've always stood for—that we are so much more than just one thing. Content creation is giving me the chance to explore all sides of my personality, be it comedy, fashion, beauty, or acting. Acting has always been the dream of my life, ever since I was a child. I actually started acting before I started content creation, but it took off, so people started seeing me as a content creator more than an actor. But now I've moved to Mumbai to train as an actor! I'm currently training, auditioning, taking workshops, and working on my skills; I'm just looking for the right project to feature in."

He also desires to see non-binary, gender-fluid, and trans people receive the same acceptance as cisgender individuals. "I hope that we may all be accepted, regardless of gender. I advocate for guys to utilise makeup, skincare, and haircare in the same way that women do, as these are not gender-specific. Everyone should have access to these things. It is a means of self-expression. Men's beauty and skincare are a sort of creativity that I hope will

become more mainstream."

As the Cannes Film Festival promotes artistic expression and cultural interchange, how did he anticipate his participation in the festival impacting the discourse around diversity and inclusion in the entertainment industry? Well, he voiced, "Influencers and content creators are increasingly collaborating with film industry professionals such as producers and directors. We work together to promote a better film. Growing up watching Bollywood might mould our identities based on the characters we witness. As Indians, we are deeply connected to cinema. Attending Cannes offers a unique opportunity to experience global cinema and connect with people from all around the world through shared feelings. I assist other Indian artists and use my platform to promote Indian films that are being screened. I'm delighted to network with prominent Indian and international people. I believe this is what I want to accomplish. We'll discuss diversity and inclusiveness, as I symbolise male beauty in South Asia. But it is also about movies. Our goal is to promote cinema through the film festival too. All of us are eager to do so since cinema has impacted our entire childhood."

"I suppose the first message I want to send folks back home is that they should come here and experience how much love Indian films receive. It will make you very proud of our culture and the films we are now making. Look at how much love Indian celebs receive on the red carpet, and now content creators have joined in! We are going worldwide, and that is the message I want to express. Beauty is evolving, as is the value of representation in culture and entertainment. South Asian participation is steadily expanding, and I couldn't be happier. The inclusion of males in beauty on a large platform is long overdue, and I believe it will provide opportunities for marginalised groups. The progress is remarkable, and I anticipate positive changes in the near future," winds up Ankush, who was spotted wearing a bespoke reverse tuxedo designed by Rohitash Notani, exuding confidence and flair.

## 'I'm jokingly called the 'richest gareeb' by my friends'

SUBODHINI PUROHIT

Karan Wahi is an actor whose trajectory resembles a narrative twist in a Bollywood blockbuster. Initially pursuing a cricket career, destiny chose to throw him a curveball. Karan is unexpectedly thrust into the spotlight after being granted a role in the cult hit *Remix*.

From there, it's a frenzy of auditions, uncertainty, and, finally, victories. As he navigates the rollercoaster ride of show business, he not only conquers the world of acting but also dabbles in the adrenaline-fueled world of reality TV with shows.

In addition to acting, he has hosted *Nach Baliye*, *Indian Idol*, and *India's Next Superstars*, and has shown his humorous side on Colors TV's comedy show *Comedy Nights Bachao*.

Finding a passion by coincidence is frequently the most incredible journey one can start on. Many people believe Karan's acting career was the result of a chance encounter that changed his life. "Acting was not a deliberate choice for me," begins the *Dill Mill Gaye* fame. But little did he know that a producer would unexpectedly approach him at his college in Delhi and give him a role in *Remix*. "I came to Mumbai without much consideration, expecting to act for a year, enjoy it, and then return. However, I never went back. Initially, I had no desire to become an actor, but I regarded this opportunity as a way to improve my graph for a time."

The audition in Delhi came as a surprise after someone discovered his photographs in an agency. Initially hesitant, "I eventually received a callback and was confirmed for the role after 10 or 12 days. My first producer, Shristi Arya, saw something in me that none of us expected would lead to the enormous success of *Remix*. We spent months filming without knowing if the show would ever air. But when it did, it caused a sensation! I suddenly found myself being identified, which drew me to act. Two decades ago, breaking into the industry was not as easy as it is today, so success felt like a huge milestone, one that motivated me to stay."

In the ever-changing environment of Indian television, breakthrough moments frequently come from unexpected places. Such was the case with him. He adds, "To be honest, none of us had any expectations for Ranveer or whether people would like him. However, after two or three months of its release, *Remix* became a hit, filling a hole in Indian television's youth-centric

programming. Prior to *Remix*, the landscape consisted primarily of family dramas such as *Kyunkis* and *Kahaniis*, but there were also serials that did not target younger audiences. The enormous success surprised us because it appeared to appeal to a wide segment of viewers seeking material tailored to their interests."

