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Entire country has faith in PM Modi's guarantee: **Adityanath** 5

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'The title *Bharathanatyam* will bring some newness to the **WHOLE STORY'** P12



QUOTE OF THE DAY the pioneer

All BRS leaders except K. Chandrasekhar Rao's family are ready to join the Congress. The BRS will not get deposits in Nalgonda and the Congress will win 14 LS seats in TG. KCR's daughter MLC Kavitha is involved in the Delhi liquor scam, some others in the sheep scam, ORR scam and now the phone tapping scam. BRS leaders are afraid of who will get caught next in the phone-tapping case



- Uttam Kumar Reddy, Minister TG

P4

DON'T MISS...

Cong to release 1st list of 5 LS, 114 ...

The Congress Central Election Committee (CEC) has given the green light to five Lok Sabha and 114 Assembly Constituency candidates for the upcoming general elections in Andhra Pradesh. The AICC is set to release the first list of candidates today, as confirmed by party sources. charge, the CEC meeting convened at the AICC office in New Delhi on Monday. Notable attendees included former president Sonia Gandhi, APCC President YS Sharmila Reddy, AP Affairs In charge Manickram Tagore, Congress Working ...

-PAGE: 3

Low-fat vegan diet lower risk ...

A low-fat vegan diet rich in fruits, vegetables, grains and beans can help reduce insulin needs in people affected by Type 1 diabetes, a new research has found. It also found that changes in body weight, brought about by the plant-based diet, helped lower participants' resistance to insulin by improving sensitivity. Glycemic control, or glucose levels in the blood serum, was also observed to get better. The improvements were, in turn, found to correspond to lowering the risk of heart disease in ...

-PAGE: 5

'Hiring in healthtech sector ...

Even as the healthtech sector in the country has been facing an investment downturn, hiring in the segment is expected to grow by 15-20 per cent, a report said on Monday. The healthtech sector is bound to grow rapidly due to the socio-economic changes in India and the competitive advantages we offer for the world in patient care as well as in manufacturing and research and development (R&D), and there has been an upswing in hiring in the recent times on a consistent basis, CIEL HR CEO Aditya Narayan ...

-PAGE: 8

Dhoni will bat higher only...

Calls for Mahendra Singh Dhoni batting higher up the order have grown after his whirlwind effort against Delhi Capitals but Michael Clarke feels the former Chennai Super Kings captain will continue to bat at no.8 and will only promote himself if the game "is on the line".Dhoni's unbeaten 37 off 16 balls at number eight did not prove to be enough but his loyal fans believe the outcome would have been different had he batted higher up the order. Clarke, who like Dhoni is a World Cup-winning captain...

-SPORTS

Delhi CM Kejriwal sent to Tihar Jail

Remanded in judicial custody till April 15



- Combative AAP says he will remain CM
- Wife Sunita poised for 'significant role'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was sent to Tihar Jail on Monday after being remanded in judicial custody till April 15 in connection with an excise policy-linked money laundering case, even as the Aam Aadmi Party dug in its heels asserting that he will remain the CM no matter how long he is kept in prison.

Kejriwal is the fourth top AAP leader to be lodged in the Tihar Jail after his former deputy Manish Sisodia, ex-health minister Satyendar Jain and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh.

2

ED acting as 'persecuting agency'

BRS MLC Kavitha's lawyer tells court



The counsel for BRS leader K Kavitha, arrested in connection with the excise policy 'scam', on Monday told a court here that Enforcement Directorate was acting as a "persecuting agency" and the probe against his client was "totally motivated".The arguments were made before Special Judge Kaveri Baweja by senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, who argued for Kavitha's bail. "ED is not acting as a prosecuting agency but as a persecuting agency... There is no fairness or impartiality. The probe is totally motivated. They say either we will arrest you or if I don't arrest you, I will play the game of cat and mouse," he said.

Continued on Page 2

Pensions from tomorrow

Revised guidelines to be issued over disbursal of pensions

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Chief Secretary Dr KS Jawahar Reddy stated that revised guidelines would be immediately issued regarding the distribution of various pensions across the State. On Monday, he held a video conference with the District Collectors from the State Secretariat on the distribution of pensions, precautionary measures for heatwaves, drinking water, employment guarantee works, and the electricity supply situation.

Speaking about the distribution of pensions in the state, CS Jawahar Reddy clarified to the collectors that starting from April 3, village and ward secretariats would issue revised guidelines on Monday night regarding the distribution of pensions through other employees. Opinions were gathered from various district collectors and state-level officials on how to distribute pensions. The CS made it clear to the collectors that revised guidelines would be issued immediately on the distribution of pensions. Jawahar Reddy instructed the officials of disaster management and the district collectors to take appropriate measures to create awareness among the public about the precautionary measures to be taken in the wake of increasing heatwaves.

Continued on Page 2



Chief Secretary KS Jawahar Reddy said that opinions were gathered from various district collectors and state-level officials on how to distribute pensions.

YSRCP deliberately withholding pensions

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Amid the halt in the distribution of social security pensions on April 1, Chandrababu Naidu, leader of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), pointed fingers at Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, accusing him of orchestrating a scheme to obstruct the delivery of old-age pensions to deserving citizens at their residences.



Naidu claimed, "In 15 days, CM Jagan has purportedly diverted Rs 13,000 crore, depleting the state treasury. Despite the feasibility of distributing pensions statewide in a single day through village secretariat employees, CM Jagan purportedly neglected this opportunity and instead shifted blame onto the TDP."

Asserting that the TDP never issued any directive, whether to the Election Commission or elsewhere, to hinder the use of volunteers for pension distribution, Naidu instructed party members to visit every household, enlightening residents about the alleged schemes of the YSRCP in obstructing pension distribution and presenting them with factual information.

2

Naidu shamelessly targeted poor pensioners: Perni



VIJAYAWADA: In a scathing attack, former minister Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani) has accused opposition leader N Chandrababu Naidu of being adept at manipulating words and infamous for his 'Use and Throw' policy. Nani alleged that Naidu, solely driven by political motives, has shamelessly targeted impoverished pensioners. He questions the origins of the complaints against volunteers to the EC, asserting that it was TDP sympathisers who lodged them to sideline volunteers. Chandrababu' Naidu's desperate bid to regain power sees him resorting to manipulation, utilising figures like Purandeswari and Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar, disregarding their true intentions, according to Nani. He reminds the public of Nimmagadda's controversial tenure as Election Commissioner and emphasised Chandrababu's exploitative view of the poor as mere vote banks.

Continued on Page 2

Notification for APSET 2024 released

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Andhra Pradesh State Eligibility Test (APSET) 2024 notification was released by the convening body, headed by Chairman Prof. AUVC PVG D Prasad Reddy, on Monday. This notification outlines the eligibility exam for admission to postgraduate (PG) programmes in universities and affiliated colleges across Andhra Pradesh.

The application window for APSET 2024 is now open. Interested candidates can submit their applications online through the official APSET website starting on Monday.

2

Key TDP, JSP leaders join YSRCP during '*Memantha Siddham*'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan embarked on the fifth day of the highly successful 'Memantha Siddham Yatra', marking a major milestone as senior TDP figures including V Hanok, former MPP from Lepakshi village in Hindupur Constituency, Chandra Dandu, and State Vice President Ansar Ahmed officially joined the ranks of the YSR Congress Party at Sanjeevapuram. Minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy also attended.

Key leaders from both the TDP and Jana Sena parties embraced the YSR Congress Party in the presence of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. Among those making the transition were Venugopal, a notable former TDP figure from the Puttaparthi constituency, Tirupathendra, a leader from Jana Sena, K Peddanna, and Venkataswamy, representing the TDP from Puttaparthi mandal. Their induction ceremony took place at the Sanjeevapuram stop, with CM YS Jagan personally welcoming them into the fold.





Venugopal's resignation from the DSP position came as a consequence of his anticipation of a TDP ticket for the Puttaparthi constituency.

2

SC raises concern over delay in CBI probe into Jagan case

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Apex Court on Monday raised concerns over the delay in the investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation into the alleged quid pro quo cases filed against YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) president and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

A bench comprising Justice Sanjeev Khanna and Justice Dipankar Dutta directed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to submit an affidavit within four weeks explaining the reasons for the delay.

The court emphasised the need for a speedy investigation into the matter and has instructed that the investigation be completed as early as possible. It issued the directive stating the importance of expediting the investigation process. Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, representing the CBI, informed the court that discharge petitions contributed to the investigation delays.



2

Pawan complains of attacks by hired mobs

PNS ■ PITHAPURAM

Jana Sena chief K Pawan Kalyan has made a startling claim, alleging that orchestrated attacks by hired mobs armed with sharp-edged blades are being carried out. He cautioned JSP leaders and cadres to remain vigilant.

Speaking to party members and leaders on Monday, Kalyan expressed his desire to engage with the people of the Pithapuram constituency but cited security concerns hindering his outreach.

"Hired mobs are infiltrating crowds and launching attacks on us with sharp-edged blades. We must exercise extreme caution against these hired assailants," Kalyan emphasized to his audience.

This isn't the first time Kalyan has raised such concerns, having previously alleged the infiltration of disruptive elements during his public gatherings.

> Hired mobs are infiltrating crowds and launching attacks on us with sharp-edged blades. We must exercise extreme caution against these hired assailants

In a separate address to his supporters, Kalyan pledged accessibility to the constituents of Pithapuram once elected to the Assembly.

"I have invoked the divine for victory in the elections, and Pithapuram has welcomed me. If the blessings of the goddess are upon me, I will reside in a village within the constituency. I am committed to addressing the grievances of all and working towards their resolution. The holistic progress of the constituency is my responsibility," asserted the JSP chief.

2

Setback to TDP as Mandali joins Jana Sena

Likely to get ticket for Avanigadda Assembly seat



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in the combined Krishna district faces a significant setback as a result of adjustments in Assembly constituencies with the Jana Sena Party (JSP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). In a surprising turn of events, former deputy speaker Mandali Buddha Prasad, a strong candidate, resigned from the TDP on Monday.

Buddha Prasad formally joined the JSP, the primary ally of the TDP, in the presence of JSP Chief Pawan Kalyan at Pithapuram in the Kakinada district. Although not officially announced, it's expected that he will contest from the Avanigadda constituency as a JSP candidate. Before this move, a considerable number of Buddha Prasad's followers and TDP supporters also resigned from the party in protest against the allocation of the segment to the JSP.

2



Spl General Observer of AP arrives

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Chief Electoral Officer Mukesh Kumar Meena and Collector S Dilli Rao welcomed Special General Observer Ram Mohan Mishra at Novotel hotel in the city on Monday late evening.

In the wake of the general elections, retired IAS of 1987 batch, officer Ram Mohan Mishra has recently been appointed by the Election Commission of India (ECI) as the Special General Observer for Andhra Pradesh. Special General Observer Ram Mohan Mishra, who reached Vijayawada city from Delhi, was welcomed by CEO Mukesh Kumar Meena, District Election Officer, Collector Dilli Rao and Joint Collector P Sampath Kumar.

Extreme heat to scorch India during poll period

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is set to experience extreme heat during the April to June period, with the central and the western peninsular parts expected to face the worst impact, the IMD said on Monday as the country prepares for the seven-phase general elections starting April 19.

Addressing a press conference, Union Minister for Earth Sciences Kiren Rijiju said India is anticipated to experience extreme weather conditions in the upcoming two-and-a-half months and this coincides with the general elections in which around a billion people are expected to exercise their franchise.

"It is going to be very challenging for all of us. Since we are the most populous country in the world and face extreme weather conditions, it makes it absolutely necessary for India to prepare in advance," he said.



> *"It is going to be very challenging for all of us. Since we are the most populous country in the world and face extreme weather conditions, it makes it absolutely necessary for India to prepare in advance, " he said.*

India Meteorological Department (IMD) Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said the anticipated increase in outdoor activities during the 2024 general elections could heighten public vulnerability to heat waves.

With greater exposure, there's an elevated risk of heatwave-related health issues among the electorate and election staff, he said.

The IMD chief said above-normal maximum temperatures are likely over most parts of the country during the April-June period, with a high probability over central and western peninsular India.

Normal to below-normal maximum temperatures are likely over some parts of the western Himalayan region, northeastern states and north Odisha, he said.

Above-normal heatwave days are likely over most parts in the plains during April-June. Ten to 20 days of heat wave are expected in different parts of the country against a normal of four to eight days, he added.

Mohapatra said Gujarat, central Maharashtra, north Karnataka, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, north Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh are likely to experience the worst impact of heat waves.

Though El Nino conditions -- the periodic warming of waters in the central Pacific Ocean -- are weakening, these will continue during April and May, according to the IMD chief.

"It is in agreement with the forecast of above-normal maximum temperatures and heatwave conditions in India," he added.



Electioneering intensifies amid debate on alliances, allegiances

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



In the political drama of Andhra Pradesh, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, N Chandrababu Naidu, and Pawan Kalyan play a major role. But there's also talk about how the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is affecting things.

People are curious about Jagan Mohan Reddy's relationship with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Some worry that they might be teaming up for their benefit, especially when it comes to winning seats in elections. This idea has everyone guessing what might happen next.

Now, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Jana Sena have joined a bigger group called the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). This adds more confusion to the mix. People are trying to figure out why they made this move and what it means for the future.

Jagan's party, the Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP), is also under the spotlight. People are watching closely to see how their strategies will play out in the long run.

The BJP's role in Andhra Pradesh is getting a lot of attention too. People are looking at how Jagan and his party are working with them, especially during legal battles. It's all part of a bigger picture where local and national politics are tangled up together.

Chandrababu Naidu's actions are also raising eyebrows. Some think he's trying to cosy up to Modi for his own reasons. This has sparked debates and criticism, making the political scene even more intense.

Comments from MP Raghuramakrishna Raju, claiming there's a shady business between Jagan and BJP leaders, are adding to the drama. Everyone's trying to figure out what this means for the next elections.

In Andhra Pradesh, things are always changing. People are teaming up and breaking apart, testing loyalties, and pointing fingers. Every move and every word is being analyzed because the state's future hangs in the balance, influenced by the BJP and the power struggles happening within its borders.

TDP-JSP-BJP alliance has no concern for North Andhra: Botsa

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a scathing criticism of the TDP-JSP-BJP alliance, Education Minister Bots Satyanarayana has accused the coalition of neglecting the interests of North Andhra and jeopardizing essential services for its people.

Speaking at a press conference in the city, the Minister highlighted several grievances against the alliance, ranging from candidate selection to disrupting pension distribution and hindering educational exams.

Minister Satyanarayana asserted that the alliance's choice of a candidate for a key constituency in North Andhra demonstrated a lack of regard for the region's aspirations. He emphasised that while the Constitution permits anyone to contest from any constituency, the selection should ideally prioritise individuals with a history of championing regional causes or possessing significant leadership credentials.



Speaking at a press conference in the city, the Minister highlighted several grievances against the alliance, ranging from candidate selection to disrupting pension distribution and hindering educational exams.

The Minister condemned the alliance for fielding what he described as a "lobbyist," accusing them of disrespecting the self-respect of North Andhra's people.

Furthermore, Minister Satyanarayana criticised the alliance's actions regarding pension distribution, stating that their complaints had obstructed the process of disbursing pensions through volunteers. This disruption, he claimed, has now made it impossible for the government to transfer pensions via Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) due to the requirement of bank account numbers. The minister lamented the impact on elderly citizens who depend on pensions for their livelihoods.

In addition to pension issues, Minister Satyanarayana accused the alliance of attempting to impede the District Selection Committee (DSC) exams, sparking widespread dissent among the region's youth. He condemned these actions, emphasizing the importance of educational opportunities for the younger generation.

Highlighting the alliance's perceived contradictions, Minister Satyanarayana pointed out the irony of the TDP and JSP's alliance with the BJP after previously criticizing the YSRCP for purportedly aligning with the same party. He called on the alliance to revoke its decision to privatize the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant before commencing its election campaign in the region. Minister Satyanarayana warned that the people of North Andhra would not hesitate to voice their discontent at the ballot box, indicating that the alliance's actions could have electoral repercussions in the upcoming elections.

PK's curtailed visit raises concerns over poll strategy

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM



In a move aimed at bolstering support for his party, Jana Sena's leader Pawan Kalyan embarked on a highly anticipated four-day tour of the Pithapuram constituency. However, concerns over his health forced an abrupt truncation of the visit, leaving many questioning the impact on his electoral plans. Despite the shortened duration, Kalyan strategically focused on local issues, sidestepping broader state politics during his brief stint in Pithapuram. Promising developmental initiatives and emphasizing his dedication to the constituency's welfare, he sought to garner favor among residents.

Attributing much of his electoral prospects to Pithapuram TDP in-charge SVSN Varma, Kalyan stressed the necessity of a unified alliance for success. Yet, uncertainties linger regarding the cohesion within the alliance, casting shadows over his electoral strategy. A pivotal aspect of Kalyan's visit was his proposal to transform Pithapuram into a 'Temple Circuit City,' securing a significant Rs. 100 crore allocation from the Center for various development projects.

In-house survey reveals YSRCP likely to win 130 Assembly seats

SNCN ACHARYULU
■ HYDERABAD

The YSR Congress was very happy over the results of in-house survey on the coming Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections. According to top sources, the in- house survey revealed that the YSR Congress is going to win 130 plus seats in the forthcoming Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections. The survey also revealed that the YSR Congress is going to secure more than 50% vote share.

The voting percentage to YSR Congress increased by 5.5 % after the announcement of candidates compared to before announcing the candidates. The SC, ST, Muslim minorities, women and downtrodden sections are totally supporting the YSR Congress. Kamma and Brahmin castes are against the YSR Congress. The YSR Congress feels that the Brahmin votes will be polled to the BJP or the Congress and not to the TDP.

The Kamma voters are reducing gradually compare to past. Due to various reasons the Kamma people are going to the USA and other countries. The survey revealed that before Jana Sena alliance with the TDP, the YSR Congress has the support of 20% from the Kapu community. After Jana Sena and TDP alliance, the support from Kapu community to YSR Congress has increased to more than 50%.

In the previous Assembly elections, the YSR Congress won 151 seats out of total 175 seats. This time the YSR Congress may not reach that figure in the coming Assembly elections. The chances for YSR Congress are increasing day-by-day. In the present situation, the YSR Congress is going to win 130 seats as per the latest survey conducted by the party. The BJP has no chances of winning a single Assembly seat. The TDP, Jana Sena and others may win below 40 seats only as per the latest survey.

Pawan complains ...

Continued from page 1

Kalyan also vowed to acknowledge and prioritize the contributions of those who diligently work for the alliance's success, expressing hope for the emergence of new-generation leaders in politics. Confident in the alliance's electoral prospects, Kalyan urged all to rally behind its candidates.

Moreover, many activists from various parties, alongside notable individuals including doctors, MPTCs, lawyers, and sarpanches, joined JSP in a ceremony presided over by Pawan Kalyan on Monday. Kalyan welcomed them into the fold by draping party scarves around their necks.

SC raises ...

Continued from page 1

The bench expressed that the trial should not be postponed for political considerations. Justice Sanjeev Khanna emphasized that the investigation should not be hindered by the influence of political leaders, including the Chief Minister.

The Supreme Court clarified that it will address matters related to the cancellation of bail and transfer petitions from Telangana to another State as part of the ongoing investigation and adjourned the next hearing to a week after August 5.

Key TDP, JSP...

Continued from page 1

However, his hopes were dashed when the promised ticket failed to materialize.

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy made a notable arrival at Bathalapalli town around 11:20 am, where he was met with eager anticipation from locals lining the streets.

Engaging with the residents for approximately 40 minutes, CM Jagan continued his journey, attracting sizable crowds between Ambapuram and Ramapuram who gathered to greet him.

Notification for...

Continued from page 1

The application deadline for submissions without a late fee is May 4.

Applicants from diverse backgrounds are subject to varying application fees: Rs 850 for OC candidates, Rs 750 for BC candidates, and Rs 650 for SC, ST, and Divyang students. Those who fail to meet the initial deadline still have the opportunity to apply, albeit with a late fee. Applications will be considered from May 5 to May 15 with a late fee of Rs 500. From May 16 to May 25, applications will be accepted with a late fee of Rs 1,000.

Setback to TDP as Mandali ...

Continued from page 1

Having been elected as an MLA from the Avanigadda constituency twice representing the Congress and once from the TDP, Buddha Prasad's family has a longstanding association with the Congress. His father, Mandali Venkata Krishna Rao, was also a minister who won from the same constituency. Buddha Prasad's loyalty to the Congress was evident in his consistent electoral success from Avanigadda.

