



the pioneer

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

The pioneer

The new government will continue developmental projects like building roads, distributing ration rice and executing drinking water supply projects. The Modi government constructed four crore houses across the nation in the last 10 years. The BJP-led NDA government will construct three crore more houses in coming days

— G. Kishan Reddy, Union Minister P4

I will be your voice in Parliament: Rahul to students on NEET row

'I HOPE HEERIYE REMAINS POPULAR FOREVER'

'I performed my own stunts in Fighter Raja, unlike OTHERS'

DON'T MISS...

Schools to reopen on June 13...

In the wake of the swearing-in ceremony of the chief minister-designate Chandrababu Naidu on June 12, the reopening of schools after summer vacations has been extended by one more day and will be reopened on June 13. The Education Department took this decision at the request of the teachers unions. They appealed to provide flexibility to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the Chief Minister on June 12. With this, schools will open on June 13 and the Education Department has issued orders to this effect. Generally, the...

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'India doesn't support' Cannes...

India didn't have any moment at Cannes, says filmmaker Anurag Kashyap, stressing that the victory of independent filmmakers at the European gala is theirs alone and the government doesn't support that kind of award winning cinema. India won an unprecedented three awards at the 77th edition of the Cannes Film Festival last month -- Payal Kapadia became the first ever director from India to win the Grand Prix for her movie 'All We Imagine As Light', Anasuya Sengupta was awarded best actress in the...

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ONGC seeks foreign partners for...

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is seeking foreign partners to reverse declining output at its flagship Mumbai High fields, offering a share of revenue from incremental production plus a fixed fee but not any equity stake. ONGC on June 1 floated an international tender seeking global technical services providers (TSP) with annual revenue of at least US\$ 75 billion, according to the tender document. The TSP would have to do a comprehensive review of the field performance and...

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Pulling out of IPL best thing for...

Australia spinner Adam Zampa said that pulling out of IPL 2024 was the "best thing" to do coming into the T20 World Cup, adding that skipping the league also allowed him to spend time with family and tend to injuries. Zampa played a pivotal role Australia's 36-run win against arch-rival England at the Kensington Oval here on Saturday with the leg-spinner getting rid of both the openers, Phil Salt and Jos Buttler, in quick succession after they had given the defending champions a solid 73-run start in the....

-SPORTS

Modi 3.0 takes oath

Modi sworn in as PM for third consecutive term; Rajnath, Shah and Gadkari return as Ministers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Narendra Modi was sworn in as Prime Minister at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here on Sunday, becoming only the second PM after Jawaharlal Nehru to secure a third consecutive term.

Along with Modi, who took oath in the name of God, senior BJP leaders Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, Nitin Gadkari, Nirmala Sitharaman and S Jaishankar were sworn in as cabinet ministers, indicating the Prime Minister's emphasis on continuity and experience as they also held senior positions in his second term.

Party president J P Nadda returned to the cabinet after five years, while former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and ex-Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar were the fresh faces in the Modi cabinet.

BJP leaders Piyush Goyal, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Dharmendra Pradhan and Bhupender Yadav, who were earlier in the Rajya Sabha but have now been elected to the Lok Sabha, were among those retained as ministers.

Former Assam CM Sarbananda Sonowal, Ashwini Vaishnaw, Virendra Kumar, Pralhad Joshi, Giriraj Singh and Jual Oram, all from BJP, were among those sworn in as ministers.

President Droupadi Murmu administered the oath of office to them.

Modi, 73, first became prime minister in 2014 and then returned to office in 2019. He was re-elected to Lok Sabha from Varanasi.

Among the allies of the BJP, which did not get a majority on its own this time, JD(S) leader H D



Among the allies of the BJP, which did not get a majority on its own this time, JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy, HAM (Secular) chief Jitan Ram Manjhi, JD(U) leader Lalan Singh and TDP's K Ram Mohan Naidu also took the oath of office as ministers.

Kumaraswamy, HAM (Secular) chief Jitan Ram Manjhi, JD(U) leader Lalan Singh and TDP's K Ram Mohan Naidu also took the oath of office as ministers.

Congress president and Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge was present, even as several opposition leaders

skipped the ceremony. Those present on the occasion included Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, TDP president Chandrababu Naidu and JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar.

Bollywood actors Shahrukh Khan and Rajinikanth, and indus-

trialists Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani were among those who attended the swearing-in ceremony.

Modi's third term, which always appeared inevitable, did not come with the massive mandate he and his party had been claiming, as the Congress and its allies in the INDIA

bloc fought a doxy rearguard battle to shock the BJP in its strongholds such as Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

It is, however, a tribute to his towering political presence that the BJP's third-best tally of 240 seats is being seen as a disappointment by the party's ardent supporters and projected as a "moral defeat" by the Congress whose own tally of 99 seats, its third worst, is being hailed by the opposition party. The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance has won 293 seats (out of 543), which Modi has noted is the biggest success for any pre-poll alliance when a single party did not get a majority.



Kinjarapu, Pemmasani & Verma from AP inducted

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inducted three new ministers from Andhra Pradesh, each bringing a unique blend of experience, dedication, and regional representation to the Union government.

The newly appointed ministers include TDP MP Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu, TDP MP Dr Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar, and BJP MP Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma. Their inclusion is expected to bolster the Cabinet with fresh perspec-

tives and reinforce the regional influence in Andhra Pradesh.

Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu: Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu, from the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), has made history as the

youngest-ever Central Union Cabinet Minister. Born into a legacy of public service, he is the son of the late TDP leader and former Central Minister Yerran Naidu.

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Foolproof arrangements for Naidu's oath-taking ceremony

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Foolproof arrangements are being made for the oath-taking ceremony of Nara Chandrababu Naidu as the new Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh on June 12 at Kesaraipalli near Gannavaram. As many as one lakh people are expected to witness the event, which will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other top VVIPs.

On Sunday, Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad directed officials to ensure strict arrangements for the swearing-in ceremony. The Chief Secretary, along with State DGP Harish Kumar Gupta, Programme Special Officers PS Pradyumna, Babu A, and G Veera Pandyan, Agriculture Commissioner C Hari Kiran, State Additional DGP Shankabrata Bagchi and Krishna District SP Adnan Naem Asmi, inspected the preparations near IT Park Medha Towers in Kesaraipalli village of Gannavaram mandal.

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Around one lakh people expected to attend



Land earmarked for the swearing-in ceremony of Chandrababu Naidu as Chief Minister, at Kesaraipalli, being cleared of bushes on Sunday. -Pic by Ch.Vijaya Bhaskar

4 or 5 berths likely for Jana Sena in Naidu Cabinet

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

With just two days left before the new government is formed in Andhra Pradesh on June 12, leaders of the TDP-led NDA alliance are swiftly finalising the list of ministers to be included in the State Cabinet. The Jana Sena Party (JSP), which

played a crucial role in the alliance's victory, is expected to receive a substantial share of the ministries.

Sources indicate that JSP is likely to secure a minimum of four or five ministries in the TDP-led NDA cabinet, as assured by TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu.

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Is Jagan sending his MPs into BJP?

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

After a debacle for the YSRCP in the recently concluded general elections, there are reports against the YSRCP on social media platforms that a few MPs and MLAs might ditch the party. It is nothing but natural that some of the party leaders would look for greener pastures to protect their political and business interests.

Already, a couple of leaders like former minister Ravela Kishore Babu quit the party with a feeling that they have no future in the party at least for the next five years. Some other leaders who lost the elections have started blaming party president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy



The YSRCP chief is learnt to have suggested to Kadapa MP Avinash Reddy and Rajampet MP Mithun Reddy to cross over to BJP. Even Tirupati MP Gurumurthy is said to be contemplating crossing the line.

and the coterie around him for the defeat.

According to the latest reports doing rounds in social media, at least a couple of YSRCP MPs are contemplating defecting to the Bharatiya Janata Party to safeguard their interests. The YSRCP has four MPs in Lok Sabha - Chetti Tanuja Rani from Araku (ST) constituency, YS Avinash Reddy from Kadapa, P Mithun Reddy from Rajampet and Maddila Gurumurthy from Tirupati (SC) constituency.

Of them, according to the rumours making rounds in the media, YS Avinash Reddy and PV Mithun Reddy might jump into the BJP.

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Nine killed as terrorists open fire at bus carrying pilgrims in J-K

PNS ■ JAMMU

Terrorists opened fire at a bus carrying pilgrims in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district on Sunday evening, killing nine people and injuring 33, police said.

The 53-seater bus, enroute from Shiv Khori temple to Katra, veered off the road following the gunfire and fell into a deep gorge. The incident took place around 6.15 pm near Teryath village in Poni area. "Nine pilgrims were killed and 33 injured," Senior Superintendent of Police, Reasi, Mohita Sharma told reporters.

The attack marks a significant escalation in violence in the region. Reasi district has been relatively untouched by terrorist activities compared to neighbouring areas such as Rajouri and Poonch.

Tearful adieu to media baron Ramoji Rao

CHANDRABABU NAIDU CARRIES THE BIER



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The mortal remains of media baron Ch. Ramoji Rao who was also the Chairman of the Ramoji Group was consigned to flames at the Ramoji

Film City on Sunday.

The funeral was held with full state honours at the Ramoji Film City here in the presence of his family, friends and well-wishers. Ramoji's son Kiron lit the pyre.

Ramoji Rao, who revolutionised the news and entertainment industries, died at a hospital here early on Saturday. He was 88.

A host of dignitaries, including former Vice President M. Venkaiah

Naidu, former Chief Justice of India NV Ramana, TDP chief N. Chandrababu Naidu, Telangana Ministers Tummala Nageswara Rao and D. Seethakka, Union Ministers G. Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay

Kumar, former Union Minister Sujana Choudhary, MLAs Prathipati Pullarao, Chintamaneni Prabhakar, Raghuramakrishna Raju, Arimilli Radhakrishna, Venigandla Ramu and TDP leaders along with

members of the film fraternity and others paid their respects to Ramoji Rao.

Chandrababu Naidu who joined in carrying the bier said later in a post on X, "My heart is filled with

deep sorrow as I took part in the final rites and bid adieu to Telugu doyen Ramoji Rao. He may not be among us now but he will continue to inspire and lead us.

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Monday Mirchi

YOURS TRULY GOT IT RIGHT

What we speak in Monday Mirchi comes to pass. In this space, we had informed readers about former AP chief secretary Adityanath Das' imminent elevation as Advisor in Telangana. The orders have been issued since Aditya will be in Telangana as Advisor-Irrigation. Like in this case, there have been several instances in the recent past when Yours truly was bang on. That makes us happy. We are committed to heightening our vigil to track what is happening behind the screen in the corridors of power. We appreciate all our little birds for their constant feeds. We look forward to spicing our column further with mirchi from newer bureaucratic circles as well.

BABU IN THE CROSSHAIRS OF LAWMAKERS' IRE

Of course, Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) faced a terrible defeat in the AP Assembly elections, leaving many political and non-political circles shocked. The near wipeout of YSRCP has left bureaucrat K Dhananjay Reddy in the crosshairs of lawmakers' and party leaders' anger at his insensitive behaviour. Several YSRCP leaders are now openly speaking against the bureaucrat for blocking their access to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. They are sore that Danunjaya Reddy had ill-treated even MLAs, making them wait outside his office for hours. Those after Dhananjay Reddy are dismayed that he has gone scot-free due to his superannuation. They are hoping for some kind of poetic justice as he had failed to be the eyes and ears of YS Jagan, resulting in YSRCP's historic debacle.

REVEALING PAGES OF RED BOOK

Who all feature in the Red Book is a matter of endless curiosity in various circles of Andhra Pradesh now. Telugu Desam Party's national general secretary Nara Lokesh has taken it around personally while campaigning during the recent elections. After a few names started making waves, the whispers in the corridors of power are that these are from the pages of the Red Book. As for IAS officers, a page in Red Book is about Jawahar Reddy, Dhananjay Reddy, Sri Lakshmi, SS Rawat, Praveen Prakash, Muthyala Raju, and Gopal Krishna Diwedi. Obviously, the names of Ajay Jain and Cherkuri Sirdhar also figured. Interestingly, the Red Book seems to have allocated relatively more pages to IPS officers, with some including names of Rajendranath Reddy, PS R Anjaneyulu, PV Sunil, N Sanjay, and

Kanti Rana. Officers handling the Y S Vivekananda murder case have special pages dedicated to them. The grapevine is abuzz about the consequences of their past actions.

CAN'T WAIT IF SOMEONE HAS TO BE SENT PACKING

If an official has to be sent packing, the powers that be do not wait even if he or she is just a couple of weeks away from superannuation. Following the announcement of election results on Tuesday, former AP chief secretary Dr KS Jawahar Reddy was forced to go on leave till June 27, though he will attain superannuation by this month end. Ahead of the elections, many allegations were made against Jawahar Reddy by leaders of opposition parties, with some even complaining to the Election Commission of India to initiate action against him. Jawahar Reddy has been accused of favoring YSRCP from day one. Curiously, the ECI had transferred more than 25 IAS/IPS officers across the state before the polls. But the poll booth did not touch Jawahar Reddy till the counting of the results for reasons that could not be fathomed. The winning TDP-led alliance has forced the CS to go on leave for 21 days. Nirab Kumar Prasad, a 1987 batch IAS officer, took charge as the new Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh.

NO ROOM FOR ANXIETY IF BABUS ARE CLEAN

The functioning of bureaucracy is supposed to be apolitical. If it were really so, where is the need for senior babu in Andhra Pradesh to step aside following the regime change? Parties may change, but governance is a continuing process. When there is a regime change, those holding nominated posts do resign. But in AP, following the defeat of YSRCP, some of the babus are going on leave, while others are inclined to go to their parent departments. "When the government changes, it is the moral responsibility of those holding nominated posts to resign from their positions. But why are some of the bureaucrats going on leave or trying to go to their parent departments well before knowing the mind of the new government? It means these bureaucrats are accepting well before being called out by the new government that they have worked in favour of the previous government," observed a senior retired bureaucrat. This implies that babus need not be anxious if they are clean.

-- Yours truly

BJP getting respect in Telugu states: Srinivasa Varma

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/AMARAVATI

Narasapuram Lok Sabha constituency winner B Srinivasa Varma on Sunday said the decision by Narendra Modi to include him in his council of ministers is synonymous with the BJP receiving respect in the Telugu states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Varma, who defeated YSRCP's G Umabala by a margin of 2.7 lakh votes, is poised to be sworn in as a Union minister on Sunday.

"Modi including me in his council of ministers is synonymous with the BJP receiving respect in the Telugu states," said Varma, talking to reporters in New Delhi, accompanied by Telangana BJP chief Kishan Reddy and others.

According to the newly-elected MP, the saffron party gave "an opportunity to every activist", and he thanked all the activists who worked towards his victory. He observed that his victory is a signal to all BJP activists in the Telugu states that when they work hard the party will recognise and encourage them.

AP elections shake up political families, cause estrangement

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Besides leaving a trail of violence in several places, the fiercely fought simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh have shaken up a string of political families resulting in discord and estrangement. Siblings took on each other, a son contested against his minister-father while a determined wife was cajoled to stop competing against her husband at the last moment, among others.

In this battle of blood relatives, YSRCP chief and outgoing Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy faced a real challenge from his sister, Andhra Pradesh Congress chief Y S Sharmila who emerged as a 'thorn in the flesh' for him. After experimenting with politics in Telangana through the YSR Telangana Party (YSRTP) and merging it with Congress, Sharmila took over the reins of the grand old party in Andhra Pradesh to target her brother daily, accompanied several times by her cousin Suneetha Narreddy.

"Jagan is not the successor of

YSR (Y S Rajasekhara Reddy) at all. There is no similarity between the regimes led by YSR and Jagan... Jagan's reign is marked by murderous politics," said Sharmila at Mydukuru in Kadapa district on April 8.

As Congress candidate for Kadapa Lok Sabha constituency, Sharmila took on her cousin Y S Avinash Reddy from YSRCP, who is an accused in the Vivekananda Reddy murder case. Though she lost, Sharmila, garnered more than 1.4 lakh votes and managed to inflict electoral damage on Avinash Reddy, who won by a margin of 62,695 votes.

Avinash Reddy had the full backing of Jagan Mohan Reddy who said the people of Kadapa 'know who killed' his uncle Vivekananda Reddy. A 'conspiracy' has been hatched to 'destroy' the life of Avinash Reddy and alleged that his younger sisters Sharmila and Narreddy are a 'part' of it.

Ditching Jagan Mohan Reddy backed Avinash Reddy, Y S Vijayamma, Rajasekhar Reddy's wife and the mother of the siblings backed her daugh-

ter, Sharmila, urging the Kadapa Lok Sabha electorate to vote for her daughter.

Similarly, the Vijayawada Lok Sabha constituency saw a battle between brothers, K Srinivas and K Sivanath. Srinivas, a transport tycoon-turned-politician from the YSRCP took on his younger brother Sivanath from the TDP. Srinivas (58), the older brother, was a key TDP leader until some months ago but differences with party leaders compelled him to jump ship to YSRCP in January.

Eventually, his gamble didn't pay off and Srinivas lost the battle to Sivanath, who won with a thumping margin of over 2.82 lakh votes, garnering 7,94,154 votes in total.

In the north Andhra region, Duvvada Vani, wife of YSRCP's Tekkali Assembly segment candidate Duvvada Srinivas, for several reasons, almost came close to competing against her husband. At the last moment, senior party leaders successfully persuaded her against doing it.

Likewise, B Ravi Kumar, son of YSRCP Anakapalli Lok

Sabha candidate and deputy chief minister B Mutyala Naidu contested as an independent from Madugula Assembly seat against his step-sister E Anuradha and all the three family members lost their elections.

Another fallout was violence at many places that went to the extent of even ordinary people, who owed allegiance to TDP and YSRCP leaders assaulting each other in several places. Palnadu, Tirupati and Anantapur districts became notorious for such attacks.

Despite authorities promising protection to YSRCP supporters in the wake of alleged attacks by Janasena and TDP cadres, violent incidents have not abated. Andhra Pradesh went to polls on May 13 for 25 Lok Sabha and 175 Assembly seats. The NDA alliance of TDP, BJP and Janasena won a landslide victory with a brute majority of 164 Assembly and 21 Lok Sabha seats. YSRCP has been relegated to a seemingly inconsequential position, with just 11 Assembly and four MP seats.

APSRTC to offer free transport services for women after June 12

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) Visakhapatnam region is poised to enhance women's access to free transport services as part of a broader initiative by the Telugu Desam Party (TDP). Following campaign promises, RTC officials are gearing up for directives expected soon after the swearing-in ceremony of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu on June 12.

A comprehensive plan has been devised to enable women to travel without charge on 579 buses in the Visakha region. This fleet includes 285 City Ordinary buses, 3 Pallevelegu buses, 28 City Express buses,



125 Metro buses, and 138 JNNURM City services. Out of the 721 buses currently operating in Visakhapatnam district, 142 premium services will not extend this benefit, but the remaining 579 will now allow unrestricted travel for women.

Officials have meticulously outlined the implementation strategy, which includes procuring additional buses, upgrading the Ticket Issue

Machine (TIM) software, identifying routes with high female ridership, and increasing bus availability on these routes. This strategic approach ensures comprehensive coverage and efficient service for female passengers. Currently, around 1.8 lakh individuals use RTC buses daily in the region, with approximately 20 thousand opting for premium services. The introduction of free transport is anticipated to increase the number of women passengers to 80,000, necessitating an expansion of the bus fleet to accommodate this growth.

Regional authorities, following directives from the APSRTC head office, are prioritising routes heavily used by female passengers to ensure

seamless access to free transport services.

This shift from previously high-traffic routes to those predominantly used by women underscores a targeted approach to addressing transportation barriers.

This initiative not only aims to improve women's access to public transportation but also aligns with broader efforts towards gender equality and accessibility in public services. With the combined commitment of RTC officials and expected policy support, this initiative stands to significantly empower women through enhanced transportation access, contributing to their overall mobility and independence.

YSRCP's defeat attributed to neglect of grassroots leaders

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) faced a stunning defeat in the recent Assembly elections in Vizianagaram, Srikakulam, and Parvathipuram-Manyam districts.