Friendships formed on the set of a show frequently withstand the test of time, across distances and diverging paths. Sharing his bonds, the *Kuch Toh Log Kahenge* star says, "I'm still friends with everyone from the show, though we only see each other on occasion because everyone is so busy with their lives and careers. Some remain in the industry, while others have taken alternative paths. However, we always make it a point to get together on November 1st to celebrate the release of *Remix*. With the twentieth anniversary coming, I am positive there will be a reunion."

Every part an actor portrays is remarkable in its own unique manner. However, the one character that resonates with and expresses the actor's own personality always leaves a lasting impression. "In television, you immerse yourself in a character day after day, inadvertently incorporating aspects of yourself into the role. This has certainly been true for the majority of the gigs I've performed. If I had to pick one character who spoke to me the most, it would be Sid (Dr. Sidhant Modi) from *Dill Mill Gaye*. At 24, I was as funny and stupid as my character, so it felt like a natural fit," says the *Channa Mereya* star, who appreciates receiving immediate reactions while anchoring live on television. However, he emphasises that it is a distinct type of challenge, needing instinctive reflexes and balancing retakes to keep viewers interested.

He is not someone who seeks inspiration from others; he goes on to say, "Your personality is what makes you distinct. While working with Maniesh Paul, I enjoyed the enthusiasm we had

onstage, and part of his flair may have rubbed off on me. However, everyone is unique, with their own sense of humour and intuition on stage. While it's fine to learn from others' hard work and expertise, it's critical to be loyal to yourself rather than attempting to emulate someone else's success."

Many people like simplicity, and Karan is no exception, finding comfort and confidence in his traditional manner. "I'm probably the least likely person to enjoy fashion. My style is really straightforward; I prefer t-shirts and denim, adhering to the classics. Shopping alone isn't my forte either; I basically go for whatever the mannequins are wearing. My aesthetic sense isn't great; my friends jokingly call me the "richest gareeb" (poor) since I prefer to stick to what's comfortable and familiar, frequently wearing the same t-shirt in different colors." We got it, Karan.

OTT, which is driving the industry's transformation, has something to offer everyone in the sector because it has ushered in a new era of possibilities and has produced a lot more talent. "It's an exciting period for everyone involved in the profession, including performers, technicians, and directors. The abundance of jobs and various personas to portray is absolutely impressive."

"Today, stardom does not ensure success; audiences have diverse tastes, and productions are diversified. The OTT revolution has created innumerable chances, but not every show will succeed. Those who seize opportunities and work hard will enjoy the benefits. However, there is a risk of complacency; waiting for that one breakthrough role can slow growth. It's critical to be realistic and proactive when chasing prospects."

Excitement fills the air as he delves into a new project unlike any other, and he concludes by saying, "I'm currently working on a project that has piqued my interest from the beginning. It's a novel format, particularly for the web, with a lengthy plot. Plus, working with pals like Jennifer Winget of *Dill Mill Gaye* is always a plus. My character, Virat, is unlike any others I've played. He's flawed and real, unlike the traditional hero archetype. The feedback has been tremendous, and this is the type of initiative that encourages you to give your all. Even when I finish my work for the day, it stays with me, which I find motivating."



## Non-surgical nose that's reshaping the beauty industry scene

Non-surgical nose reshaping, also known as non-surgical rhinoplasty or liquid rhinoplasty, is a popular cosmetic procedure in the beauty industry. This minimally invasive technique offers a way to enhance the appearance of the nose without the need for traditional surgery. It is especially favoured by individuals seeking subtle changes with minimal downtime.

**The procedure**  
Non-surgical nose reshaping involves the use of dermal fillers, such as hyaluronic acid, to alter the shape of the nose. The procedure typically takes about 15-30 minutes and is performed in an outpatient setting. Here's how it works:

- 1. Consultation:** The process begins with a consultation where the patient discusses their aesthetic goals with the practitioner. This helps determine the areas of the nose that need enhancement.
- 2. Preparation:** The treatment area is cleaned, and a topical anesthetic may be applied to minimise discomfort.
- 3. Injection:** Using a fine needle, the practitioner injects the filler into specific areas of the nose. Common areas for injection include the bridge to straighten a bump, the tip to lift it, or the sides to create a more balanced look.
- 4. Shaping:** The practitioner then gently moulds the filler to achieve the desired shape. This step requires a skilled hand to ensure a natural-looking result.

- Benefits**  
Non-surgical nose reshaping offers several benefits:
- **Quick and convenient:** The procedure is quick, often completed in under 30 minutes, making it convenient for those with busy schedules.
  - **Minimal downtime:** Unlike surgical rhinoplasty, there is little to no recovery time. Patients can usually return to their normal activities immediately.
  - **Reversible:** If hyaluronic acid fillers are used, the procedure is reversible. An enzyme called hyaluronidase can dissolve the filler if the patient is unhappy with the results.
  - **Cost-effective:** It is generally more affordable than surgical rhinoplasty.