However, following the State bifurcation, Buddha Prasad shifted allegiance to the TDP under the leadership of former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu.

Politics heats up in Amadalavalasa as Tammineni, Kuna locked in keen fight

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

Politics in Srikakulam's Amadalavala constituency has taken an intriguing turn as the upcoming elections approach. With a mix of seasoned contenders and independent hopefuls, the electoral landscape is buzzing with anticipation. At the core of the political saga lies a compelling rivalry between relatives, underscoring the familial dynamics permeating this electoral battleground. Against this backdrop, an independent candidate has seized the opportunity to challenge the status quo, injecting further complexity into the race. With several other independents also throwing their hats into the ring, voters are presented with a diverse array of options.

Tammineni Sitaram, representing the YSR Congress Party, brings a wealth of electoral experience to the table, having contested the Assembly elections an impressive ten times. His main contender, Kuna Ravikumar, enjoys the support of a coalition comprising the TDP, Janasena, and BJP parties, posing a formidable challenge to Sitaram's dominance. Both Sitaram and Ravikumar are leaving no stone unturned in their campaign endeavours, crisscrossing the constituency and engaging voters with their respective agendas. Additionally, Suvwari Gandhi, a former YSRCP member who resigned amidst internal party turmoil, has entered the fray as an independent candidate, further intensifying the competition.

The stakes are undeniably high as each candidate strives to secure the support of the electorate. Sitaram emphasizes the developmental achievements of the YSRCP government during its tenure, urging voters to rally behind the party once more. Conversely, Ravikumar advocates for change, pledging a new era of governance under the leadership of Chandrababu Naidu.

Naidu shamelessly targeted ...

Continued from page 1

Nani criticised Chandrababu's 14-year tenure as CM, accusing him of neglecting the impoverished while harbouring ambitions to reclaim power through any means necessary. Nani suggests that Chandrababu's fear of volunteers indicates his reliance on them to maintain public support. He highlights Chandrababu's failed attempts to curb volunteer efforts and distribute pensions, asserting that halting pension distributions is an impractical endeavour. Nani questions Chandrababu Naidu's sudden interest in doorstep pension distribution, implying opportunism rather than genuine concern for beneficiaries.

Recalling Chandrababu's history of contradictory alliances, Nani highlighted the leader's flip-flopping between criticising PM Modi and forming alliances with him. He also references Chandrababu's strained relationships with prominent figures like Jr NTR, Harikrishna Daggupati Venkateswara Rao, and Rammurthy Naidu, suggesting that Pawan Kalyan will soon experience similar disillusionment. Nani points out Pawan's inconsistency, citing his promise to build a house in Pithapuram while seeking medical treatment in Hyderabad for a common cold. In a final jab, Nani questions the sincerity of Pawan's commitment to his party's values by asking how many Jana Sena flag bearers were given tickets by him, contrasting it with the numerous TDP leaders granted tickets by Jana Sena in 21 contested seats.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:	Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Ashtami:	Apr 01 09:10 PM to Apr 02 08:09 PM
Navami:	Apr 02 08:09 PM to Apr 03 06:29 PM
Nakshatram:	
Purva Ashadha:	Apr 01 11:12 PM to Apr 02 10:48 PM
Uttara Ashadha:	Apr 02 10:48 PM to Apr 03 09:47 PM
Rahukalam:	3:22 PM to 4:54 PM
Yamagandam:	9:16 AM to 10:48 AM
Varjyam:	06:28 AM to 08:00 AM
Gulika:	12:19 PM to 1:51 PM
Amritakalam:	06:05 PM to 07:40 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	11:55 AM to 12:44 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Sunny
Temp: 40°c
Humidity: 51%
Sunrise: 6:01 AM
Sunset: 6:21 PM

Updated: April 1, 2024 5:00 PM

Delhi CM Kejriwal sent to ...

Continued from page 1

On Monday, AAP sources indicated that Kejriwal's wife Sunita, who virtually made her political debut at the INDIA bloc's "Loktantra Bachao" rally at the Ramlila ground a day earlier, is likely to assume a "significant role" in the party in the coming days.

Arvind Kejriwal was brought to Tihar at 4 pm and lodged in Jail Number 2, a prison official said, adding that he will be kept under watch for 24 hours.

"His medical examination was conducted. His sugar level was a bit low, but medicines were given to him as per our jail doctors' advice," said the official. While Sisodia and Sanjay Singh, arrested in the same case, are lodged in Jail Number 1 and 5 respectively, BRS leader K Kavitha is in Jail Number 6. Jain, who is facing a different money laundering case, is in Jail Number 7.

While sending the chief minister to judicial custody earlier in the day, a city court noted the Enforcement Directorate's contention that his release could hamper the investigation in the case. The chief minister was produced in the court of Special Judge Kaveri Baweja after his Enforcement Directorate custody came to an end.

"Since the investigation of the case is stated to be pending qua role of the arrestee, for unearthing the further proceeds of crime and identifying the other person who may be involved or connected, the accused is remanded to judicial custody till April 15," the judge said.

Pensions from ...

Continued from page 1

In particular, he emphasized that employment guarantee work should be completed before 10:30 am, drinking water and adequate shade should be provided at places where labourers work, and medical kits should be made available.

The officials of the education department mentioned that proper precautions should be taken as schools are being held at one time. Principal Secretary Education Praveen Prakash responded to this and explained that the Commissioner of School Education has already issued a circular to hold classes from 7:40 am to 12:30 pm.

CS Jawahar Reddy told the collectors of the respective districts that water would be released from the Prakasam barrage to Eluru, Bandaru, and Raivas canals on April 4 and through the Nagarjuna Sagar right main canal on April 8 to fill freshwater ponds given the summer. The CS directed the collectors to ensure that the water released for filling the drinking water ponds is not diverted to aqua farming and to ensure that the tail-end area receives water properly.

State Water Resources, Panchayat Raj, and Rural Development Department Principal Secretary Shashi Bhushan Kumar said that the Collectors are taking steps to implement the summer contingency plan in 20 districts. He mentioned that water supply through tanks, hiring of bore wells, flushing, and deepening of bore wells will be undertaken especially in the drinking water scarce areas. He also mentioned that currently, 549 CPWS schemes in the state are functioning properly. He said that AP has stood at the second position in the country with a labour budget of 25.37 crore working days in 2024. He also stated that Andhra Pradesh is second in the country by providing 100 days of work to 6.49 lakh people and has set a record in the history of employment guarantee schemes.

SS Rawat, Special Chief Secretary Finance, Praveen Prakash, Principal Secretary Education, SERP CEO Muralidhar Reddy, Panchayat Raj Commissioner K Kanna Babu, Disaster Management Director R Kurmanad, RDBUS ENC Krishna Reddy, and other officials participated in this meeting.

YSRCP deliberately withholding ...

Continued from page 1

Naidu demanded that the State government disclose details of payments made to each beneficiary over the past 15 days and urged immediate action to ensure pensions are delivered promptly to every doorstep. Additionally, he called upon the Election Commission to intervene and direct district collectors, tahsildars, and other officials to expedite pension distribution efforts.

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Cong to release 1st list of 5 LS, 114 Assembly candidates today

Sharmila may take on her cousin Avinash in Kadapa LS segment

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Congress Central Election Committee (CEC) has given the green light to five Lok Sabha and 114 Assembly Constituency candidates for the upcoming general elections in Andhra Pradesh. The AICC is set to release the first list of candidates today, as confirmed by party sources.

Chaired by party president Mallikharjuna Kharge, the CEC meeting convened at the AICC office in New Delhi on Monday. Notable attendees included former president Sonia Gandhi, APCC President YS Sharmila Reddy, AP Affairs In charge Manickram Tagore, Congress Working Committee (CWC) members Dr N Raghuveera Reddy, Gidugu Rudra Raju, and other senior leaders. The meeting finalized names for five MP candidates, including APCC Chief YS Sharmila Reddy.

Sources within the Congress party revealed that APCC president YS Sharmila Reddy is slated to contest the Kadapa Lok Sabha segment. Meanwhile, YS Avinash Reddy, the sitting MP and her brother are expected to contest as the YSRCP candidate. Additionally, the CEC confirmed nine more MP candidates for the forthcoming elections in the state.



AICC Chief Mallikharjuna Kharge, senior leader Sonia Gandhi, AP affairs in charge Manickam Tagore, APCC Chief Sharmila Reddy, leaders Raghuveera Reddy and others attended the Congress Party Central Election Committee (CEC) meeting held at the AICC office in New Delhi on Monday.

Among the finalised names are CWC member and former APCC chief, Giduru Rudra Raju for the Rajamahendravaram Lok Sabha segment, former central minister JD Seelam for Bapatla, Pallam Raju for Kakinada, Satya Reddy for Visakhapatnam, Vegi Venkatesh for Anakapalli, Lavanya for Eluru, Nazeer Ahmed for Rajampet, Chitti Babu for Chittoor, and Shahin for Hindupur.

However, former minister Dr N Raghuveera Reddy will not be contesting in this election but will actively campaign for the party's candidates across the State as directed by the AICC. While the Congress party state leadership has submitted a list of 114 names for the assembly constituencies, these names are yet to be confirmed.

Expectations are high for the release of the first list of candidates, including both MP and MLA segments, on April 2. The Communist Party of India (CPI), the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPM), and the Congress Party are partners in the INDIA Bloc in Andhra Pradesh. Following the finalization of seat-sharing, the remaining candidates' list will be confirmed, according to party sources. The left parties are advocating for four MP and 32 assembly segments in the state.

APCC president Sharmila Reddy, following the conclusion of the meeting, announced that the Congress CEC had finalised five MP and 114 assembly constituencies. She further stated that the first list of candidates is expected to be released on Tuesday, with the remaining candidates' names to be confirmed shortly.



Officials briefed on postal ballot and home voting

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer Mukesh Kumar Meena briefed the responsibilities of the officials and the duties they have to perform as part of postal ballot and home voting to the election officials of all districts through a PowerPoint presentation from the state secretariat through video conference on Monday.

Various aspects of this PowerPoint presentation prepared by YSR District Election Officer V Vijaya Rama Raju are being discussed in the video conference.

About postal ballot and home voting, the programmes to be conducted in April and May according to the dates, providing postal ballot facilities to the employees performing election duties, police and other personnel, and setting up necessary facilitation centres etc., are explained.

Yarlagadda promises to bring IT companies to Gannavaram

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA


TDP Gannavaram candidate Yarlagadda Venkata Rao interacting with the party leaders at Bandarugudem of Bapulapadu mandal in the Krishna district on Monday.

In a move echoing the TDP's 'Super 6 Schemes', Yarlagadda Venkata Rao, candidate for the Gannavaram Assembly Constituency and former chairman of the Krishna District Cooperative Central Bank (KDCCB), made a significant announcement on Monday. He unveiled six assurances aimed at shaping the future of Gannavaram, presenting his Super 6 promises to the public and urging voters to entrust him with the responsibility of serving as their MLA.

Addressing local leaders during a visit to Bandarugudem of Bapulapadu Mandal in Krishna district, Yarlagadda Venkata Rao aligned his pledges with the party's agenda.

Among the Super 6 schemes, the development of the Brahmaiah Lingayya Tank into a reservoir takes precedence, with a commitment to resolving drinking and irrigation issues in the constituency. Additionally, he pledged to facilitate employment for 20,000 educated youths, and allocate house sites for 15,000 families, among other initiatives.

Highlighting the potential of the Mallavalli Industrial Estate, Yarlagadda Venkata Rao assured that under TDP leadership, the estate would host various industries, potentially generating employment opportunities for local youth.

Furthermore, he emphasised plans to attract Information Technology (IT) companies to the district and facilitate the establishment of multinational IT firms in Gannavaram. He lamented the stagnation in development during the YSRCP regime, contrasting it with the rapid progress witnessed under the TDP over the previous five years.

Yarlagadda Venkata Rao also outlined a scheme to enhance irrigation facilities for delta farmers by diverting water from the River Godavari into the Elur Canal via the Polavaram Right Main Canal at Bandarugudem. Despite an allocation of Rs.15.30 crore during the TDP government, the project remains unrealized, prompting his commitment to revive it for the benefit of farmers.

Drawing attention to the developmental strides made by KDCCB during his tenure as chairman, Yarlagadda Venkata Rao asserted that it achieved the top position nationally within a year. He pledged to replicate this success in Gannavaram, vowing to prioritize its development and elevate it to the forefront of the state.

Overall, Yarlagadda Venkata Rao's announcement underscores his commitment to dri-



POLLUTION IN PHARMA CITY

Tadi residents threaten boycott of elections

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Residents of Tadi village in Anakapalle district are poised to take a drastic stance ahead of the upcoming general elections, expressing their frustration over the prolonged ordeal of living amidst severe industrial pollution. Situated near the Jawaharlal Nehru Pharma City (JNPC), the village has long been grappling with the adverse effects of pollution, prompting villagers to contemplate a boycott of the electoral process as a means of protest.

A resolution to this effect was unanimously passed by a group of villagers, symbolizing their collective discontent with the authorities' apparent disregard for their plight. With over 1,300 eligible voters among its 2,600-strong population spread across 800 households, Tadi village stands as a stark testament to the human cost of industrial negligence.

Former sarpanch of Tadi village, Bondapalli Appa Rao, expressed profound disappointment, citing the negligence of elected representatives towards the community's longstanding plea for relocation. Rao highlighted the previous allocation of funds, noting that despite assurances and promises made in previous electoral cycles, including a pledge of 57 crore rupees by the TDP government prior to the 2019 general elections, little tangible progress has been made.

The situation escalated in April 2022 when Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy pledged 56 crore rupees for the relocation of Tadi village residents within a week or 10 days. However, such promises have yet to materialize into action, leaving villagers disillusioned and emboldened in their resolve to boycott the upcoming elections. Central to the controversy is the encroachment of industrial units into the green belt area earmarked for the safety and well-being of Tadi residents. Activist G Satyanarayana underscored the imminent danger posed by the encroachment of green belt areas, stressing the urgency for relocation to ensure the safety and well-being of Tadi villagers.

As the spectre of pollution continues to loom large over Tadi village, residents find themselves at a crossroads, torn between their civic duty and the imperative to demand justice for their community's well-being. With the fate of their village hanging in the balance, the boycott of the forthcoming elections serves as a poignant reminder of the pressing need for decisive action to address the environmental crisis plaguing Tadi and similar communities across the nation.

Jagan didn't fill a single teacher post in 5 years: TDP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, who had made a promise to the unemployed youth before coming to power that District Selection Committee (DSC) notification will be released every year to fill up vacant teacher posts, did not fill up even a single teacher post in these five years, senior TDP leader AS Rama Krishna said on Monday.

Rama Krishna told media persons that TDP has the history of filling up 1.7 lakh teacher posts through 12 DSC notifications when the party was in power and pointed out that CM Jagan, after coming to power, withdrew schemes like the Best Available Schools and Videsi Vidya. On top of it all, CM Jagan ordered for closure of 25,000 schools in the State through GO no 117 resulting in 50,000 teachers losing their jobs, the former MLC said.

"While the Chief Minister has no basic knowledge about the Right to Education Act, the Principal Secretary (Education), Praveen Prakash, turned into a high-profile assistant for CM Jagan," the TDP senior leader remarked.

"The people strongly believed CM Jagan when he had made promises like mega DSC every year, Nadu-Nedu, doing away with the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) and regularisation of the services of the part-time lecturers, but he did not fulfil even a single promise after he became the Chief Minister," Rama Krishna said, adding that Jagan has absolutely no intention to improve academic facilities. He even scrapped the Best Available Schools and Videsi Vidya schemes for the poor, besides replacing Dr BR Ambedkar's name with his name, he said.

City bags second place in property tax collection

Rs 124.35 cr netted during 2023-24 financial year

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a commendable achievement, the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) has secured the second position in property tax collection across the State, closely following the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation. The fiscal year 2023-24 witnessed the VMC's effective collection amounting to Rs 124.35 crore from a substantial pool of 2,15,446 assessors, marking a significant contribution to the city's revenue by the deadline of March 31.

Speaking at a press conference on Monday, Municipal Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar revealed that the VMC had successfully realised Rs124.35 crore out of the total demand of Rs.157.26 crore. Notably, the last day of the financial year saw an impressive surge in tax revenue, amounting to Rs 3.49 crore, demonstrating a robust commitment to fiscal responsibilities.



Expressing gratitude, Pundkar extended appreciation to the conscientious citizens who diligently fulfilled their tax obligations, emphasizing the pivotal role their contributions play in fueling the city's development initiatives. Additionally, he acknowledged the tireless efforts of Sachivalayam secretaries whose dedication significantly contributed to the successful tax collection drive.

The achievement underscores VMC's proactive approach towards financial management and sets a positive trajectory for future endeavours aimed at enhancing the city's infrastructure and services.

81.26 L person-days of work created in NTR district

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA


NTR District Collector Dr Dilli Rao and Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar attended the video conference organised by Chief Secretay Dr Jawahar Reddy on Monday.

NTR district, under the stewardship of Collector Dr S Dilil Rao, has made significant strides in supporting employment opportunities for its residents during the 2023-24 fiscal year. Dr Rao reported to Chief Secretary Dr KS Jawahar Reddy that the district had provided approximately 81.26 lakh person-days of employment through the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). Additionally, the district has disbursed wages totalling Rs. 223 crore to workers participating in the Upadhi scheme.

During a recent video conference led by Chief Secretary Dr KS Jawahar Reddy, Collector Dilli Rao emphasized the district's commitment to surpassing previous achievements. Despite setting a target of 80 lakh person-days for the 2023-24 fiscal year, the NTR district exceeded expectations by delivering 81.26 lakh person-days, achieving a remarkable 101.53% of the set target. Looking ahead to the 2024-25 financial year, the district aims to provide even more opportunities, with plans to offer 82 lakh person-days of employment. To achieve this ambitious goal, the administration intends to implement strategies such as providing 5 lakh person-days of work weekly, primarily focusing on initiatives like plantation drives and infrastructure development projects including road construction, drainage systems, and dredging works.

In light of the impending summer season, Collector Rao has directed officials to expedite Upadhi scheme activities, ensuring workers are engaged before 10 am to mitigate the effects of heat. Additionally, efforts are underway to facilitate access to drinking water for labourers, with the collaboration of Gram Panchayats in water supply initiatives. Collector Rao also detailed ongoing measures to alleviate water scarcity issues within the district.

The video conference also saw the participation of key stakeholders, including Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar, DWAMA Project Director J Sunith, DRDA PD K Srinivasa Rao, RWS SE D Venkata Ramana, and others.

In neighbouring Krishna district, Collector P Raja Babu reported commendable progress, with the district providing 76 lakh person-days of employment in the 2023-24 financial year, surpassing the targeted 73 lakh person-days. The district has disbursed wages totalling Rs. 191 crore to Upadhi scheme workers.

Collector Babu assured the Chief Secretary of proactive measures to address drinking water scarcity by releasing water from the Pulichintala Project.

Disburse pensions through alternative ways: APCC vice chief

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) vice-president Kolanukonda Sivaji has appealed to the government to take steps to disburse social security pensions through alternative ways.



Talking to the media here on Monday, he said that since the volunteers should not be used for the disbursement of pensions, the government should disburse through alternative ways. Kolanukonda Shivaji demanded the government to consider the option of disbursing pensions through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode. The pension money is essential to the pensioners to buy medicines and other essentials, he stated.

The APCC Vice-president warned of organising a dharna in front of the Chief Secretary's office, if the government failed to disburse pension by three days. He also slammed the government for using the volunteers as party activists. The YSRCP-led government had made the volunteer system as the YSRCP's affiliated organizations, he criticized.

"APCC President YS Sharmila has already spoken to Chief Secretary Jawahar Reddy over the phone on the disbursement of pensions," he recalled.

Kolanukonda Shivaji strongly objected to the government's campaign that the Opposition parties created hurdles for the disbursement of pensions. The Opposition parties, including the Congress, had never opposed the volunteer system but only objected to using them in political activities, he made it clear.

TDP's poll-time music album released

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



Atluri Narayana Rao, the Convener of NTR Shata Jayanthi Utsavalu, presented 'Kadalara Telugoda Kadalira', a music album, which was unveiled by TDP Politburo Members Varla Ramaiah, Nakka Anand Babu, and TD Janardhan at the Vivanta (Gateway) hotel in Vijayawada on Monday. This album release coincided with the celebration of the party's 42nd Foundation Day.

Addressing the gathering, Ramaiah, Anand Babu, and Janardhan commended Narayana Rao for his contribution to the album.

They noted that the songs vividly depicted the governance of the YSRCP in the state over the past five years, shedding light on the prevailing state of disorder. They emphasized that these songs would resonate with the common people, offering clarity on the prevailing political scenario.

