



**BJP-led central govt hell-bent on changing Constitution:
Priyanka**

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RBI APPROVES HIGHEST-EVER DIVIDEND OF RS 2.11 L CR TO GOVT

8



'My performance will be more mature in LOVE ME..'

P12

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Sonia Gandhi is responsible for 1,500 suicides that took place during the Telangana movement. She has not made Telangana but people snatched it by thrashing and holding protests. Sonia Gandhi has nothing to do with the formation of Telangana. Under which protocol Sonia Gandhi will be invited to the government function? If they want to invite her, do it in the party's office and felicitate her for the killing of 1,500 people
- G Kishan Reddy, TG BJP Chief

P4

DON'T MISS...
Equip students with skills for nation's...
 S Abdul Nazeer, Governor of Andhra Pradesh and Chancellor of Vikrama Simhapuri University, presided over the eighth and ninth annual convocation of the university held on the University Campus in Nellore on Wednesday. "Our vision of developed India calls for a strategic alignment of higher education courses with the evolving needs of our community and society and it is imperative that our academic programmes equip the students with knowledge, skills, and values necessary to contribute to our nation's progress..."
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Risk of hospitalisation...
 On the hottest days, risk of hospitalisation for people with metabolic disorders such as those of sugar and blood pressure, and obesity, almost doubled as compared to days recording comfortable temperatures, a new study has found. The research analysing hospital admissions related to high temperatures during summer over more than a decade in Spain found that extreme heat impacted people with these conditions the most. "There are a number of reasons to explain this. For example..."
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Attrition rates continue to...
 Attrition rates continue to remain an area of concern among MBA graduates, especially among the entry-level jobs for top-tier campuses, a study said on Wednesday. Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP (Deloitte India) latest campus workforce trends 2024 study revealed that attrition remained a significant challenge, especially among MBA graduates. Overall, pan-India attrition rates for infants (new recruits), one- and two-year-old employees for top-tier campuses are 21 per cent...
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It's hard to leave ailing mother in ...
 Afghanistan wicketkeeper-batter Rahmanullah Gurbaz has revealed that he made the difficult choice of leaving his ailing mother in hospital when his IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders sought his services ahead of the playoff clash against Sunrisers Hyderabad here as the team is also his "family". Gurbaz, in his maiden game of the season, played a vital role in KKR's win over SRH by taking two vital catches and giving his side a blazing start with a 14-ball 23 on Tuesday. He replaced Englishman Phil Salt at the top...
 -SPORTS

Police searching for YSRCP MLA Pinneli

Macherla MLA was spotted at Isnapur, but gave a slip to police

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh police and the Telangana State special task force police are searching for MLA Pinneli Ramakrishna Reddy, who was caught on a CCTV camera while destroying an EVM on the polling day in Macherla. The YSRCP MLA was reportedly spotted at Isnapur in Sangareddy district of Telangana, but gave a slip to the police.

The MLA was booked as first accused in the case pertaining to destruction of EVM at Palvai Gate polling booth in Macherla on May 13.

The police have issued a lookout notice preventing the MLA from leaving the country. The AP police have formed four special teams and reportedly took Pinneli's aides into custody.

DGP Harish Kumar Gupta informed the EC that four special teams were formed, led by the Additional SP. Raids and checks are continuing in Telangana and a lookout circular has been issued.

The DGP added that the AP police registered cases against Pinneli and his brothers under 10 various sections and put all efforts to arrest them.

The EC has taken the incident seriously and ordered the arrest of Pinneli.

Continued on Page 2



Cordon and search operations continue across State

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Director General of Police (DGP) Harish Kumar Gupta has stated that the police are continuing the cordon and search operations across the State to maintain law and order and to control crimes.

Cordon and search operations are conducted in important circles, villages and outskirts in all districts and cities, he said in a press release here on Wednesday.

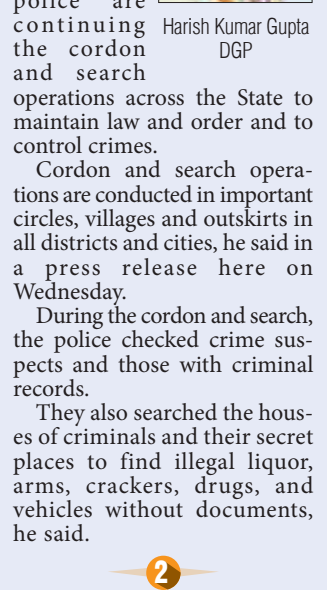
During the cordon and search, the police checked crime suspects and those with criminal records.

They also searched the houses of criminals and their secret places to find illegal liquor, arms, crackers, drugs, and vehicles without documents, he said.

Pinneli first accused, booked under 10 sections: Meena

VIJAYAWADA: State Chief Electoral Officer Mukesh Kumar Meena has said that EVMs were destroyed in nine places in the State on the day of polling. In Macherla alone, seven such incidents took place and all of them checked thoroughly through webcasting. He said that a case was registered against Pinneli Ramakrishna Reddy under 10 various sections. He said that though the EVMs were destroyed, the data was safe. The voting process continued with new EVMs. Meena said that a Special Investigation Team has been informed by the police. On May 20,

the Rentachintala SI filed a memo in the court and named Pinneli Ramakrishna Reddy as first accused (A1). He said that the accused may be sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. He said that cases were registered in connection with the other incidents, too. "The investigation is on and no one involved in the violence will be spared. After the incident of EVM damage, as per the instructions of the EC, transfers were affected. Nothing is hidden pertaining to the EVM destroying incidents. The evidence was submitted to the police officials concerned," said Meena.



State-level Sanctioning Committee meet discusses RKVY, KY

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A meeting of the State-level Sanctioning Committee was held on the implementation of Consolidated Annual Action Plan-2024-25 concerning the implementation of all the schemes under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) and Krishonnati Yojana (KY) in the State under one umbrella, chaired by Chief Secretary Dr KS Jawahar Reddy at his chamber on the premises of the Secretariat at Velagapudi on Wednesday. Under the RKVY and KY, Rs.1,193 crore will be spent for agriculture and allied sectors with the participation of State and Central governments in the 2024-25 financial year.

CS Jawahar Reddy discussed with the officials of Agriculture and allied departments the sanctioning of funds and other issues. Especially under the annual activity of RKVY, soil health fertility, RainFed area development, agriculture mechanisation, crop diversification programme, Per Drop - More Crop, agroforestry, and Paramparagati were reviewed. Also, he discussed the funds allocated for the RKVY and the programmes undertaken through them.

The other matters discussed were making drones available in Custom Hiring Centres at a cost of Rs.134 crore, mass rodent eradication programme through farmer assurance centres, setting up pesticide testing laboratories at the district-level, district agri-inputs, quality control laboratory infrastructure, making suitable equipment available in integrated agri testing laboratories etc.

Agriculture Department Special Chief Secretary Gopala Krishna Dwivedi, Commissioner Ch Hari Kiran, Parks and Forestry Commissioner Sridhar, Rythu Sadhikara Samiti Executive Vice Chairman T Vijaya Kumar, Civil Supplies Commissioner H Arun Kumar and others attended the meeting.

Under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana and Krishonnati Yojana, Rs.1,193 cr will be spent for agriculture and allied sectors

'Stern action against network hospitals that stop Aarogyasri services'

ASHA to stop cashless services under Aarogyasri scheme

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

An amount of Rs 203 crore has been released to Aarogyasri network hospitals as per the assurance given to the hospitals, said Dr YSR Aarogyasri Health Care Trust Chief Executive Officer Dr G Lakshminsha.

The CEO said that the amount for the pending bills will be released at the earliest and appealed to the management of ASHA to cooperate. In a release issued on Wednesday, Dr Lakshminsha said that during the financial year 2024-25, Rs 366 crore has been released to the network hospitals.

Dr G Lakshminsha also said that in the financial year 2023-24, a sum of Rs 3,566.22 crore was transferred to the accounts of network hospitals. During the past five years, 42,91,254 people benefited through Aarogyasri and cashless treatment worth Rs 13,470.89 crore was provided to the people across the State.

The managements of network hospitals are in constant touch with the authorities and assured that there shall not be any interruption to the Aarogyasri services to the patients. Action will be taken against those hospitals that deny services and the district collectors are instructed to ensure that there shall be uninterrupted Aarogyasri services to the people.

Special CS MT Krishna Babu has instructed the officials concerned to ensure that the people who visit CHC, AH, DH, GGH and speciality hospitals do not face inconveniences.

Meanwhile, Dr Avinash, general secretary, ASHA, said that the government has released Rs 203 crore, which is a very meager amount and they are stopping cashless services under Aarogyasri scheme.

He said that due to the tune of Rs 1,500 crore had been pending for the past eight months.

Continued on Page 2



8,360 candidates in fray in 2024 LS polls, highest since 1996

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A total of 8,360 candidates are contesting the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, the highest since 1996, according to an analysis of official data.