**Considerations**  
While non-surgical nose reshaping has many

- advantages, there are also important considerations:**
- **Temporary results:** The results are not permanent. Fillers typically last between 6 to 18 months, after which the procedure must be repeated to maintain the appearance.
  - **Limitations:** This method is best suited for minor adjustments. It cannot reduce the size of the nose or correct functional issues such as breathing difficulties.
  - **Potential risks:** As with any cosmetic procedure, there are risks, including bruising, swelling, and, in rare cases, more serious complications like vascular occlusion.

**Importance of certified practitioners**  
The success and safety of non-surgical nose reshaping highly depend on the skill and experience of the practitioner. Complications are more likely to occur in the hands of an untrained person. **Potential complications include:**

- **Vascular occlusion:** This occurs when filler material blocks a blood vessel, which can lead to tissue death and scarring if not promptly treated.
- **Infection:** Improper techniques can introduce bacteria, leading to infection.
- **Blindness:** Though extremely rare, injecting filler into or near blood vessels that supply the eyes can cause blindness.
- **Asymmetry and lumps:** Incorrect injection techniques can result in uneven appearance and palpable lumps.

Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that a certified and experienced practitioner performs the procedure to minimise these risks. They are trained to handle complications should they arise and are knowledgeable about the anatomy of the nose, ensuring safer and more effective results.

Non-surgical nose reshaping is an excellent option for those seeking minor aesthetic improvements without the commitment and recovery associated with surgery. Its popularity continues to grow in the beauty industry due to its convenience, minimal downtime, and effective results. However, it's essential to consult with a qualified practitioner to ensure the procedure is appropriate for your needs and to achieve the best possible outcome.

(The author, Dr. Dhruv Chavan, is an Aesthetic Surgeon at Clear Skin and Hair MD Clinics.)

Since making his debut into the entertainment world with *Remix*, Karan Wahi has since become a much-celebrated face in the industry. The actor, who is soon going to celebrate 20 years of his cult classic, speaks to *The Pioneer*, taking us through his formative years, and his breakthrough moments with the show.







# Salt less KKR take on Sunrisers Hyderabad in power hitting slugfest

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

High-flying Kolkata Knight Riders and an unpredictable Sunrisers Hyderabad, teams that have built their IPL 2024 campaign on power-hitting, will look to outmuscle each other in Qualifier 1 here on Tuesday. If KKR were the first team to make IPL playoffs this year, SRH gave themselves a huge boost by inflicting a four-wicket loss on Punjab Kings on Sunday to eventually finish second with 17 points, ahead of Rajasthan Royals. While the two top teams from the 70-match league round have enjoyed some time off courtesy incessant rains during their respective clashes over last 10 days, the lack of turnaround time to compete in a high-intensity playoff game will also pose a unique challenge. KKR and SRH will get only a day's time to traverse thousands of kilometres and get here for the first half of the playoffs as they both featured on the final day of the league round on Sunday. SRH would feel they have hit their strides following a comprehensive win over PBKS and having also got recent game-time, which isn't the case for KKR whose last complete game was on May 11. Shreyas Iyer's KKR had won four games on the trot before rains washed away their last two league games and the two-time winners. Table-toppers KKR (19 points) will also have to fill in the huge void at the top with their second-highest run-



scorer and wicketkeeper Phil Salt (435 runs) leaving the camp for national duties with England ahead of the T20 World Cup. Salt had forged a devastating partnership with Sunil Narine (461) at the top and KKR were immensely benefited by their ultra-aggressive approach with the bat, backed up well by a potent middle-order even though skipper Iyer (287) has not had a major impact yet. The washed out contest against

RR in particular robbed KKR of an opportunity to give expected replacement Rahmanullah Gurbaz a go at the top with Narine, something that would have settled a few concerns certainly. For KKR, the form of Nitish Rana adds more solidity to the middle-order while a fiery Andre Russell among the finishers promise them vital runs. In many ways, SRH match KKR's firepower on paper and

that is what adds more to the lure of this contest. Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma have both got their runs at a strike rate exceeding 200 while inspiring their side to rewrite a few records. Australian southpaw Head has in many ways redefined aggressiveness with the bat while also remaining successful (533 runs with one century and four fifties). His fearlessness has also brought the best out of the