Moreover, they expressed confidence that the album would serve as a source of inspiration for TDP leaders and cadres across the state, fostering their morale and determination.

GITAM Law School launches lecture series on criminal justice reforms

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM



GITAM School of Law, aiming to equip students with a comprehensive understanding of India's recently implemented criminal justice reforms, has inaugurated a lecture series focusing on the intricacies of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and Bharatiya Saksha Adhiniyam (BSA).

The inaugural session commenced with an enlightening discourse by Prof Bhavani Prasad Panda, Chairperson of Human Rights Law at KIIT University. Prof Panda offered a critical analysis, dissecting the key distinctions between the traditional Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the recently enacted legislations. He specifically highlighted the significance of the terminology shift from "penal" in the IPC to "Nyaya" (justice) in the new framework, igniting intellectual curiosity among the attending law students.

Drawing insightful parallels from the historical development of the IPC, Professor Panda underscored the vital role of open discussion and deliberation within legal education. His address resonated deeply with the audience of enthusiastic students eager to delve further into the upcoming sessions of the lecture series.

Presiding over the event, Prof Anitha Rao, Director of GITAM School of Law, emphasized the importance of familiarising students with these contemporary legal transformations, signifying a significant shift towards modern legal paradigms. The session witnessed active participation from the student body, reflecting their keen interest in fostering critical thinking skills in the areas of lawmaking and legal interpretation.

The organising committee has announced that the lecture series will continue until April 4, promising further in-depth discussions and opportunities for intellectual growth.

Scores of Volunteers quit citing Opposition hostility

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



Scores of volunteers resigned from their positions in Machilipatnam on Monday, expressing anguish that political parties are targeting them for simply trying to serve the people. The Machilipatnam Municipal Corporation office was flooded with volunteers who had come to tender their resignation. They submitted their resignation letters to the commissioner.

The volunteers stated they are resigning due to the hostile attitude towards them from opposition leaders like Chandrababu Naidu, Pawan Kalyan, and the BJP.

Speaking to the media, they complained of being falsely accused of wrongdoing like facilitating women trafficking just for collecting data to provide services. Despite the insults and obstruction, they had endured it. However, the recent criticism was highly objectionable and the volunteers could not take it anymore.

"We are hurt that the pensions given to the poor have been halted. Elderly people have been calling us all morning," one volunteer said. The pensioners lamented having to suffer like before these volunteer welfare services existed. The mass resignations signal the volunteers' frustration at being caught in the political crossfire while just trying to assist the people.

Global press all praise for the unprecedented success of Modi

Narendra Modi is going to complete 10 years as Prime Minister in a month. During the 10-year period, he faced many criticisms besides winning accolades. It is proper to arrive at a conclusion on the rule of any individual after reviewing it from all perspectives comprehensively.

A majority of the people believe that because of Modi's leadership of the country, India is going to become stronger and improve its image globally and feel that their lives would improve because of Modi's leadership. It was a claim not made by the BJP leaders or government's instruments of media, but by the global press. It came to the conclusion after studying the 10-year rule of Modi under a scanner.

Generally speaking, the educated and those who contribute to the growth of the nation's wealth criticise the nation's government policies. But surprisingly, the educated, the middle classes and the wealthy have been supporting Modi's leadership.

Internationally-renowned publication titled "The Economist", published from the UK, published an article titled "Why India's elite back Narendra Modi," praised Modi as a unique person among the popular global leaders.

What are the reasons for it? Modi has been rendering social justice to the down-trodden sections of society acting with grace and not practicing the politics of appeasement like other political outfits and not practicing disgusting caste-based politics.

Firstly, Modi who commenced his rule with the slogan "Sab Ka Saath Sab Ka Vikaas" divided society into four groups like women, farmers, youth and the poor and working hard to ensure these groups benefited.

Secondly, Modi is working with a balanced perspective to implement the economic policies of the country keeping in mind all sections of society right from the rich to the poor who figured at the other end of the spectrum. He works to achieve the goals of development and strengthening the economy.

"Leaders in various countries faced a political crisis. But, there was no such phenomenon in India. That is why Modi who is on the verge of achieving tremendous success for the third time in a row can be described as the most powerful leader," opines The Economist.

Thirdly, it is difficult for any PM to win appreciation from all sections of society. The anti-establishment perspective is more among the educated. But, today Modi gets support from the educated and also the wealthy sections of society and other upper echelons of society. It would mean that he did not alienate any particular section of society. In fact, in many nations across the globe, the upper echelons of societies oppose the most popular leaders. However, 80% of the educated and 66% of the ordinary people who did not even clear primary education support Modi, according to the Gallup poll survey.

"Leaders in various countries faced a political crisis. But, there was no such phenomenon in India. That is why Modi who is on the verge of achieving tremendous success for the third time in a row can be described as the most powerful leader," opines The Economist.

It explains, "Modi did not lose the support of the general public while trying to secure support from upper echelons of society."



Y SATYA KUMAR
BJP National Secretary

In 2019 elections, 42% of the educated voted for Modi, according to a Lok Niti-CSDS survey. "The Economist" attributed Modi becoming popular among upper echelons of society to the country's economy. He on one hand tried to drive away inequalities from society and on the other, helped improve the nation's GDP. Other factors that led to Modi become more popular are increasing the number of upper and lower middle-class persons and also their income. Under Modi, the country's economy improved and proved its specialty and excellence globally. The NRIs feel that there is the need for a leader like Modi for Indian economy to clash with that of the China.

TRULY SPEAKING

Besides the correspondents of "The Economist", everyone is of the view that there would be no parallel to Modi's popularity till a credible Opposition party takes birth.

"The New York Times" of the USA, in its latest edition, praised Modi for making the Indian Economy as one of the largest economies of world and for ensuring the rate of growth of Indian economy did not become slow in spite of many crises rocking the country.

This magazine observed that the intervention of Modi in rural development crisis and poverty eradication has been improving the situation. Free rations, provision of toilets, free LPG cylinders' supply, construction of houses for the homeless poor, supply of LED bulbs free of cost, provision of smart phones, availability of mobile data free of cost are some of the visible results of Modi's rule. CNBC in one of its reports mentioned that India is going to emerge as the biggest consumer market by 2027 with the ever-increasing number of consumers in the country. The highest population of the youth in the country is also responsible for the increasing number of consumers. The digital economy has improved in banking and business transactions, seeding of bank accounts with mobile phone numbers and Aadhaar card numbers to simplify financial transactions, introduction of the GST regime to cleanse the tax system, reduction of corporate taxes to give its due share in nation's development, encouraging domestic industries through AtmaNirbhar Bharat programme and encouraging self-employment through advancing bank loans are seen as some of the factors for the economic development of the nation.

According to "The New York Times" report, the foreigners feel satisfied over the nation's economic progress under Modi. Banks like Morgan Stanley and JP Morgan Chase have been trying to improve India's image in the eyes of globe. One of the major market strategists Chris Wood expressed concern over 25% of the Indian markets crashing if Modi fails to win this election. However, political analysts feel that Modi would not allow that to happen as he has had good grip at all levels of the administration besides having good rapport with the people.

The common man feels that the fruits of welfare and development schemes trickle down to them directly eliminating middlemen, but industrialists feel that the government is giving them opportunity to create wealth. Indians are of the view that country became a united nationalist force under Modi with their beliefs and ideas getting true value. There are the hurdles on the path of the Modi-led BJP for it to come to power for the third time in a row in an unprecedented way.

Police should keep vigil on problematic villages: DIG

PNS ■ BAPATLA



Guntur Range DIG G Palaraju directed the police officials to lay a vigil on the problematic villages and act impartially in performing duties.

The DIG visited the Bapatla District Police Headquarters on Monday. He reviewed the measures being taken by the district Police to conduct the upcoming general elections and gave appropriate instructions to the police officers to perform their duties impartially and efficiently during the elections.

Bapatla district SP Vakul Jindal explained to the DIG through PPT about the actions taken so far in the district in view of the general elections, about the cases registered, seized cash, illegal means, vehicle inspections conducted at check posts, bind-over, other details related to the elections.

Later, the DIG directed the police officers and staff to act impartially and conduct election duties efficiently without any untoward incident.

"Elections should be conducted in a peaceful atmosphere and people should be assured that they can freely exercise their right to vote. The police officials should visit the problematic villages of the district regularly and monitor the situation from time to time and take appropriate precautionary measures to maintain law and order," he told them.

The DIG also ordered them to keep a constant vigil on the movements of anti-socials who have committed crimes in the past and rowdy sheeters in the respective villages.

"People who are likely to disrupt peace and security during elections should be bound over in advance. Arrest warrants should be executed immediately, even if they are pending and the accused should be arrested immediately in cases where arrest is pending," the DIG instructed the officials.

At the check posts, every single vehicle should be thoroughly inspected and cash, liquor, gifts being transported in vehicles and items used to tempt people should be seized, he said, adding that flag marches route marches and vehicle inspections should be conducted every day.

Police officers and personnel should be ready to reach the place immediately if there is a disturbance of law and order anywhere in the district. Bapatla District SP Additional SP TP Vithaleshwar, DSPs T Muralikrishna, CH Muralikrishna, B Prasad, CCS DSP P Jagadish Naik, AR DSP S.Chandra Mohan and other officials were present.

Ex-MLA Attar Chand Basha quits TDP, to join YSRCP

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR



Telugu Desam Party (TDP) suffered a blow on Monday in the Kadiri constituency in the SSS district as its leader and former MLA Attar Chand Basha has announced that he has quit the TDP and is going to join the YSRCP.

Talking to the media in Kadiri on Monday, Attar Chand Basha alleged that the TDP did not give him due importance. Chandrababu Naidu assured of giving a ticket to contest from Kadiri under the minority quota but the ticket was not given to him.

"I have not been invited to the Iftar feast which was hosted in Kadiri town. I have not been given even information about the Iftar feast either," he lamented.

YSRCP politicised pension disbursal: TDP MLA

PNS ■ ONGOLE



Telugu Desam Party (TDP) MLA Yeluri Sambasiva Rao has alleged that the ruling YSRCP has politicised the disbursement of social security pensions intentionally since the government exchequer is empty.

Talking to the media here on Monday, he claimed that the government had no money since the government exchequer was empty. Unable to disburse the social security pensions, the YSRCP-led government was enacting new drama, adding that the government is trying to blame the Election Commission.

"The government disbursed over Rs 13,000 crore to the contractors, who are loyal to the ruling party between March 16 and 30 violating the election code. The government is hesitating the disbursement of social security pension through the secretariats since the exchequer is empty," Yeluri Sambashiva Rao slammed.

He also made it clear that the TDP has nothing to do with the stalemate on disbursing pensions. "Why Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has not ordered the disbursement of pension at the doorsteps by the secretariat staff. There are about 1.35 lakh secretariat staff and they can disburse the pension on war footing in a couple of days," the TDP MLA asserted.

The TDP MLA demanded that Chief Secretary Jawahar Reddy and SERF CEO Muralidhar Reddy take steps to disburse pensions through secretariat staff, VROs and other government employees.

Uttam rebuts KCR's allegations against govt

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Monday rebutted the allegations made by BRS chief and former chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao. KCR had been uttering lies, he said.

Addressing a press conference at Gandhi Bhavan, Uttam Kumar Reddy stated that every word KCR spoke in Suryapet on Sunday was a complete fabrication. He emphasised that KCR's media conference was riddled with inaccuracies and falsehoods. It showed KCR's frustration and depression following his loss of power in Telangana.



"There is no power shortage or power cuts to any sector in any part of Telangana as being falsely alleged by KCR," claimed Uttam Kumar Reddy.

The Minister pointed out that during KCR's tenure as Chief Minister, he enjoyed a lavish lifestyle in either the palatial Pragati Bhavan or his farmhouse. However, since losing power, KCR, out of frustration, visited Suryapet under the pretence of meeting drought-affected farmers. He accused KCR of peddling falsehoods during his entire tour, exemplifying an incident where the power supply for KCR's press conference relied on a generator. He criticised KCR for wrongly blaming the Congress Government for power supply issues, despite the government's efforts to ensure uninterrupted electricity across Telangana.

"KCR has held the position of Chief Minister for two terms. It is deeply concerning that an individual of such stature is resorting to such blatant falsehoods," he remarked.

Uttam Kumar Reddy asserted that KCR lacked the authority to comment on the power supply situation in Telangana. Referring to his prior interaction with NTPC Chairman Gurdeep Singh during his tenure as a Lok Sabha member, Uttam Kumar Reddy highlighted the previous BRS government's failure to cooperate with NTPC in providing land and water in time for the establishment of the promised 4,000 MW power plant.

He emphasised that the Civil Supplies Department has initiated the process of procuring every grain produced in Telangana by establishing 7,149 procurement centres, the highest ever in the separate state.

All the BRS leaders except Kalvakuntla Chandrasekhar Rao's family members are ready to join Congress party. BRS will not get deposits in Nalgonda Lok Sabha constituency and Congress party will win 14 MP seats in TG. KCR's daughter MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha is in Delhi liquor scam, some others are involved in sheep scam, ORR scam and now phone tapping scam. BRS leaders are scared of who is involved in phone tapping case, Uttam Kumar Reddy said

MTech admissions open at SRM-AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

SRM University-AP is offering specialisations in various fields, including Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, Data Science, Cyber Security in Computer Science and Engineering; VLSI and the Internet of Things (IoT) in Electronics and Communication Engineering; and Thermal Engineering and Materials & Manufacturing Technology in Mechanical Engineering.



The university is now accepting applications for MTech admissions for the academic year 2024-2025. In addition to lucrative placement opportunities, students admitted to the programme will also receive a 100 per cent fee waiver and a monthly stipend of Rs 6,000 (Rs 72,000/year).

"The varsity's effort to offer a 100 per cent fee waiver comes from its commitment to foster world-class education to all and to transform the face of higher education," said Prof Siva Sankar Yellampalli, Director - Admissions, SRM University-AP.

For admission, the student has to clear an interview. The eligibility criteria for admission mandate that the candidates must hold a BE/BTech degree in CSE/IT/SWE, M Sc (CSE/IT), or MCA. Alternatively, a BE/BTech degree in Electronic Engineering branches or Mechanical/Manufacturing/Metallurgy/Production Engineering with a minimum aggregate score of 60 per cent is also accepted.

Interested candidates fulfilling the eligibility criteria may apply online at srmap.edu.in.

Man killed, wife critically injured in road accident



PNS ■ ELURU

One person was killed and his wife was critically injured when the motorcycle, they were riding, rammed a tree at Kotaramachandrapuram village in Buttayagudem mandal on the night of Sunday.

Police said that the couple, who got married five months ago, went to Polavaram to participate in Easter celebrations. Their bike veered off the road and rammed a tree killing Chinnam Pawan Kumar (28) instantaneously.

His wife Renu suffered serious injuries in the accident. She was shifted to the government hospital in Jangareddygudem. As her condition turned out to be critical, she was admitted to the GGH in Rajahmundry. A pall of gloom descended on Kammagudem village with the death of a young newly married couple.

Two workers killed as oil tanker explodes

PNS ■ KAKINADA



Two workers were killed when an empty oil tanker exploded on the outskirts of Kattipudi in Sankhavaram mandal on Monday.

Police said that the workers at an automobile workshop were carrying out repairs to an oil tanker. When the workers were carrying out welding works on an empty oil tanker, the tanker exploded with thunderous noise killing Koccherla Prabhakar (48) and Bura Samuel (45) instantaneously.

The deceased belonged to Kattipudi town. Flares emanated when welding work was being carried out which led to the explosion. Heart-wrenching scenes were witnessed with the wailing family members of the deceased workers. The police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH for postmortem.

Man bludgeons son to death

PNS ■ GUNTUR

A man bludgeoned his son to death after an altercation on a trivial issue at his residence at Christianpet in the Old Guntur area on Sunday night.

Police said that the accused T Kavi Babu picked up an altercation with his son T Mojesh (29). In a fit of rage, Kavi Babu bludgeoned his son with a log. He died instantaneously. Both the father and son were in an inebriated condition when the incident took place. The police registered a case, arrested the accused and shifted the body to the GGH for postmortem.

Man kills father-in-law in acid attack

PNS ■ ELURU



In a gruesome incident, a man allegedly attacked his father-in-law with acid at Lakkavaram village in Jangareddygudem mandal on the night of Sunday and the victim succumbed to burn injuries on Monday.

Police said that the deceased Pragada Nageswara Rao performed his daughter's marriage with Ramesh, belonging to Vallampatla village in T Narasapuram mandal, and he was working as a lorry driver.

However, Ramesh was addicted to vices and had been harassing his wife for dowry for the last few months. The deceased Nageswara Rao rebuked his son-in-law many times on the issue.

Growing a grudge against his father-in-law Nageswara Rao, the accused Ramesh went to his house on the night of Sunday poured acid on him when was asleep in front of his house and fled the scene.

Nageswara Rao was shifted to the area hospital in Jangareddygudem in 108 ambulances. Later he was sent to the GGH in Eluru as his condition deteriorated. However, Nageswara Rao succumbed to the acid burn injuries on Monday.

10 red sanders logs seized, one arrested

PNS ■ KADAPA



The flying squad seized 10 red sander logs and arrested one person at Rayalpet in the Annamayya district.

Police here on Monday said that on a tip-off red sander logs were being transported from the Seshachalam reserve forest to Tamil Nadu, a flying squad conducted a checking of vehicles at Kandur village in Somala mandal on the highway.

The flying squad tried to stop a car going on the highway but the car did not stop. The flying squad chased the car and stopped it at Royalpet. The occupants of the car started fleeing after noticing the police. However, the police apprehended one of them. He is a resident of Munumuttur in Tamil Nadu.

The flying squad seized the 10 red sander logs, weighing 345 kg and worth Rs 15 lakh. The squad also seized the car and arrested red sander smuggler Tatam. A search was launched to arrest those who escaped.

Rs 1.31 cr seized, 3 persons held

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR



The police seized Rs 1.31 crore while being taken in a vehicle at a bus station area in Tadipatri town on Monday.

DSP CM Gangaiah told the media in Tadipatri town on Sunday that at the direction of SP KKN Anburajan a police team conducted a checking of vehicles.

The police team found Rs 1,31,35,750 in a car. The police held Sheik Mastan Vali, Sheik Najimunni Sha and Sheik Rasheeda who were taking the money. Since they failed to produce relevant documents for the cash, the police seized it and handed the cash to the Income Tax officials. The three persons belong to one family and are gold merchants, the DSP said.

INDIA CORNER

UP govt official looted on board Shatabdi Express in Delhi

An assistant prosecution officer from Uttar Pradesh was allegedly assaulted and looted on a Shatabdi Express while travelling to New Delhi, officials said on Monday. The incident took place on March 28 around 10 pm when the Lucknow Jn. Swarn Shatabdi Express was about 50 to 100 metres ahead of the Shivaji Bridge Railway Station in New Delhi, according to the FIR. "I was sitting inside my coach, C-4, on seat number 2 when a man entered the coach and tried to snatch my handbag," Swati Mourya said in her complaint to police.



"When I resisted, he pushed and assaulted me due to which I sustained an injury on my left hand. He then snatched my bag and jumped out of the moving train. I can identify the person," she added. As per the FIR, Mourya lost Rs 15,000, and various ID cards – PAN, Aadhar, driving licence, and prosecution identity card issued by the Uttar Pradesh government, along with two ATM cards.

Five children accused of theft beaten up in police station: Strict action urged

The Maharashtra State Commission for Protection of Child Rights has directed authorities to suspend personnel allegedly involved in beating up five minors who were detained by Shivajinagar police in Mumbai on suspicion of theft.

The five minors, who were accused of stealing Rs 63,000 from a woman's purse, were hit inside the police station, their parents had claimed. A complaint was also submitted to the Child Welfare Committee that a 15-year-old boy was kept in police custody overnight.



In a release issued on Monday, the MSCPCR said its chairperson Susieben Shah has written to Maharashtra Additional Director General of Police Deepak Pandey to appoint a committee under a deputy commissioner of police (DCP) rank officer to probe such cases.

Inspector arrested for involvement in Rs 2 cr dacoity in Navi Mumbai

A police inspector was arrested on Monday in connection with a Rs 2 crore dacoity in Navi Mumbai, an official said. Six persons posing as policemen had looted the amount from a businessman near Palm Beach Road in Vashi on March 29 and a probe zeroed in on Inspector Nitin Bhikaji Vijaykar (55) of the security branch of Thane rural police, he said. The incident took place when the businessman was travelling from his residence in Ghatkopar in neighbouring Mumbai to Turbhe MIDC in Navi Mumbai, he said.



