

The Congress and the BJP are conspiring to make Hyderabad the joint capital of TG and AP for another 10 years. Hyderabad will be a Union Territory. The Congress and the BJP are conspiring to take Hyderabad from us. Telangana without Hyderabad will be a headless torso. The BRS is the only party fighting against this.

- Harish Rao, BRS MLA

P4

'India will ensure global balance remains in favour of freedom'

5

'FILMS LIKE 8 A.M. METRO BRING OUT THE EMOTIONS THAT WE TEND TO HIDE'

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Ashika Ranganath to be on board for VISHWAMBHARA

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RIISING POLITICAL TENSIONS

Botsa appeals for restraint

Asks parties to end hostilities as State waits for poll results on June 4

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Amid rising political tensions, Education Minister Botsa Satyanarayana has appealed for restraint and peace, urging all political parties and supporters to refrain from violence and social media hostility until the June 4 election results are announced.

Addressing a press conference on Friday, he underscored the importance of a peaceful electoral process in navigating the complexities of Andhra Pradesh's political terrain.

He likened the election manifesto to a guiding principle shaping the political landscape of the State. Emphasising the fruitful translation of promises into concrete actions over the past five years, Satyanarayana highlighted the groundwork laid for future governance by the YSRCP.

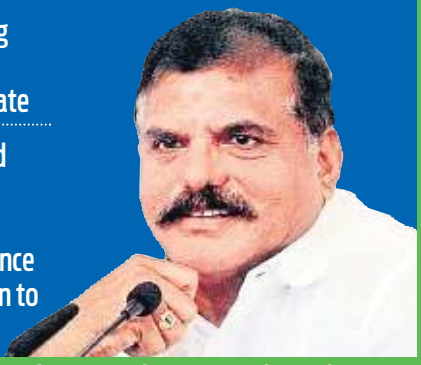
Continued on Page 2

Botsa criticises the Opposition, particularly Chandrababu Naidu, accusing him of hindering welfare programmes and inciting political unrest

Botsa says the election manifesto is the guiding principle that shapes political discourse in State

The minister showcased significant reforms in education and societal advancements as evidence of the party's dedication to public welfare

Minister showcases major reforms in education and social sectors



HC orders Pinnelli to keep off Macherla on counting day

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The AP High Court, in a ruling issued on Friday, ordered MLA Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy, which was captured on video and circulated on social media platforms a week after the polls.

The presiding judge specified that Pinnelli may attend the Narasaraopet counting centre within the Lok Sabha constituency until June 6.

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CONFIRMATION OF IAS ON OFFICERS IN AP

Naidu urges UPSC to defer interviews

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief N Chandrababu Naidu has urged the Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) to delay the interviews for the appointment of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers in the State cadre until after the formation of the new government.

He asserted that conducting these interviews, as recommended by Chief Secretary, KS Jawahar Reddy, before the conclusion of the electoral process on June 4, would breach the Model Code of Conduct.

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In a letter addressed to the UPSC Chairman, Naidu emphasised the importance of adhering to the Model Code of Conduct, highlighting that conducting interviews before the election results announcement could be deemed as an electoral offence, undermining the sanctity of the democratic process.

aspiring candidates and the general public.

Additionally, Naidu raised objections to the composition of the current interview panel, alleging that it was formed without proper adherence to procedural norms and included candidates with questionable qualifications.

Continued on Page 2

DON'T MISS...

A confident YSRCP gears up ...

Ahead of the announcement of the 2024 election results slated for June 4, the ruling YSR Congress party appears buoyed by their performance in the recently-concluded Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh. YSRCP president and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy expressed confidence in a resounding victory just days after the polls held on May 13. With this optimism driving them, party leaders have ...

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'Cyclone Remal' to make...

'Cyclone Remal' brewing in the Bay of Bengal will make landfall between Sagar Island in West Bengal and Bangladesh's Khepupara on Sunday midnight, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Friday. This is the first cyclone in the Bay of Bengal this pre-monsoon season and will be named Remal, according to a system of naming cyclones in the Indian Ocean region. The system will strengthen into a cyclonic storm by Saturday...

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Citroen ropes in MS Dhoni...

French automaker Citroen on Friday said it has roped in former India cricket captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni as its brand ambassador in India. Dhoni will mark his debut innings with Citroen in a campaign that will soon go live, the company said in a statement. "We believe that our association with one of India's finest cricketers, Dhoni, will go a long way in reinforcing our commitment to the Indian market. His humility and dedication to excellence align perfectly with..."

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DK boosted me when I...

Premier India batter Virat Kohli has paid tribute to Dinesh Karthik after his retirement at the end of RCB's IPL campaign, describing the veteran wicketkeeper-batter as a wise and honest person who lifted his spirits during a phase of struggle in the league's 2022 season. The 38-year-old, who joined Royal Challengers Bengaluru from Kolkata Knight Riders in 2022 for his second stint after 2015, played his last IPL match on Wednesday when RCB were eliminated by Rajasthan Royals in the...

-SPORTS

'Aarogyasri services available in all network hospitals'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

CEO of Dr YSR Aarogyasri Health Care Trust, Dr. G. Lakshminsha, announced on Friday that all network hospital managements are fully cooperating to ensure uninterrupted services for Aarogyasri beneficiaries. He emphasised that the Aarogyasri scheme is not only facilitating timely treatment in Andhra Pradesh but also in neighbouring states.

Dr Lakshminsha reported that during the financial year 2023-24, a total of Rs 3,566.22 crore was disbursed to network hospitals by the



Aarogyasri Trust. Additionally, in the first two months of the financial year 2024-25, Rs 366 crore have already been deposited into the accounts of network hospitals.

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BENGALURU RAVE PARTY No ties with farmhouse owner, clarifies Kakani

PNS ■ NELLORE



Minister for Agriculture, K. A. K. Govardhan Reddy, denied any association with farmhouse owner Gopal Reddy in Bengaluru where the sensational rave party was organised and refuted allegations suggesting his passport was seized by Karnataka police.

Continued on Page 2

Modi slams Cong over 1984 anti-Sikh riots

PNS ■ GURDASPUR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday attacked the Congress over the 1984-anti Sikh riots, saying while its government "saved" the rioters, he ensured the guilty were punished.

He also alleged that Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann cannot take any decisions on his own and had to go to the Tihar Jail in Delhi to take orders.

"Delhi ke darbari" are running

Punjab. The Punjab CM cannot take any decision on his own. His 'maalik' went to jail and the Punjab government started shutting down, the prime minister said at a poll rally here, referring to the arrest and incarceration of Delhi Chief Minister and AAP supreme Arvind Kejriwal in the excise policy-linked money laundering case.

Kejriwal, whose AAP is in power in Punjab, was released after the Supreme Court granted him interim bail on May 10. He has to

surrender on June 2. "To take new orders and run the government, the CM (Mann) had to go to the Tihar jail" and "he had to present his report card to him (Kejriwal)", Modi said while canvassing for BJP Lok Sabha polls candidates Dinesh Babu (Gurdaspur), Taranjit Singh Sandhu (Amritsar) and Anita Som Parkash (Hoshiarpur).

Targeting the Congress on the anti-Sikh riots, the prime minister alleged that when the Congress was in power, it "saved" the rioters.

"It was Modi who got files of the anti-Sikh riots opened. It was Modi who ensured punishment to the guilty," he said.

SUMMER VACATION IMPACT

Tirumala witnesses heavy rush of pilgrims

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

With schools and colleges closed for summer vacations nationwide, a surge of devotees from various corners of the country has flooded the Tirumala shrine, eager to catch a glimpse of the presiding deity. The influx has resulted in extensive queues stretching over 3 km, where devotees patiently await their turn for darshan. On Fridays, the wait for general darshan exceeds 20 hours, indicating the overwhelming turnout. The Vaikuntam queue complex and Narayangiri sheds are overflowing with devotees, with lines extending up to 3 km along the ring road leading to the Octopus building. Recognizing the prolonged wait times, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) officials are ensuring that devotees in queues are provided with essential amenities such as drink-



ing water, food, and milk. This surge is anticipated to persist through the weekend.

Continued on Page 2

No VIP break darshan till June 30

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

With the summer vacation pilgrim rush reaching its peak, TTD has cancelled VIP break darshan on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays till June 30. As the darshan timings for sarva darshan pilgrims are already taking nearly 30-40 hours, given the larger interests of common pilgrims, TTD has taken this decision. As such no recommendation letters will be received for VIP break darshan.

The devotees are requested to make note of this and co-operate with TTD.

DELHI EXCISE POLICY SCAM

ED opposes Kavitha's bail plea

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday opposed in the Delhi High Court the bail plea of BRS leader K Kavitha in a money laundering case linked to the alleged excise policy scam, saying her release would adversely affect further investigation to unearth the "deep-rooted, multi-layered conspiracy".

The ED, in its reply to Kavitha's bail plea, contended that the "Telangana lawmaker is a 'highly influential' individual and stands



accused of having committed a grave economic offence. She has the potential to tamper with evidence and influence witnesses, it said.

Continued on Page 2

INDIA bloc getting 'clear' mandate in LS polls

'Will name PM in less than 3 days after June 4th'

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Congress on Friday hit back at the BJP over its "five PMs in five years" remark against the INDIA bloc, saying the alliance which is set to get a "clear and decisive" mandate in the Lok Sabha polls will have one person as prime minister for five years.



The name of the prime minister will be announced by the INDIA bloc within three days after the result of the elections is declared on

June 4, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh told a press conference here ahead of the sixth round of polling on Saturday. The elections are being held in seven phases and the last is on June 1.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has in his poll rallies repeatedly targeted the bloc, claiming that it has plans to have five prime ministers in five years if voted to power.

Continued on Page 2

SC refuses to direct EC to upload voter turnout data

● 'Hands-off approach' need of the hour, says apex court

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused an NGO's plea to issue the Election Commission directions to upload polling station-wise voter turnout data on its website during the Lok Sabha polls, saying a "hands-off approach" needs to be adopted during the elections.

A vacation bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Satish Chandra Sharma said it cannot issue any such directions at the moment as five phases of polling have concluded and two remain and it would be difficult for the poll panel to mobilise manpower.

The top court adjourned the interlocutory application (IA) filed by the Association for Democratic Reforms

(ADR) to be listed before the regular bench after the elections and pointed out that prima facie it appears the prayers in the application are similar to the main petition pending since 2019 on the issue.

"This (IA) has to be taken with the pending writ petition because in between the elections, a hands-off approach has to be adopted," it said and pointed out that it would be difficult for the EC to mobilise manpower for uploading the voter turnout data on its website.

"Granting any relief in IA will amount to granting relief in the main petition which is pending," the bench said.

It said it needs to understand the ground reality and not overburden the

On May 17, the top court had sought within a week the EC's response on the NGO's plea seeking a direction to upload polling station-wise voter turnout data on its website within 48 hours of the conclusion of polling for each phase of the Lok Sabha elections.

poll panel by changing the process midway.

On May 17, the top court had sought within a week the EC's response on the NGO's plea seeking a direction to upload polling station-



wise voter turnout data on its website within 48 hours of the conclusion of polling for each phase of the Lok Sabha elections.

The ADR has filed an interim application in its 2019 PIL seeking

directions to the poll panel that "scanned legible copies of Form 17C Part-I (Account of Votes Recorded)" of all polling stations be uploaded immediately after the polls.

Continued on Page 2

EC failed to safeguard videos and documents: APSFL chief

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP leader and APSFL chairman, P. Gautham Reddy, has observed that TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu and Jana Sena president Pawan Kalyan are daydreaming about victory. Addressing the press at the party office on Friday, Reddy expressed confidence in Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy's support among SC, ST, and BC women, asserting that they had turned out in significant numbers to vote.

Reddy predicted a substantial victory for the YSRCP, projecting between 123 to 141 seats in the upcoming elections, thus securing a consecutive term in government.

Reddy denounced Chandrababu's campaign strategies and misinformation attempts, emphasising their



Reddy predicted a substantial victory for the YSRCP, projecting between 123 to 141 seats in the upcoming elections, thus securing a consecutive term in government.

failure to sway voters. He attributed incidents of violence and unrest following the DGP transfer to Chandrababu's influence, holding him accountable for disruptions on polling day and thereafter.

Highlighting a recent video leak involving a YSRCP MLA candidate in Macherla, Reddy

raised concerns over data security breaches within the Election Commission, questioning the integrity of its operations. He criticised the commission for the leaked materials and demanded accountability, particularly regarding Nara Lokesh's alleged involvement in circulating the videos via social media.

Addressing unaddressed concerns, Reddy questioned the Election Commission's decision not to conduct re-polling in 64 contested locations, urging transparency in the electoral process. He criticized Chandrababu's silence on instances of violence and irregularities during polling, accusing him of selective outrage and politicization.

Reddy accused Chandrababu of remaining silent on the Palnadu incident due to alleged TDP involvement in electoral malpractice, suggesting a lack of impartiality on the part of the Election Commission in addressing electoral infractions.

Predicting electoral defeat for Pawan Kalyan in Pithapuram and speculating on Chandrababu's political future, Reddy concluded his remarks.

A confident YSRCP gears up for Jagan's coronation in Port City

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Ahead of the announcement of the 2024 election results slated for June 4, the ruling YSR Congress party appears buoyed by their performance in the recently-concluded Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh. YSRCP president and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy expressed confidence in a resounding victory just days after the polls held on May 13.

With this optimism driving them, party leaders have initiated arrangements in Visakhapatnam for the swearing-in ceremony of YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for his second consecutive term as Chief Minister, party sources revealed.

Sources indicate that Chief Secretary KS Jawahar Reddy, during his recent visit to Visakhapatnam ostensibly to review the progress of Bhogapuram International Airport, instructed district officials to scout for a suitable venue for Jagan's public swearing-in.

Furthermore, a senior IAS officer from the Chief Minister's Office



The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) is also gearing up for a potential swearing-in ceremony in case the NDA secures power. Senior leader Ganta Srinivasa Rao has announced that Naidu would likely take the oath on June 9, potentially in Amaravati.

inspected Visakhapatnam recently to oversee preparations for Jagan Mohan Reddy's swearing-in ceremony scheduled for June 9, reportedly selecting the Andhra University grounds for the event.

Additionally, the party is securing a significant number of rooms and suites in various hotels and guest houses for June 8 and 9, anticipating a consider-

able turnout of leaders and guests for Jagan's inauguration.

Meanwhile, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) is also gearing up for a potential swearing-in ceremony in case the NDA secures power.

Senior leader Ganta Srinivasa Rao has announced that Naidu would likely take the oath on June 9, potentially in Amaravati.

Botsa appeals for ...

Continued from Page 1

Minister Satyanarayana showcased the major reforms in education and social advancements as evidence of the party's dedication to public welfare.

He called for continued support from the public, citing the recent electoral mandate as validation of the government's initiatives.

With expectations high for the upcoming June 4 counting process, Minister Satyanarayana announced Chief Minister Jagan's imminent oath-taking ceremony in Visakhapatnam.

Expressing optimism about the YSRCP's performance in Vizianagaram, he confidently predicted victory in all nine seats, attributing this confidence to transparent welfare delivery and

widespread support.

However, the Minister did not shy away from criticising the Opposition, particularly Chandrababu Naidu, accusing him of hindering welfare programmes and inciting political unrest.

Naidu was accused of orchestrating attacks and riots, alongside questioning the impartiality of the Election Commission.

Amidst rising political tensions, Minister Satyanarayana appealed for restraint and peace, urging all political entities and supporters to refrain from violence and social media hostility until the June 4 election results are announced.

He underscored the importance of a peaceful electoral process in navigating the complexities of Andhra Pradesh's political terrain.

KGBV teachers up in arms against performance appraisal

Fear that the performance review may be a ruse to dismiss underperforming staff

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The School Education Department's announcement of a performance appraisal system for teachers in Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) and Bhavita Kendras has sparked discontent among the teaching staff. Teachers claim that the current policies being implemented by higher authorities are unprecedented.

Contractual Residential Teachers (CRTs) at KGBVs and special teachers in Bhavita Kendras face a peculiar employment structure, with a

mandatory one-day break in service each academic year. This year, the academic term concluded on April 24, with officials suspending services a day earlier on April 23 and extending them only until June 9. This unusual scheduling has raised concerns among teachers.

Further fuelling anxieties, district officials have been instructed to evaluate performance of approximately 700 teachers across 34 KGBVs and about 100 teachers in over 100 Bhavita Kendras. The performance evaluations, set to be scored out of 20 marks,

have been integrated into a broader comprehensive punishment campaign, with evaluation formats already distributed.

Some teachers fear that this performance review may be a tactic by superiors to dismiss underperforming staff. This suspicion is heightened by the memory of last year's agitation, where KGBV teachers staged protests to voice their demands. The current evaluation process has led to worries about potential factionalism among the teaching staff.

Adding to the strain, teachers have been tasked with conducting special classes for

students who missed tenth and Intermediate exams, despite the ongoing summer vacation. These special classes have been running for about a month. Notably, KGBVs have outperformed government schools in Class 10 results, a fact the teachers believe should be acknowledged by the higher authorities in their evaluations. The situation remains tense as teachers await further developments, hoping their efforts and achievements will be fairly considered in the upcoming appraisals.

GVL seeks Rs 3,110 crore for VSP revival



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a move to address the ongoing financial challenges faced by Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), the corporate entity of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant senior BJP leader GVL Narasimha Rao met with Union Finance Secretary Dr TV Somanathan in New Delhi to present a proposal seeking a financial infusion of Rs 3,110 crore to aid in RINL's revival. This meeting follows a comprehensive review of RINL's operations undertaken by an inter-ministerial team. The recommendations from this review are expected to significantly influence the Finance Ministry's decision on potential financial interventions for RINL.

In a detailed letter submitted to Dr. Somanathan, Rao emphasized the severity of the financial crisis impacting RINL. He stressed that "external factors beyond RINL's control" have led to the current situation. "The livelihood of over 30,000 employees and their families hinges on the revival of RINL. This is a critical national asset, and its viability is of paramount importance," Rao underscored.

A longstanding advocate for RINL, Rao has consistently championed the company's cause in Parliament and public forums. His proposal recommends a Rs. 3,110 crore infusion through the issuance of preferential shares. "RINL can accommodate this financial restructuring. Given its authorized share capital of Rs. 8,000 crore and a paid-up capital of Rs. 4,889.85 crore, this infusion would restore a positive net worth for the company," Rao explained.