This unexpected outcome has been attributed to the YSRC leadership's neglect of its second-rung leaders, who have long been the backbone of the party's village-level operations.

For the past five years, sarpanches, Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituency (MPTC) members, and other grassroots leaders have felt increasingly marginalized. These leaders, crucial in rallying rural support, gradually distanced themselves from the party.

A significant factor in their discontent was the diversion of funds meant for panchayats under the 14th and 15th Finance Commissions to state welfare schemes, leaving village administrations financially strained.

Adding to the unrest, several sitting MLAs and their families were accused of corruption, land encroachment, and political manipulation, exacerbating anti-incumbency senti-

ments. The YSRCP's traditional stronghold in North Coastal Andhra, particularly in Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, and Parvathipuram-Manyam, crumbled under this discontent. Contrary to expectations of a fierce battle between the YSRCP and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the results revealed a one-sided victory for the NDA.

This outcome is particularly striking given that these districts had been YSRC bastions since 2019, when grassroots leaders played a pivotal role in the party's electoral success against the TDP regime.

In the lead-up to the 2019 elections, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's Praja Sankalpa Yatra garnered overwhelming support, translating into a landslide victory for the YSRCP. However, the subsequent marginalization of second-rung leaders led to growing dissatisfaction.

Village-level leaders were disconnected from the newly introduced village/ward volunteer system, and many faced financial hardships due to unpaid bills for completed village projects.

Despite repeated grievances and large-scale protests against sitting MLAs in various con-

stituencies, the YSRC leadership remained unresponsive.

This disconnect culminated in widespread dissent during the 2024 elections. The party's decision to field sitting MLAs in almost all constituencies, despite opposition from second-rung leaders, further alienated these key supporters.

A senior YSRC leader lamented, "I have worked hard for the YSRC from 2014 to 2019, facing several criminal cases. I felt elated when the YSRC recorded a landslide victory in 2019, but the government did not clear my pending bills. There were no funds in the panchayats as the government diverted the 14th and 15th Finance Commission funds to welfare schemes.

No party can survive without the support of the second-rung leaders and the cadres. They are the backbone of the party.

However, the YSRC high command ignored the cadres." This election result underscores the critical importance of maintaining strong ties with grassroots leaders and addressing their concerns. The YSRC's failure to do so has led to a significant shift in political power in North Coastal Andhra.

YSRCP leaders in nominated posts cling to power amid charges of abuse

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In the aftermath of the YSRCP's resounding defeat in the general elections, the party's appointed officials refused to relinquish their positions, sparking controversy and public outcry. Despite the electorate's clear message, those occupying nominated posts within the YSRCP government have displayed a reluctance to resign. Justification for their tenure retention centers around scepticism that the government would nullify their resignations. Since assuming power, the YSRCP administration has distributed nominated posts predominantly among party loyalists, some of whom

failed to secure electoral victories. Notably, several leaders have been granted lucrative positions, indicating a pattern of favoritism.

The Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Authority (VMRDA) Chairmanship exemplifies this trend. Successive appointments, including Dronamraju Srinivasa Rao, Akkaramani Vijaya Nirmala, and recently Sanapala Chandra Mouli, suggest a revolving door of influence within the party's ranks. Allegations have emerged regarding the misuse of authority, particularly in real estate dealings, implicating VMRDA officials closely aligned with the YSRC leadership.

Further scrutiny falls on Kayala Venkata Reddy, who retained the chairmanship of the Andhra Pradesh Maritime Board despite the end of his term. Accusations of financial mismanagement and lack of transparency have marred Reddy's tenure, raising concerns about accountability within the organization. Similarly, Chokkakula Venkata Rao's wife, Lakshmi, continues to occupy the chairpersonship of the Visakhapatnam-Kakinada Petro-Chemical Investment Region (PCPIR), despite the expiration of her term. Rao himself has assumed positions of power, reflecting a nepotistic trend within the YSRC's governance structure.

Tearful adieu...

Continued from Page 1

His glory shines eternally like the rays of dawn."

Ramoji Rao, who created a sensation in the media industry in undivided Andhra Pradesh with his Eenadu newspaper and ETV group of TV channels was a recipient of Padma Vibhushan.

The Andhra Pradesh government decided to observe state mourning on June 9 and 10.

During the mourning period, the national flag will be flown at half-mast throughout the state and there will be no official entertainment programmes, an official communication said.

Kinjarapu, Pemmasani & Verma...

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His educational journey took him from Delhi Public School, RK Puram to Purdue University for his undergraduate studies in Electrical Engineering, and later to Long Island University for his MBA.

Following the untimely death of his father in 2012, Naidu was propelled into the political arena. At just 26 years old, he contested and won the Lok Sabha seat from Srikakulam in 2014, becoming the second youngest MP in the 16th Lok Sabha. Known for his close association with Nara Chandrababu Naidu, he has been a key player in TDP's national strategy, especially during critical moments such as Chandrababu Naidu's arrest.

Ram Mohan Naidu's extensive involvement in various parliamentary committees, including the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Food Processing, highlights his deep understanding of diverse issues.

Dr. Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar: Dr. Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar, another TDP representative, brings a robust background in medicine and

public service to the Cabinet. Born in Burrupalem, Guntur district, he excelled academically, securing a high rank in the EAMCET exam and earning his MBBS from Osmania Medical College. Furthering his education in the United States, he completed his post-graduate studies in Internal Medicine at Geisinger Medical Centre, Pennsylvania.

Chandra Sekhar's career includes a notable tenure as a professor and physician at Johns Hopkins University's Sinai Hospital. He founded UWorld, an online training platform for medical students, which has since expanded to cover various professional fields. His philanthropic efforts through the Pemmasani Foundation include providing medical facilities for uninsured NRIs, establishing water infrastructure in Andhra Pradesh, and offering scholarships to talented students.

His foray into active politics was encouraged by Nara Chandrababu Naidu, leading to his successful election from the Guntur Parliamentary Constituency in 2024. His induction into the Union Cabinet is seen as a recognition of his public service and ded-

ication to the TDP's cause.

Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma: Representing the BJP, Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma from Narsapuram brings over three decades of steadfast loyalty to the party. Born in Bhimavaram, his early involvement in student politics with AIFS transitioned into a dedicated career with the BJP. His long-standing commitment includes significant roles such as organizing state executive meetings and playing a crucial part in UV Krishnam Raju's 1999 victory.

Varma's influence extends across the West Godavari district, where he has been instrumental in various electoral successes and party activities. His emotional reaction to being named the BJP candidate from Narsapuram underscored his dedication to the party. Winning his seat by a substantial margin, his appointment as a Union Minister is a testament to his unwavering service and the strategic importance of his inclusion in the Cabinet.

Together, these three leaders bring a wealth of experience, dedication, and regional representation to the Union Cabinet, promising

Is Jagan sending his MPs into...

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While Mithun Reddy has his business interests, Avinash Reddy is facing charges from the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the case related to the murder of Jagan's uncle and former MP Y S Vivekananda Reddy in March 2019. As the Telugu Desam Party is now part of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), there is every possibil-

ity that it would bring pressure on the centre to target these two MPs and the best way to overcome these issues is to join the ruling party in the centre. There are rumours that Jagan Mohan Reddy has asked Avinash Reddy and Mithun Reddy to cross the line into the BJP as it would help him to face the cases just like TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu who had sent Sujana Chowdary and CM Ramesh into BJP in 2019.

Foolproof arrangements for...

Continued from Page 1

The Chief Secretary first inspected the arrangements at the meeting place near Medha Towers and made several suggestions to the concerned officials. He emphasized the need for comprehensive arrangements, noting that the ceremony will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Ministers of various states, Union Ministers, Legislators, and other public representatives. Prasad instructed officials to repair potholes around the main auditorium and complete paving work to facilitate VIP movement. He also emphasized the need for proper barricading and separation of blocks at the venue. To ensure an uninterrupted power supply, Prasad ordered the installation of electric lights and advised the concerned authorities to set up LED screens at selected places outside the meeting premises to accommodate the large audience.

Traffic curbs in Krishna, NTR districts on June 12

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In view of the swearing-in ceremony of TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu as chief minister of the State for the second time after the State bifurcation, the Krishna district police have imposed traffic restrictions in the district on June 12. The swearing-in ceremony will be held at a vacant place near IT Park at Kesarapalli of Gannavaram Mandal in the district.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, several State Governors, Central Ministers and other States' chief ministers etc. will attend the swearing-in ceremony. For the convenience of the VIPs, traffic will be regulated on June 12.

Vehicles will be diverted in several areas in Krishna district and NTR district. So, the people should cooperate with the police to avoid inconvenience, said Krishna District SP Adnan Nayeem Asmi in a press release from Machilipatnam on Sunday.

According to SP Adnan Nayeem Asmi, all vehicles from Visakhapatnam to Chennai will be diverted from Kathipudi to National Highway

All vehicles from Visakhapatnam to Chennai will be diverted from Kathipudi to National Highway 216 via Ongole. Also, heavy vehicles from Chennai to Visakhapatnam should take a diversion at Ongole and proceed via Repalle, Machilipatnam, Losari Bridge, Narasapuram, Amalapuram, Kakinada, and Kathipudi to go to Visakhapatnam. Similarly, the vehicles will be diverted at Budampadu and they have to proceed via Tenali, Puligadda, Machilipatnam, Losari Bridge, Narasapuram, Kakinada, and Kathipudi.

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Meanwhile, vehicles coming from Visakhapatnam to Hyderabad will be diverted at five places. Those diverted at Gamana Bridge should proceed via Devarapalli, Jangareddygudem, Aswaraopeta, and Khammam. Also, the vehicles diverted at Bhimadolu should proceed via Dwaraka Tirumala, Kamavarapukota, Chintalapudi, and Khammam.

Also, the vehicles from Visakhapatnam are to divert at Eluru Bypass road and proceed to Hyderabad via

Jangareddygudem, Aswaraopeta, and Khammam. Also, some of the heavy vehicles have to divert at the Eluru bypass road and proceed via Chinthalapudi and Sattupalli. The vehicles diverted at Hanuman Junction should pass via Nuzvid, Mylavaram, Ibrahimpatnam, and Nandigama to reach Hyderabad.

Meanwhile, vehicles from Hyderabad to Visakhapatnam should take diversion at Nandigama and proceed via Madhira, Wyra, Sattupalli, Ashwaraopeta, Jagana-redy-gudem, Devarapalli, and Gamana Bridge. Those diverted at Ibrahimpatnam should proceed via Mylavaram, Nuzvid, Hanuman Junction, and Eluru Bypass Road.

The vehicles coming from Vijayawada to Visakhapatnam should take diversion at Ramavarappadu and proceed via Nunna, Pamulakalva, Velagaleru, G Konduru, Mylavaram, Nuzvid, Hanuman Junction, and Eluru Bypass Road.

However, vehicles from Vijayawada to Bhimavaram are to be diverted at Enikepadu 100 feet road and pass via Tadigadapa, Kankipadu, Pamarru, and Gudivada.

CS makes whirlwind tour of Amaravati

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad, accompanied by CRDA officials, conducted a whirlwind tour of the capital region of Amaravati on Sunday in preparation for the new government's swearing-in. The CS inspected various construction sites where work had been halted.

The TDP government, led by Chandrababu Naidu, had designated Amaravati as the capital of Andhra Pradesh, and construction progressed rapidly. However, after the YSRCP government came to power, construction work in the capital region stalled for the past five years. Within two days of taking charge, CS Neerabh Kumar Prasad prioritized resuming work in the capital region.

The government is taking urgent steps to accelerate the construction of Amaravati. For the past four to five days, CRDA officials have been carrying out minor repairs, removing bushes and trees, and restoring electric lights. They have deployed 83 JCBs and tipplers in the capital area, focusing on major roads such as the Seed Axis Road and Karakatta Road.

During his visit on Sunday, the CS emphasized the need for an action plan to expedite the construction of Amaravati immediately after the new gov-



ernment's swearing-in ceremony on June 12.

In 2015, when the foundation stone of Amaravati was laid, Neerabh Kumar Prasad was the Commissioner of Municipal Administration and Urban Development Department, giving him extensive knowledge of the capital's construction projects. As part of his visit, he inspected various incomplete construction sites.

He visited Uddandarayunipalem, the CRDA project site where the Bhumi Puja was held. He also inspected the residential complex buildings for All India Service officers, the quarters of MLAs, and the residential complexes for AP NGO employees. Additionally, the CS reviewed the 10 MLD water treatment plant, the Happy Nest project, and the additional building complex of the

High Court, which is already operational.

CS Neerabh Kumar Prasad held discussions with CRDA officials on expediting work in the Amaravati capital region once the new government is in place.

CRDA Commissioner Vivek Yadav, Additional Commissioner, SE, and other engineering department officers were present with the CS during the tour.

Heavy rush of devotees at Durga Temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A large number of devotees had darshan of the goddess at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri on Sunday. As the devotees' rush increased, the temple authorities provided all necessary facilities to them.

The temple witnesses a heavy rush of devotees during the weekends.

Given this, temple Executive Engineer KS Rama Rao has taken special steps to clear the rush.

He inspected the situation and gave instructions to the officials and staff. On Sunday,



the ongoing Arjitha sevas such as Khadgamalarchana, Laksha

Kumkumarchana, Sri Chakra Nanavaranchana, Chandri

Homam, Shanti Kalyan and others were performed.

AICC secretary warns party members to maintain discipline

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

All India Congress Committee (AICC) secretary and Andhra Pradesh in-charge CD Meyyappan has warned party leaders that those who cross the line of the party discipline should face strict action from the AICC. The party members must share their grievances at the appropriate party forum, not through the media or social media, he said.

In a press release issued on Sunday, Meyyappan said it was noticed that certain party office-bearers were airing their views through the media thereby tarnishing the image



of the party. All the Congress party members should lodge their grievances with the appropriate party forum only, he said.

"Any party member who crosses the line will face strict action," he warned.



GVMC lifeguards save teenage girl from drowning at RK Beach

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a swift and heroic act, the vigilant lifeguards of the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) averted a potential tragedy at RK Beach on Sunday, as they rescued a 16-year-old girl, Sudha, from the perilous clutches of the sea. GVMC Commissioner CM Sai Kant Verma commended the valiant efforts of GVMC lifeguards Anand, Vasu, and Achanna, who acted promptly upon receiving distress signals from the beach. Sudha, hailing from Ramnagar under the GVMC jurisdiction, had ventured into the waters for a recreational swim when the waves unexpectedly engulfed her.

The incident underscores the ongoing risks beachgoers face, despite the GVMC's diligent efforts to promote safety along the picturesque Visakhapatnam coastline. Warning boards have been strategically placed to caution visitors against swimming in hazardous conditions, yet incidents like Sudha's near-drowning persist due to disregard for these precautions. Following the rescue, Commissioner Verma issued a heartfelt appeal to the public, urging all Visakhapatnam

visitors, vacationers, and residents to prioritise their safety while enjoying the natural beauty of RK Beach and its surroundings. He emphasised the critical importance of heeding warning signs and adhering to designated safe zones for swimming.

The bravery exhibited by GVMC lifeguards serves as a poignant reminder of the dedication and readiness of local authorities to ensure the welfare of beach enthusiasts. Their swift action not only saved Sudha's life but also exemplified the tireless commitment of GVMC personnel to preserving public safety.

As the allure of Visakhapatnam's coastline continues to draw crowds, every individual must recognize their responsibility to exercise caution and respect the sea's unpredictable nature. Through collective vigilance and adherence to safety protocols, tragedies can be averted, allowing all to revel in the splendour of RK Beach without endangering lives. In the wake of this incident, let Sudha's rescue serve as a beacon of awareness, prompting a renewed commitment to safety and vigilance among all who cherish the natural wonders of Visakhapatnam's coastline.

Tributes paid to Ramoji Rao

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

President and members of the Sarvodaya Trust, established by the Krishna District Freedom Fighters Association, Vijayawada, paid their respects to the late Ramoji Rao on Sunday at Ramoji Film City, Hyderabad. Dr GV Mohan Prasad, president of the Trust, along with distinguished members Advocate Matta Jayakar and Dr Nagesh Chennupati from the United Kingdom, paid rich floral tributes to the esteemed luminary.

On the occasion, Dr Mohan Prasad said that Ramoji Rao, through his value-based living principles, touched the lives of millions of people, particularly within the Telugu-speaking community worldwide. It is no exaggeration that he was a personality of Himalayan stature, unparalleled by any other Telugu-speaking individual.

Ramoji Rao's legacy is vast and impactful, spanning various media and communication platforms including Eenadu, ETV, ETV Bharat, and the Annadaata magazine, which is dedicated to farmers. While national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi fought for and achieved India's independence, illustrious figures such as Ramoji



Rao gave meaning to that freedom. Through his actions and influential thought leadership, he has profoundly shaped the mindset and lives of the people. The loss of Ramoji Rao is colossal and irreparable.

Sarvodaya Trust, founded by the Krishna District Freedom Fighters Association, is dedicated to upholding the values and principles of freedom and community service. The Trust continues to work towards the betterment of society through various initiatives and programmes.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

After two years and seven months, the route is clear to elect the chairperson of the Kondapalli municipality as the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and its allies BJP and JSP have won big in the general elections. Now, decks have been cleared for conducting the election for chairperson and vice-chairperson. Besides, four YSRCP councillors have joined TDP, increasing the party's strength. TDP has proposed Chennuboina Chitti Babu as the municipal chairperson candidate.

As both the parties had equal number of councillors, the municipal chairperson election has been stalled for the past two-and-a-half years. The then-ruling YSRCP did not show interest in conducting the chairperson and vice-chairperson election. Though the Andhra Pradesh High Court allowed the then MP Kesineni Srinivas alias Nani to cast his vote as an ex-officio member, the YSRCP government did not hold the elections.

Meanwhile, TDP received a big victory in the district and the four YSRCP councillors switched to the party.

The previous government merged two major gram panchayats -- Kondapalli and

Kondapalli municipal chairperson election expected soon

After TDP's big win, the political scenario changed in the erstwhile Krishna district



Ibrahimpatnam - to form Kondapalli municipality with 29 wards in 2021. Later, elections were conducted and TDP secured 14 seats, while YSRCP had 14 councillors. There was also an independent councillor.

Later, the independent councillor joined TDP. However, Mylavaram MLA Vasantha Krishna Prasad (then he was with YSRCP) registered his name as an ex-officio member in the Kondapalli munic-

ipality. As a result, the YSRCP councillors' number also reached 15. So, the AP State Election Commission (SEC) decided to select chairperson and vice-chairperson elections using a coin toss.

Then Vijayawada MP Kesineni Srinivas alias Nani requested to enrol his membership in the Kondapalli municipality. But YSRCP did not accept his request and later he approached the court. However, the election was not

held. Since November 2021, the Kondapalli municipality has had no chairperson or vice-chairperson.

Meanwhile, the political scenario in the erstwhile Krishna district changed before the general elections. Mylavaram sitting MLA Vasantha Krishna Prasad joined TDP, while MP Kesineni Srinivas joined YSRCP. After the elections, both the Vijayawada MP and Mylavaram MLA seats were bagged by TDP. The number of TDP councillors reached 19 after four YSRCP councillors switched to TDP.

With the ex-officio vote, the number reached 20, while YSRCP numbers dropped from 14 to 10.

With TDP forming the government on June 12, the TDP leaders and cadres expect the release of notification for the Kondapalli chairperson and vice-chairperson elections.

Chintapalli's pepper polyhouse a crumbling economic powerhouse

PNS ■ PADERU

The Horticulture Training Center (HNTC) in Chintapalli, known for its robust efforts in fostering high-quality pepper plant production, faces a grim setback as its flagship polyhouse succumbs to neglect. The once-thriving structure, pivotal in cultivating pepper plants, now lies in disrepair; its roof ravaged by time's relentless passage, leading to a staggering decline in pepper production.

The district's indigenous communities, recognized for their innovative agricultural practices, have long embraced pepper cultivation akin to coffee. Pepper, an intercrop in coffee plantations, has emerged as

a lucrative venture, commanding premium prices in national and international markets. However, the current plight sees the tribal farmers grappling with subpar yields, straining their economic aspirations.

