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Cong demands SC-monitored probe into NEET anomalies

BANKS NEED TO RE-STRATEGISE THEIR BUSINESS PLAN TO DEAL WITH CREDIT AND DEPOSIT GROWTH GAP: DAS

'Apart from catching the case with clues, emotions in Satyabhama have worked OUT WELL'

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I would definitely like to mention that the NDA has built a strong base in south India. See Karnataka and Telangana. The Congress recently formed governments there, but the people lost confidence in them and they embraced the NDA in both the states."



PM-designate Narendra Modi

P4

DON'T MISS...

Jagan appeals to Govt to ensure...

After the general elections 2024 results were announced in Andhra Pradesh, a series of violent incidents have been witnessed and the constitutional systems have completely collapsed in the state, said YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. With the political vendetta of Chandrababu Naidu, democracy itself has been threatened across the state. An uncontrolled law and order situation has arisen with the ruthless attacks by the TDP and the entire system is out of whack. YSRCP leaders and activists are also being attacked...

-PAGE: 3

Vande Bharat average speed...

The average speed of Vande Bharat trains has decreased from 84.48 kmph in 2020-21 to 76.25 kmph in 2023-24, the railway ministry said in a response to an RTI query. Railway officials said not only Vande Bharats but many other trains are also maintaining cautionary speed at places where "huge infrastructural work" is underway. Besides this, some Vande Bharat trains have been launched in difficult terrain areas where there are speed restrictions due to geographical reasons or extreme weather...

-PAGE: 5

ONGC seeks technical help to...

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is seeking help from an internationally-proven technical service provider to raise oil and gas production from its flagship oil and gas field in the Arabian Sea. The firm has floated an international tender to identify the service provider who will help raise production from the field, ONGC said in a post on X. "The giant multi-layered Mumbai High field, which commenced production 48 years ago in 1976, is currently in its..."

-PAGE: 8

England eye improved bowling...

Defending champions England will look to restitch their T20 World Cup campaign through an improved bowling effort when they face 'old' rival Australia in a Group B match here on Saturday. England's opening game against Scotland was rained off after the latter made 90 for no loss in 10 overs, forcing the teams to take home a point each. But even those 60 balls showed the need for England to buckle up in the bowling department, to begin with. Scottish openers George Munsey and Michael Jones...

-SPORTS

NARENDRA MODI ELECTED NDA PARLIAMENTARY PARTY LEADER

Prez invites Modi to form govt

OATH-TAKING LIKELY TOMORROW EVENING

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday appointed NDA Parliamentary Party leader Narendra Modi as Prime Minister-designate and the new government will take oath on Sunday evening.

Murmu handed over the letter of appointment to Modi, who called on her at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here on Friday evening.

Earlier, leaders of the BJP-led NDA had called on Murmu and handed over letters of support for Modi, who was elected as the leader of the NDA Parliamentary Party.

Addressing the media in the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, Modi said he has been appointed as Prime Minister-designate by the President. "The President has asked me to work as the PM-designate and she has informed me about the oath ceremony," Modi said and added that he has informed the President that they will be comfortable if the event is held on the evening of June 9.

He said the Rashtrapati Bhavan will work out the details of the oath taking ceremony on Sunday by when he would hand over the list of the Council of Ministers to the President. "This 18th Lok Sabha is an important milestone towards fulfilling those dreams when the country



will celebrate the 100 years of independence in 2047," Modi said. This 18th Lok Sabha is a House of new energy, youthful energy, and people have given the NDA government one more chance, Modi said. The BJP-led NDA won 293 seats in the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections and enjoys majority in the 543-member House.

Modi meets Advani, Murli Manohar
Modi met BJP veterans L K Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi at their residences here on Friday, before staking claim to form the government at the Centre for a third consecutive term.

"This 18th Lok Sabha is an important milestone towards fulfilling those dreams when the country will celebrate the 100 years of independence in 2047," Modi said

Modi lauds Pawan as a 'storm'

VIJAYAWADA: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has described Jana Sena chief K. Pawan Kalyan as a "Toofan" (storm). In his speech after being elected as the leader of the NDA, Narendra Modi praised Pawan Kalyan. "Andhra Pradesh has given the biggest mandate. This success epitomises the aspirations of the common man. This was made possible by Pawan Kalyan and Chandrababu Naidu," Modi extolled. "Here is Pawan. Ye Pawan nahi hai, but Aandhi hai," Modi lauded, amid thunderous applause from the leaders.



Modi visited Advani soon after being chosen as the leader of the NDA parliamentary party, leader of the BJP in the Lok Sabha. After meeting Advani, he went to the residence of Joshi, a former president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).



India will move ahead under Modi's leadership: Naidu

Attributes NDA's victory to PM's dedication

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister-designate and TDP chief Nara Chandrababu Naidu acknowledged the committed and dedicated efforts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He noted that the meetings and rallies addressed by Modi, along with a public meeting organised by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, have significantly changed the political landscape in Andhra Pradesh, leading to the NDA's massive victory in the recent elections.

Speaking at the NDA Parliamentary Party meeting in New Delhi, chaired by Modi to re-elect him as leader, on Friday, Naidu highlighted the impact of public meetings addressed by BJP president JP Nadda and Union Ministers Rajnath Singh and Nitin Gadkari.

Continued on Page 2

Naidu to be sworn in CM on June 12

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu will be sworn in as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh for the third time on June 12, party sources said on Friday.

Naidu will take the oath of office at Kesarapalli IT Park near the Gannavaram airport. "At 11:27 am on June 12 (Wednesday), Chandrababu Naidu will be sworn in as the Chief Minister at Kesarapalli IT Park near Gannavaram airport," the sources said.

Continued on Page 2

BJP, JSP MLAs to get berths in State Cabinet

Naidu to demand 3 to 4 posts in Modi Cabinet

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Following the 2024 general election results announced on June 4, where the TDP-led NDA secured a landslide victory, TDP Chief N. Chandrababu Naidu swiftly began planning for cabinet appointments at both the state and central levels. Sources indicate that Naidu intends to include Jana Sena and BJP MLAs in the state cabinet, allocating 3 to 4 posts each to ensure balanced representation.

According to sources close to the TDP, speculation is rife that Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan and TDP general secretary Nara Lokesh may be appointed as Deputy Chief Ministers in Naidu's Cabinet. The Cabinet, expected to be announced on June 12, will comprise 25 ministers, including Naidu as Chief Minister. Naidu plans to prioritise seniority, loyalty, dedication, and caste representation in his selections.

CENTRAL CABINET ASPIRATIONS

Naidu is also expected to negotiate for 3 to 4 Cabinet positions in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cabinet. Potential candidates include K. Ram Manohar Naidu (Koppalavelam), Vemireddy Prabhakar Reddy and Pemmasani

Chandrasekhar. Additionally, Kuna Ravi Kumar, who won from Amadalavalasa, may be considered for a Cabinet berth from Srikakulam district.

OTHER KEY APPOINTMENTS

Senior TDP leader Kimidi Kala Venkata Rao, representing the significant Turpu Kapu community in North Andhra, may be appointed to a cabinet position. Other potential appointees include: **K. Atchannaidu:** (Finance Minister) **Nimmakayala Chitra Rajappa:** (Revenue Minister) **Gorantla Butchiah** (Civil Supplies

Chowdary: (Minister) **Pithani Satyanarayana:** (BC Welfare Minister) **Nadendla Manohar:** (Industries Minister) **Mandali Buddha Prasad:** (Likely to join the cabinet)

Former Health Minister Kamineni Srinivas, who served in the 2014 TD-BJP-JS alliance government, is likely to return as Health Minister. Another BJP MLA, P. Vishnu Kumar Raju, is speculated to become the Endowments Minister.

There is speculation about cabinet posts for several other leaders, including:

Continued on Page 2



'TDP joined NDA unconditionally'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP general secretary Nara Lokesh on Friday reaffirmed the party's commitment to the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and Narendra Modi's leadership, saying that the party joined NDA unconditionally before elections and would therefore continue to be in the NDA "unconditionally".

In an interview with a news agency, he said: "We joined NDA unconditionally before elections; we will continue to be in NDA unconditionally... We believe that he (Modi) should be the Prime Minister of India and there is no second thought about it," said Lokesh.

However, he reasoned that the relationship should be symbiotic and if some opportunity of investment is coming up, "we would like Andhra to get it and we need the Central government's push for it." "We will ask for it. It is about building a symbiotic relationship, representing the state's interests, every state's interest," Lokesh asserted.

Continued on Page 2

India will be strong under Modi as PM: PK

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena chief K Pawan Kalyan lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi, asserting that India will remain strong as long as Modi is at the helm.

Addressing the NDA meeting in Delhi, Pawan Kalyan supported Narendra Modi's candidacy for Prime Minister. He stated, "As long as Narendra Modi is the Prime Minister of the country, India will not bow down to anyone."



Pawan Kalyan praised Modi for inspiring the nation and promised to heed his advice while govern-

ing Andhra Pradesh. He remarked that from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Kamakhya to Dwaraka, Modi has instilled a sense of national integrity in everyone.

Modi has enabled India to hold its head high on the global stage, he extolled. Under Modi's leadership, India is advancing in all sectors and becoming financially strong, Pawan Kalyan added.

2

Neerabh Kumar Prasad takes charge as AP CS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The 1987 batch senior IAS officer Neerabh Kumar Prasad took charge as the new Chief Secretary of the Andhra Pradesh State Government at the State Secretariat on Friday. Nirab Kumar Prasad was appointed as CS by the State General Administration Department through GO RT No 1034 on Friday. He took charge as CS amid divine blessings of Vedic scholars of TTD and Vijayawada Sri Bhramaramba Mallikarjuna Swamy Devasthanam in the CS Chamber at Velagapudi State Secretariat.

After assuming charge, NK Prasad thanked N Chandrababu



Naidu, who will take oath as Chief Minister, for allowing him to work as the CS.

He clarified that he will do his best to take the state forward in all fields with the cooperation of fellow secretaries, heads of departments, other officers and staff.

AP BJP eyes Central cabinet berth

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Buoyed by the outcome of the recent Assembly and Lok Sabha polls, the Andhra Pradesh BJP unit is seeking at least one cabinet berth at the Centre, amid reports that there will be "ample" representation from the state.

BJP sources said the state unit has already sent a message to the top brass through Shiv Prakash, national joint general secretary of the saffron party, requesting a cabinet berth for at least one Lok Sabha member of the party from the state if possible. "This is an opportune time to expand the party in Andhra Pradesh and send a message to the masses that BJP is serious about the state."

Continued on Page 2

Ramoji Rao on ventilator

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Media baron Ramoji Rao's health condition has reportedly become critical, and he is currently receiving treatment on a ventilator. For some time, Ramoji Rao has been battling various health issues. Recently, doctors placed stents to address his heart-related problems. At around 3 pm, Ramoji Rao reportedly experienced severe discomfort, prompting his staff to transfer him to Star Hospital in Nanakramguda.

Due to his age, he has been facing multiple health challenges, and his condition remains critical. Doctors have stated that it will take a few more hours to determine his exact condition. Meanwhile, fans and staff are deeply concerned, and family members anxiously await the health bulletin.



Amaravati capital city project comes to fore

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Following the stellar triumph of the TDP in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections, the Amaravati capital city project, which was shelved by the outgoing YSRCP government, is now expected to be revived.

As the first chief minister of the bifurcated state between 2014 and 2019, TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu had floated Amaravati as the capital city. The greenfield capital city was envisioned to be an environmentally sustainable one, located between Vijayawada and Guntur cities, covering up to 29 villages.

Naidu had acquired up to 30,000 acres of land from farmers for

Amaravati capital city construction through land pooling. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had taken part in its foundation-laying ceremony on October 22, 2015, and former Telangana CM K Chandrasekhar Rao had also attended it.

However, this brainchild of Naidu suffered a setback in 2019 when the TDP lost power and Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy-led YSRCP won a landslide victory. Chandrababu Naidu poured cold water on the Amaravati capital city plans and propounded a new theory of three capitals, which could now become a dead concept that he has suffered a humiliating defeat in the 2024 polls, whereas Naidu is expected to take over as the CM soon.

Continued on Page 2

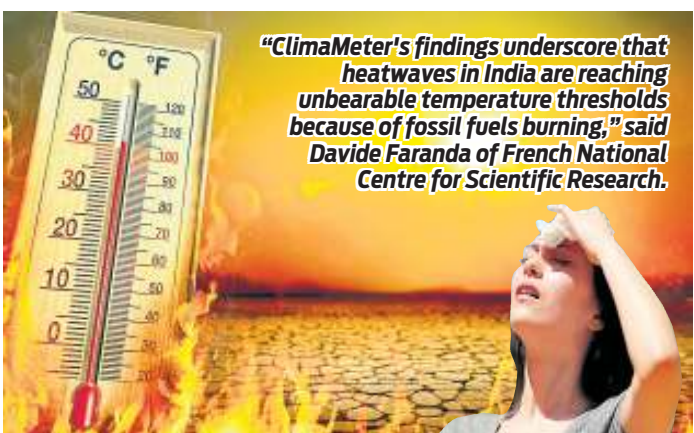
It was 1.5° C warmer than warmest month!

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Heatwaves similar to those experienced in May in India are almost 1.5 degrees Celsius warmer than the warmest heat waves previously observed in the country, according to a new rapid attribution study by an independent group of climate scientists and researchers.

The analysts at ClimaMeter said the intense and prolonged heat wave India endured in May was a result of the naturally occurring El Nino phenomenon -- unusual warming of the ocean surface in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean -- and the rapidly increasing concentration of greenhouse gases -- primarily carbon dioxide and methane -- in the atmosphere.

The researchers analyzed how events similar to the high temper-



"ClimaMeter's findings underscore that heatwaves in India are reaching unbearable temperature thresholds because of fossil fuels burning," said Davide Faranda of French National Centre for Scientific Research.

atures in the present climate at least 1.5 degrees Celsius warmer than what they would have been in the past over a large area of the region analyzed. The precipitation changes do not show any significant variations," the analysis read.

"ClimaMeter's findings underscore that heatwaves in India are reaching unbearable temperature thresholds because of fossil fuels burning," said Davide Faranda of French National Centre for Scientific Research.

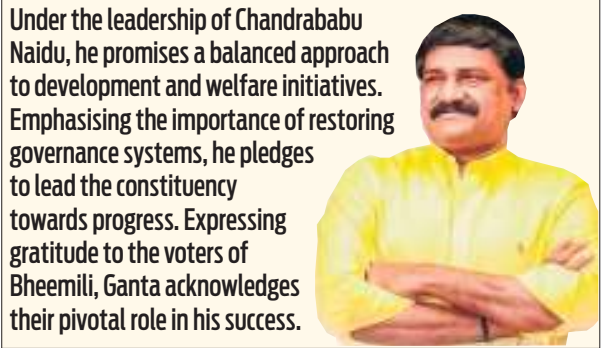
"There are no technological solutions for adapting Indian metropolises for temperatures approaching 50 degrees Celsius. We should all act now to reduce CO2 emissions and avoid exceeding vital temperature thresholds in large areas of the tropics," he said.

ature in India's May heatwave changed in the present (2001-2023) compared to what they would have looked like if they had occurred in the past (1979-2001). "The temperature changes would that similar events produce temper-

Ganta's victory reshapes Bheemili's political scene

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a dramatic upheaval in Bheemili's political scenery, Ganta Srinivasa Rao from the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) has etched his legacy with an extraordinary triumph in the constituency. Securing a remarkable majority of 92,401 votes, Rao's win resonates as one of the most remarkable victories in the state's electoral past, propelling him to the forefront of regional politics. Rao's dominance was not confined to mere victory; it was a sweeping conquest across all four mandals of the constituency. The TDP stalwart left no stone unturned, securing overwhelming support in traditional strongholds and charting unprecedented gains in 64 panchayats across Anandapuram, Padmanabham, and Bheemili rural mandals.



Under the leadership of Chandrababu Naidu, he promises a balanced approach to development and welfare initiatives. Emphasising the importance of restoring governance systems, he pledges to lead the constituency towards progress. Expressing gratitude to the voters of Bheemili, Ganta acknowledges their pivotal role in his success.

Additionally, a commanding lead of 1,686 votes was amassed through postal ballots, further solidifying his commanding position.

However, amidst the euphoria of victory, the significance of the 9,061 NOTA (None of the Above) votes cannot be overlooked, reflecting a nuanced tapestry of dissent and diversity within the electorate. Furthermore, the diverse range of voices represented by the 15 candidates underscores the democratic ethos inherent in Bheemili's political fabric. Speaking to *The Pioneer*, Ganta Srinivasa Rao reiterated his commitment to address the region's developmental chal-

enges. Under the leadership of Chandrababu Naidu, he promises a balanced approach to development and welfare initiatives. Emphasising the importance of restoring governance systems, he pledges to lead the constituency towards progress. Expressing gratitude to the voters of Bheemili, Ganta acknowledges their pivotal role in his success. He assures the implementation of a localized manifesto, addressing community-specific issues and prioritizing public welfare projects. Furthermore, Ganta assures justice for all ministers and vows to continue serving the constituency diligently. Ganta Srinivasa Rao's landslide victory heralds a new era in Bheemili's political trajectory, epitomising the electorate's unwavering faith in TDP's vision for progress and prosperity. As the dawn of a new chapter unfolds, all eyes remain riveted on the promises made and the transformative changes anticipated in the days ahead.

Govt staff's salaries delayed again

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a recurring nightmare for government employees, salaries have once again been delayed, plunging countless families into financial hardship. Despite the diligent uploading of salary bills last month, the wheels of administration have ground to a halt, plunging countless families into distress. As the seventh day of the month dawns, the spectre of unpaid wages looms large, with no respite in sight for those reliant on their monthly stipend. While select departments such as Revenue and Treasury received their dues after the 1st of the month, a vast majority of workers remain in the dark, anxiously awaiting their much-needed

compensation. This isn't an isolated incident but a recurring nightmare spanning three long years, with salaries and pensions arriving in a haphazard manner, if at all. Amidst this crisis, the silence of those tasked with overseeing administrative affairs speaks volumes. With the formation of a new government underway, the guardians of governance have turned a blind eye to the plight of their constituents, forsaking their duty in favour of political manoeuvring. In the face of mounting uncertainty, whispers abound that salaries will only be forthcoming after the establishment of the new regime—a campaign fraught with false promises and shattered dreams.

But the repercussions of this callous indifference are felt most acutely by the common man. As the cost of living soars, the inability to access their hard-earned wages leaves families struggling to make ends meet. "How can children be expected to pursue education when their parents can't even afford to enrol them in schools?" lamented TR Ambedkar, District General Secretary of the United Teachers Federation (UTF). The blame for this debacle lies squarely at the feet of the higher-ups, whose negligence has plunged countless lives into turmoil. State Teachers Union (STU) district general secretary E. Paidiraju, strongly criticizes the indifference of government officials, asserting

that the delay in salary distribution is driven by political vendettas rather than a true concern for the workers' welfare. This is a scathing critique of a system that values political manoeuvring over the fundamental needs of its people. As the clamour for justice grows louder, the onus falls on the new government to right the wrongs of the past and ensure that salaries and pensions are delivered without delay. The time for action is now—a moment of reckoning for those entrusted with the solemn duty of serving the public. Until then, the struggles of government workers will continue unabated, their hopes pinned on the faint promise of a brighter tomorrow.

Botsa denies charges over teacher transfers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Botsa Satyanarayana has strongly condemned the allegations made against him regarding the transfer of teachers. He clarified that he had instructed officials to put a hold on teacher transfers so that the next government could address the issue. In a press release on Friday, Botsa stated that the accusations concerning irregularities in teacher transfers are baseless. He emphasised that there is no truth to the news making personal allegations against him, calling it an attempt to tarnish his image. Botsa noted that similar allegations had been published multiple times before the election and had been repeatedly condemned.

Chief Secy meets Governor

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Secretary to Government Neerabh Kumar Prasad called on Governor of Andhra Pradesh S Abdul Nazeer at Raj Bhavan on Friday on a courtesy visit after assuming charge. On the other hand, hours after taking charge as the Chief Secretary of AP, Neerabh Kumar Prasad issued transfer orders transferring three senior IAS officers discharging duties in the Chief Ministers Office. The three senior IAS officers who were affected by transfers were Poonam Malakondaiah, Revu Mutyalaraju and Narayana Bharat Gupta who were discharging their duties in the Chief Minister's office. The orders mentioned that all three IAS officers should report to the GAD. Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad issued orders on Friday through General



Administration Department GO RT No 1058 granting earned leave to former Chief Secretary Dr KS Jawahar Reddy from June 7 to 27 for a period of 21 days. Dr Jawahar Reddy has applied to the government on

Thursday to grant earned leave. As per the All India Leave Rules 1955 leave has been granted to Dr Jawahar Reddy and he should report to the General Administration Department for his next posting orders after the leave.