Rao also drew a parallel to past government interventions. He highlighted the financial support extended to RINL by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee administration in 2002. Significantly, Mr. Rao pointed out that RINL had successfully repaid Rs 2,937 crore to the Central Government between 2011 and 2016.

Beyond the proposed financial injection, Rao advocated for additional measures to bolster RINL's financial health. One such proposal involves the transfer of land ownership to RINL. This strategic move, according to Rao, would not only improve the company's net worth but also unlock the potential to mobilize an additional Rs 4,000 crore from other sources. Following the meeting, Rao expressed cautious optimism. He stated that Dr Somanathan assured him of a thorough evaluation of all the proposals presented. The coming days are likely to be crucial for RINL's future, as the company awaits a definitive decision from the Finance Ministry.

YSRCP blames EC, Police for ...

Continued from Page 1

Leaders of the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) have strongly condemned the EC's actions, particularly regarding the release of only one video clip showcasing the EVM destruction in Macherla, Palnadu, despite reports of seven similar incidents. YSRC general secretary Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy raised several pertinent questions regarding the EC's conduct.

He questioned the authenticity of the leaked Palvai Gate video, which was purportedly sourced from the EC's official webcasting platform, and criticised the hasty response of the EC without proper verification. Additionally, he demanded transparency from the EC in releasing all footage of EVM damage incidents to ensure accountability and fair investigation.

Furthermore, Sajjala highlighted the lack of action by

the EC regarding videos depicting TDP members allegedly attacking voters in Macherla, stressing the need for impartiality and swift intervention in such cases.

In contrast, YSRCP Narasaraopet MP candidate Poluboina Anil Kumar Yadav expressed suspicion regarding the EC's handling of the video footage release. He criticised the delay in releasing the Palvai Gate footage, which occurred on May 20, despite the EVM damage incidents being reported on May 13.

Yadav noted the injury of YSRC cadre members, including Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy's son, during attacks allegedly carried out by TDP leaders.

He emphasised the discrepancy between the number of reported EVM damage incidents and the EC's release of only one video, suggesting bias in the EC's actions.

HC orders Pinnelli to keep...

Continued from Page 1

Additionally, the judge mandated that the accused refrain from engaging with the media regarding the case and abstain from attempting to contact witnesses. The High Court's directive extends to the CEO and police officials, instructing them to closely monitor

Pinnelli's activities. Notably, on Thursday, the High Court had decreed a stay on any actions against Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy until June 6. Pinnelli stands accused as AI in the investigation concerning the alleged tampering of an EVM at the Palwaigate polling station.

Naidu urges UPSC...

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Given the recent completion of Assembly and Lok Sabha elections and the impending announcement of results on June 4, Naidu stressed the need for a fair and transparent selection process, free from any undue influence by the outgoing government.

In his appeal to the UPSC Chairman, Naidu requested the postponement of the interviews until June 7, allowing the incoming government to assume office and ensuring confidence among the public and aspiring candidates in the integrity of the selection process.

No ties with farmhouse ...

Continued from Page 1

Addressing the media on Friday, Kakani Govardhan Reddy asserted his lack of familiarity with Gopal Reddy and emphasised that no ties existed between them. The Minister rebuffed claims made by TDP senior leader and former minister Somireddy Chandramoh Reddy, insinuating a close relationship between himself and the farmhouse proprietor where a recent rave party, attended by over 80 people, including notable figures from the film industry, resulted in police intervention for drug consumption.

Kakani Govardhan Reddy cited statements from Karnataka police affirming Gopal Reddy's non-involvement in the event.

Furthermore, the Minister categorically denied assertions regarding his passport's discovery in a vehicle parked at the venue of the rave party

in Bengaluru. He challenged Somireddy Chandra Mohn Reddy to substantiate claims of passport seizure by Karnataka authorities, affirming that his passport remained securely in his possession. Regarding the vehicle bearing an MLA sticker found at the rave party, Kakani Govardhan Reddy distanced himself from any association, stating he had filed a police complaint regarding unauthorised usage of his name on the sticker.

"Somireddy Chandramoh Reddy's attempts to tarnish my reputation with baseless allegations are unfounded."

The CBI has exonerated me in the court files theft case," Somireddy retorted. In response, the Minister criticised Somireddy Chandramoh Reddy, highlighting previous allegations concerning an attempt to sell a five-medal statue to a foreign entity.

TODAY ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Dwitiya: May 24 07:25 PM to May 25 06:58 PM
Tritiya: May 25 06:58 PM to May 26 06:06 PM

Nakshatram:
Jyeshtha: May 24 10:10 AM to May 25 10:36 AM
Moola: May 25 10:36 AM to May 26 10:36 AM

Rahukalam: 8:59 AM to 10:36 PM
Vayagandam: 1:50 PM to 3:27 PM
Varjyam: 09:00 AM to 10:36 AM
Gulika: 5:45 AM to 7:22 AM
Amritakalam: None
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:47 AM to 12:38 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Cloudy
Temp: 39°
Humidity: 57%
Sunrise: 5:34 AM
Sunset: 6:34 PM
Updated: May 24, 2024 5:00 PM

Tirumala witnesses...

Continued from Page 1

The surge in pilgrim visits is attributed to the convergence of summer vacations, the conclusion of the polling process, and the announcement of student examination results. Particularly on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, general devotees face queues lasting 30-40 hours before they can pay their respects to the Lord. In response to the overwhelming demand, TTD has announced the cancellation of VIP break darshan on weekends (Friday through Sunday) until June 30, prioritizing access for common devotees to have darshan of Sri Venkateswara Swamy.

TTD reports that all compartments are at full capacity for free sarvadarshanam, with queues extending up to Silathoranam. Free general darshan requires a wait of over 20 hours, while those opting for the Rs 300 special visit endure a four-hour wait.

In contrast, devotees awaiting the time-slot SSD darshan find themselves in a 6-hour queue across 14 compartments. Yesterday (Thursday), 65,416 devotees had the opportunity to have the darshan of the deity, with 36,128 offering hair (talaneelalu). The Hundi collection recorded a substantial Rs 3.51 crores, according to TTD officials.

ED opposes Kavitha's ...

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"K Kavitha has conspired with other people and actively involved in payment of kickbacks to the tune of Rs 100 crore and then in establishing the money laundering ecosystem, that is, M/S Indo Spirits through her proxy which generated proceeds of crime of Rs 192.8 crore. By such acts, K Kavitha is involved in various processes and activities relating to proceeds of crime (POC) to the tune of Rs 292.8 crore," the probe agency said in its counter affidavit.

On Friday, Justice Swarasa Kanta Sharma heard part arguments advanced by Kavitha's counsel and listed the matter for further proceedings on May 27.

Kavitha has challenged the trial court's May 6 order by which her bail applications in the CBI's corruption case as well as the ED's

money laundering case were dismissed. Kavitha's lawyer submitted that out of the 50 accused in the excise matter, she is the lone woman, and urged the court to consider granting her bail as law keeps women on a different pedestal.

In another plea filed by co-accused Arun Ramchandran Pillai, the CBI informed the high court that it is likely to file a charge sheet against Kavitha by the first week of June for her alleged role in the corruption case.

Hyderabad businessman Pillai has sought setting aside a trial court order dismissing his plea against commencement of arguments on charge till conclusion of investigation by the CBI.

Opposing Kavitha's bail plea, the ED said there is ample evidence to link her to the offence of money laundering.

SC refuses ...

Continued from Page 1

In its affidavit, the poll panel opposed the NGO's demand, stating that it will "vitiate" the electoral space and cause "chaos" in the poll machinery in the midst of the general elections. The poll panel has said that there is no legal mandate to provide Form 17C to any person other than the candidate or his agent. It has said that public posting of Form 17C -- which gives the number of votes polled in a polling station -- is not provided in the statutory framework and could lead to mischief and vitiation of the entire electoral space as it increases the possibility of the images being morphed.

"The petitioner is trying to create an entitlement when none exists in the law by way of filing an application in the middle of the election period," it said.

INDIA bloc ...

Continued from Page 1

The INDIA bloc is going to get a "clear and decisive mandate" on June 4 and, like in 2004, history will repeat itself after 20 years, Ramesh said.

The BJP was unseated from power in the 2004 general polls despite its 'India Shining' campaign and the Congress-led UPA came to power.

"Those who repeatedly raise the question who will be PM (if the INDIA bloc comes to power), I want to remind that in 2004, after the Congress and its allies got the mandate, within three days Dr Manmohan Singh's name was announced for the (post of) PM," the Congress leader said,

'Aarogyasri ...

Continued from Page 1

Last year saw an average of 5349 beneficiaries per day availing services under the Aarogyasri scheme across the state.

Providing further details, the CEO noted that over the past two days, May 22 and May 23, a substantial number of beneficiaries received treatment. On May 22, 6718 beneficiaries were treated, and on May 23, 7118 beneficiaries received care. Dr Lakshminsha assured that Aarogyasri ensures prompt and hassle-free treatment, readily accessible in recognised hospitals across Andhra Pradesh and neighbouring states.

Security beefed up for counting in NTR district

MORE THAN 1,000 PERSONNEL DEPLOYED FOR DUTIES

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

District Collector S Dilli Rao and Police Commissioner PHD Ramakrishna have confirmed that the counting centres will be fully operational by May 31 for the tabulation of votes from both Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies. This follows the directives issued by the Election Commission of India (ECI) and Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) for the general elections conducted on May 13, with counting scheduled for June 4.

On Friday, District Collector Dilli Rao, Police Commissioner Ramakrishna, Joint Collector P Sampath Kumar, VMC Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar, along with other officials, inspected the preparations underway at Nova and Nimra Colleges in Ibrahimpatnam for the counting process.

Collector Dilli Rao affirmed that preparations are progressing rapidly, with completion



slated for the 31st of this month. He assured that all necessary arrangements are being made at the counting centres in strict accordance with ECI guidelines to ensure a smooth tabulation process. Over a thousand counting supervisors, assistants, micro-observers, and support staff are slated to participate in the counting duties. Proper barricading and signage are being erected to avoid any confusion.

A media centre equipped with high-speed internet and

LED TVs will be established to disseminate result updates promptly through various media outlets. Additionally, arrangements for meals and beverages for officials, staff, counting agents, and candidates are being organized. Mobile phones are prohibited within the counting centres, and separate routes are being designated for staff and officials, as well as candidates and agents, to transport Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) from the strong rooms to the count-

ing venues. A stringent three-tier security system is being enforced, permitting entry only to individuals with valid passes and identification cards. Cell phones are strictly prohibited within the counting premises. Continuous CCTV surveillance will ensure oversight of the counting process. Measures are in place to ensure uninterrupted power supply and adequate parking facilities at the counting centres.

DCPs T Harikrishna, K Chakravarthy, DRO V Srinivasa Rao, Vijayawada East RO BH Bhavani Shankar, Tiruvuru RVO K Madhavi, Nandigama RVO A Ravindra Rao, Vijayawada West RVO E Kiranmayi, Jaggaiyapet RVO G Venkateshwarlu, DIPRO U Surendranath, and DPRO SV Mohana Rao, along with officials from the Police, Revenue, R&B, Transco, and Fire Departments, were among those present during the inspection.

Desilting of drains to be completed by June 15

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Kakinada Municipal Corporation (MC) Commissioner J Venkata Rao has said that desilting of all the drains in the smart city would be completed by June 15 to prevent recurring submergence of low-lying areas.

The Commissioner, along with Municipal Health Officer Dr Prudhicharan and sanitary inspectors the Commissioner inspected Subbaiah Hotel Center, Ramaraopet, Pedamarket, the old BSNL office, and wharfs road areas and instructed them to improve the night sanitation in market areas.

Talking to the media here on Friday, the Commissioner said that the desilting of drains was completed in four circles as against the total 14 sanitary circles in the city and in other circles, it was in different stages of execution. Venkata Rao said strict instructions were given according to a top priority for desilting of the Railway drain and important drains passing through the Main market.

Cordon and search ops intensified in State

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As per the instructions of DGP Harish Kumar Gupta, cordon and search operations were carried out in 276 places across the State in the wake of the counting of votes to be held on June 4. During the operation, the police seized 1,313 vehicles without proper documents, 2,750 litres of liquor, 6,910 litres of beer, 2,000 litres of jaggery wash, 4,000 litres of diesel, and 25 litres of petrol. The police also nabbed 10 persons while eight individuals were served with 41 A CrPC notices, and 24 cases were registered across the State.

In a release issued on Friday, the DGP said that cordon and search operations are being carried out by district SPs. The main objectives include maintaining law and order, controlling crime, and curbing unruly activities. The cordon



and search operations include detailed inspections at key intersections, village outskirts, residences of suspected individuals or known criminals, shops, hay storage areas, and other locations to uncover illegal liquor, weapons, explosives, drugs, unregistered goods, and vehicles. In the district, the new recruits are actively identifying and apprehending suspicious individuals. During cordon searches, vehicle records are inspected, and any vehicles lacking proper documentation are confiscated.

The DGP requested the public to contribute to this operation by sharing information about anti-social activities or suspicious persons. They can contact the local police immediately or call 112 or 100.

Vizag gears up for counting with stepped-up security

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Election Officer and Collector Dr A. Mallikarjuna has assured the public of robust arrangements for the upcoming vote counting, emphasising a peaceful atmosphere through a stringent three-step security protocol. These measures are in line with the Election Commission's guidelines to ensure timely and accurate results.

Sharing the details with the media people on Friday, Dr Mallikarjuna detailed the district's meticulous planning and security measures. He stated that strong room security is reinforced with a three-tier system involving central forces and approximately 500 civil police officers. Additionally, 176 CCTV cameras have been installed for constant monitoring from a central control room.

For the parliamentary con-



stituency counting, seven halls at Andhra University (AU) have been designated, with a total of 98 tables prepared—two for each constituency. The process will cover 140 rounds, with each table managed by a counting supervisor, an assistant, and a micro-observer. Postal ballot counting will occur in three rounds across two halls, with 18 tables and corresponding staff, including 18 Counting Superintendents, 36 Counting Assistants, and 18 Micro

Observers. Concerning the district assemblies, especially the Pendurthi Constituency, the counting will involve an additional three rounds. Five halls have been prepared with 33 tables for assembly postal ballot counting, expected to be completed in 15 rounds. The staffing includes 24 additional AROs, 33 Counting Superintendents, 57 Counting Assistants, and 33 Micro Observers. Dr. Mallikarjuna also highlighted the planned training for all officials and staff involved. The first phase of randomisation will take place on May 25, followed by a second phase on June 2, ensuring all personnel are well-prepared for their roles in the counting process. These comprehensive arrangements underscore the district administration's commitment to a secure and efficient electoral process.

STF should play vital role in maintaining L&O during counting: SP

PNS ■ TIRUPATHI

Superintendent of Police V Harshvardhan Raju directed the Special Task Force police teams to play a vital role in maintaining the law and order situation during the counting of votes on June 4.

The SP held a meeting with the Special Police officers here on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the next 10 days are very crucial to the police and all should strive hard to maintain law and order well in the district.

The STF teams should respond swiftly and rush to the place where law and order problems arise. They should take decisions and act as per the prevailing situation, maintaining peace and tranquillity during the counting should be the main objective of all police



personnel in the district, the SP added. The STF personnel should be well prepared to do duties wherever they are deployed, he told them. The STF personnel should also be prepared to face any situation, he said. ASP Srinivasulu and other officials were among those who were present.

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

In anticipation of the exit polls scheduled for June 1 and the subsequent counting of the General Elections 2024 on June 4, the Anakapalle district police conducted a comprehensive mock drill on Friday to enhance their readiness for potential mob control scenarios. The exercise, spearheaded by District Superintendent of Police (SP) KV Muralikrishna, aimed to equip officers and personnel with the skills needed to maintain law and order effectively during the election period. Held at four major road junctions in Anakapalli town, the drill saw active participation from the Armed Reserve and Law and Order Police under the guidance of Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) P Nageswara Rao.

The primary focus was on managing untoward incidents, particularly in situations where Section 144 is enforced. Officers received training on dispersing illegal gatherings, starting with verbal warnings and escalating to the use of tear gas with the magistrate's approval if necessary. Demonstrations included han-



dling tense situations with measures such as lathi charges, deployment of water cannons by the fire department, firing plastic pellets, and, if essential, opening fire.

Special teams were also formed to respond swiftly to any attempts to disrupt law and order, ensuring that emergencies are promptly controlled. SP KV Muralikrishna reiterated the police's commitment to maintaining a peaceful environment and issued a stern warning against those inciting riots. In a related security measure, a cordon and search operation was carried out in Payakaraopeta under the direction of Narsipatnam DSP Mohana Rao. During the operation on Thursday, police discovered 65 two-wheelers lacking proper records. These vehicles were moved to the police station for further examination. DSP Mohana Rao assured

Special teams were also formed to respond swiftly to any attempts to disrupt law and order, ensuring that emergencies are promptly controlled. SP KV Muralikrishna reiterated the police's commitment to maintaining a peaceful environment and issued a stern warning against those inciting riots.

that all records would be thoroughly reviewed and the vehicles returned to their rightful owners. He also warned that strict action would be taken against vehicle owners with criminal backgrounds. The operation involved the participation of 60 policemen, underscoring the district police's proactive stance in ensuring public safety and order during the election period.

Management Development Programme at SRM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a bid to empower working professionals and foster their continued growth, the Directorate of Executive Education and Professional Studies (DEEPS) at SRM University-AP has organised a comprehensive two-day Management Development Programme on 'Selling Skills and Customer Relationship Management' that began on Friday.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Manoj K Arora, Managing Director of Andhra Pradesh State Co-operative Bank Dr RS Reddy, Dean-Academic Affairs Dr Vinayak Kalluri, Dean-Paari School of Business & Director-DEEPS Prof Bharadhwaj Sivakumaran and Assistant Director-DEEPS Sailaza Kosaraju were present on the



occasion. During the inauguration, the Vice-Chancellor emphasised the broader impact of the programme, stating, "In these two transformative days, you will immerse yourselves in a wealth of knowledge and practical insights that will revolutionise your approach to customer relationship management. Our esteemed faculty members will guide you through the intricacies of selling skills, empowering you to build lasting connections with customers and drive organisational success."

Dr S Reddy, shared his enthusiasm, stating, "I am filled

with unwavering confidence that our employees will acquire the desired skills through this MDP. SRM-AP has consistently demonstrated its commitment to excellence, and we eagerly anticipate forging stronger connections with this prestigious institution. Together, we will not only elevate the capabilities of our employees, but also foster enduring partnerships that will shape the future of our organisations."