In a bid to revolutionize pepper cultivation, the erstwhile TDP government imported seven varieties of Meli pepper plants from the Kerala Calicut Spice Crop Board in 2018. These resilient strains, boasting pest resistance and a commendable yield of 3-4 kg per plant, were earmarked for tribal farmers' empowerment. The infusion of Girimunda, Shakti, Srikara, Panchami, Pournami, Malabar Excel, and Subkara varieties



breathed new life into the agricultural landscape of Chintapalli.

The Chintapalli Garden and Training Center, buoyed by an investment of approximately

Rs 5 lakh from ITDA, embarked on nurturing these imported strains within a state-

of-the-art polyhouse. This facility not only served as a beacon of hope but also facilitated the distribution of 1.3 lakh to 1.6 lakh plants annually to farmers across 11 mandals under the Paderu Revenue Division.

However, the euphoria surrounding this agricultural renaissance has dimmed as the dilapidated state of the polyhouse spells doom for pepper production. The exigencies of pepper cultivation mandate a conducive environment, characterized by ample shade and temperatures cooler than ambient conditions. Regrettably, the polyhouse, once a sanctuary for plant growth, now stands compromised, with its roof torn

asunder and gaping holes exposing the plants to the scorching sun. This neglect has precipitated a staggering 70% decline in plant production, imperiling the very livelihoods it was meant to nurture.

Efforts to rectify the situation have been stymied by fiscal constraints, with repair estimates ranging from Rs 3 lakh to Rs 4 lakh. The dearth of funds within ITDA has thwarted proposed renovations, leaving the fate of the polyhouse hanging in the balance. Criticisms have been levied against tribal representatives for their purported failure in securing government funding, exacerbating the plight of the tribal farmers.

Amidst mounting concerns,

stakeholders, including tribal farmers, HNTC employees, and local workers, clamor for action from the authorities. The onus falls on the district collector and ITDA project officer to heed these calls and salvage the polyhouse, thus safeguarding the economic prospects of the tribal communities dependent on pepper cultivation. In the absence of timely intervention, the looming specter of dwindling pepper production threatens to unravel the strides made in empowering Chintapalli's tribal farmers, underscoring the imperative for urgent action to resurrect the ailing polyhouse and rekindle hope in the hearts of those who depend on it for sustenance.

Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya: A jewel of Andhra who died in penury

Duggirala Gopala krishnayya, whose 96th death anniversary falls on Monday, was a well-known freedom fighter and member of the Indian National Congress from the erstwhile Madras Presidency in southern India. A staunch devotee of Lord Rama, he had organised a cadre of workers, called 'Rama Dandu' (Rama's army), to further the cause of Swaraj. Members of the Dandu wore saffron clothes and donned 'rudraksha' beads and vermilion, and participated in meetings in large numbers.

Popularly known as 'Andhra Ratna' (Jewel of Andhra), Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya was the first leader from the region to become the secretary of the All-India Congress Committee. In 1921, the Congress organised its annual session at Bezwada (present Vijayawada) where the Rama Dandu played a prominent role in organizing it. Gopalakrishnayya is perhaps

best known for the anti-tax Satyagraha he had led in Chirala during the Non-Cooperation Movement. The Satyagraha had its roots in the decision of the colonial government of the Madras Presidency to combine the villages of Chirala and Perala in Guntur district into a municipality. While the villages yielded an annual tax of revenue of Rs 4,000 per annum, their reclassification as a 'municipal' area would yield the municipal revenues totalling Rs 40,000 per annum. The move was opposed by the residents as it would impose a greater tax burden on them.

Duggirala Gopala krishnayya was born in Penuganchiprolu in the Nandigama taluk of Krishna District in 1889. His father, Kodanda Ramaswamy, was a school teacher but came from a family of landlords from Guntur and his mother Sitamma died soon after giving birth to him -- her only

Popularly known as 'Andhra Ratna' (Jewel of Andhra), Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya was the first leader from the region to become the secretary of the All-India Congress Committee. In 1921, the Congress organised its annual session at Bezwada (present Vijayawada) where the Rama Dandu played a prominent role in organizing it

child. Gopalakrishnayya's father died when he was still young and he was raised by his uncle and grandmother. He had his school education in Bapatla Municipal High School and worked for a year at the Bapatla taluk office after completing his matriculation.

In 1911, he had been to the University of Edinburgh, along with his childhood friend Nadimpalli Narasimha Rao

(Barrister of Guntur), where he lived for six years and earned a postgraduate degree in economics. During his years in England, Gopalakrishnayya became friends with Ananda Kumaraswamy with whom he translated the Abhinaya darpana of Nandikesvara into English as The Mirror of Gesture. Gopalakrishnayya returned to Guntur in 1917 and worked as a teacher in the



NANDIRAJU RADHAKRISHNA
Veteran journalist

Government College at Rajahmundry and at the National College in Machilipatnam. Later, he got involved in Annie Besant's Home Rule Movement.

In 1919, he gave up his teaching career to become a full-time political activist. He attended the 1920 Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress, where he was attracted to the idea of non-cooperation that

the Congress endorsed.

The government had decided to go ahead with its decision on merger of the villages, prompting the municipal council members to resign en masse. In January 1921, the residents decided not to pay the taxes and the government in response clamped down by arresting, prosecuting, and sentencing several of the protesters to imprisonment. Following the Bezwada Congress session, Mahatma Gandhi visited Chirala, where Gopalakrishnayya sought his advice on the future course of action. Gandhi advised the continuation of a nonviolent struggle, and the mass relocation of people residing in the municipal area to regions beyond town limits as this would also render a depopulated municipality meaningless.

Following Gandhi's advice, Gopalakrishnayya led the residents of Chirala out of the town and set up temporary settlements beyond town limits in

April 1921. Over 13 thousand out of the town's total population of 15 thousand responded to his call and shifted to a new settlement called 'Ramanagar', where he set up an assembly comprising members from all castes. Gopalakrishnayya and the Rama Dandu worked to keep up the morale of the people and this establishment continued for a period of eleven months.

Ultimately a combination of dwindling finances, the arrest and imprisonment of Gopalakrishnayya at Trichinopoly and the absence of leaders to continue the struggle in his absence led to the winding up of Ramanagar. Following the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement, dissension spread across the Congress party on the issue of its future course of action. When C R Das and Motilal Nehru founded the Swarajya Party in 1925, Gopalakrishnayya joined it and became one of its secre-

taries from Andhra.

For his work with Rama Dandu, he was popularly known as 'Ramadas' and as a leader of the Swarajya Party he would sometimes introduce himself with a tinge of humour as C R Das or 'Chirala Rama Das'. Gopalakrishnayya mastered multiple languages and was fluent in Sanskrit, Telugu, Hindi and English and an extempore composer of verse. He was a powerful orator and set up the Andhra Vidya Peetha Gosthi -- a literary society, but gave primacy to his political career over his literary talents.

Gopalakrishnayya was diagnosed with advanced tuberculosis in 1926 and spent much of his last days in poverty and suffering. He died on 10 June 1928, aged 39.

A bronze statue of him was unveiled by K Kamaraj in Chirala. The Congress Party's headquarters in Vijayawada, the Andhra Ratna Bhavan, is named after him.

'Rift between TDP & JSP cadres will be resolved'

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Jana Sena State general secretary K Nagababu has made it clear that efforts are being made to iron out differences between Jana Sena and TDP cadres in Pithapuram.

TDP leader SVSN Varma alleged that the followers of Kakinada MP-elect and JSP leader Uday Srinivas attacked him at Vannepudi village of Golaprolu mandal on the night of June 7.

Nagababu in a release on Sunday said that the incident which took place at Vannepudi village was brought to the notice of JSP high command. The JSP leadership is collecting information on what exactly happened.

"We will take disciplinary action if JSP activists or leaders are found involved in the attack on TDP leader SVSN Varma. We will not spare whoever they are and take stringent action. We have also got information

on the incidents which took place at Tatiparti village," Nagababu stated. The JSP leaders would discuss the issues with Pithapuram JSP coordinator Mareddy Srinivas and take an appropriate decision.

Nagababu appealed to the JSP cadres to exercise restraint and not get provoked on even trivial issues, he told the cadres. Pawan Kalyan is playing a significant role in AP politics and also in the NDA. Chandrababu Naidu and Pawan Kalyan are to take oath on June 12. At the juncture, TDP and JSP activists indulging in confrontation is not proper, he observed.

"Pawan Kalyan, after taking oath, will visit Pithapuram. Coordinator Mareddy Srinivas will be accessible to the cadres. The JSP activists and leaders should reach out to people and they should not indulge in unnecessary issues," Nagababu told his cadres.



Pawan Kalyan is planning to develop Pithapuram as a model constituency and he needs the support of all the activists for the same, he said adding that problems should be resolved one after one. "I will try to be available to the cadres in Pithapuram as much as possible," Nagababu promised.

The JSP General Secretary said that drinking water and irrigation water problems to be tackled efficiently in Pithapuram, adding that the

drainage system will be renovated in the town.

It may be mentioned here that TDP leader and former MLA, SVSN Varma, who has strived hard for the election victory of Pawan Kalyan in Pithapuram, alleged that the followers of Jana Sena leader and Kakinada MP-elect Uday Srinivas attacked him and made an attempt on his life at Vannepudi village of Golaprolu mandal on the night of June 7.

Sources said that Varma was allegedly attacked by JSP activists by pelting bottles and bricks in which the windshield of Varma's car was smashed.

Varma claimed that they escaped with minor injuries from the attack. The police said that they had launched a comprehensive inquiry into the incident. Tussles between the TDP and JSP cadres would further widen if proper steps were not taken immediately, a TDP leader felt.

Land Titling Act damaged YSRCP's electoral prospects, says Katasani

PNS ■ NANDYALA

YSRCP leader and Panyam former MLA Kadasani Rambhupal Reddy opined that the Land Titling Act badly damaged the electoral prospects of YSRCP in the elections.

Talking to the media here on Sunday, he said the Land Titling Act had badly affected their electoral prospects, adding that when they were visiting rural areas under the Gadapa Gadapaku programme, the farmers used to raise their apprehensions about the Act.

"We have taken the Land Titling Act issue to the notice of the Chief Minister and the officers and explained to them about the apprehensions of farmers in rural areas about the controversial Land Titling Act, but they did not respond properly," he claimed.

Rambhupal Reddy said that some YSRCP senior leaders advised the YSRCP leadership to postpone the Land Titling Act implementation and issuing GO till the end of the elections but they



"We have taken the Land Titling Act issue to the notice of the Chief Minister and the officers and explained to them about the apprehensions of farmers in rural areas about the controversial Land Titling Act, but they did not respond properly," he claimed.

did not heed the advice. Had the Chief Ministers and Officials paid heed to the

apprehensions of YSRCP leaders on the Land Titling Act, the results would have been different, he felt.

"We had given clear indications to the YSRCP leadership that the Land Titling Act was going to affect our electoral prospects badly but no remedial steps were taken to tackle the issue appropriately," the former MLA lamented. Ex-MLA Rambhupal Reddy said that the Telugu Desam, JSP and BJP had used the Land Titling Act to create apprehensions among people especially farmers in the rural areas during the election campaign. The leaders of the three parties succeeded in taking the Land Titling Act issue to the people extensively.

"Those, who were with us during the election campaign, told us that they voted for the TDP, fearing the Land Titling Act. Moreover, images of Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy which were printed on passbooks also enhanced the fears and doubts on the Act among farmers," he observed.

CABINET MINISTERS

1. Raj Nath Singh
2. Amit Shah
3. Nitin Jairam Gadkari
4. Jagat Prakash Nadda
5. Shivraj Singh Chouhan
6. Nirmala Sitharaman
7. S Jaishankar
8. Manohar Lal
9. HD Kumaraswamy
10. Piyush Goyal
11. Dharmendra Pradhan
12. Jitan Ram Manjhi
13. Rajiv Ranjan Singh
14. Sarbananda Sonowal
15. Virendra Kumar
16. K Rammohan Naidu
17. Pralhad Joshi
18. Jual Oram
19. Giriraj Singh
20. Ashwini Vaishnav
21. Jyotiraditya Scindia
22. Bhupender Yadav
23. Gajendra Shekhawat
24. Annpurna Devi
25. Kiren Rijju
26. Hardeep Singh Puri
27. Mansukh andaviya
28. G Kishan Reddy
29. Chirag Paswan
30. C R Patil

MINISTERS OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)

1. Rao Inderjit Singh
2. Jitendra Singh
3. Arjun Ram Meghwal
4. JP Ganpatrao
5. Jayant Chaudhary

MINISTERS OF STATE

1. Jitin Prasada
2. Shripad Yesso Naik
3. Pankaj Chaudhary
4. Krishan Pal
5. Ramdas Athawale
6. Ram Nath Thakur
7. Nityanand Rai
8. Anupriya Patel
9. V. Somanna
10. Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani
11. SP Singh Baghel
12. Sushri Sobha Karandlaje
13. Kirtivardhan Singh
14. BL Verma
15. Shantanu Thakur
16. Suresh Gopi
17. L Murugan
18. Ajay Tamta
19. Bandi Sanjay Kumar
20. Kamlesh Paswan
21. Bhagirath Choudhary
22. Satish Chandra Dubey
23. Sanjay Seth
24. Ravneet Singh
25. Durgadas Uikey
26. Raksha Nikhil Khadse
27. Sukanta Majumdar
28. Savitri Thakur
29. Tokhan Sahu
30. Raj Bhushan Choudhary
31. BR Srinivasa Varma
32. Harsh Malhotra
33. NJ Bambhaniya
34. Murlidhar Mohol
35. George Kurian
36. Pabitra Margherita

YSRCP and TDP activists clash, one killed



PNS ■ KURNOOL

A TDP activist was killed and another was critically injured in a clash between the YSRCP and the TDP activists at Veldurthi village in Pattikonda constituency on Sunday.

Police said that a group of people, suspected to be the YSRCP activists, attacked TDP workers in which Girinath Chowdary and Kalyan Chowdary suffered grievous injuries.

They were shifted to the GGH in Kurnool where Girinath Chowdary succumbed to injuries. Kalyan Chowdary was shifted to a private hospital for better treatment. A police picket was set up at the village as tension prevailed. Meanwhile, the TDP leaders alleged that unable to digest the election rout, the YSRCP leaders stoked their activists to attack the TDP workers.



Lineman electrocuted

PNS ■ CHITTOOR

A lineman, working at an electrical substation, located at Gudlanayanapalli of Kuppam mandal, was electrocuted when he was working at a transformer on a pole on Sunday.

Transco officials said that the deceased lineman Muttu Kumar (28) climbed an electric pole at the sub-station to carry out repairs.

When he was carrying out repairs after disconnecting the power supply, a generator was switched on in a nearby electronic showroom resulting in electricity passing through the line on which Muttu Kumar was working.

The lineman was electrocuted and stuck on the electric pole at the substation. Sometime later, the generator was switched off and the body of the lineman was brought down from the electric pole. The deceased Muttu Kumar was married and had a three-month-old baby girl.

The family members and the villagers staged a dharna with the body of Muthu Kumar in front of Ramakrishna Electronic showroom holding them responsible for his death. Three-month-old baby girl has become fatherless because of the negligence of electronic showroom management, the villagers alleged.

Schools to reopen on June 13

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In the wake of the swearing-in ceremony of the chief minister-designate Chandrababu Naidu on June 12, the reopening of schools after summer vacations has been extended by one more day and will be reopened on June 13.

The Education Department took this decision at the request of the teachers unions. They appealed to provide flexibility to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the Chief Minister on June 12. With this, schools will open on June 13 and the Education Department has issued orders to this effect.

Generally, the summer vacation will conclude by June 11 every year and the schools will reopen on June 12. In some cases, summer vacations are extended if the summer heat does not sub-

side. But now the school reopening is extended by one day due to CM's swearing-in ceremony.

The process of admissions in schools has already started. With the TDP-led NDA alliance winning the recently concluded assembly elections in AP, TDP chief Chandrababu will soon form the coalition government as the chief minister. Chandrababu will take oath as Chief Minister on June 12. But on the same day, schools in the state will resume after summer vacation.

With this, teachers' unions and TDP MLC AS Ramakrishna handed over a representation to Praveen Prakash, principal secretary of the school education department, to open the schools on June 13 instead of 12. The date of re-opening of schools has been postponed by a day.

Indebted betting organiser ends life

PNS ■ ELURU

A man who incurred a huge loss in election betting and unable to repay the debts, committed suicide at a mango orchard by consuming pesticide at Toorpu Digavalli village in Nuzvid mandal on Sunday.

Nuzvid Rural CI Ramakrishna told the media the deceased Jaggarapu Venugopal Reddy (53) was the husband of Toorpu Digavalli village Sarpanch.

He organized bettings in a big way on the election results. However, he lost huge money in the betting. He owed crores of rupees to the punters. Unable to pay the money and face the pressure from them, he committed suicide by consuming pesticide at a mango orchard located in Mukkollupadu-Toorpu



Digapalli villages. Vijaya, the wife of the deceased Venugopal Reddy complained with the rural police. A case was registered and an investigation is being carried out on the complaint given by the wife of the deceased, the CI said.

Will try to develop TG & AP: Kishan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy who represents Secunderabad in the Lok Sabha took oath as a Union Minister for the second time in Narendra Modi's 3.0 cabinet. Speaking on the occasion, Kishan said that he will try hard to develop the Telugu states and that he will dedicate himself to fulfilling all the assurances given in the Sankalp Patra.

He said that Modi's 2.0 government spent Rs 10 lakh crore in Telangana in the last 10 years. Kishan said the new government will continue development projects like building roads, distributing ration rice and executing drinking water supply



schemes. He said the Modi government had constructed four crore houses across the nation in the last 10 years and that the BJP-led NDA government will construct three crore more houses in the coming days. Kishan gave a call to BJP activists to strengthen the party and thanked BJP

activists and the leaders of the party's morchas in the Secunderabad constituency.

He said that the AIMIM had contested in the guise of the Congress in Secunderabad and that the people had rejected the conspiracies of the Congress and the AIMIM.

Ambedkar statue desecrated

PNS ■ AMALAPURAM

The statue of BR Ambedkar was desecrated by unidentified miscreants at Yerrapothavaram village in Ramachandrapuram mandal on the night of Saturday. Police said that miscreants garlanded the statue of Ambedkar with footwear. The miscreants also pasted a paper in which they mentioned the name of Pilla Rambabu and abused Ambedkar.

The police registered a case under Crime No 171/2024 u/s 153(A), 509,506 and SC/ST Atrocities Act. The police pressed sniffer dogs into

action to collect clues at the statue. Ramachandrapuram DSP and CI visited the scene and appealed to the people to provide them with information about the culprits. Meanwhile, MLA Vasamshetti Subash purified the Ambedkar statue with milk.

The MLA vehemently condemned the desecration of the statue. He alleged that some brats committed the heinous act and directed the police to take stringent steps to ensure that such incidents do not recur. The miscreants tried to blame the TDP-JSP-BJP, the MLA criticized.



INDIA CORNER

Cop's son killed over ransom in UP's Meerut

A constable's six-year-old son was allegedly killed in Dhanpur village in Incholi Police Station jurisdiction over ransom, police said on Sunday. Gopal Yadav, a UP Police Constable, is currently posted in Saharanpur. On Sunday around 8 am, his six-year-old son Puneet disappeared while playing from outside his house. Later, Yadav received a ransom letter with demand for Rs 50 lakh. Initially, police detained a local woman who the family had accused of kidnapping the boy. Senior Superintendent of Police Rohit Singh Sajwan said. However, soon the family found the boy's body in a sugarcane field in the village. Circle Officer Navina Shukla told PTI that police were analysing the ransom letter. The SSP said the victim's family members have alleged that the boy was murdered 'intentionally'. The killing could also be a consequence.



Cop run over with tractor by sand mafia in UP's Nawabganj

A 24-year-old constable was run over with a tractor allegedly by the sand mafia in Nawabganj area, police said on Sunday. The incident took place Saturday night when constable Rohit Kumar, a resident of Bijnor, went to Nagla Chandan on a tip-off about illegal sand mining with Sub Inspector Santosh Kumar and Constable Chaman. When they stopped the tractor-trolley, and other policemen began questioning the mafia, the driver hit Kumar with the tractor and injured him seriously, police said. Kumar was rushed to the Lohia hospital and was later taken to a private hospital. He died during treatment Sunday morning. Kumar was 2021 batch constable, Superintendent of Police Vikas Kumar said. The SP said those involved in the incident have been identified and will be arrested soon.