AP BJP Eyes Central...

Continued from Page 1

A request has been sent to the senior leadership of the party," the BJP sources said. The first choice would be State BJP President D Purandeswari who won from Rajamahendravaram Lok Sabha constituency by a margin of nearly 2.40 lakh votes, defeating her nearest rival G Srinivas of YSR Congress, they said.

The saffron party has performed impressively in the state by improving its vote share to 11.28 per cent in the recent polls, winning three Lok Sabha and eight assembly seats, from a minuscule less-than-one per cent in 2019.

As part of a seat-sharing deal among NDA partners, the TDP contested 144 assembly and 17 Lok Sabha constituencies while BJP put up candidates in six Lok Sabha and 10 assembly seats in Andhra Pradesh. Janasena contested two Lok Sabha and 21 assembly seats. The TDP won 135 seats in the assembly polls. Its allies BJP and Janasena got 8 seats and 21 seats respectively. In the LS polls, the TDP won 16 seats, BJP three and Janasena two seats.

The BJP had two Lok Sabha members between 2014 and 2019 -- Kambhampati Hari Babu (Visakhapatnam) and Gokaraju Ganga Raju (Narsapuram) -- and none during 2019-24. The party also hopes that some leaders from the YSR Congress party, which was routed in the assembly polls, may opt to join the saffron party as they could not align with TDP. During the recently concluded assembly and Lok Sabha polls, the party fielded several leaders who switched over to it, causing heartburn among old-timers.

According to political observers, by giving party tickets to new entrants, the BJP was trying to send a message or signal to disgruntled leaders of other parties that it would generously offer seats to contest polls to turncoats.

TODAY	
ALMANAC	
Month & Paksham:	Sukla Paksha
Tithi:	Dwitiya: Jun 07 04:45 PM to Jun 08 03:55 PM
Tritya:	Jun 08 03:55 PM to Jun 09 03:44 PM
Nakshatram:	
Ardra:	Jun 07 07:43 PM to Jun 08 07:42 PM
Punarvasu:	Jun 08 07:42 PM to Jun 09 08:20 PM
Rahukalam:	9:00 AM to 10:37 AM
Yamagandam:	1:52 PM to 3:30 PM
Varjyam:	08:01 AM to 09:40 AM
Gulika:	5:44 AM to 7:22 AM
Amritakalam:	09:42 AM to 11:18 AM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	11:49 AM to 12:41 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Mostly Cloudy
Temp: 35°C
Humidity: 67%
Sunrise: 5:34 AM
Sunset: 6:39 PM
Updated: June 7, 2024 5:00 PM

Pawan, Lokesh among 80 new faces in House

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections of 2024 saw many fresh faces emerging victoriously, including Telugu Desam general secretary Nara Lokesh and Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan, along with around 80 other new representatives. Notably, both Lokesh and Kalyan secured significant margins, placing them in the top 10 candidates by vote majority. Meanwhile, outgoing Chief Minister and YSRC president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, who had a strong showing in 2019, ranked within the top 20 candidates this year.

According to data on vote majorities, Palla Srinivas Rao of TDP recorded the highest margin with 95,235 votes in Gajuwaka Assembly Constituency. He was followed by Ganta Srinivasa Rao with a majority of 92,401 votes from Bheemili, and Nara Lokesh with 91,413 votes from Mangalagiri. In Pendurthi, Panchakarla Ramesh Babu of JSP registered a majority of 81,870 votes. Former minister Ponguru Narayana secured a 72,489 vote majority in Nellore City, while Arimilli Radha Krishna had a 72,121 vote majority in Tanuku.



Pantam Venkateswara Rao (Pantam Nanaji) of JSP garnered a 72,040 vote majority in Kakinada Rural. Adireddy Srinivas achieved a 71,404 vote majority in Rajahmundry City, and V e l a g a p u d i Ramakrishnababu got a 70,877 vote majority in Visakhapatnam East. Jana Sena Chief Pawan Kalyan received a 70,279 vote majority, placing him in tenth position. In Vijayawada Central, Bonda Umamaheswara Rao of TDP obtained a 68,886 vote majority. Dr. Nimmala Ramanaidu secured a 67,945 vote majority in Palakollu, Ramanjaneyulu Pulaparthi (Anjibabu) of JSP had a 66,974 vote majority in Bhimavaram, and Konathala Ramakrishna of JSP received a 65,764 vote majority in Anakapalli. Ch Vamsi Krishna Srinivas of JSP recorded a 64,594 vote majority in Visakhapatnam South, Gorantla Butchiah

Chowdary registered a 64,090 vote majority in Rajahmundry Rural. Bolisetty Srinivas of JSP had a 62,492 vote majority in Tadepalligudem, Radha Krishnaya Badeti secured a 62,388 vote majority in Eluru, and Aranii Srinivasulu of JSP achieved a 61,956 vote majority. Outgoing CM Jagan Mohan Reddy received a 61,687 vote majority in Pulivendula, placing him in the 20th position in terms of vote majorities. Former MP Kanumuru Raghu Ramakrishna Raju won as an MLA on a TDP ticket with a 56,777 vote majority, placing him 23rd. Venigandam Ramu of TDP defeated Kodali Nani with a 53,040 vote majority in Gudivada, placing 27th. First-time candidate Galla Madhavi of TDP secured a 51,150 vote majority in Guntur West, ranking 30th, while former minister Kollu Ravindra of TDP received a 50,242 vote majority in Machilipatnam, placing 31st. Jana Sena PAC member Nadendla Manohar achieved a 48,112 vote majority in Tenali, ranking 35th, and TDP President Chandrababu Naidu obtained a 48,006 vote majority, placing 36th.

India will move ahead...

Continued from Page 1

He congratulated all leaders on the NDA's success, emphasizing that Modi's relentless three-month campaign, day and night, was pivotal. Naidu praised Modi's unwavering spirit throughout the campaign, attributing the NDA's victory to this dedication. He expressed gratitude to all BJP leaders, noting that their collective message instilled confidence among the people of Andhra Pradesh about the Centre's support. Reflecting on Modi's decade-long leadership, Naidu observed that the Prime Minister's visionary decisions have placed the nation at a crucial juncture. He remarked on the remarkable progress and transformation India has witnessed, crediting Modi's dedicated approach to turning the country into a global powerhouse.

With over four decades in politics, Naidu acknowledged Modi's unique contribution to making

India proud. "Under Modi's leadership, the nation has become the fifth-largest economy in the world. We are confident he will take the country even further," he stated. Looking ahead to Modi's plans for a Vikasitha Bharat and Vision-2047, Naidu expressed confidence that India will reach a top global position, either number one or two. He believes that under Modi's leadership, Indians will attain the highest per capita income globally and lead the world in governance and other areas. Terming Modi a great asset to the nation, Naidu emphasized that this is a critical opportunity for India. He highlighted India's high growth rate over the past decade, its advantages in Information Technology, and its young generation, combined with Modi's efficient leadership. Naidu proposed Modi's name as the next Prime Minister, envisioning him steering India towards becoming a zero-poverty nation.

Naidu to be...

Continued from Page 1

Naidu first became the CM nearly 30 years ago in 1995 and went on to rule till 2004 to be replaced by late Y S Rajasekhara Reddy. After a decade and the bifurcation of the united state into Telangana and residual Andhra Pradesh, Naidu emerged as the first CM of the newly carved out state in 2014. However, he lost the elections in 2019 with the chief minister's mantle taken over by YSRCP supremo Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy. He will become the chief minister again after a gap of five years.

Amaravati capital...

Continued from Page 1

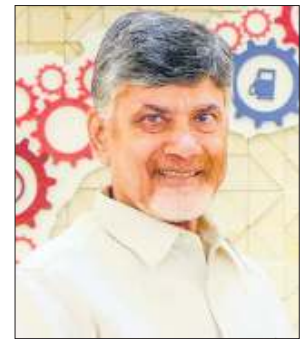
The massive victory of the NDA alliance of TDP, BJP and Janasena has injected new life into Amaravati, which is poised to see brisk activity. While releasing the election manifesto on April 30 at his Andhra Pradesh residence in Undavalli, Naidu vowed that Amaravati would be developed as the capital city of the state. Talking to reporters, TDP General Secretary Nara Lokesh, who won from the Mangalagiri assembly segment, said on June 4 that the incoming government was committed to developing Amaravati as the single capital of the state. TDP Spokesperson Jyothsna Tirunagari said that building Amaravati would be the priority of the new government. "Amaravati reconstruction is our priority, there is no doubt about that. We have done a lot of development during our regime (2014-2019). After Jagan Mohan Reddy took over he destroyed everything and demolished most of the things," Tirunagari said. Alleging that roads were dug up during the YSRCP regime, she observed that reconstruction of Amaravati has to be taken up from

scratch in some areas except for the Secretariat and the Assembly buildings. According to the TDP spokesperson, even during the first TDP regime in the residuary state of Andhra Pradesh, Amaravati was its priority, which will now see renewed pace and vigour. Meanwhile, Amaravati farmers who gave lands to the capital city are looking forward with renewed hope on Naidu. "Our motto is to build Amaravati and save Amaravati. Chandrababu won and Amaravati is saved. After Babu (Chandrababu) won we got a lot of clarity and there will also be Central Government's cooperation," a woman farmer told a regional news channel. However, she observed that the farmers who have been agitating for the past five years will continue to agitate until they receive their land leases which have been held up for three years, among other unresolved disputes. Despite several forms of agitation taken up by the farmers who committed their lands for the capital city project, Reddy did not heed their pleas during his tenure, it was pointed out.

Political maestro resurfaces, redefines Indian politics

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In an astonishing turn of events, Nara Chandrababu Naidu, renowned for his indomitable spirit in coalition politics, reemerges from the pages of history to once again steer the nation's trajectory. Amidst a turbulent political climate, Naidu's seasoned expertise and visionary leadership catapulted him back into the spotlight, seizing the nation's attention and dominating headlines nationwide. With decades of experience navigating the intricate web of coalition politics, Naidu stands as a formidable figure, wielding unparalleled influence and orchestrating pivotal decisions that echo throughout the corridors of power. As national media outlets broadcast special features and analyses, a new generation is introduced to the enigmatic persona of Chandrababu



Naidu, whose illustrious career has left an indelible mark on the tapestry of Indian politics. Rewind to 1996, a pivotal moment in India's political narrative. With the Congress party's defeat and the BJP's rise, a hung parliament throws the nation into uncertainty. Enter Naidu, the convener of the United Front, who deftly seizes the reins of power. Through a display of political acumen, he

facilitated the appointments of Prime Ministers Deve Gowda and I K Gujral, cementing his legacy as a master strategist. Yet, Naidu's journey is fraught with challenges and triumphs alike. Following the 1998 elections, he engineered a bold proposition to the BJP, offering support in exchange for key concessions. This divisive move underscores Naidu's unwavering commitment to advancing his party's agenda amid the turbulent seas of coalition politics. Throughout Vajpayee's tenure, Naidu emerged as a trusted confidant and advisor, sought after for counsel on matters ranging from infrastructure development to the contentious Ayodhya dispute. With the Telugu Desam Party wielding significant parliamentary clout, Naidu's influence extends far beyond the borders of his home state, shaping national policy and

fostering economic growth. Naidu's legacy transcends politics, with his visionary governance approach earning praise from luminaries across various fields. From economists to technologists, journalists to researchers, accolades pour in for Naidu's pioneering efforts in implementing rapid economic reforms and leveraging technology for governance. Now, amidst the shifting sands of political fortune, Naidu finds himself at the nexus of power once more. As the nation grapples with the aftermath of state separation, Naidu emerges as a kingmaker, moulding the nation's political landscape with unparalleled finesse. As India stands on the cusp of a new era, all eyes remain fixed on Chandrababu Naidu, the consummate political maestro whose enduring legacy continues to shape the destiny of the nation.

India will be...

Continued from Page 1

"The BJP-TDP-JSP alliance secured 91% of Assembly and Parliament seats in Andhra Pradesh. In the 2014 election meeting, I advocated that Narendra Modi should be the Prime Minister for 15 years to transform India. My wish has come true now," the JSP chief asserted, expressing his happiness for Modi's third term as PM. He concluded by saying that the people of India wish for Modi's Vision 2047 to come true and for the country to achieve tremendous progress under his leadership. "I hope that the Centre will extend all required support to Andhra Pradesh," he observed.

'TDP joined...

Continued from Page 1

According to the TDP leader, there would be 100 things such as Agniveer, Uniform Civil Code, reservations, allocation of budgets, development and others which could be negotiated across a table. Reacting to a question on reservations for Muslims in Andhra Pradesh, he said the TDP doesn't know caste, creed or religion, and only represents the interests of the Telugu people. "TDP has been clear from day one. TDP represents the interests of the Telugu people. We don't know caste, creed and religion. We stand only for Telugu people. We believe that the Telugu state should be strong," he noted.

BJP, JSP MLAs to get berths

Continued from Page 1

Nandamuri Balakrishna Ponguru Narayana Ganta Srinivasa Rao Bhuma Akhila Priya Jyothula Nehru Konathala Ramakrishna Paritala Sunitha Anam Ramanarayana Reddy Payyavula Keshav Bonda Umamaheswara Rao

Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy Former MP and Undi MLA K. Raghu Ramakrishnam Raju is reportedly vying for the position of AP Legislative Assembly Speaker. These proposed appointments reflect Naidu's strategy to balance experience, loyalty, and representative diversity in his administration.

Chandrababu promises to clear Neeru-Chettu pending bills

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP national president N Chandrababu Naidu has assured that the pending Neeru-Chettu bills of Rs.425 crore will be cleared soon after forming the government, said Andhra Pradesh Water Users Associations' Federation president and TDP Neeru-Chettu Pending Bills Grievances Cell in-charge Alla Venkata Gopala Krishna Rao.

He said that the works were completed during the period from 2014 to 2019. The Water Users Association's presidents spent Rs.1,303 crore for 18,544 works in all 13 districts. However, he said, the previous government harassed all WUA presidents by not paying pending bills to the tune of Rs. 425 crore.

APWUA's Federation president Alla Venkata Gopala Krishna Rao, on Thursday night, met TDP supreme N Chandrababu Naidu at his residence at Undavalli and submitted the details of dues of the



Andhra Pradesh Water Users Associations' Federation president Alla Venkata Gopala Krishna Rao submitting a representation to TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu at his residence at Undavalli

Neeru-Chettu bills which have been unpaid since 2019. Also, he explained their fight against the previous government for taking bills. After a detailed dis-

ussion, Chandrababu assured Alla Gopala Krishna Rao that his government would pay all dues soon after forming the government.

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In this connection, Alla spoke to the media at his office in Vijayawada on Friday and said that all WUA presidents were farmers and they did the Neeru-Chettu works during the TDP regime. In 13 districts, 18,544 works were done and for that, WUA presidents spent Rs.1,303 crore. However, the YSRC government did not pay these dues. Also, the government harassed farmers by issuing several memos without paying bills, he added.

Later, in 2021, the Neeru-Chettu Grievances Cell was opened at the TDP national office and after that, farmers filed 9,391 writ petitions in the

Andhra Pradesh High Court, he said. Though the AP High Court had directed the government to clear pending bills, the government did not obey the order. Subsequently, the farmers filed 6,625 contempt petitions, he added.

As a result, the State government issued around 20 GOs between March 2022 and April 2024, and paid Rs.968 crore. Bills worth around Rs.425 crore are still pending and the federation has invited Chandrababu's attention to the issue. Chandrababu assured that after verifying the details, the government will pay the Neeru-Chettu pending bills, he explained.

Jagan appeals to Guv to ensure peace in State

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

After the general elections 2024 results were announced in Andhra Pradesh, a series of violent incidents have been witnessed and the constitutional systems have completely collapsed in the state, said YSRC president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

With the political vendetta of Chandrababu Naidu, democracy itself has been threatened across the state. An uncontrolled law and order situation has arisen with the ruthless attacks by the TDP and the entire system is out of whack.

YSRC leaders and activists are also being attacked by the TDP like maniacs. The candidates who contested from the YSRC party have no protection.

In the universities that are the centres of higher education, the professors are being abused and are being terrorised. In the last five years, the State's reputation in the



country with governance reforms and programmes to support the poor has been damaged and it has turned into a violent state in just three days. Democracy and civil liberties are being seriously disturbed. I am once again appealing to the Honorable Governor @governor to intervene. I assure you that @YSRC Party will stand by the party workers, my brothers and my sisters who are victims of violent incidents, said YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

GITAM varsity holds global graduation ceremony

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

GITAM Deemed to be University (GITAM) recently held its fifth special graduation ceremony for international students, marking a significant milestone for students from Afghanistan, Rwanda, Liberia, Nigeria, Nepal, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Indonesia. The prestigious event, held on Friday, celebrated academic achievement and fostered a spirit of international collaboration.

Pro Vice-Chancellor Prof. Y Gowtham Rao, serving as the chief guest, delivered a keynote address highlighting the unique value proposition of India's education system. He emphasised its rich historical and cultural context, diverse experiences, and its role in fostering economic growth, personal development, and societal improvement. Prof. KS Krishna, Dean of the GITAM School of Science, focused on the practical application of knowledge.



SRM signs MoU with AIIMS Mangalagiri

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A team from SRM University -AP met Dr Madabanandakar, Director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Mangalagiri, on Friday. Vice-Chancellor of SRM University, Prof Manoj K Arora, spoke on the MoU between the two organisations regarding teaching and research projects.

He stated that SRM requires the mutual support and cooperation of AIIMS to implement the decisions taken through the MoU, and an action plan should be drawn up to move forward. On the occasion, Prof. Jayaseelan Murugaiyan, Head of the Department of Biological Sciences, explained the nature of the research undertaken at SRM University-AP through a PowerPoint presentation. Prof. Manoj further explained the

progress of the research at the university.

Both organisations have expressed the need to collaborate on outreach programmes, workshops and patent inventions. The Director of AIIMS, Dr Madabanandakar, emphasised that it is crucial that SRM and AIIMS officials meet once a month to discuss research-related ventures and prospects.

Dr Madabanandakar also said that AIIMS laboratories will be made available as and when required for joint research. Deputy Director of AIIMS Sashikant, Dr Seemantakumar Doss, Dr Deepthi, Dr Aarti Gupta, Dean-School of Engineering and Sciences, SRM University-AP, Prof C V Tomy, and Associate Professors Dr Mahesh Kumar Ravva and Dr K A Sunitha also attended the meeting.

AS YCP CORPORATORS EYE TDP ALLIANCE

Political turmoil rocks GVMC

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a dramatic twist of fate, the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) is embroiled in a high-stakes battle for power, as YCP corporators consider defecting to TDP. Amidst the chaos, elders of the ruling faction extend a compromise offer to TDP stalwarts, signaling a potential seismic shift in political allegiance within the city.

Following a landslide victory in the recent general elections, the TDP-led alliance, comprising TDP, Jana Sena, and BJP, has dealt a devastating blow to YCP, leaving the party with a paltry 11 MLA seats. This crushing defeat has prompted numerous YCP corporators to reassess their loyal-



ties, with many eyeing TDP as a more promising political home.

The scars of the 2021 GVMC elections are still fresh, with YCP securing 59 wards compared to TDP's 30 and Jana Sena's three. However, amidst a tumultuous political climate, defections have become the

order of the day, further unsettling the delicate balance of power. Despite desperate attempts by the YCP government to fortify its position through amendments to municipal laws, resistance mounts as shifting alliances threaten to upend the status quo.

In a bid to salvage their waning influence, the YCP leadership has initiated dialogue with TDP counterparts, offering concessions to maintain stability within the corporation. The proposed compromise includes coveted positions in the standing committee and the deputy mayorship for select TDP members, in exchange for preserving the current mayoral tenure. Yet, the response from TDP leaders is guarded, foreshadowing a potential deadlock in negotiations as both sides navigate the treacherous waters of political realignment. With defections looming large across various municipal bodies, the ripple effects of this power struggle are poised to reverberate throughout the State's governance landscape.

Control diarrhoea, officials told



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Chief Medical Officers of Health (CMHOs), District Medical & Health Officers (DM&HOs), and District Malaria Officers should take stringent measures to control the spread of diarrhoea, said Dr S Venkateswar, Commissioner of Health and Family Welfare. A review on vector-borne diseases on Friday from the Health and Family Welfare headquarters in Mangalagiri.

On the occasion, Dr Venkateswar recalled that keeping in mind the diarrhoea outbreak in Vijayawada and Guntur they should ensure that such a situation should not repeat. He instructed all CMHOs to coordinate with DM&HOs and assured them that he would discuss diarrhoea control measures with the Municipal Commissioners.