Prof Bharadhwaj Sivakumaran added, "Our goal is to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. MDPs like these will provide participants invaluable insights into customer relationship management and selling skills, which are crucial for their day-to-day operations."

Modi focuses on inclusive growth: Lanka

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

BJP State leader Lanka Dinakar has said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in the past nine years, has upheld the dignity of women by constructing toilets for almost 100 per cent of households through Swachh Bharat and building houses under PM Awas Yojana. Through the Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, the savings of poor women have increased. One crore women have made Lak Pati didis, triple talaq has been abolished for the support of Muslim women, and 60 per cent of Rs 39 lakh crore direct cash transfers through 50 crore Jan Dhan accounts benefited poor women.

He said PM Modi made a tribal woman the President of the country, and in the same spirit, he brought 33.33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament and legislative assemblies.

He alleged that the Congress party has always seen women as a mere vote bank and never came forward to shape their lives in such a way as to achieve autonomy. Rahul Gandhi has the same mentality. Rahul should come out of the mindset that women in the country are just Sonia Gandhi or Indira Gandhi. He has failed to recognise the power of women. Meanwhile, Rahul is talking about RSS very little. One has to look at history to know how his grandmother.

Human trafficking victims brought from Cambodia

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The efforts of Visakhapatnam police yielded results as 10 of the human trafficking victims reached Visakhapatnam from Cambodia on Friday.

Visakhapatnam Commissioner of Police Ravishankar Ayyannar welcomed them when they arrived at Visakhapatnam airport. The 10 victims reached Visakhapatnam today with

the help of the Indian embassy. Some agents in the name of jobs of data entry operators deceived youths and sent them to Cambodia after collecting Rs 1.50 lakh from them. They were tortured in Cambodia. The entire episode went viral on social media and the police swung into action.

The Commissioner of Police said 10 of the victims reached the city today and 18 more are coming.



Priya Sisters' magical voice enthralled the devout at Tirumala

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The melodious notes emanated from the golden voices of the renowned Carnatic music sisters duo, the Priya Sisters touched the artistic souls of the audience with their unique 'Sankeertans'.

Shanmukha Priya and Hari Priya with their supporting instrumental artists presented before the audience a galaxy of new songs penned by Saint Poet Sri Tallapaka Annamacharya on the occasion of the 616th Jayanti fete of Annamacharya held at Kalamandiram in Tirupati on Friday evening.

JEÖ for Health and



Education Smt Goutami felicitated the artists, Annamacharya's successors and released a couple of books penned by Prof. Sarvottama Rao on the occasion.

She said the richness of Annamacharya Sankeertans lies in its dialect that could eas-

ily reach every common man. That is why even after six centuries, Annamacharya Sankeertans are admired by everyone and it is nice to note that Priya Sisters have acquainted us with a new set of Annamacharya Sankeertans today, she added.

692 pilgrims from AP to perform Haj

Pilgrims from various districts to arrive at the camp from Saturday

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh State Haj Committee has stated that all arrangements are being made for the journey of 692 pilgrims from the State, who are performing Holy Haj this year. The APSHC meeting held here on Friday reviewed the arrangements. AP State Waqf Board CEO and Haj Committee Executive Officer Abdul Qadeer presided over the meeting. The committee members talked to the officials about the arrangements to be made for the pilgrims at the Haj camp.

Abdul Qadeer stated that the pilgrims from various districts will start arriving at



the camp from Saturday. He further said that the officials concerned have been advised to ensure drinking water and uninterrupted power supply. Sanitation staff on the camp premises are to ensure cleanliness.

CEO Qadeer said that the

692 pilgrims will depart from Gannavaram airport on three flights on May 27, 28 and 29. The first flight with 322 pilgrims will take off at 8.45 am on May 27, the second flight with another 322 pilgrims will depart at 4.55 pm on May 28 and the third one will

leave Gannavaram airport on May 29 at 2.50 pm.

Abdul Qadeer said that the Haj pilgrims have to report at the Gannavaram airport six hours before the departure time of the flight. He further said that RTC has arranged buses for the pilgrims from the camp to the airport.

DPO Nageswara Naik directed the staff to make foolproof arrangements for sanitation, drinking water supply and electricity at the camp. District Minority Welfare Department Officer Shamsunnisa Begum, R&B, Health Department and Electricity Department officials participated in the meeting.

Mock drill held to deal with mob violence

PNS ■ KAKINADA

The district police conducted a mob operation mock drill at the police parade ground on Friday to deal with the possible violence keeping in view the scheduled counting of votes and the aftermath on June 4.

District Superintendent of Police S Sathish Kumar said the mob operation mock drill was conducted to create awareness among the people on the police preparedness to deal with any eventuality, assuring them of their safety and warning that lawlessness would be crushed with an iron hand. Quick reaction teams of armed reserve police and teams of law and order police in large numbers took part in the operation.

Bindover cases to be registered for violation of EC guidelines

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

East Godavari District Collector K Madhavilata has warned of registering bindover cases, if representatives of political parties violate the guidelines of ECI during the counting of votes. The Collector held a meeting with the representatives of contestants here on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that one supervisor, assistants, and Micro Observers were appointed to each table for the counting of votes. One Assistant Returning Officer, Supervisor, Assistants, Micro Observer, and an Assistant Returning Officer were appointed to count postal ballots.

Collector Madhavilata said that one assistant and two Micro Observers have been appointed as assistants to the Election Observers, adding



that only after the completion of the counting process, the votes in the VVPAT belonging to the five EVMs, would be counted and they would be selected by lottery. The selection of officials for the counting process would be

randomized in a 3-stage technical process, adding that counting agents will be allowed according to the number of counting tables and ID cards will be issued accordingly.

The Collector said that candidates and political parties should take due care to ensure that persons with criminal history and bind-over cases would not be appointed as counting agents. She told the candidates that only one agent would be allowed in the counting centre on his behalf.

"After the completion of round-wise counting, the agents will be given key copies of the result details and they should verify with Form 17C," the Collector told the candidates.

She made it clear that victory rallies would not be allowed after results are declared keeping in view the law and order situation.



866 people were bound over in Anantapur SP

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

Superintendent of Police Gowthami Sali has said that 866 have been bound over in the district so far.

The SP in a statement here on Friday said that 866 people had been bound over so far during the election in the district. She stated that counselling was conducted for 176 rowdy sheeters. Sections 144 and 30 of the Police Act will remain in force in the district till the counting of elections is completed, it added.

Call to plant and nurture saplings

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh has underlined the need to plant saplings and nurture them for a healthy environment.

The Collector inaugurated the programme of planting of saplings at Pampula Cheruvu located on Tangellamudi-Jangareddygudem road on Friday. Collector's family members including his wife Dr. Manasa and children also took part in the programme.

Over 400 saplings of mango, black plum, guava and other such saplings were planted on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that planting of saplings across the district would be taken up in the season.

He stated that growing trees helps to improve climate balance, adding that trees are not only attractive in the city but also contribute significantly to climate control and also they provide shade and scorching heat.

Apart from that, the leaves of the trees absorb carbon dioxide and thus help in



improving the air quality, he highlighted stating that it will also capture rainfall and reduce soil erosion.

"As many as 400 saplings including mango, black plum and guava were planted today. I bear the expenditure of planting saplings on the occasion of my son Rudrakshan Sai Manikanta's birthday. Tree guards will be erected to the saplings for their protection," the Collector said.

District Collector's wife Dr. Manasa said that growing fruit plants helps to satisfy the appetite of various organisms. They initiated the programme of planting saplings on the occasion of the birthday of their son, she stated. DRO D Pushpamani, RDO NSK Khajavali and municipal Commissioner S Venkata Krishna were among those who took part in the programme.

One killed as auto overturns

PNS ■ KURNOOL

The driver of an auto-rickshaw was killed when the vehicle overturned at Penchikalapadu village in Gudur mandal on Friday.

Police said that the auto-rickshaw was going to Penchikalapadu village from Pratikonda. When the auto rickshaw was going at high speed, it overturned on the road killing Harijana Venkata Swamy (44) instantaneously. The police registered a case and shifted the body to the GGH for postmortem.

Meanwhile, in another accident which took place in Annamayya district, one person was killed and another



critically injured when a lorry knocked down their bike at Apparajipet village on the national highway. Police said that Subba Narasaiah (42) was



3 kg of ganja seized; 7 arrested

PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

The police seized 3.385 kg of ganja and arrested seven persons including the bootleggers and consumers in two separate cases.

DPS P Srikanth told the media that on a tip a police team conducted at Pamarru

village near Jagapathi flats and seized 2.385 kg of ganja.

Another police conducted a raid at a dumping yard at Padmavati plots and seized 1 kg of ganja. The police arrested seven persons in the two incidents and seized 3.385 kg of ganja.

38 bikes seized during cordon and search ops

PNS ■ NELLORE

The police conducted a cordon and search operation at various places and seized 38 motorcycles and an auto rickshaw.

On the directions of SP Arif Hafeez, the police teams conducted a cordon and search operation at Dargah Mitta, Indukurpet, Sangam, Vijamuru, Mattukurru, Udayagiri, Duttalur, Kavali rural, Kondapuram and Gudluru police station limits.

The police conducted the cordon and search operations



because of the counting of votes on June 4. The DSP, CIs and SIs along with their staff took part in the cordon and search operation. The police teams search every house in the locality. The

objective of the cordon and search operation is to seize lethal weapons, explosives and drugs. The cordon and search operation was conducted to infuse confidence among the people.

Hyd students hold road show to solve environmental issues

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Technology students took part in a road show 'Solve for Tomorrow' to solve pressing global issues at the institute on Friday. Solve for Tomorrow is a national education and innovation competition that aims to encourage a culture of innovative thinking and problem-solving amongst the country's next generation.

The students came forward and expressed their commitment to solving real-world issues such as ocean conservation through drone technology and waste management. They said they require a platform such as Samsung's 'Solve for Tomorrow' that can guide and support them in turning their

ideas into action and help transform people's lives.

Robin Singh, a technology enthusiast and the proud owner of Dash Dynamic and CLUX, was the chief guest at the event. Both his ventures are focused on preserving the environment. He met the students and shared his journey of success and challenges while building the two environment-focused brands. He appreciated the 'Solve for Tomorrow' initiative and encouraged the students to leverage the platform for building radical and incremental innovations.

The company has recently announced its partnership with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's (MeitY's) Startup Hub and Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT), IIT Delhi,

and the United Nations in India for the third season of 'Solve for Tomorrow'.

This year, the 'Solve for Tomorrow' programme introduces two distinct tracks - School Track and Youth Track, each dedicated to championing a specific theme and targeted towards different age groups. Both the tracks will run simultaneously, ensuring equal opportunity and a level playing field for all students.

The School Track is tailored for students aged 14-17, focusing on the theme "community and inclusion". The track underscores the importance of uplifting underprivileged groups, improving accessibility to health and social inclusion for all through social innovations. The winning team will be declared as the "Community,

BJP, Cong want Hyd as common capital for another 10 yrs: Harish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress and the BJP are conspiring to make Hyderabad the joint capital of AP and Telangana for another 10 years and to make Hyderabad a Union Territory. BRS MLA Harish Rao said at an MLC election campaign meeting held at Bonakal in Khammam district.

"The Congress and the BJP are conspiring to retain Hyderabad as the joint capital of AP and TG for another 10 years and to make Hyderabad a Union Territory. The Congress and the BJP are con-



spiriting to take Hyderabad from us. Telangana without Hyderabad is like a headless torso. The BRS is the only party fighting regarding this. If this continues TG will lose. All graduates and journalists

should think about this," Harish said.

He warned that BRS activists and farmers will gherao the Assembly during the next session if the government doesn't pay MSP for all paddy varieties. He said that the market price of fine rice is more than the MSP plus bonus.

"The Congress should be warned against cheating farmers. We will fight for everyone. Rakesh Reddy should win and become an MLC as he would be a questioning voice in the Legislative Council," he said.

"The Mahalakshmi scheme, farm loan waiver, Rythu

Bharosa, bonus, unemployment benefits, pensions, 10 gm gold, and scooters are all Congress scams. People are suffering because of Congress rule. Voting for Congress is accepting frauds," Harish said.

"The Congress government is trying to frighten us by mentioning social media cases. There is nothing to fear if false cases are filed. The legal cell in our Telangana Bhavan will fight for all BRS activists and those who fight for justice. Tear apart the Congress. Fight for everyone including farmers," Harish said while speaking at Paleru.

Wine shops to remain closed from May 25 to 27

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

On account of byelections to the Telangana Legislative Council from Warangal, Khammam and Nalgonda graduates constituency which will be held on May 27, Tarun Joshi, Commissioner of Police, Rachakonda, has announced on Friday that in

exercise of the powers vested in him, toddy and wine shops, bars attached to restaurants, military canteen (including bars in Star hotels and registered clubs) within the limits of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri Zone of Rachakonda Police Commissionerate shall remain closed.

Cine Workers Housing Society president held in cheating case

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Raidurgam Police arrested Telugu Cine Workers Cooperative Housing Society president Vallabhaneni Anil Kumar in a cheating case and produced him before the court on Wednesday.

He, along with five other members, were accused of violating the society's guidelines and allotting houses to unauthor-

ised persons by collecting huge amounts from them and cheated around 160 actual members. The prime accused of this case Vallabhaneni Anil Kumar, along with other accused persons were involved in a total six cases registered at Raidurgam police station. The case has been registered under 409, 420, 468, 471, 506, 120 (B) IPC Sections.

The Telugu Cine Workers Cooperative Housing Society

Limited was registered under the Andhra Pradesh Co-operative Societies Act (APCS), 1964 with registration number TBC-608 on September 9, 1994.

The government has allotted the land Ac. 67-16 guntas in survey number 246/1 of Manikonda vide GO Ms No 658 Revenue (Assignment) Department, dated July 4, 1994 on payment of Rs 40 per square yards in favour of the society for

construction of flats to the cine workers on cost-to-cost basis.

The government has appointed an allotment committee consisting of five members out of whom two may be from the film industry and three members shall be from the government consisting of Commissioner, Information & Public Relations, Registrar of Cooperative Societies and others.

Prohibitory orders for biennial elections

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In order to maintain public order, peace and tranquility on account of biennial elections of Telangana State Legislative Council, Dr Tarun Joshi, Rachakonda Commissioner, announced that under 144 Cr.Pc, assembly of five or more

persons is prohibited in the limits of Bhongiri Zone of Rachakonda Police Commissionerate.

For Annexure I, Centres for MLC Graduate Elections -2024 of Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda - Vidya Jyothi, Raigiri village, Bhongiri mandal and Sanjaun School.

TG EAPCET counselling for engineering from June 27

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Technical Education department on Friday released a three-phase counselling schedule for the Telangana Engineering, Agriculture and Pharmacy Common Entrance Test (TG EAPCET) 2024 with the first phase registration for engineering programmes commencing on June 27.

According to the schedule, counselling for admissions into B.E./ B.Tech / B. Pharmacy courses, the registration can be done till July 5 and certificate verification is scheduled from June 29 to July 6. Candidates can exercise web options from June 30 to July 8. Provisional seat allotment is

on or before July 12 and candidates have to report online and pay the tuition fee between July 12 to 16.

Similarly, two more phases will be held. A detailed notification along with instructions will be made available in the website tgeapcet.nic.in on June 19.

Technical Education department appealed the students to obtain all the required documents before the commencement of counselling that include Diploma or its equivalent Marks Memo from VI to Diploma or its equivalent Study Certificates or Transfer Certificate (TC) or Income Certificate issued on or after January 1, 2024 by the competent authority.



GLOBAL ACCESSIBILITY AWARENESS DAY 2024

Focus on practical accessibility for inclusive digital environments

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Supporting inclusive digital environments with a focus on practical accessibility, the Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD) 2024 was conducted jointly by the Institute for Vision Rehabilitation at the LV Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI) and the Hello A11Y Community on Friday.

Over 125 participants attended the event, such as vision rehabilitation and technology professionals, individuals with vision impairments, their families and other professionals.

Information was provided into creating more accessible websites, e-commerce sites and PDFs, enabling the creation of a more inclusive digital envi-



ronment for all.

Network Associate Director - Vision Rehabilitation at the Institute for Vision Rehabilitation, Dr Beulah Christy said, "By bringing together experts and stakeholders, we aim to drive forward the conversation around accessibility and create tangible actions towards a more inclusive society."

Dr. Beulah also said, Global

Accessibility Awareness Day serves as a critical reminder of the ongoing need to prioritize accessibility in all aspects of digital design and development.

Initiatives like these not only raise awareness but also inspire concrete steps towards building a more inclusive world for everyone.

The programme featured talks delivered by a panel of

speakers from Barrier Break, APEX Covantage, Graillemaker Innovations, HelloA11Y, and DigitalA11Ym, sharing insights on accessibility, contributing significantly to a deeper understanding of building an inclusive society.

Sessions on Empowering Web-Accessibility through Artificial Intelligence (AI), Addressing Accessibility Challenges in Remediating Shopify Websites was conducted, along with Accessibility Testing-User First Approach, Demo of Spacefelt, a Smartphone-Based QR Labeling Application and Enhancing Document Accessibility were also shared along with attendees exchanging their knowledge and experiences.

Case filed against Dwaraka Hotel for serving rotten food

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A criminal case was filed against one of the famous hotels in the city, Dwaraka Hotel, Lakdikapul, after a 35-year-old lady customer had food and suffered health issues on Friday.

Complainant K Sravanthi stated that on May 23 at 3:40 pm, she went to Dwaraka Hotel for lunch along with her husband. They order meals, carrot halwa and moong dal halwa. As soon as she started consuming the food, she felt that the food was rotten. She complained to the manager of the hotel but they did not respond properly. The couple left home carrying carrot

halwa and moong dal halwa.

The FIR mentioned that after reaching home, when she opened and tried to eat the carrot halwa, it was spoiled and a pungent smell was spreading out. Later, she was continuously suffering from vomiting and diarrhoea and asked the hotel management to bear the medical expenses.

"The hotel management behaved in a rash and negligent manner, which shows their utmost negligence towards customers by providing spoiled and rotten food," the FIR mentioned. The police filed the case under IPC 273 (selling unfit food), 337 (causing hurt) in Khairatabad police station.

INDIA CORNER

Himachal CM Sukhu meets Dalai Lama, enquires about health

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu on Friday met Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama at his residence in Dharamshala's McLeodganj and enquired about his wellbeing.