young Indian batter Abhishek (467), who has clobbered an overall 41 sixes this IPL - 10 more than his overall tally of 31 in the previous six seasons. SRH have also managed to find answers to a couple of questions which were lingering on for a while. At No 3, the 2016 winners have found a dependable option in Rahul Tripathi who can both accelerate as well as weather storms when bowlers are on-song. Additionally, Heinrich Klaasen has rediscovered his form after a dip in the middle of the tournament. With a crucial knock of 42 against PBKS, Klaasen has signalled having found his mojo back, which only makes SRH even more formidable. At Ahmedabad, as seen in the World Cup final last year, teams batting second have had more success, winning four out of six completed games while only twice the team which batted first could defend successfully. Also, against the style of play for both these teams - to bury oppositions under mountains of runs - this venue has had only two scores of 200 or above in 12 innings, which means the bowlers will also have their say. If KKR have a battery of spinners to back their fast bowlers led by Mitchell Starc, SRH's pace bowling attack led by skipper Pat Cummins has time and again produced unified efforts to make their mark. In their only meet earlier this season back in late March, KKR had pipped SRH by four runs in a high-scoring game.



## Swapnil Singh contemplated quitting cricket until RCB picked him up in IPL auction

PTI ■ BENGALURU

When Swapnil Singh went unsold in the initial rounds of the 2024 IPL auction, the dejected left-arm spinner felt it was time to end his 18-year-old-career. But then Royal Challengers Bengaluru raised the paddle late in the auction to add a welcome twist to his cricketing journey. "The day of the IPL auction I was travelling to Dharamsala for a game. It was around 7-8 pm after I landed. Nothing had happened by then and the last rounds were on. When I missed out at first, I thought that's it. Frankly I thought it was all over," Swapnil told RCB Bold Diaries. "I thought I would play out the ongoing (domestic) season, and if needed, I would end my career after playing the next season because I did not want to keep playing all my life," he said.

"There are other things to do well in life as well. I was very disappointed," said Swapnil, who made his debut in 2006 and had even shared the dressing room with RCB teammate Virat Kohli at one point in time. Bought at a base price of Rs 20 lakh, the 33-year-old has repaid the faith the franchise showed in him. Swapnil has played a pivotal role in RCB's recent string of wins which have propelled them into the playoffs, with the 2016 finalists set to face a struggling Rajasthan Royals in Ahmedabad in the Eliminator on Wednesday. Swapnil said it was an emotional moment for his entire family after they learnt that he was picked up by RCB. "As soon as my family called, we broke down. Because no one else understands how emotional the journey has been."

Swapnil has also credited former Zimbabwe captain and RCB head coach Andy Flower for showing the faith in him. "Before RCB picked me in the auction, they had organised a trial-cum-camp. I spoke to Andy sir and told him all about how my (domestic) season had gone. I told him, 'Just give me one chance. This might be my last chance. Just have faith in me.' He told he had faith in me. He called me for the camp," Swapnil said. Swapnil also revealed his wish that he expressed to his brother, that he wanted to contribute with the bat in IPL. The moment eventually arrived when he smacked a four and a six against Sunrisers Hyderabad. "I would tell my brother that I have neither scored a four nor a six in the IPL, and I have taken only one wicket. So I really want to hit a four and a six," he said.

### OTHER SPORTS

# Rohan to pair with either Balaji or Yuki at Paris Games

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's top doubles player Rohan Bopanna will pick either N Sriram Balaji or Yuki Bhambri as his partner for the Paris Olympics and All India Tennis Association (AITA) will most likely approve his choice even as the combinations will be discussed by the selection committee. Ranked four in the world, 44-year-old Bopanna, being a top-10 player, can pick a player of his choice as per the rules. The men's doubles draw at the Paris Games will be a 32-team affair, where one nation can have a maximum of two teams. The qualification criteria gives top-10 players the privilege to pick their partners, who should be inside top-300 on the ATP and WTA ranking charts. The rankings of June 10 after the

conclusion of the French Open will be considered for qualifications. According to AITA sources, Bopanna had recommended names of Balaji and Bhambri to the national federation for inclusion in TOPS as his potential partners for Paris Olympics. "Usually, it's the player's choice (to pick his partner). The selection committee will ask him about his choice and discuss that. Whoever Rohan wants to play with, will be considered positively," AITA Secretary General Anil Dhupar told PTI when asked if the national federation will allow Bopanna to play with the partner of his choice or impose its own choice on him. Both Balaji and Bhambri have got some decent results on clay in lead up to the Roland Garros, where the action will unfold during the Summer Olympics from July 27. Balaji won the Cagliari Challenger



event with German partner Andre Begemann apart from reaching the semifinals at Francavilla al Mare in Italy. Bhambri won the ATP 250 event in Munich with French player Albano Olivetti in April and reached the semifinals of the Bordeaux Challenger — the only event he competed this month. The nominations for Olympics or other multi-sporting events have often created controversy in Indian tennis. In 2012, a huge controversy had erupted when both Mahesh Bhupathi and Bopanna had refused to pair with Leander Paes, who was forced to play with Vishnu Vardhan. Sania Mirza was then asked to pair with Paes in the mixed doubles event and the top woman player of the country had chastised the AITA for using her as bait to placate Paes. In the 2018 Asian Games, Paes had