He also directed them to coordinate with the Institute of Preventive Medicine (IPM) for water sample tests and to utilize all four mobile vehicles of the IPM. Additionally, he instructed officials of Alluri Seetharamaraju, Palnadu, and Srikakulam districts to take

measures for water sample testing and to be vigilant about malaria and dengue cases reported in Tirupati, Kurnool, and Visakhapatnam. Dr Venkateswar further instructed state-level officials to prepare an action plan for controlling vector-borne diseases. He emphasized the need for mosquito control and addressing seasonal diseases with the onset of the rainy season. Nets should be distributed in tribal areas and tribal welfare hostels. Measures should also be taken to enhance the normal deliveries in private hospitals by coordinating with the Indian Medical Association (IMA) to overcome the Zero normal deliveries issue.

CHOs are to be trained in cancer screening as the training program is currently underway. He emphasized the assurance of maternal and child health care and the prevention of maternal and child deaths.

Director of Public Health and Family Welfare Dr. Padmavathi, AD Dr Anil Kumar, NHM State Program Officer Dr Dumpala Venkata Ravi Kiran, and others were present.

Misery of migrant workers abroad in spotlight

Shankar, hailing from Vajrapukotturu, died of a brain stroke in Saudi Arabia recently

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

The recent death of Shankar alias Satish (32), hailing from Chinavanka village, in Saudi Arabia has cast a dark shadow over Vajrapukotturu mandal in Srikakulam district. Shankar's passing underscores the ongoing struggles faced by migrant workers seeking employment abroad. Shankar, burdened by debt, returned to Saudi Arabia just four months ago after caring for his ailing mother back home. Sadly, he died of a brain stroke on June 5, leaving his family heartbroken and struggling to repatriate his body.

This tragedy is not an isolated incident. In 2006, three workers - Nupada Venkatesh, Battini Sriramulu, and Sangaru Mohana Rao - died in a Dubai

Road accident. While their bodies were returned within a week, thanks to local MP Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu's intervention, recent cases paint a bleaker picture. Yalamanchi Lokanatham from Chinthavanipet, who died in Dubai in 2022, took months to be brought back. Similarly, the body of another migrant worker from Uddana Gopinathampura was brought home from Qatar after 27 days.

Vajrapukotturu, known for its high emigration rates, sees many residents compelled to seek work elsewhere due to limited local opportunities.

However, these journeys abroad are often fraught with danger and exploitation. Many rely on agents who mislead them about working conditions. Upon arrival, they face a

harsh reality - grueling work, harsh environments, and a lack of support. Some workers reportedly succumb to stress and illness, while others face bureaucratic hurdles that delay their return home, even in death.

Community leaders like Y. Bhaskara Rao are calling for stronger protections for migrant workers. "The suffering of these workers is unimaginable," Rao said. "Their families face immense hardship when they fall ill or die abroad. Stricter foreign regulations are needed to ensure justice for the families."

Pucha Iswara Rao from Poondi Govindapuram criticised the lack of responsiveness from companies in compensating the families of deceased workers. "In some cases, companies simply refuse to provide

any compensation," said Rao. "The bureaucratic complexities further exacerbate the challenges faced by these families in receiving the support they rightfully deserve."

Efforts are underway to address these issues. Local MP Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu is pressuring the Central government to take action. However, more needs to be done. Implementing measures like group insurance for workers abroad could offer some security to their families. As Vajrapukotturu mourns Shankar and others like him, the demand for systemic change intensifies.

The community seeks not only to prevent future tragedies but also to ensure that affected families receive the support and compensation they deserve.

SMOOTH ELECTION PROCESS

Journalists lauded for their role

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Collector Dr A Mallikarjuna has expressed profound gratitude towards journalists for their integral role in ensuring the successful conduct of the general election process. Acknowledging the significant contributions of the media, Dr. Mallikarjuna underscored their invaluable and error-free cooperation throughout the election.

Speaking to the media at the Collectorate on Friday, Dr. Mallikarjuna emphasised that journalists, beyond mere reporting, provided constructive feedback, particularly in identifying areas for improvement in the design and editing of the election list. He extended heartfelt appreciation to all media persons for their diverse contributions to district administration.

During the meeting, Dr Mallikarjuna also outlined several initiatives undertaken for the welfare of journalists.

They provided constructive feedback, particularly in identifying areas for improvement, says Collector



The administration has been proactive in addressing journalists' health needs by paying health insurance premiums and organising free health check-ups. Financial assistance has also been provided through the Sanjeevani Nidhi for those in need. The Collector mentioned that efforts are ongoing to provide

house plots to journalists, with many positive decisions already made. He announced that from July 1, more health tests will be conducted for journalists and their spouses. Additionally, the premium renewal for the journalists' health scheme is scheduled for August.

Dr Mallikarjuna detailed various development projects within the district, including the modernisation of King George Hospital with CSR funds amounting to Rs.18 crore and upgrades in residential houses with Rs.10.82 crore. He reiterated the administration's commitment to the welfare of journalists and employees, promising continued support and new initiatives.

Police Commissioner Dr A Ravi Shankar also praised the

media for their commendable role during the election process. He noted that the media's reporting helped maintain law and order, and their positive coverage earned praise from election observers. The Police Commissioner emphasised that the department has taken numerous actions to ensure the smooth conduct of the elections, including deploying patrolling and striking teams.

The meeting was attended by key district officials, including Joint Collector K. Mayur Ashok, RDOs Hussain Saheb and Bhaskar Reddy, Estate Officer Lakshmareddy, Special Deputy Collectors Seshashailaja, Akhila, Sitarama Murthy, and District Information Civil Relations Officer S. V. Ramana, among others.

ASSOCHAM chief hails Naidu on his victory

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Kataru Ravi Kumar Reddy, Chairman of ASSOCHAM Andhra Pradesh & Telangana State Development Council congratulated Nara Chandrababu Naidu, Chief Minister-designate of AP. During this courtesy call meeting, Ravi Kumar congratulated Naidu on his remarkable victory.

He expressed ASSOCHAM's commitment to exploring opportunities in core industries by closely working with the government to drive the development of the state. Kataru Ravi Kumar Reddy, said, "I am confident that under Mr. Naidu's leadership, Andhra Pradesh will experience significant industrial growth and socio-economic development. ASSOCHAM collaborates with the government to explore new opportunities in core industries and contribute to the state's progress."

EVMs, VVPATs shifted to godown at Gollapudi

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As the general election process has been completed successfully, the NTR district administration stored all the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs) at the godown on the premises of the Marketing Yard at Gollapudi amid tight security on Friday. The officials also sealed the godown in the presence of NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao.

After completing the official record work, the district administration has shifted all EVMs and VVPATs to the Marketing Yard at Gollapudi from strong rooms. Later, Collector Dilli Rao, all political party leaders and candidates inspected the EVMs and VVPATs at the godown.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that as per the directions from Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar



NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao, on Friday, inspecting the sealing of the godown where EVMs and VVPATs were stored

and Andhra Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Mukesh Kumar Meena, all EVMs, VVPATs and other election material were stored with tight security at the godown.

He added that statutory covers, forms, registers and other materials used during the elec-

tion were also stored at the godown. The district administration will provide necessary security at these godowns.

NTR District Revenue Officer (DRO) B Srinivasa Rao, Election Cell Superintendent M Durga Prasad and other officials were present.

AN OPEN LETTER

Rahul's 'INDI'cent attack on market swings a new low

Dear Rahul Gandhi,

Noticed you wasted no time and launched a taka-tak, taka-tak attack on Narendra Modi, accusing him and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) senior leaders of manipulating the stock market and demanding a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe into it.

(NDA) government once it was formed and started your attack.

The stock market responds to risk, and political risk substantially affects investors' sentiment. It is simple. Even newbie investors understood what happened in the stock market over the past few weeks. The market rallied as long as it believed the NDA would return to power.

Your accusation of a 'stock market scam' is more than ludicrous. It exposes you to ridicule. It was a moment that demanded introspection from you, not conspiracy theories.

Markets crashed dhana-dhan, dhana-dhan, vaporising Rs 30 lakh crores in investors' net worth when they saw the slightest possibility of Rahul becoming our Prime Minister. It reflected investors' confidence that Rahul would be a disaster for the country's economy and stock valuations as the PM.

lakh crores in investors' net worth when they saw the slightest possibility of you becoming our Prime Minister. It reflected investors' confidence that you would be a disaster for the country's economy and stock valuations as the PM.

The market's preference for an NDA government is entirely logical. Investors, both foreign and Indian, were factoring in Modi's excellent track record in growing our economy. They

know that his policies and governance transformed India into the fifth-largest global economy from the tenth-largest and made India the fastest-growing large economy today. They also watched India's market capitalisation leap from 1.27 trillion to 5 trillion US dollars and the Bombay Stock Exchange's (BSE) index -SENSEX - triple to 76,693 during the same period.

This growth took work. Your earlier government left our



KISHORE POREDDY

economy in tatters. The world listed it as one of the 'Fragile Five' global economies and feared investing in India. Our banks were steeped in Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) and unable to provide loans to power economic growth.

mum-governance model revived confidence in our economy - we received record Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) year after year, peaking at 84 billion USD in 2021-22. Banks' balance sheets are better than ever, and they made a record profit this year -- of more than 3 lakh crore, with public sector banks making 1.4 lakh crore. Retail investors flock to invest in the market, and the number of DEMAT accounts has crossed 15 crore, with 30 lakh new accounts every month.

The sudden crash on results day reflects the market's fear of

a possible Congress-led INDI government. The memory of a highly corrupt and indecisive UPA (United Progressive Alliance) government that ended in 2014 is still fresh in investors' minds. In addition, if you were to come to power, your plan for the future would have been to focus on redistribution of wealth and raising taxes, as stated by your guru, Sam Pitroda. It was not on growing wealth. Your constant tirade against wealth creators, accusing them of being crony capitalists, did not go unnoticed, either.

I suspect your advisors made you aware of all these facts, and you understand basic economics and market behaviour. As a politician, I also understand your compulsion to feign ignorance of facts and spin narratives against the Modi government. But, your attempts at delegitimising our institutions like the stock market, the Securities and Exchange Board of India, the Election Commission of India, the Supreme Court, etc., coupled with your support for any external institution that tries to degrade India in the world's opinion or hurt India's rise - like Hindenburg, is what I cannot fathom.

(The author is BJP TS spokesperson.)

'Morampudi Flyover will be inaugurated in 3 months'

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Rajahmundry City MLA Adireddy Srinivas said the Morampudi Flyover construction would be completed soon. The MLA, accompanied by the officers, engineers TDP, JSP, BJP leaders and contractors, inspected the works of the Fly Over Bridge on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, Adireddy Srinivas said that the construction works of the Morampudi Fly Over Bridge began during the TDP regime and the works would be completed soon. "The Fly Over Bridge will be dedicated to the nation by three months," he announced.

The newly elected MLA Adireddy Srinivas said that the Morampudi Flyover was sanctioned with the efforts of the then MP Murali Mohan. Later the YSRCP came to power and the foundation for the FOB was laid again by



Union Minister Nitin Garkari. However, the construction of the flyover was delayed due to YSRCP MP Morgani Bharat's failure to make efforts to expedite the construction works.

The new MLA assured of

taking steps to expedite the construction works and complete the fly-over bridge works as soon as possible.

He promised that the TDP government would prioritise the implementation of welfare schemes and carry out devel-

opment. The fly over bridge would be dedicated to the nation by two or three months and MP Daggubati Purandeswari and other leaders would take part in the programme, Adireddy Srinivas said.

Scare of leopard haunts Agency areas

PNS ■ ELURU

The villages located in agency areas in Chintalapudi and Polavaram mandals are in the grip of fear of a leopard which has killed a calf and a goat.

A leopard killed a calf at Udatapalli village in Polavaram mandal on the night of Wednesday and it also killed a goat on the night of Thursday. The movements of the leopard were captured by the surveillance cameras installed by the forest officials at the place.

The leopard attacked a goat which was tied near a hut. A few days ago, the leopard attacked a herd of goats and killed five of them a few kilometres away from the Udatapalli village.

The herd of goats belonged to a farmer Bullebbai and the incident took place when he was out of station.

The farmers of the area searched and found the paw prints of the leopard in the area and understood that a leopard killed the goats. The farmers informed the forest officials. Forest Ranger Daveed Raju



Raju asked the villagers to be alert and not go to their fields alone. He asked them to provide information about the movement of leopards if they noticed. He also warned them not to harm the leopard as it is an offence under the Wild Animals Protection Act. Meanwhile, the villagers of Kanchanagudem where the leopard killed a calf a couple of days ago are still in fear of the leopard.

Interestingly, a villager of Balavariyem in Urganigudem panchayat, Ulasa Venkata Subba Rao informed the forest officials that he had seen two tigers in the oil palm orchard. The tigers went to the oil palm orchard to drink water. The villagers appealed to the forest officials to install surveillance cameras to find out the movements of tigers.

went to the village and examined the goat killed by the leopard. He confirmed that a leopard killed the goats.

The Forest Ranger said that the forest officials gathered the paw prints of the leopard. Forest Range Officer Daveed

APJAC-Amaravati leaders felicitate new CS Neerabh Kumar Prasad



APJAC-Amaravati Chairman Bopparaju Venkateswarlu and other leaders felicitating new Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad at the secretariat on Friday

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Joint Action Committee - Amaravati (APJAC-Amaravati) Chairman Bopparaju Venkateswarlu, Secretary General Paliseti Damodara Rao besides the AP Revenue Services Association representatives have met the new Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad, who taken charge at his chamber at Secretariat on Friday. These leaders greeted the new CS and felicitated him.

Later, the APJAC-Amaravati leaders discussed various issues relating to the employees with the new CS. Bopparaju

expressed his desire that the new government would fulfil all its assurances that were given before the elections. Also, employees would work with the government in a friendly nature, he said.

AP Revenue Services Association President K Ramesh Kumar, Vice President Ramiseti Venkata Rajesh, AP Municipal Employees Services Association President D Eswar, Class-IV Employees Association President S Malleswara Rao, APJAC-Amaravati Women's vice chairperson Pare Lakshmi, win chairperson D Ratna Kumar and others were met new CS Neerabh Kumar Prasad.



Liquor worth Rs 8.52 lakh destroyed

PNS ■ KADAPPA

The police destroyed a huge quantity of liquor worth Rs 8,52,720 which was seized during the checking of vehicles at various places in Annamayya district.

Madanapalli SEB CI Ramesh Reddy told the media that they seized 1,849 litres of liquor

while checking vehicles in 79 cases.

The liquor worth Rs 8,52,720 was seized while being brought from Karnataka illegally to sell here.

The police destroyed the liquor bottles and tetra packets by getting crushed with a tractor at Chippili ground here on Friday.

'TIDCO houses should be handed over to beneficiaries'



PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Tadepalligudem MLA Boliseti Srinivas has directed engineers and officials concerned to take steps to hand over TIDCO houses at the earliest.

The MLA held a meeting with the TIDCO engineers and officials in Tadepalligudem on Friday and reviewed the present status of TIDCO houses.

Speaking on the occasion, the MLA inquired on the present status of the house and providing of required infrastructure to the colonies. He

also inquired about the incomplete houses.

He told the engineers and officials that he would take the notice of the government if there were any problems in completing and handing over the TIDCO houses. The newly elected MLA directed the irrigation officials to take steps to remove the accumulated sand downstream of Nandamuri Aqueduct.

Steps would also be taken to ensure that floodwater flows downstream without inhibition, he told the officials stating that he would speak with the Collector in this regard.



2 killed as two bikes collide

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Two persons were killed and another critically injured when two bikes collided at Rangnipalem near here on the night of Thursday on the national highway.

Police said that Penugonda Srinivas (31) and Veeravelli Srinu (25) were killed instantaneously when two motorcycles collided. The injured person was admitted to the GGH where his condition is said to be critical.

Bhimavaram one town police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH for postmortem.

MODI UPBEAT ON SOUTH

People lost confidence in Cong, embraced NDA in TG

NAVEENA GHANATE ■ HYDERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed South Indian states for voting for the BJP. During the NDA Parliamentary Party meeting, Modi said, "I would definitely like to mention that the NDA has built a strong base in South India. See Karnataka and Telangana. The Congress recently formed governments there, but the people lost confidence in them and they embraced the NDA in both the states."

In Telangana, the BJP won eight seats which is equal to that of the Congress. "I would like to congratulate the Tamil Nadu team. Although we couldn't win seats in Tamil Nadu the way the NDA's vote share jumped clearly shows what is in the offing," Modi added.

Modi met the newly elect-



ed MPs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Eatala Rajender and D. Arvind among others.

As Sanjay is the BJP General Secretary he was given the responsibility of welcoming the new MPs and others to the meeting. His video of giving a bouquet to Kangana Ranaut went viral although the actress seemed to be cold in her response. However, as bouquets were not allowed inside he gave it as a formality and later took it back.



Minor relief to Pinnelli in HC

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a minor relief to the YSRC Party's former MLA Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy, the High Court has extended the interim anticipatory bail previously granted to him. The court ordered that no arrests be made for a week, giving the police department clear instructions not to detain Pinnelli during this period. The High Court stated that it would continue its investigation into the matter at a later date. Rumours had circulated that Pinnelli would be arrested on Thursday. He faces accusations of destroying an Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) at a polling station in his Macharla constituency during the polling on May 13.

Conduct surprise inspections to identify child labour: DC

PNS ■ ELURU

Underlining the need to eradicate child labour from society, District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh directed the officials to conduct surprise inspections on industrial units to identify if children are working and prevent it.

A meeting of the District Task Force Committee on Eradication Child Labor System was held here on Friday chaired by Collector Prasanna Venkatesh. Secretary of the District Legal Service Organisation KKV Bulikrishna, JJ Board Principal Magistrate B Rachna participated in the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Prasanna Venkatesh directed the officials to focus mainly on the dropouts of stu-



dents in schools. Brick industry, cashew industry, small-scale industries, other cottage industries and small shops and inspect randomly to identify child labourers.

In the same way, inspections should be conducted mainly in Chintalapudi, Lingapalem and other areas of tobacco harvesting works; he said, adding that there is a sit-

uation where children go to school. Children should not stay outside the school under any circumstances, he told them.

A lot of attention should

also be given to preventing these activities as begging by the child is also considered under child labour. If you suspect that such acts are being committed, you should inform the local police, he appealed to the people.

At present, if any children do not return to schools after the commencement of admissions in schools, they should seek the help of teachers to find out their whereabouts and bring them back to school, he told the officials concerned.

A group should be formed with the representatives of non-political and volunteer organisations to take feedback from them. To provide education in their language to the children of migrant families who come to Jangareddy-

gudem, Lingapalem, Chintalapudi and Pedavegi to work in the oil palm orchard, should be provided special school facilities to teach them in their mother tongue the District Education Officer and Samagra Siksha Abiyan.

The Collector directed the officials to conduct surprise inspections in the fish market on Sundays to identify if children were working there. He appreciated the district legal services authority for their efforts to check child marriages. District legal services authority secretary KKV Bulikrishna, JJ Board principal magistrate B Rachana, deputy commissioner of labour P Srinivas and DRDA PD R Vijaya Raju were among those who attended the meeting.

INDIA CORNER

Dalit sarpanch tied to tree, thrashed in MP's Morena; one person arrested

A Dalit sarpanch was allegedly tied to a tree and beaten up by goons in Morena in Madhya Pradesh, forcing him to leave his native village, a police official said on Friday. The Koutharkalan panchayat sarpanch, in his complaint at Porsa police station on Thursday, said goons for the past two years were harassing him and wanted him to leave his post as well as hand over his dongle, containing his digital signature password, the official said. When he refused to give in to their demands, he was taken to the outskirts of Koutharkalan on May 3, tied to a tree and thrashed, said the official quoting from his complaint. "Based on the complaint of the sarpanch, a case was registered against Diwakar Singh Tomar, who has since been arrested, and his brother Pinku. Further probe into the incident is underway," said Ambah Sub Divisional Officer of Police (SDOP) Ravi Bhadoria.



4 Indian students die in Russia's Veliky Novgorod

Four Indian students, who were studying at a university in Russia's Veliky Novgorod region, drowned in the Volkhov river, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Friday. A fifth Indian student was saved from drowning and is currently receiving medical attention, it said, adding two students are missing and search for them continues. Local emergency services have so far recovered two bodies from the Volkhov river. "Four Indian students who were studying at the Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University located in Veliky Novgorod, Russia, drowned in an unfortunate incident in the Volkhov river," the MEA said. The four students were identified as Harshal Anantrao Desale, Jishan Ashpak Pinjari, Jia Firoj Pinjari and Malik Gulamgous Mohammad Yakub from Maharashtra. The name of the student rescued is Nisha Bhupesh Sonawane.