"The accused threatened him claiming they had received complaints about him possessing a large sum of money. They took him to a flat and looted Rs 2 crore. After a case was filed on March 30, probe teams zeroed in on six persons," the official said. The probe found one of the accused was a driver of the victim and sought revenge after being sacked, and had passed on vital information about the victim's finance.

KATCHATHEEVU ISSUE

'Cong PMs simply did not care, gave away fishermen's rights'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday claimed that prime ministers from the Congress displayed indifference about Katchatheevu island as if they did not care and gave away Indian fishermen's rights despite legal views to the contrary.

Prime ministers such as Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi dubbed Katchatheevu, given to Sri Lanka in 1974 as part of a maritime boundary agreement, as a "little island" and "little rock", he told a press conference, asserting that the issue has not cropped up abruptly but was always a live matter.

The records exist of the then foreign secretary keeping the then Tamil Nadu chief minister M Karunanidhi, the late DMK patriarch, fully informed of the talks between the two countries, Jaishankar said and accused the regional party of conniving with the Congress in 1974 and thereafter in creating the situation which has been a cause of "great concern".

"The same people who connived at all this are today standing up and trying to pretend to be champions of fishermen," he said.

Citing details of the agreements between India and Sri Lanka first in 1974 and then in 1976, he said a recurring theme is the indifference shown by the central government and prime ministers of the day then about the territory of India, as he named Nehru and Gandhi for their remarks. "The fact is they simply did not care," Jaishankar said.



In 20 years, 6,184 Indian fishermen have been detained by Sri Lanka and their 1,175 fishing vessels seized by the neighbouring country, he said,

It is the Narendra Modi government that has been working to ensure that the Indian fishermen are released, Jaishankar said, adding, "We have to find a solution.

Speak on Chinese aggression: Chidambaram tells Modi

PNS ■ SIVAGANGA TAMIL NADU)

Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Monday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi should speak on "Chinese occupation" of Indian territory, rather than about Katchatheevu that was ceded to Sri Lanka to maintain good relations and to save the lives of lakhs of Tamils. Chidambaram, former Union Home Minister during his party-led UPA regime wondered why the Prime Minister was raking up an issue that was settled way back in 1974. That year, the Indira Gandhi government, in order to maintain good relations with Sri Lanka and to help lakhs and lakhs of Tamils there, negotiated with the island nation's government. Following negotiations, a settlement was made on Katchatheevu, a very small island about 1.9 sq km, and India acknowledged Katchatheevu as belonging to Sri Lanka, he said. In return, six lakh Tamils were allowed to come to India. "They have come here, their families are here, they have got full freedom, they are breathing free air.

Their children and grandchildren are here. The issue was closed 50 years ago."

CEILING ON NET BORROWING

SC refers Kerala govt's suit to five-judge Constitution Bench

The Supreme Court on Monday referred to a five-judge Constitution bench the suit filed by the Kerala government raising the issue of ceiling on net borrowing.

A bench of justices Surya Kant and K V Viswanathan passed the order on a suit filed by the Kerala government accusing the Centre of interfering in the exercise of its "exclusive, autonomous and plenary powers" to regulate the state's finances by imposing a cap on borrowing.

Referring to Article 293 of the Constitution, which deals with borrowing by states, the bench said this provision has not been so far subject to any authoritative interpretation by the apex court.

It formulated some questions to be dealt with by the larger bench, including whether Article 293 of the Constitution vests a state with



the "enforceable right" to raise borrowing from the Union government or other sources.

On the issue of interim relief, the bench observed that substantial relief has been granted to Kerala through the intervention of the apex court in the matter.

It said the suit raises more than one substantial question regarding the interpretation of the Constitution.

The bench said one of the questions formulated by it pertained to the scope and extent of judicial review by the court in respect of fiscal policy.

It said the matter be placed before the Chief Justice of India for constituting the larger bench.

In an original suit filed under Article 131 of the Constitution, the Kerala government has said the Constitution bestows fiscal autonomy upon states to regulate their finances under various articles, and the borrowing limits or the extent of such borrowings are regulated by state legislation.

Article 131 of the Constitution deals with the original jurisdiction of the apex court in any dispute between the Centre and states.

During the arguments before the apex court, the Centre had said the Kerala government has been overborrowing in recent years which indicates its financial situation.

Entire country has faith in PM Modi's guarantee: Adityanath

PNS ■ HATHRAS/BULANDSHAHR (UP)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday flayed the previous governments for unleashing a reign of terror and said that those who are pointing a finger at Prime Minister Narendra Modi are a hindrance ('avrodhak') in India's development.

Addressing the intellectuals meeting in Hathras and Bulandshahr, Adityanath said, "Viksit Bharat (developed India) and all-round development is Modi's guarantee. In developed India, every person, caste and community should get respect and opportunity to move forward without any discrimination. There should be no casteism and dynasticism. There should be development for all and this is the basis of the concept of developed India."



The chief minister said the entire country has faith in Prime Minister Modi's guarantee.

Addressing the Prabudha Sammelan in Bulandshahr, Adityanath lamented the state's tumultuous past during the previous governments, alleging that they followed a "riot policy", which unleashed a reign of terror in Bulandshahr.

"The relentless cycle of riots, curfews and lawlessness jeopardized the safety of both daughters and business people, tarnishing Bulandshahr's image," he remarked.

Comparing the present situation with earlier times, the chief minister said the common people are today revelling in the newfound security while criminals were feeling the heat.

Speaking about Bulandshahr, Adityanath said, "Bulanshahr's existence can be traced back to the Mahabharata era. It's a land blessed by Mother Ganga and Mother Yamuna. But the previous government's pro-criminal policies turned it into a land of crime and terror."

The chief minister emphasized the importance of voting responsibly, highlighting the stark contrast between fostering hooliganism and witnessing tangible development under Prime Minister Modi's visionary leadership.

"Every vote wields the power to either sow chaos or foster respect for faith while bolstering livelihood prospects," he remarked.

Acknowledging Bulandshahr's pivotal role, Adityanath reflected on the oppressive reign of previous administrations where the voices of common citizens were stifled.

SIDDARAMAIAH'S EMOTIONAL APPEAL TO VOTERS

Should I remain as CM or not?

PNS ■ MYSURU/MANDYA (KARNATAKA)

Amid speculations about leadership change, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday asked the people of his Varuna assembly segment to give the Congress candidate a lead of at least 60,000 votes in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, to ensure that he remains in the post.

In Mandya, Deputy Chief Minister and state Congress President D K Shivakumar, who has made no secret about his Chief Ministerial ambitions, told the people that the desire with which they supported the party in the assembly poll in May last year, keeping him in mind, "will not turn out to be false."

The statements gain significance amid persistent rumours



about leadership change in the ruling Congress in the state after Lok Sabha polls or midway of the current assembly's tenure.

"In 2019 (Lok Sabha polls) Dhruvanarayan (Congress candidate) lost by a margin of only 1,817 votes.... This time in the Assembly you made me win by giving a lead of 48,000 votes (in Varuna). Will you give the same lead or more now? (Our candidate should win) with a lead of at least 60,000 votes," Siddaramaiah said.

Addressing a public meeting, he said: "In Varuna you know me, as well as (H C) Mahadevappa (Minister). I'm your representative, (my son) Yathindra is a former MLA from here (Varuna). When we are all there there should be a lead of at least 60,000 votes."

"If you make (Congress candidate) victorious by a lead of 60,000 votes, I will be happy. No one will be able to touch me. Should I remain (as Chief Minister) or not? So I request you with folded hands...I will come back to thank you after winning," he added.

Siddarmaiah's Varuna assembly segment comes under Chamarajanagar Lok Sabha constituency, from where Minister Mahadevappa's son Sunil Bose is the Congress candidate.

Thunderstorm wreaks havoc in Assam; 4 die, 53,000 hit

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Four persons were killed and nearly 53,000 people affected as a thunderstorm wreaked havoc in Assam, officials said on Monday.

A four-year-old child died and two persons went missing after a boat capsized in the Brahmaputra in South Salmara-Mankachar district on Sunday night, while one each died in Cachar, West Karbi Anglong and Udalguri in storm and lightning related accidents.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah dialled Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to enquire about the situation in the state and assured him of all assistance.

'New toll rates on highways after LS polls'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has asked state-owned NHAI to go ahead with the calculation of new user fee (toll) rates on highways, which kicks in annually from April 1 across most of tolled highway stretches in the country, but said the new rates should be applicable only after the Lok Sabha elections.

According to documents accessed by PTI, ECI has asked the NHAI (National Highways Authority of India) to defer toll fee hike. The ECI was responding to a communication from road transport and highways minister in this regard.

The annual revision of toll hikes, which was expected to be in the range of average 5 per cent, was to come into effect on April 1 for most of tolled highways and expressways stretches across the country.

"The process required for the decision on the power tariff may be continued by the State Electricity Regulatory Commission.

However, tariff award shall be made only on the completion of poll in the relevant state, i.e after the poll date/dates in the state.

"In respect of the clarification sought, it is stated that user fee may be seen in context of the power tariff as mentioned in the Commission's instruction cited above," the ECI said in a communication to the road ministry on April 1, 2024.

According to a senior NHAI official, the change in toll fee is part of an annual exercise to revise the rates that are linked to the changes in the wholesale price index based inflation.

The elections for the 18th Lok Sabha will begin on April 19 followed by subsequent phases on April 26, May 7, May 13, May 20, May 25, and June 1. The counting of votes is on June 4.

Roadshows, door-to-door visits mark Nitin Gadkari's poll campaign

PNS ■ NAGPUR

Seeking blessings of elders, traversing the length and breadth of the the city in roadshows and vowing to build a clean and pollution free city, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has set himself a target to win the Nagpur Lok Sabha seat by a margin of at least five lakh votes.

Gadkari has claimed that he would not put up banners and posters across the city to seek votes for the April 19 election, but have 'heart-to-heart' and 'home-to-home' conversations with voters.



"I will follow the ideal principles of campaigning and reach out to the people and seek their blessings," Gadkari told PTI, adding that he has visited elderly voters at their homes and sought their blessings by touching their feet.

"I have set myself a target to win by at least five lakh votes. The circumstances are such and my work of the last 10 years is well known to the people," he said.

The former BJP president is seeking a third term in the Lok Sabha from Nagpur. Gadkari defeated seven-term Lok Sabha member and Congress leader Vilas Muttemwar in the 2014 elections by a margin of nearly 2.85 lakh votes.

Gadkari polled 55.67 per cent of the total votes in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, but his victory margin against Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole was 2.15 lakh votes.

Gadkari's challenger in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections is Vikas Thakre, the Nagpur city Congress chief and a former mayor of the city.

"I am a local leader. I know every bylane of the city and the people of the city. I know how to fight elections," Thakre said.

Gadkari said he has served the people of Nagpur and it was his desire to see it emerge as a clean, beautiful and pollution-free city.

"I have served the people of Nagpur and consider them as my family. You go out and ask anyone – teaseller, roadside vendor, not one will speak ill about me," he said.

Gadkari said some wrong statements were attributed to him contending that he would not campaign or seek votes for the election. "I had not said such a thing. I had said that I will not offer any inducements to anyone.

Low-fat vegan diet lower risk of heart disease

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A low-fat vegan diet rich in fruits, vegetables, grains and beans can help reduce insulin needs in people affected by Type 1 diabetes, a new research has found.

It also found that changes in body weight, brought about by the plant-based diet, helped lower participants' resistance to insulin by improving sensitivity. Glycemic control, or glucose levels in the blood serum, was also observed to get better. The improvements were, in turn, found to correspond to lowering the risk of heart disease in these patients.

While Type 2 diabetes is more common, Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease in which the body's immune system attacks the healthy pancreas, affecting its ability to produce insulin and regulate blood sugar. The patients, therefore, may require regular insulin injections.

"With the cost of insulin remaining a concern for many, our groundbreaking research shows that a low-fat vegan diet that doesn't restrict carbs may be the prescription for reducing insulin needs, managing blood sugar levels, and improving heart health in people with Type 1 diabetes," said Hana Kahleova, the study's lead author and director of clinical research at the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, US.

The study findings have



been published in the Clinical Diabetes journal.

For the study, the researchers randomly assigned 58 adults with Type 1 diabetes to either a low-fat vegan group with no limits on calories or carbohydrates or a portion-controlled group reducing daily calorie intake for overweight participants and keeping carbohydrate intake stable over time.

During the study period of 12 weeks, the participants on the low-fat vegan diet were found to require 28 per cent lesser insulin, with their body's response or sensitivity to insulin improving by 127 per cent.

The researchers observed these effects to be associated with body weight, which fell by about five kilogrammes on an average. The body weight of individuals in the portion-controlled group, on the other hand, changed non-significantly.

They also associated the improved insulin sensitivity with increased carbohydrate and fibre intake.

The results support previous research that links a lower fat and protein intake with reduced insulin requirements and improved sensitivity in people with Type 1 diabetes, the researchers said.

The team further linked these improvements to lowering cardiovascular risks of disease and death, known to be higher in Type 1 diabetic patients.

They found the participants' reduced reliance on external insulin to correspond to a nine per cent lowered cardiovascular risk.

The lowered glucose levels in the blood serum corresponded to a 12 per cent and about 9-12 per cent reduced risk of heart attack and cardiovascular disease, respectively, they said.

'MATCH-FIXING' REMARKS

BJP urges EC to take strictest action against Rahul Gandhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday urged the Election Commission to take the strictest action against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and issue directions to lodge an FIR against him for his "match-fixing" remarks at an opposition INDIA bloc rally here a day ago.

A BJP delegation comprising Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri and BJP national general secretary Arun Singh lodged the complaint against Gandhi with the poll panel, urging it to direct the Congress leader to tender an "unconditional public apology" to the nation and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for levelling "false allegations" against him.

Addressing the INDIA bloc's 'Loktantra Bachao' (Save Democracy) rally at the Ramlila Maidan on Sunday, Gandhi accused Modi of trying to do "match-fixing" in the Lok Sabha polls and warned that if the BJP wins the election through this endeavour and "changes" the Constitution, then the whole country would be "finished".

The public meeting was aimed at highlighting the issue of "attack on democracy" including the alleged misuse of agencies against opposition leaders in the aftermath of the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and former Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren and income tax notices to parties.

In a memorandum to the Election Commission (EC), the ruling BJP urged the poll panel to take a comprehensive view of the "design and patterns" of the Congress' misleading campaign and propaganda.

VIJAYAWADA | TUESDAY | APRIL 2, 2024

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Dead and buried

The Supreme Court has scrapped the Electoral Bonds scheme, but the controversy refuses to die

The Opposition is labelling the contentious issue of Electoral Bonds usage as "extortion of funds by the BJP" while Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserts that the scheme has facilitated transparency in political funding. Since its inception in 2018, the scheme has been the subject of intense scrutiny and criticism from various quarters. Opposition parties have taken up the cudgels against the Electoral Bonds scheme, alleging that it provides a veil of secrecy to big corporate donors who can channel funds to their preferred political parties without public disclosure. They argue that the lack of transparency undermines the very essence of democracy, as it allows for the unchecked influence of money on politics. Moreover, the Opposition accuses the ruling BJP of benefiting disproportionately from the scheme, alleging that it has turned into a tool for the ruling party to amass funds while sidelining smaller outfits. The recent revelations emanating from the State Bank of India documents fuelled these accusations, suggesting that the BJP has been the major beneficiary of the Electoral Bonds scheme. What is more disconcerting is that there are indications of a quid pro quo between the donors and the BJP. Many people ostensibly were let off the ED hook after buying hefty Electoral Bonds and donating them to the party in power.



In response, Modi has defended the scheme, asserting that it has made the process of political funding more transparent than ever before. He argues that earlier, political donations were made through cash transactions, which opened the doors for corruption and black money. The introduction of Electoral Bonds, according to the Prime Minister, has ensured that the flow of funds is traceable, thereby enhancing accountability and reducing the influence of illicit money in elections. Furthermore, supporters of the Electoral Bond scheme emphasise that it offers a legitimate channel for corporations and individuals to contribute to political parties without fear of reprisal or victimisation. Despite the divergent viewpoints, the issue of Electoral Bonds underscores the broader debate surrounding political finance reform in India. While the Government contends that the scheme promotes transparency and accountability, critics argue that it falls short of these objectives and instead perpetuates opacity and favours the ruling party. Perhaps the truth lies somewhere in between. Every scheme must be tweaked after it is launched to address the anomalies and loopholes to make it foolproof. Indeed, the Electoral Bonds scheme currently has too many of these and the Government would do well to relaunch it in a new avatar while addressing the lacunas. It remains to be seen whether the Government will ever address the concerns raised by the Opposition and civil society groups or persist with its defence of the controversial scheme. In a democracy, the integrity of electoral processes and the fairness of political competition are paramount, and any measures undertaken in the realm of political finance must be aimed at upholding these principles.

PICTALK



Devotees offer prayers and perform rituals on the occasion of 'Sheetala Saptami', in Bhopal PTI

Global surge in negative campaigning



KALYANI **SHANKAR**

As election fervour sweeps across 64 countries, including India and the US, a familiar trend emerges: The surge in negative political advertising



It is election season in 64 countries, such as India, the US, the UK and the European Union. Political advertising is increasing worldwide. Political parties and candidates often use negative campaigns to make themselves appear better and their opponents weaker.

Parties have used negative campaigning since the 1828 US presidential race. Historians say the John Quincy Adams/Andrew Jackson contest was the nastiest. In 1964, Lyndon Johnson discredited his opponent, Barry Goldwater, using radio ads, including the "Daisy ad."

Donald Trump aired an ad depicting his opponent, Hillary Clinton, collapsing in public during the 2016 US Presidential campaign. In the 2020 election, Presidential candidates Trump and Joe Biden engaged in negative campaigning. Trump criticised Biden's mental abilities, while Biden attacked Trump's handling of COVID-19 and his character. In 2024, too, the negative ads continue.

The Conservative Party portrayed Jeremy Corbyn as a significant security threat during the 2019 UK General Election. In the 2021 German Federal Election, the Social Democratic Party targeted Armin Laschet using images of him laughing while visiting a flood-affected region.

Since Prime Minister Modi emerged on the national scene in 2014, the use of technology and ad spending during the election campaign have enormously increased. Leaders are now trained to present themselves, communicate effectively, and make effective speeches. BSP chief Mayawati was told what to wear. Regional leaders have also employed foreign agencies. For instance, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin was told to wear jeans and T-shirts to impress the voters. Late Congress leader Rajiv Gandhi lost the 1989 elections because of hostile campaign slogans like' "Galli Galli me shore hair, Rahul Gandhi chor hai.' The Bofors scam brought him down.

Candidates adopting a "hit first, hit hard, and keep hitting" approach indulge in personal attacks and fear tactics. Even after ten years of rule, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not stopped blaming Congress for all the country's problems. The Election Commission limits candidates' spending, but many political parties and candidates spend much more than the specified amount. They offer bribes such as phones, cash, and unrealistic promises to win voters' support. One Tamil Nadu independent candidate even promised a trip to the moon and a robot for every homemaker, but he did not win.

Advertising for India's 2024 elections may cost between Rs 2000 crore and Rs 13000 crore. There are predictions that political parties and candidates may spend over $14.4 billion (1.2 trillion rupees) on advertising, twice the amount spent during the 2019 elections.

Where do political candidates get their campaign funding? Typically, some wealthy candidates self-finance, while the party spends for others. Parties have no spending limits. However, black money has also entered the fray over time.

India's Supreme Court has banned election bonds due to a lack of transparency. BJP received 57 per cent of the sold bonds, amounting to $1.1 billion, while Congress received only 10 per cent, valued at $188 million. While parties resort to any method to come to power, some campaigns succeed while others fail. The effectiveness of a negative campaign ad depends on its content, context, and the characteristics of the viewers. Prime Minister Vajpayee's 2004 "India Shining" multi-crore campaign is a classic example of a failed campaign.

> IN 2014, NARENDRA MODI TRANSFORMED INTO A STRONG NATIONALIST LEADER BY PROJECTING HIMSELF AS A NATIONAL BRAND

The Congress's 2019 "Chowkidar chor hai" campaign slogan failed, and Rahul Gandhi's attack on Modi on Rafale scam also did not click. However, the Congress party's "Aam Admi" campaign succeeded in the same elections. In 2014, Narendra Modi transformed into a strong nationalist leader by projecting himself as a national brand. He utilised modern technology for mass mobilisation, including 3D rallies, "Chai Pe Charcha," interviews, and campaign visits. YouTube has successfully enabled political parties to advertise using 30-second TV ads and longer online videos. In short, he succeeded in attracting voters with his Congress-bashing.