Nagpur man loses Rs 87.6 lakh in online share trading fraud

A retired bank employee was allegedly duped of Rs 87.6 lakh by cyber fraudsters who lured him to invest in share trading in Maharashtra's Nagpur city, police said on Sunday. Based on a complaint, the police have registered a case under relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code and Information Technology Act, an official said. The 60-year-old complainant allegedly received a message from his daughter's Instagram account about investing and earning huge returns after completing online courses on an application, he said. Accordingly, he downloaded the application on his mobile phone, completed the online courses on May 16, and started getting suggestions for investments in different companies, he said. The complainant transferred Rs 87.6 lakh to the bank accounts of three companies through immediate payment service (IMPS) for investments, the official said.



LS to get LoP after 10 years

OPPOSITION HOPES DEPUTY SPEAKER GETS ELECTED

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the INDIA bloc parties' numbers increasing in the 18th Lok Sabha, the lower house is set to get a leader of the opposition (LoP) after ten years, and opposition leaders also hope that a deputy speaker will be elected soon, a post that had been vacant for the last five years.

The 17th Lok Sabha, which was dissolved on June 5, did not have a deputy speaker for its full term, and it was the second consecutive term of the lower house without an LoP.

All eyes are set at the lower house which will get an LoP, and is also expected to have a deputy speaker, a post which usually goes to the opposition ranks.

While the INDIA bloc has not yet held any coordination meeting on its strategy for the Parliament, an opposition leader said they will mount



pressure that the deputy speaker's post is not left vacant this time.

"The BJP government has been rejected by people, they did not elect any deputy speaker in last five years... Hope they have learnt a lesson and will elect a deputy speaker this time," a TMC leader said.

The 17th Lok Sabha, in which the BJP was in an absolute majority with 303 seats, elected Om Birla as the

All eyes are set at the lower house which will get an LoP, and is also expected to have a deputy speaker, a post which usually goes to the opposition ranks

Speaker. In a first, no deputy speaker was elected through its term of five years.

As per Article 93 of the Constitution, the Lok Sabha shall, as soon as may be, choose two members to be speaker and deputy speaker so often as the offices become vacant. However, it does not provide a specific time frame.

"The office of the deputy speaker is a constitutional requirement. However, a troubling trend is that legislatures, both national and state, have not filled the office of the deputy speaker. For example, between 2019 and 2024, there was no deputy speaker in the Parliament. The last Rajasthan Assembly also did not have a deputy speaker for its full five-year term," Chakshu Roy, who heads the legislative and civic engagement initiatives at PRS Legislative Research, told PTI.

"Currently, the Jharkhand legislature, whose term is scheduled to end later this year, does not have a deputy speaker," he said.



Delhi's maximum temperature settles at 42.5° C

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The national capital on Sunday recorded a maximum temperature of 42.5 degrees Celsius, 2.5 notches above the season's average, according to the India Meteorological Department.

The weather department has predicted mainly clear sky with strong winds on the day Narendra Modi will take oath as the prime minister for a third straight term.

Modi will take the oath as the head of a coalition government. The ceremony is scheduled to take place at the Rashtrapati Bhavan at 7.15 pm.

Modi equals record feat of 3rd term as challenges await

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi scripted history on Sunday as he took the oath of office for a third straight term, becoming the first non-Congress leader and second after Jawaharlal Nehru to achieve the feat that few thought possible for a BJP leader until he shook up national politics in 2014.

His third term, which always appeared inevitable, did not come with the massive mandate he and his party had been claiming with their typical bravado, as the Congress and its allies in the INDIA bloc fought a doctored rearguard battle to shock the BJP in its strongholds like Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

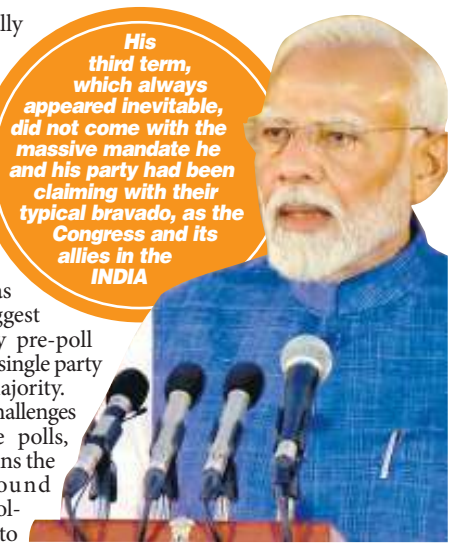
It is, however, a tribute to his towering political presence that the BJP's third-best tally of 240 seats is being seen as a disappointment by the party's ardent supporters and projected as a "moral defeat" by the Congress

whose own tally of 99 seats, its third worst, is being hailed by the opposition party.

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance has won 293 seats, which Modi has noted is the biggest success for any pre-poll alliance when a single party did not get a majority.

Despite the challenges thrown by the polls, Modi, 73, remains the fulcrum around which Indian politics is bound to revolve in the coming years, while he himself will have to negotiate the sharp bends and blind turns of coalition politics for the first time since he entered the electoral politics as Gujarat chief minister in 2001.

Since leading the BJP for the



His third term, which always appeared inevitable, did not come with the massive mandate he and his party had been claiming with their typical bravado, as the Congress and its allies in the INDIA

first time in the Gujarat assembly polls in 2002, held in the shadow of the riots in the state following the Godhra train burning incident, Modi has never looked back, remarking the substance and sentiments of politics like few before him.

I will be your voice in Parliament: Rahul to students on NEET row

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi hit out at Prime Minister-designate Narendra Modi on Sunday over the NEET-UG medical entrance row, saying the alleged "irregularities" in the examination have devastated more than 24 lakh students even before he takes oath for a new term in office.

Gandhi assured students in the country that he will become their voice in Parliament and strongly raise the issues related to their future.

Amid allegations of inflation of marks in the NEET-UG medical entrance exam, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced on Saturday that the education ministry has set up a four-member panel to review the grace marks award-



Gandhi assured students in the country that he will become their voice in Parliament and strongly raise the issues related to their future

ed to more than 1,500 candidates.

In a post in Hindi on X,

Gandhi said, "Narendra Modi has not even taken oath yet and the irregularities in the NEET exam has devastated more than 24 lakh students and their families." Six students from a single exam centre topped the exam with maximum marks, while many got such marks which are technically not possible, but the government is continuously denying the possibility of paper leak, the former Congress chief said.

He said the Congress had made a robust plan to deal with this 'paper leak industry' running in connivance with the education mafia and the government machinery. "We had pledged in our manifesto to give students 'freedom from paper leak' by making a law," he said.

Deve Gowda slams Cong, backs Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a scathing attack on the Congress, Janata Dal (Secular) chief H D Deve Gowda on Sunday slammed the opposition party for its "arrogance and negativity" while extending his party's full support to the new NDA government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Gowda's remarks came as he thanked PM Modi for offering a Cabinet position to the JD(S), assuring that his party's minister will serve the coalition with "total commitment".

His son and former Karnataka chief minister H D Kumaraswamy will make a debut in national politics and take oath as part of PM Modi's new Council of Ministers.

In a strongly worded letter,



the former prime minister congratulated PM Modi on his "historic" third consecutive term, attributing the poll victory to "the almighty's extraordinary blessing" on the prime minister.

Gowda expressed confidence that PM Modi will continue to serve the nation with the same dedication as the past decade.

2 planes land, take off within close interval on same runway

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Aviation regulator DGCA is probing an incident of an IndiGo plane landing and an Air India aircraft taking off from the same runway in less than a minute at the Mumbai airport, officials said on Sunday.

The watchdog has derostered the Air Traffic Controller (ATC) who was on duty at the time of the incident on Saturday, while IndiGo has initiated a probe into the matter, they added.

A purported video of one plane landing and another taking off from the same runway has been shared on social media.

"We are conducting a probe and have already de-rostered the ATCO involved in the



incident," the DGCA official said.

Mumbai airport is a single-runway operation with two crossing runways.

On a single runway RW27 at the Mumbai airport, there are around 46 arrivals and departures per hour.

IndiGo said its aircraft continued the approach and

landing as per the ATC instructions.

"On June 8, IndiGo flight 6E 6053 from Indore was given landing clearance by ATC at Mumbai Airport. The Pilot in Command continued the approach and landing and followed ATC instructions," IndiGo said in a statement.

NCP turns down MoS rank opts to wait for Cabinet rank



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NCP on Sunday turned down the BJP's offer to accommodate Praful Patel as a minister of state with independent charge in the new NDA government and said it was assured that "remedial measures" would be taken.

Patel, the working president of BJP ally NCP, argued that since he had already served as a Cabinet minister in the Union government, assuming office as a minister of state with independent charge would be a "demotion" for him.

"We have conveyed this to the BJP leadership and have been asked to wait for some days till it takes remedial measures," Patel told reporters here on a day when Narendra Modi would be sworn in as prime minister.

As per the power-sharing arrangements, the NCP was offered one post in the Council of Ministers of the NDA government led by PM Modi.

BJP leaders Devendra Fadnavis and Vinod Tawde called on Patel, who was reportedly upset at the "demotion" in the Union government.

The NCP has two members in the Parliament -- Patel in the Rajya Sabha and Sunil Tatkare in the Lok Sabha. The NCP is likely to increase its tally in the Rajya Sabha by two in the next few months.

Fadnavis said the BJP had decided on a criteria for handing out ministerial berths to coalition partners on the basis of their strengths in the Parliament.

"We cannot twist the criteria for one party. The NCP will be accommodated in the future whenever their will be an expansion of the Cabinet as they had requested for a Cabinet rank in the Council of Ministers," Fadnavis, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister, said.

NCP president Ajit Pawar said he supported the NDA and was seen at the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Modi



NIJJAR CASE Canada intel chief made secret visits to India twice

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Canada's intelligence agency chief David Vigneault paid two under-the-wraps visits to India in February and March to apprise Indian officials of the case relating to the killing of Khalistani extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, people familiar with the matter said.

Vigneault, the director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), is learnt to have shared information that emerged during Ottawa's investigation into the killing.

The ties between India and Canada came under severe strain following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations.

Ex-PM Rajiv Gandhi's statue found vandalised in Tripura

PNS ■ AGARTALA

A statue of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi was found vandalised in Tripura's Unakoti district, a Congress MLA said on Sunday.

Congress legislator Birajit Sinha alleged that BJP-backed goons were behind the van-

dalisation of the three-foot statue of Gandhi, which was laid on a concrete structure in Kailashahar subdivision's Govindapur area in 2009 as a mark to pay respect to the former PM.

"The statue of ex-prime minister Rajiv Gandhi was found vandalised on Sunday

morning. I suspect that the statue was vandalised by a few BJP-backed goons," Sinha told reporters.

The legislator demanded the arrest of those involved in the vandalism of the statue. Sinha also claimed that some miscreants vandalised a CPI(M) party office in

Srirampur in the Kailashahar Police Station area soon after the announcement of the Lok Sabha election results.

A statue of Himadri Deb, a renowned cultural activist, was damaged by miscreants on Friday in Kagirgaon under the Kailashahar Police Station limits.



'India doesn't support' Cannes kind' of cinema'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

India didn't have any moment at Cannes, says filmmaker Anurag Kashyap, stressing that the victory of independent filmmakers at the European gala is theirs alone and the government doesn't support that kind of award winning cinema.

India won an unprecedented three awards at the 77th edition of the Cannes Film Festival last month -- Payal Kapadia became the first ever director from India to win the Grand Prix for her movie 'All We Imagine As Light', Anasuya Sengupta was awarded best actress in the Un Certain Regard strand for 'The Shameless', and FTII student Chidananda S. Naik earned the best short film award at the La Cinef section for 'Sunflowers



"India didn't have any moment at Cannes, not a single of those films are Indian. We need to address it the way it should be addressed. India has stopped supporting such cinema, the kind of cinema that was at Cannes," he said.

Were the First Ones to Know." "I get very upset when it's said 'India@Cannes'. This is a boost... a shot in the arm for a lot of independent filmmakers but their victory is their own," Kashyap told PTI in an interview here.

"India didn't have any moment at Cannes, not a single of those films are Indian.

We need to address it the way it should be addressed. India has stopped supporting such cinema, the kind of cinema that was at Cannes," he said.

He said Kapadia's 'All We Imagine as Light', which was also the first film from India in 30 years to feature in the main competition at Cannes known for giving a platform to new

voices, received funding from a French company. The Malayalam-Hindi feature, which earned the second-highest award at Cannes after Palme d'Or, is an Indo-French co-production between Petit Chaos from France and Chalk and Cheese Films from India.

There were several films at Cannes with either India-set stories or Indian talent at the helm, but most were co-productions with banners from other countries.

Indian-British filmmaker Sandhya Suri's 'Santosh' and Karan Kandhari's 'Sister Midnight' were funded by the UK, while Konstantin Bojanov's 'The Shameless' was almost self-funded. However, Chidanand's 'Sunflowers...' is a production of the TV Wing One-year programme under

the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII).

"India just likes to take credit for a lot of things, they do not support these films, and they don't even support these films to have a release in cinema," Kashyap said.

In 2021, Kapadia had won an award at Cannes for the documentary 'A Night of Knowing Nothing' but that is yet to be released in India.

"Stop taking credit for it. Let's stop this fake celebration... Even if the film is released, no one will go to watch it in the theatre," the 51-year-old said. He also cited the example of Shaunak Sen's documentary 'All that Breathes', which won the Golden Eye award at Cannes 2022, that didn't release on Indian screens and went straight to a streamer.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Parched Capital

The water crisis in Delhi shows no signs of abating, the SC's directions to Haryana notwithstanding

The water situation in the Capital has gone worse due to Haryana's and Himachal Pradesh's refusal to supply water to Delhi, especially during these sweltering months. The issue is especially vexed since a major amount of Delhi's water supply comes from these nearby States, affecting millions of people and several industries in the NCR. The Yamuna provides Delhi with most of its water, and Haryana is an important supplier via the Western Yamuna Canal. Himachal Pradesh, for its part, makes an indirect contribution to the river through its tributaries. The significance of upholding the current water-sharing arrangements among States has been emphasised and reiterated by the Supreme Court, the latest instance being less than a week old. This entails making certain that Himachal Pradesh and Haryana provide Delhi with the agreed-upon amounts of water, particularly during the hot summer months when the demand soars. The Supreme Court last week allowed Himachal Pradesh to release 137 surplus cusecs and directed the Haryana Government to facilitate this flow through Hathnikund barrage to Wazirabad uninterruptedly to Delhi to mitigate the drinking water crisis there. Meanwhile, the Delhi BJP has demanded a special session of the Assembly to discuss the poor water situation. The move would help the issue receive quick and widespread attention, guaranteeing that legislators and bureaucrats give it top priority and move more quickly as a result of this urgency. With almost 35 million people in Delhi as of 2023, there is every year major shortage of water as supplies from Himachal Pradesh and Haryana dwindle.



The Delhi Jal Board, the city's water provider, finds it difficult to maintain steady supply levels, which frequently results in water shortages and rationing. Both wealthy and low-income households face severe inconveniences because water is available only a few hours a day. The residents are forced to depend on costly, unhygienic and erratic private water tankers. Public health hazards are made worse by this water problem. The possibility of water-borne illnesses rises when there is insufficient water available, which affects hygiene standards. The city's healthcare system may be further taxed by outbreaks of cholera, dysentery and typhoid brought on by poor sanitation. To redress Delhi's water scarcity issue, a multipronged response is needed to be put into place as a standard operating procedure. It is imperative that States stick to legal agreements and cooperate more with one another. Requirements for water infrastructure, such as treatment facilities and reservoirs, can be lessened with investment. Furthermore, encouraging water-saving behaviors and enhancing wastewater recycling might lessen the demand on the available water resources. To improve groundwater recharge, long-term initiatives should also involve rainwater gathering and the revitalisation of nearby water bodies.

PICTALK



A newly inducted officer with his wife after the Passing Out Parade at the IMA, in Dehradun

Major losses for BJP, coalitions re-emerge

The recent elections in India show the BJP's struggle due to divisive talk and policies, highlighting the importance of diverse coalitions



SHIVAJI SARKAR

Coalitions naturally suit this diverse country, allowing all voices to be heard and leaving no room for hatred. The BJP's overemphasis on religion, anti-Muslim rhetoric and offensive language has backfired. The Lok Sabha's composition has shifted significantly for three States of Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Maharashtra. In Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, where the BJP excelled in 2019, it now faces significant setbacks. In West Bengal, it sank to 11 seats enduring conflicts with TMC workers even on polling day, the BJP's position has weakened. Democracy survives in this country because of the innate wisdom of the ordinary common people. The Samajwadi Party with 37 seats have emerged as the largest party. Along with six by its Congress ally, total UP tally is 43 for INDIA. The BJP which aimed at winning 80, is satisfied with a mere 34 with many of its central and State ministers losing. Voters in areas around Ayodhya have done the unthinkable. They voted against excesses for Ram temple construction by acquiring 64-acre extra land for the temple, demolishing thousands of houses, shops, temples and structures with impunity. Many homes and shops were demolished for the Ram Path in Ayodhya, leaving people questioning why the BJP Government chose to do so. Some wonder why the Government is involved in temple construction. Similar concerns arose in Varanasi, where PM Modi faced a close contest despite winning decisively in 2019.

Even Sitapur connected to Sita, not far off Ayodhya, elected an unknown Congressman Rakesh Rathor. All these places had voted with vengeance against the highhandedness they suffered. Ganga remains as dirty as it was ten years before in Banaras. But the temple town which had varied temples of Shiv, Ganesh and other mandirs of several deities was razed for a beautification corridor that the locals never wanted. Even the main Vishwanath temple was not spared. It had images of other deities; they were all demolished to give it a new look. These



5000 temples and shops were the family livelihoods. They never expected to suffer from a Hindu party. Even a Muslim ruler did not do it.

Asked if they were acting like Aurangzeb, some senior BJP leaders replied

"he was the ruler then, now we are and would do whatever we can". The electorate did what they could. Chitrakoot and Vindhyaal repeated it vengefully for similar "beautifying corridors".

The Ram mandir had limited influence. Allahabad, the city named after Vaivatswatu Manu's daughter Eela, from where Ram walked to Chitrakoot today is in a sorry State. For no rhyme or reason Eelabhad name was changed. Over 100-year-old houses were razed or partially demolished to create roads for toll or Kumbh Mela. Arbitrary actions have given the city a devaStated look. The BJP leaders told citizens, "Modiji ne kaha hai to hoga hi" - that was the guarantee.

Most demolition agents were related to one or the other BJP leaders or their friends in a distant western State.

The issue of Ram historically had never helped the BJP. In 1989, when BJP was agitating for shilanyas, it lost the UP State assembly elections. In 1992, when they demolished the temple structure as Hindus called it since 1949, which the BJP called a disputed structure, the BJP lost power for the next six years. As of now through

a judgment based on continued occupation of a premises, the temple is coming up, the Pran Pratistha of not bal (infant) Ram but a balak (child) Ram is not taken kindly by Ayodhya residents.

Residents in Ayodhya face confinement during celebrations, worrying about the missing infant Ram image. Locals resent security measures affecting their livelihoods. Temple visits are like airport security, requiring a long walk and Aadhaar. Footfall dwindles; people yearn for the original idol. Will the new one satisfy them?

Kalighat takeover

Even before the polls began, observers assessed severe losses for the BJP in West Bengal for unemployment, rapid price rises, agniweer and other issues. This was added by the frictions within the BJP fold. The BJP leaders were fighting more against themselves than with Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool. It was not an easy challenge for Mamata Banerjee, to protect Bengali pride. She effectively did it launching her campaign for BJP-humiliated Mohua Maitra from Krishnanagar. The BJP tried to turn it into a VIP constituency by pitting an unknown Rajmata of Krishnanagar royal family of Maharaja Krishnachandra Roy. The Krishnanagar ploy not only did not work, it also became Waterloo for BJP. Its tally came down from 18 to 11. Many ministers like Subhash

Sarkar, former State party chief Dilip Ghosh, Sandeshkhali supposed rape victim Rekha Patr lost at the hustings.