In the 2019 polls, there were 8,039 candidates, and in 1996, a record 13,952 candidates were in the fray for 543 seats of the Lower House of Parliament. The 2024 general elections are being held in seven phases, with five rounds of polling completed. The sixth and last rounds will be held on May 25 and June 1, respectively. Counting of votes will be taken up on June 4.

The fourth phase of the elections held on May 13 had the highest number of candidates in the fray, 1,717 in 96 parliamentary constituencies in 10 states and Union Territories (UTs).

'Dengue cases highlight need for vigilance'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The admission of four patients with dengue symptoms at King George Hospital (KGH) last week has brought renewed attention to the potentially fatal viral disease. As many as seven patients are currently receiving treatment at KGH, with their conditions reported as stable. Additional cases are being treated at private hospitals.

The city typically experiences outbreaks during the monsoon season starting in June. However, this year, dengue cases have emerged significantly earlier, catching authorities off guard.

A 14-year-old from JNNURM Colony, Madhurawada, tested positive for dengue on Thursday after being admitted to KGH last Tuesday. "The test at the Virology Lab in KGH confirmed dengue, and he is now being treated in the 'dengue ward' at Rajendra Prasad Ward," stated Rupakula Ravi Kumar, State convener of the Medical Wing of BJP, on Monday.

District Malaria Officer M Tulasi provided data on disease surveillance efforts: "From January 1 to May 20, we collected 90,912 blood samples and detected 34 positive cases of malaria.

During the same period last year, 87,006 samples yielded 31 positive malaria cases."

7 patients receiving treatment at KGH

Stroke linked to extreme temperatures, night-time heat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Extreme temperatures, both hot and cold, are associated with increased risks of death from stroke, with the link being stronger in low-income countries than high-income ones, new research has found.

The study, led by Harvard University, analysed deaths due to stroke reported between 1979 and 2019 across 522 cities in 25 countries. About 34 lakh deaths from ischaemic stroke and 24 lakh deaths due to haemorrhagic stroke were examined, with the data being taken from the Multi-Country Multi-City Network, a global environmental health consortium.

An ischaemic stroke occurs when clotting prevents blood from reaching the brain, while a haemorrhagic stroke happens when a blood vessel in the brain begins to bleed. Researchers found that for every 1,000 ischaemic or haemorrhagic stroke deaths, about 11 were attributable to extreme cold or hot days. About 2.5 per cent of the coldest days were found to contribute to nine of the 11 excess deaths, whereas 2.5 per cent of the hottest days were found to contribute to the remaining two.

The findings are published in the journal Stroke.

The researchers, however, acknowledged that the study was limited in its geographic scope in that rural settings and countries in South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East were under-represented.

In another study, published in the European Heart Journal, researchers found that night-time heat significantly raised the risk of stroke. The researchers, including those from Augsburg University Hospital, Germany, collected data on around 11,000 strokes over 15 years in the region.

Their analysis showed that extreme heat at night increases the risk of stroke by seven per cent.

"Elderly people and women are particularly at risk, and it is mainly strokes with mild symptoms that are diagnosed in clinics after hot nights."

"Our results make it clear that adjustments in urban planning and the healthcare system are extremely important to reduce the risks posed by rising night-time temperatures."



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'INDIA bloc parties will undo work done by Modi'

PNS ■ MAHENDRAGARH (HARYANA)

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said Wednesday the Agniveer military recruitment scheme will be scrapped and thrown in the dustbin if the INDIA bloc comes to power, as he slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "turning Hindustan ke jawan into labourers".

In his first election meeting in Haryana for the Lok Sabha polls, Gandhi also attacked Modi over the issue of farmers. He claimed that the Modi government waived loans amounting to Rs 16 lakh crore for 22 "arabpatis (top industrialists)" but openly says it "won't waive farmers' debts as it will spoil them". "We had brought the land acquisition bill to protect farmers and give them due compensation, but the Modi government scrapped it. They brought three black farm laws and farmers had to take to the streets," the former Congress president said.

Slamming the BJP government over the Agniveer scheme, he said, "This is Modi's scheme, not the Army's scheme. The Army does not want it. This scheme has been framed by the PMO (Prime Minister's Office)." "When the INDIA bloc forms the government, we will chuck the Agniveer scheme in the dustbin, we will tear it up," he said at the rally held in the Mahendragarh-Bhiwani Lok Sabha constituency.

India's borders, Gandhi said, are secured by the youths of Haryana and the country. "There is patriotism in the DNA of our youth," he said, adding, "Modi has converted Hindustan ke jawan into labourers."

Sharpening his attack on the BJP government, the Congress leader said, "They say there will be two types of martyrs -- normal jawans and officers who will get a pension, martyr status and facilities and those from poor families who have been named Agniveer. Agniveers will neither get martyr status nor pension or canteen facility."

The Centre in 2022 rolled out the Agniveer recruitment scheme for short-term induction of personnel into the armed forces with an aim to bring down the age profile of the three services.

'Army doesn't want Agniveer scheme'

SAYS INDIA BLOC GOVT WILL THROW IT IN DUSTBIN



FIRST COLUMN DELETERIOUS EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE GASLIGHTING

It is a menace that undermines individuals' perceptions, beliefs and reality



SAKSHI SETHI

In the network of modern workplaces, emerges a shadowy spectre, threatening the very fabric of organisational culture and well-being - Gaslighting, a form of psychological manipulation in which one person seeks to undermine another person's perceptions, beliefs or reality often done regularly or subtly making the victim doubt their perception, memories or sanity by shifting blame or responsibility onto the victim.

Gaslighting can create a hostile work environment where employees feel anxious and confused and at times even question their competence causing a detrimental effect on themselves, their teams and organisational culture. It is a form of psychological manipulation that can have serious consequences for the well-being and productivity of those involved. When talked about the workplace, the term Gaslight can manifest in myriad forms, often subtle and insidious. It may begin with seemingly innocuous comments undermining an individual's contributions or abilities and may gradually lead to dealing with small instances of manipulation that escalate over time. Gaslighting tactics often target an individual's sense of self-worth, competence and confidence resulting in significant emotional distress, including feelings of anxiety, depression and confusion. It even isolates victims from their support networks by undermining their relationships with coworkers, friends and even family members.



It is often believed that toxic workplace gaslighting can stem from various causes that are often rooted in systemic issues, interpersonal dynamics or individual motivations such as power imbalances, insecure leadership, lack of accountability, interpersonal conflicts and many more. When communication breaks down, tensions escalate, egos clash and employees/individuals start resorting to gaslighting as a means of gaining leverage or inflicting harm.

Addressing the toxic workplace gaslighting requires a comprehensive approach that involves raising awareness, fostering a culture of respect and accountability and providing support for those impacted. Promoting transparency, accountability and psychological safety in organisations is crucial to recognise toxic gaslighting behaviour effectively.

Undoubtedly, workplace gaslighting thrives on power imbalances and psychological manipulation. Victims of gaslighting suffer immense stress, anxiety and identity erosion. Prolonged exposure leads to physical health issues like headaches, GI problems and sleep disturbances, weakening immunity and increasing illness risks.

It becomes crucial for the victims to first recognise and validate their experiences, refusing to internalise the gaslighter's manipulations. The use of assertive communication techniques, such as "I" Statements and boundary-setting, can help individuals confront gaslighting behaviour while preserving their self-esteem and dignity. Additionally, fostering a culture of accountability and transparency within organisations empowers employees to speak out against gaslighting tactics without fear of reprisal. Remember, when personal gain takes precedence over ethical conduct, gaslighting may become a tempting strategy. The only way that may benefit the victims of gaslighting is by seeking support from trusted colleagues, mentors or mental health professionals. By creating a workplace culture that promotes open communication, respect and accountability can the organisation help prevent gaslighting and other forms of manipulation from taking hold as left unchecked, it can inflict lasting psychological harm, exacerbating issues of mental health and well-being in the workplace.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

Do not withdraw capital support for oil PSUs



UTTAM GUPTA

The Government slashes equity infusions for three major oil sector CPSUs by 50 per cent, contradicting its 2023-24 budget commitments



In the Budget for the financial year 2023-24 (April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024) presented on February 1 last year, the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced an equity infusion of Rs 30,000 crore in three Central public sector undertakings (CPSUs) viz. Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), are majority-owned by the Government of India (GOI). She had also proposed Rs 5,000 crore for buying crude oil to bolster its strategic reserves (SRs) in underground storages at Mangalore in Karnataka and Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.

The equity infusions in IOCL/BPCL/HPCL were meant to support their capital investment plans for the transition to 'Green Energy' and achieve 'Net Zero' objectives. Net zero refers to a situation where the emissions of polluting gases such as carbon dioxide due to human activities and their removals are in balance over a given period. On the other hand, the allocation for SRs was meant to guard against the possibility of any disruption in its supply.