Nepal extradites prime accused in murder of Bangladesh MP in Kolkata

Nepal has extradited to India a Bangladeshi citizen, one of the main accused in the brutal murder of Bangladeshi MP Anwarul Azim Anar in Kolkata last month, a media report said here on Friday. "Mohammad Siyam Hussain was handed over to Indian authorities by Nepal's Interpol branch on Monday morning after Nepal Police contacted him," MyRepublica.com news portal reported, quoting police sources. Hussain, who fled to Nepal after the murder, was arrested from the border area of Nepal last Thursday, the report said. The 56-year-old Awami League MP Anar, who was in Kolkata for medical treatment on May 12, went incommunicado on May 17, according to a complaint filed by his acquaintance on May 18. Anar was allegedly murdered in a posh flat in the New Town area near Kolkata. Police in West Bengal have arrested a butcher, who allegedly chopped the body of the Bangladeshi lawmaker into 80 pieces.



Cong demands SC-monitored probe into NEET anomalies

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday demanded a high-level investigation under the Supreme Court's supervision into "irregularities" in NEET for medical courses and accused the BJP of cheating youngsters and playing with their futures.

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge said paper leaks, rigging and corruption have become an integral part of many examinations, including the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET).

"The Modi government is directly responsible for this. For the candidates appearing in recruitment exams, then facing several irregularities, getting caught in the labyrinth of paper leaks, is playing with their futures. The BJP has cheated the youth of the country," he said in a post in Hindi on X.

"We demand that a high-level investigation should be conducted under the supervision of the Supreme Court so that our tal-



Mallikarjun Kharge said paper leaks, rigging and corruption have become an integral part of many examinations, including the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test

ented students appearing in NEET and other exams get justice," he added.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) has denied any irregularities and said the changes made in National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) textbooks and grace marks for losing time at examination centres are behind the students scoring higher marks.

Jairam Ramesh, the Congress general secretary in charge of communications, said the

"scam" involving lakhs of candidates is "completely unacceptable and unforgivable".

"This is a direct gamble with the future of lakhs of candidates of the country, which should be immediately investigated at the high level under the supervision of the Supreme Court," he said in a post in Hindi on X.

"This year, there was news of a paper leak in it that was suppressed. Now, many candidates have alleged that the marks of the students have been increased. Students say that

this time a record 67 candidates have secured the top rank and six of these candidates are said to be from the same examination centre," he claimed.

The results for the medical entrance exam NEET-UG on Tuesday.

"The question is how did the students get cheated, who did it and why was this result deliberately declared on June 4 amid the noise of election results, whereas it was to be declared on 14 June?" Ramesh asked.

He further said, "Several questions are being raised on the results of NEET -- How did 67 toppers simultaneously get 720/720 marks?"

How did eight students from the same centre get 720/720 marks? Every question was worth four marks, then how did the numbers 718-719 come? 67 students getting 720 out of 720 marks in the results released after the NEET question paper was leaked raises serious suspicion."

TN Speaker convenes Assembly session on June 24

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Assembly Speaker M Appavu has convened a session of the state legislative assembly on June 24, Assembly principal secretary K Srinivasan said on Friday.

The session will discuss the demand for grants to various government departments.

The first brief assembly session for this year was held in February.

The House will meet this month for the first time after the DMK combine's landslide victory in the Lok Sabha election, winning all 39 Parliamentary constituencies in the state by decimating the AIADMK and the BJP.

"The legislative assembly will commence at 10 am on June 24 at the Assembly House in the Secretariat," Srinivasan said in a release here.



Tharoor bats for Rahul as LoP, hails him as 'man of match'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Friday hailed Rahul Gandhi as "the man of the match" of the Lok Sabha polls and said it would only be fitting that he takes on the mantle of the Leader of Opposition in the house.

In an interview with PTI after his fourth-straight Lok Sabha polls victory, Tharoor said the message of the mandate was that the electorate have given a "comeuppance" to the BJP's "overweening arrogance" and its "my way or the high way attitude".

"It will be a challenge for Mr (Narendra) Modi and Amit Shah who have not been used to consulting very much in running their government and I think this is going to test their ability to change their way of functioning and be more accommodative and more conciliatory within the government and also I hope with the opposition," Tharoor said on the incoming coalition government of the NDA.

The former Union minister



have to be re-examined," he said.

Tharoor said suddenly now there will have to be a more consensual model governance coming up.

He accused the Modi government of treating Parliament like a notice board in the last 10 years and expecting it to be a rubber stamp for all their decisions which, he said, was not viable now with a robust opposition of more than 230 MPs.

Batting for Rahul Gandhi to take on the mantle of the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Tharoor said the former Congress president was unquestionably the star of this Lok Sabha performance.

"He and Congress president (Mallikarjun) Kharge campaigned extensively throughout the country, but Mr Kharge is in the Rajya Sabha where he leads the Opposition and it would only be fitting that Rahul Gandhi does the same in the Lok Sabha. I have certainly conveyed my view both publicly and privately in that regard," Tharoor said.

311 out of 369 candidates lose security deposit in MP amid BJP's clean sweep in LS polls

PNS ■ BHOPAL

With the BJP sweeping the Lok Sabha elections in Madhya Pradesh by winning all 29 seats in the state, including the Congress citadel of Chhindwara, as many as 311 out of the total 369 candidates in the fray lost their security deposits, officials said on Friday.

This comes to more than 84 per cent of the candidates losing their deposit that ranged from Rs 12,500 to Rs 25,000 each, an official said.

With all 29 seats under its belt, the BJP became the first political party to achieve such a feat after 40 years in Madhya Pradesh. The victory margin of the BJP ranged between 1 lakh to 5 lakh votes in 26 constituencies, while it stood under 1 lakh in Bhind, Gwalior, and Morena constituencies.

The BJP received 59.3 per cent vote share, up by around 1.3 per cent as compared to the 2019 poll results. Fifty-eight of the total 369 candidates, including all 29 nominees of the BJP, 27 of the Congress and two of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) did not lose their deposit, Madhya Pradesh

Chief Electoral Officer Anupam Rajan said over phone.

Though the Congress' vote share dipped by 2.1 per cent this time, none of its candidates lost their deposit. Its vote share came down to 32.4 per cent from 34.5 per cent in 2019.

According to another EC official, a candidate has to secure one-sixth of the total valid votes cast in the constituency. The most spectacular victory was registered by BJP's sitting MP from Indore, Shankar Lalwani, who bagged the seat by the potentially highest-ever margin of 11,75,092 votes.

Congress did not contest the Indore seat after its candidate Akshay Kanti Bam crossed over to the BJP. All other 13 candidates lost their deposit in Indore. BSP candidate Lakshman Solanki pocketed 51,659 votes and ranked second in Indore, but he lost his deposit.

Candidates from Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Other Backward Classes have to keep Rs 12,500 as security deposit, while those belonging to the general category have to pay Rs 25,000, the EC official said.



Cong did not reject EVMs, says P Chidambaram

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Friday said his party did not reject EVMs and the party is for improvement of VVPAT.

Answering a question at a press conference here, Chidambaram said that in the Congress party's manifesto for the Lok Sabha polls, 'we did not reject EVMs.'

"Please read the manifesto, what we say is, the VVPAT slip, in order for us to read, displays for about 4-5 seconds and then the slip falls inside the box. What we say in the manifesto is that there should be one more improvement," he said.

Rather than the slip automatically falling inside the VVPAT box, the voter should be able to receive it, see that and then deposit it into the box and with this improvement, there will be no doubt for anyone as regards the EVM-VVPAT system.

Kangana Ranaut airport incident: Farmer outfits back cop

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Some farmer outfits on Friday threw their weight behind the CISF woman constable who allegedly slapped actor and BJP MP-elect Kangana Ranaut, saying the entire sequence leading to the incident needs to be properly investigated.

Ranaut, in a video message, had on Thursday said she was hit in the face and abused by the constable during security check at the Chandigarh airport, the ugly fracas breaking out two days after she was elected to the Lok Sabha from Mandi in Himachal Pradesh.

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha were among the prominent outfits which said they stand in support of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) woman constable.

The constable, who appeared to be upset with Ranaut over her stance on the farmers' protests, has been suspended and an investigation has been launched. The CISF, tasked with providing security at airports, had also ordered a court of inquiry into the incident.

SKM (Non-Political) leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal and Kisan



Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee general secretary Sarwan Singh Pandher said they will meet Punjab's Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav for a proper investigation into the



matter. "We will demand a proper investigation and we will tell him that there should be no injustice with the woman constable," Dallewal said addressing a press conference here

with Pandher and some other farmer leaders.

On June 9 in Mohali, an "Insaaf march" to Mohali the senior superintendent of police's office will be taken out "to demand that no injustice be done in this case with the constable", he said.

In a video statement titled "Shocking rise in terror and violence in Punjab" posted on X after she landed in Delhi over the incident on Thursday, Ranaut said she was safe and fine. The constable, Ranaut had said, came towards her from the side. "She hit me in the face and started abusing me.

18th Mumbai International Film Festival from June 15 to 21

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The 18th edition of the Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF) will be held in Mumbai from June 15 to 21, Union Information and Broadcasting Secretary Sanjay Jaju announced on Friday.

Addressing a press conference here at the National Media Centre, Jaju said the film gala, which showcases non-feature films (documentary, short Fiction and animation) will be at the FD-NFDC Complex in Mumbai.

Besides, MIFF screenings will also be held in Delhi at Sirifort Auditorium, Chennai at

Tagore Film Centre, Pune at NEAI auditorium and Kolkata at SRFTI Auditorium.

A premier international event in the documentary film world, the Mumbai International Film Festival is held once in two years since its inception in 1990.

The 2024 edition will open with the screening of National Geographic's documentary "Billy & Molly: An Otter Love Story".

The organisers received a record number of 1018 films from 38 countries and across 65 languages for the latest edition. A total of 118 films have been selected by the three selection

committees, comprising eminent film experts for the International (25) and National (77) competition sections along with 16 films in MIFF PRISM.

There will be eight world premieres, six international premieres, 17 Asia premieres and 15 India premieres during the film gala where special packages have also been curated.

The first one will comprise 12 shorts films each from Oscars and Berlin Film Festival. A 'Special Country Focus' package will put spotlight on collaborations with seven countries -- Russia, Japan, Belarus, Italy, Iran, Vietnam and Mali.

Vande Bharat average speed down from 84 kmph to 76 kmph

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The average speed of Vande Bharat trains has decreased from 84.48 kmph in 2020-21 to 76.25 kmph in 2023-24, the railway ministry said in a response to an RTI query.

Railway officials said not only Vande Bharats but many other trains are also maintaining cautionary speed at places where "huge infrastructural work" is underway.

"Besides this, some Vande Bharat trains have been launched in difficult terrain areas where there are speed restrictions due to geographical reasons or extreme weather conditions," a railway official

said. Citing the example of the Vande Bharat train between Mumbai CSMT and Madgaon, an official of the Central Railway Zone said, "Most of the Konkan railway area is 'ghat' section where trains pass through low height mountain ranges. It is a difficult terrain area where increasing speed could compromise safety."

"Things become very challenging during the monsoon season when we have to keep the maximum speed for all trains at 75 kmph," he added.

The RTI applicant, Madhya Pradesh-based Chandra Shekhar Gaur, said, "The data, obtained through the RTI,



shows that the average speed of Vande Bharat trains was 84.48 in 2020-21, which decreased to 81.38 kmph in 2022-23. It further deteriorated in 2023-24 to 76.25."

Launched on February 15, 2019, the Vande Bharat is a semi-high speed train which can run at a maximum speed of 160 kmph. However, it cannot go beyond 130 kmph any-

where in the country, except on the Delhi-Agra route, due to unsuitable track conditions.

"There are certain segments of tracks between Delhi and Agra which were developed in 2016 for India's first semi-high speed train Gatiman Express to run at 160 kmph. Only on those segments, the Vande Bharat also runs at 160 kmph speed. Rest of the places, its maximum speed is either 130 or less than," another railway official said.

He said the railways has been upgrading tracks to meet the speed requirement of the Vande Bharat and "it is because of these reasons there are cautions at various places". "Once

these upgrades are over, we will have trains which will go up to 250 kmph," the official said.

Some of the routes on which the Vande Bharat's speed is worse than its overall average speed are Dehradun-Anand Vihar (63.42 kmph), Patna-Ranchi (62.9 kmph) and Coimbatore-Bangalore Cantt (58.11 kmph).

An expert engaged in track construction said the first Vande Bharat was launched in February 2019 and it has been more than five years since then, but the railways is yet to replace tracks on any route so that the train can run at its maximum operating speed of 160 kmph.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

Balancing act

Regional allies driving a hard bargain will test Modi's skills in running a coalition Govt like never before

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has emerged as the most potent coalition to form the next Government under the leadership of Narendra Modi. Central to its strength is the support of regional parties for maintaining a parliamentary majority. Nevertheless, the hard bargaining by these allies, though politically essential for them, affects the Government's policy formulation exercise and the nation's progress. The NDA's regional allies, such as the Chandrababu Naidu-led TDP, Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United) and others, are engaging in intense negotiations to secure their interests. The JD(U) has already demanded a special status for Bihar while Naidu has a long list of demands. Coalition Governments, by their very nature, are unstable and we have had a long history of coalitions that failed to complete their term. Regional parties serve as the voice of their respective States, advocating for localised interests that might otherwise be overlooked in the Union Government's broader agenda. This ensures a more inclusive approach to governance, reflecting the diverse needs and aspirations of different parts of the country. However, this hard bargaining can have several negative implications for policy making. The need to accommodate the diverse, and sometimes conflicting, demands of various regional partners can lead to fragmented policies. Instead of a coherent national strategy, policies may become a patchwork of compromises, weakening their overall impact. Prolonged negotiations and the need to achieve consensus among coalition partners can slow down the decision-making process.



No doubt coalition Governments have played a significant role in governance, especially in the 1990s. One of the most notable coalition Governments was led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who not only faced numerous challenges but also set a precedent for future coalition politics in India. Vajpayee's Government was an alliance of more than 20 parties, each with its agenda and demands. Managing such a diverse coalition required significant diplomatic skill and often led to compromises on policy decisions. Following the nuclear tests, India faced international sanctions, which posed a significant challenge to the economy. The Government had to navigate these sanctions while continuing to pursue economic growth and development. The Kargil conflict with Pakistan in 1999 was another major challenge for the Vajpayee Government. The conflict tested the Government's ability to manage national security issues while maintaining internal political stability. The Government's response to the 2002 riots was seen as inadequate by many, raising concerns about the coalition's ability to address communal harmony and human rights issues. It was only Vajpayee's leadership and statesmanship that pulled off a near-impossible feat and completed full term. It remains to be seen if Modi can do the same.

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PICTALK



A parachutist lands ahead of the Canadian ceremony marking the 80th anniversary of the World War II D-Day PTI

Overcoming child sexual abuse stigma

The profound and lasting impacts of child sexual abuse necessitate dismantling systemic barriers and fostering supportive environments

According to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, 64,469 victims were reported in 2022 under the POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Act. Despite the alarming prevalence of reported cases of Child Sexual Abuse, it remains hidden behind layers of denial, silence, stigma and shame as the issue is deeply rooted in societal structures, such as patriarchy and gender bias, which often prioritize family honour and silence over confronting abuse. Research suggests that 90 per cent of the perpetrators are known to the child, such as family members, trusted neighbours, or teachers. These individuals often hold positions of trust and responsibility, making it even more challenging to address the issue. Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is a serious issue that affects many individuals. Research highlights the profound and lasting impacts of CSA, including detrimental effects on mental health, emotional stability and social functioning, which can persist into



SMITA BHARTI

adulthood if not properly addressed. Addressing child sexual abuse requires dismantling these systemic barriers and promoting an open, supportive environment that prioritizes the well-being and rights of children. **Recognizing the Signs of Sexual Abuse:** Understanding the signs that a child may have been subjected to sexual abuse is the first step in addressing this grave issue. Sudden changes in behaviour can be indicative of underlying abuse. Children may exhibit a range of physical and emotional behavioural changes like: *Unexplained injuries or bruises in the genital or anal area. *Sudden changes in behaviour such as withdrawal, unusually quietness, aggression, or depression. *Nightmares or bedwetting. *Displaying knowledge or interest in sexual acts beyond

their age. *Avoidance of specific people or places. *Sudden decline in academic performance. These signs may vary depending on the child's age, personality and the nature of the abuse. It's essential to be alert to these changes and maintain open communication with a child, create a safe environment for disclosure and take any disclosure seriously. **Preventing The Abuse:** Preventing child sexual abuse (CSA) demands a collective effort where the responsibility doesn't solely fall on children. There are steps parents, caregivers and trusted adults can take to minimize the risk and empower their children in navigating this complex world. The stigma and shame attached to sex and sexuality often translate into not having open conversations with children and giving them the appropriate vocabulary to express such concerns. On one hand, it makes it difficult for them to articulate if they've experienced abuse and on the other it hinders prevention. It is important to start conver-

sations about body autonomy, boundaries and consent from an early age. Teaching children the proper names for their body parts and emphasizing the power of saying "no" to any touch that feels uncomfortable or unwanted is important. However, the onus of preventing CSA cannot and should not solely rest on the child. Building a foundation of open communication is equally essential from the parents' side. This is possible only when adults create a safe and nurturing environment where a child feels comfortable expressing any concerns or discomfort they may have. Adults must take responsibility for creating safe spaces and intervening when they suspect abuse may be occurring. Child sexual abuse shatters a child's sense of safety and trust. It can leave them feeling confused, ashamed and isolated. As a caregiver, the first step is to acknowledge the gravity of the situation. Recognising the abuse and validating their experience is crucial. (The writer is executive director, Sakshi - a rights-based NGO; views are personal)

Punjab quietly yields surprising results



SUKHDEV SINGH

Punjab's voters remained uncharacteristically silent, leaving political parties hopeful yet uncertain about the election outcome, which ultimately did not favour any single party



The general parliamentary Lok Sabha elections 2024 have been held smoothly in Punjab without any noticeable wave or enthusiasm in favour of any political party. There has been a mysterious silence among the people raising unpredictability and allowing every party to have high hopes on the one side but hold fear in their hearts. Most political parties except the CPI-CPIM had fielded their candidates in every constituency claiming for their victory on all the thirteen seats. The voting has been lower than in the previous elections and the current national voting percentage. There could not be alliances between the political parties because of their illusory hopes for their victory independently which pushed them into the game of engineering party-switch of the leaders. The long-time allies Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) fell apart and fielded independent candidates with the BJP importing its candidates from the state Congress top brass and Aam Admi Party (AAP) and Indian National Congress (INC), who are in alliance at the national level, could not agree on seat sharing and fielded their candidates in each constituency. Other political parties such as Bahujan Samaj

Party (BSP) and Akali Dal (Maan), CPI-CPIM had also fielded their candidates. But the voters surprised most of them by electing seven congresses, three AAP, one SAD and two independent raw candidates. The ruling party in the state, the AAP, has won only three seats with a vote share of 26.02%, reduced from 42% in 2022 against its claim for all the thirteen in the state; it has managed to lead only in 32 assembly segments against its victory in 92 assembly constituencies in 2022 state assembly elections. Some of its candidates holding state government ministerial portfolios have trailed behind opponents in their assembly segments. All this is a matter of serious concern for the AAP to introspect. The ruling party in the Centre, the BJP, has not been able to win any seats though it was quite hopeful for their victory with a team of the top brass of the state Congress 'taken over' by it on its side. Of course, to its satisfaction, it has succeeded in raising its vote bank share to 18.56% and leading in 23 assembly segments. The Congress has won 7 seats and has gained the lead in 38 assembly segments against its victory only in 18 assembly



THE VOTERS OF PUNJAB HAVE SPELT OUT THAT ALTHOUGH THEY MAINTAIN THEIR IDENTITIES, THEIR POLITICAL AND INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOUR IS PREDOMINANTLY SECULAR AND PREJUDICE-FREE

constituencies in 2022. It has succeeded in managing the vote share of 26.3%, winning seven out of 13 seats in this election despite the unexpected defection by almost all its senior leaders to the BJP and other parties. The two independent candidates who were neither very big leaders nor supported by any political party, have won by defeating the established leaders of established political parties by sizable margins. The voters of Punjab have spelt out that although they maintain their identities, their political and interpersonal behaviour is predominantly secular and prejudice-free. Although it is a fact that Punjab's population is majority Sikh and rural, its other population being 40% Hindu, one-third Dalit and other horizontal and social categories, it has distributed its representation neither based on religion, nor region and social hierarchies, but based on local issues of development. Secondly, in the absence of sound trust in the political class, its choice reflects a rejection of the other 'not chosen', who is or has been in power, rather than the choice itself. The voters in Punjab have painted their character and power by maintaining

silence before voting but exercising their power independently and wisely on the day of voting. They have rejected the dominant discourses of religion, caste and urban/rural polarization, the discourse of victimization justifying non-performance. They have voted for Congress on its promise of MSP for agricultural produce, a promise to pull agriculture out of distress since it is agriculture that is the spleen of Punjab's economy so far. Whether a Hindu or a Sikh, whether an urban or a rural person, whether an upper caste or a Dalit - everybody, as a part of their collective consciousness, understands the relevance of agriculture in the state. It has chosen independent candidates exercising their rejection of all others and expressing their sympathy for their 'condition' against the state power. Thus, their victory can be attributed to local sentiments and political dynamics rather than any other radical ideology influencing voter preferences. In fact, for them, it would be a difficult choice between the Congress and the BJP. (The writer is a retired Professor from Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MORE VOTERS BUT LOWER ENGAGEMENT

Madam — Apropos the news story "More voters but lower turnout in 2024, confirms EC," published on June 7, this is my response. As a daily newspaper reader, it's heartening to see the Election Commission lifting the model code of conduct following the announcement of election results and the beginning of government formation. The overall voter turnout in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections was 65.79 per cent, which, although slightly lower than 2019's 67.40 per cent, still indicates robust democratic engagement. Notably, the data reveal a significant surge in women voter participation, with a turnout of 64.72 per cent compared to men's 63.11 per cent. This trend is particularly pronounced in states like Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and Odisha, where women's turnout surpassed men's by notable margins. This increase in female voter engagement is a positive sign of growing political awareness and empowerment among women, which can lead to more inclusive governance. The turnout of the third gender, although low at 22.33 per cent, suggests there is still work to be done to ensure their full participation in the democratic process. Overall, these elections highlight the evolving dynamics of voter engagement in India, reflecting a more diverse and representative electorate.

