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Deeply biased: MEA on US report citing rights violations

5

FUNDRAISE

OF RS 18,000 CR FRESH LEASE OF LIFE FOR VI: KUMAR MANGALAM BIRLA



8

Kiara Advani joins Prabhas in *Salaar 2*, confirm SOURCES



P11

QUOTE OF THE DAY

the pioneer

The BJP will scrap the 4% reservation given to Muslims in Telangana and will give that to SCs, STs and BCs. If Modi is elected a third time, Telangana will be freed from corruption. Both the BRS and the Congress are together in corruption. That's why there is no progress in probing the Kaleshwaram scam or land scams.



- Amit Shah, Union Home Minister

DON'T MISS...

Let's redefine the word...

It's normal that many students express tense moods while anticipating the results of Intermediate Public Examinations. Following the announcement of results, most of the students were relieved after hearing or securing good marks. However, some students, despite their hardwork, could not secure good marks. Due to this they tend to feel like a failure and take impulsive decisions like commiting suicide.In all, eight students committed suicide as they didn't secure...

-PAGE: 3

'Genetic basis for link between...

A group of genes could be common to both depression and heart disease, a finding that researchers said could explain why having one of them increases risk of developing the other.The "puzzling" link between the diseases has been known to exist since the 1990s, they said.Studies have found that people with depression run a greater risk of cardiovascular disease, with early and effective treatment of the mental illness lowering the risk...

-PAGE: 5

Electric cars and digital...

Global automakers and EV startups unveiled new models and concept cars at China's largest auto show on Thursday, with a focus on the nation's transformation into a major market and production base for digitally connected, new-energy vehicles.Toyota and Nissan both announced tie-ups with major Chinese technology companies as they strive to meet customer demand for AI-enabled online connectivity in cars, from social media apps to autonomous...

-PAGE: 8

KKR bowling woes under spotlight...

Mitchell Starc will be desperate to justify his USD 3 million price tag as Kolkata Knight Riders bowling unit try to find ways to be less profligate when it is pitted against a perennially under-achieving Punjab Kings in an IPL match here on Saturday. KKR is currently second in the 10-team table with 10 points, four behind table toppers Rajasthan Royals (14 points) and the team's success is largely due to the batting efforts from the top-order.In Punjab Kings, they meet a side that has been inconsistent ...

-SPORTS

Reservations bone of contention

BJP conspiring to end quotas for SCs, STs & OBCs: Revanth

❑ Says LS elections referendum on reservations

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The RSS and the BJP are conspiring to end reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said. He said that the BJP is conspiring to impose the RSS ideology on the nation."The BJP is conspiring to end quotas for SCs, STs and OBCs. The BJP wants to scrap reservations and is implementing the RSS ideology. Do you want reservations or not? Vote for the BJP if you don't want reservations. This election is a referendum on reservations," Revanth said.Addressing the gathering after releasing a charge sheet against the BJP named 'Naya Vanchana' on Thursday at the Gandhi Bhavan, Revanth said that the BJP is trying to win 400 seats to end reservations.

"The RSS idea is to end reservations by 2025. Prime Minister Modi is conspiring to abolish reservations. The BJP is preparing strategies to achieve a two-thirds majority for that," Revanth said.



CM Revanth releasing charge sheet against BJP on Thursday

2

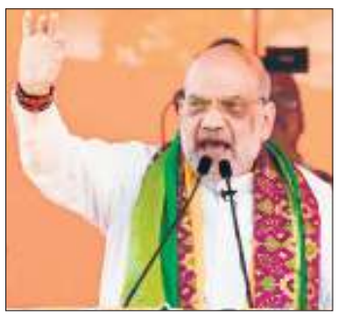
Will scrap quota for Muslims, give it to SCs, STs & OBCs: Shah

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Pointing out that the Congress and the BRS introduced reservations for Muslims in Telangana, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that the BJP will abolish reservations for Muslims and will give them to SCs, STs and OBCs.

He said that the ruling Congress in Telangana has made the state 'Delhi's ATM,' after coming to power.

He was addressing a Vijaya Sankalpa Sabha, an election rally in Siddipet on Thursday supporting M. Raghunandan Rao, the BJP candidate in the Medak Lok Sabha constituency.



"The Congress made Telangana 'Delhi's ATM.' The Congress is not investigating the corruption cases of the BRS, whether it is the Kaleshwaram Project or land scams. The BRS and the Congress are hands in glove. If you make Modi PM for a third term he will free Telangana from corruption," Amit Shah said.

Claiming that the Telangana people are with Modi this time, he said that the people of the state have decided to make BJP victorious in all seats. Telangana can develop comprehensively only if a BJP government is formed at the Centre, he said.Pointing out that the Congress and the BRS were not at all in favour of building the Ram temple in Ayodhya, he said that in five years Modi won the court case on the matter, conducted 'bhumi puja' for the temple and consecrated it.

He said that in the last 10 years, the BJP-led government at the Centre addressed all problems that plagued the country for a long time.

2

We are secular, asserts KCR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS supremo KCR said that the BJP arrested his daughter Kavitha and locked her up in prison.

"The BJP jailed my daughter in a false case. People are watching. This is injustice. We (referring to the BRS) are a secular party and we work for everyone," he said.

KCR left Suryapet in the afternoon and reached Bhuvanagiri via Arvapalli, Tirumalagiri and Janagam. At many places along the way, BRS activists were warmly welcomed by the people.

Local people participated in large numbers in the Bhuvanagiri roadshow for BRS candidate Khyama Mallesh. The roadshow started at 7 pm.

"Three parties are in the contest. We should vote for the party which will work for us.



2

BRS purchased power at Rs 20 per unit: Bhatti

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka refuted former CM Chandrashekar Rao's comments on power purchase and challenged BRS leaders to a debate on the issue.

Reacting to KCR's comment that Congress leaders spread the lie that the BRS purchased power at Rs 13 per unit and that the BRS purchased power for Rs 3.90 per unit, Bhatti said, "The BRS rulers purchased power for Rs 20 per unit and it is noted in the records. I am ready for a debate on this. KCR's statement that the Congress admin is paying around Rs 13 per unit is incorrect. The average price at which TS DISCOMs have purchased power from the market from December 2023 to March 2024 is Rs 5.34 per unit."Clarifying on the Chattisgarh agreement, Bhatti said that a MoU was signed with Chhattisgarh on 3.11.2014 and power scheduling started from 6.5.2017 to TS DISCOMs."Even though a MoU was signed for 1,000 MW, Chhattisgarh never supplied the full 1,000 MW. The average power supplied to TS DISCOMs was only 300 MW to 400 MW.

"The BRS rulers purchased power for Rs 20 per unit and it is noted in the records. I am ready for a debate on this. KCR's statement that the Congress admin is paying around Rs 13 per unit is incorrect.



2

Yadadri Thermal Power Plant gets fresh enviro nod

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu said that the construction of the Yadadri Thermal Plant which faced hurdles due to the irrational decisions of the BRS is being restarted after securing fresh environmental clearances.

The BRS government secured environmental approval on June 15, 2017, from the Centre for generating power in Damarcharla with 50 per cent imported coal and 50 per cent domestic coal. However, against the agreement made with the Centre, the BRS admin made arrangements for power generation with 100 per cent domestic coal.

2

LOAN WAIVER

Why is CM not swearing by his wife & kids: KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao who participated in a roadshow organised for BRS candidate Vinod Kumar at Konaraopet in the Karimnagar Lok Sabha constituency asked people whether they liked the "change."



"Congress said 'Marpu Kavali Congress Ravali' (Change should come). You voted for change. Now did you get Rs 2,500, loan waiver, Rythu Bandhu? You wanted change. Now, how is the change? Don't you think KCR's rule would have been better? Unless we lose something, we will not know its value," he said.

He said that Revanth Reddy gave '420' assurances and now has started a new drama using gods regarding loan waiver.

"Before the Assembly elections, he showed fraud part-1 and asked for votes. Now, during Parliament elections, he has started fraud part-2.

2

US report: Increase in scale of human rights abuses in India

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

An independent US Congressional research report has alleged that the scope and scale of human rights abuses in India has increased under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"The Biden Administration requests USD 103 million in foreign assistance to India for FY2025. Congress could consider whether to condition some or all such aid on improvements in human rights and civil liberties in India," said the brief 'India: Human Rights Assessment' report released by the independent Congressional Research Service (CRS) on Wednesday.

Continued on Page 2

TWO-DAY 'GHAR WAPSI' PROGRAMME

Roy, Eerla, Sudharani join Cong

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As per the directions of the high command, the Telangana unit of the Congress is conducting a two-day 'Ghar Wapsi' programme on April 25 and April 26. The party will be inducting leaders who had quit the Congress due to various reasons again into the party on these two days.

On the first day, leaders like Manavatha Roy, Erla Komuraiah, and Mandala Sriramulu re-joined the Congress in the presence of TPCC Working President and Joining Committee Member T. Jagga Reddy along with AICC Kisan Congress Vice-President and Joining Committee Member M. Kodanda Reddy at the Gandhi Bhavan on Thursday.

Warangal Mayor Gundu Sudharani who had quit the BRS also joined the Congress in the presence of Jagga Reddy and Kodanda Reddy. Gundu Sudharani was a TDP leader.

Later, speaking to the media, Jagga Reddy said that the leaders were exerting pressure on high command to allow them to join the Congress again. Many of the leaders had sent letters to the high command requesting it to allow them to join the Congress.

'Press Beijing to divulge whereabouts of Panchen Lama'

P5



15 TG students top in JEE Mains phase 2 exam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In all, 15 students from Telangana marked a significant milestone by achieving an elusive 100 percentile in the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Mains session-II, results for which were announced on Wednesday by the National Testing Agency (NTA).

It is the only State across India to bag the highest number of 100 percentiles in the engineering entrance exam for three consecutive years. The JEE Main phase 2 exam was conducted from April 4 to 12, 2024, spanning 319 cities nation-wide (including 22 cities outside India).

M Sai Teja, who bagged the perfect 100 score in JEE mains - session-II, said, "I gave my best in the JEE MAIN exam and secured 100 percentile and I want to score the same in the advance as well." He studied for 9 to 13 hours daily which helped him to score such good marks.

2



IMD warns of heat wave in TG, Hyd temp soars to 42.2

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Indian Meteorological Department, Hyderabad, (IMD–H) has warned of a heat wave in Telangana from Friday.

Meanwhile, Hyderabad recorded 42.2 degrees Celsius and Nalgonda recorded 44.9 degrees Celsius on Thursday.

As per the IMD-H report dry weather prevailed over Telangana on Thursday.

Continued on Page 2

1,200 candidates, 88 seats and 15.88 cr voters

Second phase of LS polls today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Voting for the second phase of Lok Sabha polls will be held on Friday for 88 seats in 13 states with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi seeking a second-straight term from Wayanad in Kerala.

All 20 seats of Kerala will go to polls besides 14 of the 28 seats in Karnataka, 13 seats in Rajasthan, 8 seats each in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, 6 seats in Madhya Pradesh, 5 seats each in Assam and Bihar, 3 seats each in Chhattisgarh and West Bengal, and 1 seat each in Manipur, Tripura and Jammu and Kashmir.

Though voting was to be held for 89 seats in the second phase, polling for the Betul seat in Madhya Pradesh has been rescheduled to the third phase due to the death of a candidate from the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP).

The Election Commission (EC) said more than 16 lakh polling officials have been deployed across 1.67 lakh polling stations for over 15.88 crore voters.

Voters include 8.08 crore male, 7.8 crore female and 5,929 third gender electors. As many as 34.8 lakh first-time voters are registered to cast their votes. Additionally, there are 3.28 crore young voters in the age group of 20-29 years, the poll authority said.

Of the 1,202 candidates in the fray, 1,098 are men, 102 are women and two are from the third gender category.

At least three helicopters, four special trains and nearly 80,000 vehicles have been deployed to ferry poll and security personnel.

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar and actor-turned-politician Arun Govil, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar's brother DK Suresh (Cong), and former Karnataka chief minister HD Kumaraswamy (JDS) are among the key candidates while BJP's Hema Malini, Om Birla and Gajendra Singh Shekhawat seeking a hat-trick of wins from their respective constituencies.The first of the seven-phase elections held last Friday for 102 seats across 21 states and Union territories saw a voter turnout of around 65.5 per cent.





'Modi 'gifting' natl assets to his crony capitalist chums'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu charged Prime Minister Narendra Modi with 'handing over' national wealth that belongs to the people to his crony capitalists on a platter.

The Congress released a charge sheet against the BJP at the Gandhi Bhavan here on Thursday alleging that the BJP wrought '100 years of destruction in just 10 years.'

Speaking on the occasion, Bhatti said that the BJP government was making desperate attempts to create communal tension by dividing society in the name of religion.

During the East India Company's time one princely state used to attack another princely state and loot its wealth. Unfortunately under the rule of Modi, the NDA government is resorting to the same tactics, he said.

"Modi had promised during the 2014 election campaign that if he formed the government it would provide two crore jobs every year but did not fulfil that promise in the last 10 years.



The nation is witness to how the Modi government deceived the people in the last 10 years and again it is making false promises to win the general elections, he said.

"Modi had promised during the 2014 election campaign that if he formed the government it would provide two crore jobs every year but did not fulfil that promise in the last 10 years. Another promise was to bring back black money stashed abroad by some Indians and deposit Rs 15 lakh each in the bank accounts of the poor. But not a single poor man has got Rs 15 lakh in his bank account. Another tall promise was demonetisation implemented by his government to check counterfeits. But even after 10 years the government has not furnished any information on this to the people," Bhatti said.

"During his padayatra from Kanyakumari to Kashmir Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had explained in detail how Modi was 'looting' public wealth to enrich his crony capitalist friends. This election is a fight between the Modi government bent on 'giving away' the nation's wealth to a few and the Rahul-led Congress which is determined to distribute national wealth to the people based on their populations. Rahul is reaching out to the people and creating awareness for safeguarding the Constitution, secularism and national wealth," Bhatti said.

Appealing to the media to do their bit for protecting democracy and secularism, he called upon Congress cadres to explain all issues listed in the charge sheet released by the party against the BJP-led NDA government to all citizens.

Need 400 seats to stop Oppn from snatching quotas, robbing people: Modi

PNS ■ AGRA/BAREILLY



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the opposition parties wanted to win the Lok Sabha elections to bring religion-based reservation while he sought 400 seats to stop them from snatching the quotas of Dalits and Other Backward Classes.

At election rallies in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, he also pitched himself as the "chowkidar" (watchman) and a "wall" to protect people from alleged Congress plans to "rob" people – either through "redistribution" of wealth or imposition of an inheritance tax – if the INDIA bloc came to power.

He suggested that the Congress and the Samajwadi Party intended to give away a chunk from reservation in jobs and education meant for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes to their own "vote bank".

Modi reminded that then PM Manmohan Singh had in 2006 said the minorities, particularly Muslims, have the "first claim" to the country's resources.

"The SP, Congress and their INDI alliance can go to any extent for appeasement... there is uproar in the entire country due to the dangerous intentions of the Congress. The dangerous 'panja' (hand symbol) is going to snatch the rights of the people of the country again," he said.

His attack on the INDIA group took place at a series of election rallies – in Morena in Madhya Pradesh, and Agra, Bareilly and Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh.

At Aonla in Bareilly district, he also claimed that the Congress not only wanted to conduct an economic survey but also survey institutions and offices.

CM has no stature to frame charges against BJP: Arvind

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP candidate in the Nizamabad Lok Sabha constituency, Dharmapuri Arvind, said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has no stature to frame a charge sheet against the BJP.

He said that fear has started in Revanth Reddy regarding his 'Vote-for-Note' case. One can see the frustration in Revanth Reddy's speeches, he said.

Speaking to the media on Thursday, Arvind said that the BJP will scrap Muslim reservations and will give the same to SCs and STs immediately after coming to power at the Centre.

He said that the Congress has been hatching a conspiracy to make India a base of the Taliban.

Revanth calls BJP 'British Janata Party'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that the BJP has taken the East India Company as its role model, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy termed the BJP as the 'British Janata Party.'

He said that the BJP agenda is the British agenda and that agenda is the abolition of reservations. However, the Congress agenda is the protection of the Constitution and implementation of reservations, Revanth said.

He said that Britishers entered India for business and the conquest of India started from Surat.

Revanth said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah are saying that they will abolish reservations and asked the BJP candidate in Chevella, Konda Vishweshwar Reddy, to reveal his stand on it.

Revanth said that BJP leaders are suffering from communal madness and that they are trying to grab votes using God. "God should be in the temple and devotion should be in hearts," he said.

Addressing a corner meeting in Rajender Nagar on Thursday for Chevella Congress candidate Dr G. Ranjith Reddy, Revanth said that they had fielded Ranjith after taking the opinion of everyone."We have to send Ranjith to the LS for the development of Chevella. One has to speak in Parliament to get permission for the development of the Musi River Front," he said.Targeting KCR, Revanth said that KCR went on a Bus Yatra as his 'Car' had been garaged.

Congress not having tie-up with any party in Telangana: Shabbir

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Government Advisor Mohammed Ali Shabbir made it clear that the Congress is not having an alliance with any party, including the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) in Telangana for the Lok Sabha elections.

He was speaking after the inauguration of the Hyderabad Lok Sabha candidate Mohammed Waliullah Sameer's central election office at Chaderghat on Thursday.

KCR made TG debt-riddled, says Rajgopal

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Munugode Congress MLA Komatireddy Rajgopal Reddy said that former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao made Telangana a debt-riddled state.

He asked former BRS Minister G. Jagdish Reddy, who used to stay in a rented house, to explain how he earned thousands of crores. Rajgopal said the Congress government would certainly order a probe against Jagdish.

Addressing a roadshow in Mothkur on Thursday for the Congress's Bhongir candidate, Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, Rajgopal warned that they will raze the buildings of BRS leaders if they say bring down the Congress.

'This election is to save democracy, Constitution'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



A day before the second phase of the Lok Sabha polls, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday urged people to support his party and asserted this is an election to save democracy and the Constitution which he alleged the BJP-RSS are trying to "destroy".

Voting for the second phase of Lok Sabha polls will be held on Friday for 89 seats in 13 states.

Gandhi, who is seeking a second-straight term from Wayanad in Kerala, in a video appeal said this election is to save democracy and the Constitution.

"On one hand there is the BJP and the RSS that are trying to finish democracy and destroying the Constitution and on the other hand there is the Congress and the INDIA alliance that is saving democracy and the Constitution," the former Congress chief said.

"We walked from Kanyakumari to Kashmir for over 4,000 km, we traversed from Manipur to Maharashtra and after speaking with you and listening to your issues we prepared our revolutionary manifesto. This is your manifesto. It is prepared by the Congress but this is your voice," Gandhi said in his appeal to the people.

15 TG students top in...

Continued from page 1

"To relax, I used to play table tennis regularly which helped me to beat the stress. I plan to pursue CSE at IIT-Bombay and also plan to set up my own company in future." Hundekar Vidith, another student who bagged the perfect 100 score, said "By daily solving various practice papers and also writing around 10 to 15 mock tests which helped me to perform well in my entrance exam, It is my dream to join IIT-Bombay. Unlike others who move abroad for higher studies and jobs, I want to stay back in the country and do something here."

KALESHWARAM SCAM

Ghose probe panel invites representations from public

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose has invited representations from the general public regarding the allegations of corruption involved in the construction of the Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla Barrages of the Kaleshwaram Project.

The Telangana government had appointed Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose, a former Judge of the Supreme Court, to probe the alleged corruption in the execution of the Kaleshwaram Project.

The public can submit their representations with evidence by May 31.

The public notice said, "The general public can submit their representations with evidence as notarized sworn affidavits in sealed envelopes. The commission will not accept any representation without evidence or an affidavit."

The public has been asked to send their representations in sealed envelopes. The envelopes can be put in a box in the office of the commission at the Burgula Ramakrishna Rao (BRKR) Bhavan till May 31 from 11 am to 3 pm on working days.

IMD warns of...

Continued from page 1

A heat wave is likely on Friday in Jayashankar Bhupalpally, Mulugu, Bhadradri Kothagudem, Khammam, Nalgonda, Mahbubnagar, Nagarkurnool, Wanaparthy, Narayanpet, Jogulamba Gadwal and Suryapet districts.