Under the above, IOCL and BPCL had done necessary spade work including approval by their respective boards for coming up with 'rights issues' of requisite amounts to enable the Union Government to give effect to its capital contribution (albeit by way of equity) promised in the budget. In the case of HPCL, the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) having acquired majority equity shares from the GOI in FY 2017-18 was to come up with the issue of the preferential issue to give effect to the latter's budgetary intention. However, in a big climb down, in November 2023, the Government reduced the amount of equity infusion to the trio by 50 per cent to Rs 15,000 crore even while deferring implementation of the budgetary announcement on the SRs. Meanwhile, the Interim Budget for FY 2024-25 presented by Sitharaman on February 1, 2024, didn't show any allocation for equity infusion for FY 2023-24. The said amount has been earmarked for the FY 2024-25. This was confirmed by Finance Secretary T V



JUST BECAUSE DURING FY 2023-24, THEY HAVE IMPROVED THEIR PROFITS DUE TO CONTINUING MODERATION IN THE PRICE OF CRUDE OIL, IT WON'T BE LOGICAL TO TRIM THE PROMISED BUDGETARY SUPPORT

Somanathan at a post-budget press conference. As for SRs, the budget documents do not provide any funds either in the revised estimate for FY 2023-24 or during FY 2024-25.

Why did the Government climb down? Even as the Ministry of Finance (MoF) hasn't given any reason, it seems the decision was prompted by a significant boost to their profitability during 2023-24. The IOCL posted a standalone net profit of close to Rs 40,000 crore as against a profit of a little over Rs 8000 crore during 2022-23. The BPCL posted a net profit of around Rs 26,500 crore in 2023-24, compared to about Rs 1,850 crore profit during 2022-23. The HPCL posted a profit of around Rs 14,500 crore during 2023-24 against a loss of about Rs 9,000 crore in 2022-23.

When the companies can generate good profits hence, a good investible surplus for meeting their investment commitments, why do they need the Government's budgetary support? But, there is much more than what meets the eye on a plain reading of the profit numbers. First, out of the net profit, a substantial amount is paid as dividends to the shareholders. For instance, in case IOCL @Rs 7 on a share of Rs 10 each, the payout during 2023-24 on a total of 1,412 crore outstanding shares would be around Rs 10,000 crore.

Second, these undertakings are engaged in the business of refining crude oil to produce a range of finished products such as petrol, diesel, LPG etc besides importing them to meet their demand. That makes their operations highly capital-intensive. Consequently, their investment requirements for expansion and growth are heavy. This is exacerbated by their commitments regarding the transition to 'Green Energy'. While IOCL has decided to

achieve 'Net Zero' by 2040, BPCL and HPCL intend to reach this goal by 2045.

Third, the most potent reason as to why the Government shouldn't backtrack on the capital support once promised to oil PSUs has to do with the loss the latter had suffered during FY 2022-23, courtesy of directions given by the former regarding setting retail prices of petrol and diesel. To understand the full ramifications of such orders, let us look at some basics.

Petrol and diesel were deregulated long back in June 2010 and November 2014 respectively. As a result, oil PSUs got the freedom to fix their retail prices. The price is fixed as refinery-gate price or RGP (import parity price or IPP and export parity price or EPP of the fuel in the ratio of 80:20) plus freight, marketing costs, marketing margin, dealers' commission taxes and duties. Considering that over 85 per cent of India's crude oil needed for making refined products is imported (the balance 15 per cent is sourced from domestic companies such as ONGC, Oil India Limited or OIL) etc, an increase/decrease in its international price should lead to corresponding increase/decrease in the retail price of petrol and diesel but only if the marketing PSUs are allowed to fix the price strictly as per the formula. But, this is rarely done.

The Government issues tacit instructions to IOCL/BPCL/HPCL (together, they account for around 90 per cent of the domestic fuel retail network in the country) to fix the retail price. This is driven by extraneous considerations. Ever since the start of the Ukraine war in February 2022, the international price of oil has been on the boil. The average of the basket of crude oil that India imports during April-September 2022 was \$ 103.7 per barrel against the \$90 per barrel that prevailed before the war started. But,

these PSUs were told to keep the price of petrol and diesel unchanged for six months. This led to substantial under-recovery from the sale of these products.

For instance, in June 2022, the price of petrol in Delhi remained at Rs 97 per litre corresponding to the pre-war crude price of US\$ 90 per barrel. This was despite the price of crude jumping to US\$ 116 per barrel which would have required the price to be set at Rs 112 per litre. Consequently, on the sale of petrol during June 2022, the PSUs suffered under-recovery of Rs 15 per litre (112-97).

Cumulatively, the three PSUs incurred a loss of around Rs 40,000 crore during the first half of FY 2022-23. As the crude price started to decrease from October 2022 onward, their finances became a shade better during the second half. For the whole year, they posted a meagre profit of Rs 850 crore. The capital infusion of Rs 30,000 crore proposed in the budget for 2023-24 was meant to help them offset the losses incurred in the previous year.

Just because during FY 2023-24, they have improved their profits due to continuing moderation in the price of crude oil, it won't be logical to trim the promised budgetary support. Moreover, they need some cushion to guard against crude prices moving north yet again; that possibility is not ruled out considering the continuing tense geo-political situation. For the same reason, the Government shouldn't defer bolstering the strategic buffer of crude oil.

In sync with its emphasis on 'predictability' and 'stability' of the policy, having deregulated petrol and diesel, the Government shouldn't interfere in the process of setting prices by the oil PSUs.

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

Is AI a game changer or a disruptor in the communication landscape?

Artificial Intelligence has introduced complex dilemmas, balancing data-driven insights with human ingenuity and profoundly impacting various sectors

The growing tentacles of AI have become a push factor for change, innovation and disruption in the borderless world that we live in today. AI tools, processes and its vast architecture have been billed as game changers, influencing a vast range of stakeholders including policy-makers, Governments, multi-lateral bodies, agencies and institutions, which are responsible for carving out the road ahead. The debate today hovers around whether AI has become a disruptor or a transformative catalyst leading to a new normal, which is unpredictable, tech-driven and bereft of the necessary human connection. It has disrupted the new normal driving the communication engagement matrix to a terrain that at



CHAITANYA K PRASAD

times is daunting, unpredictable, spontaneous and instant. In the given context, it is important to understand that AI has truly created layers of dilemma, a tug-of-war related to ideas, content, data analysis and the conflict between human minds and data-driven mindsets. We are in a situation perhaps where we over-depend on machines, their learning tools & predictability leading to an

ecosystem that is technology savvy, the behaviour of stakeholders being driven by data metrics and accompanying models and influenced by the power of prediction. The impact of AI has been profound in several areas, as the search for the unknown has grown bigger. A report on India's media and entertainment sector published by EY #Reinventin 2024 mentions that AI can provide an Rs 450 billion boost to the Indian M&E sector by 2027. The report also mentions AI and especially Gen AI - gives it the tools the sector has always dreamed of and can result in a 10 per cent revenue growth and 15 per cent cost efficiency. AI is now used for measuring the effectiveness of campaigns, the growth of cus-

tomised solutions for addressing issues, analysing data for data-driven narratives and stakeholder engagement and changing equations in the context of the client-agency relationship. There is a need to balance human competence with tech tools and the fear of the unknown in the future. For AI to succeed its performance indicators must be based on open, transparent and inclusive. Its tools are re-engineered to reflect the spirit of "Oneness", and "The World is One Family" and the social and economic impact is studied and analysed. As far as outreach is concerned, the need is to balance the technology push that characterises AI outlining its operational efficiency and the creative quotient of human

beings. As a tool for outreach AI supplements outreach with data-focused audience insights which provide practitioners with a feel of audience preferences and behaviours leading to focused and targeted communication strategies. The data processing of the medium also leads to a better and more comprehensive understanding of stakeholder demographics, dynamics, strategy protocols and audience behaviour. There is an urgent need to integrate the communication matrix with the broad themes to ensure a seamless operation of both verticals. AI being futuristic commands the means to create a positive perception of the AI architecture. Some of the themes to be discussed are AI and Machine

Learning in communication networks, AI-powered communication networks: Shaping a greener digital future and including other sectors such as health, environment and education. In all such discussions, the process of communicating the theme will be critical for both policymakers and practitioners. It is also critical that in the era of change, the continuity of technology is weaved with access that is open and democratic. The benefits of positive change must be beneficial to all through the principle of open sourcing: tools, processes, opportunities and community participation. There must be standard operating procedures and processes that ensure the standardisation of algorithms, address

the frailties of human behaviour and integrate the machine and human mind. Technological advancement is only possible if the gap is bridged between the haves and have-nots. AI as a tool for policy formulation and information dissemination should be based on the strong foundations of adaptability, cohesiveness, inclusivity, access and a proper understanding of the complex and diverse social ecosystem of which we are its key constituents. As the impact of AI grows across different terrains, the evolution has to be in sync with human abilities and the irreplaceable human trait that characterises outreach. To ensure a sustainable process, AI needs to follow the five mantras of outreach commu-

nication: Being Receptive, Responsive, Responsible and Reciprocal and Reconcile to the needs and requirements of an ecosystem that believes in equity, equal participation, mutual recognition and collaboration. The success of communication depends on the balance between perception, tools and trust i.e. positioned across different platforms and sectors. A model of this nature will certainly ensure a perfect symphony between AI and the communication landscape bringing forth an effective and lasting communication process.