Ananya Sharma | Nashik

MARKETS BOUNCE BACK

Madam — Apropos the news story "Markets extend winning momentum to 2nd day running," published on June 7, this is my response. As a daily newspaper reader, it's fascinating to see how the market's optimism can be so closely tied to political stability. The recent surge in the Sensex and Nifty, following the unanimous election of Narendra Modi as the leader of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), underscores the confidence that investors place in political continuity and leadership. The 30-share BSE

Taiwan greets Modi, China fumes



Regarding the news story "China lodges protest with India over PM Modi's response to Taiwan President Lai's greetings on his poll victory," published on June 7, here are my thoughts. As a regular newspaper reader, the recent diplomatic spat between China and India over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's social media interaction with Taiwan President Lai Ching-te is quite intriguing. Modi's expression of enthusiasm

for strengthening ties with Taiwan, following Lai's congratulatory message, has irked China, which sees Taiwan as a breakaway province. China's swift protest underscores its sensitivity to any international recognition of Taiwan's sovereignty. The geopolitical chessboard in the Indo-Pacific region is complex and Modi's statement hints at India's potential shift towards deeper engagement with Taiwan, especially in trade and technology. This could be a strategic move to counterbalance China's growing influence. However, it also risks straining India-China relations, which have already been tense. China's insistence on the One China policy and its warning against Taiwan's "political calculations" highlight the delicate nature of this issue. As an observer, I see this as a significant moment that could reshape regional alliances and economic partnerships in the coming years.

Kabir Patel | Rajkot

Sensex's impressive jump to 75,078.70 points and the NSE Nifty climbing to 22,799.50 signal a strong market reaction to Modi's impending third term as Prime Minister.

The gains in companies like NTPC, State Bank of India and Tata Steel reflect a broader bullish sentiment, though some laggards like Hindustan Unilever and Nestle temper the overall enthusiasm. It's noteworthy that despite the positive domestic sentiment, Foreign Institutional Investors are still cautious, selling off equities amid high valuations in India compared to Chinese stocks. This juxtaposition of political stability and cautious foreign investment paints a complex but intriguing picture of the current market dynamics.

Ishani Malhotra | Gwalior

EMBRACING SOCIAL WORK

Madam — Regarding the news story "Rejuvenating Indian social work, culturally," published on June 7, here are my thoughts. Every profession is unique and essential for societal growth and develop-

ment. Social work, however, carries an added responsibility - to serve people and communities, striving to uplift them. It involves working with people and their surroundings, considering external and internal factors simultaneously. Social work is not just about empathising with others' circumstances but also about reflecting on potential solutions and alternatives.

In today's India, social work as a profession is emerging as one of the crucial sectors. Over the last decade, this profession has expanded its horizon and established itself across the country. It is encouraging to see a growing number of young professionals choosing this career path. India needs more such young minds and professionals who can work on the ground and formulate policies to address critical societal issues. However, it is essential to question whether we are truly fulfilling this need.

Ishita Verma | Bhopal

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN COALITION GOVERNMENT AND DIPLOMACY

Recalibration of diplomatic priorities due to coalition compulsions is on the cards



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

India has voted and the verdict is out. It has brought back the era of coalition governments, the pressures of alliance partners weighing in on key policy matters, back to India's polity after a decade. The era of robust, single-source decisions is most likely over and may not return for a decade. The voter's verdict will have long-reaching impact on India's foreign policy and diplomatic trajectory for a long time to come.

The relations with the US which were nurtured by the Modi Government in the past decade and which have reached a certain stable platform, are unlikely to be disturbed. The technology partnership added to the existing trade partnership, has bipartisan support in Washington. This means in the eventuality of Trump returning to in the US, towards the year's end, it won't be a spoiler in India US bilateral relationship. India and the US have in the past, shown enough maturity in discussing sensitive issues, such as the alleged hit plan on India-designated terrorist G S Pannun, behind closed doors.

Most US businesses operating in India may be relieved, with a coalition verdict, as it could, take away many concerns (expressed by their US-based colleagues behind closed doors) regarding the overreach by a PM, with a brute majority. They may be relieved to find several pockets of influence, with more alliance partners coming in the Government, weighing on crucial policy decisions. The US and global capital would feel safe in India as a market, as long as it is business as usual, no surprise protectionist regulations and there is a growth market. In a coalition government, with several checks and balances, the scope for unilateral decisions, is less likely. Also, as many experts mentioned to this author, the US would be happy to have a peaceful democratic ally in Asia, to counter



an aggressive China in the Indo-Pacific. Joint exercises, with Indian defence forces, sharing of crucial intelligence of strategic importance (even though India is not part of the five eyes network), sharing and empowering India on semiconductors, close co-creation of standards and regulations on critical and emerging technologies such as AI are not likely to be impacted. India and the US on plurilateral platforms such as QUAD, the I2U2 and on wider UN etc would not be impacted. However, pompous, state visits and hosting each other's leaders on a grand scale (reference Trump in 2019 and Indian PM state visit to the US in 2023) could move to more sober, away from the camera, diplomatic conversations. Despite an occasional criticism of India, by mainly US think tanks and policy experts, primarily on human rights, polarising speeches, freedom of speech and religion in India etc, there is bipartisan support for India and deep relations between the two nations and it is not likely to change.

If the India-US civil nuclear deal proved to be the cause of a weak coalition government (due to the withdrawal of support by a crucial ally from the UPA government 1.0), there exist no such threats to the bilateral relationship currently. Even with a coalition Indian government at the centre. Washington and New Delhi have successfully managed to educate their senior lawmakers/politicians/think tanks/experts on either side of the aisle, regarding the strategic importance of the relationship. President Biden, even though faces occasional criticism from his party colleagues or pressure groups, regarding being a bit too lenient approach towards India on several issues, he understands the relevance of this relationship in the current context. There is likely to be a new Indian ambassador to the US (the former ambassador post-retirement unsuccessfully contested elections in 2024) in the next few months. The Indian ambassador to the US does most of the heavy lifting on building consensus across the aisle on several mutual bilateral issues. The choice of the next ambassador would be a space to watch out for.

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

Indian electorate ushers in a new political era



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

By rejecting divisive politics and reducing the BJP's dominance, voters have endorsed a new era of coalition politics favouring regional and smaller parties

The outcomes of the recently concluded Indian Lok Sabha elections signal promise for the region, prompting nations to reconsider and reassess their democratic political frameworks. In a resounding declaration of democracy's resilience, the once seemingly invincible fortress of the Modi-Ka Parivar lies shattered. The echoes of this strong message from the public reverberate louder than the emotional sensationalism, resonating with the collective voice of a nation that has spoken unequivocally for the power of balance. Despite the relentless onslaught of propaganda and fervent efforts to manufacture public opinion, the Indian electorate has delivered a decisive blow, reclaiming their power and rejecting the facade of religious fervour masquerading as governance. Narendra Modi, the erstwhile political juggernaut, now stands at the precipice of his last tenure, his aspirations of perpetual rule dashed against the rocks of reality. His grandiose ambitions of global dominion and spiritual leadership lie in tatters, mere relics of a bygone era marked by hubris and delusion.

The BJP's significant loss, laid bare in the aftermath of the election, paints a stark portrait of defeat. With 92 seats lost out of their previous 303, including once impregnable strongholds in rural heartlands and urban bastions like Mumbai, the party finds itself relegated to the sidelines of political discourse. The myth of invincibility shattered, the BJP stands exposed, its veneer of infallibility stripped away to reveal the inherent flaws and fallacies of its governance model. The result also exposes the impact of heavy spending on AI-driven social media manipulation. Government agencies outspent political parties on Google ads leading up to India's national elections, with the BJP ranking second. This stark contrast in spending highlights the influence of advertising in shaping democratic norms, serving as a stark reminder of democracy's vulnerability to manipulation.

Yet amidst the debris of defeat lies the triumph of democracy. The people have spoken, their voices resonating with clarity and conviction, reaffirming their allegiance not to religious ideologies or cults of personality, but to the principles of democracy and secular governance. This electoral upheaval serves as a clarion call for change, a witness to the indomitable spirit of a nation that refuses to be swayed by divisive verbiage or empty promises.

As the dust settles on the frontline of Indian politics, the narrative of triumph and victory spun by the BJP and its leader Narendra Modi stands starkly contrasted against the reality of their electoral performance. Despite Modi's impassioned spiel and grandiose claims of India's newfound global prominence, the truth remains irrefutable: the BJP's grip on power has weakened, its once impregnable fortress breached by the resolute will of the Indian electorate.

The BJP's electoral arithmetic, touted as proof of its enduring popularity, belies a deeper truth of diminishing returns and waning support. While the party managed to retain a significant portion of its 2019 tally, the loss of 92 seats, coupled with the failure to secure the predicted landslide victory, exposes the chinks in its armour and the vulnerabilities lurking beneath the



THE PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN, THEIR VOICES RESONATING WITH CLARITY AND CONVICTION, REAFFIRMING THEIR ALLEGIANCE NOT TO RELIGIOUS IDEOLOGIES OR CULTS OF PERSONALITY, BUT TO THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY AND SECULAR GOVERNANCE

surface of its facade.

Modi's campaign discourse has taken a sharp turn towards foreign affairs and diplomacy, perhaps as a tactic to deflect attention from his administration's domestic shortcomings. By emphasizing India's global ascendancy and economic strength, Modi aims to eclipse the harsh realities of mounting unemployment, economic disparity and social turmoil within the nation. Amidst his grandiose assertions of India's international accomplishments, including hosting global summits and economic growth, Modi's narrative conveniently obscures governance failures and policy deficiencies. Despite his celebrations of India's elevated global standing, the everyday struggles of citizens remain overshadowed by political oratory, highlighting a growing disparity between political narratives and lived experiences.

Facing electoral setbacks and a reduced mandate, Modi and the BJP confront a populace increasingly demanding accountability and change. The rejection of empty promises signals a call for transparent, people-centric governance, underscoring the need for a political shift away from complacency towards accountability.

Modi's foreign policy rhetoric aligns with his domestic agenda, framing a narrative of "us-vs.-them" and emphasizing resolve against perceived threats like Pakistan and China, particularly in combating terrorism. Despite clashes with Pakistan and the 2020 China confrontation showcased as symbols of national strength, critics challenge Modi's response to Chinese aggression, while BJP members rally behind his assertive stance. Yet, beneath this facade, lie intricate geopolitical complexities and diplomatic hurdles. India's navigation among

global powers demands a nuanced approach, prioritizing national interests amidst turbulent international dynamics.

Accusations against the BJP for prioritising foreign affairs over domestic concerns challenge Modi's nationalist narrative, despite his claims of India's global ascendancy. Opposition voices condemn the party's erosion of democratic norms, yet Modi's firm stance resonates with many voters, reflecting a desire for a stronger international presence. However, mounting criticism of the BJP's handling of issues like inflation and unemployment casts doubt on its commitment to democracy. Recent electoral setbacks, notably in Uttar Pradesh, reveal deep-seated discontent, with opposition framing the BJP's governance as a threat to constitutional rights, leading to disillusionment among both critics and former supporters.

The symbolism of Ayodhya, from the demolition of the Babri mosque in 1992 to the consecration of the Ram temple in 2021, epitomizes the BJP's journey to power and its subsequent challenges. While Modi's imprint on Varanasi is undeniable, with infrastructure development projects transforming the city's landscape, the cost of progress has been the erosion of its unique identity, lamented by many locals.

The electoral panorama in Uttar Pradesh unveils a complex interplay of shifting loyalties and deep-rooted grievances, particularly within marginalized communities such as the Dalits. Despite Modi's enduring popularity, evidenced by his victory in Varanasi albeit with a notably reduced margin, the BJP's electoral fortunes have been tempered by various concerns, notably regarding constitutional rights and social equi-

ty. The BJP's ambitious electoral slogan, promising an overwhelming triumph, stirred apprehensions among the Dalit populace, raising fears of potential amendments to the constitution.

This apprehension, as the media reports asserted, stemming from the fear of diluting protections advocated by Bhimrao Ambedkar, prompted numerous Dalit voters to align with the opposition INDIA alliance, which adeptly mobilised a coalition of marginalized groups. Modi's language targeting Muslims as "infiltrators" further galvanised opposition to the BJP, particularly among Dalit and Muslim communities, despite the party's efforts to allay Dalit fears and disavow any intentions of rescinding their constitutional privileges. The electoral terrain in Uttar Pradesh reflects a shifting paradigm, with marginalized communities asserting their voices and demanding accountability from political incumbents.

The narrative of disillusionment and disenchantment highlights the intricate nature of Indian politics and the hurdles confronting the BJP as it navigates the evolving currents of public opinion. Despite facing electoral setbacks, the BJP remains a potent political force, positioned to forge the next government alongside its allies. However, the undercurrents of discontent and unmet assurances could potentially influence the trajectory of Indian politics in the years ahead. The resounding voice of the nation echoes: it's now up to the government, poised to lead for the next five years, to heed the lessons of tolerance spoken by the populace of the world's most populous country.

(The writer is a Sri Lankan journalist and author; Views are personal)

Soaring milk prices may hit affordability, health

Growth in the dairy industry necessitates ethical, accessible and safe milk production; without these, milk could become inaccessible to the general public

For ages, milk has been universally acknowledged as an excellent source of nutrition, especially for children. A good sign that milk & dairy production in our country is increasing fast. However, if the trend of consistently rising milk prices is not held up, it may be hard for the common man to afford it, thus impinging on the health of their family. Whole milk price of popular brands is presently hovering around Rs. 66 a litre. Nutritionists recommend routine intake of milk and its derivatives to maintain a balanced diet. So ironic that the legendary repository of milk, a country with rivers overflowing with milk is now concerned with feeding safe milk to its people!



HARISH BARTHVAL

India has been consistently atop in milk production since 1997 and contributes about 25% to the global milk output. In 2023, India produced 231 million metric tonnes of milk with a decadal compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6%. More important than NITI Ayog's prediction of achieving the 300 million metric tonnes mark by 2030 is the need to ensure that this staple nutrition is accessible to

the countrymen at large. The fault lines must be identified and addressed in time. Beyond just a fluid secreted by the mammary glands of female mammals for nourishing their young ones, cow milk and cows are special to India, sacred and pure since the Vedic era. Along with its other holy derivatives like curd and ghee, it is a routine offering to Gods at religious observances particularly during Shivaratri and Nag Panchami festivals. To Hindus, the cow is sacrosanct, at par with Gods. As against other milch animals, buffalo, sheep, goats and camel, the cow is also a symbol of motherhood, fertility, prosperity, health and strength. It has had sanctity in other faiths as well. Egyptians

accorded cow the status of goddess of milk, 'fat' due to its association with nurturing attributes. Among early Christians, milk was figuratively used for abundance, blessings, spiritual food and purity. Prophet Muhammad said, "The milk of the bovine (cow) contains healing, its fat is a medicine and its meat a cause for sickness." This is despite most milk in India being derived from buffalo, which is valued for its higher fat content and its use as a draught animal. In our country, 60% of the milk is produced by the unorganised sector, remaining 40% is from the organised sector, mostly dairy cooperatives and private players. However, the scenario is set to reverse and in a few years the milkman of

the unorganised sector may have to shift the profession for numerous reasons. For one, the city folks prefer value-added or packaged milk & dairy wrapped in pouches or packets made of LDPE, LLDPE, HDPE or EVA; cans and tetra packs. Admittedly, the products from the organised sector are superior; pasteurised (i.e. heating for a while up to 700C to minimise infection, then cooling) and sticking to certain quality specifications yet it has its pitfalls partly the deliberate ones. I recall the description of the Vijaya brand milk tetra pack of an Andhra Pradesh dairy in the early 80s while I was in Bhopal. It guaranteed freshness without refrigeration for up to six months in any ambient temperature - decades

after, we witnessed Amul, Britannia and other popular brands taking the cue. Mind that the milk in the pouch procured from the booth degenerates when heated just in 10 to 15 minutes, it is so delicate. There is more to tetra packs than tetrahedron texture to keep its non-degradability intact for long. It is like lethal insecticides being spread 400 times more than the permitted doses on maturing crops to avert food-

grain loss and ensure enhanced shelf life. Also, witness many popular desi ghee brands selling at Rs. 450 a litre while in villages it costs between Rs. 1200 to Rs. 2400 although dairy people confide that per kg cost of desi ghee is Rs. 500 to Rs. 600. Indian dairy business is incessantly growing at 4.5% annually. The organised milk sector is elated at the growing international and domestic demand and business prospects. Yet it must be monitored that the ethical aspects are not compromised and the domestic consumers are not taken for a ride. Fodder availability for large milch cattle, education & training and technology improvement are the other formidable issues in dairy to

be addressed. Our young ones also must be made to learn that saying no to milk is saying no to nutrition and that almond milk, soy milk, rice milk and coconut milk are poor substitutes. Amul Federation, the undisputed leader has planned expansion activity abroad and is targeting one Rs one lakh crore business now. Dairy supports the livelihoods of one billion people worldwide. As we celebrate Milk Day, an FAO initiative, to recognise the importance of milk as a global food let us not overlook that the common people are not deprived of this staple nutrition. (The writer is a blogger and writes on health, social and other issues; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

RERA inspects 8 under-construction projects in Gurugram to grant more time

The Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA), Gurugram, on Friday inspected eight under-construction realty projects which are to be granted extension for completion and handing over the units to the allottees, an official said. The projects included Signature Global Prime, Micasa, Waterfall Residences, Signature Global Proxima 1, SS High Point, Signature Global City, Godrej Meridien Phase II and eminence Kimberly Suites which are situated along the southern and northern peripheral roads of Gurugram, RERA said in a statement. "Authority's purpose was to see and check the ground reality. Under Section 6 and 7 (3) of the RERA Act 2016, these projects are to be granted extension (additional time) to complete the project and hand over the units to the allottees," said Arun Kumar, RERA Gurugram Chairman. According to the statement, Section 6 of the act says, the registration granted under Section 5 may be extended by the Authority on application made by the promoter due to force majeure in such form and on payment of such fee as may be.



TVS Srichakra unveils steel-belted agro-industrial radial tyres

Manufacturers of two, three-wheeler and off-highway tyres TVS Srichakra has launched new steel belted agro-industrial radial tyres to be used in agricultural and industrial applications. The steel-belted agro-industrial radial tyres were recently displayed at the Tire Cologne 2024 trade fair in Germany. "We are extremely happy to have launched our new and premier products at the Tire Cologne 2024. The Tire show provides the most extensive industry overview, a great platform for us to showcase our best-in-class product range," company Business Head, Karthikeyan S said in a company statement on Friday. The Steel Belted Agro-Industrial Radial Tyre has been designed for use predominantly in compact wheel loaders and backhoe loaders engaged in agricultural and industrial applications. "Europe is a key market for us, we believe it will play a pivotal role in our business growth," Karthikeyan said.