Similar conditions are likely on Saturday too. On Sunday, Mahbubabad, Warangal and the abovementioned districts are likely to experience a heat wave.

Thunderstorms are likely in Nirmal, Nizamabad Peddapally, Kamareddy, Rajanna Sirsilla, Mancherial, Komaram Bheem Asifabad and Karimnagar districts on Sunday.

On Monday, thunderstorms are likely in the districts of Adilabad, Komaram Bheem Asifabad, Mancherial, Jagtiyal, Eajanna Sirsilla Nirmal and Nizamabad.

Yadadri Thermal Power Plant gets...

Continued from page 1

Environmental NGOs complained to the Green Tribunal that the changed technology would adversely affect the environment. The NGT ordered that fresh approvals should be taken in accordance with the technology change and suspended the earlier approvals given by the Centre on Sept. 30, 2022.

Steps were not taken to secure environmental clearance and as a result, construction of the power plant came to a standstill.

An action plan for completing the two projects was made and Bhatti visited the power plant and reviewed things with officials. In the last three months, he held several review meetings with officials at the secretariat and speeded up the pending process.

Bhatti initiated the process for public hearings in line with the changed technology. With the cooperation of officials, people's representatives and local people, a public hearing was held again on Feb. 20, 2024. The government also fulfilled other conditions laid down by the NGT and secured approvals in two months.

US report: Increase in scale...

Continued from page 1

CRS is an independent research wing of the US Congress, which prepares reports on issues of importance for the members of the Congress for them to make informed decisions.

The latest CRS report comes days after the State Department's 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices in which it said India is the site of numerous human rights abuses, many of them serious, some seen to be perpetrated by state and federal governments or their agents.

"The United Nations, other intergovernmental organizations, and numerous nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have conveyed similar concerns.

Will scrap...

Continued from page 1

By abolishing Article 370, Modi has integrated Kashmir with the country forever, he said.He also said that the Congress and the BRS did not celebrate 'Telangana Liberation Day' on September 17 as they 'fear the AIMIM.' He made it clear that the BJP would celebrate September 17 and that it is not afraid of the AIMIM.

Amit Shah said that the Congress and the BRS are the same and that they both are damaging the nation. The Congress and the BRS encouraged corruption. The Kaleshwaram Project and other projects are examples of that, he said.He urged the people to ensure that the BJP wins 12 LS seats (of the 17) in Telangana. Every vote given to Raghunandan Rao would help make Modi the PM again, he said.

We are secular...

Continued from page 1

The BJP is coining big slogans like 'Make in India' but they are not implementing it. There are attacks on women in BJP-ruled states. The value of the US Dollar has jumped to Rs 83. One party seeks votes in the name of God and another party takes oath in the name of God. We built Yadadri brilliantly but never used it for votes," he said.He said that the BJP and the Congress are one in Bhongir and asked if Akhintalu and Prasadam would fill our stomachs.He said that the BJP did injustice to Telangana and that now the youth should think as the future is yours.

"The Congress is our enemy. We fought for Telangana even though there was no one with us and we got Telangana and ruled it for 10 years. I protected it like a parent who takes care of a child," KCR said."The Congress admin is a vicious entity that allows farmers to get bitten by snakes at night. The moment KCR went electricity stopped. This is an incompetent government. If the crop dries up in front of my eyes should I shut up or fight," KCR said.

"There is no fee reimbursement under the Congress. They are not able to support handloom workers. There is no unemployment allowance. Scooty didn't come but looty did," KCR said.

"God created me for Telangana. KCR is in the hearts of the people of Telangana and in KCR's heart are the people of Telangana," KCR said.

BRS purchased...

Continued from page 1

Chhattisgarh stopped supplying power to TS DISCOMs in April 2022. Therefore, the MoU signed with Chhattisgarh for supplying 1,000 MW to the state failed to achieve its objective," he said.KCR said that NTPC had said that it would supply power at Rs 15 per unit but we did not agree to it.

"This statement is incorrect. The NTPC has already commissioned 1,600 MW as per the provisions of the AP Reorganization Act, 2014. The average per unit rate at which they are billing to DISCOMs is Rs 5.60," Bhati said.

KCR had said that during the formation of Telangana, only 7,700 MW was available. Now 19,000 MW of power is available.Reacting to this, Bhatti said, "Out of the total installed thermal capacity in Telangana, only 2,080 MW was initiated by the BRS government. Of this, 1,000 MW was procured from Chhattisgarh which stopped supplying power in April 2022. The remaining 1,080 MW of thermal capacity was constructed at Bhadradri (BTPS) using subcritical technology at high cost. All the remaining thermal and hydel projects were launched by previous governments before 2014."

BJP conspiring...

Continued from page 1

He said that Rahul Gandhi had clearly announced that the Congress would increase reservations based on population. However, the BJP is conspiring to prevent it. The BJP is trying to win elections by launching a venomous campaign against the Congress, he said."Every vote for the BJP is against reservations. I don't understand why leaders who fought for SC reservations are supporting the BJP. You should support the BJP if you don't want reservations. Don't support the BJP for temporary benefits. These elections are a referendum on reservations," he said.

Stating that there is a need for an 'X-ray' of the country, he said that the Congress will increase reservations for various sections in proportion to their population. He said that the BJP is afraid that the 27 per cent reservation for OBCs may be increased to 50 per cent."Some parties which, for the sake of politics want reservations to go are backing the BJP," he said.

He said that in the last 10 years, the Modi government betrayed all sections of people.He said that Modi failed to implement his promises made in 2014 and 2019 to provide two crore jobs every year."The government should have provided 20 crore jobs in these 10 years but in reply to a question I asked in the Lok Sabha in 2022, the government said that only 7.21 lakh jobs were created," he said.The Chief Minister also said that the Prime Minister had promised to double the income of farmers and added that the Centre introduced 'black' laws to make farmers 'slaves to private companies.'

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:	Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Dwitiya:	Apr 25 06:46 AM to Apr 26 07:46 AM
Tritiya:	Apr 26 07:46 AM to Apr 27 08:18 AM
Nakshatram:	
Anuradha:	Apr 26 02:24 AM to Apr 27 03:39 AM
Jyeshta:	Apr 27 03:39 AM to Apr 28 04:28 AM
Rahukalam:	10:39 AM to 12:14 PM
Yamagandam:	3:22 PM to 4:57 PM
Varjyam:	09:27 AM to 11:06 AM
Gulika:	7:30 AM to 9:05 AM
Amritakalam:	04:43 PM to 06:24 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	11:48 AM to 12:39 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Sunny
Temp: 41°c
Humidity: 27%
Sunrise: 5:53 AM
Sunset: 6:35 PM

Updated: April 25, 2024 5:00 PM

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STUDENTS' SUISIDES

Let's redefine the word failure: Psychologists

RASHMI BHUMIREDDY
■ HYDERABAD



It's normal that many students express tense moods while anticipating the results of Intermediate Public Examinations. Following the announcement of results, most of the students were relieved after hearing or securing good marks. However, some students, despite their hardwork, could not secure good marks. Due to this they tend to feel like a failure and take impulsive decisions like commiting suicide.

In all, eight students committed suicide as they didn't secure good marks in the Intermediate board exams. It's a matter of concern that students commit suicides in spite of awareness on sucide prevention and prioritising mental health.

Dr Charan Teja Koganti, Consultant Neuropsychiatrist, KIMS said, "Generally, parents compare their kids to others irrespective of how good he or she is in academics. This is the first key factor which results in children committing suicides. Parents should stop comparing their kids with others. Even if they are doing well, parents should not compare them. Also, at the time of results, if the child doesn't score good marks, he or she will have the constant fear that kills their peace of mind.

Parents need to be careful with the expectations of their kids. Irrespective of marks a child scores in the exams, guardians need to celebrate their efforts or achievements."

Dr Anupama, Head of Psychology Department, Osmania University said, "Adolescents are very emotional when it comes to thinking. It is the transition stage from child to adult. During this stage, their brains are not fully developed to think logically. Hence, they think emotionally.

They first react and then think unlike adults. This factor leads them in taking impulsive decisions or making rash actions. Parents should offer full support to their children and need to keep an eye on them. Failing in one subject or exam doesn't mean the end of the world."

Dr Diana, a psychologist said, " The cognitive development in adolescents is still at the developing stage, .i.e the brain is not fully developed. The adolescents or teenagers think emotionally rather than logically.

So, parents need to spend a lot of time with their child and observe them in regards to their activities, their performances in school, people with whom they spent more time with."

German among five held for drunk-driving, crashing car

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In an incident reported from Jubilee Hills on April 24, five persons, including a German national, were arrested for drunk-driving and crashing the car.

All occupants of the car including the driver were drunk; however none of them were injured after the car crashed into a transformer. The driver was identified as Avinash Chalasani (24), and Sai Pritham Kasam (25) - who work in America, and Sasha (23), a student from Dubai and Maximilian Henry Radinger (23), a German national.Venkat crashed the brand-new BMW into a transformer around 3:30 am. According to the police, they were all in Hyderabad to attend the wedding of Avinash's brother. They were returning back to their hotel after drinking alcohol in or around Jubilee Hills itself, when the accident transpired. The police tested Venkat's blood alcohol content, and subsequently arrested all five and sent them for remand.

Poll observers satisfied with arrangements: DEO

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Parliamentary election observers, along with District Election Officer Ronald Rose, discuss about the arrangements for elections

General and Police Election Observers have arrived for the parliamentary elections in the district. Dr Saroj Kumar is designated for Secunderabad-8 parliamentary constituency; P. Srividya for Hyderabad-9 parliamentary constituency and Shashank Anand for both Hyderabad and Secunderabad parliamentary constituencies.

The General and Police Election Observers were welcomed by District Election Officer Ronald Rose at the GHMC office on Thursday, where they were briefed on the election arrangements.

The District Election Officer said, POs, APOs and other polling staff completed the first stage of randomisation process in their presence.

The District Election Officer, along with the General Election Observers, along with the polling Personnel, SST, FST, VVT inspection teams, elaborated on the election procedures, while the Additional Police Commissioner Vikram Singh Mann outlined the security measures.

Ronald Rose said, "General Inspectors inspected the District Election Officer's Complaint Grievance Call Centre, MCC Control Room and expressed satisfaction with all the arrangements.

The second randomisation process for polling staff and officers was conducted transparently, following the regulations set by the Election Commission, lLed by the District Election Officer, and in the presence of General and Police Observers on the same day.

District Election Officer Ronald Rose briefed the observers on the second randomisation process for staff and officers designated to the Secunderabad and Hyderabad parliamentary constituencies and for the Cantonment Assembly byelection under Medchal parliamentary constituency.

He explained the entire process and election arrangements through a power-point presentation.

He informed the observers that inspection of 779 liquor shops is being carried out by CC Cameras, utilising C-Whistle, FST, YST, Command Control methods.

Increase in DTH installations this IPL season in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad leads among the major cities, witnessing a 26% surge in DTH installation searches amidst the record-breaking start of the 17th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL).

In the same way, Pune leads the surge with a 29% increase, followed closely by Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Bengaluru. Popular searches include DTH service providers like Tata Play and Airtel Digital, as well as installation services for Dish TV and Tata Play set-top boxes.

Justdial, India's local search engine, notes a 19% rise in these searches compared to pre-IPL levels, with expectations of surpassing last year's 26% rise as the tournament moves forward.

The Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) reports a massive viewership of Rs 35 crore for the first 10 IPL matches, with the opening day alone collecting Rs 16.8 crore unique viewers and a total watch-time of 1,276 crore minutes.

80 foresters sensitised on animal protection, wildlife laws

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



To curb activities such as poaching and trading of several species, particularly star tortoises, monitor lizards and other reptiles which are prominent across Telangana, the Humane Society International/ India (HSI/India), in collaboration with Telangana State Forest Academy, organised a workshop to sensitise 80 forest officers on the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 (including the recent amendment in 2022) on Wednesday. The workshop aimed at empowering forest officers with the knowledge and skills to effectively address wildlife crimes (like illegal trade, hunting and poaching) and human-animal conflict.

Sumanth Bindumadhav and Shubhra Sotie from HSI/India's wildlife team facilitated discussions and trained the forest officers on topics like investigations into wildlife crimes, application of the most relevant sections of the Act, interpretation of the Act in various scenarios and the challenging facets of human-wildlife conflict and its mitigation.

"Empowering forest officers with comprehensive knowledge of wildlife laws and illegal trade is pivotal in amplifying our efforts to protect wildlife.

We aim to foster networking and collaboration among forest officers, enforcement agencies and conservation organisations to strengthen the animal protection movement in India," said Mousumi Gupta, director of Government Affairs, at Humane Society International/India.

This initiative is a part of HSI/India's commitment to build a more compassionate society by collaborating with key stakeholders and empowering law enforcement officials with the knowledge and tools needed to enforce animal protection laws effectively. Since 2013, HSI/India has trained over 1,200 law enforcement officials annually on animal protection laws.

If you witness a wildlife crime, you can report it to the nearest police station or call 1800 425 5364, a toll-free number by the Telangana Forest Department.

14,352 TMREIS students pass Inter examinations

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Aisha Masarath Khanam, Secretary, Telangana Minorities Residential Educational Institutions Society (TMREIS), in a statement on Thursday stated that TMREIS students have excelled in the Intermediate Public Examinations 2024. The pass percentage in Intermediate first year is 76 per cent and in Intermediate second year it is 89 per cent.

A total number of 17,543 students (both first year and second year students) had taken the Intermediate Public Examinations held in March, 2024, out of whom 14,352 students had passed.

Shahnawaz Qasim, Secretary to Chief Minister, Tafseer Iqubal, Special Secretary to Govt., Minorities Welfare Department and Aisha Masarath Khanam, Secretary, Telangana Minorities Residential Educational Institutions Society, congratulated the students and teachers on their achievement.

22 from TMREIS qualify in JEE Mains

Telangana Minority Residen tial Educational Institutions Society (TMREIS) Secretary Aisha Masarat Khanam said that 30 students of TMREIS from CentrE of Excellence, Hyderabad, appeared for JEE Mains examination and 22 students qualified as per the National Testing Agency (NTA) cut off marks. Sufiyan Mohiuddin has secured 99.05 percentile marks in All India 15,119th rank in Open category and 2,251st rank in EWS category. The students are trained under the house team of best junior lecturers and post-graduate teachers of TMREIS. Chief Minister's Secretary Shahnawaz Qasim, Minorities Welfare Department Special Secretary to Government Tafseer Iqbal, Telangana Minorities Residential Educational Institutions Society Secretary Aisha Masarat Khanam congratulated the students and faculty of Centre of Excellence, Barkas, for their excellent results.

JEE MAIN 2024

Sri Chaitanya sets new record

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Sri Chaitanya has achieved a remarkable feat in the JEE Main 2024 results, with its students having secured exceptional ranks, showcasing the institution's commitment to providing quality education and preparing students for competitive exams.

Six students of Sri Chaitanya scored 300 out of 300 marks in JEE Main 2024 and four students secured all-India top ranks of 1, 3, 6 and 9, along with all-India open category 9th rank also. In addition to this, in all-India open category below 100 ranks 25, below 200 ranks 46 and below 1000 ranks 200 were bagged by Sri Chaitanya alone of whom most of them are from the Telugu states.

Sri Chaitanya has set a new record in the JEE Main 2024 results, with 300 out of 300 marks securing all-India 1st rank (K.C. Basava Reddy), 3rd Rank (Thotamsetty Nikilesh), 6th Rank (Himanshu Thalor) and 9th rank (AV Tanish Reddy). In addition to this, in all-India open category below 100 ranks 25, below 200 ranks 46, below 1000 ranks 200 were bagged by Sri Chaitanya alone of whom most of them were from the Telugu states.

Sri Chaitanya's dominance is further evident in the number of students securing 100 percentile, with a total of 272 students achieving this feat in Maths, Physics and Chemistry subject-wise and percentile-wise. Congratulating the toppers on their result, Sushma Boppana, Academic Director of Sri Chaitanya Educational Institutions, said, "We congratulate all the students for their excellent performance in JEE Main 2024.

This remarkable achievement is a testament to the diligent efforts of our students, guided by our highly skilled faculty.

We are proud that our students have secured 4 ranks in the top 10 and 25 ranks within the top 100 AIR in JEE (Main) 2024. We wish all the students a successful career ahead."



KC Basava Reddy
All India 1 Rank



Thotamsetty Nikilesh
All India 3 Rank



Himanshu Thalor
All India 6 Rank



Reddi Anil
All India 9 Rank

EMOTIONAL APPEAL TO STUDENTS BY OFFICIAL

Exams are not end of life

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Parents were advised to be open-hearted and allow their children to develop their broad personalities

Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) Director General CV Anand posted an emotional Tweet on the death of students after the Inter results in Telangana on Thursday. He blamed educational institutions for turning them into sheepish.

As per the Tweet, Anand said, "It's heart-rending to read such news where eight precious lives are sacrificed under the pressure being exerted by ambitious parents and the education system. Decades ago, the cursed corporate education has started turning children into sheep."

He appealed to the parents and students to think that these exams are not the end of life. Parents were advised to be open-hearted and allow their children to develop their broad personalities and not force them to end their lives out of despair. "Life is big and there is a place for everyone on this planet according to their talent and it doesn't need maths and chemistry," he added.

TO EXPLORE CRITICAL MINERALS

CSIR-NGRI inks MoU with KABIL

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Dr Prakash Kumar, Director of CSIR-NGRI and Sadashiv Samantaray, CEO of KABIL holding MoU along with other officials

In a landmark move aimed at bolstering India's mineral exploration capabilities, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been formalised between Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL), represented by Sadashiv Samantaray, Director (Commercial) of the National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO) and CEO of KABIL, and Dr Prakash Kumar, Director of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)- National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) on Thursday at the NALCO corporate office in Bhubaneswar. The event was attended by Sridhar Patra, Chief Managing Director (CMD) of NALCO and Chairman of KABIL.

The collaborative agreement between KABIL and CSIR-NGRI marks a significant step towards strengthening India's self-reliance in critical minerals, crucial for the nation's sustainable development and global competitiveness.

Dr Prakash Kumar emphasised the pressing need of delving into critical minerals through comprehensive geophysical and geological investigations. He highlighted the significance of collaborative efforts between industry and research institutions to leverage national and international advantages.

Echoing Dr Kumar's sentiments, Patra expressed confidence in the collaborative venture, foreseeing it as a catalyst for innovation and actionable insights, particularly for the ongoing projects spearheaded by KABIL.

KABIL, a formidable consortium comprising NALCO, Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL), and Mineral Exploration and Consultancy Limited (MECL), operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Mines. Meanwhile, CSIR-NGRI, a distinguished research arm of CSIR, is renowned for its expertise in delving into the Earth's depths through meticulous geophysical and geological studies.

The extraction of critical minerals, vital components in various sectors such as electronics, renewable energy, defence and telecommunications is heavily dependent on a few nations, exposing the global supply chain to geopolitical uncertainties.

India's steadfast commitment in achieving 50 per cent of cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil sources by 2030 underscores the urgency of securing a reliable supply of these minerals.

Societal measures to prevent mosquito menace mooted

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Mosquito prevention is a collective responsibility and everyone should be aware to combat malaria. Upon the directives of GHMC Commissioner Ronald Rose, the World Malaria Day programme took place at West Maredpally Multi-Purpose Function Hall, Begumpet Circle on Thursday. GHMC Additional Commissioner for Health and Sanitation Ravi Kiran and GHMC Chief Entomologist Dr Rambabu participated in the event.

During the programme, Additional Commissioner Ravi Kiran applauded the dedication of the GHMC entomology staff in their efforts toward mosquito eradication, emphasising their crucial role in combating malaria and dengue, as well as their contribution to election management.

Chief Entomologist Dr Rambabu highlighted the historical context of malaria transmission which was explained by Ronald Ross, a military doctor in 1897 and the significance of World Malaria Day since its formation by the World Health Organisation in 2008.

The programme also focused on the theme of accelerating the fight against malaria for a more unbiased world, along with discussions on individual and societal measures to combat the disease.

Begumpet Deputy Commissioner Sammayya, Secunderabad Zone Senior Entomologist Durgaprasad, Begumpet Circle Assistant Entomologist Srinivas Reddy, Sanitary Supervisor Dhana Goud, Division Supervisors and other staff members participated in the World Malaria Day programme.

Sneha Mehra appointed South Zone DCP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Thursday appointed IPS officer Sneha Mehra as the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) South Zone.