For Congress, Jharkhand is ATM of corruption: Amit Shah

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday launched a scathing attack on Congress, alleging that the grand old party sees Jharkhand as an 'ATM of corruption'.



BJP telling lies about my health, I am fine: Odisha CM

Odisha Chief Minister and BJD president Naveen Patnaik on Friday asserted that he is in 'very good health' and campaigning in the elections for the Lok Sabha and Assembly all over the state.



'India will ensure global balance remains in favour of freedom'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's growing weight will ensure that the overall balance in the world order remains in favour of freedom, openness, transparency and a rules-based order, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Friday.



In a virtual address at the Nikkei Asia Future of Asia Forum, he said the challenge of supply chain and the use of economic coercion by states have put a premium on resilience, in comments that came amid China's attempt to become an economic hegemon.

data harnessing are leveraged, national security has become crucial to many economic transactions," he said. Jaishankar said the transformation of India is critical to strengthening multipolarity in Asia itself, which is a prerequisite for a multipolar world.

BJP leader, scribe among four booked in attempt to murder case

PNS ■ BALLIA (UP)

Police have booked four people including a local BJP functionary and a journalist in connection with an alleged murder attempt on a businessman here, officials said on Friday.

'INDIA bloc for robbing quota of SCs, STs, OBCs to appease Muslims'

PNS ■ KUSHINAGAR (UP)

Hitting out at the INDIA bloc, BJP president J P Nadda on Friday alleged that the "ghamandia" (arrogant) alliance is against the Dalits, tribals and backwards because they want to rob the reservation of these sections and appease Muslims.



He appealed to the people to vote in favour of the BJP and claimed that if Narendra Modi becomes the prime minister for the third time, India will become the third largest economy of the world.

third largest economy of the world. Reminding the Covid crisis, Nadda said, "No leader of the world was capable of fighting Covid. America, Europe and Japan could not take a decision but Narendra Modi imposed a lockdown and made the country capable of fighting Covid within two months."

Displaced KPs to vote at 34 special polling stations in Jammu, Udhampur and Delhi

PNS ■ JAMMU

More than 26,000 displaced Kashmiri Pandit voters from across the country are eligible to vote at 34 polling stations in the sixth phase of the Lok Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag constituency on Saturday.



"Over 26,000 Kashmiri migrant voters will cast their ballots at special polling stations set up in Jammu, Udhampur and Delhi tomorrow. All arrangements have been made for free and fair polling tomorrow," Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner Dr Arvind Karwani said.

tion officers at 21 polling booths and 8 auxiliary ones in Jammu, one in Udhampur and four in Delhi. Assistant Electoral Returning Officer (AERO) Dr Riaz Ahmed urged the Kashmiri migrant voters to participate in the election.

'Cyclone Remal' to make landfall in WB tomorrow

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

'Cyclone Remal' brewing in the Bay of Bengal will make landfall between Sagar Island and Khepupara around Sunday midnight as a severe cyclonic storm, the IMD said in an update.

Bengal coasts between Sagar Island and Khepupara around Sunday midnight as a severe cyclonic storm, the IMD said in an update.



have been asked to remain indoors and vacate vulnerable structures. Scientists say cyclonic storms are intensifying rapidly and retaining their potency for longer periods due to warmer sea surface temperatures, a result of oceans absorbing most of the excess heat from greenhouse gas emissions.

Madhavan Rajeevan, former secretary of the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences, said a sea surface temperature of 27 degrees Celsius and above is needed for a low-pressure system to intensify into a cyclone.

Kamal Kishore starts term as envoy of UN chief for disaster risk reduction

PNS ■ UNITED NATIONS

Kamal Kishore, a top Indian official for disaster and climate risk management, has started his term as a special representative of UN chief Antonio Guterres for disaster risk reduction.



On March 28, Kishore, 55, was appointed by Guterres as his special representative for disaster risk reduction and the head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR). Kishore was earlier with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). He succeeds Mami Mizutori of Japan at the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR).

Four dead as torrential rains lash Kerala, IMD sounds red alert

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Four people were killed as torrential rains lashed several parts of Kerala, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Wednesday sounding a red alert in five districts that were likely to receive heavy rainfall.



A red alert indicates heavy to extremely heavy rain of over 20 cm in 24 hours, while an orange alert means very heavy rain of 11 cm to 20 cm, and a yellow alert means heavy rainfall between 6 cm and 11 cm.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday announced that her government will approach a higher court, challenging the Calcutta High Court order that cancelled all OBC certificates issued in the state since 2010.

WB govt to move higher court to challenge Cal HC order on OBCs

Addressing an election rally in Sagar in South 24 Parganas district, she said the state government would appeal to the higher court against the order after summer vacation. "We do not accept the order that scrapped OBC certificates. We will contest at a higher court after summer vacation," Banerjee said.

The Calcutta High Court on Wednesday struck down as illegal the OBC status of several classes in West Bengal granted since 2010, sparking a political debate in the middle of the Lok Sabha elections.

Prayagraj: 'LS polls a fight to save Constitution'

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj Lok Sabha constituency is expected to witness an interesting electoral battle with some sections of voters here raising local issues such as cleanliness and healthcare facilities, while many seeing the poll as a fight to save the Constitution and the unique 'Ilaahabadi' culture.

seat of education, spirituality and syncretic culture in Indian history. One of the largest and most populous districts of Uttar Pradesh, it also takes pride in giving India seven prime ministers.



here have a 'hekdi' (arrogance) and don't cow down to anyone. It's intellectually a very vibrant city and if some mistake has been committed in the past, this city will rectify it, be assured of that," said Bakht, who identified unemployment and youth distress as major issues here this election.

31 lakh registered voters, of which 20.67 lakh are in Pulpur constituency and 18.25 lakh in the Allahabad seat, according to official data. Suresh 'Rahi', president of the Progressive Writers Association (PWA) said institutions, and not individuals, are pillars of a democracy.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Market's thumbs-up

There is jubilation in economic circles, signalling positive investor sentiment in Govt fate

It is not every day that the market breaches new records just days ahead of the Lok Sabha poll results. Both Sensex and Nifty are shooting northwards, especially since the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) declared a huge dividend bonanza for the Government. The stock market has witnessed a historic surge, with the benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty hitting lifetime highs two consecutive days. With the RBI also recently announcing a record dividend for the Government, this confluence of events has fostered an atmosphere of positive investor sentiment, largely driven by optimistic expectations from election outcomes. The RBI's decision to transfer a record dividend of Rs87,416 crore to the Government has been a crucial factor in this financial upturn. This move not only bolsters the Government's fiscal position but also signals robust economic health and prudent management by the Central bank. Such a hefty dividend payout is expected to provide the Government with additional fiscal space to boost public spending, invest in infrastructure projects and support social welfare programmes. The substantial RBI dividend is seen as a sign of economic stability and strong fundamentals, encouraging both domestic and foreign investors to pour capital into the market. Following the dividend announcement, both Sensex and Nifty have experienced unprecedented highs. Sensex soared past the 62,000-mark while Nifty breached the 18,600-level.



This surge reflects investor confidence in Indian economy's resilience and growth potential. The interplay between the RBI's dividend announcement and the buoyant stock market creates a positive feedback loop. Another critical driver of this market exuberance is the

anticipation of favourable election outcomes. Investors often view political stability as a key determinant of economic policies and growth trajectories. This growth prospect attracts more investment, driving the stock markets higher and creating a cycle of optimism and financial prosperity. The prevailing sentiment suggests that the election results will lead to a continuation of pro-business and market-friendly policies. Historical trends indicate that markets typically react positively to clear and stable election results, which are seen as conducive to consistent and predictable economic governance. The interplay between the RBI's dividend announcement and the buoyant stock market creates a positive feedback loop. The additional fiscal resources enable the Government to undertake more significant developmental initiatives, which in turn stimulate economic growth. This alignment of fiscal prudence, economic strategy and political expectations bodes well for the nation's future. As the election comes to an end shortly and a new Government takes over, a positive sentiment among investors is likely to reinforce market stability and growth. However, the market does not reflect the state of the economy. The indices are more speculative and driven by positive sentiments rather than actual ground realities.

PICTALK



Buddhist devotees stand in a queue to light butter lamps during Buddha Jayanti, in Kathmandu

Ambedkar's warning on democracy rings true



BHOPIINDER SINGH

India backslides on global democracy indexes and exhibits resistance to internal party democracy, starkly contrasting with the political culture of the UK

In 1936, Dr BR Ambedkar wrote an undelivered speech, Annihilation of Caste, where he forewarned, "Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment. It has to be cultivated. We must realise that our people have yet to learn it. Democracy in India is only a top-dressing on an Indian soil which is essentially undemocratic." This sharp but sage observation was well before the Constitution of India was formally framed and adopted under his leadership. Eighty-eight years since the speech that was considered too controversial to be delivered, the issues of caste, constitutional impropriety and his controversial but astute insistence that "Democracy in India is only a top-dressing on India soil which is essentially undemocratic" resonates loud and clear with the proceedings (rather, regressions) in the ensuing Lok Sabha elections.

Amongst the most invoked, galvanising and feared concerns in the ongoing election pitch are still, caste and religion. Beyond the trumpeting label of 'world's largest democracy' which we proudly accept and acknowledge, is the damning backsliding on various Democracy 'indexes' - which we equally readily slam as vested, unfair, or even 'anti-national'. An unmistakably think-skinned spirit and hypersensitivity about the unflattering reportage abounds, which does not help build credentials of a mature, confident and progressive democracy. The 'mother of democracy' simply cannot be selectively entertaining of all praise and simultaneously small-spirited against criticism. However, beyond the multiple and well-known afflictions like dynastic tendencies, majoritarianism, ethnic-casteist-regional assertions, muscle power, money power et al, lies yet another serious curse of the complete lack of, or even any pretence of an 'internal democracy' in any political party, national or regional. We seem to be partaking in the exercise of democracy with a rather regrettable set of undemocratic parties.

Beyond the obvious threats of the 'carrot-and-stick' nature (with murmurs of the infamous 'wash-



ing machine' phenomenon) that may have made many opposition politicians jump ships - there is yet another loud concern expressed of unapproachability, remaining essentially unheard, or even of inaccessibility attributed to political leadership that leads to members to leave political parties for greener pastures. All Indian political parties have their exclusive leadership cocooned, isolated and protected from lesser leaders - this seemingly helps build leadership aura, mystique and even fear of the respective 'high commands'. The top leadership is only for taking the 'final call' and all others must robotically comply with the same, as described in the uniquely Indian expression of subservience, 'as disciplined soldiers of the party'. Such obsequious and diktat-filled frameworks are more suggestive of autocracies rather than participative democracies. This suffocating, intolerant and illiberal normalcy of Indian political culture is in stark contrast to that of its progenitor, British Westminster politics. In the UK, there have always been divisions within party ranks (on issues), expressed ambition for top roles and public expression of dissenting positions e.g., Brexit. All these individualistic or non-conformist positions do not warrant the automatic



THERE ARE NO PERMANENT GODS IN BRITISH POLITICAL PARTIES, UNLIKE IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT, WHERE A FEW INDIVIDUALS RULE THE ROOST WITHOUT GETTING SUBJECTED TO ANY INTERNAL CHALLENGE, QUESTIONING OR CHANGE

expulsion or diminishment of an individual from party ranks. The ruling Conservative Party has many active and known 'camps' that may or may not agree with the policies and decisions of their Partyman as the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak. It has always been so with divides amongst social liberals and social democrats, modernisers and traditionalists and Brexiters of various sides and shades etc.. Therefore, even though the Conservative Party has ruled uninterrupted since 2010 (then by David Cameron), it has since had five different Prime Ministers i.e., David Cameron, Theresa May, Boris Johnson, Liz Truss and now, Rishi Sunak. Even now the jostling within the Tories continues with apparently Boris Johnson planning a comeback to David Cameron having staged a dramatic comeback as the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, under Rishi Sunak!

It is the same concept of 'internal democracy' that has seen a similar leadership change in the principal opposition party i.e., the Labour Party. Since 2010 under Gordon Brown, it has seen a constant change in leadership Harriet Harman, Ed Miliband, Jeremy Corbyn to now Sir Keir Starmer. Each of these individual leaders has

reflected the topical preference of the party cadres and leaders. Now with Keir Starmer sure to get elected as the Prime Minister of the UK, he couldn't be more unlike his party predecessor, Jeremy Corbyn, both in person and policies. Starmer continues to consult both the former Labour Prime Minister i.e., Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, though neither has any outsized political relevance. In short, there are no permanent Gods in British political parties, unlike the Indian context where a few individuals rule the roost without getting subjected to any internal challenge, questioning or change. The rules and circumstances for leadership can be made to change overnight to suit certain individuals or dynasties which essentially seek to perpetuate the leadership composition, that has existed for years.

As Winston Churchill once said, "The opposition occupies the benches in front of you, but the enemy sits behind you" implying in his party ranks - that such internal competition can never be a sign of weakness but of ensuring that only one with the most competitive, compelling and winning credentials leads the party.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CONTROL PLASTIC USE

Madam — Although the central and State Governments have imposed a complete ban on polythene covers of thickness less than 125 microns in the State, it is not seen in practice. The viscosity of polythene bags is too high. 75-micron-thick bags, which were once banned, are still being used today. A large number of polythene covers are used in vegetable, tiffin, grocery, big shops and wholesale shops. As authorities have failed to ban polythene covers, they are seen everywhere on roads and canals. Cattle are falling sick by eating the wastes dumped in these covers in front of the houses and on the road. Criticisms are being heard that even though so many mishaps are happening, the concerned authorities are not paying attention. The authorities should clamp down on the sale of banned polythene bags which harm the environment and take strict action against those selling them. The authorities should make an effort to inform the people about the disadvantages caused by the use of banned polythene bags and to organise awareness programmes to encourage people to use eco-friendly clothing as an alternative.

Appanna Gonapa | Visakhapatnam

WORKPLACE GASLIGHTING HARMS

Madam — It refers to 'Deleterious Effects of Workplace Gaslighting' (May 23). Gaslighting within the organisational setting presents a significant threat to employee well-being and overall organisational effectiveness. This form of psychological manipulation, characterised by the deliberate undermining of an individual's perceptions, beliefs and reality, fosters a detrimental work environment with far-reaching consequences. The erosion of employee confidence and self-esteem, heightened anxiety and paranoia, social isolation and withdrawal and manifestations in physical health are some of the critical impacts of gaslighting in the workplace. Gaslighting through denial, blame-shifting and criticism erodes employees' self-worth and competence, causing isolation, stress,

Recognise Palestinian sovereignty



propos the news article, "Norway, Ireland and Spain give recognition to Palestinian State", published on May 23, this is my response. Palestine should be treated as a sovereign country as per the partisan plan of Great Britain's Palestine in 1947. Israel has been ignoring the two-State solution as per the 1993 Oslo Accord for decades and now it has engaged in genocidal violence in response to the October 7 Hamas attack. The United Nations secretary-general António

Guterres said that the Hamas attack did not take place in a vacuum. His comment was as right as the observation that the Indian Rebellion of 1857 did not take place in a vacuum.

There were acts of terrorism against British civilians like Kennedy ladies during the British Raj in India. Khudiram Bose and his friend Prafulla Chaki threw a bomb at a carriage thinking that the district magistrate of Muzaffarpur, Douglas Kingsford, was in the carriage. However, Kingsford was seated in a different carriage and the bomb killed two British women. Can such attacks on the British civilians justify the Jallianwala Bagh massacre? Had the British still been ruling India, would the world have lent moral support to the colonial regime against the freedom fighters? Gaza massacre put Jallianwala Bagh to shame. More than 35,000 Palestinians, including nearly half of them children and elderly, have been killed in Gaza.

Sujit De | Kolkata

decreased productivity and physical health issues like headaches and sleep disturbances. Address gaslighting by documenting interactions, building support, prioritising self-care, limiting exposure and seeking intervention. Organisations must cultivate a supportive work environment through awareness campaigns, clear reporting mechanisms, robust anti-bullying policies, respectful communication practices and training for managers to identify and address gaslighting. By empowering employees and fostering a supportive culture, organisations can combat gaslighting effectively and build a healthier workplace for all.

Amarjeet Kumar | Hazaribagh

MAKE STRESS YOUR FRIEND

Madam — In a world where stress is often demoralised, reframing it as a friend can transform your relationship with it. Most people think that stress makes them sick; it increases the risk of everything from the common cold to cardiovascular disease. Basically, we have turned stress into our enemy. One study found that people who

experienced a lot of stress in the previous year had a 43 per cent increased risk of dying, but that was only true for people who believed that stress was harmful to their health.

The researchers estimated that the people who died prematurely died not from stress but from the belief that stress was bad for them. Cultivate a mindset shift: view stress as a sign that your body is energised and ready to tackle tasks. Embrace the physiological changes, like an increased heart rate, as your body gears up for action. If you're breathing faster, there is no problem; it's getting more oxygen to your brain. Over a lifetime of stressful experiences, this one biological change could be the difference between a stress-induced heart attack at age 50 and living well into your 90s. Ultimately, by reframing stress as a friend rather than a foe, you no longer need to get rid of your stress; instead, make yourself better at it.