(The writer is a former civil servant. Views are Personal. Inputs by Vaishnavie Srinivasan and Zoya Ahmad)

Taylor Swift might be joining Marvel universe

Swifties, it's time to purchase your Comic-Con tickets because Taylor Swift is doing something with the Marvel Cinematic Universe that has the internet going crazy!

Despite years of reports that Taylor Swift had been cast as the singing superhero Dazzler, there was no turnout. Fans' expectations were evolving, and her long-awaited partnership with the MCU may finally come true.

Miss Swift met with the top boss, Kevin Feige, and sources say it was a very successful meeting. According to reports, she may be agreeing to play the role of a blonde superhero who is not the Dazzler.

Taylor Swift, who is now touring Europe with Eras, has previously been affiliated with superhero films, most notably the highly anticipated *Deadpool And Wolverine* trilogy. Fans, however, appear to be most enthusiastic about her portrayal of Dazzler.

Although the *Cruel Summer* singer has long been the focus of fan conjecture about her potential casting as Dazzler, the latest encounter does not necessarily confirm it; she may be working on something exciting!

So, if Taylor continues to play Dazzler in *Deadpool And Wolverine*, her meeting with Feige might be to expand the character after so much publicity.

However, no confirmations have been issued thus far. *Deadpool* star Ryan Reynolds responded to the rumours, saying, "Anything can happen, and that's sort of what I love about this universe. The core of *Deadpool* is surprise."



KATRINA KAIF IS PREGNANT WITH HER FIRST BABY

The internet is enthralled with a new video of actors Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal walking together on London's streets. After the video went viral, social media was inundated with comments about how Katrina, who was dressed in baggy clothes, was expecting her first child with her husband. Zoom now claims that the actor is definitely pregnant.

According to a source referenced by the publication, Katrina Kaif's pregnancy rumours are accurate. According to the source, "if all goes well, Katrina and Vicky will welcome their first child in the UK." According to a Zoom source, Katrina, who grew up in the UK and owns a home in London's Hampstead, will give birth in London.

"Katrina bacha London mein hi deliver karegi. She is pregnant. Vicky is already with her."

She is pregnant. Vicky is already with her."



what's brewing?

Avneet Kaur teases fans by saying, "A big surprise coming soon: what's cooking?"

Avneet Kaur has left her fans buzzing with excitement after posting a cryptic message on her Instagram story. The enigmatic post simply reads, "What's cooking? Stay tuned; a big surprise is coming soon!"

As soon as the post went live, fans and followers began speculating about what this surprise could be. The mystery has sparked a frenzy of anticipation, with everyone eager to know what Avneet has in store.

Avneet Kaur has become a familiar face to audiences through her impressive work across different platforms. With her natural acting prowess and charismatic presence on screen, she has captured the hearts of many.

As we count the excitement and support for Avneet Kaur that will continue to grow, we wonder what she is hinting at.



Akshay Oberoi expresses his involvement in *Illegal 3*

Akshay Oberoi, an acclaimed actor and rising star in the Indian entertainment industry, recently shared his enthusiasm for his involvement in the upcoming web series *Illegal 3*. Renowned for his dynamic performances and versatile roles, Oberoi's excitement stems from his passion for court dramas and the prospect of collaborating once again with the well-known actor Piyush Mishra.

"Being a part of *Illegal 3* has been an incredibly fulfilling experience for me," Oberoi remarked. "As someone deeply fascinated by the intricacies of courtroom narratives, this project presented a compelling opportunity to delve into that world and explore its complexities." Oberoi's admiration for the genre is matched by his admiration for his co-star, Piyush Mishra, with whom he previously shared the screen in other successful ventures. "Working alongside Piyush Mishra ji is always a privilege," Oberoi stated. "His dedication and talent elevate every scene, and I am grateful for the chance to collaborate with him once again."

The actor, who recently captivated audiences with his portrayal of a character with shades of grey in the hit show *Broken News 2*, continues to push boundaries and captivate viewers with his compelling performances. "I am immensely proud of the work we have accomplished in *Illegal 3* and can't wait for audiences to witness the gripping narrative unfold," Oberoi concluded.

Illegal 3, directed by Sahir Raza, is set to premiere on the Jio Cinema streaming platform soon.



MEET THE AGENTS OF NEW REAL ESTATE SERIES

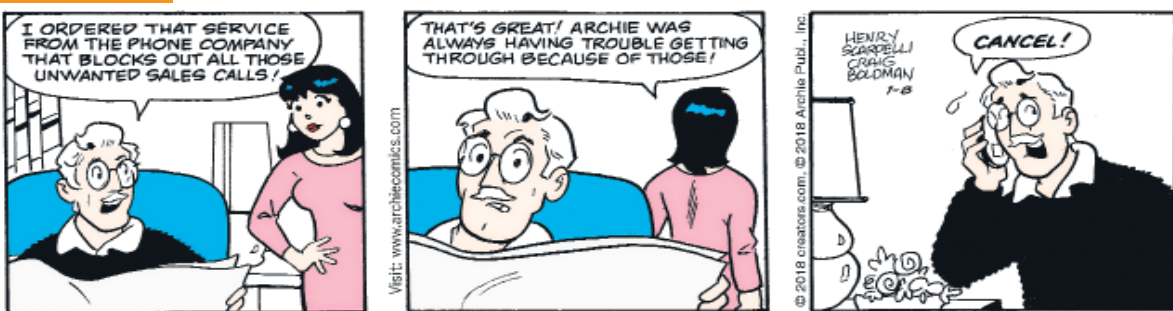
If you enjoyed *Selling Sunset* and *Buying Beverly Hills*, Netflix offers another real estate show based in the British capital. *Buying London* follows property billionaire Daniel Daggars and his team of DDRE Global agents as they seek to sell luxury houses in the city's affluent neighbourhoods. Aside from negotiations on expensive residences in Mayfair and Holland Park, the show will dig into the agents' personal lives, guaranteeing a high level of drama.

Buying London, like other real estate series, will have a competitor agent named Alex Bourne. Though he has been Daniel's friend for years, the two compete in the real estate market for the top listings. Alex is the founder and director of DDRE Global's competitor, London House. He describes himself as a gourmand and a proud father on Instagram, where he has over 5,000 followers. *Buying London* will air on Netflix on May 22.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



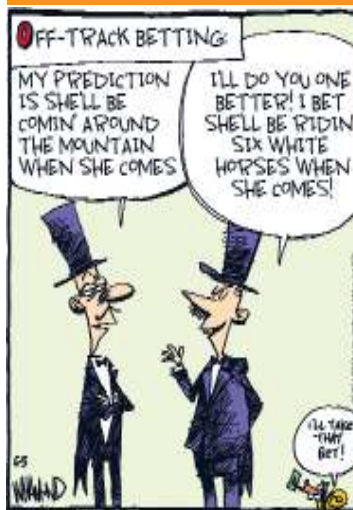
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GINGER MEGGS



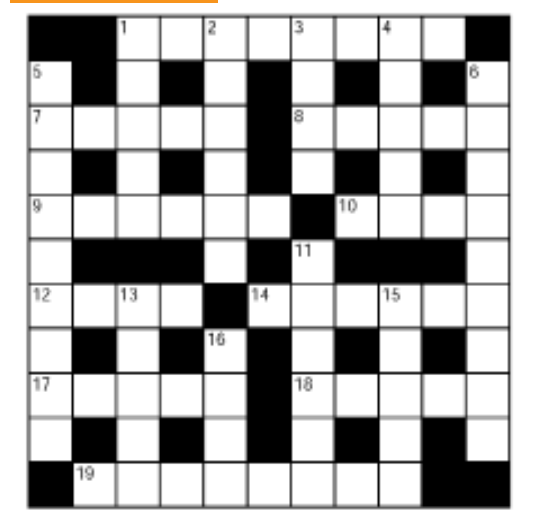
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

ACROSS

- Strong hairs sticking out from a cat's face
- A sour citrus fruit
- People who get coal or metal ore from underground
- A joint between two ropes
- Middy
- Cardboard box
- The brother of your father or mother
- A soldier's bravery award
- Things that belong to someone
- Strike with the foot
- A red-breasted bird
- A light metal
- Immediately
- Someone who grows crops or raises animals
- Happen
- A soft toy bear
- Jump over

DOWN

- Adult females
- Take no notice of



CLOSING THE GAPS IN CIRCULARITY AND SOLVING PLANET'S WASTE CRISIS!

A forward-thinking environmental organisation dedicated to driving positive change is OneEarth Foundation, focusing on promoting sustainability and combating environmental challenges. This week, *The Pioneer* hears from the founder as we discuss their mission!

SHIKHA DUGGAL

To contribute to a cleaner world, the OneEarth Foundation delivered study tables and benches manufactured from separated low-value plastic garbage gathered during the 30-day anti-plastic pollution campaign to an underprivileged school in a slum.

The program, which aimed to prevent plastic pollution and promote sustainable practices, raised awareness among over 1300 people and students, collected 1.4 tons of trash, held 59 seminars and clean-up drives, and paddled 120 kilometers along the Goa shoreline.