Sandeshkhali was hyped up. It was busted by Mamata as fake and people believed her.

The famous Kalighat temple, supposedly one of the 51 shakti peethas also became a poll issue. A business house from Ahmedabad has reportedly illegally taken it over. It hurts the Bengali psyche.

Maharashtra was another Waterloo where the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Thakre) emerged as the real Sena. Along with Uddhav, Sharad Pawar and the Congress, the opposition won 30 of the 48 seats. While BJP had to cut a sorry figure. Maharashtra has proved that Uddhav Thakre's is the real party. Even Muslims in large numbers did not mind voting Uddhav and Shiv Sena (UT) voted for the Congress. Their vote was against betrayal by the elected leaders Eknath Shinde, Ajit Pawar and BJP which rocked the BJP-Sena alliance.

The recent polls prove that hatred, name calling and below the belt Statements by the mighty have no place in electoral fray. Nobody is an enemy. They are just rivals. In a democracy there is no authoritarian leader. All are equal. It also proves that coalition is more natural in this country than a one-party rule.

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



THE RECENT POLLS PROVE THAT HATRED, NAME-CALLING AND BELOW-THE-BELT STATEMENTS BY THE MIGHTY HAVE NO PLACE WHILE IN ELECTORAL FRAY. NOBODY IS AN ENEMY. THEY ARE JUST RIVALS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MILK PRICES IMPACT HEALTH, TOO

Madam — Apropos the news story "Soaring milk prices may hit affordability, health," published on June 8, this is my response. As a daily newspaper reader, I'm struck by the paradox of India being a global leader in milk production yet facing rising milk prices, which threatens the affordability of this essential nutrition for many. With whole milk prices around Rs. 66 a litre, the common man's ability to provide nutritious milk for their family is at risk. Despite India's rich dairy heritage, the increasing cost could impinge on public health, underscoring the need to address the reasons behind these price hikes.

It's also concerning that while milk production is booming, with an impressive output of 231 million metric tonnes in 2023, 60 per cent of it still comes from the unorganised sector. This sector might struggle as urban consumers lean towards packaged milk from organised dairies. However, these packaged products often contain preservatives that pose health risks, raising questions about their safety. As we mark Milk Day, it's crucial to ensure milk remains accessible and safe for everyone, maintaining its status as a staple in our diet.

Kiara Rao | Mumbai

URGENT INVASIVE SPECIES CRISIS

Madam — Apropos the news story "Invasive species threaten Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary," published on June 9, this is my response. As a daily reader of the newspaper, the ongoing situation at Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (WWS) is profoundly concerning. Invasive species like Senna spectabilis are transforming this once-thriving biodiversity hotspot into a monoculture. The rapid spread of these species has overwhelmed local flora, disrupted the food chain and contributed to a decline in native wildlife, including tigers and elephants. The Asian elephant's role in dispersing Senna seeds through its dung exemplifies how interconnected and delicate



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

Protecting health through food safety

Food fuels our health. Its quality influences, and aggravates, chronic diseases such as heart issues, diabetes, obesity and some cancer types

Food is an essential component of our life. The quality of food one consumes plays a significant role in developing and managing chronic diseases. Many chronic conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes, obesity and certain types of cancer, are closely linked to diet and nutrition. Unfortunately, the public rarely looks into the quality of food one consumes. We can see the mushrooming of street food stalls across the nook and corner of the country, sans any hygiene or quality. Even the food items we procure from supermarkets do not guarantee quality. In many cases, there would be a mismatch between what is mentioned on the label and actual ingredients. Even enforcement agencies rarely check the quality of foods served by the vendors.



toxins. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), around 600 million people fall ill after consuming contaminated food each year, leading to 420,000 deaths. These figures underscore the severe health implications of unsafe food. Foodborne illnesses can cause long-term health problems, including kidney failure, chronic arthritis, brain and nerve damage and death. This year's World Food Safety Day theme, "Prepare for the Unexpected", underscores the importance of proactive measures in maintaining food safety amidst various unforeseen challenges. The need for robust and adaptive food safety measures is of prime importance in the current scenario, where new pathogens are evolving and new toxic additives are added to foods to make money. Earlier, every food item had

a local flavour available in a particular place and in a specific shop. Since the production level was minimal, the manufacturers had control over the quality and safety of their food products. Unfortunately, the globalization of the food supply chain has increased the complexity of ensuring food safety. Food products often travel long distances and pass through numerous intermediaries before reaching consumers. This extended supply chain makes it challenging to trace the source of contamination and implement consistent safety standards. Reliance on technology in food production and safety monitoring introduces risks related to technological failures. For instance, breakdowns in refrigeration systems can lead to spoilage, while contamination in automated processing lines can spread quickly if not detected.

Bioterrorism, or the intentional contamination of food supplies, is a potential but severe threat. Members of the Rajneeshee (Osho) cult contaminated salad bars in Oregon with Salmonella, sickening 751 people. The quali-

ty standards should be fixed not on a nation's stature but based on its consumable nature. The quality of food products available in the Indian markets and overseas has a wide gap. Harmonizing standards globally can help address disparities in food safety practices across countries. There should also be active collaboration between agencies like WHO and FAO in evolving strategies to combat foodborne diseases and health issues. Enforcement agencies should embrace tech advancements like blockchain for better food traceability and IoT sensors for real-time monitoring of storage conditions. Keeping food safe demands constant innovation and vigilance. As our global food system continues to grow and change, so must our approaches to ensuring its safety. Preparing for the unexpected in food safety is not just a reactive measure but a proactive commitment to safeguarding the well-being of all humanity.

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

Excitement for T20 clash



Apropos the news story "India Vs Pakistan: Spotlight on NY pitch as steady India take on wounded Pakistan," published on June 8, this is my response. As a regular reader of cricket news, I'm eagerly awaiting the high-stakes T20 World Cup clash between India and Pakistan this Sunday. India's confidence contrasts sharply with Pakistan's recent struggles,

highlighted by their shocking defeat to the USA. The newly constructed Nassau County International Cricket Stadium, with its unpredictable pitch, adds an intriguing layer to the matchup.

The pitch's uneven bounce has been a major talking point, raising both safety concerns and doubts about its suitability for high-scoring games. Rohit Sharma's injury and his cautious remarks post-Ireland match underline the uncertainty. Pakistan's limited preparation time at the venue could be a significant disadvantage. However, their unpredictability, especially their formidable bowling led by Shaheen Afridi, keeps the contest balanced. India's strategy, possibly including the in-form Kuldeep Yadav, adds another dimension. This game promises to be a fascinating blend of skill, strategy and unpredictability, making it a must-watch event.

Dhruv Chatterjee | Varanasi

these ecosystems are. The forest department's 1986 decision to plant Senna, although well-intentioned, highlights the importance of thoroughly assessing ecological impacts before introducing new species. The Forest Department's efforts to control Senna are commendable but face significant challenges. Sustainable strategies and community involvement are crucial to restoring Wayanad's ecological balance. This situation serves as a stark reminder of how invasive species can cascade into widespread ecological and economic crises, urging us to approach conservation with greater caution and urgency.

Aditya Gupta | Mysore

SLEEP EARLY, STAY HEALTHY

Madam — Apropos the news story "Nightbirds, hit the sack early for mental health, longevity," published on June 9, this is my response. As someone who peruses the newspaper daily, I find the new study by Stanford Medicine quite enlightening. Grandma's advice about early bedtimes holds more weight than

ever, transcending our natural sleep preferences, or chronotypes. The research, involving nearly 74,000 adults, reveals that late-night wakefulness correlates with higher rates of mental health disorders, such as depression and anxiety, regardless of being a night owl or a morning person.

The study's unexpected findings challenge the long-held belief that aligning sleep schedules with one's chronotype is key for mental well-being. Instead, the timing of sleep itself is crucial. Those who go to bed early exhibit better mental health outcomes. This discovery emphasises the importance of sleep hygiene and the potential benefits of adopting an earlier bedtime for everyone. Despite the difficulty in altering one's chronotype, strategies like morning sunlight exposure and consistent routines might aid in improving sleep patterns and, subsequently, mental health.

Aarush Mehta | Agra

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE OUR ATTITUDES

Fear and affection stem from experiences shaping human thoughts and emotions



RAVI VALLURI

The Mahabharata is one of the greatest epics essayed in the sub-continent, perhaps in the world. It is believed to have been recited by the sage Veda Vyasa with Lord Ganesha himself playing the role of meticulous scribe.

The saga captures variegated attitudes and heterogeneous characteristics of humans in both the gross and subtle form. Human attitudes and standpoints emerge in all shades of the spectrum, rather than in simple black, white and grey.

Attitude is all

Lord Krishna, an avatar of Lord Vishnu decides to test the waters and mollify the ego, arrogance and anger of the Kaurava scion- Duryodhana. Social influences, overwrought emotions and environmental factors impinge upon human minds. Consequently, individual behavioural patterns become complex and often antipathetic in nature. The mind gets filled with cobwebs and nugatory thoughts and human attitudes towards self and others become ossified.

Duryodhana's mind was prejudiced against his cousins and this attitude was fuelled by his scheming uncle Shakuni, sibling Dushasana and bosom friend and fabled archer, Karna. History is replete with examples of such discriminatory practices. The genocide committed by the Nazis in Germany against the hapless Jewish populace is a singular and extreme example of how prejudice leads to hatred, discrimination and mass extermination of sections of people and humanity.



Compassion: an efficacious attitude

Aeons ago an estimable Zen Master assembled several monks and novices for vigorous sessions of meditation. During one of these sessions a tutee was caught stealing by his colleagues. The guilty was produced before the Zen Master and all those present demanded that he be expelled from the Temple of Knowledge as an exemplary punishment. The Zen Master ignored the entreaties of the monks.

Once again, the pupil was caught stealing. This angered the assembly of monks who demanded that the culprit recompense the losses he caused so that it had a salutary influence on all the inhabitants of the monastery. The Zen Master, after deep thought, forgave the troubled student, causing dismay among others. He believed the student lacked moral clarity while others had evolved through meditation. "I can't abandon him," the Master said. Touched, the student vowed to change, shedding his thieving ways to become a better person.

The consideration and compassion displayed by the Master was singularly responsible for this change. Psychologists opine that the inclination and slant of humans is immovably wedged in by certain predominant factors like the actor-observer effect arousal by various stimuli, attribution, balance maintained in day-to-day operations.

Likewise, the Zen tutee was overwhelmed by the tenderness and benevolence shown by the Master and he mutated into a better human being by eschewing the act of surreptitious pilferage.

Essentially human beings are social creatures and need to interact with and relate to others. This in turn shapes their attitudes and behavioural patterns. Individual attitudes evolve through a continuous learning process. Xenophobia and fondness are a result of various occurrences and their influence on the human mind. Impression formation takes place in a systematic manner and is exhibited as decent or indecent behaviour. The illustrious American business honcho, Harold S Geneen was to famously say, "Leadership is practiced not so much in words as in attitudes and in action."

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

Uncertainty prevails after Lok Sabha polls



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

Congress, with its allies, gains strength as Opposition. Modi adapts to a new landscape, reliant on diverse regional satraps for support

The dust has settled and the performers are back in their homes as the great election carnival has come to an end. What pervades all over India is a sense of uncertainty and indecisiveness. No political parties have an absolute majority of their own to form the Government though the National Democratic Alliance (also termed as Non Dependable Allies) has nearly 300 MPs, 27 more than the halfway mark. Though the Congress, the main player in the opposition, could not touch the three digit mark, together with its allies, the party has emerged as a striking force.

While reporting about the Bharat Jodo Yatra undertaken by Rahul Gandhi, The Pioneer had forecast that it was going to be the gamechanger of national politics. The question is whether Rahul could maintain the initial enthusiasm generated by the Yatra. He was handicapped by the absence of a team of leaders who could rise up to his expectations. Better luck next time.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was not his normal self when addressed the party cadre on the day results were announced. Something was missing from his hitherto confident voice and the speech failed to inspire the party ranks, a rare incident in his decade long avatar as Prime Minister. This is not Narendra Modi who is familiar to the electorate. Modi had made a grant entry to New Delhi in 2014 after winning the Lok Sabha election. He had 282 seats of his own and 336 with the support of his alliance partners. The people offered India on a platter to Modi in the 2019 election despite the sustained campaign by a section of the New Delhi media. The BJP on its own won 303 seats while the NDA had 353 seats which made Narendra Modi the monarch of all he surveyed.

But 2024 turned out to be an entirely different scenario. The charismatic, uncompromising and powerful Modi is at the mercy of two regional satraps with national ambitions, Nitish Kumar of JD(U) and Chandrababu Naidu of TDP. Even before the NDA held its first meeting, Kumar and Naidu had put forward a set of demands including conducting the caste census and scrapping the Agniveer Scheme. Equally important is the opposition of these two leaders to the Uniform Civil Code, a dream project of Modi as well as BJP. These are in addition to Naidu's demand for the post of Speaker and four or five berths in the union cabinet. Nitish too has demanded an equal number of berths in the cabinet and that too with the coveted ministries like Railways, Agriculture and Rural Development.

Cut to 2014 when Narendra Modi led the Lok Sabha election campaign for the first time. Television images aired pictures of a sheepish Chandrababu Naidu walking behind Modi throughout the campaign yatra in Andhra Pradesh. Within two or three years, Naidu walked out of the NDA, cursing and abusing Modi. His ire was directed against the Prime Minister's refusal to accord Special Category Status to Andhra Pradesh. He walked over to the Congress camp and declared that his mission was to oust Narendra Modi from the post of Prime Minister as well India. Some media even reported that Naidu is a strong contender for the top post of the country. But the 2019 assembly election shattered Naidu's dreams. Jagan Mohan Reddy, leader of YSR Congress, demolished Naidu in the assembly election with a massive win and was sworn in as chief minister. As part of his



THE UNCERTAINTY FOLLOWING THE 2024 ELECTION, WITH NO PARTY SECURING AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY, UNDERSCORES THE SHIFTING DYNAMICS AND CHALLENGES FACING KEY POLITICAL FIGURES LIKE NARENDRA MODI AND RAHUL GANDHI

objective of finishing TDP once and for ever, Reddy launched a thorough probe into the charges of corruption against Naidu, his family and friends. Three years ago, Naidu's six-year old grandson Devansh had assets worth Rs 19.55 crore and there was nothing abnormal in an investigation by the Income Tax officials. Naidu faces a series of corruption charges for which he was arrested and imprisoned for months by the Jagan Mohan Reddy Government. When it was time for the 2024 assembly election, Naidu felt the need of support and that was how he cast his lot with BJP and Modi, till then his bête noir. Having got more than what he aspired for, Naidu has set his eyes on the chair of the Prime Minister. We cannot expect anything better from a person who stabbed his father-in-law N T Rama Rao, the founder of the TDP and usurped the proprietorship of the party.

Nitish Kumar is no different from Chandrababu Naidu. He is emblematic of the Aaya Ram, Gaya Raam phenomenon in Indian politics. Even late Arjit Sen, the ace radio commentator of football and hockey matches may find it tough to describe Nitish's defection from one front to another laced with speed, agility and the Perfect 10 landing. It is not possible to say whether Nitish Kumar would be with the NDA by the time this article goes into press and reach the hands of the readers. Naidu and Nitish are two deceiving crutches and can lead Modi to a "no man's land" with their "dedication".

Both TDP and JD(U) are secular and liberal parties and that settles the issues. Naidu and Nitish have been entrusted with the task of saving secularism from "communal" BJP and once the mission is achieved they would cross over to NDI Alliance, a rainbow alliance launched by Nitish Kumar himself. The BJP is in a Catch-22 situation. Chandrababu Naidu has won Andhra Pradesh assembly election with a brutal majority despite the

good works done by Jagan Mohan Reddy and Modi has become extra-luggage for the TDP leader. Naidu was instrumental in easing out the then Prime Minister Deve Gowda in 1997 after a ten month tenure much to the anguish of the latter. Now come back to 2024. The present political imbroglio is BJP's own making. How many of us remember the five day long crisis in Maharashtra when Devendra Fadnavis, the then leader of the opposition was sworn in as chief minister in 2019 with Ajit Pawar (NCP) the chief minister only to make an ignominious exit after four days. Fadnavis and the BJP had termed Ajit Pawar as the embodiment of corruption but they found no qualms in forming a coalition Government with him. Despite Ajit Pawar returning to the Pawar Parivar within two days of swearing in as deputy chief minister dumping the BJP, Fadnavis solicited him again and right now the former is back in the Hindutva fold. Fadnavis should have understood the truth that BJP can never compromise with a dynasty party. Having failed to cross the magic figure (having failed to cross the half line mark) in the legislative assembly, the best option for him was to bid his time till the next assembly election or the disintegration of MVA. But he was in a hurry to become the Prime Minister of the country and this forced him to commit the hara-kiri. This reminds us of the kamikaze by Choudhri Charan Singh in 1979 ostensibly to teach the then Prime Minister Morarji Desai a lesson. Choudhri Sahab went down with the Janata ship and could not stage a comeback. And the most important thing about the 2024 election is another hara-kiri by J P Nadda, the BJP president. His declaration that the BJP has no links with the RSS and his outfit is free of "Bhagwa Dhwa", the flag of the Maratha Empire and emblematic of the followers of Hinduism. Nadda's claim was a cardinal sin because without Bhagwa,

there is no Sanatana Dharma. The saffron is the color of Hinduism and all Sanatana organizations. The disownment of the Bhagwa hurt the RSS karyakartas and swayam sevaks forcing them to cry off from the campaign trail. "Our flag was apparently created by Lord Indra himself. The flag carries the saffron color of the Lord. We chose the flag for our kingdom. The flag represents humanity and we need to ensure that we live up to its representation," Shivaji, the great Maratha emperor is quoted as telling his ministers and commanders. It is time for Nadda to move out of the presidency of BJP. He has neither inspired nor enlightened the people through his words and actions. With nothing to show as his credentials, Nadda is a burden for the BJP and Sangh Parivar. The ouster of Nadda is the need of the hour. What the country needs is a leader who is capable of generating oneness and enthusiasm amongst the Hindus. Nadda should read and learn about two gentlemen from South India, K Kamaraj and S Nijalingappa, both former presidents of the Congress and were rated as titans of Indian politics. (It is a sad twist of history that we have only Congress leaders wearing Titan watches made by the House of Tatas!). Nadda is occupying the seat which was once held by the likes of A B Vajpayee, L K Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi. BJP should identify persons with leadership qualities. Nadda has no qualities to be in that chair. The 2024 election has thrown a fractured mandate even as the BJP has emerged as the single largest party. Rahu Gandhi should remember the fight between Bjorn Borg and John McEnroe in the Wimbledon championship. McEnroe was beaten by Borg in a marathon five setter in 1980 but the former came back to claim the championship in 1981 by defeating Borg. Tennis and Politics have a lot of similarities.

(The writer is a special correspondent with The Pioneer; views are personal)

Women lead India's 2024 election transformation

Women's increasing involvement in Indian elections led to nearly equal representation in voter turnout, marking historic progress

The Lok Sabha 2024 elections in India this year marked the emergence of women as a significant contributor to India's destiny, reflecting 'she' as an important factor in the democratic process. For the first time, women constituted nearly half of the voter turnout, as the electoral gender ratio increased from 928 in 2010 to 948 in 2024. This shift reflects a critical evolution in the democratic process, highlighting women as a decisive voting bloc.

Public Choice Theory and Electoral Strategies

According to the public choice theory, as women become a decisive voting bloc, political parties will act in their self-interest to cater to 'she' needs. So, every political party in

REKHA SHARMA

India gauged the importance of the female demographic bloc and put concerted efforts to engage female voters. They acknowledged and addressed the unique needs of women through various women-centric welfare schemes and community initiatives such as Ujjwala Yojana, the Swachh Bharat Mission, free bus rides, direct cash transfers and prohibition policies. These initiatives garnered substantial support from female voters, highlighting the electoral impact of gender-focused strategies.