Mehra, who served as the Cyber Crimes DCP has been asked to take charge of her new position immediately. The order was communicated by the ECI through A Santhi Kumari, Chief Secretary to Telangana government.

GHMC summer camp for children

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Emphasising the importance of sports apart from the education, urging parents to support their children's athletic activities, GHMC Commissioner Ronald Rose announced the commencement of summer coaching programmes across Greater Hyderabad on Thursday, aimed at encouraging sporting talents among children aged between 6 and 16 years, which will conclude on May 31.

Ronald Rose said, "GHMC's commitment to organising summer camps annually is to provide a break from academic stress and encouraging a love for sports among the children." He emphasised the role of sports in sharpening skills, lightening mental stress and nurturing future State and national-level athletes.

Ronald Rose urged parents to let their children enrol in the summer training camps provided to their interests. He also advised community members to spread awareness and participate in these programmes.

The Commissioner assured flexibility in choosing different games, with arrangements available for indoor sports upon request. He urged children to attend the camps regularly and engage actively, with coaches and necessary equipment provided for each sport.

Later, Rose inspected the sports facilities and enquired about related arrangements, highlighting GHMC's commitment to sports development.

Zonal Commissioner Abhilash Abhinav, sports department officials, players, students, coaches and parents participated in the programme.

By-election to MLC seat in Telangana on May 27

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The by-election to the Telangana Legislative Council from the Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda Graduates' constituency will be held on May 27, the Election Commission announced on Thursday.

The vacancy was caused by the resignation of Dr Palla Rajeshwar Reddy of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) in December last year, following his election to the Assembly from the Jangaon constituency.

The notification for the by-election will be issued on May 2. The last date for filing nominations will be May 9 while scrutiny of nominations will be taken up the next day. According to the schedule, May 13 is the last date for withdrawal of candidatures.

Polling will be held from 8 am to 4 pm on May 27, and the counting of votes will be taken up on June 5.

The ruling Congress on Wednesday announced Teenmaar Mallanna as its candidate for the by-election. Chintapandu Naveen alias Teenmaar Mallanna, had joined the party in November last year, a few days before the Assembly elections, after quitting the BJP a few months ago.

The by-election to the Legislative Council from Mahabubnagar Local Authorities' Constituency was held on March 28 and the counting of votes was scheduled on April 2.

DCA seizes medicine claiming to cure fever

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Drug Control Administration (DCA) on Thursday seized a medicine which was claimed to cure fever, following a raid conducted at a medical store in the Aiza village of Jogulamba\Gadwal.

DCA officials seized 'DICLOJAN Forte Tablets' during the raid. "Fever is indeed a symptom, typically indicating that the body is fighting off an infection or some other underlying condition. Medicines such as Paracetamol can help alleviate discomfort associated with fever, but they don't directly address the underlying cause of the fever.

'Come with resignation letter to Gun Park today'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

● Harish challenges CM Revanth

In a counter to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's comments to keep his resignation letter ready, BRS MLA Harish Rao said, "On Friday at 10 am I will come to the Martyrs Memorial at Gun Park in front of the Assembly with my resignation letter. Will you come? If it is true that farm loans will be waived before August 15, if the guarantee written on bond paper is true, then come to Gun Park."

Harish once again challenged Revanth at the rally organised at the Ramdas Chowrasta in Medak district centre.

"Let's hand over the resignation letters to intellectuals. If the loan waiver and the six guarantees are implemented by August 15, I will take my resignation letter and give it to the Speaker. If it is not implemented then your resignation letter will be given to the Governor. Are you ready for that? Come if you have the guts and if you are a person who keeps his word," Harish said.

"If the promises given by the Congress are to be implemented, the Congress should be defeated in parliament elections. Congress leaders are arrogant. Medak Lok Sabha candidate Venkatrami Reddy should be sent to Parliament to bring them back to the ground," he said.



"Bond paper used to have credibility and value. After Congressmen wrote six guarantees on it its value has been lost. Revanth must first implement the six guarantees. Revanth is not authorised to talk about Medak's development. Due to the construction of check dams on Haldivagu, there is not even a single acre of dry land in Medak and Narsapur. Crops are harvested. KCR sanctioned three medical colleges for Siddipet, Medak and Sangareddy districts," he said.

"You wrote on bond paper that the six guarantees will be implemented in 100 days. A bond paper has an intrinsic value. After Congressmen wrote on the bond paper its value has been lost. A new drama of swearing on God has started as bond paper politics is not working. Wherever Revanth goes he is swearing on God," Harish said.

Need for ensuring third straight term for Narendra Modi stressed

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh has expressed the confidence that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would become the PM for a third consecutive term. It will ensure ountry's prosperity and security.

He appealed to one and all to take part in safeguarding the Hindu religion and strive for the electoral success of the BJP.

He praised Narendra Modi as the leader who set an example for the world.

He described the BRS and Congress as two sides of the same coin and their stand on many issues is similar. The two parties are family-run parties and they practise dynastic politics, he alleged. He appealed to people to question the representatives of the Congress and BRS when they visited their places for votes.



Pushkar Singh

He was addressing a public meeting at the old Collectorate grounds here on Thursday as part of campaigning for the BJP candidate Dharmapuri Arvind.

Uttarakhand region has pilgrimage centers like Gangotri, Yamunotri, Bhadrinath and Kedarnath. The credit for developing them goes to Modi alone, he said.

He called Arvind very efficient and developed Nizamabad district with the help extended by Narendra Modi. Going by the jubilant mood of the people, he said that reelection of Arvind is certain.

The credit of fulfilling the long-cherished dream of the people to have Ram temple at Ayodha goes to PM Modi. Modi is sure to become the PM once again with the blessings of Lord Rama, he felt.

Nizamabad Urban MlaDhanpal Suryanarayana, Armoor MLA Paidi Rakesh Reddy, district BJP president Dinesh Kulachary, state level BJP leaders and others took part in the event.

Urban electorate urged to come out in large numbers and elect BJP



Sangita Reddy campaigning on behalf of Chevella Lok Sabha candidate Konda Vishweshwar Reddy in Chevella on Thursday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Sangita Reddy, spouse of Konda Vishweshwar Reddy, the BJP candidate for the Chevella Lok Sabha constituency, speaking at Maheshwaram stressed the need to elect the BJP to ensure hattrick for the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

It wass imperative to choose wisely, electing individuals who truly grasp the challenges faced by the people and actively work to address them. "Selecting a right person to represent you in Parliament is pivotal, as they will shape policies and decisions that directly impact our lives and shape our collective future." She said.

Modi is widely recognised today as a global leader, praised as a Vishwaguru. His tenure has seen remarkable transformations across various sectors in India, spanning economic development, defence, manufacturing, and global diplomacy. His leadership during the challenges like the Covid pandemic garnered praise worldwide. Notably, the construction of the Sri Rama temple after a span of 5,000 years stands as a testament to his commitment to cultural and religious heritage. His efforts have lifted an impressive 400 million people out of poverty, illustrating his dedication to inclusive growth. Throughout his endeavours, Modi remains steadfast in his vision of propelling India to the forefront of the global stage.

"I earnestly urge the urban populace to actively participate in the electoral process by exercising their invaluable right to vote. As you cast your vote, take a moment to contemplate which candidate and party hold the best interests of the nation and our future generations at heart. Your vote is not merely a civic duty but a crucial contribution towards shaping the trajectory of our country. We are highly optimistic of Konda Vishweshwar Reddy securing a resounding victory with a substantial majority," she said.

BJP's Bandi Sanjay, Arvind Dharmapuri file nominations

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR/NIZAMABAD





BJP national general secretary Bandi Sanjay Kumar and party MP Arvind Dharmapuri were among the candidates in Telangana who filed their nominations for the Lok Sabha polls on Thursday.

Today is the last day to submit nominations in the State.

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and Telangana BJP president G Kishan Reddy accompanied Sanjay Kumar, who is seeking re-election from Karimnagar, when the latter submitted the nomination to the Returning Officer.

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, BJP Rajya Sabha member K Laxman and other leaders accompanied Arvind, who is contesting again from Nizamabad.

The process of filing nominations began in Telangana on April 18. The scrutiny of nominations would take place on April 26, while April 29 is the last date for withdrawal of candidatures.

Polling would be held in Telangana on May 13.

Modi will scrap reservation if elected again: Jagga Reddy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Jagga Reddy said that Rahul Gandhi will increase the reservations by conducting caste census if he becomes PM. He said that Nehru and Ambedkar provided reservations for the SCs, STs, BCs and minorities.

TPCC working president T Jagga Reddy alleged that Narendra Modi will change the constitution and scrap the reservations if he became Prime Minister again.

While addressing the media on Thursday at Gandhi Bhavan, Jagga Reddy said that PM Modi undermined the administration for 10 years. Modi did not implement a single assurance. He deceived the unemployed by assuring 2 crore jobs every year. He promised to deposit Rs 15 lakh in every Jan Dhan accounts by bringing the black money, but he failed to do that, Jagga Reddy said.

Jagga Reddy said that Rahul Gandhi will increase the reservations by conducting caste census if he became PM. He said that Nehru and Ambedkar provided reservations for the SCs, STs, BCs and Minorities. The SC, ST, BC and minorities benefited for the last 75 years. However, Modi will change the constitution and scrap the reservations if Modi became PM again, he said.

Jagga Reddy cautioned the people saying that it is time for the people to take decisions to ensure the future of their children. He appealed to people to ensure the victory of 15 Congress candidates s in Telangana to make Rahul Gandhi as PM.



Congress MLA Komatireddy Rajgopal Reddy holding a roadshow at Motkur in Bhongir Lok Sabha constituency on Thursday

Rajagopal holds roadshow at Motkur seeking support for Kiran Kumar

PNS ■ MOTKURU

Bhongir Lok Sabha constituency in-charge for the Congress party Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy has described Bhongir as the Congress stronghold. He thanked the people of the Bhongir for having elected him in 2009 and his elder brother in 2018.

Addressing at a roadshow at Motkur on Thursday, he said that K Chandrashekar Rao ruled Telangana for 10 years and pushed the state into a debts.

He demanded that Suryapeta MLA G Jagadish Reddy explain how could he earn h thousands of crores. He said there was something fishy. Jagadish Reddy used to live in a rented house and he became a millionaire suddenly. The Congress government would order an inquiry into his antecedents and send him jail if found guilty, he said.

Stating that the pollution level in River Musi has increased, he offered to ensure that it is cleaned. The government will complete the pending projects like Dharmareddypalli irrigation channel, Bhunyadigani canal, Baswapur and asifnagar irrigation canals and provide irrigation facility to the farmers. A vote given to Congress nominee for Bhongir LS seat Kiran Kumar would mean giving it to him. Therefore, he appealed to the voters to elect Kirankumar Reddy with a huge margin of votes.

10 killed in two separate road accidents in State

PNS ■ SURYAPET/WARANGAL



Ill-fate car

Ten people, including a girl child, died in two separate road accidents in Telangana on Thursday.

Six of a family died in Suryapet district when the car they were travelling in rammed into a stationary truck.

The accident took place near Durgapuram village in Suryapet district, located about 180 km from Hyderabad.

The car smashed into the back of the truck parked on the roadside after it broke down.

A total of 10 people were in the car when the accident happened in the early hours of Thursday. Four passengers had minor injuries and were shifted to a government hospital.

The deceased were identified as Jella Srikanth, Manikyamma, Chandra Rao, Krishna Rao, Swarna and Lasya. They hailed from Govindapuram in Khammam district

In another tragic incident, four intermediate students died on Wednesday night after the two-wheeler on which they were riding collided head-on with a speeding private travel bus coming in the opposite direction at Yellanda village in Warangal District.

Three of them died on the spot and the other succumbed their injuries on the way to hospital, the police said.

PLAN TO IMPROVE VOTER TURNOUT

District administration officials to sensitise electorate



Voter sensitization programme being conducted in Hyderabad on Thursday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

To improve the voter turnout in Hyderabad district, people from all walks of life have been sensitised through various programmes. As part of that, under the direction of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Commissioner Ronald Rose, the district administrative officials have planned targeted intervention to improve the voter turnout.

The officials attested that Voter Awareness Forums are being organised across the district and people from all walks of life are being invited and are being made aware of the importance of voting and the use of the right to vote. In addition to making a pledge - 'I will definitely vote', we are generating awareness on how to check your vote in the voter list and how to know which polling center has a vote.

Moreover, the women are being extensively explained and encouraged to sensitise the voters at home through them. Members of Self Help Groups (SHGs) and representatives of Residential Welfare Associations are holding meetings to encourage every single voter to vote.

They also said that the SVEEP programs are being intensified throughout the district and people are being made aware in all divisions, every basti, colonies, community halls, flower and fruit markets and small chittaka santhals with the aim of increasing the voter turnout. These programmes get good responses from people.

Fight for LS seats is 'BRS versus BRS'

SNCN ACHARYULU
■ HYDERABAD

In the coming Lok Sabha elections, the Congress leaders say that their fight is with BJP. BJP leaders say that their fight is with the Congress. The BRS leaders say that their fight is with the Congress. But the fact is the fighting in the Lok Sabha elections is BRS versus BRS. In Telangana, there are a total of 17 Lok Sabha constituencies. In several constituencies, the BRS candidates are fighting with former BRS leaders from every party they are contesting. The main political parties in Telangana are Congress, BJP and BRS.

In some Lok Sabha constituencies all three candidates of major political parties once belonged to the BRS. For example, in Chevella Lok Sabha constituency, from Congress Ranjith Reddy, from BJP Konda Visheswar Reddy and from BRS Kasani Jnaneshwar are contesting. Congress candidate Ranjith Reddy is sitting BRS MP. Ranjith Reddy recently joined the Congress and contesting from this party in the present Lok Sabha elections. In the previous Lok Sabha elections Ranjith Reddy contested from the BRS and won. The BJP candidate Konda Visheswar Reddy got elected as MP from Chevella from the BRS in the past. BRS candidate Kasani is fighting with former BRS leaders in Chevella.

In the same way in Malkajgiri Lok Sabha constituency, BRS candidate Ragidi Lakshma Reddy is fighting with two former BRS leaders. From BJP Etala Rajender and from Congress Patnam Sunitha Mahendar Reddy are contesting. Both Etala and Sunitha were former BRS leaders. While Etala joined the BJP long back, Sunitha joined the Congress recently.

In Warangal Lok Sabha constituency also, the BJP and Congress candidates belonged to the BRS. BJP candidate Aruri Ramesh and Congress candidate Kadiyam Kavya recently joined the BJP and Congress respectively from the BRS. In fact, the BRS had announced Kavya as its candidate.

But Kavya, along with her father BRS MLA Kadiyam Sreehari, joined the Congress just a few days ago. After Kavya left the party the BRS announced Marepalli Sudheer Kumar as its candidate. Now BRS candidate Sudheer Kumar is fighting with former BRS leaders in Warangal Lok Sabha seat.

In the Medak Lok Sabha constituency, from BRS, former IAS officer and MLC Venkatram Reddy is contesting. From BJP, former MLA Raghunandan Rao and from Congress Neelam Madhu are contesting. Both Raghunandan and Madhu were former BRS leaders.

In the Secunderabad Lok Sabha constituency, BRS candidate Katti Padma Rao is fighting with BRS MLA Danam Nagendar, who is contesting from the Congress along with BJP candidate and with BJP candidate and Union Minister G Kishan Reddy.

In Zaheerabad, BRS candidate Gali Anil Kumar is fighting with sitting BRS MP BB Patil who is contesting from the BJP. In Peddapalli Lok Sabha seat, from BRS, forner minister Koppula Eswar is fighting with former BRS leader Gaddam Vamsi Krishna, who is contesting from the Congress. In Bhongir Lok Sabha seat, BRS candidate C Mallesh is fighting with BJP candidates Bura Narasaiah Goud who was former BRS MP. In Mahabubabad, BRS sitting MP M Kavitha is fighting with BJP candidate Sitaram Nayak, who was former BRS MP.

Rajaram village adopts resolution to boycott LS polls

PNS ■ MANCHERIAL



Rajaram villagers on Thursday announcing decision to boycott the LS elections

Residents of Rajaram village under Kotapalle mandal in Mancherial district have decided to boycott the Lok Sabha elections stating that there is no change in their lives despite successive parties coming to power in the State as well as at the Center.

No leader paid attention to developing their village, they contended. That is why they have decided to abstain from voting in the current Lok Sabha elections. The villagers adopted a resolution in this regard. The issue became a hot topic for debate among the people of the district.

After the *Swatantra* TV broadcast story, the Revenue and police officials swung into action and appealed to the villagers to relent. They assured the villages that they would address their grievances after the Lok Sabha elections. However, the villagers were in no mood to relent. They made it clear to the officials to release funds for the development of the village and then seek votes.

The villagers told the authorities that they would take part in the election process only after the government provided transport and drinking water to people. Unable to do anything, the officials left the village assuring them that they would bring to the attention of the District Collector the problems being faced by the people.

the pioneer
HYDERABAD | FRIDAY | APRIL 26, 2024

INDIA CORNER

US woman who 'tried to bribe' CISF personnel with gold held at IGI Airport

A US woman who allegedly tried to "bribe" a CISF security personnel with smuggled gold was apprehended at the Delhi airport, officials said on Thursday. The incident took place at Terminal-3 of the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport early on Wednesday, when a passenger identified as US citizen Farah Deeko Mohamed arrived from Nairobi (Kenya) on an Air India flight. The passenger was intercepted by Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel while she was being frisked before taking a connecting Air India flight to Hyderabad, a senior officer of the paramilitary force said. She was found carrying five gold bars (weighing 50 grams each) and some jewellery worth about Rs 35 lakh by concealing it in her undergarments, the officer added. "The passenger discreetly offered some gold she was carrying to the CISF woman personnel who frisked her, in exchange for allowing her to proceed with the precious metal," a CISF spokesperson said.



Man thrown off 8th floor in money dispute in Delhi

Two men were arrested for allegedly abducting a 30-year-old man and throwing him to death from the eighth floor of a building in south Delhi over money, police said on Thursday. The accused have been identified as Ahmad Salman, 29, and Dharmesh Malik, 33, they said. Salman was found to be involved in two criminal cases, including an attempt to murder, said an officer. "We got to know that victim, identified as Chandan, took around Rs 8-9 lakh on high interest from Malik, but could not pay back due to which Malik and his associates were pressurising him," Additional Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch) Sanjay Bhatia said. The officer said that on April 20 around 11 am, both Salman and Malik, along with their associates, kidnapped Chandan and his friend from Sarai Kale Khan in a car. They took them to the eighth floor of the NDMC building in Lodhi Colony and demanded money, the officer said.



Indians working as support staff with Russian military returned

Ten Indian nationals working as support staff with the Russian military have been released and have returned to India, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Thursday. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said New Delhi has been pressing Russia to ensure the return of all other citizens serving in similar positions in the Russian military. "Ten such individuals have come back to India and they have been released and they have returned home," Jaiswal said at his weekly media briefing.

After two Indians, working as support staff with the Russian military lost their lives, India last month called on its nationals to not risk their lives by taking up such jobs. Jaiswal said the Indian side is very actively pursuing the case of all Indians serving with the Russian military at various levels, including with the foreign ministry, defence ministry and several other organisations in Russia.



Deeply biased: MEA on US report citing rights violations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



India on Friday described a US State Department report citing alleged incidents of human rights violations including in Manipur as "deeply biased" and said it reflects a poor understanding of India and it attaches no value to it.

The annual report of the State Department highlighted instances of human rights abuses in Manipur following the outbreak of ethnic conflict.

"This report is deeply biased and reflects a poor understanding of India," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

"We attach no value to it and urge you to do the same," he said at his weekly media briefing. The report also mentioned the raids by Indian tax authorities on the office of British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

The India section of the report said local human rights organisations, minority political parties, and affected communities criticised the country's government for the delayed action to stop violence and provide humanitarian assistance in Manipur.

According to the report, there were many press and civil society reports of representatives of political parties using disinformation tactics against civil society organisations, religious minorities, such as Sikhs and Muslims, and the political opposition, sometimes depicting them as security threats.

Referring to the tax raids on BBC offices, the report said although tax authorities described the searches as motivated by irregularities in the BBC's tax payments and ownership structure, officials also searched and seized equipment from journalists who were not involved in the organisation's financial processes.