pulled out of the continental event just two days before the start of tennis competition, saying he was not given a specialist player to pair with. AITA had nominated Bopanna and Divij Sharan as a team, leaving Paes with no option but to pair with one of the singles players in the squad. It will be Bopanna's last shot at winning an Olympic medal, having come close to a bronze medal with Sania Mirza in the mixed event of the 2016 Rio Games. In the singles, Sumit Nagal will need a good run at the French Open to boost his ranking. He is placed 94 as of Monday. In a draw of 64, the organisers will accept 56 direct entries and out of six ITF places, three men's quotas have been awarded to winners of continental events — Asian Games, African Games and Pan-American Games.



## Nagal bows out of Geneva Open after loss to world number 19 Baez

PTI ■ GENEVA

India's top-ranked singles player Sumit Nagal made a first round exit from the Geneva Open after going down fighting against Argentina's Sebastian Baez. The world no.94 went down 6-7 (7) 3-6 to the Argentine, who is a clay court specialist, in a match that lasted one hour, 52-minutes here on Sunday. "Gutted with the loss today. But good preparation ahead of Roland Garros. Paris next," Nagal, who has qualified for the French Open, tweeted after the loss. Nagal started off brightly taking an early 4-1 lead over Baez. He also had a set point. But world no. 19 Baez, who has already won two titles on clay this season, showed his class to force a tiebreaker owing to his fantastic first serve performance. In the second set, Baez continued to bank on his superb first serve, and wrapped up the proceedings in 38 minutes.

# Focus on Sindhu as she looks to end title drought at Malaysia Masters

PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Back from a break, P V Sindhu will look to hit the right notes in her quest for some confidence-boosting wins ahead of Paris Olympics when she spearheads India's campaign in the Malaysia Masters badminton tournament starting here on Tuesday. Sindhu, a former world champion, returns to the international circuit after skipping the Uber Cup and Thailand Open, and she will aim to go deep in the women's singles draw of the BWF World Tour Super 500 event. The 28-year-old from Hyderabad hasn't been able to hit top form after recovering from a knee injury sustained in October last year. A silver and bronze-winner at the Olympics, Sindhu's return hasn't been smooth and she has endured a series of narrow losses. Sindhu has just two quarterfinal finishes to show in her six competitive appearances so far. The last title win for her came in the 2022 Singapore Open though she did come close to claiming the Spain Masters last year when she reached the finals in Madrid. Sindhu, who had also suffered a stress fracture on her left ankle en route to the 2022 Commonwealth Games gold,

will look to hit the ground running when she opens against Scotland's Kirsty Gilmour this week. Top stars such as An Se Young, Chen Yu Fei, Akane Yamaguchi or Carolina Marin are not participating this week and Sindhu will be desperate to test her preparation against the next generation players, who have troubled her recently. With a new set-up under mentor Prakash Padukone, Sindhu has shown glimpses of her menacing game but she hasn't been consistent with her shot-selection. Ashmita Chaliha, Aakarshi Kashyap and Malvika Bansod too will look to produce some good results after having been in the circuit for quite sometime now. Chaliha has played some quality matches against the likes of Han Yue and Aya Ohori, both of whom she had pushed to three games recently. In men's singles, Kiran George is the lone Indian in fray and he will open against Japan's Takuma Obayashi. While Thailand Open champions Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty have opted out and it will be a chance for Krishna Prasad Garaga and Sai Pratheek K to show their prowess in men's doubles. In mixed doubles, the husband-wife duo of B



Sumeeth Reddy and N Sikki Reddy, and Sathish Kumar Karunakaran and Aadya Variyath would be carrying India's hopes. Paralympics opens in 100 days; Paris organizers launching campaign to boost ticket sales Paris, (AP) With 100 days until the Paralympics begin, Paris organizers are delivering a message from the athletes in a bid to boost ticket sales: I am

not missing anything, except you. The countdown campaign for the August 28-September 8 Paralympic Games begins Monday. It features three Paralympic athletes, each of them alone in an empty stadium. The campaign slogan - "Il ne me manque rien, sauf vous" (I'm not missing anything, except you) - is a rallying call to get people to come along and

watch them compete. The French athletes featured in the campaign are Arnaud Assoumani, a long jump and triple jump specialist who won gold at the 2008 Games in Beijing; wheelchair tennis player Pauline Déroulède, and blind soccer player Gaël Rivière who was a European championship winner two years ago. He plays at club level for Bondy Cécifoot Club - in