Harshita Dhakad | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

New-to-credit users drive financial inclusion

New-to-credit users have become one of the fastest-growing segments over the past three years but they also present challenges

New-to-credit (NTC) users or first-time users of credit products were one of the fastest-growing consumer segments in the lending category in the last three years, driving sustainable financial inclusion and economic growth in India. Industry data suggests that India currently has around 200 million active credit users and around 800,000 NTC consumers are being added to this pool every year. Over the last few years, these consumers driven by easy access to credit cards and short-term-personal loans (STPL) grew the retail credit category at a rapid pace. Rapid digitisation of the lending process gave a boost to the rise in NTC customers but also resulted in challenges in background checks and client's repayment capacity. It took the RBI to step in by increasing risk weightage to control the uncontrolled growth in this category. As a result, the supply has been curtailed with first-time users increasingly finding it difficult to get easy access to credit products. However, there are



some specially co-created credit cards for first-time users, helping them to build a good credit history before getting access to other credit products. In such a situation, managing debt smartly has become important for first-time consumers. For them, using a credit card responsibly is crucial for building a positive credit history and avoiding debt. Here are some financial tips: **Understand your need for a credit card:** For new users, it is very important to understand the terms and conditions of your credit card. These include interest rates, fees, grace periods and rewards programs if applicable. We often make the mistake of activating the

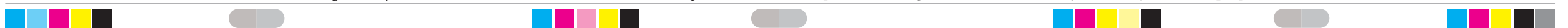
credit card without understanding the finer details of credit card usage. This mistake may cost you a bad debt and a bad financial history, limiting your access to credit in the future. **Start small:** There is always a temptation to overspend with a credit card, especially if you are a first-time user. So, it is advisable to begin with a low credit limit to avoid overspending and to ease into managing credit responsibly. **Always pay on time and in full:** Always pay your credit card bill on time and in full to avoid late fees and interest charges. Setting up automatic payments can help ensure you never miss a due date. **Monitor your spending:** Keep track of your credit card transactions to stay within your budget and avoid overspending. Many credit card companies offer online or mobile banking apps to help you monitor your spending in real time. Keep utilisation low: Aim to keep your credit utilisation ratio—the amount of credit you're using compared to your total credit limit—below

30 per cent. This shows lenders that you're using credit responsibly and can help improve your credit score. **Advise cash advances:** Cash advances often come with high fees and interest rates, so it's best to avoid using your credit card for cash withdrawals unless necessary. **Regularly check your credit report:** Monitor your credit report for any errors or unauthorised activity. You're entitled to a free credit report from each of the three major credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian and TransUnion) once a year. **Build an emergency fund:** Having an emergency fund can help cover unexpected expenses without relying solely on credit cards, reducing the risk of accumulating debt. Having a financial discipline is very important towards a good financial future. For NTC consumers the early they start is good for a healthy future but with a bit of discipline and consciousness.

(The writer is a co-founder Zet-fintech platform; views are personal)



MANISH SHARA





FIRST COLUMN

TRUST IN THE SUPREME BEING!

The writer ponders the true nature of belief and the role of religion in our lives



SANJAY CHANDRA

I am not an atheist! But I do believe that there is a supreme power that guides us through the journey that we call life. Yet, there are questions that the rational mind refuses to subdue. One such dilemma that I have not been able to resolve is that we cannot be the only living beings in this vast universe. There have to be others. Would they also look like us?

Probably not my mother was a firm believer in the Gods of the faith that I was born in. She would make it a point to visit the nearby temples every week, accompanied by our father and the three of us children. We would watch her from outside the temple folding her hands in supplication before each God, praying for our wellbeing. I never asked my father the reason that he would stand at the entry to the temple, not accompanying his wife inside. Maybe it was to keep a watch on my mother's footwear, which had to be left outside.

Even a temple was not immune to missing slippers or sandals or shoes — others were more in need of the accessory. It also might have been because it was a little difficult to untie and then retie the laces on our shoes. As I grew up, I was intrigued by the increase in traffic at the temples, particularly at examination times. Young boys and also girls, could be seen touching the holy steps and then bowing to the deities, sometimes even putting their books reverentially at the feet of the Gods. I asked a friend, who smirked at my naiveté, before explaining that this helped in securing good marks. I also saw young unmarried women fasting and then visiting the temple on specific days of the week in the hope of getting a suitable husband.



I do not know if they lived a happily thereafter life. As I grew older, I too felt the need to visit the temple, particularly when facing a difficult time — initially when I was a student and then during my professional life. And then I realised the power of trust in a supreme being. It was this implicit faith, that the Lord above will not forsake me in my tough times, that gave me the confidence. It was a trust in my capabilities, reinforced by faith, that kept me going and kept me working. It sounds clichéd, but I also understood that my God resides within me; I do not need to visit a temple to pray to my God. I can do it wherever I am, whenever I need to. There was an interesting episode in my life recently. I got trolled on the WhatsApp group of my society by the same people who had only in the morning appreciated my writing. My fault — I had sinned opposing the construction of a temple inside the gated community. I felt there were more pressing issues to be attended. I smiled as I was called an elitist — the gentleman probably wanted to call me a pseudo-intellectual. These are the persons who have chosen, like me, to live out their lives in this complex — and hence, by default, they are the extended family. Relationships went for a toss. Which brings me to the query of the rational me. If there is a life after death and if there is life on many distant planets, then, I might be reborn in another form somewhere else. In that other life, I might pray to the supreme being in another form or shape. Then, is it really important for us to wear our religion on our sleeves or even to let it divide?

(The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)

Political messaging in Indian elections



SAIDEEP KAR

The current election cycle witnesses a proliferation of digital misinformation campaigns, presenting new challenges for the authorities and citizens alike



A prominent film programmer and writer David Schwartz has rightly quoted, "Political commercials pretend to be like documentaries, but they use all the techniques of fiction filmmaking, including scripts, performances and music." This could be quite apt to ponder on the current general election and political communication in India. The use of technologies including deep fakes is attempting to make this election distinct from the 2019 general election.

Political communication is the production and influence of persuasive political messages, campaigns and advertisements, often involving the mass media. It is an interdisciplinary field that uses communication, journalism and political science. Political communication concerns ideas such as information flow, political influence, decision-making, news and impact on citizens. Since the advent of the World Wide Web, the amount of data to be analysed has increased and researchers are turning to computational methods to study the dynamics of political communication. This can be quite relevant in the light of Parliamentary elections, 2024 in India.

The parliamentary elections in India have started from 19 April and will continue up to 1 June in seven phases to elect all 543 members of the Lok Sabha. This is the longest election in history, surpassing the previous election of 44 days, second only to the Indian general election of 1951-52. Approximately 970 million of the 1.4 billion people are eligible to vote, that is 70 per cent of the total population. In the States of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim, parliamentary elections will be held simultaneously with general elections and by-elections to 25 constituencies in 12 legislative assemblies. The votes will be counted and the results announced on June 4. Current Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has completed his second term, is running for a third consecutive term.



THE FRAUD PULSE HAS FOUND A NEW, MORE ENTHUSIASTIC CHANNEL IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS. LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES ARE WARNING LOUDER THAN EVER THAT THE AVERAGE INDIAN VOTER IN 2024 IS MOST AT RISK OF BEING MISINFORMED ABOUT THE ELECTION

Social media in the political domain

Social media has become an increasingly important tool for political communication. For certain demographics, it is one of the main platforms where people get their news and interact with it by commenting and sharing. Social media has dramatically changed the way modern political campaigns are run. As more and more digitally native citizens vote, social media has become an important tool for politicians to establish themselves and communicate with voters.

The experience of using social media depends largely on the user, as the platform's algorithms tailor the consumer experience to each user. This leads to each person seeing more like-minded people due to increased digital social behaviour. In addition, social media changed politics because it gave politicians a direct way to inform their constituents and people to speak directly to politicians. This unofficial nature can lead to misinformation because it is not subject to the same "fact-checking processes as institutional journalism". Moreover, social media platforms serve as democratising agents, empowering individuals to participate in political conversations irrespective of geographical or socio-economic barriers. Citizens can voice their perspectives, amplify marginalised narratives and mobilise collective action, thereby enriching the democratic fabric of society. Concurrently, social media's interactive nature engenders heightened transparency and accountability within political institutions, as public scrutiny intensifies and feedback mechanisms proliferate.

AI Deepfakes: A new era

Technological implications are increasingly becoming imperative in the current election in India about political communication. This election season, misinformation has a new face. This time, India smiles, talks and woos the voters with a wisdom that is hard to start and harder to regulate. The 2019 election was no stranger to hate and misinformation campaigns, but the technology that enables this ecosystem has changed the rate of misrepresentation. The fraud pulse has found a new, more enthusiastic channel in the last five years. Law enforcement agencies are warning louder than ever that the average Indian voter in 2024 is most at risk of being misinformed about the election. There are gaps in people's ability to distinguish between real and artificial intelligence, leaving them vulnerable to fraud and unauthorised access. Social media companies struggle to curb fake news and propaganda; The Indian Government is updating existing legislation to better address the spread of online counterfeiting. The 2019 election took place on social media. Researchers identified sophisticated campaigns that used WhatsApp messaging and massive deployment of IT bots to distribute cropped photos, post coordinated content and publish fake videos on Facebook during the 2024 general elections. The pressing question now is how digital platforms tag, identify and contextualise such media. Even in the era of generative AI, such enforcement measures were nascent or seasonal at best. Now, cheap or free tools allow even amateurs to create deep fakes without content filters to prevent fake or illegal content from

spreading. This means that technology platforms have to act stronger against criminals and break the chain of disinformation faster than they do. One of the biggest changes in social media after the 2019 elections in India is the absence of Twitter (Now X), the platform used by India's controlled politicians and Government agencies to broadcast official information to the country's media.

A way forward

In today's world, understanding politics means delving into how political actors communicate and navigate various media channels. These channels not only reflect but also shape political messages and images. Just as political systems influence media through policies and decisions, media structures profoundly impact political communication processes. Easy-to-make AI videos with near-perfect shadows and hand gestures can sometimes confuse even the digitally literate. But the risks are greater in a country where many of its 1.4 billion people are technologically challenged and where manipulated content can easily stoke sectarian tensions, especially during elections. The Election Commission of India recently warned political parties against using artificial intelligence to spread misinformation, issuing seven provisions of IT and other laws that carry up to three years in prison for offences including forgery, rumour and hostility. Looking forward to a free and fair election this time!

(The author is from Journalism and Mass Communication, Rama Devi Women's University, Bhubaneswar; views are personal)

Millennium City says 'no development, no vote'

Frustrated by poor infrastructure despite high taxes, Gurgaon residents are shunning election candidates

This month Gurgaon has seen protests in several localities with frustrated and disillusioned residents announcing 'Election candidates not welcome, no development, no vote'.

Gurgaon residents are piqued that despite paying taxes (the highest share in the State), they are getting a raw deal. Sensing the mood of the public, both BJP stalwart and five-time MP, Rao Inderjit Singh and Congress candidate Raj Babbar, have made development their poll plank. Interestingly though it is a national election, focus remains on local issues, especially in the absence of a central national poll theme. Gurgaon may have fancy



VINOD BEHL

tags of 'Millennium City' and 'Cyber City' but the city which has made a global mark, lacks badly on physical and social infrastructure. It presents an ugly face with city waste besides construction debris lying all over, posing a serious health hazard.

It is not just Gurgaon, even the new sectors of the city which are grappling with poorly maintained roads (leading to accidents and dust pollution), inadequate drinking water, power and sewerage infrastructure. In the absence of proper drainage. Failure of civic authorities has made matters worse.

The lack of an adequate metro network in the city has created a traffic mess on



the roads. The lack of proper parking infrastructure has only made matters worse. A lot of the city's civic infra woos are because of the flawed development model of real estate development preceding infrastructure

development. Moreover, unlike in neighbouring Noida where there is a single development authority, Gurgaon lacks on this front. GMDA (Gurgaon Metropolitan Development Authority) constituted to

put an end to a multiplicity of development authorities, has proved to be an eyewash with MCG (Municipal Corporation Gurgaon) and HSVP (Haryana Shahari Vikas Pradhikaran) around. Seeking vote on development, Rao Inderjit Singh takes credit for initiating the mega infrastructure and connectivity projects like KMP Expressway, Delhi-Mumbai Expressway (passing through Gurgaon), Sohna Elevated Expressway, Dwarka Expressway, Metro Expansion, Gurgaon Railway Station upgradation.

In rural and Muslim-dominated Nuh, he is telling voters about the development gains of key infrastructure projects like the Delhi-

Mumbai Expressway and Orbital Rail. Raj Babbar, on the other hand, is also playing the development card to counter Rao Inderjit, pointing to shoddy development with several civic issues plaguing the city, turning it into a slum. Long delays in metro expansion, Lack of an Inter-State Bus Terminus and the absence of a suitable Civil Hospital are among the issues he has been raking up among the voters, demanding a fair share of development. He is promising the transformation of Gurgaon.

Though Rao Inderjit Singh may be facing anti-incumbency he has an obvious advantage of a well-oiled organisation besides the Modi factor. On the other

hand, Raj Babbar faces the challenge of being an outsider. Besides he has the disadvantage of being a late starter due to a delay in announcing his nomination. The Gurgaon electorate seems to be in a mood to give another chance to the BJP, banking on the strong pro-development credentials of Modi. However, they have also shown their displeasure with the political parties. Indeed Gurgaon's infrastructure is not up to the mark and needs an immediate attention. Besides, their anger has led politicians to take notice of their woes and have now started showing interest in infrastructure upgradation.

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

MONEY MATTERS

Air India appoints Sanjay Sharma as CFO

Air India on Friday announced the appointment of Sanjay Sharma as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) with effect from June 10. Sharma will succeed Vinod Hejmati, who is retiring after more than three decades with Air India. In a release, the airline said Sharma has more than three decades of experience in the corporate finance, investment banking and real estate sectors. He was the CFO at Tata Projects Ltd. Earlier, he has served as the CFO at Tata Realty Infrastructure Ltd, and Managing Director, Head of Equity Capital Markets, at Deutsche Bank Group, among other roles. "We are pleased to have Sanjay joining the leadership team and look forward to his contribution to the ongoing transformation at Air India. We also thank Vinod for his long service to the company, and for his vital role in its transition to private ownership and, thereafter, its subsequent transformation," Air India CEO and MD Campbell Wilson said. Tata Group took control of loss-making Air India from the government in January 2022.



HUDCO Q4 profit rises 9 per cent to Rs 700 crore

State-owned HUDCO on Friday reported 9.54 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to Rs 700.16 crore for the quarter ended March 2024. Its net profit stood at Rs 639.14 crore in the year-ago period. Total income rose to Rs 2,194.04 crore in March 2024 quarter from Rs 1,862.41 crore a year ago, according to a regulatory filing. Net profit rose to Rs 2,116.69 crore in 2023-24 financial year from Rs 1,701.43 crore in 2022-23. Total income went up to Rs 7,948.10 crore from Rs 7,086.18 crore. The company's board also recommended a final dividend of Rs 2.65 per equity share of face value of Rs 10 each for 2023-24, subject to approval of shareholders in the ensuing Annual General Meeting (AGM). HUDCO is a policy institution that provides housing finance and non-commercial urban infrastructure financing. It is regulated by the National Housing Bank and is under the administrative control of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.



India's coffee exports rise 12% to US\$ 1.28 billion in 2023-24

India's coffee exports rose by 12.22 per cent to US\$ 1.28 billion in 2023-24 on higher demand for Robusta coffee in the global markets, according to the commerce ministry data. The country exported coffee worth US\$ 1.14 billion in 2022-23. India is Asia's third-largest producer and exporter of coffee. The country grows Arabica and Robusta varieties. Arabica coffee beans have less caffeine content than the Robusta. Arabica has sweet and smoother taste, while Robusta is generally more bitter and harsher on the taste buds. In volume terms, coffee shipments from India rose 13.35 per cent to 1,25,631 tonnes during the January-March period of 2023-24. The country had exported 1,10,830 tonnes of coffee in the same period in 2023. Italy, Russia, the UAE, Germany and Turkey are major coffee export destinations for India.



ADANI COAL IMPORTS CASE IN SC

21 international organisations write to CJJ for speedy resolution

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

At least 21 international organisations have written to Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and requested the Supreme Court to speedily resolve the pending case filed by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, investigating Adani Group firms for alleged overvaluation of Indonesian coal imports.

The letter comes after a report by the London-based Financial Times, citing documents from George Soros-backed Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), alluded to a "fraud" by the Adani Group by selling low-grade coal as high-value



fuel in 2013.

Contending that they stand firmly against the continued use of fossil fuels, the organisations said the Financial Times report provided fresh and detailed evidence of the passing off of "low-quality coal as far more expensive cleaner

fuel" by the Adani Group in transactions with Tamil Nadu's Tangedco.

The 21 international organisations that have written to Chief Justice Chandrachud are Australian Centre for International Justice, Banktrack, Bob Brown

Foundation, Culture Unstained, Eko, Extinction Rebellion, Friends of the Earth Australia, London Mining Network, Mackay Conservation Group, Market Forces, Money Rebellion, Move Beyond Coal, Seniors for Climate Action Now, Stand.earth, Stop Adani, Sunrise Movement, Tipping Point, Toxic Bonds, Transparency International Australia, W&J Nagana Yarbawn Cultural Custodians, and Queensland Conservation Council.

While the Adani Group has denied all allegations, the news report has been cited by opposition leaders, including former

Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, to demand a joint parliamentary committee probe into the alleged wrongdoing.

A spokesperson for the group said the quality of the coal was independently tested at the point of loading and discharge, as well as by customs authorities and Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Company (Tangedco) officials.

"With the supplied coal having passed such an elaborate quality check process by multiple agencies at multiple points, clearly the allegation of supply of low-quality coal is not only baseless and unfair but completely absurd," the spokesperson said.

NCLAT upholds NCLT order on Jaypee Infra

Asks Suraksha to pay additional Rs 1,300 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Insolvency Appellate Tribunal NCLAT on Friday upheld Suraksha Realty's bid to acquire debt-ridden Jaypee Infratech Ltd but asked it to pay an additional around Rs 1,300 crore as farmers' compensation.

Upholding the National Company Law Tribunal's (NCLT) decision of March 2023, the NCLAT said the decision was to avoid any further delay in the implementation of the resolution plan and to take care of the interests of all stakeholders, including home buyers and claim of Yamuna Express development authority YEIDA

for additional compensation of the farmers. NCLT had on March 7,



2023, approved the bid of Mumbai-based Suraksha group to buy Jaypee Infratech Ltd (JIL), giving relief to more than 20,000 home buyers whose investments are stuck across various projects being

developed in Delhi-NCR. "The impugned order passed by the adjudicating authority (NCLT) deals with the claim of the appellant (YEIDA) of Rs 1,689 crore of additional farmers compensation is set aside and the rest of the order approving the plan is upheld," said NCLAT.

"Successful Resolution applicant (Suraksha Realty) is directed to make payment to the appellant of its secured operational creditor Rs 1,689 crore in the ratio of 79 per cent, which has been paid to other secured creditors which amount comes to Rs 1,334.31 crore."

Adani Ports to join Sensex from June 24, replacing Wipro

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gautam Adani Group firm Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone will replace IT major Wipro in BSE's benchmark index Sensex from June 24, according to an official announcement on Friday.

The changes have been announced by Asia Index, a joint venture between S&P Dow Jones Indices and BSE. Apart from this, Tata Group company Trent Ltd will make an entry in Sensex 50, while Divi's Laboratories Ltd will be dropped from the index.

"Effective at the open of Monday, June 24, 2024, the... changes will be made," Asia Index said.