This effort is more than just a symbolic gesture; it symbolises the OneEarth Foundation's core ideals, which are based on circular economy techniques. It believes in closing the loop by managing garbage in a sustainable manner, which will contribute to a more ecologically conscious society.

This "more ecologically conscious society" prompted us to do an exclusive community wise column with the foundation, in which we hear from founder Ferdin Sylvester: "Our mission is to protect India's coastal ecosystems, specifically targeting marine plastic pollution and preserving the mangrove ecosystem and beyond. We empower communities, educate kids across the country, and promote equitable access to climate and related education for government and socially disadvantaged pupils."

The foundation advocates a circular economy model that reduces waste and improves resource efficiency through concepts such as reduce, reuse, repair, and recycle. They focus on programs aimed at effectively managing ocean-bound plastic garbage. They bridge the gap with the circular model, repurposing waste as valuable resources rather than disposing of it in landfills or the ocean! They also use new techniques to turn low-

value plastics into usable items, which promotes environmental sustainability and drives systemic change.

"Recognising the importance of mangrove ecosystems, we work with local people of southwestern coast to expand mangrove plantations and preserve existing mangroves. Our strategy focuses on empowering communities, particularly women, through awareness programs on the socio-economic benefits of mangrove agriculture. The charity places a high priority on climate education and awareness. Our IEC projects serve as change agents, raising awareness and encouraging action toward more sustainable living. The foundation lobbies for policy reforms and climate-friendly policies at the local, national, and international levels, participating in programs such as the Rural WASH program under SBM-G 2.0 and JJM 2.0," adds the founder.

They conducted various investigations on rivers and estuaries, including extensive mapping, baseline surveys, categorisation and characterisation studies, to discover data weaknesses such as plastic trash, mangrove diversity, and biodiversity. They use cutting-edge technologies such as arcGIS and satellite imagery in their research, as well as conducting in-depth analyses of published papers and reports from reputable organisations!

The founder goes on, "In the face of an unsustainable environment created by human acts, we must go deeper and accelerate efforts both personally and systematically. The behaviour change and information, education, and communication awareness are critical components of our activities. We prioritise disseminating good narratives through a variety of channels. Combating disinformation is critical in an information-rich age, especially in the environmental and sustainability realms. Our work on the 16 ways waste segregation



initiatives demonstrate the power of community action and individual responsibility in environmental management. Segregation at the source is critical to reducing trash mishandling, increasing recycling, and lowering government costs for refuse-derived fuel."

Accolades, prizes, and recognition are more than just achievements; they demonstrate their enthusiasm and commitment for the founder. As a youthful and enthusiastic group, their mission is to safeguard coastal ecosystems and communities while building sustainable cities through circular waste management systems, mangrove restoration, and empowering youngsters to take positive climate action. Their case study, "Mitigating Plastic Waste in Coastal Ecosystems Through Education and Circular Economy Innovation," was recognised and featured in the India Sanitation Coalition's flagship publication, *Business of Change Series 2023!*

Furthermore, "being recognised by leading corporations, funding organisations, think tanks, and mentors is extremely rewarding. It confirms that we are on the right track and strengthens our reputation in the eyes of stakeholders, partners, and supporters worldwide. This increased visibility not only allows us to reach a larger audience, but it also reinforces our message of environmental protection and sustainability. Building on recent triumphs, such as our anti-plastic pollution campaign, we intend to expand these efforts beyond coastal waters to include streams, backwaters, and land areas."



Kritika prefers substantive roles, regardless of platform

SUBODHINI PUROHIT

Kritika Bharadwaj has received recognition for her remarkable performances in *Mismatched*, *Yodha*, and *Rashmi Rocket*. Her interest in theatre grew over her undergraduate years, and she made the daring decision to pursue acting as a career in her second year. Everything changed when she got the attention of a prominent casting director, who was blown away by her talent. She begins, "This opportunity brought me to Mumbai, where I began an incredible journey in acting. This experience offered me significant information about auditions, scripts, director preferences, and acting skills. Every day has been an exciting adventure as I hone my abilities and expand my knowledge of the profession. Despite the obstacles, I am confident that I am intended to be an actor."

Having last seen in *Yodha*, she indicated that she had little time to prepare for her role. She explains, "I actually began shooting for *Yodha* just three days after finishing *Mismatched Season 2*. Fortunately, my director helped me understand the technical requirements of playing a pilot, and filming the sequences in a chronological order made things easier."

The set had a calm environment, and despite her early fears, the entire experience went surprisingly well. *Yodha* contained numerous dramatic action sequences;

therefore, her character had few action scenes in the film. She says, "I focused on getting the technical things right without appearing false. Sagar walked me through the details of the final scenario. During action sequences, all I had to do was try to act naturally while others engaged in fierce fighting."

She prioritises projects based on whether she would like to watch them personally. She prefers substantive roles, regardless of platform or scale, as long as the character has depth and meaning.

For example, "When I was offered the opportunity to work on *Mismatched*, I had no idea it would become such a popular Netflix show, but being a part of it was a huge thing. When the filmmaker approached me about *Rashmi Rocket*, I didn't hesitate, especially given his talent. Similarly, *Yodha* came from auditions. Even after *Mismatched*, I've turned down projects whose scripts

Urdu, thanks to my upbringing in Lucknow. It's a solid foundation that has helped me advance my career in the Hindi film industry."

However, she has yet to play a role that is related to her heritage. She emphasises, "While I've often been cast in these hoity characters, I'm eager to explore roles that showcase different facets of my talent."

Working on the set of *Mismatched* for her is like going to a never-ending party. It has been an extremely rewarding experience, one of the most wholesome of her life. She says, "From the start, there was genuine camaraderie among us, and it felt like we had suddenly become a

close-knit family. It's unusual to discover such a pleasant dynamic among a group of people, especially when they're all the same age. Fortunately, we clicked right away, which made the entire event enjoyable." Even when they weren't shooting, they found themselves missing the set terribly.

Mismatched's first two seasons got excellent appreciation from both fans and critics. She gave some light on the process of portraying a character who is always evolving, especially during production breaks. "Akarsh is recognised for his extraordinary casting abilities. He has an uncanny capacity to spot the correct individual for a given character almost immediately. When I auditioned for the role of Simran, he only wanted to meet me and see whether I was a good fit for the character. He casts with incredible precision. Even though Simran isn't the nicest person in *Season 1*, I found it easy to play her. This doesn't imply I'm a bad person; there's just something about her demeanour that appealed to me as an actress."

Aside from *Mismatched* and *Yodha*, she is looking into other opportunities. She explains, "I'm actively engaging with industry professionals, reading scripts, and auditioning. While there is nothing specific to report at this time, I will surely announce any developments when the time is right."

Actress Kritika Bharadwaj has become a known face since her stint in *Mismatched*, for all the obvious reasons. Without sharing much detail about the upcoming season, she does get candid with *The Pioneer* about the *Mismatched* franchise and working on the sets.



THE WORLD'S FIRST ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TREATMENT FOR AUTISM

Autism, a developmental disease recognised over a century ago, has long posed challenges to families and societies around the world. This illness has had an impact on the lives of thousands of innocent children over the past 133 years. Every parent has an unwavering hope that their children will prosper, regardless of the hardships.

Pinnacle Blooms Network® uses Pinnacle Therapeutic AI™ to help children and families with autism achieve self-sufficiency, integrate into society, and live fulfilling lives. For countless moms, fathers, and families afflicted by autism, this topic has a champion! With the world's first artificial intelligence engine treating autism, Dr. Sreeja Reddy Saripalli, mother, chief strategist, and CEO, leads this groundbreaking organisation on a mission to transform the lives of 90 crore children and families affected by autism through innovative therapies and cutting-edge technology.

Dr. Sreeja's team just got the prestigious honour of being the top autism therapy center network. We also had some fascinating chats with them regarding the current and future of autism for children, parents, families around the world, business, and other topics. Here are some snippets from the conversation!

When asked about the accolade, Dr. Sreeja was full of admiration for her staff. "Receiving the coveted award is more than just an honour; it demonstrates our deep devotion to helping children and families affected by autism globally. This honour confirms all our energy and strengthens our resolve to continue leading innovative advancements in therapy, technology, and care."

The attempt is motivated by a deep desire to empower nearly 90 crore children, parents, and families worldwide. Their willpower to #CoreSuccessfulLives has a global impact, fostering excellence, inclusion, and innovation. This accolade inspires the team to pursue their future goals with renewed enthusiasm and purpose!

The doc goes on to say, "With over 160 patentable breakthroughs, systems, technologies, and methods, we have established new standards in autism therapy. Among these, it stands out as a huge step forward. As the world's first artificial intelligence engine built to treat autism across 400 distinct dimensions of child development, it represents a watershed moment in customised and successful healthcare. This technique combines more than a century of autism studies and has already resulted in 10.3 million successful therapies in 60 countries." Its unique feature is its holistic approach to therapy, which is based on a trinity of fundamental components: teams of certified professionals, a data-driven methodology, and persistent innovation. This combination fosters a loving environment, resulting in significant improvements and mainstream societal integration for those with autism.