Expect commercial vehicle volumes to witness 4-7% dip this fiscal: Icra

Hit by a high base of last year and weakness in demand, the domestic commercial vehicle industry is expected to witness a dip of 4-7 per cent in wholesale volumes in the current fiscal as compared to FY23, rating agency Icra said on Friday. The medium and heavy commercial vehicle (trucks) volumes are expected to contract by 4-7 per cent year-on-year given the high base effect and the impact of the Lok Sabha polls on infrastructure activities in the first few months. Similarly, the volume of light commercial vehicles (trucks) wholesale volumes is likely to decline by 5-8 per cent in FY2025 due to factors such as a high base effect, sustained slowdown in e-commerce, and cannibalisation from electric three-wheelers, Icra said. The rating agency expects the domestic CV industry's uptrend to be arrested in FY2025, with a decline of 4-7 per cent in wholesale volumes, it stated.



RBI raises GDP growth projection to 7.2%

PNS ■ MUMBAI
The Reserve Bank of India on Friday revised upwards the GDP growth projection for the current fiscal to 7.2 per cent from 7 per cent on rising private consumption and revival of demand in rural areas.

Unveiling the bi-monthly monetary policy, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said estimates released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) placed India's real gross domestic product (GDP) growth at 8.2 per cent in 2023-24.

"During 2024-25 so far, domestic economic activity has maintained resilience," he said, adding that manufacturing activity continues to gain ground on the back of strengthening domestic demand.

Also, the services sector maintained buoyancy, as evident in available high-frequency indicators.

Later replying to a question if the economy was overheating,

RBI deputy governor Michael Debabrata Patra said: "We are not seeing signs of overheating because, remember, that level of output had fallen very low during the pandemic and even these high rates of growth are enabling it



to catch up with that level. So, no signs of overheating".

In his monetary policy statement, Governor Das said private consumption, the mainstay of aggregate demand, is recovering with steady discretionary spending in urban areas.

The revival in rural demand is getting a fillip from improving farm sector activity, and investment activity continues to gain traction on the back of ongoing expansion in non-food bank credit.

He also said the forecast of above normal south-west monsoon by the India Meteorological Department

(IMD) is expected to boost kharif production and replenish the reservoir levels.

"Taking all these factors into consideration, real GDP growth for 2024-25 is projected at 7.2 per cent with Q1 at 7.3 per cent, Q2 at 7.2 per cent, Q3 at 7.3 per cent, and Q4 at 7.2 per cent. The risks are evenly balanced," Das said.

Banks need to re-strategise their business plan to deal with credit and deposit growth gap: Das

Banks need to re-strategise their business to deal with the persistent gap between credit and deposit growth, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Friday. He also said that further actions on moderating growth in unsecured loans could be taken, if required. In November last year, RBI had flagged certain concerns on excessive growth



in the unsecured retail loans and over-reliance of NBFCs on bank funding.

"Recent data suggests that there is some moderation in these loans and advances. We are closely monitoring the incoming data to ascertain if further measures are necessary," he said while announcing the bi-monthly policy.

"The message is to convey that RBI is watchful of every aspect of financial sector especially in the banking sector.

We are agile, we are watchful and if and when some further measures are required, we will come," he said during an interaction with reporters.

The Reserve Bank increased risk weights on unsecured consumer credit and bank credit to NBFCs on November 16, 2023 to pre-empt build-up of any potential risk in these segments.

Sensex, Nifty hit all-time high

PNS ■ MUMBAI
Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty climbed over 2 per cent to settle at record closing high levels on Friday after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) revised upwards the GDP growth projection to 7.2 per cent for 2024-25 from 7 per cent earlier.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,720.8 points, or 2.29 per cent, to hit a new record peak of 76,795.31 in day trade. The benchmark ended at 76,693.36, up 1,618.85 points, or 2.16 per cent.

The NSE Nifty climbed 498.8 points, or 2.18 per cent, to 23,320.20 during the day and is just 18.5 points from hitting its record high level. It settled with a jump of 468.75 points, or 2.05 per cent, at 23,290.15. IT and interest rate-sensitive bank, realty,

and auto stocks ended with sharp gains.

The RBI left its key interest rates unchanged on Friday as expected, keeping the focus on inflation amid robust economic growth that is likely to provide the new Modi government headroom



for manoeuvring reforms.

The Monetary Policy Committee, consisting of three RBI and an equal number of external members, kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent for an eighth straight policy meeting and stuck to its relatively hawk-

ish stance of "withdrawal of accommodation", Governor Shaktikanta Das said in his statement.

With the Indian economy, Asia's third-largest, growing faster than expected in the previous year, the RBI raised its GDP growth projection for the current fiscal through March 2025 to 7.2 per cent from 7 per cent while maintaining its inflation forecast at 4.5 per cent.

"The anticipation of stability within the coalition government at the centre, coupled with the RBI's upward revision of its growth forecast for FY25 to 7.2 per cent, fuelled a broad-based rally in the domestic market. The Indian market surpassed its previous record high set on exit-poll day and reached a fresh peak," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

TCS launches Gen AI platform WisdomNext

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) on Friday launched a Gen AI platform WisdomNext that aggregates multiple generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) into a single interface and enables companies to adopt next gen technology rapidly at scale, lower costs and within regulatory framework.

The platform is designed to remove barriers for customers to develop and launch business solutions, allowing for real time experimentation across vendor, internal, and open source LLM models, TCS said at the launch.

AI and Gen AI have far-reaching applications across the value chain for business.

However, solutions designers around the world find it difficult to select, experiment, and decide on the right foundation models to use, TCS said.

According to the company, foundational models are constantly evolving, and each model offers different capabilities in terms of mode of usage, cost, and effectiveness.

TCS integrated enterprise AI orchestration platform AI WisdomNext helps businesses choose the right models and simplify the design of new business solutions using GenAI tools, the company said, adding it also enables businesses to reuse pre-existing components to accelerate design, it said.

Rupee rises 14 paise to 83.39 against US\$

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee appreciated 14 paise to 83.39 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, in line with a firm trend in domestic equity markets after the Reserve Bank kept the key policy rate unchanged. A weak American currency against major crosses overseas and lower crude prices in international markets also supported the local currency, forex traders said.

However, foreign fund outflows restricted the upward movement in the rupee, they added. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened strong at 83.46 and moved in the range of 83.48 to 83.37 against the greenback. The unit finally settled at 83.39 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a gain of 14 paise from its previous close.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday decided to keep the policy rate unchanged for the eighth time in a row, saying it will maintain a tight vigil on inflation. Announcing the second bi-monthly monetary policy for the current financial year, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has decided to keep the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent.

BSE denies tech glitch on June 4

Lag in payment receipt from banks led to delayed mutual fund NAV

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leading stock exchange BSE on Friday said lag in receiving payments from banks led to delay in assigning NAV to investors who bought mutual funds on June 4 and there was no technical glitch at its end. Many investors had complained on social media for failing to

square off their positions.

Several investors purchased their mutual funds before the cut-off time, although they were assigned the Net Asset Value (NAV), which determines the fund's value for June 5 instead of June 4. This resulted in substantial financial losses to such investors. "It is hereby clarified that there was no

technical glitch at BSE Clearing House (ICCL) on June 4th. Prima Facie, there was a lag in receiving details of credit/payments from payments aggregator(s) / bank(s) for few customers which led to the delayed NAV," BSE said in a statement.

The clarification came after several broking platforms alleged BSE for a glitch in the

mutual fund system of the exchange on June 4, which led the orders to go through the next day (June 5), when the equity markets had partially recouped some of their losses.

Stock market crashed on June 4 the day of Lok Sabha election results in which Rs 31 lakh crore of investors' wealth was wiped out.

ONGC seeks technical help to raise Mumbai High output

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is seeking help from an internationally-proven technical service provider to raise oil and gas production from its flagship but old and maturing Mumbai field in the Arabian Sea.

The firm has floated an international tender to identify the service provider who will help raise production from the field, ONGC said in a post on X.

"The giant multi-layered Mumbai High field, which commenced production 48 years ago in 1976, is currently

in its mature stage of production and ONGC has implemented a number of schemes in this field to improve production," it said.

"As a custodian and operator of Mumbai High field, ONGC is keen to collaborate with a global technical service provider. The service provider would be contracted for 10 years, extendable by another five years." Mumbai High field lies 160 kilometres off the coast of Mumbai and produces about 38 per cent of India's oil production.

While it hit a peak output of 40,000 barrels per day in 1989, the field is producing 134,000 bpd and about 10

million standard cubic metres per day of gas.

The field is estimated to hold a balance reserve of 80 million tonnes (610 million barrels) of oil and over 40 billion cubic metres of gas.

The service provider would give technical solutions for raising the output. It will be paid a fixed fee and a biddable share from the revenue earned from incremental production over an agreed baseline.

"Mumbai High is one of the prime assets of ONGC and significant upside is still to be unlocked here if ONGC applies best-in-class reservoir management technologies and adopts globally-best opera-

tional and management practices," the firm said, adding that the bids are due in mid-September.

The identified service provider would carry out a comprehensive review of field performance and identify improvements in wells, reservoirs including water injection, and facilities management (WRFM). It would suggest and help implement suitable technological interventions to improve production.

Integrated reservoir/FEED studies and development of detailed work plans for field development would also be within the scope of work, it said.

Bankers, economists expect RBI to cut key interest rate

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With RBI holding the benchmark interest rate on Friday, bankers and economists said the first monetary policy committee meet post general elections has instilled confidence and stability in the market and they expect the central bank to slash repo rate in the second half of FY25.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) left its key interest rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent as expected, keeping the focus on inflation amid robust economic growth that is likely to provide the new Modi government headroom for manoeuvring reforms.

The central bank also retained its projection for retail inflation at 4.5 per

cent for the current fiscal assuming a normal monsoon, while emphasising that uncertainties related to food price outlook warrant a close monitoring.

Dharmakirti Joshi, Chief Economist, CRISIL Ltd said:



"We now see the RBI cutting rates starting October and have lowered our expectation to two rate cuts against three foreseen earlier."

According to Ajay Kumar Srivastava, Managing Director

& CEO, Indian Overseas Bank, the RBI's decision to continue its focus on "withdrawal of accommodation" reflects a balanced approach to sustain economic growth while keeping inflation in check.

RBI's decision on e-mandates for recurring payments to be extended to fastags, introduction of auto replenishment of UPI-like wallet, and establishment of a digital payments intelligence platform, is all set to promote a resilient banking sector, he added.

Rajiv Sabharwal, MD and CEO, Tata Capital said: "The first MPC post-election has instilled confidence and stability in the market. With steady repo rate at 6.5 per cent, RBI is hinting towards balancing growth and inflation."

Digi Yatra facility launched at Chennai airport

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The Digi Yatra facility for seamless flow of domestic passengers was launched at the Chennai airport's domestic terminals on Friday.

This contactless movement of passengers at various checkpoints at airports is based on facial recognition technology (FRT).

It was launched in the presence of Airport Director CV Deepak and other officials and is available at terminals 1 and 4, an official said.

Adani Ports bags 5-year operation and maintenance contract at Kolkata port

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited (APSEZ) on Friday said it has secured a five-year Operation and Maintenance (O&M) contract for the container facility at the Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port in Kolkata.

With this, APSEZ has to deploy cargo handling equipment within seven months from the letter of acceptance (LOA) date, the company said in a statement.

"APSEZ won the five-year O&M contract through a competitive bidding process, which mandates the successful bidder to deploy cargo handling equipment within seven months from the letter of acceptance (LOA) date," the

statement said.

"The presence of APSEZ at the dock is likely to improve connectivity between the terminal and its container ports, particularly with the transhipment hubs at Vizhinjam and Colombo that are targeted for commissioning during the year," it said.

APSEZ whole-time director and CEO Ashwani Gupta said, "The award of the O&M contract for container handling facilities at Netaji Subhas Dock to APSEZ underlines our commitment to develop ports and logistics infrastructure across the country and the potential we see in West Bengal.

"We will bring our experience of over two decades of efficiently managing various container terminals within

India and outside, benefiting customers and the people of the state."

Netaji Subhas Dock is the largest container terminal on the eastern coast of India.

It handled around 0.63 million TEU (Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit) in FY2023-24, serving a vast hinterland encompassing West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Assam, the north-eastern hill states and the landlocked neighbouring countries of Nepal and Bhutan.

The Kolkata port is the nominated port for the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade route. Netaji Subhas Dock has regular liner service calls from the hub ports of Singapore, Port Kelang and Colombo.

Mutual funds to buy, sell Credit Default Swaps?

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Friday proposed allowing greater flexibility to mutual funds in buying and selling investment product Credit Default Swaps (CDS) in a bid to further develop debt market in the country.

Under the current framework, mutual funds are permitted to participate in CDS transactions only as users -to buy credit protection only to hedge the credit risk on corporate bonds held by them.

Furthermore, this transaction can be undertaken by mutual funds only in the portfolio of Fixed Maturity Plans (FMP) schemes with a tenor of more than one year.

In its consultation paper, the regulator has suggested to permit participation of mutual funds in CDS buying for all schemes as well as CDS selling for all schemes except Overnight and Liquid.

The proposal came after Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on February 10, 2022, specified the revised regulatory framework for CDS to further develop the debt market in the country. The guidelines sought

to provide the necessary impetus for the development of CDS market by expanding the base of protection sellers including selling of protection by all major non-bank regulated entities including by mutual funds.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has sought comments till July on the proposal.

In market parlance, CDS means a credit derivative contract in which one counterparty (protection seller) commits to pay to the other counterparty (protection buyer) in the case of a credit event and in return, the protection buyer makes periodic payments (premium) to the protection seller until the maturity of the contract or the credit event, whichever is earlier.

Accordingly, buying a CDS is akin to buying insurance. In case any debt security on which a CDS is bought defaults, the protection seller (seller of CDS) pays the notional amount (amount of debt security) and takes over the debt security in default.

Going by the consultation paper, Sebi has suggested that mutual fund schemes should

be permitted to buy CDS only to hedge their credit risk on debt securities they hold in all schemes. In case the protected debt security is sold, schemes should ensure that the respective CDS position is closed within 7 days of selling such protected debt security.

MF schemes should buy CDS only from CDS programmes rated by Credit Rating Agencies.

On selling CDS, Sebi has suggested that mutual fund schemes should be permitted to sell CDS only as investors in synthetic debt securities -- sell CDS on a reference obligation covered with cash, Government-Securities and Treasury bills. Overnight and Liquid schemes should not be permitted to sell CDS contracts. Additionally, the regulator has suggested that mutual funds should ensure a Two-way Credit Support Annex (CSA) as part of CDS contracts.

The Two-way CSA decreases the counter party risk -- the risk that the protection seller is unable to pay, given the default on reference obligation -- since margin is kept by both sides.



'IT'S CATHARTIC FOR ME TO PLAY A NEGATIVE CHARACTER LIKE THAT IN BAD COP'

Filmmaker-actor Anurag Kashyap shared that he was scared and skeptical about shooting for gore scenes in Bad Cop, as opposed to the films he has made.

Anurag, who plays the lethal Kazbe Mama in the series, said, "Kazbe Mama is a one-of-a-kind villain. His aura is charismatic and lethal at the same time. I was scared and skeptical when shooting for gore scenes; as opposed to my films."

He shared that his character Kazbe is powerful and hard-hitting and that he drew traits from many of the negative characters that the filmmaker-actor had created, to prepare for this role. He also shared that he was inspired by Nana Patekar from

Parinda and Irrfan Khan from Haasil for his role in the series. "I had no process for Kazbe, in fact, I was inspired by Nana Patekar from Parinda and Irrfan Khan from Haasil. I take the script only before I shoot it and the dialogue writer would help me how to approach it. It's cathartic for me to play a negative character and I take it all out of my system. I hope audiences enjoy me in this avatar."

In Bad Cop, actor Gulshan Devaiah swiftly steps into the double role of twins Karan and Arjun, who are polar opposites and choose a path of their own. Actress Harleen Sethi takes on the role of Devika. Saurabh Sachdeva and Aishwarya Sushmita star in significant roles in this thriller. The series will stream from June 21 on Disney+ Hotstar.

Jeff Eastin confirms White Collar reboot

It seems that additional episodes of White Collar, which had a spike in popularity years after its finale, would soon be available to watch. The show's creator, Jeff Eastin, said that a new version of the FBI series is in the works at Variety's TV Fest on Thursday. Variety quotes Eastin as saying, "We're going to revamp. My task is to write the script."

Among the superstars he performed with at the trade's TV festival were Tiffany Thiessen, Tim DeKay, and Matt Bomer; all three are anticipated to return. According to DeKay, the screenplay is excellent and provides all the answers to any queries that viewers would have had after

seeing the performance. "It would introduce the show to those who haven't seen it as well," DeKay continued. The sword has been sharpened on both edges. The revival will pay tribute to Willie Garson, who played Mozzie in White Collar and died in 2021. It's not official yet, but it seems likely that the revival will air on Hulu. Eastin claims that the revival of White Collar on streaming services and other procedurals like Suits—which is also getting a franchise extension—had an impact on a new version of the show.



IMRAN KHAN TO RELOCATE INTO A NEW HOUSE WITH GF LEKHA

After an almost five-year hiatus, Imran Khan has found love again and is enjoying the change of being with someone. The actor has been living alone since their 2016 divorce from Avantika Malik, with whom he was previously married. Actress



Lekha Washington and Khan have been dating for a while, and Khan eventually wants to move in together shortly.

Imran Khan recently opened up about his romance while making an appearance on comedian Raunaq Rajani's YouTube channel. He said, "My relationship status (is that I am seeing somebody.)"

I'm in the process of relocating to a new apartment right now. For the last five years, I have lived alone. Khan added, "We are in the process of moving into the new apartment together," underscoring his intentions to live with Lekha. The actor of Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na also disclosed that he first became interested in Lekha during Covid and that the Kamina actress was the one who suggested that they move in together. Imran confessed, "She brought it up! I'll be real with you, man. So, I was like, 'Why not? It's been long enough.'"

Francis Ford opens up about misconduct allegations on Megalopolis set

Francis Ford Coppola's Megalopolis was one of the most talked-about films during the 77th Cannes Film Festival, which ended last month. Ahead of the premiere, The Guardian released a piece outlining the director's alleged wrongdoing on production, as reported by staff members. Coppola has now spoken out in a new interview regarding the charges, which he absolutely denies.



In an interview with The New York Times, Coppola was asked about the charges and mentioned his mother, Italia, saying, "She looked like Hedy Lamarr." "I have the photo. But my mother told me that making an advance on a woman means disrespecting her, and I surely did not disrespect the females I had eyes on. I am not touchy-feely. I am too shy." Megalopolis executive producer Darren Demetre previously issued a comment following the Guardian investigation, stating: "I was never aware of any complaints of harassment or ill behavior during the course of the project." Megalopolis is described as the director's passion project, which has been in development for many years. The self-financed picture apparently has a budget of around \$120 million. It stars Adam Driver, Nathalie Emmanuel, Giancarlo Esposito, Shia LaBeouf, Aubrey Plaza, Laurence Fishburne, Talia Shire, and Jason Schwartzman.



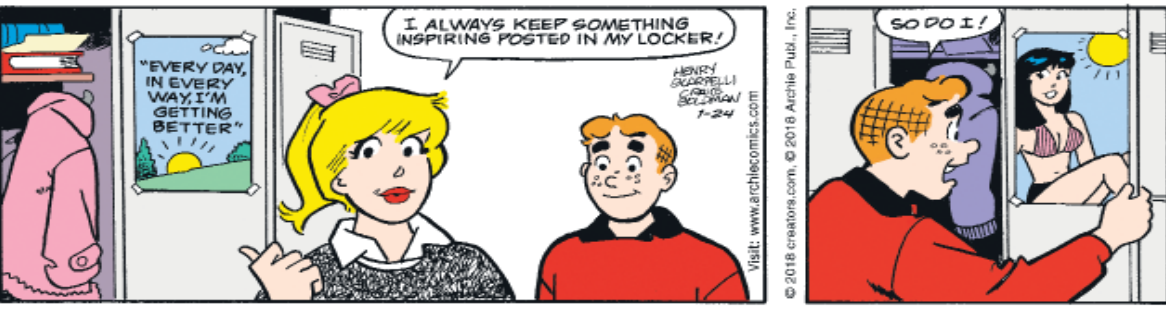
'It's time we stand against hooliganism,' says Raveena Tandon

Raveena Tandon was not long ago attacked in Bandra. When the incident that happened directly outside her bungalow was captured on camera and went viral, and further she found herself embroiled in controversy. In the video, the actress pleaded people not to hit her driver while attempting to save him. The actress was accused of assaulting three people. But the actress and her driver received a clean chit from Mumbai Police on Thursday. The actress responded to the event on her Instagram handle after that. Now, on Friday, the actress sent a lengthy letter denouncing "violence against women" once more.