The Aam Admi Party, a new political party, emerged as a strong contender during the 2013 Delhi Assembly elections. They used mohalla campaigns, social media, and a radio ad featuring AAP chief Kejriwal. Today, this party is in power in both Punjab and Delhi. All parties used negative tactics in the 2019 political campaign. The opposition criticised the BJP's Hindutva-inspired programmes. Still, the saffron Party came back to power with an increased number of seats. Modi is aspiring for a 400-plus tally in the 2024 polls. Last year, the BJP produced an AI-generated video of Modi campaigning. The Congress party mocked the footage, using his digital likeness to counter. The video, portraying a business tycoon attempting to steal resources, has gone viral with over 1.5 million views.

Despite the Election Commission's guidelines, the 2024 elections will likely feature more negative campaign tactics. Political parties and candidates should create positive advertisements instead of negative campaigns. This will help to protect democracy and prevent character assassination. One solution is to have the State fund polls, as many Electoral Commissions recommend. It is also essential to maintain decency and decorum in campaigns. This will help create a fair, respectful environment and a level playing field for all candidates.

(The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)

Need more women representation in science



BIJU **DHARAMAPALAN**

Women aspiring to pursue scientific research often encounter barriers in the form of stereotypes and inadequate mentorship opportunities

The underrepresentation of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields is a complex issue with multiple contributing factors. Apart from societal bias towards women opting for careers in Science and technology, lack of support from the peer professional group in their workplace is also a severe issue. It is challenging for women to venture into scientific research without the support of the peer community dominated by their male counterparts. In such a scenario, special schemes or initiatives targeting women in scientific research can be beneficial in addressing systemic barriers and inequalities that women may face in STEM fields. These schemes can provide targeted support to increase the participation and advancement of women in these fields.



The Department of Science and Technology (DST),Govt of India recognises the importance of inclusivity and diversity in driving scientific innovation and progress. To address the underrepresentation of women in the field of Science and Technology (S&T), DST has initiated the 'Women in Science and Engineering-KIRAN (WISE-KIRAN)' scheme. This programme aims to empower women from various backgrounds and walks of life, providing them with opportunities to participate and excel actively in S&T domains. WISE-KIRAN is designed to be a holistic initiative addressing a wide range of challenges women encounter in their scientific journeys. These challenges may include societal stereotypes and biases, limited access to resources and opportunities, lack of mentorship and networking, and work-life balance issues. The scheme offers diverse programmes and interventions to support women at different stages of their scientific careers. These programmes may include:

1. Educational and training initiatives to encourage girls and young women to pursue S&T subjects and careers.
2. Scholarships, fellowships, and research grants to support women in higher education and research; e.g., WISE-PhD and WISE-PDF.
3. Mentorship programmes to connect aspiring female scientists with established professionals in their field.
4. Capacity-building workshops and skill development programmes to enhance women's scientific expertise and leadership abilities; e.g., WISE Internship in Intellectual Property Rights (WISE-IPR) .
5. Networking events and conferences to facilitate collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and career advancement opportunities for women in S&T, e.g., Women International Grant Support (WINGS). Women's Instinct for Developing and Ushering in Scientific Heights & Innovations (WIDUSHI) is a unique initiative from the Government of India to support women scientists on the verge of retirement and also the women scientists who are not in permanent positions but are active researchers and continuously excelling in the research field.

Through the Consolidation of University Research for Innovation and Excellence (CURIE) programme, the DST also supports infrastructure development in Women's Institutions, especially women's universities and post-graduate colleges. It assists women's institutions in setting up cutting-edge research infrastructure to enhance their research capabilities and elevate their research and development (R&D) efforts, ultimately striving for excellence in the Science & Technology (S&T) domain. The DST also supports young girls in igniting interest in STEM disciplines. The Vigyan Jyoti programme presents a crucial avenue for young girls to explore and excel in Science and technology.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INADEQUATE FOOD FOR PEOPLE

Madam — Apropos news article, "Quantifying happiness is perplexing" published on March 29, this is my response. Amid hunger, malnutrition, unemployment, poverty and inequality, it is hardly possible for a person to be happy. India's child wasting and child stunting rates are horrific. As per the Union Health Ministry's National Family Health Survey - 5 (2019 - 20) report, the nutrition indicators for children under 5 years show that 1 out of 3 children (35.5 per cent) is a victim of stunting and 1 out of 5 children (19.3 per cent) is a victim of wasting.

A study, across 92 low-income and middle-income countries on infants aged between 6 months and 24 months who have not received any food over a 24-hour period which it called Zero-food children (ZFC), has recently been published. For its study on ZFC in India, it used the data from the Union Health Ministry's national family health survey for 2019-21. It is found that in terms of the total number of zero-food children, India is at the top of the list with over 6.7 million infants and the third highest in the world percentage-wise. Instead of finding fault with the happiness index, authorities need to take corrective measures to ensure equitable growth.

Sujit De | *Kolkata*

SAVING OUR TIGERS

Madam — Apropos news article "Majestic Cats Continue to Perish" published on March 27, this is my response. That Madhya Pradesh accounted for 12 of the 39 tiger deaths does not augur well for its "tiger state of India" tag. India can no longer claim to be the "safest" place for the big cat. The same old story of tiger habitat destruction due to urbanisation continues. However, some of the latest tiger casualties are attributed to territorial fights as 22 tigers succumbed inside the tiger reserves. It is important to remember that any tiger death is attributed to poaching unless proven otherwise.

Tigers have lost lives when they have ventured out of their way in search of water or looking for habitat. The big cats traverse through what is known as "tiger spots" on the highway because tigers need serious demarcation of territories, and crowded highways are impediments to tiger movement. The need for overbridges and underpasses on highways is more pronounced now. Dedicated officers should be put in charge of tiger projects. Increased patrolling, camera traps and conviction rates to pin the poachers are important. Safeguarding ecologically sensitive areas, forests water and grasslands cannot be overlooked. Tiger relocation also has to be prioritised.

Ganapathi Bhat | *Akola*

EMBRACING IMPERFECT BEAUTY

Madam — Apropos news article "The quest for perfection: Imperfection and life's beauty" published on April 01, this is my response. Witnessing small moments of imperfection can often lead to profound reflections on the nature of perfection itself. On a recent flight, a seemingly trivial gesture—a wife offering a pillow to her husband—prompted contemplation on societal norms and personal imperfections. In a world where striving for perfection is often praised, these observations serve as gentle reminders of the beauty found in imperfection. From the intricacies of personal relationships to professional endeavours, the pursuit of perfection can sometimes lead to futile iterations and missed opportunities.

As we navigate through life, embracing imperfections can reveal moments of genuine beauty. Whether it's in the spontaneity of nature or the authenticity of human connections, there's a richness to be found in the imperfect. Renowned musician Graham Nash aptly captures this sentiment, reminding us that life's tapestry is woven with both terrifying and incredibly beautiful moments. Perhaps it's in accepting this duality that we can truly make the best of what life offers, opening our hearts to the imperfect beauty that surrounds us.

Sneha Gupta | *Delhi*

Tribals' tribulations



Apropos news article "Empowering India's tribal communities" published on April 01, this is my response. India's dynamic progress often overshadows the struggles of its indigenous tribal communities. Despite their rich cultural heritage, these communities grapple with deep-rooted challenges, from educational disparities to land rights violations. The Pioneer sheds light on these pressing issues, urging concerted efforts for holistic development. Educational inequity remains a glaring concern, with tribal literacy rates languishing below the national average. The lack of infrastructure and cultural barriers perpetuate this gap, entrenching cycles of poverty.

Land rights violations compound their plight, as development projects encroach upon ancestral lands. Legal safeguards like PESA often prove insufficient, leaving tribes vulnerable to exploitation. However, initiatives like the ITDA model in Andhra Pradesh offer hope, providing holistic interventions that empower communities. Efforts to bolster education, healthcare, and entrepreneurship are paramount. By investing in these sectors and fostering social inclusion, India can uplift its tribal populations, honouring their heritage while securing their future. The Pioneer's spotlight on these issues is commendable, catalysing dialogue and action for a more equitable society.

Khirabdi | *Noida*

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

VIJAYAWADA | TUESDAY | APRIL 2, 2024

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FIRST COLUMN

REHABILITATION OF ALCOHOLICS

Alcoholism is a complex interplay of desires, physiology and mental patterns



RAVI **VALLURI**

This article arose as a result of a debate on the ban of alcohol consumption in some states of the country, which I heard on a podcast recently. Without getting into the merits of the issue, a simple question arose in my mind - can we expatriate thoughts?

An alcoholic's mind is extraordinarily sharp yet deviant despite suffering from this medical malady. An alcoholic will employ all possible means at his disposal to acquire the prized possession - the bottle. Like fish is to water, an alcoholic is to liquor.

The problem can be addressed by getting an alcoholic admitted into a rehabilitation programme, joining the Alcoholics Anonymous, a self-help group; undertaking the Happiness Programme of the Art of Living (where the unique breathing technique of Sudarshan Kriya is imparted) or undergoing the Vipassana breathing technique. These techniques can be of help only when the alcoholic acknowledges the problem.

Through grave indulgence of Bacchus and reckless drinking, alcoholics wreak immense damage to all organs of the human body. This is no rocket science and is known to the afflicted. To begin with, the stomach, the pancreas, the liver, the esophagus, the small and large intestine get adversely damaged. Once the gut is affected, it has a debilitating impact on the circulatory and nervous systems. Alcoholics develop heart ailments, problems pertaining to blood pressure, diabetes and arthritis, among others. One organ after the other start failing and collapsing and eventually an alcoholic becomes a vegetable. The alcoholic finally lands up in the ICU or is in the grave. The cause of alcoholism is the negative and destructive pattern of thinking.

This is an advisory for all alcoholics and recovering alcoholics (those



who have turned sober through the gift of the Divine) regarding their eating and drinking patterns. Those who get admitted to a rehab or an Ayurvedic clinic fortuitously will be served a regulated diet for proper resuscitation.

There are large, unfortunate numbers who are caught in the vortex of drinking or continue to suffer from relapses. They should begin the day with several glasses of warm lime water laced with honey and not with a cup of coffee/tea. It goes without saying, say a firm 'NO' to drink. Lime water with honey assists in detoxifying the system. Eating fresh fruits for breakfast and not leftovers of the night help in digestion. It is guaranteed that most alcoholics suffer from an irritable bowel syndrome and associated disorders. The fruit should be partaken as an entire meal and should not merely be a supplement. Tamasic and Rajasic intake of food invariably trigger the desire to consume alcohol. However, consumption of Sattvic food will certainly enable to rectify the imbalances present in the body and diminish the craving for alcohol.

There is a tremendous weakening of the immune system of the body of an alcoholic as precious minerals and vitamins get drained out. The resistance levels need to be enhanced through the proper intake of nutritious food. The propensity of an alcoholic falling prey to opportunistic ailments is extortionate. This medical problem can be addressed only by a qualified medical practitioner.

Also, what about the mental problem? Louise L. Hay, in You Can Heal Your Life has identified the probable cause of alcoholism as negative thought processes such as - 'What's the use?'. Feelings of futility, guilt, and self-rejection. According to her, the renewed thought pattern should be - 'I live in the now'. 'Each moment is new'. 'I choose to see my self-worth'. 'I love and approve of myself'.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

Checkmating China's chicanery



ATUL **SEHGAL**

China's relentless pursuit of dominance in the Asia-Pacific region has led to unease. It is time to call China's bluff and give a befitting reply



China is at it continuously. Devising devious designs to disturb and destabilise its neighbouring countries to whet its hegemonic appetite, it has created an atmosphere of unprecedented tension in the Asia Pacific region. In specific countries, picking on individuals and community persons who have Communist mindset and funding, arming and training them to further its hegemonic agenda, it has gravely vitiated the political atmosphere of the Asian subcontinent. The instruments of its nefarious actions extend from veiled cultural and economic intrusion to brazen intimidation through military exercises and gestures. Yes, it has learnt expansionism from none other than the erstwhile hegemonic global powers who have ruled the roost in the twentieth century.

Nations are built on ideologies and sustain on the ideological threads that are drawn from the universalistic divine principles called Dharma. But disbelievers in the divine have always existed in this world. Their original breed was called Naastik (atheists) whose ideological icon was an ancient Indian philosopher called Charavak and members of its modern breed are the Communists. Since they do not believe in any supernatural controlling and regulating power called God and also reject the theory of karmic retribution, they display naked self righteousness. They show no qualms of conscience. Since their numbers have steadily grown in the last few decades, they have become arrogant and supercilious. The ruling Chinese Communist Party, its cohorts and subscribers are an illustrative example of above.

China, under its communist regime, annexed Tibet in 1951 and followed it up in 1962 by usurping 38000 square kilometres of Indian territory in Ladakh. In recent months, persons have circulated on social media channels like Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram the original map of China showing in distinctive colours the grabbed territories- China occupied Tibet, East Turkistan, South Mongolia, Manchuria and Yunnan. And China doesn't stop at it.

> CHINA, UNDER ITS COMMUNIST REGIME, ANNEXED TIBET IN 1951 AND FOLLOWED IT UP IN 1962 BY USURPING 38,000 SQUARE KILOMETRES OF INDIAN TERRITORY IN LADAKH

It is continuously provoking India either through military build-up across the LAC, intrusion and attempts for encroachment of Indian territory using salami slicing tactics, negative and malicious propaganda against India through its mouthpiece Global Times or by enticing smaller nations in the Indo-China region in its debt trap, installing Communist party regimes in some of these smaller states, establishing military bases in neighbouring smaller states through debt trap diplomacy, cultural infiltration in states as far flung as USA and developing a starkly hegemonic global land route infrastructure for trade called the Belt and Road Initiative – BRI. The recent political manipulations by China in Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka glaringly reveal this.

But Bharat, through astute political and diplomatic counter plays has been successfully checkmating all the sinister moves by China. However, Bharat needs to do much more and with greater prudence and precision, using planning and proactive approach to beat China at its game. The Chinese are following the ideological principles of Sun Tzu which are full of guile, deceit and chicanery. But Barat's ancient strategy Chanakya Niti is ideologically far superior and powerful, based as it is on the divine principles of eternal Dharma. And, it is heartening to note that the present political dispensation in Bharat is using Chanakya Niti to a good extent to counter the predatory actions of China.

Bharat has a much bigger and broader task to do in keeping with its ancient historical role as the spiritual torchbearer of the world. It has to first retrieve its territory occupied by China-eastern Ladakh or Aksai Chin and then go on to liberate Tibet. Its long term natural objective should be reintegration of Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and even Pakistan and Afghanistan with it. The following action plan is suggested for achieving its geo political objectives in the Asia Pacific region.

1. Creation of strong national and international media channels for propagation of the facts about pristine cultural and geopolitical glory of Bharat and exposing the propaganda of the colonial and new colonial west about Bharat's past. This and much more needs to be done to propagate the divine, universalistic Vedic culture of Bharat so that our peace and progress promoting ideology can enter the mental space of global citizens.
2. Countering China by following the axioms of Chanakya Niti and Artha Shastra-the ultimate tools of statecraft for progress, prosperity and political empowerment of nations. This means China will be dealt with in a planned, proactive, secretive and deceptive manner befitting it. The strategy will not just be paying it back in the same coin, but surprising and shocking it at every step and thoroughly outwitting it. As long as our approach is anchored to eternal principles of Dharma, we will always be victorious.
3. Bharat needs to spend much more on its defence than at present. Bharat with its current defence outlay of 75 million USD is far behind China with outlay of 222 billion USD. The outlay needs to be doubled by reducing the expenditure on socialistic schemes and doles. R&D in defence needs to be given a further boost by reviving the critical MSME sector, though some good work has been done in the past few years by involving private sector in defence and by encouraging startups. The MSME part of the economy has not received adequate attention of the present Government so far. Boosting of MSME sector will need more drastic import curbs and bureaucratic and structural reforms which will accelerate the growth of this sector and generate jobs in a big way.
4. Military strength and geopolitical clout are based on economic might. And we need to boost economic growth through educational reforms, agricultural reforms, judicial reforms and bureaucratic reforms. We hope Modi 3.0 envisions them and will complete the half or quarter steps taken in these areas in Modi 1.0 and Modi 2.0 terms.
5. The reintegration of Bharat to form the United Bharat of the distant past will need ironing out of ideological differences between the countries of the Indian subcontinent. This, it is reiterated, is the most important measure. Our Sanatan Vedic ideology has the potential to rationalise and harmonise all other schools of thought because only the former is humanistic and universalistic.

It can reunite the ideologically divided world like nothing else can. We need to make intensive efforts to disseminate our peace promoting philosophy in the current world with raging wars and other peace disrupting processes on. This is the singular most important step that the scholars, sages and politicians of Bharat need to take in the present times.

(The author is a management consultant; views are personal)

Political turmoil in the Capital in the wake of ED arrests

The arrest of Arvind Kejriwal and tax notices issued to Opposition parties stir up both domestic and international disquiet



SHSHANK **SAURAV**

Political heat is also on the rise with the soaring temperature in Delhi after the arrest of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and tax notices to opposition parties. Political development in India has invited criticism from Germany, US and even United Nations, more particularly on the arrest of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal who is facing corruption charges and many of his cabinet ministers are already in jail.

Perhaps western powers are still in the colonial hangover and carrying a false sense of superiority believing that they can meddle in the internal affairs of any country. Perhaps it is high time for them to smell the coffee and adjust to the realities of the twenty-first century. World is not ready to accept the sermons on democracy from those who have a track record of toppling the democratically elected Governments and siding with autocratic regimes to achieve their own means.

Political parties which are part of INDI alliance have received Income Tax (IT) notice and principal opposition party Congress is one of them. IT officials should show some maturity and issuing notices on merely technical grounds is not going to help the Indian democracy. If the position taken by the IT officials is applied across all assessments, then it would be difficult to find any political party which is fully compliant.

In terms of technical requirements as per the law, section 13A of the IT Act casts a requirement to maintain the detail of every donor (viz name and address) and Section 29C of the Representation of the People's Act, 1951 requires the political party to file these details with the Election Commission of India (ECI). Contribution report filed by all major political parties with the ECI and available on



its website shows that data quality issues persist across the details provided by all the parties. IT authorities need to look beyond what has been submitted in the return filed with ECI and they must be answering the question, if in-substance they are in possession of any information which can establish the donor's credentials. Section 13A of the Income Tax Act, 1961 clearly provides that any donation more than Rs. Two thousand must be received via banking channels and if any political party is compliant with this requirement, then it is for the tax officials to explain what difficulty they are facing in corroborating the details when donations are coming via bank?

As per media reports, communist party of India (CPI) has received IT notice quoting its old income tax PAN in the filing and questions should be asked from tax officials on what was the bonafide intent in sending notice to the assessee? How this error has impacted the cause of transparency and why couldn't CPI be provided an opportunity to correct this kind of error by updating the PAN?

This country does not need a bureaucracy which goes on unleashed and those who are defending harassment over trivial issues should think from a long-term perspective. Bureaucrats are not answerable to the public but politicians should be conscious of the message which gets disseminated from the actions of babus. Treasurer and office bearers of Congress, CPI or any other political outfit can be criticised for not following appropriate procedures so far as it relates to filing the necessary details or pursuing the income tax notices, or filing an appeal with income tax appellate tribunal but as a democracy we must not give a free run to bureaucrats to manage the show in accordance with their whims and fancies.

Though people's memory is very short, I would like to remind you of the retrospective amendment done in Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), 1976 to bailout both BJP and Congress. In 2014, Delhi high court found both BJP & Congress guilty of receiving foreign contribution in violation of FCRA and therefore the law was amended first in 2016 and applied retrospectively since the inception of FCRA, 1976 via another amendment in 2018. This issue was also technical in nature and the current income tax issue is also technical in nature.

We are the largest democracy in the world and such instances which appear to be over enthusiasm of tax officials to please their bosses is not in a good taste. There are a lot of cases pending with the agencies and they should be told to focus on those rather than bringing new topics for discussion which create unnecessary noise and have no practical value. On a lighter note, now seasoned politicians would have understood how the common man of the country feels when it gets tax notices on frivolous grounds which gets quashed but only after following a prolonged appellate procedure.