"The global impact extends to almost 60 countries. We take satisfaction in making a meaningful difference in the lives of millions of people, allowing them to live regular lives. Their allegiance to diversity guarantees that all services are available, regardless of their financial situation. It has accumulated over 1 crore successful therapies, including speech, ABA, occupational, and special education therapies, with a 97% improvement rate," added the successful doctor who is leading the organisation! While several projects aim for similar goals, it stands out for its AI-powered approach to therapy. Their focus is on empowering individuals to lead self-sufficient lifestyles, with the objective of reaching 90 million children and families worldwide. This aim motivates them to scale their technologies.

Looking forward, "We intend to extend to include further aspects of child development. Future plans include opening new facilities throughout the world to address marginalised areas and investing in ongoing research to advance the field of autism treatment. Our wholeheartedness to inclusivity extends to the introduction of a first-of-its-kind OTT platform that provides high-quality self-therapeutic services to children and families globally."

Every mother, father, and family see it as a light of hope. They encourage readers to trust in everyone's potential, welcome innovative thinking, and prioritise equality and accessibility. "Together, we can create a world where every child and family affected by autism can thrive and lead wonderful, self-sufficient lives as integral members of mainstream society." Because, for the first time in the 133-year history of autism therapy, it launched Pinnacle S.O.U.L., which captures every second of your child's golden age and makes the entire world work for your child's self-sufficient, mainstream, and delightful existence. "It assesses your child's developmental milestones, delays, current conditions, behaviours, and tantrums from birth to the present day and, using 133 years of autism research, develops a scientific, exclusive early intervention program and therapy goals suited to your child's specific requirements. The success of giving over 1 crore therapies with a 97% improvement rate demonstrates the usefulness of this strategy," is what information we acquired from the founder.

It's more than just a therapeutic clinic; it's a holy movement for empowerment. Each therapist is equipped with the information and instruments necessary to provide the greatest therapy possible, similar to offering prayers in sacred sites where their potency is multiplied by the location's cosmic force. This equates to the Therapist + God + the Entire World + #1CroreLivesSuccess, resulting in an atmosphere in which your child can grow! The holistic approach incorporates the use of technology to customise therapy programs. This powerful AI, similar to the Google or Amazon of autism therapy, understands exactly what therapy materials to utilise, what strategies to employ, and the best time frames, repetitions, and sequences for your child's age and gender. This means that every moment is used to prepare your child for a self-sufficient, mainstream, and beautiful life.





It's hard to leave ailing mother in hospital but KKR is family too, says Gurbaz

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Afghanistan wicketkeeper-batter Rahmanullah Gurbaz has revealed that he made the difficult choice of leaving his ailing mother in hospital when his IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders sought his services ahead of the playoff clash against Sunrisers Hyderabad here as the team is also his "family".

Gurbaz, in his maiden game of the season, played a vital role in KKR's win over SRH by taking two vital catches and giving his side a blazing start with a 14-ball 23 on Tuesday. He replaced Englishman Phil Salt at the top and hit the ground running to help the two-time champions enter the IPL final with their comfortable eight-wicket victory here on Tuesday.

"As a cricketer, you (should) know, what to do. (In) League cricket, only a few players can play. If there is opportunity for you, you should do best. If there's no

opportunity for you, you should be prepared, well prepared for the opportunity," Gurbaz told the media here after the match.

"My mom is still sick. I went (back) there and the call from here was (that) Phil Salt was leaving. They called and they messaged me that 'Gurbaz, we need you, and what is your feedback for us?'," he revealed.

"I said, 'yes, I will come. My mom is still in hospital, and I'm always talking to her, but this is also my family. I should manage both of that, my mom and my KKR family. It's hard, it's tough, but still, I need to manage it," he added.

SRH skipper Pat Cummins' decision to bat first backfired. Gurbaz said KKR had planned to bowl first had they won the toss.

"We all (had) decided that we should go and we should bowl first, because in this kind of moment, and team likes Sunrisers that have a strong batting side and you should know what (is) the total and then you go for it," he said.



"We bowled really well, actually. (To get a) team likes Sunrisers all out on 160, that was bowling effort. And then once we come to the batting end, we also not just try to, we should win the circle (powerplay)."

"(In) my mind was (the) only (thought) that I should win the circle, because sometime in low total like this, you need to have a good circle, otherwise, match can be difficult in the end."

Gurbaz said it was the best he had seen KKR pacer Mitchell Starc bowl after the left-arm pacer took three wickets in the powerplay to set up the game for his side.

"He was just unbelievable. The way he bowled today, he's one of the best, he has a lot of experience, he knows how to manage the big games. I saw him today totally different than other games," he said.

Gurbaz said Afghanistan players are preparing well for the T20 World Cup next month. He said franchise cricket is something that comes second and doing well for their country is always their priority.

"It's all about hard work. It doesn't mean that you come from Afghanistan, you come from India, you come from Australia, whatever. It's all about hard work, I think. If you work hard, if you know what to do, and it's help you in every situation."

"Afghanistan is not the same Afghanistan. We know what to do and how can we represent our country. Everything is good for cricket there, and we played really well, the last World Cup, and from the last six-seven years, Afghanistan is doing great," he said.

"Our mindset (is) not (just) to play for league cricket, our mindset is always to do something better for our country, and then come the leagues. If you do good for your country, all leagues will pick you, and that's the point that we play all the leagues," he added.



Till I play Tests, I will limit franchise appearances to only two events a year: Travis Head

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Travis Head might have taken this year's IPL by storm but Test cricket remains his top priority and till the time he is playing the format, the Australian big-hitter would like to limit his participation in T20 leagues to just two events per year.

Head, who has enjoyed an incredible last 10 months, has been a nemesis for India with centuries in both the World Test Championship and the ODI World Cup finals. Currently, he has blazed to 533 runs for Sunrisers Hyderabad, forging a fabulous opening partnership with uncapped Indian Abhishek Sharma.

Needless to say he is sought after and asked how he plans to manage the lucrative T20 offers with his commitment for the 'Baggy Green', Head said it's a no-brainer.

"This has been the first year in IPL for me in quite a while (since 2017). I would put all my eggs in Test basket for the moment, I will continue to do that," Head told PTI during an exclusive interview organised by Prime Video ahead of their upcoming docu-series, 'The Test Season 3', featuring the Australian team's tour of England last year.

"After Tests, I will pick formats, and see in which different ways I am available for selection."

T20 events have mushroomed across the world with some like West Indies' Andre Russell and Sunil Narine appearing in multiple events, adding up to more than five a year.

Having had a great run for the 'Orange Army' this season, Head is keen on coming back to IPL next year too.

"At this stage, I would like to be back here in IPL next year. Like I will play Major League Cricket (MLC in USA) this year right after the World T20 but next year might just look a lot different."

"Each year, you prioritise what you can and can't do. Next year, Test cricket is around, we tour the West Indies and probably I will not feature in many other franchisees," the 30-year-old was categorical.

"Look, in few years when I am finished with Test cricket, then probably there will be few more opportunities to play a bit more franchise cricket. But at this time, I would try to limit it to a couple of franchise may be, and (focus on) Test cricket."

The last 10 months have been very hectic for Head starting with the WTC final, followed by the Ashes and then the World Cup where he came in during the second half after recovering from a hand injury.

Right now, more than two months of IPL will be followed by World T20 in the Americas. But the southpaw doesn't want to make a big deal about workload management.

"I will be home in a couple of days' time once we are done with IPL. Be home for two-three days and make the trip to the West Indies with family and start all over again."

"Look, we are very fortunate to do what we do and I am not going to do it forever. So try and make the most of it as we can, we are lucky that we are well looked after."

He then tried to put things in perspective.

"I know in a few years, I can retire and do nothing. I will have plenty of time to look back and wish I was back on tour, I would like to be in the moment, keep batting through and stay in the moment, enjoying the moment."

CRACKING THE 'INDIA CODE': The performance that Head has delivered over the past few months, he believes that the seeds of it were sown early in 2023 when he came with the Test team, a hard-fought series that Australia lost 1-2.

"I think a lot of that has come from the Test tour last year, spending time here and working on things and also being a bit older, understanding my game and its blueprint and how you want to go about it and being content and my family being around, all those things," he explained.

"In IPL, I have evolved continuously while getting better but I still have some work to do," he seemed confident. His national team skipper Pat Cummins has been his SRH skipper and he says they have developed a chemistry where both know what to expect of each other.

"We are just close friends and just enjoy each other's company. Not too much game stuff and over time when you build relationships, he now knows how I will go about it (my job)...," he said.

"...If I need anything, I talk to him but he lets me do what I need to in order to perform. He backs me."

SRH lost the first qualifier on Tuesday to Kolkata Knight Riders but will have another shot at qualifying for finals in the second qualifier in Chennai on May 24.