The actress took to her Instagram stories and penned a long note as she talked about the unfortunate Bandra attack incident. She wrote, "In a world where public scrutiny is relentless, it is essential to remember that women achievers are human too. Disparaging them solely for their fame is unfair and harmful." She further continued writing, "This increasing violence against women and children world over needs to be addressed urgently. It's time we stand united against violence and hooliganism."

FUN

ARCHIE



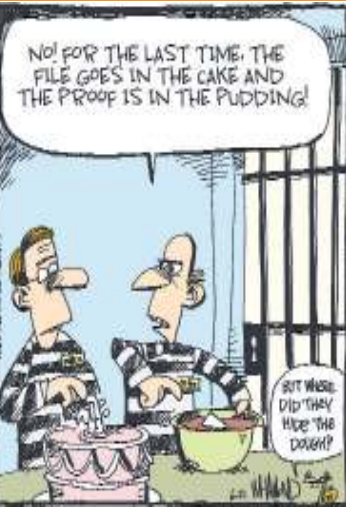
CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



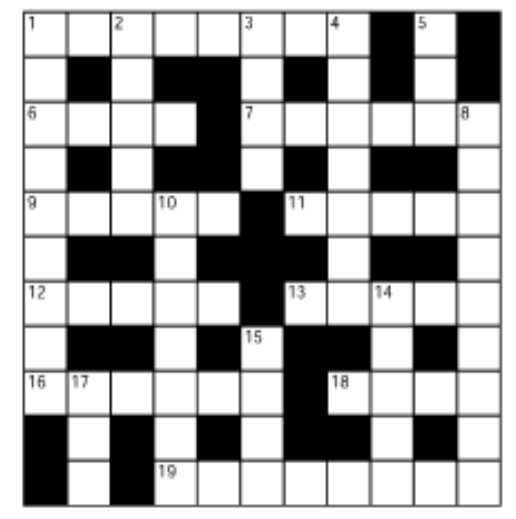
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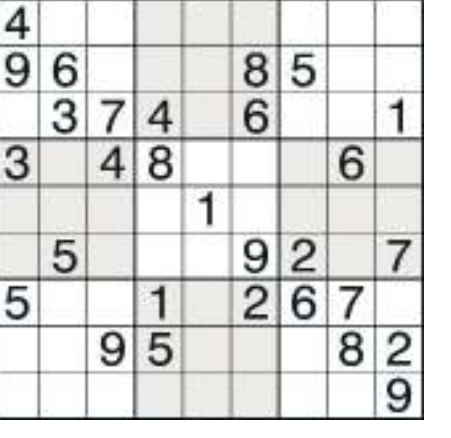
CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution
6 5 7 2 8 1 9 4 3
9 2 1 6 3 4 8 5 7
8 4 3 5 7 9 1 6 2
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7 3 9 1 6 5 2 8 4
5 1 4 7 2 8 3 9 6
3 9 6 8 5 2 4 7 1
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ACROSS
1 Gigantic
6 The organs of sight
7 Cardboard box
9 Move on hands and knees
11 Hurt by a bee
12 Three times twenty
13 Yell
16 Gave out a long deep breath to show sadness or happiness
18 A sheet-like garment worn in ancient Rome
19 Think differently to someone else
2 A sung musical drama
3 One time
4 Make longer by pulling
5 A place to see animals
8 A frightening dream
10 Observed
14 A small
15 Counts up
17 Unwell
Down
1 Do these to strengthen your muscles and keep fit

GINGER MEGGS



'I believe there is still room for growth among IT organisations in Hyd'

SHRADDHA NEWARE

Harleen Bagga, a Sikh originally from Bengaluru who moved to Hyderabad, interacts with *The Pioneer* for our weekly piece, *Hyderabad, and discusses her roots in the city.*

A well-known multi-disciplinary psychotherapist and hypnotherapist from the city, Harleen Bagga communicates with people on an emotional level, guides them through it, and improves their quality of life. She infuses an awareness of human psychology into her leadership and empowerment courses, assisting Hyderabadis in dealing with their demons.

Despite being a Sikh who was born and raised in Bengaluru, she has fallen in love with Hyderabad. A city that is hungry for expansion and curious about what comes next, as she beautifully expresses during our chat, she raises her concerns about overpopulation and points out that Hyderabad has a population advantage over Bangalore. She recalls visiting Hyderabad prior to making the permanent move: "When I visited the city during my adolescent years, I didn't have any responsibilities, so I came here to have fun and relax. I felt like a tourist." After spending a few years abroad, she felt that

returning to India and residing in Hyderabad would be advantageous. "Hyderabad appeared to be rising at a rapid pace, with effective governance. The city is growing. Policies are being developed in areas where, at least, the urban section of the city is expanding. And it's been great for the city. We are looking into it. We're living it!"

She has a lovely family of four, including two children, who are all grown and ready to face the world. When questioned about her favourite re-collections of Hyderabad, she responded emotionally: "We are Sikhs. We held a Pagdi-tying ceremony. And having done that for my son, he grew into an adult. It was a great recollection because it encapsulated everything, including our humility, God's grace, how small we are in this vast universe, and God's kindness to us."

She credits the city with her career as one of the most sought-after wellness trainers in the thriving corporate hub. She adds, "I believe your work speaks for itself. I believe that is where the city can really benefit me. The city is willing to seek support. It has greatly aided my work, but I do not rely just on them in Hyderabad, as my clientele is global."

She is particularly outspoken about the Hyderabad corporate world's approach to addressing mental health issues, stating, "The mistakes a lot of corporations make are employing these dime-a-dozen coaches straight out of school, only because of some of the corporate policies and CSR that are in place. There is no emotion or comprehension involved. Each person has unique factors, and no two people are likely to experience the same level of anxiety or stress reaction."

Despite criticism, stigma associated with mental health disorders, and judgement when seeking help, she applauds the city for taking the essential measures in the correct direction. She continues, "There are many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that support people."

However, I believe there is still room for growth, particularly among IT organisations. I wish they could raise awareness and mandate it for IT companies as well."

Change is unavoidable, and a fast-paced metropolis like Hyderabad has ups and downs. Harleen expresses concern over the city's future. She considers Hyderabad her home and feels that "home is where the heart is. It's natural to be terrified of change."

When asked about her family who visit her, she answers, "We are a very emotional family. We only focus on memories, love, and laughing. We enjoy food in Hyderabad. But we enjoy just talking, laughing, and creating memories."

Rather than going shopping in the city, it is crucial for me and my family to spend time together."

Harleen feels deeply bonded to Hyderabad, calling it "home." "For me, it is both the beginning and the conclusion of existence. Hyderabad is more than just a city; it is a way of life that is deeply ingrained in my soul."



Avneet Kaur, a social media superstar and actress who is gearing ready to amuse audiences with her next film *Luv Ki Arrange Marriage* on Zee5, has shared some unique details about her character and working with her co-stars.



'I'VE ALWAYS BEEN THE SORT OF KID WHO TAKES RESPONSIBILITY FOR HER PARENTS'

TEJAL SINHA

Dazzling bright as a diamond with her prowess at a pretty young age, the social media sensation and actress Avneet Kaur enjoys a great fan following of over 32.2 million followers on social media. Well, one might recall the I'll Avneet cutting a rug on the stage of *Dance India Dance Lil Masters* and going on to recall her as the choti Rajkumari Damyanti in *Savitri—Ek Prem Kahani*.

Today, the talented star has proficiently made a remarkable mark in the filmy world, be it her debut with *Mardaani* or her upcoming project *Luv Ki Arrange Marriage*, which is going to premiere on Zee 5 on June 14.

As the film is nearing its release, we have the star of the show on board for a quick exclusive chat, sharing some interesting anecdotes.

"I think the responsibility factor is something I completely relate to," shares the *Tiku Weds Sheru* star as she speaks of finding similarities between her characters, Ishika and Avneet in real life. "I've always been so responsible at home. I've always been the sort of kid who takes responsibility for her parents."

In the film, Avneet plays the love interest of 'Tiku' boy Sunny Singh, who plays Luv. On that point, when asked about their on-screen chemistry, the *Meri Maa* actress says, "It was nice from the start; he was very sweet and comfortable as a co-actor. He never made me feel uncomfortable. He has always been the type of person who has taught me a lot of things on set. Every woman wants a male co-actor who is loving and encouraging."

Going ahead, she also shares a memorable moment with her co-star, as she recalls, "I think it was at the beginning of the shoot, during a scene we filmed in Orchha, when our feet were burning from the heat because it was 40 degrees. That was memorable because, despite the conditions, he made me laugh. We didn't even realise when the shoot was over. It gets very difficult for the whole crew to work in that heat,

but I remember it was a romantic song shoot—the song that is out now, *Ishq Ki Chhavi Tale*. He made me feel very comfortable and helped me forget about working in such a hot and humid climate."

The film also stars Annu Kapoor, who plays the character of Luv's father and Supriya Pathak as Ishika's mother. Working with both the adroit actors was no less than an amazing experience for Avneet. "It has been amazing in so many ways. Supriya ma'am has taught me grace, to be effortless, and many other things that I, as a lady, can use in my future. Annu sir, on the other hand, taught me how to be happy on set, keep everybody entertained, and never show any attitude or ego. He was like a father figure to me on the set and made every feel at home. We all used to sit together for our meals; it felt like family. Talking about Bhopal, it was really good cuisine-wise, and the overall experience of shooting there and bonding with the cast was great. We used to try different food items together. It was fun."

Luv Ki Arrange Marriage is not your regular rom-com film, at least with what the trailer showcases. There is certainly a twist involving the characters of Annu Kapoor and Supriya Pathak. However, without revealing much detail, on a concluding note, she shares, "I am not going to disclose anything. All I can say is that you should watch the trailer for now and prepare for fun-filled entertainment content. There are so many complications, confusion, and humour in the movie that you will thoroughly enjoy it!"

SUPRIYA MA'AM HAS TAUGHT ME GRACE, TO BE EFFORTLESS, AND ANNU SIR, ON THE OTHER HAND, TAUGHT ME HOW TO BE HAPPY ON SET, KEEP EVERYBODY ENTERTAINED, AND NEVER SHOW ANY ATTITUDE OR EGO.



Heart failure in men and women: Understanding the differences and risks

Cardiovascular diseases represent a significant health challenge in India, with heart failure being a prominent condition among them. According to a recent report by the Asian Pacific Society of Cardiology (APSC), heart failure accounts for 1.8 million hospitalisations annually in India. This condition places a substantial burden on the healthcare system and affects both men and women, though the prevalence and outcomes can vary between genders. In particular, men tend to be diagnosed with heart failure at a younger age compared to women, who often present with more advanced stages of the disease due to different risk factors and biological differences. Addressing heart failure in India requires targeted strategies to manage its impact across different demographics, emphasizing the need for gender-specific approaches in treatment and prevention.

Understanding heart failure

Understanding heart failure is crucial, as it is a complex condition where the heart is unable to pump blood efficiently, leading to inadequate circulation and oxygenation of the body's tissues. This syndrome can result from various underlying issues such as coronary artery disease, hypertension, diabetes, and cardiomyopathy. Heart failure manifests in symptoms like shortness of breath, fatigue, swollen extremities,

rapid heartbeat, persistent cough or wheezing, increased need to urinate at night, swelling of the abdomen, rapid weight gain from fluid retention, and difficulty concentrating or decreased alertness. The condition is categorised into types based on which part of the heart is affected: left-sided, right-sided, or congestive heart failure. Treatment typically involves a combination of lifestyle changes, medications, and sometimes surgical interventions, tailored to manage symptoms and improve quality of life.

Differences between men and women

While the underlying causes and basic symptoms of heart failure are largely similar between men and women, there are notable differences in how they experience and manage the disease. Men tend to be diagnosed with heart failure at a younger age and often have more severe symptoms at the time of the diagnosis. In contrast, women are typically diagnosed later in life, with the onset of heart failure often linked to the decline in protective oestrogen levels post-menopause. Men are more likely to report classic symptoms such as chest pain and shortness of breath, whereas women often experience non-classic symptoms like fatigue, nausea, and abdominal swelling. Women may also have a

higher incidence of heart failure with preserved ejection fraction (HFpEF), where the heart contracts normally but the ventricles do not relax properly. Risk factors also vary, with men facing higher risks due to lifestyle factors like smoking, alcohol consumption, and hypertension. For women, the risk increases significantly post-menopause due to hormonal changes, and conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure pose greater risks compared to men. These gender-specific differences highlight the need for tailored approach-

es in the diagnosis and management of heart failure (World Heart Federation, BioMed Central).

Who is more at risk?

Determining the comparative risk of heart failure between men and women is complex, as it depends upon factors such as age, lifestyle choices, and underlying health conditions. Generally, men face a heightened risk at a younger age due to a higher prevalence of risk factors such as smoking, alcohol consumption, and hyper-

tension, which contribute to earlier onset and more severe manifestations of heart disease. In contrast, women typically develop heart failure later in life, yet their prognosis may be bleaker. This is attributed to the presence of co-existing conditions like diabetes and hypertension, compounded by the loss of oestrogen's protective effects.

Management and treatment

MEDICATIONS:

- **ACE Inhibitors and ARBs:** Help relax blood vessels and reduce the workload on the heart
- **Beta-blockers:** Slow the heart rate and lower blood pressure, reducing strain on the heart
- **Diuretics:** Help reduce fluid buildup in the body, alleviating swelling and shortness of breath
- **Aldosterone Antagonists:** Prevent fluid retention and improve heart function
- **Digitalis:** Strengthens heart contractions and helps manage arrhythmias
- **Lifestyle Changes**
 - **Diet:** Low-sodium, heart-healthy diets

rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains

- **Exercise:** Regular, moderate physical activity tailored to individual capabilities
- **Smoking Cessation:** Eliminating tobacco use to improve heart and overall health
- **Alcohol Reduction:** Limiting alcohol intake to prevent further heart damage
- **Weight Management:** Maintaining a healthy weight to reduce strain on the heart
- **Medical devices and surgery**
 - **Implantable Cardioverter-Defibrillators (ICDs):** Help prevent sudden cardiac arrest
 - **Pacemakers:** Regulate heartbeats in patients with arrhythmias
 - **Ventricular Assist Devices (VADs):** Mechanical pumps that support heart function
 - **Heart Transplant:** For severe cases where other treatments have failed

(The author, Dr. Deep Chandh Raja, S, is a Consultant Cardiologist and Clinical Lead - Cardiac Electrophysiology, at Kauvery Hospital in Chennai.)



ENGLAND EYE IMPROVED BOWLING EFFORT TO HALT FORMIDABLE AUSSIES

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS)

Defending champions England will look to restitch their T20 World Cup campaign through an improved bowling effort when they face 'old' rival Australia in a Group B match here on Saturday. England's opening game against Scotland was rained off after the latter made 90 for no loss in 10 overs, forcing the teams to take home a point each. But even those 60 balls showed the need for England to buckle up in the bowling department, to begin with. Scottish openers George Munsey and Michael Jones scored freely against all England bowlers, and Australia carry far more lethal guns in their line-up. David Warner and Marcus Stoinis showed the extent of damage they can do while outclassing Oman in their tournament opener. Once again, there will be a lot of focus on Jofra Archer, who gave away 12 runs in two overs against Scotland, as the pacer continues his comeback trail into top-flight cricket. But bowling is just one part, as the English batters under

skipper Jos Buttler, who had a good run in the IPL 2024, will have to fire in unison against the Aussie attack. The Australian bowlers were potent against Oman even without Pat Cummins, who had a reasonable outing for Sunrisers Hyderabad in the IPL. Nathan Ellis played ahead of Cummins in that game, but Australia might bring back the premier pacer against a much more formidable opponent. While Australia's batting looks settled, the misfiring Glenn Maxwell remains a missing link. After enduring a shipwreck of an IPL campaign with Royal Challengers Bengaluru recently, the 'Big Show' got out for a first-ball duck against Oman. The 2021 champions will be eager to see Maxwell return to his best at the earliest, and a match against England offers him a perfect occasion. **TEAMS (FROM):** Australia: Mitchell Marsh (c), Ashton Agar, Pat Cummins, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Glenn Maxwell, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis,



Matthew Wade, David Warner, Adam Zampa. Travelling Reserves: Jake Fraser-McGurk, Matt Short. England: Jos Buttler (c), Moeen Ali, Jofra Archer, Jonathan Bairstow, Harry Brook, Sam Curran, Ben Duckett, Tom Hartley, Will Jacks, Chris Jordan, Liam Livingstone, Adil Rashid, Phil Salt, Reece Topley, Mark Wood. Match starts at 10.30 PM IST.

SA FACE COURAGEOUS DUTCH: South Africa might have trotted past Sri Lanka in their first match, but they have a tricky opponent in Netherlands in their second group D match in New York on Saturday. The scars from their 38-run loss against the Dutch in last year's 50-over World Cup might still be fresh in the minds of the Proteas. The Aiden Markram-led side

would certainly want a reversal this time around. The most encouraging signal from their win over Sri Lanka was the form of Anrich Nortje. The pacer, who was a shadow of his intimidating self in the IPL, seemed to have regained his rhythm on a spicily New York pitch while grabbing four wickets against the Islanders. Along with Kagiso Rabada,

SA FACE NETHERLANDS



Nortje forms a strong combination upfront, and SA will require them in full flight against Netherlands, who started with a six-wicket win over Nepal. They also ticked a few boxes in that match as frontline batter Max O'Dowd made a fifty while leading pacers Tim Pringle and Logan van Beek took three wickets apiece. The Dutch side will be

hoping for another clinical outing from their top players to bruise their fancied opponent once more. **TEAMS (FROM):** South Africa: Aiden Markram (c), Ottiel Baartman, Gerald Coetzee, Quinton de Kock, Bjorn Fortuin, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Maharaj, David Miller, Anrich Nortje,

Kagiso Rabada, Ryan Rickelton, Tabraiz Shamsi, Tristan Stubbs. Netherlands: Scott Edwards (c), Aryan Dutt, Bas de Leede, Kyle Klein, Logan van Beek, Max O'Dowd, Michael Levitt, Paul van Meekeren, Ryan Klein, Saqib Zulfiqar, Sybrand Engelbrecht, Teja Nidamanuru, Tim Pringle, Vikram Singh, Viv Kingma, Wesley Barresi. Travelling reserve: Ryan Klein.

New Zealand face Afghanistan test



PTI ■ PROVIDENCE (GUYANA)

New Zealand will have no room for complacency when they begin the T20 World Cup campaign against a gutsy Afghanistan side full of IPL stars in a Group C fixture here on Saturday. New Zealand find themselves in a difficult group with two-time champions West Indies and Afghanistan also vying for the top two spots. With rain restricting their training sessions, New Zealand's preparation for the marquee event has been less than ideal. Additionally, they take on Afghanistan and West Indies in their opening two games. Come Saturday, Kane Williamson and Co. Will have to get the better of a side that is not only warmed up but has also registered a morale-boosting win and know the conditions here well. However, New Zealand's strength in ICC events has been their adaptability, they always manage to turn up, reaching the latter stages. And with a wealth of experience as well as an exuberance of youth in the likes of Finn Allen and Rachin Ravindra in the side, they will be expected to get past the Afghans.

On paper, New Zealand have all bases covered, they have depth in batting and variety in bowling. Trent Boult will look dominate with the new ball, with Lockie Ferguson and Tim Southee complementing him. Left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner has a phenomenal record in the Caribbean, averaging under 17 with the ball at an economy of 5.5 and he will be look to outsmart the Afghans. Meanwhile, Afghanistan secured a thumping victory over Uganda in their opener. If the opening duo of Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran provided the team a great start with the bat, pacers Fazalhaq Farooqi, Naveen-ul-Haq, and skipper Rashid Khan exhibited exceptional prowess with the ball. But apart from Gurbaz and Zadran none of the other batters manage to stick around and against a formidable Kiwi side, they will need to do better. **TEAMS (FROM):** New Zealand: Kane Williamson (c), Finn Allen, Trent Boult, Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway, Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry, Daryl Mitchell, Jimmy Neesham, Glenn Phillips, Rachin



PTI ■ DALLAS (USA)

Ravindra, Mitchell Santner, Ish Sodhi, Tim Southee. Afghanistan: Rashid Khan (c), Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Ibrahim Zadran, Azmatullah Omarzai, Najibullah Zadran, Mohammad Ishaq, Mohammad Nabi, Gulbadin Naib, Karim Janat, Nangyal Kharoti, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Noor Ahmad, Naveen-ul-Haq, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Fareed Ahmad Malik. Reserves: Sediq Atal, Hazratullah Zazai, Saleem Safi. Match starts 5am IST

defending 77 against South Africa and the Islanders would fancy their chances against an out of form Bangladesh side. Bangladesh have struggled in the shortest format this year. They have had series losses against Sri Lanka and USA. They were handed a comprehensive defeat by India in their warm up game as well. **TEAMS (FROM):** Sri Lanka: Wanindu Hasaranga (c), Charith Asalanka, Kusal Mendis, Pathum Nissanka, Kamindu Mendis, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Angelo Mathews, Dasun Shanaka, Dhananjaya De Silva, Maheesh Theekshana, Dunith Wellalage, Dushmantha Chameera, Nuwan Thushara, Matheesha Pathirana, Dilshan Madushanka. Travelling Reserves: Asitha Fernando, Vijayakanth Vijaykanth, Bhanuka Rajapaksa, Janith Liyanage. Bangladesh: Najmul Hossain Shanto (c), Taskin Ahmed, Litton Das, Soumya Sarkar, Tanzid Hasan Tamim, Shakib Al Hasan, Tawhid Hridoy, Mahmud Ullah Riyad, Jaker Ali Anik, Tanvir Islam, Shak Mahedi Hasan, Rishad Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman, Shoriful Islam, Tanzim Hasan Sakib. Travelling reserves: Afif Hossain, Hasan Mahmud.