Beyond Electoral Gains

The implications of these gender-focused strategies extend far beyond immediate electoral gains: Improved Governance and institutional reforms: The increased competition among

political parties to attract female voters has led to a promise of more responsive and effective governance. Parties are encouraged to deliver more and better public services, welfare programs; thereby improving overall welfare. This may also lead to institutional and legal reforms that protect and promote rights of women.

Challenging Patriarchal Norms: Rising literacy and civic participation among women signify a transformative shift. This shift challenges traditional patriarchal norms and expands the role of women beyond traditional caregiving responsibilities. This progressive attitude promotes economic growth and productivity. Enhancing Capabilities:



Drawing on Amartya Sen's "capabilities approach," enhancing women's abilities to participate politically, socially and economically not only

improves their individual functioning but also boosts the overall human development level of the economy. Studies have shown that States with

higher female representation have increased investments in public services such as sanitation, drinking water and education, leading to improved community well-being.

Role Models and Leadership: Women in leadership roles serve as role models, encouraging other women and girls to participate in public life and pursue leadership positions. This self-empowerment breaks down social barriers and fosters more inclusive and representative governance.

Vision for Viksit Bharat@2047

The focus on gender empowerment in the 2024 elections is pivotal for achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047, which envisions a developed and inclusive India. Political parties that recognized and

acted upon this cultural shift have positioned themselves on the right side of history, understanding the changing dynamics of Indian democracy.

As Indian democracy continues to evolve, the empowerment of women in politics will pave the way for more balanced and equitable institutions, reflecting the true spirit of democracy. This evolution promises a governance system that is more inclusive and effective, ultimately contributing to the nation's development and the fulfillment of its long-term vision.

(The writer is Associate Professor Department of Economics Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, University of Delhi; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

NCLT initiates insolvency against Himalayan Mineral Water

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has directed initiating insolvency proceedings against Himalayan Mineral Waters, allowing Jammu & Kashmir Bank's plea for default of a corporate guarantee given for Leel Electricals. The Allahabad bench of NCLT has also appointed Bhoopesh Gupta as the interim resolution professional (IRP) for this Dehradun-based firm's Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP). "We are satisfied that the Applicant/Financial Creditor (J&K Bank) has proved the debt and the default, which is more than the threshold limit... the application u/s 7 is found to be fit for initiation of the CIRP against the Corporate Debtor (Himalayan Mineral Waters)," said a two-member bench in the order passed last Monday. Jammu & Kashmir Bank had claimed a default of Rs 50 crore against Himalayan Mineral Waters, engaged in the business of manufacturing of beverages, being the corporate guarantor for the credit facilities availed by the Leel Electricals.



Asus bets big on India's personal computer market

India's personal computer (PC) market is better than the rest of the world and low penetration level of the devices offers a good growth opportunity for the Taiwanese tech major Asus, senior company officials have said. The Taiwanese PC maker has seen positive growth in the Indian market. Asus India consumer and gaming PC vice president Arnold Su said that "India's PC penetration per household is around 10 to 11 per cent. Which means around 90 per cent of Indian households still do not have a PC, which means it is a very good opportunity for us," he said. Su said Asus is continuing to invest in India making its product available across the country. "... If you see today in India, out of 750 districts, we have already covered around 450 districts," he added. Asus general manager for Asia Pacific System Business Unit Peter Chang said that post COVID pandemic, the company has not seen very positive signals in PC demand both globally and in India.



Lupin recalls 51k bottles of generic antibiotic drug in US

Drug firm Lupin is recalling over 51,000 bottles of a generic antibiotic medication in the US market due to a "defective container," according to the American health regulator. The US-based arm of the drug maker is recalling 51,006 bottles of Cefdinir for Oral Suspension (250 mg/5 mL) due to "defective container: lack of seal integrity," US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) said in its latest Enforcement Report. Cefdinir Oral Suspension is indicated for the treatment of a range of bacterial infections. The affected lot has been manufactured at Lupin's Mandideep-based plant and marketed in the US by Baltimore-based Lupin Pharmaceuticals, Inc. The drug maker initiated the Class II nationwide (US) voluntary recall on May 8 this year. As per the USFDA, a Class II recall is initiated in a situation in which the use of, or exposure to, a violative product may cause temporary or medically reversible adverse health consequences or where the probability of serious adverse health consequences is remote.



Commerce Min may seek more funds for startups in forthcoming Budget

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The commerce and industry ministry may seek more funds for startups in the forthcoming Budget, to be announced by the new government, to promote innovation in the country, an official has said.

The new government may announce the Budget for 2024-25 in July.

The seed fund scheme, announced in April 2021 with a corpus of Rs 945 crore, will end in 2025, and the ministry may consider proposing a new scheme on similar lines.

The seed fund scheme was aimed at providing financial



assistance to startups for proof of concept, prototype development, product trials, market-entry, and commercialisation. The fund was divided into four years for providing seed

funding to eligible startups through incubators across India.

Easy availability of capital is essential for entrepreneurs at the early stages of growth of an

enterprise, and the capital required at this stage often presents a make-or-buy situation for startups with good business ideas, another official said.

There are over 1.17 lakh government-registered startups in the country. They are eligible for income tax and other benefits. These recognised startups have been reported to have created over 12.42 lakh direct jobs.

The ministry is also expected to propose a dedicated policy for deep tech startups.

Deep technology refers to innovations founded on advanced scientific and technological breakthroughs. Due to

their disruptive nature, they have the potential to solve India's most pressing societal issues.

Focus on promoting startups was crucial in the previous government, which unveiled the Startup India initiative on January 16, 2016, along with an action plan for startups consisting of schemes and incentives to create a vibrant startup ecosystem in the country.

The action plan comprises 19 action items spanning various areas, such as simplification and handholding, funding support and incentive, and industry-academia partnership and incubation

448 infra projects hit by cost overrun of Rs 5.55 L cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 448 infrastructure projects, each entailing an investment of Rs 150 crore or above, were hit by a cost overrun of more than Rs 5.55 lakh crore in April 2024, according to an official report.

According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), which monitors infrastructure projects worth Rs 150 crore and above, out of 1,838 projects, 448 reported cost overruns and 792 projects were delayed.

The total original cost of implementation of the 1,838 projects was Rs 27,64,246.50 crore, and their anticipated completion cost is likely to be Rs 33,19,601.84 crore, which

reflects an overall cost overrun of over Rs 5,55,355.34 (20.09 per cent of original cost), the ministry's latest report for



April 2024 showed.

According to the report, the expenditure incurred on these projects till April 2024 is Rs 1,692,997.5 crore, which is 51 per cent of the anticipated cost of the projects.

However, the number of delayed projects decreased to 514 if the delay is calculated on the basis of the latest schedule of completion, it added.

Of the 792 delayed projects, 220 have overall delays in the range of 1-12 months, 192 have been delayed for 13-24 months, 259 projects for 25-60 months, and 121 projects for more than 60 months.

The average time overrun in these 792 delayed projects is 35.4 months.

Reasons for time overrun, as reported by various project implementing agencies, include land acquisition, environmental clearance, financial issues, contractual/internal issues, manpower shortage and litigation issues

'Domestic open access solar capacity addition doubles to 1.8 GW in Jan-Mar'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Open access solar installations rose two-fold in India to 1.8 gigawatts during January-March this year supported by several factors, including reduced module cost, US-based Mercom Capital has said.

Solar power through open access is an arrangement where a power producer establishes a solar power plant to supply green energy to consumers.

India added over 1.8 gigawatts (GW) of solar open access capacity in the first quarter of the calendar year of

2024, posting a two-fold increase from 909.3 megawatts (MW) in Q4 2023, the report titled 'Mercom India Solar



Open Access Market' said.

As of March 2024, the cumulative installed solar open access capacity stood at 14.3 GW. Solar open access developers

benefited from lower Chinese module prices and the suspension of the Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM) order for projects commissioned through March 2024. Additionally, lower power purchase agreement (PPA) prices, due to reduced project costs, further incentivized consumers to adopt solar open access.

"Demand for green energy open access, especially solar, has been mounting, driven by the financial savings and initiatives to add renewable energy in the power procurement mix.

"An additional push comes from the corporates leading climate change mitigation strategies. If not for the regulatory restrictions, green energy open access could be the driving force that helps India meet its non-fossil fuel targets," said Priya Sanjay, Managing Director at Mercom India.

In Q1 2024, Rajasthan led solar open access capacity additions, accounting for almost 28 per cent followed by Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra with 21 per cent and 12 per cent of capacity additions, respectively.

Mcap of 8 of top-10 valued firms jumps Rs 3.28 L cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Eight of the 10 most valued domestic firms together added Rs 3.28 lakh crore to their market valuation last week, with blue-chips Tata Consultancy Services, Hindustan Unilever and Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest winners. In an eventful week, the BSE benchmark jumped 2,732.05 points or 3.69 per cent.

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 intra-day trade on Friday. The benchmark ended at a record high of 76,693.36, up 1,618.85 points or 2.16 per cent.

TCS, HUL, Reliance lead winners

From the top-10 pack, Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever (HUL) and ITC were the gainers. These companies added a total of Rs 3,28,116.58 crore to their market valuations

From the top-10 pack, Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever (HUL) and ITC were the gainers. These companies added a total of Rs 3,28,116.58

crore to their market valuations. State Bank of India and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) were the laggards from the top-10 pack.

The market valuation of TCS zoomed Rs 80,828.08 crore to Rs 14,08,485.29 crore,

emerging as the biggest gainer from the pack.

Hindustan Unilever added Rs 58,258.11 crore taking its market capitalisation (mcap) to Rs 6,05,407.43 crore. The valuation of Reliance Industries jumped Rs 54,024.35 crore to Rs 19,88,741.47 crore and that of Infosys rallied by Rs 52,770.59 crore to Rs 6,36,630.87 crore.

The mcap of HDFC Bank soared Rs 32,241.67 crore to Rs 11,96,325.52 crore and that of Bharti Airtel climbed Rs 32,080.61 crore to Rs 8,10,416.01 crore. ITC's valuation surged Rs 16,167.71 crore to Rs 5,48,204.12 crore and that of ICICI Bank went up by Rs 1,745.46 crore to Rs 7,88,975.17 crore.

'Inflation data, global cues to drive stock mkts'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The US Fed interest rate decision, domestic inflation data and global trends would be key driving factors in dictating movement in the market this week, as the Lok Sabha elections outcome and the RBI policy decision are behind us, analysts said.

The past week was a roller-coaster ride for investors as markets swung sharply in both directions before closing with strong gains.

In an eventful week, the BSE benchmark jumped 2,732.05 points or 3.69 per cent and the

Nifty zoomed 759.45 points or 3.37 per cent.

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 on Friday. The benchmark ended at a record high of 76,693.36, up 1,618.85 points, or 2.16 per cent.

"Now the Lok Sabha elections and the RBI policy decision are settled, attention now turns to global factors. Key areas to watch include the US Fed interest rate decision, the rupee's movement against the dollar, crude oil prices and commodity prices.

India's end-use energy consumption to grow 90%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's end-use energy consumption is set to grow by 90 per cent by 2050 -- one of the fastest growth rates in the world, Russian oil giant Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin said.

Sechin, Chief Executive Officer of Rosneft, Russia's biggest oil producer, addressed key global business and political leaders at the Energy Panel of the 27th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF), according to a statement by the company.

In his keynote speech titled "Energy transition and phantom barrels", he provided a comprehensive analysis of the current state of the energy market and highlighted key challenges facing the industry.

"Over the next five years, India is projected to continue its strong economic momentum and become one of the top three largest economies in the world with a GDP of US\$ 5 trillion, and by 2050 will overtake the US in terms of the size



"Over the next five years, India is projected to continue its strong economic momentum and become one of the top three largest economies in the world with a GDP of US\$ 5 trillion, and by 2050 will overtake the US in terms of the size of the economy," he said.

He added that India's end-use energy consumption is set to grow 90 per cent by 2050, registering one of the fastest growth rates in the world.

Taking about the global preparation on energy transition, Rosneft CEO criticised the prioritisation of the anthropogenic factor in climate change discourse and argues against the

effectiveness of energy transition initiatives in addressing environmental concerns.

Sechin highlighted the insights of renowned physicist Pyotr Leonidovich Kapitsa, who predicted energy production challenges due to the inefficiency of alternative energy sources.

Despite considering hydrogen as a promising clean fuel,

he pointed out current limitations in production technology, logistics, and market readiness.

He highlighted that while renewable energy accounts for less than 5 per cent of global energy production and electric vehicles only make up approximately 3 per cent, consumption of oil, gas, and coal has continued to rise.

Sechin underlined that the energy transition should be well-balanced and focused on addressing the interests of the majority that will ensure the growth of energy consumption in the coming years, i.e. developing countries.

He also noted that to achieve energy security, it is necessary to ensure the sufficiency, affordability, and reliability of energy sources.

Aggressive promotion of the "green agenda" actually means declaring an energy war on the majority of the world's population, and overcoming energy inequality is impossible without reliable supplies of oil and gas, said Rosneft CEO

Innovations and understanding chemical components of waste will boost its reuse: Experts



PNS ■ BENGALURU

More innovations and understanding the chemistry of waste material will help find ways to reuse solid waste, experts suggested during a panel discussion organised at Bangalore International Centre on June 9.

One of the panelists, Myriam Shankar, co-founder of The Anonymous Indian Charitable Trust (TAICT) formed to address the critical issue of solid waste management, pointed out that in India 45% of dry waste cannot be recycled.

"It is mainly because the waste is not segregated at source. This also increases the cost of recycling," added Shankar.

Shubhi Sachan, a multidisciplinary designer who specialises in textile waste, proposing alternative uses rather than traditional waste disposal methods, discussed the challenges in waste processing.

According to her, homogeneity is the biggest hurdle when it comes to using waste as a resource.

"For instance, we cannot insist on mono material because we may not get, say, 2 million tonnes of milk pack-

ets when we need it. Often we are forced to use different packets resulting in differences in the recycled yarn or textile," said Sachan.

She also said economically it will not be viable to scale waste reuse projects as long as waste management is not recognised as a separate industry.

"At present, we have to deal with taxation three times. When we buy waste, we are taxed. When we process the waste and sell it, we are taxed. And when we innovate end uses, again we are taxed. There is also no visibility for the industry players. We do not know how much waste contributes towards our GDP, for instance," said Sachan.

Pune-based Jesh Krishna Murthy, founder of Advanced Nature, which transforms toxic materials into sustainable solutions, specialising in cement-free concrete and waste-based products like tiles and furniture to combat the climate crisis, talked about the need to merge science and art as well as the need for experimentations in form and function of recycled waste. Sachan added that many times interventions to convert waste into resources fall flat because of the knowledge gap.

ONGC seeks foreign partners for Mumbai High oilfield

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is seeking foreign partners to reverse declining output at its flagship Mumbai High fields, offering a share of revenue from incremental production plus a fixed fee but not any equity stake.

ONGC on June 1 floated an international tender seeking global technical services providers (TSP) with annual revenue of at least US\$ 75 billion, according to the tender document.

The TSP would have to do a comprehensive review of the

field performance and identify improvements as well as implement suitable technological interventions and practices for improving production and recovery, it said.

Bidders have been asked to quote quarterly incremental production they can enable over the 10-year contract period as well as the percentage share of the revenue they want from the sale of oil and gas produced over and above the baseline production.

Bids are due by September 15, 2024.

The TSP, who would be selected on the basis of one offering the highest incremen-



tal production and the lowest revenue share, will also be paid a fixed service fee for its efforts, the document said.

The Mumbai High field (previously Bombay High

field) -- India's most prolific oil field -- lies some 160-kilometer in the Arabian Sea off the Mumbai coast. It was discovered in February 1974 and started production on May

21, 1976.

The field hit a peak of 4,76,000 barrels of oil per day and 28 billion cubic meters of gas in 1989 and has since seen a gradual decline in output.

It is currently producing 1,34,000 bpd of oil and 13 bcm (less than 10 million standard cubic meters per day) of gas - accounting for almost 38 per cent of India's production and 14 per cent of consumption.

ONGC believes the field still has a balance reserve of 80 million tonnes (610 million barrels) of oil and over 40 bcm of gas and hence needs partners who can help tap them.

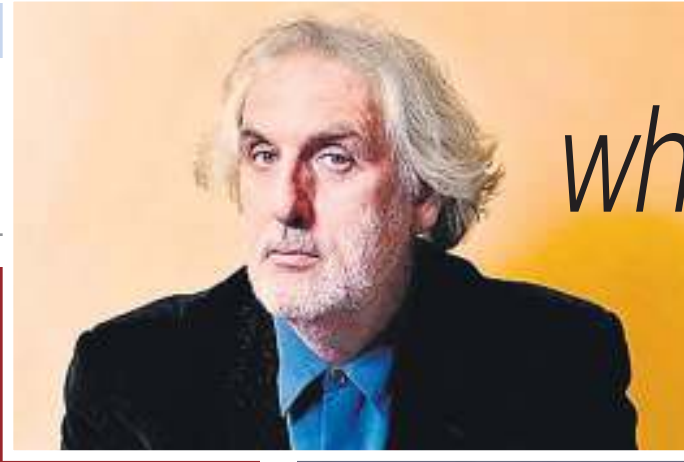
With the field seeing a steady

decline in output, a stake sale had been considered on at least two occasions in recent years.

A high-level committee headed by the then Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar in late 2018 considered "transferring" western offshore oil and gas fields of Mumbai High as also some fields in Mumbai offshore, Assam, Rajasthan, and Gujarat to private/foreign companies.

But that plan met with strong opposition from ONGC and some quarters within the government, three sources with knowledge of the matter said.

Phillip Noyce uncovers his desire to work in Indian cinema



Australian film director Phillip Noyce, who has helmed the popular film *Salt*, is excited that his latest film, *Fast Charlie* (2023), has finally hit theatres in India. "It's so exciting that people in India are watching my film now. I wish I was there to see it with them and see their reactions. Seeing a movie with an Indian audience is different because they are so expressive with their appreciation. They live the movie inside their bodies in a cinema. That doesn't really happen anywhere in the world," he says.

Filming *Fast Charlie* was "fantastic for two reasons," according to the director. "I was filming in New Orleans, which is one of my favourite cities. Second, I was filming with Pierce Brosnan, Morena Baccarin, and my idol, James Caan. Working on the settings with such an amazing cast was fantastic."

The cast and crew were shocked by the sudden passing of actor James Caan, but he will

always treasure a beautiful recollection. "James Caan died two months after the movie's filming was finished. While collaborating with him, we considered the possibility that we might be producing a documentary rather than a drama. He informs us that he is playing a man who is suffering from dementia and that he wasn't really acting—rather, he was enduring the same experience—but that after the shoot, he was so happy and excited that we had the honour of working with such a wonderful actor. His passion for method acting was so great that it caused dementia. It wasn't him; it was his performance, and he fooled everyone on the set. It was a relief, actually! He wasn't sick; he was fine. But sadly, he passed away soon after."

Noyce enjoys watching Indian movies and has seen a number of them. "I have seen *RRR*; it was an enormous global hit. The movie of the year for me was *Dev Patel's Monkey Man*, which I absolutely adored. It shares the same

passion for narrative that *RRR* had. I believe it is an Indian film," he informs us. "I've always loved Indian films. I think one of my all-time favourite movies is *Pather Panchali*. It stirred me deeply when I was younger and has emotion." The 74-year-old continues, "We also get to witness a ton of amazing Indian movies thanks to streaming services."

He would love to collaborate with Bollywood actors and hopes to film a movie in India shortly. "I'd adore collaborating with Shah Rukh Khan. To make a movie in India would be an honour. There are countless amazing films available in a wide variety of genres. If the Indian film business tried harder to get its films in front of more people, that would be fantastic. I am aware that the market is meant to be in control of things, but a lot of excellent Indian films never see the light of day outside of India. I've watched them at a lot of film festivals, so I can say that," he concludes.

Imran Khan reveals being in his vulnerable phase post-divorce

Bollywood star Imran Khan talked candidly about the effects of splitting from his ex-wife, Avantika Malik. The actor acknowledged that, after the breakup, he experienced a difficult time. Imran acknowledged that he suffered from depression and that simple things like brushing his teeth and getting out of bed felt like a big ask. But when it came time for him to look after his daughter, Imara, Imran promised he would have the fortitude to get back up.