"The government invoked emergency powers to ban the screening of the documentary, forced media companies to remove links to the video, and detained student protesters who organised viewing parties," the State Department alleged, referring to a BBC documentary on the 2002 Gujarat riots, the screening of which was banned in India.

'BJP made 'zero progress' on Darjeeling issue'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day before polling in the Darjeeling Lok Sabha constituency, the Congress on Thursday attacked the BJP, saying despite winning the seat in the last three elections, it has made "zero progress" on finding a permanent political solution to the issue of the Darjeeling Hills.

Three Lok Sabha constituencies in the northern part of West Bengal, including the strategically important Darjeeling seat, will go to polls in the second phase of general elections on Friday.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said only the Congress has taken concrete action to address the people's concerns in Darjeeling.

"The people of beautiful and historic Darjeeling go to polls tomorrow. This is why they cannot trust the Bharatiya Jumla Party."

Congress slams 'Modi's steadfast adherence to lies'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The Congress on Thursday termed as "lies" Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks that former PM Rajiv Gandhi had abolished inheritance tax after his mother Indira Gandhi's death to save her wealth from going to the government, as it cited then finance minister's budget speech on abolition of the estate duty.

Addressing an election rally in Madhya Pradesh's Morena city, Modi also said that after benefitting from it, the Congress now wants to impose inheritance tax again on the people of the country. If the Congress comes to power, it will snatch more than half of the earnings of people through inheritance tax, he said.

Hitting back at the prime minister, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said on X, "Yesterday the PM claimed that @INCIndia wanted to impose an Inheritance Tax. Once it became clear that it was the BJP that has been propagating an Inheritance Tax, he switched lanes."

"Once again, his lies stand unraveled. Here is the paragraph from then-Finance Minister VP Singh's budget speech of March 16th, 1985, which proposed the abolition of estate duty. Paragraph 88 of the speech states the reasons clearly," Ramesh said and shared an excerpt from the speech.

"As both wealth-tax and estate duty laws apply to the property of a person, the former applying to his property before death and the latter after his death, the existence of two separate laws with reference to the same property amounts to procedural harassment to the taxpayers and the heirs of the deceased who have to comply with the provisions of two different laws," Singh had said, according to the excerpt of his speech shared by Ramesh.

"Having considered the relative merits of the two taxes, I am of the view that estate duty has not achieved the twin objectives with which it was introduced, namely, to reduce unequal distribution of wealth and assist the States in financing their development schemes," Singh had said.

While the yield from estate duty is only about Rs 20 crore, its cost of administration is relatively high, he had noted.

"I, therefore, propose to abolish the levy of estate duty in respect of estates passing on deaths occurring on or after 16th March, 1985. I will come forward in due course with suitable legislation for this purpose," the then finance minister said.

'Bengal school jobs verdict gross injustice'

PNS ■ KESHIARY (WB)



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday dubbed the cancellation of over 25,000 school jobs as "gross injustice" and alleged that it was a ploy by the BJP to stop these job losers from being deployed in poll duty.

Banerjee, while addressing an election rally in the Medinipur Lok Sabha constituency in Paschim Medinipur district, wondered how the schools could function with so many teachers out of jobs.

Earlier this week, the Calcutta High Court had declared the recruitment process of the State Level Selection Test-2016 (SLST) in West Bengal government-sponsored and aided schools as "null and void", ordering the cancellation of all appointments made through it.

"If someone has committed a mistake, it can be rectified, but snatching 25,000 jobs is a gross injustice. How will the schools function, if so many teachers are out of jobs?

"It is a ploy by the BJP. I have respect for the judiciary but what has happened is gross injustice," Banerjee said.

The BJP leaders are "taking away jobs" despite the country having the highest unemployment rate since independence, she claimed.

"So many jobs have been taken away so that these job losers cannot be deployed in poll duty during elections and central government employees can be engaged, who will work at the behest of the saffron camp," Banerjee said.

"We are giving jobs. More than 10 lakh jobs are ready. But the BJP to pursue its political agenda is taking away jobs. The administration and the teachers have moved the Supreme Court. We will support them," she said.

The Medinipur Lok Sabha seat was wrested by the BJP's Dilip Ghosh from the TMC in 2019. However, this time Ghosh has been shifted to the Bardhaman-Durgapur Lok Sabha seat, where the party is facing a tough fight. The BJP had won the constituency by a slender margin five years ago. "The BJP should answer why it has shifted its sitting MP from this seat. Is it because he was a non-performer? If so, then BJP must say it in public and apologise to the people," she said.

Banerjee also hit out at RSS for "not reining in the BJP from conducting atrocities on people" across the country.

SC imposes Rs 5 L costs on Centre for filing frivolous petition

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has imposed costs of Rs 5 lakh on the Centre for challenging a Meghalaya High Court order, holding it was "sheer abuse" of the process of law.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Satish Chandra Sharma said there was no occasion or justification for the Union of India to have challenged the order by way of a Special Leave Petition.

"The present petition is sheer abuse of the process of law. The petitioners are cautioned not to file such frivolous petitions in future.

"We are not inclined to interfere with the impugned judgment(s) and order(s) of the High Court. Accordingly, the Special Leave Petition is dismissed with costs for the reason that before the High Court counsel for the petitioner (UoI) submitted that the matter was squarely covered by a previous decision and, accordingly, the High Court had disposed of the matter on the statement of the counsel for Union of India," the bench said.

The top court was hearing an appeal against the High Court order which upheld a Central Administrative Tribunal judgement.

Severe heat wave predicted during second phase polling

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Lakhs of voters will have to bear the searing heat when they step out to exercise their franchise in the second phase of the Lok Sabha elections on Friday.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Thursday warned of heatwave to severe heatwave conditions in parts of West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh during the next five days.

It has issued a red warning for West Bengal and Odisha and an orange alert for Bihar and parts of Karnataka.

The Met office said high humidity could add to people's inconvenience in Tripura, Kerala, coastal Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Assam, Meghalaya and Goa.

High-velocity winds, light rain and thunderstorms could provide temporary relief from the hot weather in parts of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh on Friday, the weather office said.

On Wednesday, Union Minister and BJP leader Nitin Gadkari fainted while speaking at an election rally in eastern Maharashtra's Yavatmal district amid the scorching heat, prompting West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to question the nearly two-month-long schedule.

"Pray for quick and complete recovery of senior Union Minister and BJP leader Nitin Gadkari. Electioneering in the scorching heat of this cruel summer is indeed unbearable. Today is 24 April, and, can you imagine, our seven-phase elections will continue till 1st June??!!" Banerjee said in a post on X.

The ongoing heatwave spell is the second this month.

AAP alleges LG office cancelled mayoral polls

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Thursday alleged that the Lt Governor's office has "cancelled" the April 26 mayoral polls of Municipal Corporation of Delhi.

"The BJP got this election cancelled despite there being permission from Election Commission. The LG office has cancelled the polls saying he works on the advice of the chief minister. There have been previous instances where he has not followed the aid and advice of the chief minister," AAP MCD in-charge Durgesh Pathak claimed at a press conference.

There was no immediate reaction from the LG officer on the allegations. Pathak said that the post of the mayor in the second term is reserved for councillor from reserved category. "People of Dalit community are calling for this development. This shows that BJP is anti-Dalit. Even in 2019 when the Lok Sabha polls were on, mayors were elected," he said. Asked whether the party will approach court in the matter, he responded, "We are discussing with lawyers on the matter and will see what happens. We have seen duch difficulties earlier also but we will ensure that mayor is elected." AAP MLA Vishesh Ravi alleged that BJP was stopping a person from Dalit community from becoming the mayor.

"The AAP had the number since Congress councillors were also supporting our candidate in the polls. Tomorrow' election was a formality where we just had to go and get our candidate elected for the mayoral post," he said.

For those behind barbed wire border fencing, life is tough but voting is a must

PNS ■ GOBINDAPUR (INDO-BANGLADESH BORDER)

For the 42 families living behind the barbed wire fencing along the Indo-Bangladesh border in Assam's Karimganj district, life may be tough but they cast their votes in all elections, harbouring the hope of being a part of the mainland one day.

The day in the lives of those families - 40 Hindus belonging to the Namasudra community and two Muslims - begin with the opening of the Border Gate No: 36 at 6 am by BSF when they are allowed to go to work or school but they must return to their village by 7 pm. The gate opens beyond this timeframe only during emergencies.

Gobindapur village remained outside the barbed wire as according to the border protocol signed between India and Bangladesh, fencing or any construction can only be done at least 150 yards away from the actual line of the border but in case of Karimganj, it was reduced to 50 yards, due to the River Kushiara flowing along the boundary.

"We face a lot of difficulties. Our forefathers have lived here for many decades before Independence.

We want the authorities to provide us with land to settle on the other side of the fence but we are mostly ignored by political parties," he 41-year old Shibu Namasudra said.

"All villagers, however, are sincere about exercising their votes as it reassures us that we are Indians and not just a part of the No-Man's Land," he said.

There has been no campaigning in the village by any of the 24 candidates in fray in the Karimganj constituency and the only sign of electioneering is a single poster of a contestant put up by some villagers.

"The candidates do not come to our village to campaign.



'Genetic basis for link between depression, heart disease'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A group of genes could be common to both depression and heart disease, a finding that researchers said could explain why having one of them increases risk of developing the other.

The "puzzling" link between the diseases has been known to exist since the 1990s, they said.

Studies have found that people with depression run a greater risk of cardiovascular disease, with early and effective treatment of the mental illness lowering the risk of developing heart-related conditions. Conversely, studies have also shown that people having cardiovascular disease tend to have depression as well.

The researchers, including those from the Tampere University, Finland, said that the link between the two conditions could be partly explained by lifestyle commonly observed in depression patients such as poor diet and lack of exercise.

However, they said, it is also possible that the two diseases could be related on a "deeper level" by sharing biological processes such as inflammation, which are important to developing these conditions. The findings are published in the journal Frontiers in Psychiatry.

The researchers collected blood samples from close to 900 men and women aged between 34 and 49 years, who were participants in the Young Finns study. The study, examining cardiovascular risk factors in children and adolescents as they grow into adults, started in 1980. The participants were followed-up since then.



The blood samples were analysed for gene expression, which is the process by which information in a gene eventually translates into observable traits in an individual.

The researchers identified a specific group of genes that expressed themselves in a similar manner across both the conditions -- depression and cardiovascular health. This group of genes, or gene module, was found to be associated with a high score for depressive symptoms as well as a low score for cardiovascular health.

"We looked at gene expression profile in the blood of people with depression and CVD and found 256 genes in a single gene module (group of genes) whose expression at levels higher or lower than average puts people at greater risk of both diseases," first author Binisha H. Mishra, a postdoctoral researcher at Tampere University, said.

The genes forming the module are involved in biological processes such as inflammation known to play a role in the development of both depression and cardiovascular disease, the researchers said.

'Press Beijing to divulge whereabouts of Panchen Lama'

PNS ■ DHARAMSHALA

The Tibetan government-in-exile on Thursday called on India and other democratic nations to press Beijing to divulge the whereabouts of Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and allow an independent fact-finding commission to examine his disappearance in China nearly 29 years ago.

The demand was made at a grand event held in this Himachal Pradesh town commemorating the 35th birth anniversary of Choekyi Nyima who disappeared just three days after the Dalai Lama declared the then six-year to be the reincarnated Panchen Lama.



A joint statement issued by leading Tibetan leaders called on foreign governments and the UN to direct their ambassadors in China to meet with the 11th Panchen Lama and ascertain his whereabouts and wellbeing.

The Panchen Lama is the second most important figure in Tibetan Buddhism.

"Our most pressing concern is whether the Panchen Rinpoche is still alive or not," said Penpa Tsering, the Sikyong or political head of Tibet's government-in-exile, in presence of hundreds of Tibetans and international delegations.

"If he is presumed to be alive, has he been brought up with his parents from the age of six up till now for the last 29 years?

HYDERABAD | FRIDAY | APRIL 26, 2024

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Patrimonial dispute

It may be time to debate a tax on inheritance in India, but it will not be a walk in the park

The informal proposal in the Congress quarters of an inheritance tax has garnered attention and curiosity across India. While the party has distanced itself from these remarks, originally made by Indian Overseas Congress chairperson Sam Pitroda, the Statement has given another stick to the BJP to beat the Congress with. As to the viability of implementing a tax system akin to America's, delving into the issue requires a comprehensive examination of various factors, including economic, social and political. The US has long embraced the concept of taxing inheritance, albeit with its own complexities and controversies. The rationale behind such a tax is multilayered. One, it aims to address wealth inequality by ensuring that accumulated wealth is not perpetually passed down generations without contributing to public good. Two, it serves as a source of revenue for the Government, aiding in funding public services and initiatives. However, the implementation of an inheritance tax in India would face unique challenges. One of the primary concerns is the prevalence of informal economies and undocumented wealth, which could potentially evade taxation. Additionally, India's cultural and social fabric places a significant emphasis on familial ties and inheritance practices, making the introduction of such a tax a sensitive issue. Moreover, the Indian taxation system already comprises various levies, including income tax, capital gains tax and wealth tax (though repealed in 2015), which may complicate the addition of an inheritance tax. There are also concerns about the practicality of administering such a tax, given the diverse nature of assets and prevailing inheritance structures.



However, proponents argue that implementing an inheritance tax could serve as a tool for promoting economic mobility and reducing wealth concentration among a select few. By imposing a tax on large inheritances, the Government could potentially redistribute wealth more equitably and generate revenue to fund social welfare programmes. To effectively assess the feasibility of an inheritance tax in India, policymakers would need to engage in extensive consultations with stakeholders, including economists, tax experts, legal professionals and the public. Additionally, careful consideration has to be given to designing a tax framework that minimises loopholes and ensures compliance while addressing concerns related to family businesses, agricultural land and other sensitive assets. Any decision to introduce an inheritance tax should be accompanied by measures to enhance tax transparency, improve enforcement mechanisms and bolster efforts to combat tax evasion and avoidance. In conclusion, while the idea of taxing inheritance in India draws parallels with the US model, its implementation would necessitate a nuanced approach tailored to the nation's unique socio-economic context.

PICTALK



Tibetan monks during special prayers for the long life of the 11th Panchen Lama on his birthday, in Shimla PTI

The marginalisation of disabled in politics



VAMIKA **GUPTA**

Despite 2.68 crore persons with disabilities, the *divyang* community struggles to find representation in mainstream politics



In the vast landscape of Indian democracy, where diversity should thrive, the voices and needs of individuals with disabilities often echo in silence. Despite India accounting for 2.68 crore persons with disabilities, making up 2.28 per cent of the population as per Census 2011, the disabled community has been unable to find its place in mainstream politics.

With the Lok Sabha General Elections 2024 looming large and around the corner, a stark reality emerges: out of the 543 seats, not even one is occupied by a person with a disability. This absence speaks volumes, reflecting a systemic failure to acknowledge the rights and contributions of over 2.68 crore disabled individuals.

As the countdown to the elections intensifies, this leads us to critical questions. Why do the demands of persons with disabilities find little or no place in the manifestos of the political parties? Why do the exit polls overlook this significant demographic, pushing them to the sidelines of the demographic discourse? Can we truly celebrate the biggest festival of democracy with one of the significant sections of the population lagging behind?

A vicious cycle of exclusion persists when it comes to the political representation of persons with disabilities. Political parties often overlook people with disabilities, considering them a marginalised group who do not vote and are "incompetent" and "incapable" of creating any electoral impact. Professor Anita Ghai poignantly observes this disparity as "to be disabled is to be disabled by society."

Too often, persons with disabilities are portrayed solely as objects of inspiration, highlighting their perceived "achievements" in crawling, reaching a polling booth and overcoming all the adversities. While these stories may momentarily touch hearts, they ultimately reinforce stereotypes, further excluding the disabled community from active participation in the electoral process. Moreover, the physical barriers encountered at the polling stations compound the challenges faced by disabled voters, stripping away their dignity and agency. Lack of accessibility of polling stations and booths, absence of information, as well as inadequate capacity building of staff to support persons with disabilities, often make it difficult for disabled people to exercise their political rights.

For instance, during the Karnataka Assembly Elections held in 2023, when Anitha (38) arrived at the polling center, having traveled 20 km on her three-wheeled mobility bike, she was unable to make her way to the polling booth. There were no wheelchairs stocked at the facility. She says "The ramp was too narrow and could only accommodate a two-wheeler. It could not fit my three-wheeled assisted bike. The only person to ask for help was the security guard, who shrugged it off and told me to 'manage' like the other voters with disabilities, who were forced to crawl up the ramp, to the booth to cast their vote." Anitha's experience serves as a reminder of the systemic neglect that plagues our electoral infrastructure.

> AS WE MARK 75 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE, THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CIVIL AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS OF THE STATE MUST BE RESPECTED AND HONOURED

The challenges multiply for those with lesser known and lesser visible disabilities, such as those with blood disorders and intellectual and developmental disability. For example, the absence of sign language interpreters during political campaigns renders crucial information inaccessible, further alienating persons with speech and hearing impairments. In a democratic process that is built on inclusivity and fairness, these barriers erode the dignity of its disabled citizens, which it promised to uphold.

Further, the lack of concrete and official data exacerbates the situation. Without accurate statistics on the number of disabled voters who cast their votes and their representation in positions of power, policy formulation becomes a shot in the dark. The reliance on outdated figures, such as considering only 7 kinds of disabilities as against 21 as per the amended Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD) 2016, further compounds the problem. This dearth of information results in a lack of targeted policies and inadequate budget allocations for persons with disabilities.

Yet, amidst these challenges lies an opportunity for transformation. The need is for persons with disabilities to be considered a part of the mainstream discourse around development. It is time to shift from a tokenistic approach to disability towards a more rights-based approach. Significantly, we need to move away from the traditional approach of treating disabled persons as mere beneficiaries and recipients of pensions and assistive devices.

As we mark 75 years of independence, the fundamental rights of persons with disability to participate in the civil and political systems of the State must be respected and honoured. This necessitates that persons with disabilities hold a seat at the table, with them being key stakeholders in designing and developing all policies and programs developed for them. Integration of the needs of the disabled community across all facets of governance is the need of the hour. I believe that it is only then that we can truly realise the vision of a 'Viksit Bharat' and propel India towards its aspiration of a $ 5 trillion economy.

(The writer is Program Officer-Advocacy, NCPEDP; views are personal)

Why do Indians excel abroad and fail back home?



RADHIKA **SHRIVASTAVA**

Emphasis on fostering creativity, innovation and risk-taking is pivotal for the nation to become a global hub for knowledge creation

Indians have undeniably left a lasting impression across various global arenas, spanning technology, entrepreneurship, academia and healthcare. However, a perplexing paradox persists - why do Indians excel overseas while encountering unique obstacles within their homeland? This compelling question warrants immediate attention and a thorough exploration of the multifaceted challenges at hand.

Deciphering the Enigma: Indian Excellence Abroad and Domestic Hurdles

The disparity between Indian achievements on the international stage and the hurdles faced domestically primarily stems from deficiencies in the public education system. The insightful narrative of "Why Indians Succeed Everywhere Except in India," as presented by EW, adeptly dissects this paradox, attributing it to the lamentable State of public education - an observation that holds true.



The Interplay of Education, Governance and Economic Development

The nexus between the quality of education and the overall health of political, socio-economic and law and order systems is profound. A robust education system forms the cornerstone for an informed citizenry, competent leadership and a flourishing economy. Recognising education as a catalyst for effective governance and economic prosperity, it is imperative to prioritise education within national development strategies.

Challenges in Primary and Secondary Education

The current State of primary and secondary education reflects the trajectory of our nation's future. ASER surveys reveal a stark reality - a significant portion of our youth lacks even basic skills expected at their grade levels. This systemic failure jeopardises the very foundation of our future, necessitating a discerning response to address underlying issues.

Higher Education: Quality and Employability Crisis

Graduation should ideally open doors to a world of opportunities. However, India grapples with the challenge of higher education - the mismatch between degrees and employability. It is crucial to question whether higher education institutions adequately prepare graduates for the dynamic job market, reflecting the systemic challenges faced by graduates and the subsequent brain drain.

The Brain Drain Predicament: Retaining India's Brightest Minds

While India boasts exporting talent worldwide, there's a sobering reality - a loss of intellectual capital that could otherwise fuel national growth. Understanding the migration patterns of Indian graduates to foreign shores challenges the conventional narrative of brain drain. Yet, it's vital to acknowledge the diaspora's positive contributions as a bridge between India and the global economy.