Newcomers USA record historic win over Pakistan in T20 World Cup

Newcomers USA on Thursday shocked former champions Pakistan via the Super Over to record their biggest win in a T20 World Cup match that reflected the shambolic state of affairs in the Asian giants' cricket. The result was reminiscent of Pakistan's three-wicket loss to Ireland in the 2007 ODI World Cup in the West Indies, which knocked them out of that tournament. USA thus jumped to the top of Group A with two wins from as many games ahead of the clash against India. USA had defeated Canada by seven wickets in their opener. Opting to field, left-arm spinner Nosthush Kenjige scalped three wickets for 30 runs as Pakistan found it difficult to press the accelerator and were restricted to 159 for seven. While chasing, USA ended on the same score, reaching 159 for 3 with skipper Monank Patel (50 off 38), Aaron Jones (36 not out of 26) and Andries Gous (35 off 26) leading from the front. In the Super Over bowled by



Mohammad Amir, USA piled up 18 runs, eight of which came from extras. Saurabh Netravalkar then kept his cool and bowled brilliantly to give away just 13 runs for a famous win. In another embarrassment for Pakistan, they took longer time than usual to come out to bat in the Super Over, keeping the USA fielders waiting and getting the on-field umpires involved. Earlier, USA's decision to bowl first worked as Mohammad Rizwan was dismissed in the second over, caught by Steven Taylor off Netravalkar (2/18). USA started their chase on a bright note, scoring 44 runs in the powerplay. Patel led from the front as he played his shots to pick up consecutive

boundaries off Shaheen Shah Afridi in the fourth over. Naseem Shah gave Pakistan the first breakthrough when Taylor nicked one to Mohammad Rizwan behind the stumps. Bur new man Andries Gous meant business as he picked up two fours in the same over. Gous was particularly elegant square of the wicket as he just opened his bat a bit to pick up another four off Haris Rauf. USA's body language was positive with Patel and Gous leading the charge. Patel showed his prowess through the off-side, picking up two consecutive boundaries off Iftikhar Ahmed through the cover region. Patel was at his destructive best as he first hit Afridi over mid-

off for a boundary and then clobbered the bowler over his head for a six to bring up his 50 off 34 balls. A 68-run second wicket stand was finally broken by Rauf, who got the better of Gous with a quick delivery. Wickets were the need of the hour for Pakistan and they picked up the important scalp of Patel, who edged one to Rizwan off Mohammad Amir. Aaron Jones (36 not out off 26), who played a blinder against Canada in their last match, lived up to the expectations again and in the company Nitish Kumar (14 not out off 14) took the match into the Super Over. With 12 needed off three balls, Jones smashed a full toss of Rauf over square leg for a six and then got a single to bring down the target to five off last ball. Earlier, Pakistan lost Usman Khan as he mistimed a Kenjige delivery. Fakhar Zaman tried to force his way with his aggressive instincts but fell short when he paddle-swept a simple catch to Taylor off Ali Khan in the fifth over, as Pakistan slumped to 26 for 3.

Pandya braces for extra special Pakistan match in T20 WC

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Hardik Pandya does not want to treat the upcoming T20 World Cup match against Pakistan as a "fight" but the India all-rounder is quite excited to face a rival against whom he has had considerable success. Rohit Sharma-led India will take on Pakistan on Sunday and Pandya will be eager to repeat his past success against the cross-border opponents. "Standing in big games is very exciting for me. I find it extra special and Pakistan has been one team where I have been very



fortunate, I have been able to do well in a lot of games," Pandya told 'Star Sports'. Pandya has played six T20Is against Pakistan so far. While his outings with the bat largely remained moderate, having

scored just 84 runs with a highest of 40, the Baroda man has fared better with the ball in hand. The pace-bowling all-rounder has taken 11 wickets from six matches at a very good economy of 7.5 with 3/8 being his best analysis. "It all comes down to the vibe. Hold your breath, this is a request. This is not a fight, this is going to be history," said Pandya. India began the ICC marquee event with a facile eight-wicket win over Ireland, but Pakistan were stunned by the USA via super over here on Thursday. While underlining the riches in India's bowling unit, Pandya said they needed to remain disciplined against Pakistan. "India-Pakistan has always been very exciting, lot of cheer and buzz, a lot of emotion and a lot of excitement but at the same time, I hope we will be disciplined in that game, one goal as a group is we go and kind of hunt.

Pressure was on Pakistan, knew crowd support will backfire on them: USA skipper Patel

PTI ■ DALLAS

After scripting a win for the ages against Pakistan, USA captain Monank Patel said his team did not feel any pressure during the nerve-wracking Super Over as the crowd was mostly behind Babar Azam's men, which ended up backfiring on the visiting side in their T20 World Cup clash here. Patel made a composed 50 as co-hosts USA shocked 2009 champions Pakistan via Super Over here on Thursday. "I thought we should have finished the game (in regular time) and we should have never gone to Super Over. I mean the way we kept our nerves...and in

the Super Over particularly, scoring 18 runs gave us a big upper hand to defend the target," Patel said in the post-match press conference. So, what was the talk inside the team huddle at that crucial juncture? Were there any queasy stomachs? "In the huddle we talked about - there's no pressure for us. All the pressure is in front of Pakistan. We knew that we didn't have enough support from the crowd. Pakistan had more support from the crowd. "I thought it will backfire on them, and if we play good cricket, they'll be more under pressure," said Patel. Patel, who was born in Anand,

Gujarat, said his side bowled brilliantly in the Power Play segment and kept Pakistan batters on a tight leash. "The way we bowled in the first six overs, I felt we didn't give them enough opportunity to score runs and we kept them under more pressure and it helped us," he said. Patel said USA were always in the game once they restricted Pakistan to 159. "The plan was to win the toss and bowl first. We knew the initial first half an hour would help pace bowlers and the way we kept them quiet and took the crucial wickets in the power play, it helped really well. "And yeah, 160 on this wicket

with one side short boundary, I felt we were always in the game," he explained. The home side threw a surprise by handing the



responsibility of bowling the Super Over to Saurabh Netravalkar instead of the more pedigreed Ali Khan. But the left-arm pacer successfully defended 18 runs to guide his side to a memorable victory. "The plan was we wanted to make sure that we utilise the condition. The condition was I left-arm bowler bowling cutters and wide yorkers from left-arm over. "Ali Khan usually hits the stump and we wanted to make sure that we make them play outside the off-stump. And as a left-hander, the angle helps it. Saurabh had a good day, and I backed Saurabh, and yeah, that was the decision,"

he explained. The USA also made a rather surprising decision to hold back a natural range-hitter like Corey Anderson and promoted Nitish Kumar up the order in the regulation time. Patel said they wanted to keep Anderson for the last three overs. "As a player he (Nitish) always thinks about the team first and I felt when I got out, I think it was 14th over or something. Nitish, the way he's batting, we wanted to back him. "We wanted to make sure that even if the wicket goes, obviously, Corey was going next. We wanted to keep Corey in the last three overs. That was the plan," said Patel.

'Apart from catching the case with clues, emotions in Satyabhama have worked out well'



Director Sashi Kiran Tikka, who has worked as a presenter and screenplay writer in *Satyabhama*, speaks of the film sharing its journey, and working with the team.

PNS | HYDERABAD

Director Sashi Kiran Tikka gained recognition as a talented director with films like *Goodachari* and *Major*. Now with the just-released *Satyabhama*, he worked as a presenter and screenplay writer. The film produced by Aurum Arts banner by Srinivasa Rao Takkalapelly and Bobby Tikka, stars the 'Queen of Masses' Kajal Aggarwal as the heroine.

Ahead of the film's release, Sashi Kiran Tikka shared a few insights about the film. Beginning with the film's journey, he shared that the film started with the story narrated by his friends Ramesh and Prashanth, who are presently in the UK. "Director Suman and I liked that point and developed it. After finishing the major movie, we wanted to take it on the sets. When we told Kajal the story of *Satyabhama*, she immediately liked it."

Now if you wondered the reason why he did not direct the film, he revealed, "I have projects to do as a director and I'm currently preparing my scripts. That is why I did not direct the movie *Satyabhama*. Moreover, we want to make more movies under our Aurum Arts banner. But I need



experience as a producer. Along with directing, production, and editing are also to be done."

Well, during the interaction, how could he not speak of the 'Queen of the Masses'? He gleefully enthuses, "Kajal is very active. I have never seen her tired. During the shooting, her energy gave us all a lot of enthusiasm. Kajal's action sequences in this movie are very special and will entertain the audience. Especially, the emotional aspect connects well with the audience. Even though there are many police stories, emotionally, *Satyabhama* is special. Today's audiences are going to experience fresh storytelling."

Director Suman Chikkala, Sricharan Pakala, and Sashi have been friends and have worked together as a team for *Satyabhama*. He expressed, "Suman's work as a director is impressive. Our movie is an investigative thriller, but instead of just catching the case with clues like regular investigative thrillers, the emotion is well worked out in the story."

He continued, "Apart from Kajal, Naveen Chandra, Prakash Raj, Nagineedu, Harshvardhan, and Ravi Varma played key roles in the movie *Satyabhama*. Apart from them, some new actors were also involved. The release of this movie will give them a good name. This movie is a team effort; the music director, editor, director, producers, and I have all worked together. Mythri Movie Makers are releasing our movie in Nizam. Dheeraj Mogilineni releasing it in AP. Saregama is releasing it overseas. Overall, including OTT, Saregama is releasing it overseas. He also spilled that he is all said to announce his next project as a director. He is planning to do movies in multiple genres."

tollywood

INTRODUCING ANANTHIKA SANILKUMAR AS SHUDDHI AYODHYA



Director Phanindra Narsetti infuses poetic imagery into the film's promotional materials, with posters adorned with thought-provoking quotes that capture the essence of the narrative. Each glimpse into the world of 8 *Vasanthulu* stirs curiosity and anticipation, hinting at a cinematic masterpiece in the making.

Mythri Movie Makers, known for their illustrious track record in delivering captivating cinematic experiences, is set to embark on a new creative venture with director Phanindra Narsetti at the helm. Their latest project, 8 *Vasanthulu*, promises to delve into the depths of human emotions, offering audiences a profound narrative enriched with compelling characters and heartfelt storytelling.

On Friday, the spotlight shines on Ananthika Sanilkumar, who steps into the shoes of the enigmatic character Shuddhi Ayodhya. Known for her memorable performance in *MAD*, Ananthika brings a nuanced portrayal to the screen, embodying the essence of purity and grace synonymous with her character.

As Shuddhi Ayodhya, Ananthika portrays a multifaceted persona—a daughter, a friend, a lover, a martial arts enthusiast, a writer, and above all, a beacon of unwavering dignity. Her transformative journey spanning eight years encapsulates a myriad of experiences, emotions, and encounters, offering viewers a glimpse into the complexities of human existence.

Behind the scenes, a talented team of creatives brings the vision to life, with Vishwanath Reddy capturing the film's visual splendor as the director of photography, and Naresh Kumaran weaving musical magic with his compositions. Aravind Mule's intricate production design and Shashank Mali's seamless editing ensure a cinematic experience that transcends boundaries.

Produced by Naveen Yerneni and Y Ravi Shankar, 8 *Vasanthulu* is poised to captivate audiences with its poignant storytelling and captivating performances. With the shoot currently underway, anticipation mounts for a cinematic journey that promises to leave a lasting impact on viewers' hearts and minds.

As the curtain rises on 8 *Vasanthulu*, audiences are invited to immerse themselves in a world where poetry meets motion, and where the purity of the human spirit shines bright amidst life's myriad challenges. Stay tuned for more updates as this evocative tale unfolds on the silver screen.

'RAKSHANA OFFERS FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON PAAYAL RAJPUT'S ACTING PROWESS'

Rakshana, directed and produced by Prandep Thakore under the banner of Haripriya Creations, has finally hit the cinemas. Starring the talented Paayal Rajput in the lead role, this investigative thriller has already generated significant buzz among audiences with its captivating teasers and trailers. In an interview, director Prandep Thakore sheds light on the journey of *Rakshana*.

Tell us more about *Rakshana*:

The title *Rakshana* signifies protection and defense, reflecting the film's theme of fighting for victims and safeguarding them. Initially, *Rakshak* was considered, but that was associated with Telangana Police vehicles. The final title, *Rakshana*, aptly fits the film's realistic approach.

What is *Rakshana* all about?

The movie is a fictional story inspired by an incident in the life of a police officer and carries a meaningful message without being preachy.

How did you zero in actors for the particular roles?

No specific actor was in mind during the story writing. The need was for someone with a physique suitable for a police officer role. After seeing Paayal Rajput in *RX 100*, the team believed she would be perfect for the role. She was approached, loved the story, and thus the movie began.

How did the shooting take place and the experience with Paayal Rajput who played the lead role?

The film's shooting spanned 57 days, with Paayal Rajput's scenes taking up 47 days. Paayal Rajput's performance promises to be a revelation, showcasing her range and versatility as an actress.

How will it transform Paayal Rajput after *Rakshana*?

Paayal Rajput delivers an outstanding performance, and the film is expected to transform her image, paving the way for more powerful roles in the future.

Tell us about your journey as the director.

I worked as an assistant and co-director on films like *Okkadu*, *Sainikudu*, and *Rudhrnadevi* by Gunasekar, as well as *Oye!* by Anand Ranga and *Orange* by Bommarillu Bhaskar. Despite facing challenges in finding a producer, I decided to make a small film independently.

What challenges did you face while marketing the film?

While the creative aspect of film-making is covered, releasing a movie poses significant marketing challenges. I am less adept in marketing but remained hopeful due to the positive response from distributors.

What about the film's OTT deals?

The film is scheduled for a significant release. OTT and satellite rights are still pending, and the team encourages audiences to watch the film in theaters if they enjoyed the trailers and teasers.

Tell us what *Rakshana* offers to movie lovers and how you will invite viewers to your film.

Rakshana promises to be a gripping and realistic investigative thriller, offering audiences a fresh perspective on Paayal Rajput's acting prowess.



Varun Tej's *Matka* shooting to begin on June 19

Mega Prince Varun Tej is all set to dazzle audiences with his maiden Pan-Indian venture, *Matka*, helmed by director Karuna Kumar of *Palasa* fame. Produced by Dr. Vijender Reddy Teegala of Vyra Entertainments in collaboration with Rajani Thalluri's SRT Entertainments, this ambitious project promises to raise the bar with its grand scale and compelling narrative. Scheduled to kick off its new shooting schedule from June 19, *Matka* is currently undergoing preparations on a massive scale. A sprawling set is being meticulously constructed in Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad, setting the stage for this high-octane mass-action entertainer to unfold.

Varun Tej is set to showcase his versatility by portraying a challenging role encompassing four distinct personas, each representing different

timelines in the gripping tale inspired by a real-life incident that captured national attention. As anticipation mounts, fans can expect more intriguing updates to follow as the project progresses.

The teaser titled "Opening Bracket", unveiled on Varun Tej's birthday, provided a tantalising glimpse into the film's premise, introducing key characters portrayed by acclaimed actors such as Naveen Chandra and P. Ravi Shankar.

Behind the scenes, *Matka* boasts a stellar technical team, with A. Kishor Kumar handling the cinematography duties and GV Prakash Kumar lending his musical prowess as the composer. Meanwhile, Karthika Srinivas R takes on

the role of editor, ensuring a seamless cinematic experience. Joining Varun Tej on screen are the talented Nora Fatehi and Meenakshi Chowdhary, who are set to add depth and dimension to the narrative. With plans for release across Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, and Hindi languages, *Matka* is poised to make a significant impact on the Pan-Indian cinematic landscape.

As the countdown to its release begins, *Matka* emerges as a promising addition to Varun Tej's illustrious filmography, offering audiences a thrilling cinematic experience that transcends boundaries and captivates hearts nationwide. Stay tuned for more updates as this epic saga unfolds.

Star now available on Prime

Directed and written by Elan, and produced by B. V. S. N. Prasad and Sreenidhi Sagar under Sri Venkateswara Cine Chitra and Rise East Entertainment banners respectively, *Star* features Kavin in the lead role, supported by Lal, Aaditi Pohankar, Preity Mukundhan, and Geetha Kailasam in significant roles. Prime members in India and across 240 countries and territories worldwide can enjoy this Tamil drama from today onwards.

Set in the heart of Mumbai, the film encapsulates the captivating journey of Kalai, a young boy from a modest background with dreams of making it big in the Tamil film industry. His unwavering determination is buoyed by the unwavering support of his father, Pandian, a photographer. Together, they navigate life's challenges, finding solace and purpose in their bond. Despite facing numerous obstacles, Kalai remains steadfast in his pursuit. But will his resilience be enough to surmount the hurdles and transform his aspirations into reality?

Star promises a heartfelt narrative about the resilience of the human spirit and the pursuit of dreams, bolstered by stellar performances, enchanting music by Yuvan Shankar Raja, and captivating cinematography by Ezhil Arasu K. Available exclusively on Prime Video, this Tamil gem joins the array of offerings for Prime members in India, providing both entertainment and value in a single membership package.



Amitabh Bachchan looks ready to battle as Ashwatthama in the new *Kalki 2898 AD* poster

With only three days remaining until the release of the highly anticipated trailer of the upcoming sci-fi epic *Kalki 2898 AD*, the makers are leaving no stone unturned to heighten the excitement for the film. On Friday, a new poster featuring megastar Amitabh Bachchan in his Ashwatthama avatar was unveiled on social media. The actor looks intriguing and battle-ready, holding his Astra and sporting a divine gem on his forehead. He's seen standing in the middle of a battlefield with some men fallen on the ground, alongside a life-size vehicle behind him.

Hinting that his wait is ending soon with the film's trailer out in three days, the caption read, "His wait is ending... 3 days to go for #Kalki2898AD Trailer, Out on June 10th."

Meanwhile, Amitabh Bachchan's character as

Ashwatthama was unveiled through a monumental projection at Narmada, Narmada Ghat in Madhya Pradesh. The selection of Narmada and Narmada Ghat for this occasion held great significance as it is believed that Ashwatthama still walks the grounds of Narmada, further leaving fans excited for the film and the actor's portrayal. Featuring an ensemble star cast including Amitabh Bachchan, Kamal Haasan, Prabhas, Deepika Padukone and Disha Patani in key roles, *Kalki 2898 AD* is directed by Nag Ashwin and produced by Vyjayanthi Movies. A multilingual, mythology-inspired sci-fi spectacle set in the future, the film hits the screens on June 27, 2024.



UPENDRA'S A TO RE-RELEASE ON JUNE 21

The industry is always bustling with fresh trends, and one such trend is the re-release of old blockbusters with enhanced quality, drawing audiences back to the theaters. Joining this trend is the grand re-release of the film *A*, presented by Uppi Creations and Chandu Entertainment banners. Starring Kannada Superstar Upendra, this film is a trendsetter. Originally released approximately 26 years ago in 1998, *A* has left a lasting impact. It's not just about running for a hundred days back then; even after three to four weeks, getting tickets was

nearly impossible, illustrating the magic the film created.

By bringing this cult film back to the audience's attention, Producer Lingam Yadav is uncovering vintage days. Chandu Entertainment, known for producing multiple films, is now bringing the film with love to the theaters. Part of this initiative is the re-release of iconic films like *Chatrapathi* and *Yogi*, acted by Hero Prabhas, within four weeks. Now, they are bringing films that the audience has never seen before. After its Kannada release, this film has received tremendous appreciation. Now, on June 21,



it will be released in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

In Kannada industry, it is only meant for intelligent people. This film starred Upendra and Chandini. Despite being made on a low budget, this film grossed over 20 crores in Kannada alone in 1998, creating an industry record. The eagerly anticipated re-release of this cult film on June 21 has movie buffs and Upendra fans eagerly waiting. They are keen to see the magic that Upendra weaves on the screen. They are eagerly awaiting the spellbinding work of Upendra.