the same suburb where France star Kylian Mbappé grew up. National broadcaster France Télévisions will show the campaign in a bid to raise awareness and - ultimately - boost sales. So far, 900,000 of the 2.8 million tickets have been sold. A total of 4,400 athletes will take part in the Paralympics. Tickets are available from 15 euros (USD 16) for track and

field sessions at Stade de France, wheelchair tennis at Roland Garros, or blind soccer at the foot of the Eiffel Tower. The finals cost from 25 (USD 27) euros and it costs 45 euros (USD 49) to watch the closing ceremony. Ticket sales could escalate once posters start appearing around Paris, with organizers aiming to raise awareness and increase fan engagement and solidarity. There will be 651 posters dotted around the city, 972 on the subway and a further 2,520 on the sides of buses. On Tuesday, four Paralympic athletes will walk up the famed steps at the Cannes Film Festival along with Paris 2024 Olympic head Tony Estanguet. Of the tickets sold so far, organizers said 300,000 have been bought by the state and 150,000 by the International Olympic Committee and National Paralympic Committee. Organizers haven't released details for the amount of tickets sold for the opening ceremony, which takes place along a section of the famed Champs-Élysées. Paul McCartney has let the song "We All Stand Together" be used in a promotional film for the International Paralympic Committee. The Paralympics will have a record 164 broadcasters worldwide covering 549 events across 22 sports.



# JR NTR, PRASHANTH NEEL'S MEGA ACTION EPIC IS ON!

The much-awaited collaboration between the "Man of Masses," NTR, and the blockbuster director, Prashanth Neel, is finally set to roll. Tentatively titled *NTRNeel*, this action-packed extravaganza has been generating immense buzz since its announcement. In a delightful birthday surprise for NTR fans, the makers unveiled a crucial update: filming for *NTRNeel* will kick off in August 2024. This announcement has sent waves of excitement rippling through the fandom as anticipation reaches fever pitch. Director Prashanth Neel, known for his gripping narratives and larger-than-life visuals, is meticulously crafting the script to match the colossal expectations surrounding the project.

With Prashanth Neel's track record of delivering blockbuster hits like the *KGF* series and *Salaar*, paired with NTR's unmatched charisma, *NTRNeel* promises to be a cinematic spectacle of epic proportions. Produced by production houses Mythri Movie Makers and NTR Arts, the film aims to scale the same heights of grandeur as the *KGF* franchise.

As fans eagerly await the dynamic collaboration between NTR and Neel, industry insiders are predicting that *NTRNeel* will redefine the Indian film landscape. With NTR currently immersed in his commitments to *Devara* and *War 2*, he is slated to join the sets of *NTRNeel* once he wraps up his ongoing projects.

As August 2024 draws closer, all eyes will be on *NTRNeel*, poised to witness the magic that unfolds when two powerhouse talents come together to create cinematic history.



# Manchu Manoj returns as Black Sword in Mirai

After an electrifying hiatus spanning eight years, actor Manchu Manoj is poised for a triumphant comeback to the silver screen. In a move that promises to redefine the superhero genre, Manoj takes on the mantle of "The Black Sword" in the much-anticipated film, *Mirai*. Directed by the visionary Karthik Ghattamaneni and produced by TG Vishwa Prasad of People Media Factory, this cinematic extravaganza marks Manoj's debut in a universe pulsating with action, adventure, and unparalleled excitement.

Amidst the fervour of his birthday celebrations, the curtains were lifted to unveil the first glimpse of Manchu Manoj as "The Black Sword." The teaser presents Manoj in a never-before-seen avatar, exuding intensity and power as he wields a mysterious weapon against the backdrop of a ravaged landscape. His portrayal exudes a commanding presence, blending swagger with grit, as he embodies the essence of "The Black Sword" character. With long hair tied in a ponytail and a stylish beard, Manoj's appearance strikes a balance between lethal and fashionable, captivating audiences with every frame.

The introduction of this character adds a new layer of depth to the narrative, showcasing Manoj's versatility and dedication as an actor. His journey promises to resonate deeply with viewers, elevating the film's impact to new heights.

Reflecting on his return to the industry, Rocking Star Manoj Manchu remarked, "Portraying such a powerful and enigmatic



character has been both challenging and exhilarating. 'The Black Sword' embodies the strength and resilience that every hero should possess, and I am thrilled to embark on this journey with my fans, who have patiently awaited my return."

Set against the backdrop of the visually stunning world of *Mirai*, the film offers a seamless blend of traditional heroism and contemporary storytelling that is poised to captivate audiences worldwide. Exploring the mysteries of Ashoka's nine unknown books, *Mirai* weaves together elements of history and mythology into an epic tale of adventure and discovery.