Suzlon Energy profit down 21% to Rs 254 crore in Q4

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Renewable energy solutions provider Suzlon Energy on Friday reported nearly 21 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 254 crore in the March quarter mainly due to certain exceptional items.

The company reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 320 crore in the year-ago period, a BSE filing said.

Total income rose to Rs 2,207.43 crore in the quarter from Rs 1,699.96 crore in the same period a year ago.

The consolidated net profit in the 2023-24 fiscal year also declined to Rs 660 crore from Rs 2,887 crore a year earlier.

Total income in the fiscal rose to Rs 6,567.51 crore from

Rs 5,990.16 crore a year ago. The company explained that PAT (profit after tax or net profit before exceptional items) for the March quarter



increased 411 per cent to Rs 281 crore on a year-on-year basis.

The cumulative orders as on May 24, 2024 are 3.3 GW. This includes the order book as on March 31, 2024 of 2,929 MW,

plus orders secured subsequently of 402 MW.

"We have been able to create a solid foundation over the last FY across all business verticals of technology, manufacturing, projects, and OMS," Suzlon Group Vice Chairman Girish Tanti said in the statement.

This positions the company strongly to lead the sector in years to come, he said, adding, "We stacked up our largest ever order book of value-driven orders for more than 3.3 GW."

The board also approved forfeiture of 81,94,063 partly paid-up equity shares of the company worth Rs 2 each issued on rights basis as the first and final call money of Rs 2.50 per share has not been paid.

Rupee jumps 18 paise to close at 83.11 against US dollar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee rallied for the fourth consecutive trading session on Friday and appreciated by 18 paise to settle at 83.11 (provisional) against the US dollar on fresh foreign fund inflows and suspected intervention by the RBI.

Forex traders attributed the rally to Rs 2.11 lakh crore record dividend by the RBI to the government for the fiscal ended March 31. It was more than double the budgeted expectation, helping shore up revenue ahead of a new government taking office.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 83.26 and moved in the range of 83.03 and 83.26 against the greenback during

the session.

The local unit finally settled at 83.11 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a rise of



18 paise from its previous close. In the last four trading sessions the local unit has added 39 paise against the American currency.

The forex market was closed on Thursday on account of

'Buddha Purnima'. On Wednesday, the rupee appreciated by 2 paise to settle at 83.29 against the US dollar.

"The Indian rupee gained on suspected intervention by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The RBI's Rs 2.11 lakh crore dividend to the government also boosted market sentiments.

"Fresh FII inflows and a decline in crude oil prices also supported the rupee. The US dollar strengthened as markets trimmed rate cut bets amid hawkish US data and hawkish Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting minutes," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, declined 0.22 per cent to 104.88. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, slipped 0.70 per cent to US\$ 80.79 per barrel.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a positive bias on positive domestic equities and overall weakness in crude oil prices.

India's forex kitty reaches new high of US\$ 648.7 bn

PNS ■ MUMBAI

India's forex reserves jumped US\$ 4.549 billion to a new all-time high of US\$ 648.7 billion for the week ended May 17, the Reserve Bank said on Friday.

This is the third consecutive week of increase in the overall kitty, which had increased by US\$ 2.561 billion to US\$ 644.151 billion in the previous reporting week ended May 17.

For the week ended April 5, the reserves had hit an all time high of US\$ 648.562 billion following multiple weeks of increases. In the week ended May 10, foreign currency

assets -- a major component of the reserves -- increased US\$ 3.361 billion to US\$ 569.009 billion, the data released on Friday showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound, and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. Gold reserves increased US\$ 1.244 billion to US\$ 57.195 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up US\$ 113 million to US\$ 18.168 billion, the apex bank said.

Markets end lower after peaking

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed marginally lower on Friday as investors booked profit in FMCG, IT and healthcare stocks after the BSE Sensex and Nifty hit fresh lifetime highs in intra-day deals.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dipped 7.65 points or 0.01 per cent to settle at 75,410.39. During the day, it rallied 218.46 points or 0.28 per cent to hit its all-time intra-day high of 75,636.50.

The NSE Nifty breached the 23,000 mark for the first time in early trade.



During the day, the benchmark climbed 58.75 points or 0.25 per cent to hit its lifetime peak of 23,026.40. However, it pared all the gains and ended with a marginal decline of

10.55 points or 0.05 per cent at 22,957.10. Markets were on a record-breaking rally for the second straight day ahead of the results of Lok Sabha polls. The results of the ongoing

general elections will be declared on June 4.

From the Sensex firms, Tech Mahindra, Asian Paints, Tata Consultancy Services, Mahindra & Mahindra, Titan, JSW Steel and ITC were among the major laggards.

On the other hand, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, Larsen & Toubro, NTPC, Axis Bank and UltraTech Cement were the major gainers.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers on Thursday after days of offloading equities. They bought equities worth Rs 4,670.95 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

Coromandel launches 10 new products to boost crop yields

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Agro-chemical firm Coromandel International on Friday introduced 10 new products, including patented ones, to boost crop yield and protect harvests from pests and diseases.

The new products include an innovative neem-coated bio plant and soil health promoter and five generic formulations, offering comprehensive crop protection solutions for Indian farmers, the company said in a statement.

Coromandel has partnered with Japan's ISK to launch Prachand, a patented product

using Japanese technology to protect paddy crops from pests like stem borers and leaf folders that can cause up to 70 per cent yield losses.

It has also developed a formulation to effectively combat fall armyworm, a highly destructive pest that damages up to 30 per cent of the corn crop annually in India. Two new patented fungicides aim to improve crop health and yields - one offers long-lasting control of sheath blight disease in rice, while the other provides both surface and systemic action against diseases in potatoes, grapes and tomatoes.

Citroen ropes in MS Dhoni as brand ambassador in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

French automaker Citroen on Friday said it has roped in former India cricket captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni as its brand ambassador in India.

Dhoni will mark his debut innings with Citroen in a campaign that will soon go live, the company said in a statement.

"We believe that our association with one of India's finest cricketers, Dhoni, will go a long way in reinforcing our commitment to the Indian market. His humility and dedication to excellence align perfectly with



our brand's ideology, while our shared commitment to sustainability and shaping the future of mobility strengthens our connection," Citroen India Brand Director Shishir Mishra said.

On his association with Citroen, Dhoni said, "The brand shares my commitment to electric mobility and sustainable solutions and like me, focuses on doing what really matters. Citroen's philosophy of truly understanding customer needs and making meaningful innovations resonates deeply with me.

NIIT Q4 profit at Rs 11.16 cr; revenue from operations at Rs 74.34 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Skill and talent development company NIIT on Friday reported a consolidated net profit (attributable to owners of the parent company) of Rs 11.16 crore for the quarter ended March 31, 2024.

The company had posted a loss of Rs 9.36 crore in the year-ago period, according to a regulatory filing. Revenue from operations in the January-March quarter came in at Rs 74.34 crore, a 23.81 per cent jump from the year-ago period.



Despite a continuing freeze in IT sector hiring and compression in spending, the business has exited the year with year-on-year growth in Q4, after starting Q1 with a steep decline, the company said in an investor presentation.

Vice Chairman and Managing Director Vijay K Thadani said Q4 was a seasonally weak quarter for the business. Therefore, year-on-year changes are more appropriate for comparison, he said.

"The business has responded with agility to the IT hiring freeze with alternate growth strategies which resulted in getting back on the path of growth in Q4," he said.

Thadani expressed confidence in the potential of generative AI (GenAI), and said, "GenAI is a huge opportunity.

We have an early-mover advantage. We need to capitalise on that."

The company previously announced the incorporation of Generative AI into its existing Digital Marketing and Full-Stack Software Engineering programs.

For FY24, net profit saw a multifold increase to Rs 38.36 crore, as against Rs 3.17 crore in FY23.

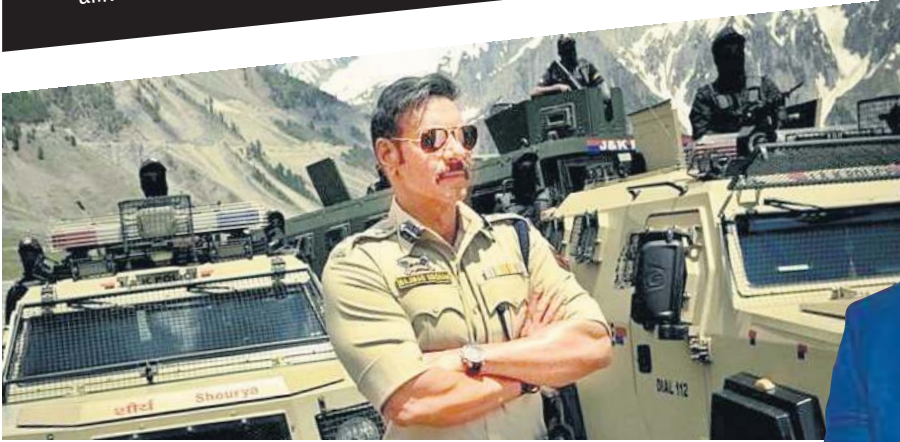
The revenue from operations declined by 11.07 per cent to Rs 303.47 crore, from Rs 341.25 crore in the previous fiscal.

Legendary singer KK's last song to feature in Abhinay Deo's film Savi

As the excitement builds for Abhinay Deo's eagerly awaited film *Savi*, the makers have unveiled a touching behind-the-scenes video showcasing the legendary singer KK recording his final song, *Vaada Humse Karo* for the movie. This sneak peek into the creation of *Vaada Humse Karo* promises to tug at the heartstrings of fans, evoking tears and emotions alike. The live recording video serves as a

testament to KK's unmatched talent and enduring impact on the music industry. With each note, KK's timeless voice resonates with passion and emotion, leaving an indelible mark and reminding us of his remarkable legacy. The song enhances the excitement of the film even further. *Savi* features Anil Kapoor, Divya Khosla, and Harshvardhan Rane in lead roles. The film promises to be a roller coaster ride of thrill and

suspense, showcasing Divya Khosla in a never-before-seen avatar. The film is produced by Mukesh Bhatt, Bhushan Kumar, and Krishan Kumar, under the banners of Vishesh Films and T-Series. Shiv Chanana and Sakshi Bhatt have joined in as co-producers. To know the story of how a simple housewife masterminds a dangerous jail break and whether she succeeds, head to your nearest theatre on May 31, 2024.



Bajirao Singham is back as Singham Again, wraps Kashmir schedule

Ajay Devgn, Akshay Kumar, Ranveer Singh, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Deepika Padukone, Tiger Shroff, and Arjun Kapoor are preparing to blow your mind with their upcoming blockbuster. *Singham Again*, directed by Rohit Shetty, is one of this year's most anticipated films. The success of Rohit Shetty's previous cop-themed films, *Singham*, *Singham Returns*, *Sooryavanshi*, and *Simmba*, has given fans confidence that *Singham Again* will outperform its predecessors. Adding to the excitement, Rohit Shetty shared the first official photo of Ajay Devgn as Bajirao Singham. Rohit posted photos of actor Ajay Devgn from the sets in Kashmir. He was seen surrounded by J&K Police vehicles. On his Instagram, he shared a picture of Ajay in uniform. Rohit wrote, "Schedule wrap! Thank you Kashmir." With the film, Ajay is reprising his role of Bajirao Singham. A few days ago, a photo from the sets of *Singham Again* went viral, featuring Ajay Devgn and Jackie Shroff. Ajay can be seen leading a group of police officers who have taken Jackie Shroff by the collar. The team is now shooting in Kashmir. The image was enough to get spectators eager for the release of *Singham Again*. To add to the excitement, Rohit Shetty just shared the first photo of Ajay Devgn as Bajirao Singham from *Singham Returns*. One glance at the image and we can clearly conclude that Bajirao Singham is about to break several box office records. As soon as the photo was posted on social media, admirers swamped the comments section, praising it.

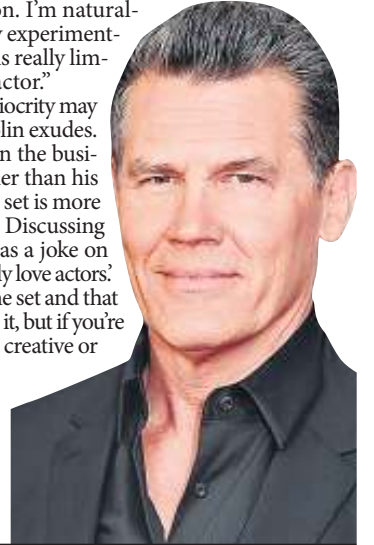


CHRIS HEMSWORTH HONOURED WITH A STAR ON THE HOLLYWOOD WALK OF FAME

Actor Chris Hemsworth has been honoured with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. The Thor star received the star on Thursday in the presence of his family and actor Robert Downey Jr. Downey paid tribute to Hemsworth as the latter received his star on Hollywood Boulevard. Downey brought with him a list of roasts from their other Marvel costars, each describing him in three words, as per PEOPLE. "First off, [Jeremy] Renner says 'absurdly annoyingly amazing.' [Mark] Ruffalo came in strong with 'Friend from work.' That's a callback, now I get it," Downey Jr. said in front of a crowd that also included Hemsworth's *Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga* director George Miller, costar Anya Taylor-Joy and Hemsworth's family. He continued, "Scarlett [Johansson] got to the heart of it with 'sensitive leading lady.' Captain America [Chris Evans] calls him 'second-best Chris.'" Hemsworth and Downey portrayed two of the core *Avengers* superheroes, Thor and Iron Man, respectively, alongside Evans, 42, Johansson, 39, Renner, 53 and Ruffalo, 56. Hemsworth most recently starred as Thor in 2022's *Love and Thunder*. "Chris is a bit daunting to describe. He's very elusive because of the pretty packaging. However, upon further inspection, he has a true-blue wit and he has a depth of soul, and it has been my sincere pleasure to know you these many years," Downey said in his speech. "You keep us Hollywood folks on our toes because you're just a real dude." Chris also posed for the pictures with wife, Elsa Pataky, and their three children -- daughter India Rose and twin sons Sasha and Tristan.

Josh Brolin says he gets excited by experimenting

Some directors favour a gentle approach when working with their actors, but as an actor himself, Josh Brolin's temperament behind the camera is more straightforward. Brolin discussed his first time in the director's chair on his television show *Outer Range* with Esquire, describing how directing was imposed upon him rather than requested, but that it came from others who saw he had the abilities and sensibility to take on the role. "There were a lot of interests that I've had through the decades that I never really understood," said Brolin. "When I directed, I was able to funnel it all into one place without trying to force it. My whole life made sense.... I'm not going to quit acting and just be a director. But it utilizes more of my sensibilities as a person. I'm naturally a communal person. I get excited by experimenting. To imprison that with just me feels really limiting. But I may just be a mediocre actor." Though misplaced, that sense of mediocrity may come from a general lack of vanity Brolin exudes. After growing up and coming of age in the business, he has no one left to impress other than his audience and realises being reliable on set is more important than proving your artistry. Discussing this with Esquire, he said, "I said this as a joke on 'Kimmel' -- I was like, 'I don't particularly love actors.' Especially people who won't come to the set and that kind of shit. If there's a good reason, I get it, but if you're just an irritated actor because you're so creative or sensitive, I just don't buy it." Not specifying any one negative experience, Brolin went on to speak of his preference for just doing the work and trying to create something that takes people away without force-feeding a message.



Stree makers introduce a new character in Munjya

Sharvari, Mona Singh, Abhay Verma, and Sathyaraj are ready to terrify you while tickling your humorous bones. *Munjya*, directed by Aditya Sarpotdar, is based on the tale of Munjya, which is deeply embedded in Indian religion and cultural systems. Maddock Films, the force behind genre-defining classics such as *Stree* and *Bhediya*, has released the much awaited trailer for their latest horror-comedy, which also features India's best CGI actor, *Munjya*. The trailer shows him in all his magnificence, and you will be astounded by his performance. The film starring Sharvari, Mona Singh, and others, is intended to provide an unforgettable movie experience overflowing with intrigue and thrill. It is set to be released in theatres on June 7, 2024, and tells the story of *Munjya*, who struggles with love's obsession, through the lens of a folklore horror story. The teaser and posters, which were released earlier, sparked a surge of speculation on social media, with fans and critics alike intrigued by the enigmatic *Munjya* and its intriguing quest for Mumi. With *Stree* and *Bhediya*, Maddock Films has established itself as a pioneer in horror-comedy franchise films. Almost all of their films have diverse comic flavors, making them a sure hit at the box office. It'll be intriguing to observe how *Munjya* works its magic and captures viewers' attention.

PREITY ZINTA ON HER 6 YEARS HIATUS

'I wanted to have children & focus on my personal life'

Preity Zinta is currently filming *Lahore 1947*, her first film in six years following *Bhaiaji Superhit*. In an interview with DD India, the performer explained why she took so long to make her next picture. "I didn't want to do a film. I was focusing on business, I wanted to focus on my personal life. People forget that for women, as actors, your craft is important, you want a body of work, but

you have a biological clock. I've never dated anyone in the industry. I've never dated an actor. So the logical thing was I also needed to have my own family. It's great to play various lives, but you shouldn't forget to live your life. So I wanted to have children. Business was also very exciting since it was something new. But mostly, I wanted to focus on my personal life. I really don't want to be an accomplished

actor and a lonely person," said Preity. Preity said she read a bunch of scripts in the last six years, but didn't find something as exciting and important as *Lahore 1947*. The period drama is directed by Rajkumar Santoshi and stars Sunny Deol opposite her. It's produced by Aamir Khan. Preity is currently at the Cannes Film Festival, where she will present a special honour to veteran cinematographer Santosh Sivan.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



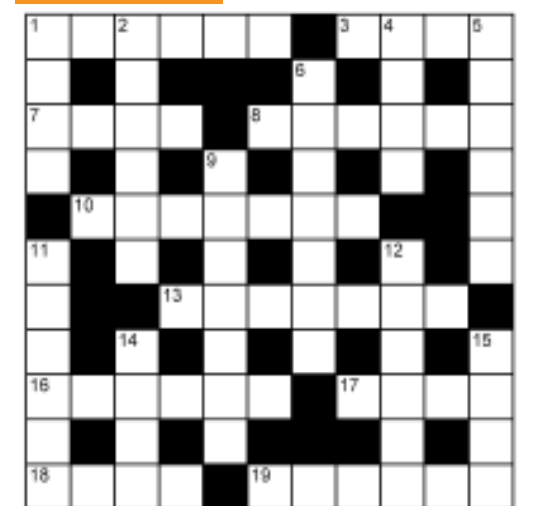
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- A hole in a hill for a train
- Unlock
- Very uncommon
- An animal with a shell
- An erupting mountain
- A long sort of table where you are served in a shop
- A restaurant worker
- Meat and vegetables cooked slowly in liquid
- Scraps of material
- A planet
- Required
- On fire
- A month
- Replied
- Defeated
- Make music with the voice
- These birds hunt at night

DOWN

- Ripped and ragged
- Opposite of wide
- Tame animals kept at home

SOLUTION

A	D	J	E	C	T	I	V	E
R	O	N	D	C	A	N	O	L
E	G	S	K	U	L			
A	C	H	E	A	L	A	S	K
C	H	E	N	E				
H	E	L	P	E	R	S	P	O
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C	R	O	S	E				
S	H	A	T	T	E	R	E	D

'There's no need to seek medical care elsewhere with advanced options available in Hyd'

In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, Dr. Srirang Abkari, a consultant physician at Udai Omni Hospital, Hyderabad shares his association with the city.