(The writer is Chartered Accountant, Author and Public Policy Analyst; views are personal)

the pioneer
VIJAYAWADA | TUESDAY | APRIL 2, 2024

MONEY MATTERS

Kross, Saraswati Saree Depot get Sebi's go ahead to float IPO

Auto parts manufacturer Kross Ltd and Saraswati Saree Depot Ltd have received Sebi's go ahead to raise funds through initial public offerings. The two companies filed their preliminary initial public offering (IPO) papers with the capital markets regulator between October and December 2023 and obtained their regulatory observation during March 22-27, an update with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) showed on Monday. As per the draft papers, Kross' maiden public issue is a mix of a fresh issue of shares worth up to Rs 250 crore and an Offer for Sale (OFS) of shares aggregating up to Rs 250 crore by promoters. The OFS portion consists of equity shares to the tune of up to Rs 168 crore by Sudhir Rai and Rs 82 crore by Anita Rai. The Jamshedpur-based company proposes to utilise the net proceeds of the fresh issue for the purchase of machinery and equipment, payment of debt, and funding the working capital requirements of the company.



GST collections hit Rs 1.78 lakh crore, second highest since roll-out

GST collections in March grew 11.5 per cent to Rs 1.78 lakh crore on higher domestic sales, the finance ministry said on Monday. The gross GST collection for the last fiscal (April 2023-March 2024) stood at Rs 20.18 lakh crore, 11.7 per cent higher than the mop-up in the preceding fiscal. The average monthly gross collection for FY24 stood at Rs 1.68 lakh crore, exceeding Rs 1.5 lakh crore in the preceding fiscal. "Gross Good and Services Tax (GST) revenue for March 2024 witnessed the second highest collection ever at Rs 1.78 lakh crore, with a 11.5 per cent year-on-year growth. This surge was driven by a significant rise in GST collection from domestic transactions at 17.6 per cent," the ministry said in a statement. The highest-ever GST collection was recorded at Rs 1.87 lakh crore in April 2023. Experts said the double-digit increase in monthly GST collection underscores the resilience of economy and paves way for next generation GST reforms.



97.69 pc of Rs 2000 currency notes returned: RBI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday said nearly 97.69 per cent of the Rs 2000 denomination bank notes have returned to the banking system, and only Rs 8,202 crore worth of the withdrawn notes are still with the public. On May 19, 2023, the RBI announced the withdrawal of Rs 2,000 denomination bank notes from circulation. The total value of Rs 2000 banknotes in circulation, which was Rs 3.56 lakh crore at the close of business on May 19, 2023, when the withdrawal of Rs 2000 banknotes was announced, has declined to Rs 8,202 crore at the close of business on March 29, 2024, the Reserve Bank of India said in a statement. "Thus, 97.69 per cent of the Rs 2000 banknotes in circulation as of May 19, 2023, has since been returned," it added. The Rs 2,000 banknotes continue to be legal tender. People can deposit and/or exchange Rs 2000 bank notes at 19 RBI offices across the country. People can also send Rs 2000 bank notes through India Post from any post office to any of the RBI Issue Offices for credit to their bank accounts in India.



TO COMPETE WITH CHINA ON ECONOMIC FRONT

India must focus on manufacturing: Jaishankar

PNS ■ SURAT

To compete with China on the economic front, India should focus on manufacturing, a key sector which was ignored by governments before Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power in 2014, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Monday.

He noted that tension at the border with China has caused "abnormality" in New Delhi-Beijing relations, and added India's thinking is absolutely clear that unless there is peace and stability in the border areas, the ties between the two Asian powers will not improve.

"If we have to compete with China, which we should, then its solution is that we should focus on manufacturing here. Our approach towards manufacturing has changed after Modiji came to power. Before that, people did not give much emphasis on manufacturing," Jaishankar said during his interaction with industry leaders at a programme in Surat.

There is no other way to counter China on the economic front, insisted the career diplomat-turned-politician while replying to questions from audience members on how he saw India's relationship with the world's second largest economy as it moves towards becoming a USD 5 trillion economy.

Jaishankar was speaking at a corporate summit on "Bharat's Economic Rising," organised by the Southern Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SGCCI).



"If we talk of rising Bharat, it will rise through technology. You cannot build strong technology on weak manufacturing. At any cost, we should put special emphasis on manufacturing, because that is the only economic response," the Union minister maintained.

Jaishankar, a former Ambassador to China, emphasised that tension at the border has affected Sino-Indian ties.

"As you know, there is tension at the border (with China). And this has caused abnormality in our relations. For that our thinking is very clear that unless there is peace and stability at the border, the relations will remain in the same deteriorated condition," he noted.

Asked about relationship with Pakistan which remains strained and New Delhi's fight against terrorism sponsored from across the border, Jaishankar asserted India should never compromise on terrorism.

"For us to tolerate, justify (terrorism) -- are all wrong. The only response to terrorism is counter-terrorism. And they should understand this to make it a deterrent," he further said.

Asked about the future of the World Trade Organisation amid China dumping goods in India through dubious methods and advanced countries using the WTO to their own convenience, the minister said while it has its own set of challenges, New Delhi should never leave the global forum.

"It (WTO) is a formal and accepted forum for talks. Here we would put forward our point, work with allies to save our interest. We recently held a meeting on fishing. We should also explore arrangements at bilateral and group levels," he noted.

In his speech at the corporate summit, Jaishankar emphasised that reforms carried out by the government and policies framed to counter COVID-19 have helped India emerge from the pandemic and strengthen its economic position to such an extent that today "we are the fastest growing large economy". "This is one reason why global perception about India has changed," he said.

Given India's leadership role, vision, stability, confidence and foreign investment figures, the world wants to collaborate with "us in our journey", said the External Affairs Minister.

"This is a very auspicious occasion for us to engage with the world in different ways in different spheres.

Gold surges by Rs 1,070 to all-time high of Rs 68,420 per 10 gr. in Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices surged by Rs 1,070 to hit an all-time high of Rs 68,420 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid a rally in the precious metal in global markets, according to HDFC Securities. The precious metal had closed at Rs 67,350 per 10 grams in the previous trade.

Silver prices also jumped by Rs 1,120 to Rs 78,570 per kg. In the previous trade, it had closed at Rs 77,450 per kg.



BIZ-COAL-PRODUCTION

'India's coal and lignite production hits all-time high of over 1b tons'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The country has for the first time crossed the milestone of 1 billion tonnes of coal and lignite production in the financial year 2023-24, Union Coal and Mines Minister Pralhad Joshi said on Monday. India's total coal and lignite output was at 937 million tonnes (MT) in the preceding 2022-23 fiscal, as per official figures.

"Proud to share that under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi, we have registered a stellar achievement by crossing 1 billion tonne (BT) coal and lignite production," Joshi said.

It is a historic moment for India as the country has achieved the highest-ever production, and it will go a long way in ensuring energy security to the nation. The continuous efforts to increase domestic coal production has ensured that going forward the country will never have to face coal shortage, the minister said.

Joshi further said, "I thank the officials of the sector, all the coal warriors and private miners for their grit and hard work in helping achieve mission-1BT. Owing to your support we have registered 70 per cent growth in production over the last 10 years."



Govt pushing ACC battery storage scheme

Budget hiked 6x in last few years: Official

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The budget for the advanced chemistry cell sector has gone up 6x in the last few years, reflecting the government's continuous focus to boost the country's energy storage ecosystem, a senior official said.

The National Programme on Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) battery storage was approved by the Union Cabinet on May 12, 2021 with budgetary outlay of Rs 18,100 crore. The scheme is aimed at strengthening the ecosystem for electric mobility and battery storage in the country.



The scheme envisages to enhance India's manufacturing capabilities of ACCs by setting up of giga scale ACC and battery manufacturing facilities in India with emphasis on maximum domestic value addition.

Addressing at the India Energy Storage Week 2024 (IESW 2024) curtain raiser even, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Heavy Industries Vijay Mittal said, "Ministry of Heavy Industries and the Government of India have provided a 6x growth in the budget."



Stock markets start new fiscal on a high

Sensex, Nifty scale new lifetime highs

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Stock markets started the new fiscal on a high with benchmark Sensex and Nifty scaling fresh record high levels in intra-day trade before settling in the green on Monday, backed by firm trends in Asian markets and foreign fund inflows.

Extending its winning momentum to the third day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 363.20 points or 0.49 per cent to settle at 74,014.55. During the day, it zoomed 603.27 points or 0.81 per cent to hit its record intra-day high of 74,254.62. The NSE Nifty climbed 135.10 points or 0.61 per cent to 22,462. During the day, it jumped 203.05 points or 0.90 per cent to hit the all-time peak of 22,529.95. Realty and metal shares performed well while FMCG and auto traded subdued. From the Sensex basket, JSW Steel, Tata Steel, UltraTech Cement, NTPC, Larsen & Toubro and HDFC Bank were the major gainers.

Markets rally make investors richer by Rs 10.58L crore in three days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Investors' wealth soared by Rs 10.58 lakh crore in three days of the market rally, where the BSE benchmark jumped over 2 per cent, and hit an all-time high on Monday.

Extending its winning momentum to the third day running, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 363.20 points or 0.49 per cent to settle at 74,014.55. During the day, it zoomed 603.27 points or 0.81 per cent to hit its record high of 74,254.62. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies jumped by Rs 10,58,034.42 crore to Rs 3,93,15,471.18 crore (USD 4.74 trillion) in three days.

The BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 1,544.25 points or 2.13 per cent in three days.

Equity markets were closed on March 29 for Good Friday.

All Adani group stocks in heavy demand

Adani Energy jumps over 8 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

All listed Adani group stocks were in the limelight on Monday, with Adani Energy climbing over 8 per cent, as investors flocked to the counters amid a positive trend in the broader market.

Shares of Adani Energy Solutions jumped 8.40 per cent, NDTV zoomed 6.16 per cent, Adani Wilmar advanced 5.92 per cent, Adani Power surged 4.99 per cent, Adani Total Gas soared 4.81 per cent, Adani Green Energy rallied 2.93 per cent, Adani Ports climbed 2.56 per cent and ACC (2.38 per cent) on the BSE.

The stock of Adani Enterprises went up by 1.80 per cent and Ambuja Cements climbed 1.49 per cent.

The combined market valuation of all the group firms stood at Rs 16,30,648.23 crore.



The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 363.20 points or 0.49 per cent to settle at 74,014.55 and the NSE Nifty advanced 135.10 points or 0.61 per cent to 22,462. Both the benchmarks hit their all-time high levels in intra-day.

Adani group opened a USD 1.2 billion copper plant, bought a port in Odisha, raised stakes in a cement company and stitched an alliance with rival Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries, all in a matter of one week in signs that the apples-to-airport conglomerate has shrugged off the Hindenburg effect and is back to rapid expansion spree.

SCORES 2.0 to strengthen complaint redressal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Monday launched the new version of SCORES in a bid to strengthen the investor complaint redressal mechanism by introducing auto-routing of complaints and monitoring such grievances by designated bodies.

SEBI Complaint Redress System (SCORES) is an online system where investors in the securities market can lodge their complaints through web URL and an app. It was launched in June 2011.

"The new version of SCORES strengthens the investor complaint redress mechanism in the securities market by making the process more efficient through auto-routing, auto-escalation, monitoring by the designated bodies and reduction of timelines," Sebi said in a statement.

Sebi said that investors can lodge complaints only through a new version of SCORES from April 1, 2024.

In the old SCORES, investors would not be able to lodge any new complaint, however, investors can check the status of their complaints already lodged in old SCORES. Further, the disposed of complaints filed in the old SCORES can be viewed at SCORES 2.0.

The regulator said that the old app has been discontinued and a new app in its place will be launched soon.

Under the new version of SCORES, the regulator has introduced auto-routing of complaints to the concerned regulated entity to eliminate time lapses in the flow of complaints.

'Hiring in healthtech sector to grow by 15-20 pc'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Even as the healthtech sector in the country has been facing an investment downturn, hiring in the segment is expected to grow by 15-20 per cent, a report said on Monday.

The healthtech sector is bound to grow rapidly due to the socio-economic changes in India and the competitive advantages we offer for the world in patient care as well as in manufacturing and research and development (R&D), and there has been an upswing in hiring in the recent times on a consistent basis, CIEL HR CEO Aditya Narayan Mishra said.



The healthtech sector in India demonstrates resilience with a 9 per cent increase in employment in 2023, over the previous year despite a 'funding winter' impacting the flow of investments and hiring sentiments, according to HR services company CIEL HR's 'Health Tech Sector Employment Trends' report.

"Despite the 'funding winter', the hiring numbers have grown and the outlook for the year ahead (2024) is significantly stronger," he added. Hiring outlook for 2024 remains robust and is projected to increase by 15-20 per cent, with a surge in demand for skilled professionals across various domains.

"Companies must fine-tune their strategies for talent attraction and retention to make the most out of the opportunity available for us," he added.

The CIEL HR's 'Health Tech Sector Employment Trends' report is based on the data and analysis of 42,166 employees working in 38 leading healthtech organisations operating in India and job postings on portals.

It further revealed that despite the cost-cutting and a slowdown in hiring, companies continued to fill the roles in sales and business development followed by the critical roles in technology and product development all through 2023.

As a result the hiring in the sector beat the market trends and continued to grow by 9 per cent.

Indian cos collect Rs 9.41 lakh cr from private placement of corp bonds

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian companies garnered Rs 9.41 lakh crore through the issuance of bonds on a private placement basis in 2023-24, a surge of 10 per cent from the preceding fiscal amid surge in credit demand.

The 2024-25 fiscal is expected to be very robust as companies will continue to raise capital for capex post-election results.

"In an unprecedented era of economic development aided by pro-business reforms and macroeconomic stability, India is set to become the third largest economy globally by 2027 and will continue to see strong flows.

"In this backdrop, we expect FY25 to also be a very strong year from a primary capital perspective as companies will continue to look to raise capital for capex post-election results,"

Neha Agarwal, Managing Director & Head of Equity Capital Markets at JM Financial Ltd, said.

According to data compiled by Prime Database, the amount raised through debt private placement in 2023-24 stood at Rs 9.41 lakh crore, up 10 per cent from Rs 8.52 lakh crore in 2022-23. This was mobilised by 904 institutions and corporates. In addition, there were 17 debt private placements from real estate investment trusts (REITs) and infrastructure investment trusts (InVITs) collecting Rs 14,155 crore.

The funds were mopped up to strengthen balance sheets, retire existing debt and support working capital requirements.

the pioneer
Vijayawada | Tuesday April 2, 2024

what's brewing?

BHUMI PEDNEKAR HATES TERM 'FEMALE-LED PROJECTS' IN HER GUT AND WHOOPS IT RIDICULOUS



Bhumi hates the term 'female-led projects' that are used to label content that is headlined by women actors in our country because no one uses the term 'men-led projects' to describe otherwise.

Bhumi says, "There is a misconception that people are not immediately drawn to watch films headlined by women. Such projects are immediately bracketed as 'female-led projects'. This is an annoying term, and I hate it from the gut. Gender doesn't define people's watching preferences. The audience wants to see good cinema. They aren't choosing to watch it on the basis of gender. It's ridiculous! If that were the case, I wouldn't have survived, and I have built a career out of essaying remarkably strong women on screen! I got lucky because I started working at a time that coincided with how women characters were being written for cinema. There were authour-backed roles written for me. I was fortunate that directors liked my performances and chose me to headline some of these incredibly beautiful projects that showed women as agents of change."

Bhumi further adds, "My last, *Bhakshak*, was about a woman's willpower to fight the system for social good, and it went on to become a huge hit globally. So audiences saw a female actor headline a subject that took on patriarchy and showed it in all it's ugliness. Such a project should have never become a hit if the audience were selecting to watch male-actor-driven projects."

Bhumi wants filmmakers to take the punt and produce more and more projects with the same budget and scale that male actors get in our country.

She says, "*Toilet: Ek Prem Katha, Lust Stories, Dum Laga Ke Haisha, Saand Ki Aankh, Bala,* and *Pati Patni Aur Woh* are all films that had women driving the story, and they are all successful projects. So, I feel it's high time we discard all misconceptions and back projects led by women and give them the scale and mounting that we truly deserve."



Boney Kapoor opens up about 'never' intervening in his children's dating lives

Filmmaker Boney Kapoor, father of Janhvi Kapoor, Khushi Kapoor, Arjun Kapoor, and Anshula Kapoor, claims he has 'never' intervened in his children's personal affairs, but there have been instances when he has 'resented' their relationships.

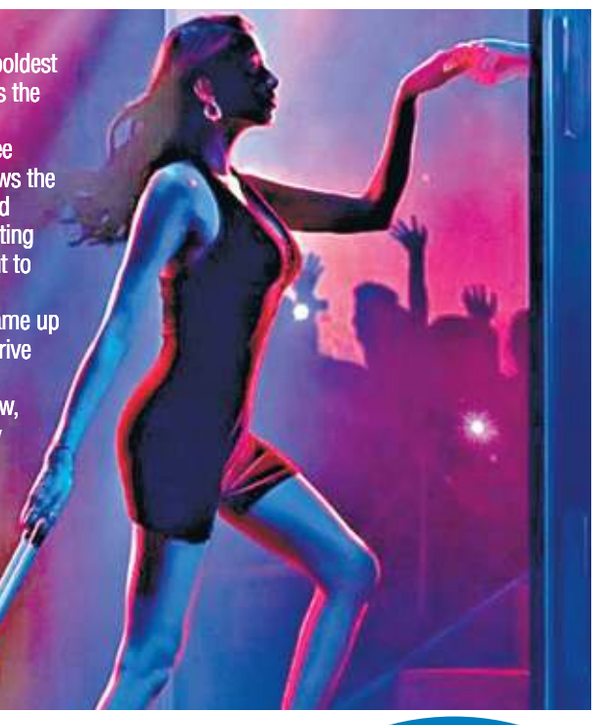
Boney, who was last seen in *Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar*, said that he has never discussed his children's "dating choices". He stated, "Such a situation has never arisen in which I had to drill something into their minds. Having said that, I've resented a few problems in Arjun, Janhvi, and Khushi's relationships, but I've asked them to deal with them on their own. It's always been like this."

Arjun Kapoor has been dating Malaika Arora since 2018. Janhvi Kapoor announced her reunion with her former boyfriend Shikhar Pahariya on Karan Johar's chat show *Koffee With Karan 8*. Anshula Kapoor confirmed her romance with screenwriter Rohan Thakkar on social media. Khushi Kapoor, who made her Bollywood debut in *The Archies*, is rumoured to be dating her co-star Vedang Raina.

Boney Kapoor prefers to let his children be themselves. He believes that they have their own thoughts. "The world has shrunk today, which was not the case in our lifetime. We took our time to grasp how the world works. It's easier for them to form their own views." Arjun and Anshula are Boney's children from his previous marriage to Mona Shourie Kapoor, and Janhvi and Khushi are his and Sridevi's daughters.

Arjun Kapoor and Anshula Kapoor grew closer to Janhvi and Khushi following Sridevi's unexpected death in 2018. Boney Kapoor feels "good" when he sees everyone together. "It's fantastic to see them getting along. Boney remarked, "With all of them around me, I feel like the whole world is with me."

Bold and gripping teaser of *LSD2* out now



Being true to its theme and concept, the makers have dropped the boldest yet very gripping teaser of *Love Sex Aur Dhokha 2*, which captures the essence and theme of the sequel perfectly.

The highly anticipated teaser takes the audience into a glimpse of three parallel stories that are set in the modern internet era. The teaser shows the film's location in the world of digital and the consequences of love and betrayal in today's world. The makers have wrapped up a very interesting subject in today's world, and it guarantees to leave everyone impatient to watch the film.

Moreover, producer Ektaa R. Kapoor and director Dibakar Banerjee came up with a disclaimer for the audience that *Love Sex Aur Dhokha 2* will arrive with shocking content that should be watched with personal concern. Looking at the teaser, it seems like this indeed needs a disclaimer. Now, the makers are coming up with the second installment, and it's surely going to be bolder than the previous one.

Love, Sex, Aur Dhokha 2 explores the complexities of relationships and unveils the hidden facets of modern-day love in the era of the Internet. Through a gripping narrative and compelling performances, the film promises to delve deeper into the themes of love, betrayal, and the consequences of our technologically driven world. The film will be released on April 19, 2024.

Ajay recalls his prank that led a woman to commit suicide!



Today, Bollywood actor Ajay Devgn celebrates his birthday. The actor, who is married to Kajol and has two children, Nysa and Yug, is known to be a prankster on set. While he intends to do things in good fun, there was a time when a prank went bad, resulting in a woman contemplating suicide.

In a recent interview, Ajay shared, "Years ago, there was this actor who had just gotten married and brought along his wife for an outdoor shoot. The girl was from outside the [film] industry—a simple girl from a small town. We used to shoot at night. She would obviously meet her husband in the morning. We would keep telling the wife that her husband was having an affair. And then, at night, he goes off somewhere. There are no night shoots! I'd tell her that I return to my room at 10.30 [p.m.]. She'd tell me that she's heard all about my pranks. She trusts her husband. This carried on for eight days. On the ninth day, we woke up and learned that she had actually taken pills and had to be rushed to the hospital. She'd been fighting with her husband over this, throughout, checking with him on what the hell he'd been up to!"