"I was at my most vulnerable, both physically and mentally, when I got divorced in 2019. It is, in my opinion, merely the skeletal remains of a human individual. It was a huge task to take a shower and brush my teeth. I wasn't sure if I could pull that off. I couldn't even get out of bed. I would stay in my pajamas, switch off the doorbell, lock the door, and simply vegetate."

"I had parenting responsibilities. We split the custody, so she was with me from Thursday to Sunday. Therefore, no matter how weak I feel on the days she is with me, you have to go out there," he continued.

The actor has discovered love in his life once more. Imran talked candidly about his connection with Lekha Washington in a recent interview. He has several times reaffirmed the rumours about his romance, and he even revealed to comedian Raunaq Rajani that they have moved in together.



Roshan Mathew's Paradise to release on June 28

Acclaimed Sri Lankan filmmaker Prasanna Vithanage's latest international film *Paradise*, which had its world premiere at the Busan International Film Festival 2023, where it won the prestigious Kim Jiseok Award for Best Film, is set for a pan-India and worldwide release on June 28, 2024.

The film garnered multiple accolades at international film festivals and was ranked among the top 10 films in the FIPRESCI India Grand Prix 2023. The languages spoken in the film are English, Malayalam, Tamil, Sinhala, and Hindi.

Paradise is produced by Newton Cinema and presented by Mani Ratnam's Madras Talkies, marking their first collaboration. Shot in Sri Lanka, the film narrates the vacation of a tourist couple, exploring their struggles with societal, personal, and internal challenges. Through their experiences, they unveil an objective truth about human nature.

Roshan Mathew, the lead actor of the film, says, "I'm happy *Paradise* is releasing and look forward to knowing the reaction from the audience. The experience of making this film was inspiring and challenging. I'm very grateful to Prasanna sir and the team of lovely, talented people who got together for *Paradise*. It's the most diverse team I've been part of and a joy to work with."

The film features an impressive cast, with Roshan Mathew and Darshana Rajendran in the lead roles,



supported by Shyam Fernando and Mahendra Perera. The film's illustrious crew includes Rajeev Ravi as the cinematographer, Sreekar Prasad as the editor, Tapas Nayak as the sound designer, and K as the music director.

Meanwhile, the lead actress of the film, Darshana Rajendran, says, "From the first time I read the script, I thought Amritha was a very challenging and exciting character because, while she has very strong opinions, we rarely see her be vocal. So we get to know her less through her interactions and conversations with others and more through her thoughts and her time alone. I felt like that would be a great space to occupy as an actor because I had to take the audience through the deep transformation that Amritha goes through in the film, but with very few words."

KOURTNEY KARDASHIAN BROACHES ON HER FETAL SURGERY

Recently, Kourtney Kardashian Barker revealed details regarding the fetal surgery she underwent while expecting her fourth child. She discussed her pregnancy picture shoots after surgery on a recent episode of *The Kardashians*. She adhered to her doctor's rigorous instructions and proudly displayed her surgical scars.

On November 3, 2023, Kourtney Kardashian Barker gave birth to her first child with her husband, Travis Barker, marking her first motherhood. Her fourth pregnancy was not as simple to give birth to as her other three, which all went quite well. As a result, the mother of four had to have fetal surgery.

Kourtney revealed the specifics of her first post-surgery picture shoot in the most recent episode of *The Kardashians*. She complied with every recommendation from her physician, proudly displaying her baby belly and her surgical scars. The shoot was restricted to two hours in order to protect her safety, and the studio was conveniently only ten minutes from her house.

"I'm filming with the Morelli Brothers today. My physicians gave me very tight instructions on how to carry out this shot. We made sure it was 10 minutes away from the house, and I can stop at any moment if I'm not feeling well. I'm allowed to shoot for two hours tops," she said.

Kourtney said she felt great being on set but had to pay attention to her doctor's many recommendations as she stood for the picture in all of her beauty. "I feel great, but I just need to exercise extreme caution, as though I'm incapable of twisting. I have a long list of things I am not capable of doing," she said.



FUN

ARCHIE



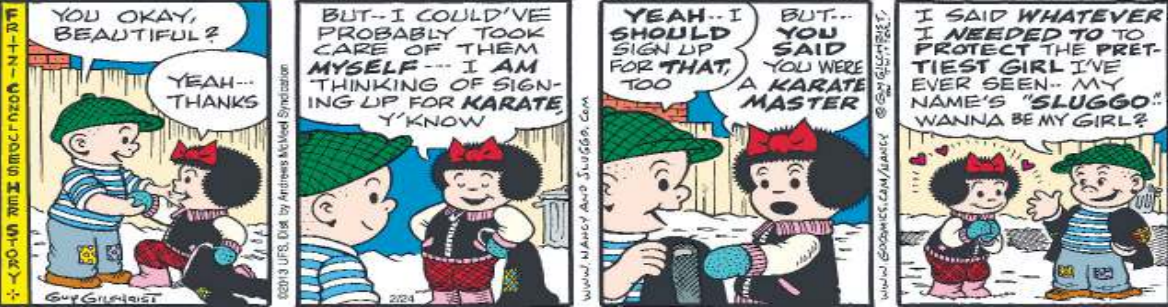
CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



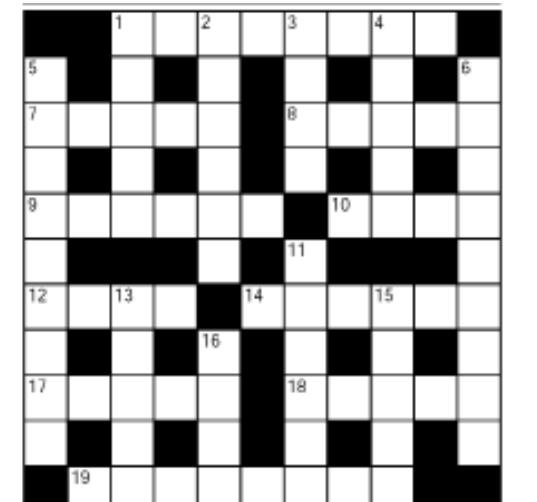
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

7				6			8
	5					1	6
3		4	9	8			
9	1		4				3
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Yesterday's solution

4	8	5	9	3	1	7	2	6
9	6	1	2	7	8	5	3	4
2	3	7	4	5	6	8	9	1
3	1	4	8	2	7	9	6	5
7	9	2	6	1	5	3	4	8
8	5	6	3	4	9	2	1	7
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1	7	9	5	6	3	4	8	2
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- Rules
- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
 - The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

ACROSS

- A three-sided figure
- Following
- Tiny
- Assistant
- Finest
- Moist
- A glass container
- Have a quarrel
- Living
- Cut paper with these
- Depart
- A big important church
- Squashed right down
- A vegetable that grows underground
- A witch's power
- Small tree branches
- Tame animals

DOWN

- Add up numbers to get this
- Jerusalem is in this country
- The organ of smell



'I HOPE HEERIYE REMAINS POPULAR FOREVER'

TEJAL SINHA

With her new single, *Assi Sajna*, Jasleen Royal, known as "Lady Queen of Love Anthem," is returning to captivate the crowd. She's officially made her pop music debut with this song. We immediately got in touch with the star for an exclusive discussion, and we have to say that she was in full "yahoo" mode. The *Ranjha* singer chuckles and says, "I feel good that my music is all about love and being in love." We started this conversation by referring to her as the "Lady Queen of Love Anthem." That feels unique (we chuckle). Looking back at her journey, she recalled in this chitter-chatter how music was something that happened to her by chance and how, as a kid, she'd adored the legendary A R Rahman. Moving ahead, apart from her filmy tracks, there has been a loyal fan following that she has certainly enjoyed. However, her melody with Dulquer Salmaan, *Heeriye*, has to date been all over social media, making Jasleen Royal a celebrated name in the music industry. *Heeriye* being an independent song, she recalls, "It was a pretty expensive project because I had also produced. There was some belief that made me take the risk, and it was not like I was thinking about it from a financial point of view. I was thinking, 'This is something I believe in, and I want to go big on it. People kept being curious about the money and giving it a label. But there was something in me that stopped me. I was really holding it tight, and I couldn't part ways with it. By that logic, I would say that I believed in it, but I didn't know it would become like a global no. 1 on YouTube and other streaming platforms. I just feel very lucky and grateful for the love I've got for it.'" While people are still not out of *Heeriye*, her just-released track *Assi Sajna* has once again been making some right noise on the internet. Though she says both songs are different from one another, she gleefully

enthus, "I am so glad that people are still not out of *Heeriye*, and I hope they never are out of it (we laugh out loud). I hope that *Heeriye* becomes a timeless song. That's a dream for any artist. But coming to *Assi Sajna*, it's a very different song in terms of its arrangement, structure, and feel; it's a very pop and very summer song. We made this song last year in my studio around the same time in June. We felt such a sunny and beachy vibe when we made the song. It just made us feel very happy to make this song. I wanted that same feeling to be translated to the audience. And now, when I see it, people are making reels on this song with the same feel that I wanted to have: having fun with their loved one, enjoying themselves with friends, or eating their favourite food. It's just about loving life and feeling happy. That is what *Assi Sajna* is all about." The song, just like many of us, also resonates with Jasleen enjoying life with a cup of coffee and enjoying nothingness. *Assi Sajna*, she says, has very well translated her feelings into the song. It celebrates life's unpredictable journey and the love that accompanies us everywhere, and it's set to become the romantic blockbuster of the year. Her journey to start again and rediscover herself on her own is shown in the music video. "I am very excited, obviously, to be able to try out different genres," enthuses the *Sang Rahiyo* singer. "As a person, I get bored of doing similar things. All I want to do is keep trying new things and improving. I wish to collaborate with many musicians on my song. The director and I had to collaborate on this song due to our different schedules. We continued tormenting one another, and a great deal had changed. It was quite intense." Well, as we head towards the end of this chat on what's more on the plate, she gushes, "A lot of things are coming up; like I said, I keep experimenting, and I'm also trying to mount things bigger and bigger, and that's the Punjabi in me. *Joh kareng grand kareng*. So you'll be happy to see what's next."

Musician Jasleen Royal, who never fails to captivate audience—has made waves once more with her track *Assi Sajna*. She talks about the song, her career, and of course the tremendous reception to *Heeriye* in an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*.



Simplifying life's methodologies & ideologies

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Are you aware of *The Passionate Life* by Rakesh B. Kulwal, brand-new book for would-be business owners? In his own style, Kulwal combines real-world guidance from his experiences with optimism for aspiring young business owners and poignant insights. The book offers advice on how to embrace and pursue your passions in order to achieve success and contentment. Simultaneously, it seeks to empower readers to overcome obstacles in life by unleashing their mental potential and realising their own abilities. This is an exclusive conversation with a seasoned entrepreneur, who helps people find and pursue their passions by offering resources to ignite and maintain a passionate life. First of all, he states, "Being bedridden owing to health problems was the biggest turning point in my life. Conflicts with a prominent corporation during that difficult time forced me to make a crucial choice: I stopped being a distributor and launched my own business. That was the first thing I did as an entrepreneur." The founder and managing director of Jhandewalas Foods Limited continues by sharing one of the most important personal tales that influenced his style of entrepreneurship, "You may desire to pursue something with all of your heart, but sometimes destiny decides otherwise for you, as I describe in my book! You don't know right then that fate has selected the finest path for you, but you will eventually recognise it. When I was younger, I had planned to work as a jeweller, but I had to help my father out in the family business because of certain circumstances. I wasn't satisfied with this choice at first. But one of my close friends made me understand that, if this was my fate, then I ought to work at building a company I could be proud of. That encouraging idea inspired me to expand the company throughout all of India. Success in life can be attained through adopting an optimistic outlook on everything." He answers questions for those who are curious about how he defines passion and how people might discover and follow their own passions: "According to *The Passionate Life*, passion is a strong drive and excitement that propels people toward their objectives. It is characterised by a strong emotional bond and dedication to one's passions, which provide one with a sense of direction and inspire them to conquer challenges. In order to discover and develop their passions, people should reflect on themselves, try different things, ask for feedback, stick with their goals, keep a healthy balance, and place a high value on lifelong learning. People can have more purposeful and fulfilling lives,

In an interview with *The Pioneer*, an entrepreneur-turned-author Rakesh B. Kulwal discusses his latest book, *The Passionate Life*, and shares some of his most significant personal anecdotes.



driven by their inner desires and motivations, by pursuing their passions." Visualisation is a very useful technique for sustaining motivation and enthusiasm, according to the book enthusiast. "Creating vivid mental images of reaching your objectives and leading the life you want is known as visualisation. People can strengthen their commitment, gain confidence, and maintain focus on their goals by routinely picturing victory. Through programming the subconscious mind to link ideas, feelings, and behaviours with desired results, this technique harnesses the power of the subconscious mind. Including visualisation in regular activities, like meditation or getting ready for bed, can support people in staying true to their passions and keeping an optimistic outlook even in the face of adversity," adds Rakesh, who possesses a library of more than 300 novels! "One of the biggest misconceptions about entrepreneurship is that it's primarily about making money or achieving overnight success," he really says, continuing with the same fervour. "In actuality, becoming an entrepreneur is a journey with ups and downs that calls for perseverance, hard work, and dedication. I dispel this myth in my book and talk by highlighting the value of tenacity, passion, and purpose in business ventures. I stress the importance of having a long-term perspective, setting reasonable goals, and being prepared to accept failure as a teaching moment. By changing the emphasis from quick satisfaction to long-term success and personal fulfillment, I hope to encourage ambitious business owners to approach their journey with endurance, forbearance, and a sincere desire to have a beneficial influence."

FROM LEGAL BRIEFS TO SILVER SCREENS

Ambiecka Pandit, a former lawyer, makes ripples in film industry

SHRADDHA NEWARE

Ambiecka Pandit gave up her job practicing corporate law to follow her dream of becoming a filmmaker. She appears to have established herself in the business with critically acclaimed movies like *Custody* and *Under the Waters*. These movies questioned accepted social mores and promoted diversity in business. The filmmaker who became a lawyer is said to be motivated by inclusivity, self-belief, and a goal of advancement. Additionally, she is a storyteller on a mission to change the world, rather than merely a filmmaker. "My legal background is the fundamental bedrock of my approach to filmmaking," the former lawyer explains, discussing her move from corporate law to the film industry. "I learned from law that there are usually two sides to every story. Furthermore, screenwriting and filmmaking, in the words of David Fincher, 'work best when two people, on opposite sides, are both right.'" The inspirational director says of breaking social conventions and taking on daring and contentious subjects, "I don't think in terms of social impact while telling stories. I tell the stories that speak to me and that I think the audience will find meaningful. It is an added plus if they have a social influence." Motivated by her confidence in herself, she continues by outlining her filmmaking technique. "The ability to communicate your viewpoint is the only intriguing aspect of becoming a filmmaker. Why not incorporate a variety of viewpoints and observe the magic that develops? I find it effortless to incorporate many viewpoints into my filmmaking process since, similar to movies, the process of making a film involves teamwork. The highly regarded director asserts that "the whole will always be greater than the sum of its parts." Her films' creative value and social relevance have won them praise from critics. The grounded director responds, "When people who watch my films tell me they enjoy them, I feel very successful!" She got the chance to showcase her work in front of the public with *The Walkers Project* at the Cannes film festival thanks to her partnership with Walker & Co. "We're excited to see more of her motivational work in the future!"

Filmmaker Ambiecka Pandit breaks social norms with her storytelling and talks about her transition from corporate law to the film industry in an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*.



SOUTH AFRICA TAKE ON PLUCKY BANGLADESH

PTI ■ NEW YORK

South Africa will hope for a better performance when they take on a plucky Bangladesh in their Group D match of the T20 World Cup here on Monday. Both teams will have their task cut out as they will have to navigate the unpredictable surface at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium. While South Africa may have a slight edge having played their previous two games here, Bangladesh are somewhat familiar with the conditions having faced India in their warm-up fixture at this venue. South Africa laboured to victory against the Netherlands on Saturday and their batters didn't look comfortable in the win against Sri Lanka either while chasing 103 and 77 respectively. The Proteas are not expected to tinker with their four-pronged pace attack comprising Anrich Nortje, Kagiso Rabada, Marco Jansen and Otniel Baartman that has served them well in the tournament so far with Keshav Maharaj taking on the spin duties.



The batters, however, will have to do better. Against the Netherlands, South Africa managed just 33 after 10 overs. Had it not been for their No. 4 Tristan Stubbs and David Miller, who walked in at number six to score an unbeaten fifty, the Proteas would have been staring at a hat-trick of defeats at the hands

of the Dutch at the World Cups. A win will put South Africa firmly in the driver's seat for a Super Eight spot.

History is also on South Africa's side as they haven't ever lost to Bangladesh in T20Is and have beaten the Tigers in each of the last two editions of the World Cup.

Bangladesh began their campaign with a win over rivals Sri Lanka which will boost their morale. But like the Proteas, the Bangladesh batters will also have to do better. They had struggled in the warm-up game against India and also against Sri Lanka. The top-order is prone to

collapses and while Liton Das has done well, the others have to take more responsibility, especially in testing conditions. All-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is not firing either with the ball or the bat, which is a cause for concern for Bangladesh. Bangladesh's pace attack lacks a genuine tearaway fast bowler who can rock the opposition at the top and they might struggle against a formidable South African line-up comprising several power hitters.

TEAMS (FROM):
South Africa: Aiden Markram (c), Otniel 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.
Bangladesh: Najmul Hossain Shanto (c), Taskin Ahmed, Litton Das, Soumya Sarkar, Tanzim 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.



Australia nails England by 36 runs in the T20 World Cup

AP ■ BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS)

Defending champion England charged at Australia's tournament-best 201 total and came up 36 runs short in a one-sided Twenty20 World Cup contest on Saturday. The first big heavyweight match - a day before India vs. Pakistan - failed to live up to the billing as Australia impressively squeezed England, which hit only three boundaries in the last six overs at Kensington Oval. Forced to bat first, Australia made a brutal start by openers David Warner and Travis Head - 70-0 in 4.5 overs - but was pulled back and posted 201-7, the highest total in a week-old tournament featuring tricky pitches. Tasked with making the third biggest successful run chase in tournament history, England took a swipe but decayed to 165-6. Adam Zampa and Pat Cummins took two cheap wickets each. Australia moved on top of Group B with two wins from two matches, while England remained winless with Oman and Namibia to come. England threw offspin at left-handed openers Warner and Head without success. Head smashed Will Jacks' first two deliveries for sixes, and Warner smoked him in the same over. Pace didn't bother the batters either. Warner hit three sixes and a boundary in one Mark Wood over. Warner, playing England for possibly the last time, was out for 39 off 16 when he backed up to a Moeen Ali delivery that stayed low. Head went in the next over, bowled by Jofra Archer for 34 off 18. Australia finished the

powerplay 74-2. Adil Rashid was put on the roof by captain Mitchell Marsh, and Chris Jordan went for 18 in an over. A change to Liam Livingstone's legspin was profitable, as Marsh was stumped for 35 and three balls later Glenn Maxwell departed for 28. Marcus Stoinis greeted Rashid with a one-handed six over backward square, and smacked Livingstone over his head. Australia reached 200 with three balls to go, and Stoinis was out for 30 off 17 - Jordan's 100th T20 wicket - and Cummins was run out. England's chase was measured but cruising. Phil Salt and Jos Buttler had them 54-0 after the powerplay then took 19 runs off a Mitchell Starc over. Zampa spun the momentum back Australia's way. His first ball bowled Salt for 37 off 23. Buttler then hit Zampa straight to backward point after 42 off 28, including five boundaries and two sixes. England was 92-2 in the 10th over and on track, but the middle order failed to fire as they were pinned down by the Australian battery. Starc was expensive but his brilliant diving catch on the boundary removed Jacks. England needed 14 runs an over with seven to go, and blasted 20 off Maxwell, including three sixes by Ali. But Maxwell then caught Jonny Bairstow on the boundary for a 13-ball 7 and blew a kiss to the England fans who had been ribbing him. After Ali was caught in the deep for 25 off 15, Harry Brook and Livingstone were tied down by Hazlewood, Cummins and Zampa, the man of the match.