A Call to Action for Change

Viewing the emigration of skilled individuals as a loss for India underscores the urgency for comprehensive strategies to reverse brain drain, attract exceptional talent back home and invest in research and development.

A paradigm shift in higher education is imperative, emphasising creativity, innovation and risk-taking to foster a globally competitive India. Restoring the spirit of private enterprise and nurturing a dynamic academic and industrial environment is crucial for sustained growth.

As we navigate the complexities of reform, the vision outlined in this analysis serves as a beacon toward a more prosperous, innovative and globally competitive India.

(The author is a Managing Director, FIIB; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DISRESPECT BY HIGH COMMAND

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Churn in Congress over Delhi candidates", published on April 25, this is my response. The recent resignation of Raj Kumar Chauhan, a stalwart in Delhi politics and a prominent Dalit leader, from the Congress party highlights a deepening discontent within its ranks. Chauhan's departure, fuelled by allegations of disrespect from the party high command, sheds light on internal rifts over ticket distribution and outsider nominations.

The incident underscores a broader issue of party unity and inclusivity, especially ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha polls. The rejection of 'outsider' candidates and the clash between grassroots leaders and central leadership reflect a disconnect that could harm the party's electoral prospects. Chauhan's decades-long dedication to the Congress, coupled with his grievances, poses a significant challenge to the party's leadership. His departure, along with the protests against nominations like Udit Raj's, signals a need for introspection and reconciliation within the Delhi Congress. Ultimately, the party must address these grievances transparently to uphold its integrity and regain the trust of its members and constituents alike.

Ayesha Singh | *Jaipur*

CORRUPTION, A PERVASIVE REALITY

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Determining the limits of corruption, the Indian way", published on April 25, this is my response. Corruption, an omnipresent spectre, haunts every facet of Indian society, transcending the boundaries of public and private sectors. While Governmental and political malfeasance often grab the headlines, corruption manifests in myriad forms, from petty bribery to workplace coercion. The notion that only monetary exchanges define corruption overlooks systemic injustices and abuses of power. The oath-bound duty of public officials to serve the populace is marred by arrogance and apathy, fostering a culture where exploitation thrives unchecked.

Despite legislative efforts, corruption persists unabated, prompting introspection on the efficacy of legal remedies. Is corruption an indelible part of our collective psyche, entrenched beyond legislative constraints? The normalisation of corrupt practices challenges societal morality, blurring the lines between acceptance and condemnation. As scandals unveil the deep-seated roots of corruption, it beckons a reevaluation of societal norms and ethical compasses. The lament of a disillusioned officer underscores a sobering reality: corruption knows no bounds, yet its normalisation is a limit we dare not accept.

Nikhil Desai | *Pune*

NAVIGATING WORKPLACE DYNAMICS

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Nurture workplace safety and inclusivity", published on April 25, this is my response. The modern workplace is a dynamic ecosystem, mirroring Maslow's hierarchy of needs, where foundational elements must be addressed before reaching higher goals. With a diverse workforce spanning multiple generations, including X-Gens to Generation Alpha, it's imperative to adapt policies and practices accordingly. Pay parity, safe workplaces and respectful environments are crucial pillars, alongside diversity and inclusion initiatives. Flexibility, accessibility and appreciation further enhance employee well-being and engagement.

Training and development programs ensure continuous growth and inclusivity. By prioritising accessibility and accommodation, organisations demonstrate their commitment to equality. In this evolving landscape, fostering a culture of support and appreciation is key to nurturing talent and achieving collective success. As we navigate these workplace dynamics, it's essential to embrace change and prioritise the well-being of all employees.

Pooja Menon | *Kochi*

India's democracy dilemma



Apropos the news article, "The democratic status of India under scanner", published on April 25, this is my response. The V-Dem Institute's report labeling India as an "electoral autocracy" raises eyebrows, suggesting a skewed perspective on its democratic landscape. While global indices like the EIU Democracy Index provide a framework, their methodology and accuracy have been questioned. Civil liberties, a cornerstone of democracy, show a worrying decline in India, impacting its global rankings and sovereignty. The World Happiness Report highlights India's struggle, exacerbated by the pandemic, influencing its happiness index.

Moreover, the RSF's Press Freedom Index depicts a concerning picture, placing India unfavorably alongside Pakistan and Afghanistan. The methodology critique underscores the importance of robust research methodologies. As India faces scrutiny, it's imperative to introspect and perhaps develop indigenous indices aligned with its realities. Decolonising the democracy index could offer a more accurate reflection of India's democratic journey amidst global assessments.

Anand Rajan | *Chennai*

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

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FIRST COLUMN

THE ESSENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

It is awareness of the environment, thoughts, feelings and sensations



RAVI **VALLURI**

We are shaped by our thoughts; we become what we think. When the mind is pure, joy follows like a shadow that never leaves. What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday, and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow, the Enlightened One, Buddha was to say.

In our lexicon today subjects and topics like physics, metaphysics, an elevated State, consciousness, life coaches and mind, apart from iconic names of Stephen Hawking, Jim Holt, and Carl Sagan among others are all bandied quite recklessly without deep study. This is perhaps done under pressure to keep up with Jones or to display our awareness about certain issues of topical interests without proper research.

Recently my jaw dropped when confronted with some basic facts and facets of our universe. Through my elementary study of physics and geography, I was aware that we live on Planet Earth, which is an integral part of a Solar System; though I was in the dark and not fully aware that each star in the galaxy has its own solar systems like ours. I was certainly an ignoramus on these riveting concepts. Apparently, several of these stars and their respective solar systems do not exist anymore and have disappeared forever in the sands of time or are perhaps gravitating towards a black hole. It dawned on me as to how ignorant I was despite my readings on the subject.

So how does this lead us to the quintessential term of consciousness? Simply put consciousness is a State when humans are aware of and responsive to their environment. This is inclusive of both prevailing internal and external conditions. An individual blessed with an efficacious and robust thought process becomes aware and responsive to various occurrences which are taking place both within and without.



Consciousness is an individual's State of awareness of their environment, thoughts, feelings, or sensations; and in order to experience consciousness, one must be both awake and aware. Arjuna, the ace archer slumped and his fabled Gandiva fell to the ground as his mind was gripped with doubts and fear as the spectre of battling his cousins, his Gurus and above all the patriarch Bhishma coloured the mind and Sisyphean thought process engulfed his persona.

This was when Lord Krishna unleashed his Vishwarup Darshan and rendered the song celestial Bhagavad Gita which revealed his true self and raised the consciousness in Arjuna who took up the cudgels once again. King Janaka the father of Sita was a Jnani Purush. He was a highly knowledgeable and enlightened person and was referred to as a Raj Rishi. One day in his court he fell asleep and dreamt that Mithila his kingdom was stricken by severe and dreaded drought conditions.

The suzerain visualised an eagle swooping down and plucking a piece of bread/chappati from the hands of an impoverished peasant. This shocked the king and he woke up from a State of slumber to receive sage Ashtavakra who was to reveal the gospel of truth, which is popularly referred to as Ashtavakra Gita. Janaka then realised his true self and the consciousness was ignited. Buddha for years continued with his spiritual practices and was perennially haunted by Mara (evil/fiendish forces) while cogitating, until on one full moon night pristine truth dawned on him and he went into deep silence.

Consciousness in Buddhism refers to life force, mind and discernment. Consciousness is the State when the human mind is verily awakened and assumes the form of a pure and pristine child brimming with enthusiasm, joy and curiosity. This is an experiential State of mind and consciousness.

(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)

Neglect spurs industry exodus in Punjab



ASHWANI **MAHAJAN**

The Punjab Government has not only lacked an industrial policy for a long time, but there has been a continuous deterioration in the infrastructure required for industries



After independence till the year 2011-12, Punjab was considered to be one of the rich and prosperous States of India. In the year 2000-01, the per capita income of Punjab was not only the highest in the country, but it was also 9 per cent more than the second richest State, namely, Haryana. But in the year 2012-13, the per capita income of Punjab slipped to the second position and today Punjab has reached the 10th position in terms of per capita income among the States with a population of more than 1 crore and the 19th position among all the States, and has now become the second slowest growing States in the country.

In the year 2011-12, when Punjab's per capita income was the highest in the country, the share of agriculture was 24 per cent, that of industries 28.4 per cent and that of services 47.6 per cent. But by the year 2022-23, the share of agriculture had increased to 28.94 per cent, while the share of industries and services was reduced to 25.51 per cent and 45.91 per cent respectively. It can be assumed that the industry and service sector have shrunk in Punjab. While talking about its neighbouring State Haryana, the share of industries in GDP in Haryana has increased from 25.90 per cent to 28 per cent between the years 2011-12 and 2021-22. The share of industries in Gujarat has increased from 36 per cent to 43 per cent during the same period, and in Tamil Nadu from 27.9 per cent to 33 per cent.

It can be understood that during this period, deindustrialisation has taken place in Punjab. Although Punjab is famous in the world for its population migrating to different parts of the world, since the beginning, after independence, a large number of Punjabi people migrated to the USA, Canada, Europe and many other countries. Punjab benefited a lot from these migrant Punjabis. The money sent to Punjab by the migrant Punjabis from abroad was greatly beneficial for the development of agriculture and industries. A wave of industrial development was seen in Punjab for a long time.

But for quite some time now it has been observed that not only has the industrial development of Punjab come to a halt, but a large number of industries have now started migrating out of Punjab. Industries of Punjab have now started shifting to its neighbouring States like Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan etc. as well as to distant States like Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat etc. Punjab was especially known for its engineering industry, but many engineering companies have now shifted to the user States of their products. On the other hand, Jalandhar was considered a big centre for sports products, and many sports industries there, have now shifted to Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. It is being observed that textile and garment industries have shifted to Madhya Pradesh, the bicycle industry to Chennai and China, knitwear industry to Africa, Southeast Asia and Madhya Pradesh.

Anti-industry policies of Punjab Government

The agriculture sector in Punjab has been considered very important from an economic point of view. It is worth noting that although only 28.94 per cent of the total GDP in Punjab comes from agriculture, more than 65 per cent of its population depends directly on agriculture. A sad part of Indian democracy is its populist policies. In Punjab, these populist policies have worked to adversely affect the economic development of Punjab. Punjab, that is, the region of five rivers, has been very rich in terms of water. However in Punjab, due to the ease of groundwater extraction, a large number of tube wells were installed. To please farmers, the Punjab Government started the scheme of giving free electricity for agriculture. In such a situation, excessive exploitation of water started. Due to this, many districts of Punjab have now become dark zones, that is, where the availability of groundwater has depleted excessively.

> PUNJABIS ARE GOOD ENTREPRENEURS, WHICH MAKES PUNJAB EXCEL IN INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT. BUT TODAY, PUNJAB IS LAGGING BEHIND IN COMPETITION WITH THOSE STATES WHERE LOGISTICS COSTS ARE LOW AND WHERE THERE HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN INFRASTRUCTURE

However, the Punjab Government's policy of giving free electricity to agriculture has not only affected the availability of groundwater but has also affected the industries there. The Punjab Government has put most of the burden of free electricity for agriculture on industries and businesses. Due to this electricity has become very expensive for industries, causing a huge disadvantage to the Punjab industry vis a vis their counterparts elsewhere. This has seriously affected the viability of industries. They have no option left but to move out of Punjab to other States and even to foreign countries. Environmental laws in Punjab are such that it is almost impossible to comply with them. In such a situation, industries have no choice but to shut down their units or move to other States. Not only this, industries and businesses in Punjab also have to pay high water cess, due to which industries have to face losses.

Conditions becoming difficult

One of the reasons for rapid industrial and economic development in States like Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh etc. is infrastructure development and other facilities, which leads to a reduction in their logistics cost. It is well known that Punjabis are good entrepreneurs, which made Punjab excel in industrial and commercial development. But today Punjab is lagging behind in competition with those States where logistics cost is low and where there has been significant progress in infrastructure. It is worth noting that the condition of infrastructure in Punjab has become much worse in recent years.

Not only this, the implementation of the GST system has also affected the industries of Punjab. Earlier, indirect taxes were levied at a low rate by the Punjab Government, but after the implementation of the GST system, the possibility of State-specific fiscal incentives is very limited, due to which the competitive power of the industries of Punjab has now become much lower than other States.

Obstacles for new and old industries

If someone wants to set up a new industry in Punjab, then not only environmental but also other types of clearances are highly difficult. Not only this, allotment of land for industries is also very difficult and is also plagued by corruption.

The financial sector in Punjab has also been seriously affected, because most of the agricultural loans of Punjab have turned bad and due to this, NPAs in Punjab are also very high.

Not only this, the continuously deteriorating law and order situation in Punjab is wreaking havoc on the industries.

Half-hearted efforts

The distance from the sea and the high logistics cost of exports are also one of the reasons why Punjab's industries have to send goods through a long route. Earlier, goods could be sent through Pakistan, but now since that route is closed, goods can be sent overseas only through Mumbai port. To deal with this situation, an air cargo facility was started in Amritsar, but there was a lack of complementary efforts. Due to the lack of backward linkages of air cargo with industries, only 20 per cent of the air cargo facility is being used presently.

While other State Governments are offering various incentives to attract industries, the Punjab Government has not only lacked an industrial policy for a long time but there has been a continuous deterioration in the infrastructure required for industries. There is also a lack of research and development activities.

Due to the lack of industrial development, Punjab is continuously lagging behind economically, but the biggest concern is that the Punjab administration has no thought or policy initiatives on this subject. In such a situation, if this trend is not stopped, Punjab can lag far behind in economic development, which will be neither good for Punjab nor for the country.

(The writer is a professor at PGDAV College, University of Delhi, views are personal)

Bihar's educational reforms cock a snook at private players

Bihar Government's bold education initiatives combat global capital's influence on marginalised, *writes* ***Keyoor Pathak***

The failure of the Bihar Government on countless fronts in the last few decades cannot be dismissed, and an exclusive example of the failure can be perceived in the law made without any proper preparation and study against liquor. Apart from this, there are many issues where the Government has demonstrated its substantial weakness such as rural migration, agriculture et cetera. However, there are some steps taken by the Government that must be appreciated without any political prejudices, this is the initiative on the subject of education in the State. Today, when the market is bent on taking over education completely in almost the entire India, the effort of the State to patronise education on such a large scale can be considered a very bold step. In a way, this is a counter by the State to global capital. When the educational institutions are coming out of the hands of the Government and going into the hands of the corporates, the work done by the Bihar Government on the education system is in a way like the return of the welfare State. Such efforts must be made on health services too. However, in recent years, its big beginning can be seen in Delhi where it was claimed that Government school education has been taken to a prestigious level, and this claim should not be denied. But through education reforms in Bihar, the State is again visible in its public-concerning role, albeit partially, only in a few subjects. Bihar is one of the poorest States in the country, and social and economic inequality is also at its peak. Then in such a situation, the model of economic development of putting education in the open market will push marginalised people even further to the margins.

It has always been a crying question of how much space will be left for the rights of education of the marginalised sections while in most of the private schools are functioning like money making industries. And it should be understood that private schools do not flourish because of their quality, rather the failure of the Government schools gives them an opportunity to spread their footing. Unfortunately, Government schools have



been continuously neglected by the State for decades. And all this did not happen spontaneously, rather there was a well-planned conspiracy of the Global Capital behind it that firstly let the Government schools be destroyed and then the private schools would automatically get legitimacy. In a way, the society has given up all its expectations from Government schools, they have accepted that children have no future in Government schools. Consequently, social psychology developed which did not take the availability of quality education as a serious question. If it had been taken, there would have been pressure on the Governments and they would have worked on the facilities and quality education in the Government schools, but this rarely happened. The Bihar Government again made Government schools a part of the election manifestos of political parties. We saw some of the work that the Government has done to improve the education system. For example, there was a severe shortage of teachers in schools for a long time, to fulfil teachers were recruited on a large scale. The appointment of more than one lakh teachers is enough to show the seriousness of the Government's vision on education. Undoubtedly a large part of the budget would have been spent on this. If we talk about infrastructure, the schools of Bihar had turned into ruins. It was difficult to say which building would collapse and when. Children were often forced to sit in the open field or in the veranda. But to fix all these things the Government allocated a huge amount. Allotment of the books, dresses and bags and water bottles for children along with other materials not only attracts them towards schools but also reduces the financial burden for the parents, especially for those who are barely able to earn their living by doing farm labour. For urban elites these things might be futile but for the rural people this is not affordable by their own income.

We all had seen children carrying books in their hands or in dusted polythene or in torn cloth (jhola), but now they had beautiful bags in their hands and instead of torn half-naked clothes on their bodies, uniforms were shining on them. It was well known fact how little attention they paid to the children.

The Government has strictly forced the teachers to be responsible for their duties towards children, which was not an easy task, years of Government negligence had made them indolent. Some other small and big efforts can be seen there to control the deep-rooted corruption in the education system. A pertinent aspect which perhaps sought for more attention that is 'Mid-Day Meal'. This should be allowed to continue in a smoother manner and at the local level merely, any interference by any external agency is likely to lead to many other complications. Amidst all these achievements, the biggest problem visible is, how to continue this reform in the future, because there still seems to be a lack of proper mechanism for this; and in the absence of a mechanism all efforts and achievement may be proven futile.

(The author is Post-Doctorate from CSD, Hyderabad and Assistant Professor in Department of Sociology, University of Allahabad; views are personal)

the pioneer
HYDERABAD | FRIDAY | APRIL 26, 2024

MONEY MATTERS

IndiGo places order for 30 wide-body A350-900 planes

The country's largest airline IndiGo on Thursday announced placing an order for 30 wide-body A350-900 planes. The airline, which is expanding its international presence, has till now been operating only narro-body Airbus aircraft except for two Boeing 777 planes leased from Turkish Airlines for operations on the Istanbul route. In a release, the carrier said it has entered the "wide body space with an order for 30 firm Airbus A350-900 aircraft". These planes will be powered by Rolls Royce's Trent XWB engine. "The exact configuration of the aircraft will be decided at a later stage, and the deliveries are expected to start from 2027. In addition to the 30 firm A350-900 order, IndiGo has purchase rights for an additional 70 Airbus A350 family aircraft, at its discretion, for possible future needs under certain conditions," it said. Currently, IndiGo operates over 350 aircraft. In June last year, IndiGo placed the largest ever single aircraft order by any airline for 500 aircraft with Airbus.



Swiggy to raise over Rs 10,400 cr via IPO

Food and grocery delivery major Swiggy has received shareholders' approval for an initial public offering to raise Rs 10,414 crore fund through issue of fresh equity shares and an offer for sale, according to sources. A special resolution was passed at an extraordinary general meeting of Swiggy on April 23, they said. According to sources, the Bengaluru-based company plans to raise up to Rs 3,750 crore funds through fresh equity shares, in addition to an offer-for-sale component of up to Rs 6,664 crore. The company is looking to shore up about Rs 750 crore from anchor investors in a pre-IPO round, they added. Swiggy, founded in 2014, has a valuation of USD 12.7 billion as on April 10, 2024. Its annual revenue stood at USD 1.09 billion as on March 31, 2023. The company has more than 4,700 employees, according to Tracxn, a global startup data platform.



Fortis Group launches AI-powered mental healthcare app

A private hospital group is looking at leveraging the power of artificial intelligence to enhance mental wellbeing and accessibility to care for patients. 'Adayu', a free app, has been launched by Adayu Mindfulness, a Fortis Healthcare Group company, in collaboration with deep-tech company United We Care to address critical needs of mental healthcare. "In a significant step forward, we have launched our dedicated mental health vertical, 'Adayu Mindfulness'. This new initiative not only emphasises our commitment to addressing the pervasive challenge of mental health but also showcases our innovative approach by integrating AI technology through our partnership with United We Care," Dr Ashutosh Raghuvanshi, MD and CEO, Fortis Healthcare, said. This collaboration is set to transform the accessibility of mental health services, making comprehensive care available at the touch of a button, he said.



'As India develops, problem of high food inflation will get less severe'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The problem of high food inflation will be "less severe" in India going ahead, as modern supply chains with diversified sources can help quickly address sudden spikes in prices of specific food items, RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) member Ashima Goyal said on Thursday.

Stressing that the share of food in the household budget is high in India, Goyal said policy needs to focus on increasing agricultural productivity since stable agricultural prices are important for non-inflationary growth.