THE FIRST OMEN TO UNVEIL THE ORIGIN STORY OF THE TERRIFYING '666' LORE



Terrifying first visuals of 20th Century Studios *The First Omen* trailer is giving audiences sleepless nights as the horror thriller is set to unfold upon them in Indian cinemas, 5th April 2024 onwards. Earlier this week, some lucky fans got a chance to witness the horrifying prequel at the L.A. premiere, post which they took to social media to share their spooky experiences from a chilling, eerie, and unsettling premise to actress Nell Tiger Free's captivating performance in the upcoming psychological-thriller film.

The upcoming 6th film of *The Omen* franchise will reveal a peculiar connection of the unholy number '666' and the highly-anticipated prequel of the *Omen* franchise. This terrifying sequence of numbers is perceived as that of the 'antichrist' or the evil throughout the world, and sheds light on the evil incarnate. Much alike the dreadful origins of the number, a brand new poster for *The First Omen* teases the birth of the evil on the '6th Month, 6th Day and the 6th Hour' which only darkens the mystery behind the fearful evil creation in *The First Omen*.

20th Century Studios' *The First Omen* is set in 1971 and follows a young American woman Margaret, who encounters darkness that causes her to question her own faith and uncovers a terrifying conspiracy that hopes to bring about the birth of an evil incarnate. Directed by Arkasha Stevenson based on characters created by David Seltzer, *The First Omen* stars Nell Tiger Free, Tawfeek Barhom, Sonia Braga, Ralph Ineson, with Charles Dance, and Bill Nighy in pivotal roles. *The First Omen* releases in Indian theatres on April 5.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBES



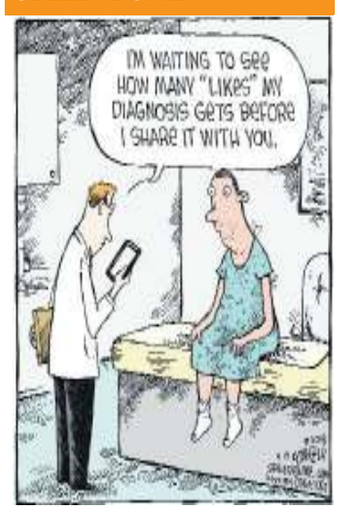
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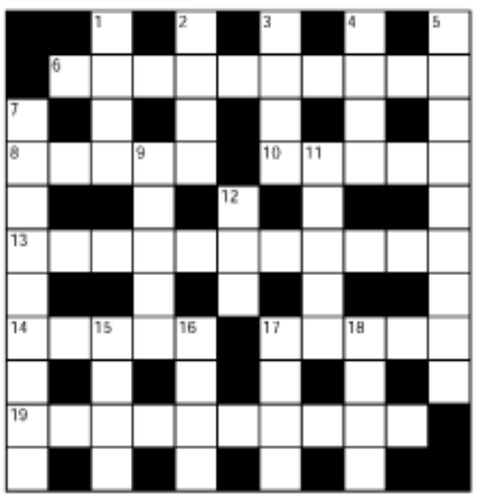
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



SUDOKU

			5					
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	1			6	7	5		8
	8	7			3			
4		3				2		5
			2			6	8	
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		6	1				3	
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Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

6 Television advertisement
8 Group of eight
10 A black and white animal in China
13 A kind of small glass tube for showing temperatures
14 Time of darkness
17 Comes to a standstill
19 Rang up

DOWN

1 Mislaid
2 Leave out
3 Put paper around something
4 A large African cat
5 A very large seabird
7 Lucky
9 Our planet
11 Watchful, ready for anything that might happen
12 Plaything
15 A very strong wind
16 Adhesive strip
17 Shortly
18 Unlock

SOLUTION

S	P	I	D	E	R		S	P	O	T
A		C				F		A		W
F	A	I	L		P	O	L	I	T	E
E		C		A		R		R		N
	G	L	A	S	S	E	S			T
S		E		P		I		A		Y
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Tuesday
April 2, 2024

'I WATCH MALAYALAM CINEMA MORE THAN BOLLYWOOD'

Actress Monika Panwar is playing the leading lady in *Dukaan*, directed by Siddharth Garima, the writer of *Toilet-Ek Prem Katha*, *Raabta*, and *Ram-leela*. She shoots the breeze about the film, her character, working with kids, and more.



K. RAMYA SREE

Actress Monika Panwar, who was previously seen in projects like *Super 30*, *Jamtara*, *Class of 83*, and *Mast Mein Rehne Ka*, has bagged the opportunity to lead the film *Dukaan*, directed by Siddharth-Garima, writers of *Toilet: Ek Prem Katha*, *Raabta*, and *Ram-Leela*. For Siddarth-Garima too, this is their debut film as directors.

This is a project that talks about surrogacy, where Monika plays Jasmine, a surrogate mother.

If we look at the filmography of Monika, she has been part of intense projects only, but in this project she is also exploring the comical side of acting. In this interview, blowing the gaff about why she agreed to play Jasmine, Monika shared, "In *Dukaan*, Jasmine is a fiery and a street-smart girl. The way Siddharth Garima has written the character gives so much depth to Jasmine. I think it is every actor's dream to play something like this. So, when I first read the script, I was quite overwhelmed by it. Because, generally, you don't see this kind of writing where you are showing a strong-headed, courageous girl, showing her fragilities and also where she is lacking. It is not always black and white; it also shows the grey area. That's what resonated with me."

"It was wonderful working with Siddarth-Garima. When they approached me for this role, I learned that they were the writers of *Ram Leela*. I am such a huge fan of *Ram Leela*, especially the way they have written the dialogue. The best part of Siddarth-Garima's writing style is that it is lyrical and has some rhythm. Even if there's banter going on between two people, they don't miss the beat in the dialogue, which is very important to them. They write their characters in an unconventional way. Their dialogues are very catchy," she continued, further sharing a dialogue from the film to let us know the content of the film. She shared, "In *Dukaan*, there is a dialogue: "Tu apna shakal kaise dekhthi hai, and Jasmine says 'surma lagage'. There is a certain humour in giving straight to someone's face. This is their debut film, and their direction is very simple and not result-oriented. They make their actors work very easily."



Furthermore, letting the cat out of the bag about her character Jasmine and how she prepped for it, Monika, who next wanted to explore some action-oriented films, gave away: "Jasmine can turn anything, any ridiculous idea, into a business. That's how she entered surrogate life. We have taken a conscious decision to go to Gujarat because this story is based in Gujarat. We went to Anand and stayed there for two to three weeks just to observe and learn more about their culture and perceptions. We also spent time with surrogates over there to prep for my character. That's how you incorporate a bit of nuances and gestures into your character."

"Jasmine's character is intense but lighthearted," asserted the *Super 30* actress.

However, this project has a lot of kids, and working with them was bitterly candy-coated for her. "Because they are their own directors. In scenes where they have to laugh, they cry, and vice versa. In the film, as the story progressed, we worked with a lot of small children, and it was very difficult. There is a last scene where, according to the script, the kid was not supposed to sleep, but the child was sleeping. So the director decided not to wake the child up as they might get cranky again, and we shot like that only. Most of the time, children were doing the opposite of the script. So it was memorable, but I will avoid doing that in the future," she laughed.

Having been part of many Bollwood projects, do you know Malayalam cinema is something she watches more than Bollywood? She coughed, "I am a big, big fan of Malayalam cinema. If I get an offer from there, it is definitely a yes. There are so many directors and actors that I want to work with. More than Bollywood films, I watch Malayalam cinema."

On the other hand, she is also part of Prime Video's *Khauf*, which is billed to be a psychological horror film. "I was never keen on doing horror stuff. Psychological horror is something I always look forward to, and I am fortunate I got an opportunity like this. If you have watched my earlier projects, they have all been intense, but this is more than intense. In this show, you follow the story of a young woman who has a traumatic past, and to overcome that past, she comes to a big city and lives in a hostel. She starts to feel that there are some unexplained forces inside and outside the hostel, and at the same time, she is confronting her troubled past. A lot of things go on with the character. I think that's something we haven't explored; for that matter, this project is very important to me," she expressed.

Monika's career graph is only ascending, and we were curious to know how she chooses her scripts. To this, she humbly responded, "For me, it's instinctive sometimes. But I am more of a reader, so for me, the script is God. I give lots of preference to the script. And when the story is striking, I see how impactful my character is. Even if the character's screen presence is less, if it is impactful, then I will go ahead with it. The third is always the director. These three aspects are something I always consider before signing a project."

Religious tech start-up simplifies pooja shopping

With an aim to address the challenges posed by disorganised pooja markets, *The Pioneer* brings to you My Puja Mart start-up as we connect with the co-founder via an exclusive chat.



RASHMI BHUMIREDDY

Determined to address the challenges posed by the disorganised puja market, where customers often grapple with fragmented sources and time constraints, My Puja Mart emerged with a vision to streamline the entire process. By offering meticulously curated puja kits for various festivals, pujas, and rituals, complemented by top-notch services delivered by a team of vedic pundits and astrologers, the venture ensures a comprehensive and satisfying experience. My Puja Mart, was launched by Dr. Srilatha, an alumnus of the Indian Institute of Management, and Ravikumar, an alumnus of the Asian Institute of Management. As per Dr. Srilatha, the co-founder, this "religious tech" start-up reshapes the landscape of religious rituals, making them accessible to all through a technologically enabled platform.

Sharing her journey with ***The Pioneer***, Dr. Srilatha said, "I am always interested in religious activities. In regards to the market for puja materials, it is very nascent. Most of the players in the market are unorganised players or businessmen. People procure necessary materials after searching through many places, as not all materials are available at a single place. So, I wanted to set up something where all the services related to religion are available."

She desires to cater to all kinds of religious services for diverse communities and cultures by using technology immensely.

Just like many with no business background, she too had her own share of troubles in order to embark on this journey. The main challenges she faced were, "The religious markets have been unorganised, and people were used to these markets. To change this, there was a dire need to shift the mindsets of people. There are no standardised products for a particular puja. Many a time, customers need to overpay as per the whims and fancies of pandits suggesting them. To solve these issues, we offer customisation of products while adhering to the core values of authenticity."

By offering meticulously curated puja kits for various festivals, pujas, and rituals, complemented by top-notch services delivered by a team of vedic pundits and astrologers, the start-up ensures a comprehensive and satisfying experience.

Having embarked on it's journey with WE Hub's pre-incubation program, *Upsurge*, they have thrived under the guidance provided during the subsequent incubation program. With mentorship, formalisation through company registration, exposure to funding opportunities through business pitching events, participation in MSME hackathons, assistance in the procurement of materials for the puja kit, support in business financial modelling, and media visibility, the entrepreneur says, has flourished under the incubation support.

Since its inception in May 2023, it has served over 250 customers in Hyderabad alone, with aspirations to broaden its customer base through multiple sales channels. The company has a mission to expand globally, targeting international markets by 2025.

"I want to expand my business in multiple cities before expanding it internationally. It brings me immense pleasure to provide her puja kits, especially to working women and senior citizens who have been appreciating my idea, making the procurement much easier and, at the same time, allowing them to celebrate religious fervour and devotion," signs off Dr. Srilatha as she speaks of her future goals.

Gaining insights on brown fat

In contrast to white fat, brown fat, which is typically located in the neck region, consumes energy rather than stores it.

To be able to decipher brown fat, we must first understand the types of fats found in our bodies.

Essential fat is necessary for survival and physiological activities. It is found in many tissues throughout the body and is required for proper hormone action, particularly reproductive hormones.

Brown fat helps to keep the body temperature stable. Brown fat, unlike other fat types, produces heat when it burns calories, making it a viable target for weight loss and obesity prevention efforts.

The most abundant type of fat in the body is white fat, which stores energy. It also works as insulation, helping to control body temperature, as well as cushioning and protecting organs.

Beige fat shares properties with both white and brown fat. It burns calories similarly to brown fat but is less plentiful in the body.

Subcutaneous fat is situated directly beneath the skin. It is what you can "pinch" on your body, and while it provides insulation and energy storage, excessive amounts can be unsightly and may signal an increased risk of certain health disorders.

Visceral fat accumulates in the abdominal cavity near vital internal organs like the liver, pancreas, and intestines. High levels of visceral fat have been linked to an increased risk of significant health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and some malignancies.

Body fat, particularly brown fat, may have more benefits for you than you realize. For example, brown fat can assist prevent diabetes. Yes, it is true.

According to a Cell Metabolism study, people with more brown fat had less blood sugar changes and so had a lower risk of getting diabetes.

In addition, newborns have more brown fat, which helps control their body temperature. However, as we become older, the amount of brown fat in our bodies gradually decreases.

Recent research suggests that people can stimulate their brown fat by exposing themselves to chilly temperatures. A study found that those who slept in a somewhat cold room (about 19 degrees Celsius) had up to a 40% increase in both the amount and activity of their brown fat.

Sleeping under warmer temperatures, around 27 degrees Celsius, resulted in a drop in brown fat levels. Surprisingly, cold showers had no significant effect on brown fat activation.

Another natural way to increase brown fat is to consume apple peels. Ursolic acid, a chemical found in apple peels, has been demonstrated to increase brown fat content. Furthermore, foods including cranberries, blueberries, plums, and prunes contain ursolic acid, which may promote brown fat activation.

Meanwhile, radiologists frequently detest brown fat because it produces a lot of heat, which might make it difficult to spot tumour-related activity in cancer patients during body scans.

Radiologists frequently advise patients to eat a high-fat, low-carb meal before scans to reduce brown fat activation. This suggests that a high-carbohydrate, low-fat diet may boost brown fat activity.

Furthermore, radiologists provide heated waiting rooms to avoid the unexpected.

(The author, Dr Meenakshi Jain, is the director of internal medicine at Max Super Speciality Hospital.)





DHONI WILL BAT HIGHER ONLY IF GAME IS ON THE LINE: CLARKE

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Calls for Mahendra Singh Dhoni batting higher up the order have grown after his whirlwind effort against Delhi Capitals but Michael Clarke feels the former Chennai Super Kings captain will continue to bat at no.8 and will only promote himself if the game "is on the line".

Dhoni's unbeaten 37 off 16 balls at number eight did not prove to be enough but his loyal fans believe the outcome would have been different had he batted higher up the order.

Clarke, who like Dhoni is a World Cup-winning captain, said the Indian legend will continue to perform the finisher's role.

"I don't think he will. I think he'll stay where he is. I think every MS Dhoni fan wants to see him as high up the order as possible. We've all said throughout his career, he should open the batting," Clarke told Star Sports.

"But look, he's at a stage of his career where he's down from the captaincy. I don't think he'll come up the order. I think if there's a game on the line and he needs to go up the order because it's what's best for the team, I'm sure he will."

Dhoni's cameo against the Delhi Capitals included a thundering six over extra-cover before he unleashed a one handed maximum over mid-wicket in the 20th over.

The 42-year-old, who last played for India in 2019, had undergone a knee surgery last year.

"...Just because he's hitting the ball so well, I don't think you'll see him batting in the top five or top six. I think he's a genius at the dance. He's probably the best finisher I've ever seen. So, I think they'll continue to utilize him in that role," said Clarke.

Steve Smith, who has also captained Australia, said Dhoni at higher than number eight could benefit CSK.

"Let's get him up the order. I think he did not miss the middle of the bat tonight. That was just incredible to witness. I think Jadeja, throughout the other end, was actually struggling to find the middle.

"They bowled really well to him but MS got there on strike. Obviously, in his first ball to the boundary and then from there, he just barely missed the middle of the bat. It was great to watch and I think the fans want to see him getting up the order and keep doing it more often," said Smith.



You are not a true human being if you are not inspired by Pant: Watson

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

If Rishabh Pant's journey from a near death car accident to hitting one handed sixes in a space of 15 months does not inspire someone then they are probably "not true human beings", feels former Australia all-rounder Shane Watson.

The 26-year-old returned to competitive cricket in this IPL after recovering from a horrifying car crash in December 2022. The flamboyant batter had suffered multiple injuries, which required a major knee surgery and an extensive rehabilitation.

After two scratchy innings in the opening two games, Pant gave a glimpse of his devastating best as he hammered four boundaries and three maximums, including his trademark hand-off-the-bat six, to notch his maiden fifty of the season.

"It's inspirational, no question about it. To think that Rishabh had the ability to do this tonight, after the injuries that he sustained is unbelievable," Watson said on JioCinema.

"You're not a true human being if you're not inspired by Rishabh Pant, the way he was able to come out and turn it on like that. It took him a little while to find his feet but once he let those shackles off, he played some 'Rishabh Pant' shots, and they were extraordinary.

His knock helped Delhi Capitals register a 20-run win, their maiden victory of the season, over defending champions Chennai Super Kings in Visakhapatnam on Sunday.

"It really was something special. I thought it might take him a few games, if not towards the backend of the IPL, to be able to play an innings like that.

Watson, who worked with Pant during his stint at Delhi Capitals' assistant coach added "But knowing him, that doesn't surprise me. He's so desperate to be the best he possibly can, and that showed tonight," Watson added.

It was Pant's resilience and mental strength that helped him make an early recovery.

Faltering RCB eye collective improvement

PTI ■ BENGALURU



An inconsistent Royal Challengers Bengaluru would be eager to hit the turnaround button when they host Lucknow Super Giants, who will keep an eye on regular skipper KL Rahul's fitness, in the IPL here on Tuesday.

The Royal Challengers are currently eighth on the table with two points from three matches, and alarmingly, their net run rate too has dipped to -0.71 after a heavy defeat against Kolkata Knight Riders here last week.

This is not to undermine the side under Faf du Plessis, who himself is struggling for big runs, but its ability to dish out consistent cricket is a matter of debate at this point.

Several reasons are there for that overbearing feeling. It starts with the RCB batting line-up in which Virat Kohli is the only constant with two fifties from three matches.

But Du Plessis, Glenn Maxwell, Rajat Patidar and Cameron Green, who constitute the cream of RCB's top and middle-order, have so far made up for a faltering coalition.

The quartet's collective returns from three matches stand at — Du Plessis (46, Avg: 15.33), Maxwell (31, Avg: 10.33), Green (54, Avg: 18) and Patidar (21, Avg: 7), and terming them underwhelming is an understatement.

It meant that RCB had to often rely on their late-order batters like Dinesh Karthik, Anuj Rawat and Mahipal Lomror to add meat to the total.

In that context, the RCB might give a break to Patidar for this game and bring in someone like Suyash Prabhudessai, who can also roll his arm for an over or two.

The senior batters' struggles have percolated to their bowling department too. Mohammed Siraj offers the most glaring example.

The lead pacer has taken just two wickets in three matches, conceding 10 runs an over and he needs to step up immediately.

Siraj's lack of bite has robbed RCB of a chance to take some early wickets in the Power Play and put the opposition under pressure, something he had done quite consistently during IPL 2023.

The situation has turned even grimmer as Siraj's new-ball partner Alzarri Joseph, RCB's Rs 11.5 crore buy in the auction, has been totally rudderless, taking a solitary wicket and leaking 9.4 runs per over.

So, the hosts might ponder the inclusion of either Reece Topley or Lockie Ferguson against Lucknow in place of the West Indian.

The spin unit of RCB offers an even more bewildering view as none among Glenn Maxwell, Karn Sharma and Mayank Dagar, the most impressive of the lot, have bowled their full quota of four overs in any of the three previous matches.

In fact, Maxwell's off-spin was not even employed in their last match against the Knight Riders.

To make matters worse, they don't have many reliable choices in the dugout too.

RAHUL UNDER SCANNER:

On the other hand, the Super Giants have their own set of worries as the fitness of regular captain Rahul, who came in as an Impact Sub in their 21-run win over Punjab Kings, will be closely monitored.

Will the LSG continue to use Rahul as an impact player with Nicholas Pooran wearing the captain's armband or will he return to his normal three-in-one role of skipper, batter and wicketkeeper?

We will have to wait for the answer.

Be that as it may, the Lucknow side, the whole of the Indian cricket ecosystem too, will be delighted to see the emergence of Mayank Yadav, a fast bowler who can effortlessly touch 150 clicks.

But the 21-year-old Delhi quick will have a different kind of test at Chinnaswamy as compared to the Ekana Stadium, the venue of his IPL debut against Punjab.

Here, Mayank will have to nullify a smoother pitch and shorter boundaries but the current form of RCB batters will certainly fill him with the hopes of swelling his tally of wickets.