With the recent release of Super Hero Teja Sajja's teaser garnering widespread acclaim, Manoj Manchu's unveiling on his birthday heralds a statement of intent that reverberates across the Telugu film industry and beyond.

Ritika Nayak joins the cast as the lead actress opposite Teja Sajja, while Karthik Ghattamaneni and Manibabu Karanam lend their creative talents to the screenplay and dialogue. Adding to the film's allure is the musical genius of Gowra Hari, with Sri Nagendra Tangala serving as the art director and Vivek Kuchibhotla as the co-producer. Krithi Prasad assumes the role of creative producer, supported by Sujith Kumar Kolli as executive producer.

*Mirai* is slated for release in multiple languages—Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam—on April 18th, promising audiences an immersive cinematic experience in both 2D and 3D formats.

## HOMBAL FILMS TO START THEIR OWN FILM, MEDIA AND CREATIVE ARTS INSTITUTE

After creating waves across the globe with *KGF*, *Kantara*, and *Salaar*, Hombale ventures into the film, media, and creative arts institutes with the aim of giving back to the creative community.

The production house has served as a launch pad for many names, and in an exciting move, they're going to now open 'School of Film, Media, and Creative Arts'. This marks India's first liberal school and creative arts-led film and media school.

The aim behind this is to conduct a masterclass for aspiring filmmakers, writers, and actors, and they will all be trained and taught by artists, directors, and super technicians. The experts will provide complete training in their internship sessions, and Hombale Films has helped top names for their film school. In the training session, they will be giving several programs and will also provide certificate courses. Talking about Hombale Films, they have always proved their mettle, and with the *KGF* franchise, they dared to dream big! The production house is solely responsible for Kannada Cinema on the global map with their two biggest blockbusters, *KGF 1 and 2*, and *Kantara: A Legend*.

Meanwhile, Hombale Films has an exciting line-up of films in the pipeline, which includes *Salaar Part 2: Shouryanga Parvam* and *Kantara: Chapter 1*.

## AJAY MEETS AJAY DEVGN IN THE 'COP'VERSE

In an exciting crossover move, Tollywood actor Ajay is set to join Bollywood's iconic *Singham* franchise alongside superstar Ajay Devgn. Known for his versatile performances in Telugu cinema, Ajay is all set to make his mark in the cop genre.

The *Singham* series, one of Bollywood's biggest franchises, has captivated audiences with its high-octane action and powerful storytelling. Now, with the addition of Ajay from the Telugu film industry, fans can expect an even more thrilling cinematic experience.

Stepping into the shoes of a cop is a new challenge for Ajay, who has impressed audiences with his phenomenal roles alongside Tollywood's star heroes. His versatility and acting prowess are sure to shine in this new avatar.

With Ajay Devgn leading the charge as the iconic *Singham* and Ajay bringing his own unique flair to the table, anticipation is at an all-time high for this crossover collaboration. Fans can't wait to see these two powerhouse actors share the screen and set the box office on fire. As preparations for the film are underway, the excitement surrounding *Singham* is palpable. Stay tuned for more updates as this dynamic duo gears up to deliver a cop drama like never before.



## Raj and DK rope in Aditya Roy Kapur for Family Man 3: Reports

Aditya Roy Kapur grabbed headlines recently amid rumours of his split with Ananya Pandey. On the professional front, the actor marked his OTT debut with *The Night Manager*, earning accolades from his fan base. As anticipation builds for his upcoming projects, a recent report unveiled that Kapur is

set to collaborate with acclaimed directors Raj and DK for his next venture.

According to a report, Aditya Roy Kapur will join forces with Raj and DK for an upcoming project, marking their first collaboration together. The report

disclosed that Kapur has officially signed on for the project, although specific details are yet to be finalised. A source mentioned, "Aditya has committed to a project with Raj and DK, and preparations are currently underway. While further project details remain undisclosed, Aditya is slated to portray a sports-related role in the yet-unnamed venture."

Reportedly, Kapur will commence preparations for his character in the Raj and DK project in the near future. The source added, "Raj and DK are currently occupied with the post-production of *Citadel India*, and *The Family Man 3* filming has recently begun. Following these commitments, they will actively begin work on their collaboration with Aditya." However, neither the actor nor the director have officially confirmed these reports.

Many aspects of the project remain shrouded in secrecy, including whether it will be a film or a web series. Kapur was last seen in *Gumraah*, where he portrayed a dual role, and is presently engaged in filming *Metro... In Dino*. Renowned for their acclaimed web series like *The Family Man*, *Farzi*, and *Guns & Gulaabs*, director duo Raj & DK's collaboration with Kapur has stirred considerable excitement among fans and industry insiders alike.