"As India develops, this problem (high food inflation) will get less severe, for a number of reasons. Modern supply chains with diversified sources respond quickly to large spikes in specific items," she said.

Goyal further pointed out that one does not hear of tomato or onion prices spiking in advanced economies.

"We naturally have diverse geographic regions, better-integrated markets sourcing from different regions can help mitigate climate change-induced food price spikes," she said.



Moreover, as the weight of food in consumption falls and food consumption itself becomes more diversified, the impact and size of future food price shocks fall, she noted.

Goyal stressed that under flexible inflation targeting, expectations get better anchored.

She cited the example of East Asia, where food prices were allowed to rise and agriculture was subsidized only after food budget shares fell.

"India unfortunately opted for a distorting system of subsidies to farmers as well as to consumers," she said, adding that given India's huge population, this was very expensive and reduced the space for government investment in agriculture.

Besides, Goyal said it also kept inflation high as procurement prices rose yearly.

She said agricultural productivity is finally rising supported by a policy reset, along with the availability of new technologies even though further policy adjustment is required, she stressed.



"As India develops, this problem (high food inflation) will get less severe, for a number of reasons. Modern supply chains with diversified sources respond quickly to large spikes in specific items," she said.

According to official figures, retail inflation declined to a five-month low of 4.85 per cent in March, mainly due to a cooling down of food prices. The inflation in the food basket was at 8.52 per cent in March, down from 8.66 per cent in February.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das has recently said that the baseline projections show inflation moderating to 4.5 per cent in 2024-25, from 5.4 per cent in 2023-24, and 6.7 per cent in 2022-23.

Replying to a question on India's current macroeconomic situation, Goyal said conditions have been created for sustainable and inclusive growth.

"We are seeing results since 2021 with continued robust growth, reduction in multidimensional poverty, more assets and infrastructure sustainably helping the lower income groups, more opportunities for youth," she said.

Goyal said inequality has risen but the famous 'Kuznets inverted U-curve' tells us that this is normal in a period of high growth and should come down over time.

But for the economy to continue on such a path, the eminent economist said policy continuity is very important.

Increasing investments in latest tech to boost exports: CII

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Steps such as increasing investments in the latest technologies for tracking and handling cargo, training workforce, and timely completion of critical infrastructure projects would help enhance the competitiveness of India's exports, industry body CII said on Thursday.

Chairman of the CII national committee on EXIM Sanjay Budhia said that the digital transformation of India's logistics networks is a necessity.

Leveraging technologies for end-to-end supply chain visibility and tracking and tracing the cargo can dramatically streamline domestic processes and increase transparency and trust among global trade partners, he said.

He was speaking at CII's conference on Resilient Export Logistics for Trade and connectivity here.

Budhia, who is also Managing Director of Patton Group, said that logistics forms the cornerstone of India's international trade, playing a vital role in diversifying both the country's exports and the products manufactured within it.



The growth of e-commerce has further emphasized the critical role of logistics in driving economic development.

Budhia said that the government has actively worked to facilitate trade, lower logistics costs, and bolster global competitiveness for businesses.

Initiatives such as the Sagarmala programme, aimed at reducing both inventory and direct handling costs, is a major initiative by the government.

"We need significant investments in the latest technologies for tracking and handling cargo, and in addition, training our workforce," he said, adding, "we must prioritize the completion of critical infrastructure projects, such as dedicated freight corridors, which are essential for reducing bottlenecks and improving turnaround times." These recommendations assume significance as the government has set an ambitious export target of USD 2 trillion by 2030.

Markets extend gains for 5th session; Sensex revisits 74k

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Rising for the fifth straight session, equity benchmark Sensex rallied nearly 500 points to reclaim the 74,000 mark, while the Nifty closed above the 22,550 level on Thursday due to heavy buying in banking, financial and metal stocks.



Recovering after a sell-off in early trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 486.50 points or 0.66 per cent to settle at 74,339.44. During the day, it surged 718.31 points or 0.97 per cent to 74,571.25.

The NSE Nifty advanced 167.95 points or 0.75 per cent to 22,570.35. "Indian benchmark indices opened on a weak note today, but the markets gained strength in the second half to end in the green for a fifth consecutive session. "The weak opening can be attributed to negative cues from Asian peers. Buying in the second half came in select banks and FMCG stocks like Axis Bank, ICICI Bank and Nestle," said Avdhut Bagkar, Technical and Derivatives Analyst, StoxBox.

From the Sensex basket, Axis Bank jumped 6 per cent after the company reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 7,599 crore during the March 2024 quarter.

State Bank of India, NTPC, Nestle, Sun Pharma, JSW Steel, ITC, Mahindra & Mahindra and HCL Technologies were among the other major gainers.

Hindustan Unilever, Titan, Bajaj Finance, Maruti and Asian Paints were among the laggards.

Kotak Mahindra Bank tanked 10.85 per cent after the RBI barred the company from onboarding customers online and issuing credit cards.

Private airports likely to see 30 pc rise in topline: Report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Private airports in the country are likely to see a 30 per cent jump in the topline this fiscal on the back of rising traffic, a report said on Thursday.

As passenger volume rises, airports will see an increase in aeronautical and non-aeronautical revenues.



Aeronautical sources include fees collected from passengers, airlines and cargo operators for the use of infrastructure. Non-aeronautical sources include advertising, retail, lounge and duty-free shops, credit rating agency Crisil said in its report.

About two-thirds of the increase in the revenue of airports is expected to come from aeronautical sources, a 45 per cent growth year-on-year, it added. This is because almost half the airports in the Crisil Ratings study will clock a predetermined increase in their aeronautical tariffs by 25 per cent on average. "An expected increase of around 10 per cent in passenger traffic on the high base of the previous fiscal, coupled with capital expenditure-linked tariff hikes and rising non-aeronautical revenue per passenger, will help grow their revenue of leading private airport operators by around 30 per cent this fiscal," the agency said. The report is based on a study of 10 private airports that accounted for an estimated 60 per cent of overall passenger traffic in FY24, it added. The rising revenue will restore the cushion for debt servicing to around 1.4 times, taking it back to the level last seen before the COVID-19 pandemic. Airports had dipped into their cash reserve to service debt during this period.

"Taking off from the strong base of last fiscal, passenger traffic growth will continue its momentum in fiscal 2025 and rise more than 10 per cent to over 415 million," said Ankit Hakhu, Director, Crisil Ratings.

Continuing economic growth, opening of more airports and improving regional connectivity are providing the tailwinds necessary for domestic traffic growth, he noted.

Fundraise of Rs 18,000 cr fresh lease of life for Vi: Kumar Mangalam Birla

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Aditya Birla Group chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla on Thursday said the Rs 18,000-crore fundraising by Vodafone Idea is a "fresh lease of life" for the company and asserted that the telco will stage a smart comeback.

The company, which has been struggling to hold on to subscribers amid aggressive play by bigger rivals Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel, will focus on increasing its network, densifying it, and also selectively introducing 5G services, Birla told reporters at the listing ceremony of Vodafone Idea's follow-on public offer.



Calling it the beginning of 'Vi 2.0', Birla said the money raised will be invested in the business, which will trigger a cycle of growth.

"Vi will stage a smart comeback, this moment marks the beginning of Vi 2.0," Birla said at the listing ceremony. When asked if most of the problems for the company get sorted with the capital raise, Birla answered in the affirmative. "And this is like a sort of fresh lease of life for the company," he said.

He credited the government's reform package for ensuring the journey till here for the company and helping preserve a three-player telecom market.

"A nation of 1.4 billion people deserves three private telecom players," he said, calling Vi as a "national asset" that serves 215 million people and possesses over 8,000 MHz of spectrum.

Birla declined to comment on the reports of a stake sale in Indus Towers while speaking with reporters. He said Vi's promoters Vodafone and the Aditya Birla Group have invested over Rs 1.70 lakh crore in the telco till now and added that in the last five years alone, three-fourths of the Rs 30,000 crore investment at the company has come from the two parents.

Gold slips Rs 110; silver jumps Rs 350

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price on Thursday slipped Rs 110 to Rs 72,500 per 10 grams in the national capital amid a decline in the precious metal rates globally, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous session, the yellow metal had ended at Rs 72,610 per 10 grams.

However, silver prices bounced Rs 350 to Rs 84,100 per kg. It had closed at Rs 83,750 per kg in the previous close.

"Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 72,500 per 10 grams, down by Rs 110 against the previous close," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.



In the international markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,319 per ounce, down USD 3 from the previous close.

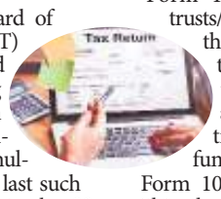
Gold saw a slight decline on Thursday as the overall appeal of the precious metal remained low due to a reduced safe-haven premium caused by easing tensions in the Middle East, Gandhi said.

Tax dept extends deadline for registration by charitable trusts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The income tax department on Thursday extended the deadline for charitable and religious trusts to furnish registration application with tax authorities till June 30.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) had earlier extended the due date for filing Form 10A, Form 10AB by trusts, institutions and funds multiple times and the last such extension was till September 30, 2023. "Considering the representations received by CBDT requesting for further extension of due date for filing of such forms beyond the last extended date of September 30, 2023, and with a view to avoid genuine hardships to taxpayers, CBDT has extended the due date of filing Form 10A/Form 10AB up to June 30, 2024," the CBDT said in a statement. Form 10A is an application form filed by trusts/institutions who wish to get themselves registered for income tax exemption.



Form 10 AB is filed by trusts/institutions to renew their permanent registration. CBDT further clarified that if any such existing trust, institution or fund had failed to file Form 10A for AY 2022-23 within the extended due date, and subsequently, applied for provisional registration as a new entity and received Form 10AC, can also avail of this opportunity to surrender the said Form 10AC and apply for registration for AY 2022-23 as an existing trust, institution or fund, in Form 10A till June 30, 2024.

BEIJING AUTO SHOW

Electric cars and digital connectivity dominate

PNS ■ BEIJING

Global automakers and EV startups unveiled new models and concept cars at China's largest auto show on Thursday, with a focus on the nation's transformation into a major market and production base for digitally connected, new-energy vehicles.

Toyota and Nissan both announced tie-ups with major Chinese technology companies as they strive to meet customer demand for AI-enabled online connectivity in cars, from social media apps to autonomous driving features.



Electric vehicles accounted for about a quarter of all auto sales in China last year. Hybrids, which have trailed EVs, are expected to be a growing segment going forward.

China's largest EV maker, BYD, showed off two "dual-mode" plug-in cars that can run either solely on electricity or as hybrids. The other is a hybrid off-road SUV from its luxury Yangwang brand in the 1 million Yuan-plus (USD 1,40,000) range.

"China's EVs, represented by (BYD's) Qin and Han series, have successfully realized the large-scale replacement of traditional fuel cars, and this trend is irreversible," said Lu Tian, the head of sales for BYD's Dynasty models. The cars are named after former imperial dynasties.

An executive from Chery, a more traditional Chinese maker, offered a more moderate perspective. Li Xueyong, a deputy general manager, said they envision a future of 40 per cent fuel vehicles, 30 per cent hybrids and 30 per cent electric.



The company plans to develop both fuel-powered and new-energy cars.

BYD has been expanding rapidly into overseas markets, launching its low-priced Dolphin Mini, sold as the Seagull in China, in Latin American markets this year.

It's building a factory in Brazil on the site of a former Ford plant that closed when the US maker left the country. Two other Chinese automakers including Chery already have factories in Brazil.

BYD accounted for 41 per cent of EV sales in Brazil in the first three months of this year, though the overall number is still relatively low.

In Mexico, Chinese vehicles went from about 2.6 per cent of the market in 2021 to 19.2 per cent in the first quarter of this year. Most of those were gasoline-powered vehicles, as there are few charging stations and the cost of electricity makes it expensive to do so at home.

Chinese makers are making inroads in Europe too, raising concern in some countries that they pose a potential threat to European automakers and jobs.

The EU is weighing whether to impose tariffs on China-made EVs because of government subsidies that drove the industry's growth.

the pioneer
Hyderabad

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Friday
April 26, 2024

FROM 'FAIRY CHIMNEYS OF CAPPADOCIA' TO EMBRACING 'GEORGIA'S TRACTIONS'

SUBODHINI PUROHIT

Travel transcends mere leisure. It's a vital source of inner peace and renewal, and so has it been for actor Romanch Mehta too. With a wanderlust spirit, he has explored captivating destinations such as Georgia, Dubai, the UAE, Vegas, and beyond, enriching his experiences and sharing his adventures.

Travel, more than a pastime, is a transformative journey of self-discovery, and cultural immersion for him. "Travel embodies the essence of nurturing oneself, finding inner peace, and embracing diverse experiences," begins the avid traveller on a brighter note. "It's about immersing oneself in different cultures, understanding varied behaviours, and continuously learning from the world around us. Travel isn't just a hobby—it's a passion that fuels my soul. I approach travel with boundless enthusiasm, eager to explore new destinations and create unforgettable memories. Once one journey concludes, I eagerly begin planning the next, dedicating two months of every year to travel."

From solo adventures in distant lands during September and December to seizing every opportunity for exploration, as he shares, "Travel holds immense significance for me. It's not just a leisure activity; it's a source of inner peace and rejuvenation. Every year, without fail, I embark on journeys abroad, particularly in September and the closing days of December. During these two weeks, I immerse myself in the experience of solo travel, relishing every moment of exploration and discovery."

However, his love for travel extends beyond these dedicated months. Whenever an opportunity arises, whether for work or any other purpose, he eagerly embraces the chance to embark on new adventures. No matter how brief, he says, each trip fills him with a profound sense of happiness and contentment, enriching his life in ways that words can scarcely capture. From the snowy landscapes of Georgia to the historic charm of Istanbul, he recalls that each destination offered a unique cultural tapestry, inviting immersive exploration and unforgettable experiences. He shares "My recent adventure took me to the captivating lands of Georgia and Istanbul. Beginning with six delightful days in Georgia, I journeyed to the enchanting streets of Istanbul. From there, my exploration led me to the mesmerising landscapes of Cappadocia. Spanning a memorable 15 to 20 days, this journey was truly unforgettable. Each destination offered a unique cultural tapestry, showcasing diverse traditions and attractions." Exploring Georgia's picturesque locales and revelling in the snowy landscapes was a highlight, while Istanbul's bustling streets and historic charm captivated him.Throughout his travels, he shares, "I indulged in a myriad of activities. From floating above the fairy chimneys of Cappadocia in a hot-air balloon—an iconic experience—to embracing the allure of Georgia's famed attractions, every moment was filled with excitement and wonder. While Turkey is predominantly Islamic, Georgia is steeped in Christian heritage. This stark contrast in culture and language was a captivating aspect of my travels."

In fact, interacting with the locals allowed him to delve deeper into the essence of each country. This profound exchange of cultural knowledge is precisely what fuels his passion for travel. Within India's vast tapestry of breathtaking destinations, Leh, Ladakh, and Goa stand out as unparalleled treasures for him. He further expresses, "India is home to countless breathtaking destinations, but for me, the most remarkable ones are Leh, Ladakh, and Goa. These gems stand out for their unparalleled blend of natural beauty and cultural richness, setting them apart from the rest of the country. What sets these destinations apart is not just their scenic splendour, but also the unique cultural experiences they offer. The rich tapestry of traditions and customs in Leh, Ladakh, and Goa adds an extra layer of charm to every visit. Despite frequent trips, the magic of these places still needs to be improved."

When it comes to accommodation, prioritising quality over cost is paramount for a memorable stay. From boutique charm to luxurious resorts, the ambience of a property sets the tone for an unforgettable travel experience. "In my opinion, selecting the right property can truly make or break a travel experience. By choosing accommodations that prioritise comfort, ambience, and overall enjoyment, one can ensure a truly unforgettable stay wherever their travels may take them."

These experiences too come with times when one experiences something unsettling, and so did he experience too. He recalls, "While at Milan train station, I sensed someone following me as I disembarked from the train. Glancing back, my suspicions were confirmed as I spotted two individuals trailing behind me. With a sense of urgency, I quickened my pace, clutching my small bag tightly. Despite my efforts to evade them, they persisted, even following me to my hotel. It was a nerve-wracking ordeal, especially since I was travelling alone and had plans to journey to Zurich the next day."

Navigating global cuisine as a vegetarian presents challenges, yet he unveils delightful surprises and unique fusion experiences. "Exploring different countries means immersing oneself in diverse cultures, including their culinary delights. As a vegetarian, however, navigating food options abroad can sometimes be challenging. While vegetarian options are becoming more common globally, many hotels and restaurants still lack them. This often means seeking out specific chains or establishments that cater to vegetarian diets. During my travels, I've encountered such challenges firsthand.

However, I've also discovered delightful surprises, like a restaurant in the UAE that skillfully blends Indian flavours with Arabic influences. Sampling their cuisine was a memorable experience, highlighting the fusion of cultures through food."

As a solo traveller, he does allocate a significant portion of his budget, about 70%, to the exhilarating adventures. For him, these activities are more than just fleeting moments; they're indelible memories that etch themselves into the fabric of his travels. Exploring the world through daring pursuits allows him to connect with each destination uniquely and unforgettably. From heart-pounding thrills to awe-inspiring vistas, these experiences enrich his journey and leave an indelible mark on his soul. Well, his bucket list is brimming with places waiting to be discovered, each offering its own unique allure.

TRAVELOGUE



Actor-influencer Romanch Mehta, who has been an avid traveller, gets candid with *The Pioneer* for our Travelogue segment, sharing his travel diaries from his recent trip, immersing himself in diverse cultures, and more.

Staying malaria-free with the ultimate guide

PNS|HYDERABAD

Every year, March 25 is observed as World Malaria Day to recognise the global efforts to control malaria.

India in particular, malaria still poses a serious threat to public health, despite considerable improvements in recent years. To save yourself and your loved ones against this preventable disease, it is essential to comprehend the risk factors and put preventive measures in place.

Malaria is a potentially fatal disease caused by parasites of the Plasmodium genus. It's generally transmitted through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes. The transmission cycle of malaria begins when an infected mosquito feeds on a person. During this, the mosquito injects saliva containing the malaria parasites into the bloodstream. The parasites then travel to the liver, where they undergo multiplication and maturation. After they are developed, the parasites are released back into the bloodstream, where they infect red blood cells, leading to the typical symptoms of malaria. Malaria can also be transmitted through blood transfusions, organ transplants, or the sharing of needles contaminated with infected blood. It can also be transmitted from the pregnant mother to the fetus. Plasmodium parasites are the cause of malaria, an infectious disease spread by mosquitoes. Via contaminated blood feeds, the Anopheles mosquito spreads the parasite to people. Because these mosquitoes breed in stagnant water bodies, malaria transmission is more common in locations with poor drainage, especially during the monsoon season (June to September).

Dr. P. Venkata Krishnan, senior consultant, internal medicine at Artemis Hospital, Gurugram explains, "The symptoms of malaria include fevers, chills, headaches, fatigue, sweating, abdominal pain, muscle and joint pain, cough, and jaundice. Fever happening because of malaria typically comes in cycles, with the temperature spiking every few days. The chills from malaria can be severe and shaking. When it comes to headaches, they are typically accompanied by fevers and chills. Fatigue persisting for a long time may indicate malaria. Profuse sweating that wets the clothes may be a sign of malaria. Abdominal pain, if caused by malaria, is generally accompanied by other gastronomic issues. Severe muscle and joint pain are also indicative of malaria. If the cough is very severe, it might indicate malaria. Lastly, jaundice causing yellowing of the skin is an indication of malaria."

Primary methods for preventing malaria, especially in high-risk areas, include taking steps like the use of insecticide-treated bed nets, indoor residual spraying with insecticides, and chemoprophylaxis for travellers to endemic areas. Emphasis must be laid on the immediate diagnosis and treatment of malaria cases to prevent severe illness and death. In India, who is most vulnerable to malaria?

Travellers: People travelling to or relocating to locations where malaria is endemic, especially those that are mountainous, forested, or tribal belts, are at high risk.

Individuals who live close to bodies of stagnant water: In peri-urban and rural regions, mosquitoes that thrive in puddles, ponds, or badly maintained drainage systems constitute a serious menace.

People with impaired immune systems: Those with HIV/AIDS, chronic illnesses, pregnant women, and children under five are particularly vulnerable to severe malaria.

Communities without adequate preventative measures and sanitation.