TEAMS (FROM):

Royal Challengers Bengaluru: Faf du Plessis (c), Glenn Maxwell, Virat Kohli, Rajat Patidar, Anuj Rawat, Dinesh Karthik, Suyash Prabhudessai, Will Jacks, Mahipal Lomror, Karn Sharma, Manoj Bhandage, Mayank Dagar, Vijaykumar Vyshak, Akash Deep, Mohammed Siraj, Reece Topley, Himanshu Sharma, Rajan Kumar, Cameron Green, Alzarri Joseph, Yash Dayal, Tom Curran, Lockie Ferguson, Swapnil, Saurav Chauhan.

Lucknow Super Giants: KL Rahul (c), Quinton de Kock, Nicholas Pooran, Ayush Badoni, Kyle Mayers, Marcus Stoinis, Deepak Hooda, Devdutt Padikkal, Ravi Bishnoi, Naveen-ul-Haq, Krunal Pandya, Yudhvir Singh, Prerak Mankad, Yash Thakur, Amit Mishra, Shamar Joseph, Mayank Yadav, Mohsin Khan, K. Gowtham, Shivam Mavi, Arshin Kulkarni, M. Siddharth, Ashton Turner, Matt Henry, Arshad Khan.



Pant fined ₹12 lakh for slow over rate

PTI ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Delhi Capitals skipper Rishabh Pant has copped a Rs 12 lakh fine for maintaining a slow over rate during the IPL game against Chennai Super Kings here.

Delhi Capitals pulled off a comfortable 20-run win over defending champions CSK here on Sunday.

"Rishabh Pant, the Delhi Capitals captain, has been fined after his team maintained a slow over rate during their IPL match against Chennai Super Kings," an IPL statement read.

"As it was his team's first offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over rate offences, Pant was fined Rs 12 lakhs," it added.

Openers Prithvi Shaw and David Warner provided a thunderous start to the Capitals before Pant provided the final flurry to post a challenging target with a gutsy fifty. The DC bowlers, especially pacers Khaleel Ahmed and Mukesh Kumar, then rattled the CSK batters and despite veteran Mahendra Singh Dhoni's cracking 16-ball 37 not out, the defending champions suffered their first loss of the season.

The win on Sunday was Delhi Capitals' first this season.

Pandya gets booed again

PTI ■ MUMBAI



There was no letup in crowd hostility towards Hardik Pandya with fans booing the Mumbai Indians skipper as he walked out for toss in their IPL match against Rajasthan Royals on Monday, even as chants of 'Rohit… Rohit' reverberated across the Wankhede Stadium.

But, with the bat in his hand, Pandya managed to get the crowd on his side, quickly turning the jeers into cheers with half a dozen boundaries during a 21-ball 34, which lifted his team from 20/4 to 76/5 in the 10th over, when his entertaining knock came to an end. In fact, the cheers from around the ground were as loud as any when Pandya smashed his first four, a far cry from the evening's hostile reception.

The 29-year-old Pandya, who replaced Rohit as the captain of the Mumbai Indians in the lead-up to the tournament, has already been subjected to crowd's anger over the franchise's decision regarding leadership during the team's previous two away games at Ahmedabad and Hyderabad.

Pandya was booed by a section of the crowd before the toss when he was doing rounds of the field as a warm-up exercise.

The flamboyant all-rounder was then booed again when his named was announced at the time of the toss, to which Pandya only smiled as loud chants in support of the former Mumbai skipper Rohit filled the venue.

The jeers continued as Pandya began speaking after losing the toss to Rajasthan Royals' skipper Sanju Samson, forcing presenter Sanjay Manjrekar to ask the crowd to "behave".

Right at that moment, Rohit, in his training kit, was meeting his former teammate Harbhajan Singh who was at the field as one of the commentators doing the pre-match show.

If the relentless booing was not enough, Pandya again found himself at the receiving end of crowd's displeasure, especially from the Sachin Tendulkar stand when he walked out to bat with his team reeling at 20/4 in the fourth over.

"The day Hardik wins a game for MI by contributing big, he'll walk into the Wankhede to a hero's welcome! Wankhede will soon chant 'Navratri maa Daandiya, Wankhede maa Pandya,'" said Nish Navalkar, a member of the 'North Stand Gang' at the iconic venue.

Additionally, as per officials here, the fans were allowed inside the stadium only after their banners were confiscated due to an election commission directive given to the Mumbai police.

However, there was an element of miscommunication as well as misinterpretation since the directive was about not allowing political banners but fans complained on social media about all banners being taken away.

There were, nevertheless, a few fans who were able to carry their banners inside.



BCCI invites IPL owners for informal meet in Ahmedabad on April 16

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The BCCI has invited owners of the 10 IPL teams for an informal meeting in Ahmedabad on April 16 and there could be discussions on potential increase in auction purse for the franchises and player retention.

The meeting will take place on the sidelines of the game between Delhi Capitals and Gujarat Titans at the Narendra Modi Stadium. "The IPL owners have been invited for an informal meeting. There is no set agenda. Since IPL will be into its second month, it will be a good time for all stake-holders to get together," a BCCI official told PTI.

Likely discussions could be around the mega auction due later this year, covering player retention and potential increase in the auction purse which currently stands at Rs 100 crore.

BCCI secretary Jay Shah, president Roger Binny and IPL chairman Arun Dhumal will attend the meeting.

Currently, teams are allowed to retain four players ahead of every mega auction, which is conducted once in three years and was last held in 2022. The next mega auction will be held ahead of the 2025 edition of the league.

The two-month IPL began on March 22 and will end with the final in Chennai on May 26.

Qualifier 1 and Eliminator will be held in Ahmedabad on May 21 and May 22 while the Qualifier will be staged in Chennai on May 24.

The BCCI had first announced the schedule of the first two weeks before releasing the full line-up of games last week after the dates of the general elections were revealed.

The seven-phase elections will begin on April 19 and coincide with the league.

'The title *Bharathanatyam* will bring some newness to the whole story'

K. RAMYA SREE

Actor Surya Teja Aelay is making his debut in films with the film *Bharathanatyam*, a hilarious thriller helmed by KVR Mahendra of *Dorasani* fame. While Meenakshi Goswami is playing the female lead in the film produced by PR Films, actor Ajay Ghosh is said to play another key role in the project.

Ahead of the film's release on April 5, the director spoke to us about the gap he took between *Dorasani* and *Bharathanatyam*, and he shared, "After *Dorasani*, I signed a crime drama with an established hero, but due to COVID, it later went on hold. In the meantime, Surya Teja met us with this story, and we liked it. We later developed it into a full-length story and started working on it."

"I feel privileged to launch Anand Deverakonda and Shivatmika with *Dorasani*," he added.

Going further, he shared that this movie has a lot of characters for me to explore with the story, and "I broke all myths about my character artists in the film, which brings a new look to the actors and the audience. I enjoyed the whole process, as this is not just a hero-heroine story."

The film, which has music by Vivek Sagar and cinematography by Venkar R. Shakamuri, will release in theatres on April 5.

This film is a crime comedy, but they named it *Bharathanatyam*, a traditional name. Explaining to us the reason behind this title, he continued, "I named this film *Bharathanatyam* to bring some newness to the whole story. I feel like had I not named it *Bhrathanatyam*, it wouldn't have done justice to the story because *Bharathanatyam* is a dance form. I gave that name to the crime world here for a good reason. When the audience comes out after watching the movie, the justification of the title *Bharathanatyam* for this story becomes clear. This story gives joy to the viewer."

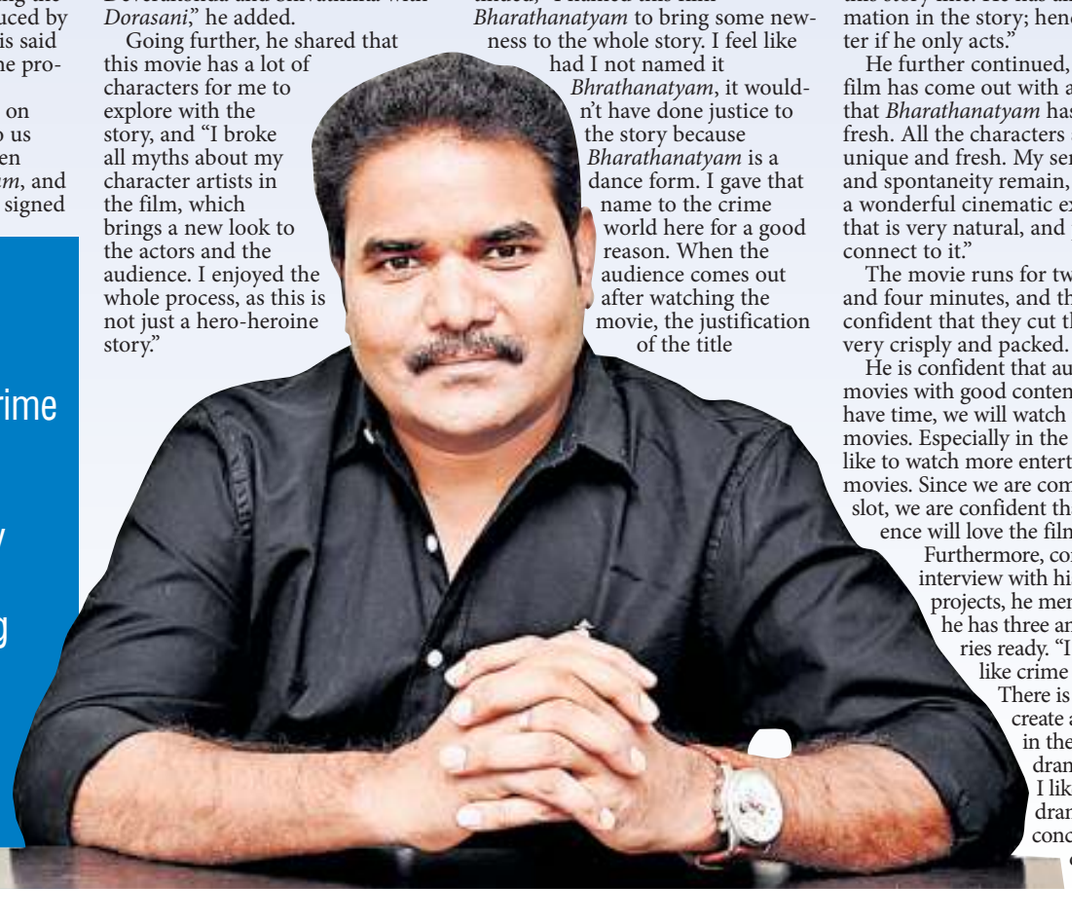
Asked why he chose Surya Teja as the protagonist in the movie, the director mentioned, "It will be appropriate only if the hero is new to this story. Surya came up with this story line. He has all the information in the story; hence, it is better if he only acts."

He further continued, "So far, no film has come out with an element that *Bharathanatyam* has. It is very fresh. All the characters are very unique and fresh. My sensibilities and spontaneity remain, but there is a wonderful cinematic expression that is very natural, and people can connect to it."

The movie runs for two hours and four minutes, and the director is confident that they cut the movie very crisply and packed.

He is confident that audiences like movies with good content. "If we have time, we will watch two or three movies. Especially in the summer, we like to watch more entertainment movies. Since we are coming in that slot, we are confident that the audience will love the film."

Furthermore, concluding the interview with his upcoming projects, he mentioned that he has three amazing stories ready. "I have stories like crime dramas. There is an idea to create a new world in the crime drama universe. I like the crime drama genre," concluded the director.



Director KVR Mahendra, who is all set to woo the audience with a crime comedy titled *Bharatanatyam*, speaks exclusively with ***The Pioneer***, sharing interesting tidbits about the upcoming film releasing on April 5.

DIL RAJU: I HAVE NO PLANS TO ACT

K. RAMYA SREE

Actor Vijay Deverakonda and heroine Mrunal Thakur's movie *Family Star* is gearing up for a grand theatrical release in four days.

Producer Dil Raju is known for making family-oriented films, and with this *Family Star* movie, another family-oriented film is coming from him. He has a successful track record of making family-oriented movies. All his such movies except *Srinivasa Kalyanam* were good hits, and the producer himself confessed the same. Not just as a producer, Dil Raju is also known for his good looks and for being overly involved in the making of films. Hence, of late, many people have been asking Dil Raju if he has any plans to make his acting debut, and the producer clarified that he has no plans.

He expressed, "There is no idea of acting on screen. There will be a huge pan-India movie in our company, with Vijay as the hero. The script is ready for it. After all that is done, we will definitely take the movie to the sets. Vijay is a hero who thinks about producers. That's why we are going to do two more films with him."

Additionally, he said that *Family Star* is in good shape overall. He also shared that you will enjoy the music and the trailer when you see them. "I was intrigued by the story's point when Parasuram told it. We were all impressed once the plot was developed. In the past, Vijay and Parasuram produced the hit film *Geetha Govindam*. We think that this film will succeed in conjunction with them as well. Vijay's portrayal serves as *Family Star's* framework. Vijay is a hero who experiences all of these emotions: he laughs, laments, fights, worries about his family, loves a girl, hates her, and romances in the movie. One could say that Vijay played a character in this film that has literally all emotions. It's a love story as well as a family narrative."

He further added, "Mrunal is a lucky heroine. Following the triumph of *Sita Ramam*, and *Hi Nanna*, she is expected to receive a hat trick from *Family Star*. For this film, director Parasuram is putting in a lot of work. He is still working on dubbing and mixing projects. Regarding family entertainers, I still have goals. One *Srinivasa Kalyanam* film did not receive the anticipated response. We are considered linked as family in our Indian culture. I have great significance for April 5. That day, when the movie *Dil* came out, I changed from Raju to Dil Raju. Since then, both you and the public have shown a great deal of support, up until the previous movie, *Balagam*."



Producer Dil Raju, who is all excited for the release of his upcoming production, *Family Star*, discusses his plans to make his acting debut, produce Parasuram's film, and more.



Abhishek Pictures' new film announced

Abhishek Pictures, one of the popular production houses in Tollywood known for doing unique concepts, announced their ninth film on Monday. They released a poster from the film that shows an 'aghora' walking ferociously, whereas the universe is an imaginary one that sees skulls, fire, and ice mountains, which spellbinds us. It is evident through the poster that the yet-to-be-titled flick has spiritual elements. 'Swarami Narayanan Thathwamavyayam' can be read on the poster, which means 'I remember the inexhaustible Narayana element'.

The title announcement of the movie being made on a grand scale with a larger-than-life story will be unveiled on April 9, on the auspicious occasion of Ugadi. More details of the movie are awaited.



Suhas' new movie *Oh Bhama Ayyo Rama* launched with a puja ceremony

Actor Suhas has a handful of projects lined up for release. Apart from that, he is also busy signing new projects, one of which is a film with director Ram Godhala. The official announcement was made recently. The film will mark actress Anita Hassanandani's comeback in Tollywood after many years.

On Monday, the movie took off with a puja ceremony. Titled *Oh Bhama Ayyo Rama*, the film is a distinct love story. Starring Malavika Manoj as the heroine, the film's puja event was held at the famous Film Nagar Daiva Sannidhanam in Hyderabad. Harish Nalla and Pradeep Tallapu Reddy are producing this film under the banner of V Arts and Chitralahari Talkies. Producer Dil Raju attended the muhurtham event and gave a clap for the muhurtham scene shot on the hero and heroine. Director Vasistha switched the camera on. Director Kolanu Sailesh handed over the bound script to Ram Godahala. A title poster was unveiled by directors Vijay Kanakamedala, Kishore Tirumala, and Sudarshan Reddy.

Speaking on the occasion, Suhas said, "I have known this director since the time he worked in the direction department of Maruthi. He has come out with a very good story. I got the chance to act with my favourite actors. I am looking forward to the shoot." Anita Hassanandani of *Nuvvu Nenu* fame, who is playing a leading role in the film, said that the film is perfect for her second innings. "This is a story that attracted me so much," she added.

Director Ram said, "This is a beautiful love story. Suhas is a gift for new directors. He is a very comfortable artist to work with. He is selective and works on a diverse set of stories. Suhas is happy to do such a film. The producers have provided us with good technicians without compromising anywhere. Rathan's music will add strength to the film."

According to the producers, a talented team of artists and technicians has been selected to suit the story written by the director.



LOVE MOULI RELEASING ON APRIL 19

Actor Navdeep's *Love Mouli* is the most anticipated film of the actor, as he was missing playing lead roles in Tollywood for a while. Ever since the film was announced, expectations were very high for this film, as its story is very different and seems to be very new for the Telugu audience.

The makers have announced the release date of the film on Monday with the release of a new poster in which Navdeep is seen kissing the leading lady.

With its hysterical background, the poster creates new excitement among the audience. The makers announced that the movie will hit big screens on April 19. Written and directed by Avaneendra, Navdeep is said to play a different role in the film, completely in contrast to what he has played so far. The movie has romance and violence.

Navdeep took to his Instagram to announce the same.

The songs and glimpses released from the movie are generating a lot of buzz.

Director: *Jithender Reddy* will make Rakesh a notable action hero

The film *Jithender Reddy*, an action-drama movie, directed by Virinchi Varma, who rose to fame after doing films like *Uyyala Jampala* and *Majnu*, has been announced. Starring Rakesh Varre as the lead, the movie is being produced by Peka Medalu. It has been announced that the film will be released on May 3.

Meanwhile, director Virinchi Varma informed us, "The public's curiosity in the film has grown ever since *Jithender Reddy* was chosen as the title. Rakesh Varre's debut appearance has also created a lot of buzz. With this movie, he would become known as an action hero. We made this video at Jagtial, in the former Karimnagar District of Telangana, based on actual events that happened in the 1980s. We have screened this film for a few notable people and gathered their feedback and information before releasing it to you. We'll be providing you with intriguing teasers, trailers, and promotions soon."



#ORIGINDAY: A landmark event in the digital age

The inaugural Digital Creators Meet, #ORIGINDAY, hosted by the Telugu Digital Media Federation (TeluguDMF), has not only marked a significant moment in digital creativity but also set unprecedented milestones in the digital space. With over 700 digital creators and influencers in attendance, the event, held at HICC Novotel in Hyderabad, has become the largest gathering of its kind in South India, showcasing the strength and vibrancy of the digital creator community. A standout moment that captivated audiences both on-site and online was the candid interview session between the dynamic Rowdy Star, Vijay Devarakonda, and the legendary Padma Vibhushan awardee, Megastar Chiranjeevi. This unique interaction provided insights into the minds of two of the most influential figures in Indian entertainment, bridging generations of cinema and digital content creation. The session is currently trending across digital platforms, highlighting its widespread appeal and impact.





CHIRU ALL PRAISE FOR *TILLU SQUARE*



Megastar Chiranjeevi watched *Tillu Square* and invited the team to his house. Siddhu Jonnalagadda, director Mallik Ram, one of the writer for the film Kalyan Shankar, producer Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and editor Navin Nooli have gone to his home upon his invitation. Appreciating the team, he said, "I and my entire family loved *DJ Tillu*. Siddhu Jonnalagadda is loved by everyone in our family, too. So, I was waiting for *Tillu Square* and watched it recently. Immediately, I wanted to invite the team and appreciate. Even after watching *DJ Tillu*, I invited Siddhu to home and appreciated him."

Later, he continued to appreciate director Mallik Ram, producer Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and Kalyan Shankar for their combined efforts to make the film such a big blockbuster. He also appreciated Navin Nooli for his editing efforts to keep the movie at racing pace.

Shruti Haasan begins shooting for *Chennai story*

Actress Shruti Haasan, who has been receiving a lot of positive responses to her recently released song *Inimel* with director Lokesh Kanagaraj, has started shooting for her next project.

Her next project is an international film titled *Chennai Story*, and is helmed by BAFTA-nominated director Philip John.

On Monday, Shruti took to the stories section of her Instagram and shared glimpses from the sets of the film and the mahurat shot.

The actress also shared a video of herself en route to the set in her car. Shruti shared the video with the caption: "New day. New movie. New energy. Thankful." *Chennai Story* marks Shruti's third international outing after *Treadstone* and *The Eye*.

The movie, adapted from Timeri N. Murari's bestseller *The Arrangements of Love*, is set against the backdrop of Chennai. It unfolds in a coming-of-age romantic comedy set, and Shruti takes on the pivotal role of Anu, a spunky private detective.

Shruti, who is also a renowned musician, has acting credits across India's various language film industries. In 2023, she was one of the leads in *Salaar*, which also starred Prabhas and Prithviraj Sukumaran.

The film emerged as one of India's biggest hits of the year. She also led the British thriller *The Eye*. In 2019, she had a key role in the US series *Treadston*.