SUBODHINI PUROHIT

Hyderabad, a place where tradition and modernity blend to create a vibrant culture, we have Dr. Srirang Abkari, a consultant physician at Udai Omni Hospital in Hyderabad, proudly carries the legacy of three generations deeply rooted in this historic hometown.

Hyderabad is an incredibly welcoming city with a rich, cosmopolitan culture. People from all backgrounds and communities live together harmoniously. "The city exudes warmth and kindness, and I've never encountered any form of discrimination here. It's truly a place filled with wonderful, good-hearted people."

Hyderabad, he says, is a wonderful place, full of cherished childhood memories. One festival that stands out for him is Sankranti when the sky is filled with kites flown from every terrace. It was a time when different communities came together to celebrate in unity and joy.

The diverse environment at St. Paul's High School brought together people from all walks of life, shaping who they are today. The values and lessons learned there have profoundly influenced both his personal development and professional career.

Meanwhile, he feels that the city boasts an excellent health infrastructure, making medical care highly accessible compared to abroad. Both government and private hospitals, as well as numerous clinics, are readily available throughout the city. Thanks to continuous advancements and a plethora of educational conferences and activities, healthcare in Hyderabad remains affordable, he emphasises. "There's no need to seek medical care elsewhere when such comprehensive and advanced options are available right here."

Hyderabad is renowned for its unique offerings that his loved ones cherish. They always make it a point to take home trademark treats from



Karachi Bakery, like their cashew biscuits and fruit biscuits, which are the perfect blend of sweet and savoury. He says, "Souvenirs from iconic landmarks like Charminar, and Golconda, and traditional handloom and Pochampally sarees are also a must-have for my closed ones, capturing the essence of Hyderabad's rich culture and heritage."

He loves the warm, cosmopolitan culture and hospitality of Hyderabad. However, he dislikes the traffic situation and the frequent instances of wrong-side driving, and he shares, "Improvements in these areas would make driving much more comfortable and enhance overall safety in the city."

Hyderabad is a wonderful place that always feels like home. While one may travel abroad to see grand monuments, the comfort and peace found here are unmatched. The warm reception you receive in Hyderabad is unparalleled. "The unique local lingo, the distinctive Hyderabad Hindi, and the rich vocabulary add to its charm. Having lived here since childhood, I can confidently say that Hyderabad is a truly special place to live," he signs off on a concluding note.



'Films like 8 A.M. Metro bring out the emotions that we tend to hide'

PNS| HYDERABAD

Be it whether playing a villainous role like that of in *Hate Story* and *Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela*, or that of a funky kind of character in *Hunterrr*, Gulshan Devaiah has not just proved his prowess but also makes his character so impactful that one can just not take their eyes off. For example, talking of his recent film that has now been in talk-of-the-town, *8 A.M. Metro*, we see a whole different Gulshan altogether.

The film which is now streaming on Zee 5, has been gaining immense traction on the OTT, even more than that back when the film was released in the theatres. Well, speaking of the aspect that compelled him to be a part of this film, he shares, "I read this script, and I thought it was very moving. I cried in the end and was thinking a lot about the story, the characters. It was very emotional. I had a discussion with Raj, the director and it seemed like the idea and the story both are great, and we must make this into a movie. I connected with the script, and I wanted to be Pritam in this story. I didn't quite know how I would do it, but I had this intense urge to explore the idea of being Pritam in *8 A.M. Metro*. That's

how I became part of the film."

8 A.M. Metro opens discussions around mental health, suicide, social anxiety and many other such issues but in an unusual manner. Talking about such issues he says is really important, and that in itself is a help. A lot of times, "I think, we face issues, and we don't know how to talk about it, or we refrain from talking about it due to the social stigma or we want to seem stronger. We don't want to show or open up and reveal our weaknesses, so we tend to hide them, but films like this bring out emotions. I did get the opportunity to watch this movie with a live audience, I randomly went into a movie hall, people were sitting and watching. They were moved and were crying which means that it brings out a certain emotion. People were able to identify and resonate with the characters or their trauma and that in itself is quite therapeutic. I guess it urges people to think about how they are feeling, if they have any addictions or certain traumas, and then they would find a way to talk about it. That's how I think films such as *8 A.M. Metro* will help people."



Actor Gulshan Devaiah, who is known for his remarkable performances in the industry, speaks to *The Pioneer* on some interesting insights about being a part of *8 A.M. Metro*.

Pediatric Intensive Care Units: A critical aspect of healthcare

This can be a cause of too much anxiety and stress amongst parents and other family members who may find themselves in need of such services unexpectedly. Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICUs) are specifically designed to provide high-level medical care to children from infancy to adolescence who are critically ill, some even with life-threatening medical conditions.

Understanding PICU

A Pediatric Intensive Care Unit is significantly more specialised than a typical hospital ward. It is equipped with cutting-edge medical technology and staffed by specialised healthcare professionals trained to handle severe and acute conditions in children.

A PICU is equipped with complex medical equipment, including mechanical ventilators, advanced monitoring devices (cardiac monitors etc) and specialised equipment to support failing kidney or liver functions.

These units are intended to address a variety of serious health issues in children, such as severe respiratory distress, serious neurological disorders, heart ailments and other organ injuries like the involvement of the liver or kidneys. PICUs are geared to manage children needing complex surgeries or those with severe infections (Dengue, Malaria, Brain fever, pneumonia, etc), children with trauma (road traffic accidents, children with burns, drowning, those who falls from heights, poisoning, etc).

Not all PICUs can manage all types of emergencies and complexities in child healthcare. Depending upon the expertise and the availability of trained and skilled manpower, PICUs are stratified into Level-1 to Level-4 units, with Level-4 units having competencies of the highest order.

Some PICUs are highly specialised to take care of specific categories of clinical conditions, e.g. children after liver transplant or kidney transplant surgeries, or children who are operated on for heart conditions, etc.

Pediatric intensivists are physicians working in the PICUs with advanced training in critical care for children. These specialists understand how children's physiological needs differ from those of adults in critical care situations. The PICU team also includes a highly skilled and specialised team of nurses, which are the most critical part of any good PICU.

Apart from physicians and nurses, a good PICU team comprises respiratory therapists, clinical pharmacists, nutritionists, and social workers, all of whom play critical roles in each patient's care.

The Role of Pediatric Intensivists

Pediatric intensivists are essential to the operation of a PICU. They oversee the child's care plan and participate in all aspects of their treatment. These professionals are trained to make quick decisions about life-saving interventions and manage complex technologies like mechanical ventilators, intravenous lines, and monitoring systems, frequently required for their pediatric patients.

Support from Paediatric Sub-Specialties:

A level-3 or Level-4 PICU can not be complete without round-the-clock support from important paediatric subspecialists like a paediatric neurologist, pulmonologist, haematologist, nephrologist, gastroenterologist, endocrinologist, surgeons (paediatric surgeons, plastic surgeons, orthopaedic surgeons, fascio-maxillary surgeon, neuro surgeon etc).



The PICU team also needs support from microbiology, pathology and radiology departments and, if possible, a reliable blood bank.

Financial aspects of care

The cost of PICU care can be a major concern. Insurance coverage can prove very useful in facing the rising cost of care in PICUs. Various government schemes and contributions from various charitable organisations also help families in meeting the cost of care.

Counselling of families and family-centric care:

Modern PICU teams are increasingly focusing on families' involvement in caring for their children in PICUs. In any good PICU, the treating team of physicians is involved

closely with the family members in daily counselling and discussion regarding not only the treatment and cost of care of their child but also how the overall progress is taking place and how they plan to work together for early liberation of their child from PICU.

Awareness and Education

The general public is unaware of when and why a child may need to be admitted to a pediatric intensive care unit. Parents frequently fail to recognise the severity of a condition until it is far advanced, delaying potentially life-saving medical care.

Educating the public on the warning signs of severe illness and the availability of PICU services is critical. This includes recognising the signs of serious conditions such as meningitis (brain fever), septic shock (blood infection with a fall in blood pressure), or severe allergic reactions that necessitate immediate medical attention.

Preventive measures

Preventive healthcare is also important in lowering the need for PICU services. This includes ensuring that children have received all necessary vaccinations, which can help them avoid serious illnesses.

Improving hygiene and cleanliness also can prevent many diseases. Furthermore, promoting safe practices at home and on the road can reduce the number of injuries and accidents that may necessitate emergency care.

Conclusion

To summarise, while PICUs in India play an important role in pediatric healthcare, there is a significant need for increased public awareness and education about these facilities.

Parents and caregivers should be educated on the symptoms of critical illnesses, the operation of a PICU, and preventive measures that can help keep children healthy.

Understanding these aspects can help improve the timely and effective use of PICU resources, resulting in better health outcomes for children.

(The author, Dr. Farhan AR Shaikh, is the Head of the Department of Paediatric Intensive Care Unit, at Rainbow Children's Hospital, in Banjara Hills.)



DK BOOSTED ME WHEN I STRUGGLED IN IPL 2022: KOHLI

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Former India batter Virat Kohli has paid tribute to Dinesh Karthik after his retirement at the end of RCB's IPL campaign, describing the veteran wicketkeeper-batter as a wise and honest person who lifted his spirits during a phase of struggle in the league's 2022 season.

The 38-year-old, who joined Royal Challengers Bengaluru from Kolkata Knight Riders in 2022 for his second stint after 2015, played his last IPL match on Wednesday when RCB were eliminated by Rajasthan Royals in the playoffs.

"Off the field, I have had some really nice and interesting conversations with him. He is a wise man, and has great knowledge about a lot of things, not just cricket," Kohli said in a special tribute video posted by RCB.

The little over 11-minute video features tributes from Karthik's wife, Dipika Pallikal Karthik; his personal mentor, Abhishek

Nayar; RCB assistant coach, Malolan Rangarajan; and fitness coach, Shanker Basu.

Kohli recalled the 2022 season when he averaged just 22.73 scoring 341 runs from 16 matches as they missed the final bus losing to Rajasthan Royals in the second qualifier.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my conversations with him. Even in that phase in 2022 when I did not have a great IPL season, I was really struggling for confidence," he recalled.

"He sat me down a couple of times and just gave me a very honest explanation of how he saw things and maybe I am not able to see them myself," Kohli added.

A veteran campaigner in the IPL, Karthik has been involved in all the editions of the league since the inaugural 2008 season and has represented six franchises, including leading KKR to the playoffs in 2018.

He ended with 4,842 runs in 257 matches with 22 fifties.

"I just like his honesty, his courage to go and speak to



anyone about things that he really feels about. And that, I think, is the most special thing for me when it comes to Dinesh. "And that's something that I've always cherished about him. And that's why we get along really, really well."

A CORRECT PLAYER: Kohli also hailed Karthik as a technically "correct" and versatile batter.

"I always looked at Dinesh and felt like he was such a correct player technically that he could adapt to any kind of role that's been given to him, and I remember watching him in the 2013 season where he got 600 runs or something and he batted brilliantly at three.

"I saw him play shots which were like 'wow'. I think he's done brilliantly to switch and become a renowned finisher.

"...I wish him all the very best for all his future endeavours moving forward." Kohli hoped that Karthik would stay connected to the RCB franchise in some capacity.

"...Because his expertise when

it comes to cricket is priceless. I think he's of great value to this franchise," he said.

'HYPERACTIVE, CONFUSED PERSON': Recalling his first meeting with Karthik during India's tour of South Africa in 2009, Kohli said at first, he found him to be a hyperactive and confused person moving all over the place.

"The first time I met him, I remember we were playing in South Africa if I am not wrong in the Champions Trophy 2009. It was the first time I shared the change room with Dinesh, and I found him to be very amusing, very... I would say hyperactive, confused person. "Most of the time, he was moving all over the place, never stopping. That was my first impression of Dinesh.

"He is an outstanding talent, brilliant batter to watch and my first impression and the present-day impression are not far — just that he has become wiser and calmed down a lot," Kohli added.

No reason for Dhoni to stop playing: Kaif

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Former India batter Mohammad Kaif feels there is no reason why Mahendra Singh Dhoni should not play the next season of the IPL, given his form, fitness and ability to play big shots with ease.

Speculation has been rife that Dhoni, who has led CSK to five IPL titles, could have played his last IPL season.

The former CSK skipper, who had undergone surgery to treat a knee injury issue last year, scored 161 runs in 73 balls at a strike rate of 220.55 this season. He was also good behind the stumps.

Kaif thinks Dhoni has enough left in the tank to keep playing. "Personally, I don't think he's done, he could not win the game (last league match against RCB). In the last over after hitting a six, he got out. You could make out seeing his



body language that he seemed very disappointed not winning the game for CSK," Kaif, a cricket expert with Star Sports, told PTI Videos.

"Why he should not come back? He is fit, he is scoring runs and hitting sixes, and there's no reason to stop playing... It's up to him, we can't say with Dhoni what's his plan," added Kaif, regarded as one of India's greatest fielders.

20 points.

"He (Iyer) missed the whole IPL last year and KKR probably missed his captaincy in 2023. The way he is changing the bowlers, and picking his playing XI, he looks very calm under pressure.

"In a tournament like the IPL, you have to be very composed, you have to know what's happening in the game and Iyer has come a long way. He has become a much better captain now," opined Kaif.

Experts are also attributing KKR's success this season to Gautam Gambhir returning to the side as the team mentor but Kaif said the team's superb run had got a lot to do with how Iyer marshals his boys on the field.

"We always talk about (Gautam) Gambhir, but he can't enter the field... In the rope with the players. Iyer has also been there with the players

and it will help him grow as a person and player.

"He missed out on the (T20) World Cup this year (beginning in the US and West Indies next month), but certainly it's great learning for him, captaining the team, leading it to the finals. He has a great future ahead," said Kaif.

Kaif said KKR were the overwhelming favourites to lift the IPL trophy this season given that they have quality bowlers and a balanced side, the two ingredients required to win.

"I think KKR is a very well-balanced side. Tournament-winning team has to have good bowlers, KKR has got the bowlers. You saw how (Mitchell) Starc bowled against (SRH in Qualifier 1), it's a balanced side. KKR has got all bases covered in terms of batting and bowling. They are the team to beat in IPL, they are way ahead."

Shah denies approaching Aussies for coach job



PTI ■ MUMBAI

BCCI secretary Jay Shah on Friday rejected claims that the Board has approached any former Australian cricketer to be India's next head coach and hinted that Rahul Dravid's successor could be an Indian by saying that he should have a "deep understanding" of the game's structure in the country.

While Dravid has reportedly told the board that he is not interested in a third stint, former Australian players like Ricky Ponting and Justin Langer have claimed that they have turned down approaches for the high-profile position.

"Neither I nor the BCCI have approached any former Australian cricketer with a coaching offer. The reports circulating in certain media sections are completely incorrect," Shah said in a statement.

Both Ponting and Langer are involved in the Indian Premier League as the head coaches of Delhi Capitals and Lucknow Super Giants respectively. World Cup-winning former batting star Gautam Gambhir, who is currently mentoring Kolkata Knight Riders, is speculated to be among the top contenders for the post right now.

"Finding the right coach for our national team is a meticulous and thorough process. We are focused on identifying individuals who possess a deep understanding of the Indian cricket structure and have risen through the ranks," Shah said.

The BCCI secretary also said that having in-depth knowledge of Indian domestic cricket will be one of the important criteria for appointing the next coach. He said the understanding would be crucial to "truly elevate Team India to the next level."

Ponting had claimed on Thursday that he was

approached to take over the role but said that he declined as it did not fit with his "lifestyle" right now.

Ponting told ICC review, "I've seen a lot of reports about it. Normally these things pop up on social media before you even know about them, but there were a few little one-on-one conversations during the IPL, just to get a level of interest from me as to whether I would do it."

"I'd love to be a senior coach of a national team, but with the other things that I have in my life and wanting to have a bit of time at home...everyone knows if you take a job working with the Indian team you can't be involved in an IPL team, so it would take that out of it as well," he said.

Taking up the job of coaching India also implies spending 10-11 months away from home but Ponting said his family seemed ready for it.

"...I had a whisper to my son about it, and I said, 'Dad's been offered the Indian coaching job' and he said, 'Just take it, dad, we would love to move over there for the next couple of years,'" he said.

"That's how much they love being over there and the culture of cricket in India, but right now it probably doesn't exactly fit into my lifestyle," Ponting said.

Meanwhile, Langer, who had remained noncommittal about applying for India coaching role after IPL clash between LSG and Mumbai Indians, said he would "never say never" but at the same time revealed receiving crucial advice from Lucknow skipper KL Rahul.

Langer told BBS Stumped Podcast, "It would be an amazing job. I also know that it's an all-encompassing role, and having done it for four years with the Australian team, honestly, it's exhausting. And that's the

Australian job."

"You never say never. And the pressure of doing it in India... I was talking to KL Rahul and he said, 'You know, if you think there's pressure and politics in an IPL team, multiply that by a thousand, (that is) coaching India. That was a good bit of advice, I guess,' Langer said.

"It would be an awesome job, but not for me at the moment," he added.

Former England and current Royal Challengers Bengaluru head coach Andy Flower had also ruled himself out of the race saying he is happy being involved in franchise cricket for now.

Chennai Super Kings chief executive Kasi Viswanathan has done the same for Stephen Fleming claiming the former New Zealand captain won't be keen on taking a job which requires him to work "nine-ten months a year."