Effective ways to stop Malaria

Bed nets treated with long-lasting insecticides, or LLINs: The most effective way to prevent malaria is to sleep under insecticide-treated LLINs. Make sure you have full coverage all night, even when you're napping. Given that they are more susceptible to the illness, pregnant women and small children should especially use LLINs.

Repellents for insects: Carefully follow the directions on the package when applying repellents containing DEET (Diethyltoluamide), picaridin, or IR3535 to exposed skin and clothes. Especially during outdoor activities in the evenings and early mornings, when mosquitoes are most active, repellents offer an extra layer of protection.

Minimise sites for mosquito breeding: Avoid water stagnation in the areas surrounding your house, make sure drainage systems are in working order, and control vegetation close to homes. By supporting neighborhood-level programs for trash management and drainage enhancement, mosquito breeding grounds can be greatly reduced.

Indoor residual spraying (IRS): Insecticides are frequently sprayed outdoors, and repellents are used indoors as part of public health campaigns to kill mosquitoes.When such programs are offered in your region, participate in them. IRS campaigns are an effective strategy for managing mosquito populations, and their success depends on community involvement.

Early diagnosis and treatment: Seek emergency medical assistance if you have any of the following symptoms, especially after visiting a high-risk area: fever, chills, sweating, headache, muscle pains, or exhaustion. Complications and transmission can be avoided with early diagnosis and timely medical care. Effective therapy for malaria and stopping the disease's spread depend on early symptom recognition and medical consultation. "We can drastically lower the malaria load in India by implementing these preventive measures and supporting community-level programs. Remember that the best way to ensure that there is no malaria in the future is to remain aware, practice personal safety, and support public health activities. Together, we can make tomorrow healthier for both present and future generations," shares Dr. Swati Rajagopal, consultant, infectious disease and travel medicine, Aster CMI Hospital, Bangalore.

Differences between uncomplicated and severe malaria

Uncomplicated malaria is characterised by symptoms like fever, chills, headache, fatigue, muscle and joint pain, nausea, and vomiting. It can generally be managed on an outpatient basis, and the prognosis is generally good with immediate and effective treatment. The treatment of uncomplicated malaria typically involves the use of antimalarial medications, which target the Plasmodium parasites that cause infection. The choice of antimalarial medication depends on various factors, like the species of Plasmodium involved and the drug resistance patterns in the region where the infection was acquired. Severe malaria is a medical emergency that requires urgent intervention because of the presence of life-threatening complications. Symptoms of severe malaria may include impaired consciousness, seizures, respiratory distress, severe anemia, jaundice, renal failure, and circulatory collapse. It can progress to multiple organ failure and death at a very fast pace if not treated immediately. The treatment of severe malaria includes rigorous management to address both the underlying infection and associated complications. Key components of the treatment approach include intravenous antimalarial therapy, supportive care, monitoring and close observation, and critical care interventions.

"Key challenges in combating malaria include drug resistance, insecticide resistance in mosquitoes, lack of access to healthcare in remote areas, and funding constraints. People can address these issues by supporting organisations that provide mosquito nets, advocating for increased funding for malaria research and prevention, participating in community outreach programs to educate others about prevention methods, and donating to organisations working on malaria eradication."



Weaving stories with handcrafted traditions

RASHMI BHUMIREDDY

Remember the days when our parents got us dressed in Pattu Langas or half sarees, especially during birthdays or weddings? Irrespective of the trends in sarees, the love for silk never fades away in our Indian society.

Unlike other online websites or shops that just carry or flow with the trends by selling the latest sarees, two engineers, Ramya Rao and Kavea R. Chavali, have launched a clothing brand, Kalaneca, which revives the fresh golden memories of our love for rare and pure Uppada silk.

Speaking to ***The Pioneer***, Ramya Rao said, "The word Kalaneca— 'Kala' means art and 'Neca' means marriage. Though we launched this brand in 2014, the seeds were sown in 2000. Our childhood was all over India, as our father (Cdr. Rajeswara Rao) was with the Indian Navy, but we settled in Kakinada at the age of 16. That was when our journey to explore Uppada began. What motivated us to launch is that during our childhood days, me, my sister Kavea R. Chavali, and my mother Latha Rao were residing in Kakinada. During that time, we used to pay a visit to Uppada village, Andhra Pradesh, and interact with the weavers there."

Keeping up with the tradition, Kalaneca has been putting up the legacy of Uppada sarees on the Handloom Map of the World. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, Ramya Rao, the founder takes us through their journey and the inspiration behind it.

They also observed the weavers, especially in their work, i.e., how they weave beautiful silk sarees. Back then, these mesmerising sarees were generated or produced on a small scale. However, as time passed, "We were caught up with our routine lives like education, and careers, thereby not paying a visit to the village. When we moved to Bombay, we missed those colourful days of the weaving of silk sarees by skilled weavers, etc. We are constantly reminded of those memories, which pushed us to create a base or foundation for Uppada weavers in order to make them popular in our country. In 2022-2023, I had left the organisation I was working for. My sister and I started working for Kalaneca by writing various articles and blogs, pitching for the weavers, etc. My mother has been enthusiastically involved in this by interacting with the weavers. Uppada silks got their GI tag in the early 1990s; however, they weren't recognised for their beauty as people were unaware of this rare gem. Despite coming from an engineering background, we have a huge passion to popularise Uppada silks in the country. This passion and purpose drive us to launch the Kalaneca. This began the journey of Kalaneca. We started Kalaneca as a hobby in 2014. Kalaneca Company was founded in 2018."

She also said that the specialty of Uppada silks lies in the style of weaving. Unlike other silk fabrics such as Banaras, Kanchipuram silks, or Kanjiram silks, the entire saree is woven in one shot along with a blouse. There is nothing attached to the saree. However, in the case of other silk sarees, for instance, Kanjivaram sarees, the borders are attached to the saree. But in the case of Uppada silks, nothing is attached. The other specialty of Uppada silk is being lightweight. Even the grandest of Uppada sarees are very light in weight—approximately around 300–400 g.



When asked if they are expanding their products to other garments or apparel, Ramya shared, "At the moment, we are focusing on sarees, but shortly, we will be creating an opportunity to produce Pattu Langas, Kurtis, Chunis, pocket squares for men, etc. When it comes to Pattu Langas, we create customised Pattu Langas for clients. We weave the sarees that are switched into Langa Voni, or half sarees. By two to five years down the line, we want to get into all sorts of garments."

She further spoke of how WE Hub aided them in the journey, and she said, "We connected to WE Hub last year in December. WE Hub has aided us in connecting with a lot of weavers across Telangana State. They also helped us arrange partners and hosts to collaborate. They ensured that we got the most out of the revenue. We have had their mentorship for three months. Currently, one month is left. We are hoping to connect with retailers or wholesalers to host our sarees. Moreover, we need to open our own clothing store. Currently, we have our own home studio where we produce beautiful and creative silk sarees for our clients and customers."

To grab the attention of youth, the founders of Kalaneca launched a sister brand called 'Etram' in August 2023. Etram comes from the word Arangetram, which means everything is connected to the arts. Kalaneca purely focuses on natural silk fabrics, but Etram focuses on fancy or designer sarees, Dola sarees, and many more. "Another way to attract youth to Kalaneca is 'Style with Kalaneca' where we have styling pieces and create awareness about the beauty of natural silk sarees among them. These sarees are handmade without the use of electricity," Ramya shares on the concluding note.

the pioneer
Hyderabad | Friday April 26, 2024

what's brewing?

PARTY




Yasaswini


Padmini


Pragnya Ayyagari


Thakur Veena


Dr.Nandita Kaviti


Aparna and Urmila

Miss Supranational Asia 2023, Praganya Ayyagari, along with actresses Amiksha, Sravanthi, and Preeti, graced the launch of the Hilife exhibition. The spring-summer fashion special expo will end on April 27 at HICC Novotel.


Esteemed panelists, distinguished guests, and medical professionals gathered for the Continuous Medical Education (CME) event focusing on "Thalassemia Free Telangana" and "Thalassemia Prevention: A Prick Away" in Hyderabad. In his opening remarks, Dr. Chandrakant Agrawal, President of TSCS Hyderabad, expressed profound pleasure in welcoming the esteemed attendees. He remarked on the notable presence of renowned gynecologists and obstetricians, acknowledging their pivotal role in the collective effort towards making Telangana thalassemia-free.



Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL) proudly unveils the exceptional achievement of two of its Hyderabad-based students in the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Main 2024 second session. Murikinati Sai Divya Teja Reddy and Rishi Shekher Shukla, both students of AESL, have etched their names in the annals of academic excellence by securing a flawless 100 percentile and achieving AIR 15 and AIR 19, respectively. They have also secured 100 percentiles in the pivotal subjects of physics, chemistry, and mathematics.

Photos by- SV Chary



JNIAS-School of planning and Architecture is conducting the 3-day Kurukshetra event, at Railway ground Secunderabad. The event, which was graced by Dr. D. Suresh, registrar of JNIAS, will end on April 27. The event also has competitions in Fashion Design, Journalism, Designs, and Photography & Short Films.

CURTAIN RAISER

Jackfruit Dance Party Night; Get ready to feel the rhythm and light up the night at the Jackfruit Dance Party, coming to Hyderabad this Friday at the vibrant antiSOCIAL! This dynamic show will transform the dancefloor into a haven of pure musical bliss. Experience a night filled with the best House and Disco tunes, spun by talented artists including Rishi Sippy, GST, Ankit Pandey, and Kartik Shekar.Let the Jackfruit Dance Party transform you into the world of rhythmic euphoria and boundless energy as we unite in the joy of music and move.

Save the date and bring your crew for a night filled with euphoric tunes and electric atmosphere. Grab your tickets soon.

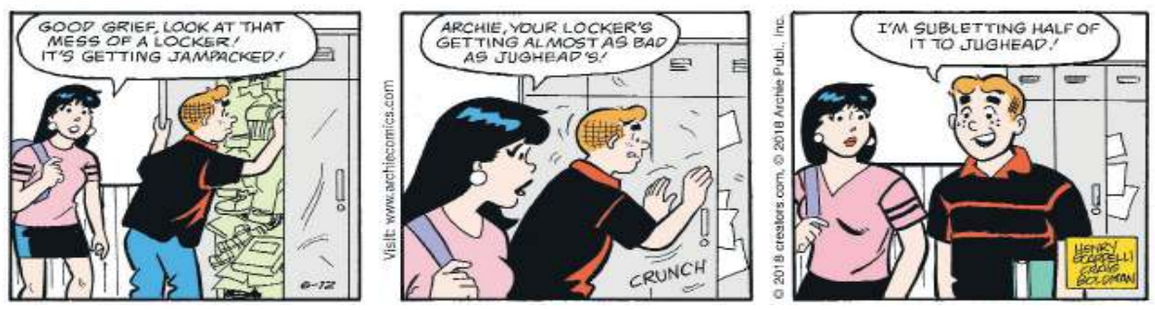
Date: 26th April 2024 (FRIDAY)

Time: 08.00 PM Onwards

Place: Mindspace SOCIAL, Raheja IT Park, Survey No.64, Ground plus, near, Mindspace Junction Flyover, Hyderabad, Telangana, 500081

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBES



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



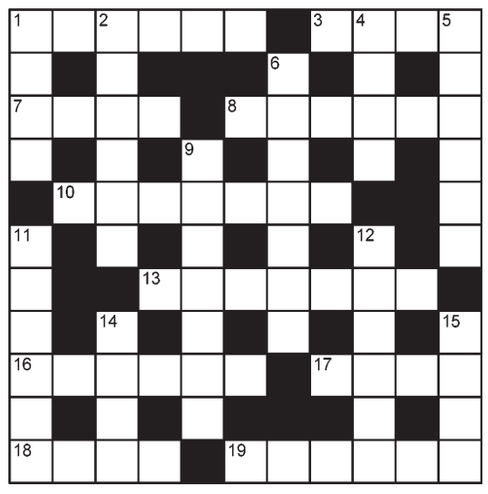
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1 Mend
3 Very thin metal sheet used in the kitchen
7 The line where material is joined
8 Murdered
10 Tales
13 The later part of the day
16 Wanting food
17 Money someone has to pay as a punishment
18 A fruit from a palm tree
19 A light wind

DOWN

1 Have a lie down
2 Braided lengths of hair
4 These birds hunt at night
5 A climbing aid with rungs
6 Birds that fly back home
9 Courage
11 Shoved
12 Ask to come
14 A tangle in your hair
15 At this place

SOLUTION

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		C	U		O		I			
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SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

Yesterday's solution

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

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

RAZAKAR AHEAD OF HINDI RELEASE

Raj Arjun talks about transformation, commitment

K. RAMYA SREE

Raj Arjun, renowned for his nuanced portrayals across the Indian film industry, steps into the challenging realm of a brutal antagonist in the historical drama *Razakar*, set for its Hindi release today (April 26). The actor's riveting performance in the Telugu version of the film received critical acclaim, setting high expectations for his Hindi and Marathi releases.

Directed by Yata Satyanarayana and bankrolled by Gudur Narayana Reddy, the film stars Raj Arjun, Bobby Simha, Anasuya Bharadwaj, Vedhika, and Indraja in key roles. Ahead of its Hindi release, we spoke to actor Raj Arjun, a Bhopal native creating his sweet spot in the southern film industry with the kind of work he has been doing apart from being part of some superhit Bollywood films.

In a candid conversation, Raj Arjun delves into the meticulous process of embodying his character, drawing inspiration from historical figures like Hitler and Saddam Hussein: "Just for reference to know what they have done and how they have done, I learned about Hitler and Saddam Hussain. They had a vision of making something in their minds, and to execute that, they went out of their limits, started killing people, and did whatever they liked. There is no such feeling for them. When I got this role, I was thinking about how to justify my role. I related it to my dream. That's how I started developing that psychology, and that helped me a lot. If I start behaving like a villain, it will look monotonous, so I looked for the purpose of playing the role and living the character rather than pretending it. I think that has reached the people and touched the chords."



Living the character of a remorseless antagonist posed unique challenges for Raj Arjun. We wanted to know if it took a mental toll on him, as Raj Arjun is an actor who lives in the character. He explained, "I am scared to leave the character. I got all the works I have done so far with a lot of difficulties, and much effort went into it. I am afraid of not taking my characters seriously. I live in that zone of the character deliberately until it is over so I can give my best; however, I do not start behaving like one at home. I avoid parties being in that zone too, so it will subconsciously enhance the graph of the character. I sometimes get very tired of living in the character because it is all brain work, but the actor within me lets me leave it."

The *Thalaivii* star believes his performance and emotions should reflect from his eyes, and till today he follows the words told by his guru, "*Kam mein khubsoorati hai, zyada mein gadbad hai* (There is more beauty in less and confusion in more)."

Be it *Thalaivii, Rowdy Rathore, Thalaivaa, Dear Comrade,* and more, the actor was mostly seen playing negative roles only, and he is genuinely not bored of playing those villain characters time and again. Reflecting on his diverse roles spanning Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam cinema, Raj Arjun remains unfazed by the recurring villainous characters. He shared, "I don't get bored because whatever role I am getting, it is from different industries. I have done films in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, and Malayalam, and fortunately, whatever roles I am getting are because of the intensity of my performance in the films, and all the roles are very different from one another."

"I have *Yudhra*, which is a performance-oriented film. I have another film, *Gam Gam Ganesha*, with Anand Deverakonda, which has a bit of comedy in my out-and-out negative role. It is a proper commercial film. So I am enjoying all the work that I have been doing because I am not playing a typical villain. I am playing those roles where I can show more character than just being a villain," he added.

Having played so many roles in his illustrious career, we asked him about the role in which he put in more effort than the rest, and he answered, "I have no background in the industry, so initially I didn't get the freedom to choose roles. But now the roles I am getting are the result of all the work I did in my initial days. However, I believe *Secret Superstar* is the running point in my life that helped me bag roles across industries. The next is *Thalaivii,* and I am truly performing one-on-one with Kangana. I was initially worried if she would give me space to perform because she is an established actress, but to my surprise, she turned out to be one of the best and most supportive co-actresses. My character is a masterpiece in *Thalaivii*. *Razakar*, too, is close to my heart. Moreover, I am eagerly waiting for my upcoming film, *Yudhra*, because this is a commercial film and I loved working on it."

Lastly, on the work front, he has *Yudhra, Gam Gam Ganesha,* and another Hindi project whose title is yet to be decided.



Ahead of the Hindi release of *Razakar*, actor Raj Arjun gets candid with *The Pioneer* in an exclusive chat, speaking of taking historical references for his character, being afraid to leave a character, and more.

Tamannaah Bhatia falls into legal trouble

Actress Tamannaah Bhatia was summoned by the Maharashtra Cyber Police on Thursday to come in for questioning about the illicit streaming of Indian Premier League (IPL) 2023 matches on the FairPlay app, which she and other celebrities were purportedly promoting. She is expected to appear before the police on April 29.

The persons with knowledge of the situation said that Bhatia's statement will be recorded by the agency as a witness in the investigation. Without getting permission from Viacom 18, which held the exclusive rights to broadcast the cricket competition, they supported and encouraged the application that had unlawfully placed hoardings throughout the city of the live transmission of the Indian Premier League 2023, according to officials.

An investigative official from the Maharashtra Cyber Police stated, "We have called the actress on April 29."



KIARA ADVANI JOINS PRABHAS IN *SALAAR 2*, CONFIRM SOURCES

Exciting news is on the horizon for fans of Indian cinema as actress Kiara Advani is reportedly set to share screen space with superstar Prabhas in the highly anticipated film *Salaar 2*. Following the immense success of the first installment, expectations are soaring for this next chapter, which promises to be even more captivating.

Details surrounding Kiara Advani's role in *Salaar 2* have been kept under wraps, adding an air of mystery and anticipation to the project. However, sources indicate that she will be essaying a significant and pivotal character, omplementing the powerhouse performances expected from Prabhas and the ensemble cast. Directed by the visionary filmmaker Prashanth Neel, known for his groundbreaking work in the industry, *Salaar 2* is poised to push boundaries and redefine cinematic experiences once again. With the combined star power of Prabhas and Kiara Advani, coupled with Prashanth Neel's distinctive storytelling style, the film is already generating immense buzz among audiences.



Preparations for the film are in full swing, with shooting scheduled to commence in just a couple of months. The production team is gearing up to deliver an unforgettable cinematic spectacle that will captivate audiences across the globe. As *Salaar 2* gears up for production, fans can expect a blend of high-octane action, gripping narrative, and stellar perfor mances that will elevate the blockbuster franchise to new heights.

'Aa Okkati Adakku title was chosen by Allari Naresh'

PNS | HYDERABAD

Allari Naresh, celebrated for his comedic prowess, is set to charm audiences once again with the upcoming family entertainer *Aa Okkati Adakku*. Directed by Malli Ankam and produced by Rajiv Chilaka under Chilaka Productions, the film features Faria Abdullah as the leading lady. The anticipation is high for this film as Naresh returns to his roots in comedy after a notable hiatus, promising a delightful cinematic experience. Ahead of the film's grand release on May 3, producer Rajiv Chilaka shared insights into the making of *Aa Okkati Adakku* during a recent press conference.

On entering film production:

"I entered the industry with a long-term plan to produce films. Director Malli brought this story to me, which resonates with universal themes like marriage, family, comedy, and emotions. We believed that this genre would be a perfect fit for our debut film."

Transition from animation to films:

"The animation industry is challenging, and our primary focus was to stabilise our company. After establishing ourselves, we ventured into filmmaking. We have successfully produced six animation films, and now we are committed to producing movies consecutively."

On choosing Allari Naresh:

"When we heard this story, Allari Naresh was our first choice. His comedic timing and charm perfectly suit the character. Naresh loved the story and we waited for him to become available for this project."

Addressing the relevance of the story:

"The theme of marriage is something everyone can relate to. Nowadays, marriage has become more complex with changing societal norms and geographical distances. This film touches upon relatable issues faced by today's youth in a highly entertaining manner."

Film's title *Aa Okkati Adakku*:

"Naresh garu suggested the title *Aa Okkati Adakku*, which perfectly captures the essence of the story. The title reflects a common question faced by the protagonist about marriage. Naresh's approval of the title was pivotal."

Choosing Faria Abdullah:

"Allari Naresh's towering presence required a suitable co-star like Faria Abdullah, whose comedic timing complements his. We are thrilled to have Jamie Lever and a talented ensemble cast including Murali Sharma, Vennela Kishore, and Viva Harsha."