## Anand Deverakonda's Gam Gam Ganesha brings confusion, chaos and comedy altogether

Hero Anand Deverakonda's upcoming film *Gam Gam Ganesha* has been one of the projects that's creating enormous buzz and features a compelling element of crime comedy. The teaser seemed both exhilarating and entertaining.

The film, which is directed by Uday Bommisetty, opens with Anand being introduced as a thief. The carefree criminal flirts with his girl and goes about his regular life with his companion. But he finds himself in a position where he must steal the idol of God.

Two individuals are engaged in a political power struggle that is depicted in par-

allel. Anand also becomes entangled in this situation. He is completely absorbed in formulating a scheme to amass wealth as a lifetime settlement. The remaining narrative reveals whether or not Anand has achieved success. This time, Anand is creating a distinct character. He plays a more animated role in the movie than he did in his earlier productions. He might benefit greatly from this, and the movie is technically sound.

The cast of the project includes Anand Deverakonda, Pragati Srivastava, Nayan Sarika, Emmanuel, Vennela Kishore, Raj Arjun, and Satyam Rajesh.

## Srikanth opens up on rave party rumours

Recently, there were rumours that many Tollywood influencers and actors had attended a rave party in Bengaluru, which was busted by the police.

It was circulated that actor Srikanth Meka was also present at the party. While initially Srikanth and his family laughed off these rumours, later, because of the calls he has been receiving from the media and other well-wishers, the actor wanted to issue a clarification about the same.

"I'm not the one who attends rave parties or goes to pubs. Please don't believe such rumours," clarified actor Srikanth in a video released by him on Monday.

Speaking further, Srikanth made it clear that he has no affiliation with the rave party held in Bengaluru. "I am currently at home in Hyderabad. I have never attended any rave parties in Bengaluru, nor have I been arrested by the police, as reported. Some media friends called me seeking clarification, but I didn't respond to their queries. Recently, there were rumours that I attended a rave party in Bengaluru. My family members and I laughed it off upon hearing the news. They have put up fake thumbnails, alleging me to be the person attending the party. They even added a beard to my face. I am shocked. Please don't believe such false news. I'm at home. Please don't believe such rumours." He also requested that the media confirm and fact-check any news before publishing, as earlier they spread rumours that he was getting divorced!

## Rakshana producer takes legal action against Paayal Rajput!

In her most recent film, *Mangalavaaram*, actress Paayal Rajput astonished everyone by taking on a difficult and distinctive character. *Rakshana*, a crime investigative thriller, is her upcoming film on cards, where the actress will assume the role of a tough police officer for the first time in her career.

The producer further mentioned that if the main lead does not attend the promotion of the film, he and his family will suffer financial losses as her absence from the promotion of the movie will have a considerable impact on the business and revenue from the film to be released.



On the other hand, the actress had also taken this issue to her Instagram and shared a post where she also alleged some serious allegations against the producer. Sharing the post, she revealed that her team had attempted to negotiate the digital promotion of *Rakshana* with Paayal, suggesting clearing dues with compensation first. However, they had refused to compromise!

She further went on to reveal that they had used inappropriate language, stating that the distributor asked Paayal to showcase certain assets and would further be banned from doing films.

According to the producer and as per the agreement, she was supposed to work for 50 days for the completion of the film in addition to the promotion of the film. However, the producer used her services for 47 days. He mentioned that with all the problems faced by him due to COVID, he completed the film and, with business done on the above-mentioned film, planned to release it on April 19.

Notwithstanding the above, the producer and director informed that he is ready to pay the balance



## PICTURE BLOCK

The LB Stadium in Hyderabad was abuzz with excitement as some of Tollywood's biggest stars and directors gathered to celebrate 'Directors' Day 2024'. The event, touted as India's biggest celebration of filmmaking talent, witnessed a star-studded turnout that left fans and industry insiders alike in awe.

Leading the pack was none other than the iconic Allu Arjun, whose charismatic presence lit up the venue. The *Pushpa* star, known for his stylish demeanour and electrifying performances, stole the spotlight as he graced the event with his signature charm.

Joining Allu Arjun were other top-notch talents from the Telugu film industry, including the versatile Natural Star Nani. Renowned for his

## GLAMOUR GALORE



impeccable acting prowess and relatable characters, Nani added his own brand of charm to the festivities, delighting fans with his presence.

But the glitz and glamour didn't stop there. The event also played host to a galaxy of acclaimed directors, who are the creative minds behind some of Tollywood's biggest blockbusters. From innovative storytellers to visionary filmmakers, the gathering

was a testament to the incredible talent pool that drives the Telugu film industry forward. As the stars mingled and exchanged pleasantries, the atmosphere was filled with camaraderie and excitement. Photographers captured candid moments, fans cheered their favorite celebrities, and the air was electric with anticipation for what the future holds for Telugu cinema.