Asked if a documentary like the 'The Test Season 3' can be intrusive and possibly catch players when they are at their most vulnerable and want to privately get over a low phase, Head,

I could not have made better choices: Former RCB owner Mallya on Kohli

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Royal Challengers Bengaluru owner Vijay Mallya on Wednesday said he couldn't have made a better choice when he bid for Virat Kohli in the inaugural IPL auction as he lauded the superstar batter for his brilliant run in the ongoing season.

RCB have made a tremendous comeback after losing seven out of their first eight games to qualify for the playoffs with six straight victories, riding on Kohli's sublime form which

has so far fetched him 708 runs from 14 innings.

RCB will face Rajasthan Royals in the Eliminator on Wednesday night.

"When I bid for the RCB franchise and I bid for Virat, my inner instinct told me that I could not have made better choices," Mallya, who currently lives in the United Kingdom and is trying to avoid extradition to India, wrote on 'X'. "My inner instinct tells me that RCB have the best chance to go for the IPL Trophy, Onward and Upward. Best of luck."

Kohli was bought by RCB for USD



30,000 ahead of the 2008 IPL following his title-winning run with India's U19 World Cup.

RCB, however, hasn't been able to lift the trophy despite reaching the final thrice — in 2009, 2011 and 2016.

Mallya is accused in a bank loan default matter of over Rs 9,000 crore involving his defunct Kingfisher Airlines.

He has been living in the United Kingdom since March 2016. The same year he had to forego his ownership of RCB due to the legal proceedings against him.

Sunrisers Hyderabad batting approach was puzzling: Gavaskar

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Legendary Sunil Gavaskar has questioned the "puzzling" batting approach of Sunrisers Hyderabad during the powerplay in the first IPL Qualifier, suggesting their reckless strategy may have cost them the match against Kolkata Knight Riders.

Having cleaned up his fellow Australian Travis Head with a peach of a delivery with his second ball, Mitchell Starc blew away the SRH top-order in his opening spell of 3-0-22-3.

SRH lost four wickets inside the powerplay to be dismissed for a paltry 159, a target KKR shot down in 13.4 overs to storm into the Sunday's summit clash in Chennai.

"It was a terrific performance, no question. Such an impressive display with both the bat and the ball. They took four wickets in the power play,



and that's where the Sunrisers were pushed onto the back foot, really on the ropes. They couldn't recover from that," the former Indian captain told Star Sports Cricket Live.

"There was a partnership of sorts, but to me, the approach of the SRH batters in those first six overs was puzzling." With Vaibhav Arora dismissing the in-form

Abhishek Sharma in the next over, SRH's explosive opening pair were out for 13 runs. Gavaskar said after losing two key wickets, SRH's batters should have played more

cautiously. Instead, they continued to play aggressively, which led to further losses and ultimately cost them the match.

"When you've lost two wickets and the two who have been scoring runs for you, a certain amount of caution is required. Sure, don't miss out on scoring opportunities, but don't look to throw your bat at everything. That's what we saw."

"They lost those four wickets, and losing four top batters means you can't really expect numbers five, six, seven, eight, and nine to get you to 200. So, that is where they may have lost it. But full credit to Kolkata for the way they attacked and took advantage of that pitch as well," Gavaskar said.

The former India opener was all praise for Venkatesh Iyer and emphasised his value as a versatile player, a top left-handed batter and a capable medium-pace bowler, even if

he hasn't bowled much recently.

Venkatesh struck a 28-ball 51 not out in an unbroken partnership with his skipper Shreyas Iyer (58 not out; 24b) to seal their eight-wicket win with 38 balls to spare.

"He's been a very good player for such a long time. His first season, a couple of seasons ago, was outstanding. Then, as it happens to everybody, the second season is harder because opponents have a better idea of how to bowl to you," Gavaskar said.

"But Venkatesh is the kind of cricketer you want in your team. He's a top batter, a left-handed batter, and he can bowl medium pace. We haven't seen him bowl much recently, but he's a very good medium-pace bowler. He might not always pick up wickets, but he can bowl those few overs that can make a significant difference," he added.

OTHER SPORTS

Khilari defends gold at World Para Athletics, India surpasses best ever tally

INDIA SURPASSES BEST-EVER TALLY



PTI ■ KOBE (JAPAN)

India's Sachin Sarjerao Khilari defended his gold medal in the men's shot put F46 category with an Asian record at the World Para Athletics Championship as the country surpassed its best-ever haul in the global competition here on Wednesday.

India, now have 11 medals, five of them gold. They bettered their previous best tally of 10 (3 gold, 4 silver and 3 bronze) in the 2023 edition in Paris.

Sachin heaved the iron ball to a distance of 16.30 metres, bettering his own Asian record of 16.21 metres set during the World Para Athletics Championship in

Paris last year. The F46 category in para athletics events is for those with moderately affected movement in one or both arms or the absence of limbs. These athletes have to transmit power from hips and legs into the throw.

In the case of Sachin, who hails from Karangani village in Maharashtra's Sangli district, he suffered a mishap during his school days leading to disability in his left hand.

The stocky 34-year-old lost his muscles from the elbow due to gangrene and despite multiple surgeries, his arm never recovered.

On Tuesday, India had reaped a rich haul

of five medals to swell its tally to 10 (4 gold, 4 silver, 2 bronze). China is currently leading the medals tally followed by Brazil.

The Hangzhou Asian Games gold-medallist thrower told PTI that he was confident of taking the top podium spot.

"I was expecting the gold here and I am happy. I have also qualified for Paris Olympics and hope to win gold there also," Sachin said from Kobe.

With three more days still to go, India are in with a chance of winning a few more medals including gold and head coach Satyanarayan said he was quite optimistic.

"We are expecting two more gold medals and hoping to touch the 17-medal mark," said Satyanarayan.

On Tuesday, Reigning Paralympics champion Sumit Antil had defended his F64 javelin throw world title, while Thangavelu Mariyappan and Ekta Bhatnagar also grabbed gold medals in their respective events as India jumped to third place in the World Para Athletics Championships here.

Antil, who had won gold medals in the Tokyo Paralympics and 2023 World Para Athletics Championships, sent his spear to a distance of 69.50m to stand on top of the podium.

The 25-year-old Haryana athlete thus continued his global domination in the F64 javelin event. He is the current world record holder also, courtesy his massive 73.29m throw while winning gold in the Para Asian Games in Hangzhou, China last year.

He also holds the World Para Athletics Championships record of 70.83m which he had produced while winning the gold in the last edition in Paris in 2023.

Compatriot Sandeep won the bronze medal in the same event with a throw of 60.41m. Sri Lanka's Dulan Kodithuwakku took the silver with a throw of 66.49m.



Hina, Kanika strike as India juniors beat Dutch hockey club 2-0

PTI ■ BREDA (NETHERLANDS)

Hina Banerjee and Kanika Banerjee scored a goal each as the Indian junior women's hockey team began their tour of Europe with a 2-0 win against Netherlands club Breda Hockey Vereniging on Tuesday.

The Indian junior team will play their next match against Belgium in Breda, Netherlands later on Wednesday.

Breda Hockey Vereniging pushed aggressively for the equaliser but success eluded them despite the hosts earning three PCs in the third quarter.

Kanika Banerjee struck the back of the net to double India's lead in the fourth quarter following which the defenders did well to ward off several spirited attacks from the opponents in the last few minutes.

The Indian junior team will play their next match against Belgium in Breda, Netherlands later on Wednesday.

‘MY PERFORMANCE WILL BE MORE MATURE IN LOVE ME..’

RAMYA SREE

Prepare to be spellbound as *Love Me If You Dare* gears up to weave its tale of love, mystery, and the supernatural on the silver screen, set for release on May 25. With its unique blend of horror and romance, the film has already captured the imagination of audiences, having cleared the censor board with a U/A certification.

Directed by novelist-turned-filmmaker Arun Bhimavarapu and produced by Dil Raju Productions, the film stars Ashish and Vaishnavi Chaitanya in lead roles, promising a cinematic experience unlike any other.

Ahead of the much-anticipated release, Ashish, known for his acclaimed performance in *Rowdy Boys*, shares insights into his character and the making of the film.

In an exclusive interview, Ashish delves into the intricacies of his role, stating, “My character represents a dark theme. My character is such that I will do all the work that I am told not to. I am a YouTuber in this film. No one can judge what my character does or thinks.”

Reflecting on the preparation process, Ashish highlights the importance of workshops and discussions with director Arun, stating, “I spent more time with my director, who explains the character very well. We did workshops, which helped me a lot. I give a much more mature performance in this movie.”

Speaking about the film’s unique premise, Ashish shares, “I have a duet song with the ghost in the movie. I found the story very different; the romance and love track with a ghost are very different.”

Ashish also sheds light on the film’s production journey, stating, “MM

Keeravani sir immediately okayed the film. We shot for 15 days to see if we could implement what we wanted, and it came out well, so we proceeded further.” As for the character dynamics, Ashish reveals, “This is a love story. Mine is a carefree character. Ghost is also a character in this movie.”

Moreover, Ashish confessed that he is a big fan of Allu Arjun, Dulquer Salman, and Dhanush and wants to do films that are both commercial and content-oriented.