Music:

"We prioritise music in our films, and Gopi Sundar's compositions elevate the emotional depth of *Aa Okkati Adakku*. Additionally, we have exciting projects lined up, including real-life adaptations of 'Chhota Bheem' and an animation show set to launch on Disney."



SATYABHAMA FIRST SINGLE: A LOVE JOURNEY IN HARMONY

Actress Kajal Aggarwal embarks on a captivating love journey in the upcoming movie *Satyabhama*, where she takes the lead alongside Naveen Chandra as Amarender. Produced by Bobby Tikka and Srinivasa Rao Takkalapalli under the banner of Aurum Arts and presented by acclaimed director Sashikiran Thikka, this crime thriller is set to make its grand theatrical debut on May 17.

On Thursday, the makers unveiled the film's first single, titled *Kallara*, setting a musical stage for the romantic saga ahead. Composed by Sricharan Pakala, the soulful melody features lyrics by Rambabu Gosala and vocals by Shreya Ghoshal.

Kallara beautifully captures the evolving love story of Satyabhama and Amarender, tracing their journey from university days to deeper emotional connections. The song promises to be a special highlight of *Satyabhama*, weaving melodious magic that instantly finds a place in every listener's favourite playlist. *Satyabhama* is poised to offer audiences a compelling blend of crime, romance, and evocative music. As the release date approaches, anticipation mounts for this enthralling cinematic experience crafted by director Suman Chikkala and a talented ensemble of makers.

The film will grace the Indian theatres on May 17.



Arjun launches *Sahya's* first look poster



Sahya, a forthcoming film produced under the banner of Sudha Creations, is poised to captivate audiences with its unique concept and talented cast. The movie marks the directorial debut of Yasa Rakesh Reddy and features Mounika Reddy in the lead role. Produced by Sudhakar Jukanti and Bhaskar Reddy, *Sahya* promises to be a compelling addition to the world of cinema.

Actor Arjun recently unveiled the first look of *Sahya*, expressing optimism about its potential success. He remarked, "The poster and title of *Sahya* bring forth a fresh concept. Movies with strong female leads and compelling narratives have been gaining traction, and I hope *Sahya* follows suit and becomes a success."

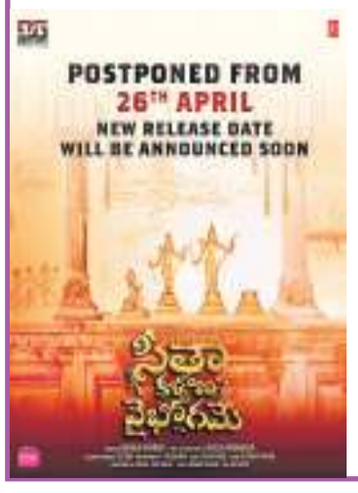
Director Yasa Rakesh Reddy shared insights into the film's progress, announcing that the teaser and trailer will be released shortly, generating further excitement among eager audiences.



Apart from Mounika Reddy, the ensemble cast includes Ravinder Reddy, Suman, Bhanu, Nilesh, and Prashanth, each contributing to the film's narrative with their impactful performances. Moreover, Arun Koluguri's cinematography and Rohit Zilla's music add depth and dimension to *Sahya*, promising a visual and auditory treat for moviegoers.

Seeta Kalyana Vaibhogame release date postponed

Excitement was building for the release of the much-anticipated film *Seeta Kalyana Vaibhogame*, but fans will need to wait a little longer. The producers have announced on Thursday that the release date has been postponed, with a new date set to be revealed soon. *Seeta Kalyana Vaibhogame*, produced by Rachala Yugandhar under the banner of Dream Gate Productions and directed by Satish Paramaveda, starring Suman Tej and Garima Chouhan in lead roles was initially scheduled for April 26 release.



The film promised to be an engaging and captivating cinematic experience, with its unique storyline and talented cast. Despite the delay, fans can rest assured that the producers are committed to delivering a quality film that will resonate with viewers. The anticipation surrounding *Seeta Kalyana Vaibhogame* remains high, and the postponement is seen as a step towards ensuring a polished and memorable movie-watching experience.



KKR bowling woes under spotlight vs shaky Punjab Kings

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Mitchell Starc will be desperate to justify his USD 3 million price tag as Kolkata Knight Riders bowling unit try to find ways to be less profligate when it is pitted against a perennially under-achieving Punjab Kings in an IPL match here on Saturday.

KKR is currently second in the 10-team table with 10 points, four behind table toppers Rajasthan Royals (14 points) and the team's success is largely due to the batting efforts from the top-order.

In Punjab Kings, they meet a side that has been inconsistent and despite two good finds in Shashank Singh and Ashutosh Sharma, they haven't exactly done well during key moments and like every other year, they are all but out of play-off contention.

Sunil Narine (286 @176.54 SR) and Phil Salt (249 @169.38 SR) have been phenomenal at the top, Andre Russell (155 @184.52), skipper Shreyas Iyer (190 @126.66) have all been among the runs. Even Rinku Singh, who has just faced 67 balls in 7 games has a strike-rate of close to 160.

Save captain Iyer, all the specialist batters have scored at a strike-rate northwards of 150 and that has been instrumental in the Shah Rukh Khan co-owned team posting four 200-plus totals in their seven games so far.

Only Venkatesh Iyer's poor form has stuck out like a sore thumb and Nitish Rana's finger fracture has not only robbed KKR of a master player of spinners but also a very handy off-break bowler.

However the same can't be said about the bowling unit where Narine with his immaculate line and length is the only person, who has been able to maintain an economy rate of just above 7.10 which is brilliant in times when 'Impact Player' is in vogue.

The Trinidadian has also started leaking runs and the way Rajat Patidar took him on, hitting him for two sixes in one over, will definitely inspire the likes of Ashutosh and



Shashank — the two in-form batters of PBKS.

But it is Starc, whose underwhelming performance (6 wickets at ER 11.48) is the worst among the specialist bowler. At an all-time high price tag of Rs 24.75 crore (USD 3 million), Starc must be feeling the heat but to be fair to him, some of the tracks, including the one at the Eden Gardens have been perfect belters where length balls are soaring into the stands.

Compared to Starc, uncapped India pacers Harshit Rana (ER 9.25, 9 wickets) and Vaibhav Arora (9.57, 7 wickets) have been more impressive but they have also got hit at times.

Against a side like Kings with some power-hitters at the back-end, a better performance will be warranted from the bowling unit. Starc has looked unidimensional, relying more on pace and has been reluctant to bowl the slower ones as the batters have negotiated him easily especially in the death overs.

For KKR to go all the way, Starc will have to get his mojo back and play a lead role in the bowling department, for the likes of Narine and Varun Chakravarthy to dominate in the middle overs.

This is one area PBKS would like to exploit as they would look to return to winning ways.

While KKR top-order has done the bulk of their scoring, it's the opposite in case of Punjab Kings who have struggled to get it going from the outset.

The likes of Prabhsimran Singh, Liam Livingstone, Rilee Rossouw and Jonny Bairstow have failed to get into the act.

It's their uncapped duo of Ashustosh and Shashank who have salvaged the team from precarious situations with their astonishing powerhitting.

They would hope that their regular skipper Shikhar Dhawan who is nursing a shoulder injury makes a comeback, after sitting out of their last three matches.

Dhawan was seen knocking in two phases and also playing a football match during their training after reaching here on Wednesday as his inclusion would definitely be a boost to their sagging morale.



All rounder role is in danger: Axar Patel

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Axar Patel, who is a very capable batter besides being a quality left-arm spinner, feels the "all-rounder's role is in danger" because of the 'Impact Player' rule, making him the latest cricketer to give a thumbs down to the IPL innovation that has polarised opinions.

Promoted to No.3, Axar made a counter-attacking 43-ball 66 and along with skipper Rishabh Pant, lifted Delhi Capitals from 44/3 to 224/4 in their Indian Premier League match against Gujarat Titans here on Wednesday.

Later, he picked up one wicket as DC successfully defended their total to win by four runs.

Sharing his thoughts on the Impact Player rule, Axar said, "As an all-rounder, I feel that an all-rounder's role is in danger with the Impact Player rule. Every team is looking to play either a pure batter or a pure bowler as the Impact Player, and the all-rounders are not being used."

"With the Impact Player, every team goes into the match thinking they have six batters or bowlers, depending on if they are batting or bowing. This also creates a lot of confusion sometimes," Axar told 'JioCinema'.

The rule has also been criticised by the likes of Indian captain Rohit Sharma and several former players as well.

Introduced in 2023, the 'Impact Player' rule allows teams to substitute players during innings, sparking debate and scrutiny in the current season.

Axar, who sees himself as an all-rounder, had earlier said that because of the rule, the value of an all-rounder has gone down.

Thanks to Axar and Pant's brisk 113-run association, DC put up a total that helped them register their season's fourth win.

"I didn't know beforehand that I would bat at No. 3. When our batting came, they told me that they were thinking I should go at No. 3 because three spinners were playing. First, they asked Rishabh and then we discussed, and I said that I'll go.

"Rishabh also wanted to go, but then I told him that they'll use spinners later as well, and he should go at No. 4 because he can handle the middle-overs," Axar said.

On his bowling, Axar said, "I am not doing anything new. I am just adding variations to the pace. I wasn't confident about bowling my slow ball earlier, but I have found that confidence regardless of the batter being right or left-handed.

"The pace variations are making a big difference now. With the high-scoring games we're seeing, it's important to have the right attitude."

Rishabh Pant looks hungry, he is in very good form: DC batting coach Amre

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The swashbuckling Rishabh Pant has showed with his scintillating knock against Gujarat Titans that he is ready to roar in the upcoming T20 World Cup, feels Delhi Capitals' batting coach Pravin Amre.

A month after returning to competitive cricket after recovering from the multiple injuries sustained during a horrific car accident in December 2022, Pant virtually sealed his spot as India's first choice wicketkeeper for the T20 World Cup with an unbeaten 88 off 43 balls in DC's four-run win over GT in an IPL match here on Wednesday.

Skipper Pant and Axar Patel (66 off 43) forged a brisk 113-run stand off 68 balls to power DC to 224/4 after they were reeling at 44/3 in their must-win game.

"He (pant) started with a two-week camp in Vizag, he came there, he prepared himself very well. I remember when he came for the Vizag camp, he came straight to the ground from the airport.

"He was hungry and made sure



everyday he is going to utilise. It is all about his hard work, which is paying him," Amre said at the post-match press conference.

"And obviously a couple of good knocks gave him the confidence and today we saw a special knock. Finishing was important, and we saw how Rishabh single-handedly got 31 runs against an experienced bowler (Mohit Sharma), and that really says that he is in good form."

Amre also praised Axar, who made the opportunity count after being promoted to the No.3 spot.



It is Rahul vs Sanju and Avesh vs Bishnoi and Axar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

KL Rahul is believed to be slightly ahead of Sanju Samson in the race for second wicketkeeper's slot even as Mumbai Indians skipper Hardik Pandya's indifferent batting form remains a worry for the national selection panel which is expected to announce the 15-member squad for the T20 World Cup in Americas by the end of this month.

The other bone of contention in drafting the final squad could be the choice of an extra bowler.

It remains to be seen whether an extra pace bowler in Avesh Khan will be accommodated or whether the choice would be between Lucknow Super Giants leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi and Delhi Capitals all-rounder Axar Patel considering the low and slow tracks in the West Indies.

It is understood that skipper Rohit Sharma is likely to have a meeting with chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar to discuss the outline of the team.

With the ICC setting a May 1 deadline for the announcement of 15-member squads, the BCCI is expected to reveal the names anytime between the end of this week or the beginning of next week.

Pandya has so far bowled 17 overs out of a possible 32 in eight games for MI.

As a designated finisher, he has hit only seven sixes in these games, which is below par by every measure. The free-flowing bat-swing is completely missing in the 150 odd runs that he has scored in the tournament so far at a strike-rate of 142.

However, Pandya can be called a 'TINA' option (There Is No Alternative) for the selectors as Shivam Dube, who is also expected to board the New York bound flight, isn't bowling either.

Also in terms of skill and pace, Dube the bowler isn't anywhere close to Pandya but his current batting form (22 sixes in eight games) can't be ignored either.

RAHUL VS SANJU: It can be safely concluded that Rishabh Pant, who is now third among the top run-getters in the competition with 342 at a strike rate of 161, has sealed his place as the team's No. 1 keeper-batter and also as a designated finisher.

The fight is pretty intense for the second keeper's slot and despite KL Rahul (302 at 141 SR) not batting in the middle-order, his range of strokes might just help him pip Samson (314 at SR 152).

Samson might again have to be content with being a stand-by inclusion like last year's 50 over World Cup.

BISHNOI VS AVESH VS AXAR: The five bowlers, who have all but sealed their places are Jasprit Bumrah, Arshdeep Singh, Mohammed Siraj, Ravindra Jadeja and Kuldeep Yadav.

However save Bumrah and Kuldeep, the other Indian bowlers haven't been in great form during IPL and hence the choice of an extra bowler becomes very important.

It will be a three-way fight between Rajasthan Royals' pacer Avesh, Delhi Capitals left-arm spin bowling all-rounder Axar and Lucknow Super Giants leg-spinner Bishnoi.

Avesh, who has improved a lot as far as his death bowling is concerned, has eight wickets from as many matches with an economy rate of 9.41 while Bishnoi has only taken five wickets but on flat tracks, his economy of 8.47 can be considered impressive.

Axar, who has seven scalps from nine games but is bowling at an rate of just above 7, would be a brilliant choice too taking the conditions into consideration.

Add to it, his batting prowess, scoring runs at a strike of 132, and also the fact that he is a very good all-round fielder.

OTHER SPORTS

Archery World Cup: Recurve men team in final

PTI ■ SHANGHAI

The Indian trio of Tarundeep Rai, Dhiraj Bommadevara and Pravin Jadhav set up a gold medal clash with Olympic champions Korea after storming into the men's team recurve final of the Archery World Cup Stage 1 here on Thursday.

It came a day after India were assured of at least two medals in the compound competition after both the men's and women's teams made the finals.

The Indian recurve team, which qualified behind reigning world and Olympic champions South Korea, sailed past Italy 5-1 (55-54, 55-55, 56-55) in the last-four stage.

India will be up against the South Korea's Tokyo Olympics gold medal-winning trio of Kim Woojin, Lee Woo Seok and Kim Je Deok in the final slated for Sunday.

The top-seeded Korean trio defeated their Chinese Taipei rivals Tan Chih-Chun, Lin Zih-Siang and Tai Yu-Hsuan in straight sets 6-0 (57-50, 58-56, 58-54).

In the compound event, former world youth champion Priyansh and reigning Asian Games gold-medallist Jyothi Surekha Vennam advanced to their respective individual semi-finals to also remain in the hunt for a medal.

Having got a first round bye in the season-opening tournament, the second-seeded men's recurve team overcame a first set deficit to



beat 15th seeded Indonesia 5-3 (55-56, 54-54, 55-51, 55-53) in their tricky opening clash.

They were back to their best against seventh-seeded Spain as they began by dropping just one point (59 out of 60) before cruising to a 5-1 (59-54, 56-55, 55-55) win to make the semifinals.

The Indian women's team of Deepika Kumari, Ankita Bhakat and Bhajan Kaur, which got the sixth rank in the qualifiers, managed a below-par show and lost a 3-1 lead to go down to Mexico in its opening clash.

Having got a bye in the first round, the Indian women's team enjoyed a 3-1 lead in the second set. But their scores were below-par and they eventually lost 3-5 (50-50, 55-49, 51-54, 52-54).

Later, World Cup gold-medallist Jyothi, who is seeded second, downed teammate Avneet Kaur 143-142 in a tight finish to make the semis in teh compound competition.

Youngster Avneet gave her experienced teammate a tough fight when she bounced back from being two points behind to level 86-all at the end of third end.

She then produced two 10s including one X in the central ring to snatch a 115-114 lead, but only to falter in the final, hitting the 8-ring.

Jyothi sealed it by two X and a nine. Jyothi will face Meeri-Martia Paas of Estonia in the semifinal on Saturday.

Liverpool Premier League title hopes hit by 2-0 loss to Everton

AP ■ LIVERPOOL

Jurgen Klopp's hopes of a dream send-off were left in tatters after a 2-0 loss at Everton dealt a major blow to Liverpool's Premier League title bid on Wednesday.

Goals from Jarrad Branthwaite and Dominic Calvert-Lewin at Goodison Park meant Klopp tasted a bitter defeat in his last Merseyside derby before standing down at the end of the season.

"I can only apologize for today to the people. We should have done better and we didn't and that's why we lost," Klopp said.

The loss keeps Liverpool three points behind league leader Arsenal in second place and one ahead of defending champion Manchester City, which is in third and has two games in hand on both of its rivals. Klopp had spoken last week of needing perfection to win his second title at the club. But this was the latest setback for his team, which has lost two of its last three games in the league. While the result hurt Liverpool's title chances, it delivered a boost to Everton's survival bid, with the win moving Sean Dyche's team eight points above the relegation zone. That fact seemed to be of less concern to the home fans, who were too busy reveling in the damage caused to Liverpool's season.

"You lost the league at Goodison Park," they chanted



as the final whistle approached and the majority of the 39,000 crowd remained inside the stadium to drink in the atmosphere as the players celebrated on the field.

"I'm very disappointed. We let it happen exactly the game that Everton wanted," Klopp said.

Klopp had dominated this fixture since taking over at Anfield in 2015, winning nine of the past 16 derbies before Wednesday's match.

Statistics showed Everton won 75% of all duels in the opening half hour, a league record for any top flight team this season.

After just six minutes, Liverpool was grateful for VAR as it escaped an early penalty when Alisson brought down Calvert-Lewin in the box and referee Andrew Madley pointed to the spot. The decision was overturned because of an offside in the build up.

That pressure was made to count when Everton took the lead in in the 27th. Liverpool's defenders repeatedly failed to clear the danger from a free kick and Branthwaite's shot squirmed through the hands of Alisson and off the post before crossing the line. Again there was an agonizing wait for a VAR check, but on this occasion there was no reprieve for Liverpool.

Luis Diaz had the chance to level before the break, but was denied by the legs of Jordan Pickford from close range.

Liverpool came out with more intent for the second half without forcing Pickford into serious action before conceding a second goal.

Again the visitors failed to deal with a set piece when Dwight McNeil swung a deep corner to the far post and Calvert-Lewin rose unmarked to head home.

Liverpool came close to pulling one back in the 69th, but Diaz's effort came back off the post.

I will not have been close to what I am now if it was not for Vishy: Gukesh

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Indian chess prodigy D Gukesh on Thursday thanked the legendary Viswanathan Anand for playing a huge role in shaping his career, saying "I wouldn't have been close to what I am now if it wasn't for him".

The 17-year-old Grandmaster scripted history on Monday by winning the Candidates Chess Tournament in Toronto to become the youngest ever challenger to the world title, beating a record created by the legendary Garry Kasparov 40 years ago.

The triumph paved the way for Gukesh's clash against reigning world champion Ding Liren of China later this year.

"Vishy sir has been a huge inspiration for me and I have heavily benefitted from his academy. I am truly grateful to him and wouldn't have been close to what I am now if it wasn't for him," Gukesh said at a press conference a few hours after his arrival here to a rousing reception from fans and schoolmates.

Gukesh has trained at the Westbridge-Anand Chess Academy which came into existence in 2020. Incidentally,



before Gukesh, Anand was the only Indian to have won the Candidates, the last time being 2014.

Speaking about his much-anticipated clash against Liren, Gukesh said, "The biggest challenge against Ding would be how I prepare myself and being in the right state of mind since it will be a big match.

"There are a lot of expectations and a lot at stake. I have full belief in myself and will be going in with the same strategy. Hopefully, it will work out well."

The history-making teen was swamped by fans as he returned to an enthusiastic reception early this morning.

Hundreds of students from the Velammal Vidyalaya, the school where Gukesh studies, lined up at the airport at least one hour before his flight landed to greet him. "I am happy to see what the victory meant to the country. I was delighted to see young kids full of energy and rooting for me the moment I landed in Chennai. It's truly special and means a lot to me," he said.

His mother Padma, who is a microbiologist, was at the airport to receive him. His father Rajinikanth had travelled with Gukesh to Toronto.