Shah described the position of India's head coach as the most prestigious job in international cricket, saying it demands high level of professionalism given the kind of support the national side enjoys.

"When we talk about international cricket, no role is more prestigious than that of the Head Coach of the Indian Cricket Team. Team India commands the largest fan base globally, enjoying support that is truly unrivalled," he said.

"Our rich history, passion for the game make this one of the most lucrative jobs in the world. The role demands a high level of professionalism as one gets to nurture some of the best cricketers in the world and an assembly line of talented cricketers to follow.

"Catering to the aspirations of a billion fans is a huge honour and the BCCI will pick the right candidate, capable of propelling Indian cricket forward," Shah added.

OTHER SPORTS



Indian junior men hockey team loses 4-5 against Dutch local club

PTI ■ ANTWERP (BELGIUM)

Indian men's hockey team will hope to iron out the flaws ahead of the Paris Olympics, while the women's team under new skipper Salima Tete will look to overcome the disappointment of not qualifying for the Summer Games, when the gruelling European leg of the FIH Pro League commences here with matches against Argentina on Wednesday.

The men's team under drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh is coming into the tournament following a 0-5 Test series whitewash at the hands of Australia and would look to make the most of the opportunity in Europe to get back to winning ways ahead of the Paris Games.

"Undoubtedly, we are focused on the Olympics but we also need to give our best to finish as champions (in Pro League) and secure direct qualification for the 2026 Hockey World Cup as well," said Harmanpreet, whose team is currently placed third with 15 points from eight Pro League games. Netherlands are leading the charts with 26 points (12 matches), while Australia are on 20 points (8 matches).

"To achieve both these targets (doing well ahead of Olympics and secure direct qualification for 2026 World Cup), we will strive to give our all on the pitch

and win all our matches," the skipper added.

Besides Argentina, the Indian men's team will also test their Olympic preparations against Belgium, Germany and Great Britain. The Indian women, currently placed sixth on the Pro League table, have a chance to climb up the table when they take on world No.7 Argentina on Wednesday.

The world No.6 side has earned eight points from an equal number of games in the Pro League home leg, registering victories against the United States and Australia.

Newly-appointed captain Salima said the friendlies against South Africa in India earlier this month had helped her team prepare for the European leg of the Pro League.

"We played practice matches against South Africa (in India) to prepare for these Hockey Pro League matches. The point difference between us and second-placed China is just seven points," said Tete in a Hockey India release.

"We (will) aim to close this gap in the remaining matches against Argentina, Belgium, Germany, and Great Britain in a bid to finish as high as we can," she added. China are placed second on the table with 15 points from eight games, while leaders Netherlands are on 36 points with an all-win record in 12 games.

Delhi HC appoints administrative committee for Equestrian Federation of India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has appointed an ad-hoc administrative committee under its retired judge to run the affairs of the Equestrian Federation of India (EFI) following allegations of "impropriety" in its functioning.

Justice Tara V Ganju said, ordinarily, a court does not interfere in the administration of a national sports federation but when there is "clear impropriety" and the administration is being carried

on in an "arbitrary" or "perverse" manner, the situation cannot be ignored. The court said the ad-hoc administrative committee (AAC) shall have former high court judge Justice Najmi Waziri as its chairperson, former Chief Election Commissioner S Y Quraishi as observer/member and advocate Rohini Musa as member.

The order came on a petition by Rajasthan Equestrian Association.

"Pending the conduct of elections, EFI cannot be left

without any office bearers.. This Court cannot in good conscience leave the functioning of the EFI solely in the hands of those office bearer(s) whose tenure has expired and who are acting in a capricious manner and in violation of the directives of the court," said the court in an order passed on May 21.

"Accordingly, the interest of justice would be served if an ad-hoc Administrative Committee is appointed to supervise the administration of the Respondent No. 1/EFI," the court ordered.

Atwal, Jeev open with 69s at seniors PGA Championships

PTI ■ BENTON HARBOR (US)

Indian golfers Arjun Atwal and Jeev Milkha Singh opened with identical rounds of 2-under 69 each and were Tied-19th at the end of the first round at the KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship, one of the Majors for the Seniors, on the Champions Tour here.

As the Indian duo began strongly, leading the field in the USD 3.5 million seniors' event (over-50s), were Australian Richard Green and Englishman Richard Bland, who shot 7-under 64 each at Harbor Shores.

Green hit all 13 fairways and 17 of the 18 greens in regulation en route to the 64.

Green shared the lead with Englishman Richard Bland, playing his first over-50s event. Bland showed great overall form and did not miss a fairway until the eighth hole, which was his 17th of the day. He was bogey free on his debut on the PGA TOUR Championships.

Defending champion Steve Stricker opened with a 5-under 66 and was among five players



with 66.

Jeev, playing from the first alongside Italian Emanuele Canonica (69) and Jeff Schmid (66), opened on the first with three pars and then had a great run. He birdied the fourth and then had three in a row from seventh to ninth to turn in an impressive 4-under.

On the back, he missed a couple of birdie chances but was hit by a double bogey on Par-4 12th and no more birdies or bogeys to finish with 69.

Atwal, the only Indian to have won on the main PGA TOUR,

began on the 10th with a birdie and added a second on the 12th. He dropped three shots in a row from 16th to 18th and turned in 1-over.

On the back nine, Atwal birdied the first, third and the ninth and bogeyed Par-4 sixth to finish in 69, while his playing partners Jake Reeves (89) and Kirk Triplett (75) struggled through the day.

Presidents Cup International team captain Mike Weir mixed six birdies with one bogey to open in 5-under 66 and was T-4. He played alongside Darren Clarke (67) and Ernie Els (70).



ASHIKA RANGANATH TO BE ON BOARD FOR VISHWAMBHARA

Megastar Chiranjeevi's highly anticipated magnum opus Vishwambhara is the most ambitious project for director Vassishtha and also for the production house, UV Creations. While Vassishtha is rightly utilising the opportunity to make a memorable film for mega fans and movie buffs, UV Creations is mounting the movie on a large canvas in an uncompromised manner. Meanwhile, the team of mighty Vishwambhara welcomes the charming Ashika Ranganath to the epic cinematic journey of Vishwambhara. Yes, the actress who impressed one and all with her stunning looks and superb performance in *Naa Saami Ranga* comes on board to play one of the important roles in the movie. The ageless diva Trisha Krishnan is the female lead opposite Chiranjeevi in this movie that features some other noted actors in prominent roles. Vikram, Vamsi and Pramod are bankrolling this fantasy action adventure. MM Keeravani who recently won an Oscar Award scores the music, while the popular lensman Chota K Naidu is the cinematographer. Vishwambhara will be released for Sankranti in 2025 on January 10.



Rajinikanth receives Golden Visa from UAE

Renowned actor Rajinikanth has been granted the prestigious Golden Visa by the UAE's Department of Culture and Tourism, marking a significant recognition of his contributions to the world of cinema. A video capturing the heartfelt moment of the legendary actor expressing his gratitude towards the Abu Dhabi government and his close associate, MA Yusuff Ali, the chairman and managing director of Lulu Group, has been making rounds on the internet.

In the video, Rajinikanth, aged 73, can be seen extending his heartfelt thanks to the UAE government and Yusuff Ali for the honour and hospitality bestowed upon him. He remarked, "Today, I am honoured to receive a prestigious Golden visa of UAE. My heartfelt thanks to the UAE government, and to my friend Lulu Group, chairman and managing director, Yusuff Ali, without him, this would not have happened, I am grateful to him".

The Golden Visa was presented to the actor by Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Member of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council and Chairman of the Department of Culture and Tourism

(DCT), Government of Abu Dhabi, in the presence of MA Yusuff.

During his stay in Abu Dhabi, fondly referred to as Thalaivar, Rajinikanth also took the opportunity to visit the renowned Hindu temple, BAPS, to offer prayers. A video capturing his visit to the temple, where he received an official tour and blessings from the priests, has gone viral on social media. Rajinikanth could be seen admiring the temple's architecture and receiving blessings with reverence.

On the professional front, Rajinikanth recently wrapped up shooting for his upcoming movie, *Vettaivan*, scheduled for release in October 2024. Alongside Amitabh Bachchan, Fahadh Faasil, and Rana Daggubati, the Chandramukhi actor will captivate audiences with his performance.

Looking ahead, Rajinikanth is set to commence shooting for Lokesh Kanagaraj's *Coolie*, starring alongside Shruti Haasan. Additionally, there are reports suggesting a potential reunion with Nelson Dilipkumar for a sequel to *Jailer*, tentatively titled *Hukum*, although official confirmation is pending.

Bellamkonda Srinivas's Tyson Naidu new schedule begins in Rajasthan

Promising young hero Bellamkonda Sai Srinivas's unique action entertainer being helmed by Saagar K Chandra is produced by 14 Reels Plus.

The movie titled *Tyson Naidu* had its title and glimpse unveiled on Bellamkonda Srinivas's birthday and received a stupendous response.

On Friday, the makers began a new crucial 2 week long schedule of the movie in Rajasthan. The team will be canning breathtaking action blocks which is very significant for the movie for 10 nights in Rajasthan forts under the supervision of Stun Shiva which will be one of the major highlights in the movie. In this 2-week long schedule, the makers will also shoot some talkie part. The movie is being made in an uncompromised way as the team is super confident on the subject. Bellamkonda sports a massy and bulky look in the movie, as shown in the glimpse. Saagar K Chandra is presenting him in a never-before-seen action-packed character as a cop.

Some prominent technicians are taking care of different crafts of the movie. Mukesh Gnanesh and Anith are the lensman, while the in form sensational composer Bheems Cecireleo provides the music. Kotagiri Venkateswara Rao is the editor of the movie, while Avinash Kolla are the art directors. Stun Shiva, Vijay, Venkat, and Real Satish oversee the action part of the movie.

Kajol, Prabhudeva to unite after 27 years for Telugu director Charan Tej

Acclaimed Telugu filmmaker Charan Tej Uppalapati is widely celebrated for his exceptional cinematic vision. Now, all set to make his long-anticipated directorial debut in Hindi, Charan Tej Uppalapati is busy working on a high-budget action thriller. The star-studded spectacle features industry stalwarts such as Kajol, Prabhudeva, Naseeruddin Shah, Sanyuktha Menon, Jishu Sen Gupta, and Aditya Seal among its esteemed cast.

Marking the much-awaited reunion of Kajol and Prabhudeva after 27 years, the first schedule of the mass entertainer has been completed, and the makers are gearing up to release the film's teaser soon.

An ambitious venture, the action thriller has top-tier technicians on board, including GK Vishnu as the Director of Photography, Music Director Harshavardhan Rameshwar, and editor Navin Nooli. The screenplay is penned by Niranjan Iyengar and Jessica Khurana. Production designer Saahi Suresh will craft the visual aesthetics.

While further details of the project are awaited, the combination of a stellar cast and a top-notch technical crew makes this action spectacle one of the most anticipated upcoming releases.



SURIYA TO BANKROLL KARTHI'S FILM

Tamil film industry's celebrated siblings, Suriya and Karthi, have long harboured a desire to collaborate on a project. However, despite their aspirations, such an endeavor failed to materialise. In a recent development, Suriya has taken a significant step towards fulfilling this dream by announcing his production venture, featuring his brother Karthi in the lead role.

The much-anticipated project has been confirmed, with a sneak peek set to be unveiled soon. Notably, the acclaimed director of *96*, Prem Kumar, has been roped in to helm the film, adding to the excitement surrounding the announcement. Karthi, along with Arvind Swamy, will headline the cast, promising a captivating cinematic experience.

This collaboration marks a significant milestone as it's the first time Karthi will be working under the production banner of Suriya's 2D Entertainment, co-produced by Suriya and Jyotika.

While Suriya is currently occupied with his ongoing commitments, including *Kanguva*, which is set for release soon, and an upcoming project under the direction of Sudha Kongara, Karthi is busy shooting for *Vaa Vaathiyaare*, scheduled for release this year. Additionally, he is gearing up to commence filming for *Khaidi 2*, helmed by Lokesh Kanagaraj, in the near future.

As anticipation builds around this sibling collaboration, fans eagerly await further updates on the project and look forward to witnessing the dynamic duo's combined talents unfold on the silver screen.



Harish Shankar lauds Yevam teaser

The teaser of the *Yevam* opens with a captivating voiceover narrating a traditional Indian folktale, setting the stage for a story that explores the battle between good and evil. We see glimpses of Vasishtha Simha, the antagonist, harbouring a dark desire for Chandini Chowdary, the protagonist, who embodies strength as a police officer. The parallels drawn between Vasishtha and the mythological Indra, known for his lustful pursuits, further hint at the film's exploration of societal norms and the objectification of women.

Adding fuel to the excitement, renowned director Harish Shankar, who launched the teaser and even participated in the muhurtham shot, showered the project with praise. He commended the director's

unique vision, the high production quality, and the teaser's ability to hook viewers. This endorsement from a prominent filmmaker has only heightened anticipation for the film. Director Prakash Dantuluri's unconventional approach to promotion shines through. Each character poster released so far comes with a distinct tagline, offering a glimpse into their personalities. This strategy effectively builds intrigue and piques audience interest.

Yevam promises to be more than just a thrilling ride. The press release hints that the film will challenge societal norms and celebrate the strength of women. This focus on female empowerment adds another layer of depth and significance to the project. Produced by Navadeep and Pavan Goparaju, *Yevam* boasts a talented crew, including music composers Keertana Sesh and Neelesh Mandalapu. With a captivating teaser setting the stage, the film promises to be a cinematic milestone.



Sharwanand's Manamey releasing on June 7

Accomplished hero Sharwanand is all set to provide wholesome entertainment with his landmark 35th movie *Manamey*. Helmed by talented director Sriram Aditya and produced luxuriously by TG Vishwa Prasad under the banner of People Media Factory, the movie joins the summer race. To end the dry summer season, *Manamey* is coming on June 7, as officially announced by the makers.

Summer is one of the biggest seasons for films. However, this year, Tollywood did not witness the outing of even a decent number of releases. Audiences are waiting keenly for an out-and-out entertainer. Their wait ends in another couple of weeks with *Manamey* gracing the cinemas on June 7. The release date poster presents Sharwanand in a slick and sophisticated avatar in the suit with a laptop bag in his hand. He looks extremely joyful here with a charismatic smile on his face.

Each and every promotional material created hype for the movie. As the release date is not far off, they will up the game in promotions in the coming days. As shown in the teaser, Sharwanand,

and Krithi Shetty will be seen in contrasting roles in the movie where the kid Vikram Aditya will be seen in a crucial role.

This new-age entertainer has Sriram Aditya mark adequate entertainment which was observed in the teaser.

Vishnu Sharma and Gnana Shekar VS are the cinematographers, while Hesham Abdul Wahab scored the music.

Vivek Kuchibhotla is the co-producer, while Krithi Prasad and Phani Varma are the executive producers. Popular technician Pravin Pudi is the editor and Jonny Shaik is the art director. The dialogues for the movie are provided by Arjun Carthyk, Tagore, and Venky.



SPEED 220 RELEASING ON JUNE 7

The film *Speed 220* is ready to hit the screens worldwide on June 7. Produced by Vijayalakshmi Productions, this youthful romantic entertainer, directed by Harsha Bezawada, features Hemant and Ganesh as the lead actors, with Sneha Gupta and Jahnavi Sharma playing the

female leads. Currently, the post-production work and censor formalities are being completed, and the film unit is committed to releasing it on June 7, on a global scale.

Promotional materials, including videos and posters, are intriguing audiences. The first single from the film has already been released, featuring a special song by singer Geetha Madhuri, choreographed by Sneha Gupta. It has garnered significant attention on social media platforms. Another song, titled *Emotional Melody*, composed by Shekar Mopuri with lyrics by Suresh Gangu, was also released, receiving praise for its emotional depth. Both songs are gaining traction on YouTube.

The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) has already reviewed *Speed 220*, indicating positive feedback and raising expectations for a remarkable

cinematic experience. The filmmakers are confident that the movie will create a sensation among all sections of the audience. With grand promotions and high expectations, the movie is set to connect with the youth audience. The title *Speed 220* itself promises an exciting narrative, and audiences are eagerly awaiting its release on June 7th to discover the storyline along with its captivating songs.



PRERNA ARORA TO JOIN HANDS WITH OSCAR-WINNING COMPOSER KEERAVANI FOR HERO HEROINE

Producer Prerna Arora, who has backed substantial films such as *Padman*, *Rustom*, *Toilet: Ek Prem Katha*, and *Pari*, is speculated to be joining forces with *Baahubali* and *RRR* fame music director and composer MM Keeravani for her upcoming film *Hero Heroine*, a Suresh Krissna directorial. Arora, along with the Oscar-winning composer, are expected to bring together romantic commercial tracks to enhance the emotional narrative and add depth to the plot. This upcoming film boasts a starry ensemble cast including Divyah Khosla, Paresh Rawal, Tusshar Kapoor, Soni Razdan, and Suchitra Krishnamoorthi among others.

For *Hero Heroine*, an industry insider revealed that Prerna Arora and MM Keeravani are keen to incorporate romantic commercial numbers that will enhance the storytelling and emotional depth of the film. These songs will play a pivotal role in connecting the audience with the characters and their relationships, adding layers of depth and nuance to the narrative. The film's first schedule is slated to hit the floors in June in Hyderabad, and promises to tell a tale of love, music and also bring back the brilliance of Indian cinema. The makers are yet to reveal the titular 'Hero' of the film. If sources close to the production are to be believed, this announcement will happen just before the shoot begins!



Rythu teaser introduces Tirupati character from Kanyakumari

Kanyakumari is a movie starring Geet Saini and Sricharan Rachakonda. Damodara is producing this film under the banner of Radical Pictures. This movie, which is being made as a village backdrop entertainer, is getting ready for a grand theatrical release after completing all the preparations. Today, the teaser for *Rythu* was released, introducing the character of Tirupati from the movie *Kanyakumari*.

The *Rythu* teaser portrays a five-acre farmer, Tirupati, from Pentapadu in the Srikakulam district. Tirupati, who has studied up to the seventh standard, is engaged in agriculture. This career becomes an obstacle to his marriage. Wherever he goes to seek a match, he is told that their daughters will only marry a working man.

Tirupati is looked down upon as a farmer. He challenges those who belittle him by saying that he will marry a well-educated girl. The movie will reveal whether this young farmer can meet this challenge. The funny and interesting teaser of *Rythu* is impressive.