Dispelling misconceptions, Ashish clarifies, “Many thought Vaishnavi was a ghost in this movie. She is not. The audience will be surprised to know the other characters in the film.” With legendary cinematographer PC Sreeram on board, Ashish expresses gratitude, stating, “The film has a legendary cameraman, PC Sreeram, and receiving compliments for him gave me more confidence.”

Looking ahead, Ashish teases, “There are a lot of emotions and pain in this movie. There are many twists and turns. Our way of approaching it is also different.” In closing, Ashish emphasises the importance of theatrical experiences, stating, “We are living in the OTT era, but I believe the impact you get in theaters will not be getting at OTT. This movie will give a visual experience; that’s why I want the audience to watch the movie in theatres.”

With promises of surprises and twists in store, *Love Me If You Dare* emerges as a must-watch for cinephiles seeking an immersive and exhilarating cinematic journey.



Adah Sharma’s *C.D (Criminal Or Devil)* clears censor

Renowned for her captivating performances, Adah Sharma has garnered nationwide acclaim with her roles in critically acclaimed films such as *The Kerala Story* and *Bastar*. Now, she ventures into the realm of Telugu cinema with *C.D. (Criminal Or Devil)*, a psychological horror thriller set to enthrall audiences with its chilling narrative.

Directed by Krishna Annam and produced by SSCM Productions, *C.D. (Criminal Or Devil)* features Viswam in the male lead role, promising a cinematic journey filled with suspense and intrigue. With a growing demand for films spanning genres like horror and thriller, anticipation for *C.D. (Criminal Or Devil)* has soared, fuelled by its intriguing

concept and captivating promotional materials.

Following the completion of censorship formalities, the film has received a U/A certificate, clearing the path for its highly anticipated theatrical release on May 24th. The positive feedback from censor officials has only intensified the excitement surrounding the film’s impending debut.

In addition to Adah Sharma and Viswam’s stellar performances, *C.D. (Criminal Or Devil)* boasts a talented ensemble cast, including Jabardasth Rohini, Bharani Shankar, Ramana Bhargav, and Mahesh Vitta, who bring depth and authenticity to their roles. With A. Muddu Krishna crafting gripping dialogues and Satya Giduthuri overseeing the meticulous editing, the film promises to deliver a seamless blend of storytelling and technical prowess.

As the release date approaches, *C.D. (Criminal Or Devil)* emerges as a cinematic treat for audiences craving a thrilling and immersive experience. With its spine-tingling premise and talented cast, the film is poised to captivate viewers and leave them on the edge of their seats.



Doing a film soon with Anushka, Vijayashanthi: Producer SK Basheed

Producer SK Basheed is confident of his win as an MP candidate in Rajampet with a heavy majority. He started his journey as a producer with the 2007 Telugu film *Allare Allari*, starring Allari Naresh and Venu as heroes. He told the media in the Hyderabad Film Chamber that he has come into politics to serve the people but has faced many obstacles.

Speaking there, he mentioned, “I came into the film industry as a producer with the film *Allare Allari*. Now I am venturing into business as well as producing. Recently, I met director Suresh Krishna. He is directing a movie with Anushka and Vijayashanthi in the lead roles. We have not finalised any more details with them yet. We are going to distribute this film.”



KAVIN08 CONFIRMED: Nayanthara to star in Vishnu Edavan’s next directorial

Excitement is brewing in the film industry as actor Kavin gears up for his next project after the success of *#Mask*. The talented actor has been confirmed to star in an upcoming film, tentatively titled *Kavin08*, under the direction of Vishnu Edavan, known for his lyrical contributions to hit films like *LEQ*, *DaDa*, and *Devara*. Adding to the anticipation, the film will feature the powerhouse performer Nayanthara in the lead role, marking a significant collaboration between two acclaimed talents of the industry. This casting coup has already set expectations high among fans and movie buffs.

Behind the scenes, the project is backed by the reputed production house 7 Screen Studio, renowned for delivering blockbuster hits like *Master*, *KVRK*, *Cobra*, and *LICFilm*. With a track record of delivering quality entertainment, the studio’s involvement further raises anticipation for *Kavin08*.

As details continue to unfold, fans eagerly await further updates on the film’s storyline, cast, and release date. With an ensemble of talented individuals coming together, *Kavin08* promises to be an enthralling cinematic experience for audiences.

Kamal Haasan’s insightful perspective: “GOOD THINGS TAKE TIME”

In response to queries regarding the prolonged duration between the release of his iconic film *Indian* and its sequel, renowned actor Kamal Haasan offered a thought-provoking insight, drawing parallels from India’s cricketing history. He aptly compared the delay to the gap between India’s first and second cricket World Cup victories, succinctly asserting, “Good things take time.” This analogy resonated deeply,



emphasising the significance of patience and persistence in attaining significant milestones. Haasan’s profound observation struck a chord with many, underscoring the notion that meaningful achievements often require dedication and endurance. By referencing India’s cricketing journey, the actor underscored the value of resilience and drew parallels between two of India’s biggest passions, cinema and cricket, both of which require immense skill and a lot of blood and sweat in order to achieve excellence.

Meanwhile, *Indian 2* will be released in theatres on July 12. The producers released the first song from the film *Paaraa* on Wednesday. Composed by Anirudh Ravichander, *Paaraa* is a delightful blend of his vocals and those of Shruthika Samudhrala, with lyrics penned by Pa Vijay. The lyrical video doesn’t show any scenes from the film, but a closer look reveals it’s exploring the back story of Kamal’s *Senapathy*. The animated video shows a man fighting a war against the British during the Independence movement while his lover awaits his safe return.

Manisha Koirala celebrates UK- Nepal’s friendship treaty with UK PM Rishi Sunak

Actor Manisha Koirala met UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak at his residence to celebrate 100 years of the United Kingdom and Nepal’s friendship treaty.

The *Heeramandi* star took to her Instagram to share a series of photographs from the celebrations at Sunak’s official residence, 10 Downing Street, in London. “It was an honour to be invited to 10 Downing Street to celebrate United Kingdom - Nepal relations and 100 years of our friendship treaty. It was such

a pleasure to hear the Prime Minister @rishisunakmp speak fondly of our country Nepal. “I took the liberty of inviting the PM and his family to come trek to Everest Base Camp,” the Nepal-born actor posted.

Koirala, 53, also said that it was surprising that many people at the event had watched her OTT series *Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar*. “Can you believe that most of the attendees had seen *Heeramandi* on Netflix and loved it? I was thrilled!” the actor wrote.



KIARA ADVANI AND JANHVI KAPOOR TO STAR OPPOSITE SILAMBARASAN IN #STR48

The latest buzz reveals the cast of *#STR48*, the upcoming project of the versatile actor Silambarasan TR. In a thrilling development, Bollywood sensations Kiara Advani and Janhvi Kapoor are confirmed to play the female leads in this much-anticipated film, as per sources.

The collaboration between Silambarasan, Kiara, and Janhvi has already sparked immense curiosity among fans, promising a fresh and dynamic on-screen chemistry. With their stellar performances in previous projects, both actresses have carved a niche for themselves in the Indian film industry, making their presence in *#STR48* all the more enticing.

Directed by the talented Desingh Periyasamy and produced by RKFI, the shooting for *#STR48* is slated to commence in June. Adding to the visual appeal of the film is cinematographer Sathyan Sooryan, known for his remarkable work in the industry.

As anticipation builds up for *#STR48*, audiences eagerly await further updates on the storyline, supporting cast, and release date.



Shruti Haasan revisits her childhood home in Chennai

In a touching homage to her roots, actress and musician Shruti Haasan recently took a trip down memory lane by visiting her childhood home in Chennai. Sharing the experience with her fans through a series of Instagram stories, Shruti offered a rare glimpse into the place where her dreams first took shape.

One memorable story features Shruti standing on the roof of her old house, with a serene backdrop and a caption that reads, “Thank you, Akshara, for the picture and the best memories too.” This brief yet heartfelt note reflects the close bond she shares with her sister, Akshara Haasan, and the fond memories they have of their early years together.

In another story, Shruti is seen sitting on the roof, deep in thought. She writes, “Many days spent, wishing and dreaming for the future I enjoy as my present today. I work hard, never to forget that Chennai girl who never forgot to be a weirdo and dream on her own terms.” This candid reflection underscores her journey from a young dreamer to a successful artist, emphasising the importance of staying true to oneself.

Another image shows Shruti standing on the terrace, looking out with a contemplative gaze. She shares, “I started to dream for myself; I began writing music and thinking of going to music school; and I fell in love with life and myself for the very first time.” This revelation highlights the pivotal moments of self-discovery and passion for music that were nurtured in this very place.

On the work front, Shruti is looking forward to her next schedule of *Dacoit* in Hyderabad and the release of her international film, *The Eye*.



STANDALONE

On Wednesday, the makers and Naga Chaitanya released a moving still from his upcoming film *Thandel*. The dashing look of Chay as Thandel Raju has created quite a great buzz on X.