Earlier, David Miller bailed South Africa out of deep trouble against their bogey team the Netherlands in a four-wicket win on Long Island. Miller's unbeaten 59 off 51 balls, with four sixes and three boundaries, rescued South Africa from 12-4 in the fifth over. This was after the Netherlands was restricted to 103-9. Miller and Tristan Stubbs, with 33, saved the day in making 106-6 with seven balls remaining. The Netherlands was going for a hat trick of wins against South Africa in World Cups, after winning their T20 in 2022 and one-day international in 2023. Chasing a paltry 104 for victory, South Africa's big T20 hitters failed. Quinton de Kock was run out for a duck, and fellow opener Reeza Hendricks was bowled for 3. Aiden Markram was caught behind playing down the leg side for a three-ball duck and Heinrich Klaasen holed out for 4. Dutch medium-pace Vivian Kingma finished his four overs with 2-12. Miller and Stubbs put on a cautious 65 off 72 balls on a challenging pitch. Stubbs was caught in the 17th over and Marco Jansen was dismissed for a golden duck in the next over, and the situation tensed up again. But Miller held his nerve and the Proteas earned their second win in two games in Group D. Earlier, pacer Otniel Baartman grabbed 4-11 in four overs as the Netherlands was cut down to 48-6 in 11.5 overs. Sybrand Engelbrecht scored 40 off 45 balls to anchor the Dutch, and Logan Van Beek scored 23 to push the total past 100.

Pulling out of IPL best thing for me moving forward into this World Cup, says Zampa

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS)

Australia spinner Adam Zampa said that pulling out of IPL 2024 was the "best thing" to do coming into the T20 World Cup, adding that skipping the league also allowed him to spend time with family and tend to injuries. Zampa played a pivotal role Australia's 36-run win against arch-rival England at the Kensington Oval here on Saturday with the leg-spinner getting rid of both the openers, Phil Salt and Jos Buttler, in quick succession after they had given the defending champions a solid 73-run start in the chase of 201/7. "Yeah, obviously made that decision a little while ago to pull out of the IPL and I

thought it was the best thing for me moving forward into this World Cup," said Zampa at the post-match press conference. "I was tired, I had some niggles and I'm a family man as well, so trying to put them first over work sometimes is pretty important. "I actually am a bit of a slow starter and I put in a little bit of extra work. My body feels great and I just did that bit of extra work. Maybe a bit more bowling than I usually would before a tournament like this. And then the practice games and everything just feels nice at the moment," he added. With the win, Australia climbed to the top of Group B with four points, while England slumped to fourth. Cricket pundits have started



drawing comparisons between Zampa and the legendary Shane Warne, following the former's crucial role in Australia's title-winning run at the 2021 T20 World Cup. Zampa also stepped up in big matches during the ODI World Cup last year, but the 32-year-old said the thought

had never crossed his mind. "Never really thought of it that way, to be honest. Like I had to fight for my position in the team for a long time. And then I was lucky enough to have captains that backed me, (Aaron) Finch really backed me in. And it's the same with (Pat) Cummins and (Mitchel)

Marsh as well. "And under this coaching management, my role is clear, I've done the work over time to build up that skill level. But in terms of actually my role in the team, I get backed to take wickets and try and win the game for us and I absolutely feel that with our leadership. Zampa feels his skills had improved over the years. "As I said, I reckon I did the work when I was young. I went through some rough patches for sure, I got dropped I was in and out of the team a little bit and then I was probably in the team and not bowling that well — but in the last few years that skill is definitely better than it was eight years ago when I started. And then as I said, the leadership, it helps me feel at home."

Sanjivani bags top spot in 10,000 m event in Portland

PTI ■ PORTLAND (USA)

Asian Championships bronze medalist runner Sanjivani Jadhav won the gruelling women's 10,000m race at the Portland Track Festival High-Performance Meet, clocking a personal best time of 32:22.77 seconds here. Portland has turned out to be a happy hunting ground for the 27-year-old long-distance runner, who had finished second in the event last year, registering 32:46.88 seconds, her first sub-33 mark. Another Indian in the fray, Seema finished fifth clocking 32:55.91. Commonwealth and Asian Games medalist, Avinash Sable clocked 8:21.85 seconds



in men's 3000m steeplechase to finish second, though he was a good 10 seconds adrift of his national record of 8:11.20, set at the 2022 CWG where he had

won the silver medal. American Kenneth Rooks, winner of the 3000m steeplechase national title at the 2023 USA Outdoor Track

and Field Championships, took the top spot clocking 8:18.77, and coming close to the meet record of 8:18.55. Ace Indian women's long-distance runner Parul Chaudhary, winner of gold (5000m) and silver (3000m steeplechase) at the Hangzhou Asian Games last year, finished third in steeplechase, clocking 9:31.38 seconds, which was nearly 16 seconds adrift from the national record of 9:15.31 in her name set in Budapest last year. Another Indian in the event, Priti, was 20th clocking 10:12.88 seconds. Several Indian elite middle and long-distance athletes currently training in Colorado are competing in Portland Track Festival.

Puja Tomar becomes first Indian to win in UFC

PTI ■ KENTUCKY

India's Puja Tomar scripted history as she became the first mixed martial arts fighter from the country to win a bout at the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) in Louisville here. Debutant Tomar eked out a 30-27, 27-30, 29-28 split-decision win over Brazil's Rayanne dos Santos in the straw-weight (52kg) bout on Saturday. "This win is not my win. This win is for all Indian fans and all Indian fighters. Before everyone thought that Indian fighters did not stand anywhere. I only thought I have to win and show the world that Indian fighters are not losers," Tomar told Sony Sport Network after her win. The 30-year-old, known as "cyclone", signed a contract with the UFC last year in October to become the first woman from India to compete in the biggest Mixed Martial Arts promotion. Anshul Jubli and Bharat Kandare have



represented India on the world stage in the UFC, as has Canada-based Arjan Singh Bhullar. "I feel great, I had come from home thinking that I will win. I have worked really hard that's why I am here and the crowd is cheering me. I was very strong

and motivated so that's why I won." Born in Budhana village of Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar, Tomar is a five-time national wushu champion and also has a background in karate and taekwondo. "I was confident of winning. I attacked a lot. But I wasn't able to give my 100 percent. I felt pressured in the second round. I need to improve on a lot of skills like take downs. "My MMA journey was not easy, this win is for my mother, she has fought with the world for me. So this win is for her." She has competed in other tournaments including Matrix Fight Night, where she won the straw-weight title twice. MMA is a full-contact combat sport based on striking, grappling and ground fighting, incorporating techniques from various combat sports from around the world. Ultimate Fighting Championship is an American mixed martial arts promotion company.

Ronaldo, Modric go to Euro 2024 showing age is no boundary for soccer's modern stars

AP ■ LONDON

Aged 39 and about to play in a record-extending sixth European Championship, Cristiano Ronaldo's longevity at soccer's highest levels almost defies belief. Luka Modric is 38, still performing for Real Madrid and will be expected to provide the X-Factor for Croatia at the Euros in Germany, which start June 14. The best players are extending their careers for longer despite the increased pace and intensity of the modern game. Higher levels of fitness and stamina are being demanded of athletes, but that is being matched by ever-improving expertise in how to maximize performance. "Sports science has had an impact on how we prepare the modern-day player in terms of diet, nutrition, lifestyle, (and) training programs. We've moved out of the 80s and 90s with the increased level of professionalism," Tony Strudwick, a sports scientist with more than three decades of experience in soccer, told The Associated Press. Strudwick has held prominent

roles at Manchester United, Arsenal and England and is currently director of medical at West Bromwich Albion. He worked with Ronaldo at United when the Portugal forward first established himself as one of the best players in the world. "He just set himself up for success," Strudwick said. "I said four or five years ago, knowing how professional Ronaldo was, he could play up to the age of 40. That was no problem." With his 40th birthday in sight, Ronaldo shows no sign of being ready to quit. And, with the advancement of sports science, the longevity that the likes of Ronaldo and Modric are achieving could become the norm. **ATTITUDE:** It's not so much that athletes have changed physically over the years - rather it has been a shift in mentality. "We have seen a kind of evolution in professionalism as opposed to an evolution in genetics," Strudwick said. "It wasn't that players were unprofessional (in the past). They just didn't know what they didn't know. There's a lot more scrutiny on players in terms of accountability."



Improvements in player lifestyle are lengthening careers, with many using the services of fitness and conditioning experts to ensure they remain in prime condition even during the offseason. Ryan Giggs took on yoga in his later years to help extend his career and allow him to play for United until he was 40.

DIET: Many top players also rely on the services of private chefs who deliver daily meals that are nutritionally balanced while also being of restaurant quality. That's in addition to what's provided by elite clubs, which have nutrition departments to help players keep food diaries and provide them with diet coaching.

In the past, some players would have pre-match meals of steak. Much has changed, with some managers banning sauces at the table. Rod Thornley, a masseur who worked with Manchester United and England, can remember when Italian coach Fabio Capello took charge of the Three Lions.

"The first-ever pre-match meal was just a massive bowl of pasta. No sauce, just pasta," Thornley told the AP. "The lads were looking around, going 'What is this? We can't eat this.' And that's all he offered. That was it." **INJURY PREVENTION:** Massage plays a role in avoiding soft tissue injury. Contemporary players will have several massages throughout the week at the training ground or home. "With the more exercise you do, the more tight your muscles become," Thornley said. "You're affecting muscles. You're affecting your build-up of tightness, your lack of elasticity in the muscle. "It's a huge part of keeping a player fit, keeping a player healthy, keeping them on the pitch." Ice baths are also used to help recovery. **MONEY:** For all the ambition of players to continue as long as they can, there is also a clear financial incentive at a time when the rewards have never been higher. It only makes sense for a player to want to extend their earning potential. Ronaldo, for instance, is

reportedly paid USD 200 million a year playing for Al Nassr in the Saudi League. He is the CEO of the money-making machine that is his playing career. It is something Strudwick calls the "rise of the entrepreneur" soccer player. And it can apply to players much lower down the food chain than Ronaldo. "There is a big incentive to keep your career going," Strudwick said. "An extra five years at the back end of your career sets up the modern footballer for a very, very comfortable future." **DRIVE:** In the case of Ronaldo, a remarkable career that has seen him win five Ballon d'Or awards for the best player in the world is no accident, according to Thornley. They worked together at United, where Ronaldo won the first of his five Champions League titles. "Ronaldo just had that mentality where he was just wanting to be the best at everything," Thornley said. "He wanted to be the best player in the world from the second he turned up there. He was just one of those lads that you knew he would do whatever it took to be that person, and he did, and he proved it."

'I performed my own stunts in *Fighter Raja*, unlike other body doubles'

SHIKHA DUGGAL

The upcoming movie that Runway Films is working on is called *Fighter Raja*. The makers had previously revealed the film's title and first look. Maya S Krishnan and Raamz play the key characters in *Fighter Raja*. As the release is nearing, we get in touch with the leading man of the film to compile some exclusive insights about the quirky action thriller!

Raamz made a seamless transition from his two decades of rich expertise as a technician to acting, bringing a deep understanding of the craft to his performances. "Many people attempt to take shortcuts in life in an effort to succeed quickly. Admittedly, I was once one of those folks. I quickly came to the conclusion that this wasn't the best strategy, even though I wanted to succeed as quickly as possible. I discovered that taking shortcuts doesn't work out well, and it inadvertently brought me into some dubious situations. However, I had no trouble playing a technician in the movie business. Surrounded by fellow technicians, I felt quite comfortable playing this character, having worked in the sector for twenty years."

Stories that follow a character through obstacles, turmoil, and eventual redemption have always piqued his interest. He claims, "I've never been into filmy movies or songs, but I love stories that make you feel like what's happening on screen could actually happen in real life. It's a prevalent theme in many international films, and it's something that has always attracted me. Finding

relatable people and circumstances is crucial." He is one of the adroit actors who chooses characters that are diverse from who he is in real life. He shares, "I loved playing a working-class guy from a tiny town because I love to think beyond the box. I personally searched Hyderabad's Chor Bazaar, for the ideal outfit to help me get into character. The character ensured that each piece only cost between 200 and 300 rupees in order to seem fashionable without breaking the bank."

As an actor, he applied the same degree of effort to understand and portray his character, from the gestures to the speech, drawing on his experience as a costume designer. He says, "When I transitioned to acting, I applied the same level of dedication to understand and embody my character. Seeing people recognise the unexpected depth I offered to the character was immensely satisfying and gave me a sense of small-scale success."

"Unlike the other body doubles in the films, I did all my own stunts," he explains, citing his intense enthusiasm for fitness as the reason behind his ability to pull off some incredible stunts. "It gives me great satisfaction to be able to be creative and stretch my boundaries. My motivation comes from my constant pursuit of delivering something that others consider unachievable."

In addition, the movie presents a novel perspective on relationships while capturing the unadulterated spirit of daily existence. "The characters are effortlessly relatable, reflecting the unassuming nature of modern

relationships and off-screen relationships," he says. "It challenges the conventional notion of glamorous romance, instead embracing the simplicity of real-life connections." As a busy professional, he cherishes his alone time and takes pleasure in exploring a wide range of films in other languages, which helps him stay true to himself. His partner has varied tastes in movies, but he enjoys watching movies on his own because it's a more enriching experience. "This movie does a remarkable job of catching the beauty of everyday life."

Fighter Raja holds a special place in his heart in a different dimension since he believes he gave a strong acting performance; he states, "The character's innocence and the fact that he is a body double in the film make him a slightly tricky guy. I was really active throughout the stunt scenes and really enjoyed shooting them. I think I ought to perform more stunts in movies, as I always felt happy when there were stunts."

Finally, he said, "I enjoy that journey at a slow pace, and I always want to make things possible at a very slow pace, and I like to do things that make me happier." He felt that every day in every profession was a learning process.

Fighter Raja appears to be an eccentric and fashionable action thriller. After a three-year hiatus, the film features actor Raamz, who made his feature debut in the 2021 film *Pachhis*. Shiva Nandan, Harsh Roshan, and Tanikella Bharni are also featured in the upcoming movie.

In an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, actor Raamz, who will soon be featured in the movie *Fighter Raja* in a new role, talks about his career path and offers some intriguing details about his character.



PRODUCTION NO. 1, STARRING SIMRAN CHOUDHARY OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED

Produced by Shantanupathi, Alapatiraja, Avinashbunani and Ankit Reddy under the direction of Karthi, the upcoming film *Production No. 1*, starring Avinash Thiruveedhula and Simran Choudhary, was officially announced on Sunday. Under the script supervision of famous writer Saimadhav Burra and the banner of Silverscreen Cinemas LLP, it has also been announced that the film's shoot has also begun.

The pooja ceremony was held at Saradhi Studio in Hyderabad. During the same time, producer T.G. Vishwasprasad switched the camera, veteran director Bobby directed the first shot, and Hyderabad City Police Commissioner Srinivasa Reddy clapped Speaking on the occasion, Shantanupathi said, "We came from America with the desire to make a good film. We have been trying for more than 4 years. A lot of time was wasted due to Corona. We heard about 30 stories. I liked this line by our writer,

Vishwajit. In addition to this, Saimadhav Burragaru writing dialogue for our film will be a plus. It has everything a good hit movie needs."

Meanwhile, actor Avinash said, "I am very crazy about movies. I spent more time at the movies than the time allotted for my studies. The producers are my very close friends. Our unit feels lucky to have a good story set and top technicians working for it. He said that we will definitely give a hit film."

Producers Ambika Krishna, Damodara Prasad, Tummalapalli, Tandoor MLA Manohar Reddy, MLC Mahesh Naidu along with many celebrities from film and politics, attended the event.

The film also stars Nandu, Shivajiraja, Satya, Harshvardhan, Tarzan, Harsha, Bhasha, Amani, ETV Prabhakar, Sameta Gandhi and others in important roles.

Amal Neerad has revealed the title of his upcoming film as *Bougainvillea*

Two years after Amal Neerad, a former cinematographer turned filmmaker, ignited the Kerala box office with his gangster action picture *Bheeshma Parvam*, which starred Mammooty in the lead role, he has revealed that he will be directing again, but this time with a group of up-and-coming talent.

The first look poster for the film, *Bougainvillea*, which stars the main actors and provides a brief glance into the movie's setting, has finally been released.

The look, which is steeped in blood-red hues and features Fahadh Faasi, Kunchacko Boban, Jyothirmayi, Sharaf U Dheen, Veena Nandakumar, and Srinda in prominent parts, conveys a sense of dread and emphasises that *Bougainvillea* will be another action-packed spectacle in Neerad's repertoire. Boban, holding a shotgun in the center of the poster, exudes a swagger, while Fahadh is standing close by, pointing a handgun in the other direction while projecting an angry expression.

Jyothirmayi is pictured at Boban's right, carrying another shotgun and with a salt-and-pepper appearance. With angry expressions, Sharaf U Dheen, Veena Nandakumar, and Srinda heighten the tension in the backdrop!



MRUNAL THAKUR SET TO MAKE HER TAMIL DEBUT IN *KANCHANA 4*

The *Kanchana* series by Raghava Lawrence is incredibly popular. Viewers have loved all three of the parts. The unveiling of the fourth installment has been a topic of discussion among fans recently. As the next film is being developed, casting choices are now being made.

Talented actors like Rai Lakshmi, Taapsee, Nithya Menen, Oviya, and Vedika had significant roles in previous *Kanchana* films and provided excellent performances.

According to reports, Raghava Lawrence has recently cast renowned actress Mrunal Thakur in a pivotal role in *Kanchana 4*. Known for her roles in successful movies such as *Sita Ramam* and *Family Star*, Tagore is recommended as a perfect fit for the lead female character in the upcoming movie.

Fans are anticipating additional information about the *Kanchana 4* cast as Mrunal Thakur's casting heightens the hype.

The film's release schedule calls for the production team to begin shooting in September and finish it during the summer vacation of the following year.



Amala Akkineni announces teaser for *Honeymoon Express*

Honeymoon Express has gained attention for their T-Series four-song album. Every song, written by Kalyani Malik and featuring Spoothi Jithender as the title song, had an effect on the public, and the number of viewers kept rising.

Amala Akkineni was introduced to director Bala Rajasekharuni and the *Honeymoon Express* team at Annapurna College of Film & Media, located in Annapurna Studios. Los Angeles resident Bala said, "Annapurna Studios is a very special place to me. As the Dean of Annapurna College of Film & Media, Amala & Nagarajuna Akkineni brought me back to India after I had spent so much time in the US. I began *Honeymoon Express*, my first Telugu film, with their encouragement. My main crew on the *Honeymoon Express* consisted of Annapurna College faculty, students, and alumni."

"I thank the Akkineni family for their tremendous support of me and the *Honeymoon Express* team. As my mentor, Akkineni Nagarajuna, introduced our first look poster. Therefore, I thought it will be a wonderful thing if Amala Akkineni could release our teaser."

Amala and the colleagues later saw the teaser. "Bala has been an acting and screenplay professor in the US for a long time," she stated. "However, he had always hoped to direct a Telugu movie. His desire has come true, and I am very happy about it now. There are two different kinds of endeavours: teaching and filmmaking. Bala's inclusion of our instructors, staff, and students in *Honeymoon Express* makes me delighted. They definitely acquired real-world experience, which is crucial."

Honeymoon Express, which is presented by NRI Entertainments (USA) under the banner of New Reel India Entertainments Private Limited and co-produced by KKR & BalaRaj, features Chaitanya Rao, Hebah Patel, Tanikella Bharani, Suhassini, and Ali in major roles. *Honeymoon Express*, a "futuristic romantic comedy with surreal twists," will hit theaters worldwide on June 21st, according to Bala.

In advance of *Kalki 2898 AD*, Deepika Padukone has released a new poster

Today will see the release of the much-awaited trailer for the Tollywood epic *Kalki 2898 AD*. There are also plans to have theatre showings in both AP and TS. The makers have released a new poster as a teaser for the upcoming trailer release in an effort to build anticipation.

Deepika Padukone's moving portrayal, which reflects a yearning for optimism, is the focal point of the most recent poster. Buzz is increased by Deepika Padukone's unique act of sharing the poster on the day of its release. Fans can anticipate a variety of promotional events in the coming days as excitement grows.

Directed by Nag Ashwin, this lavish production with a lot of visual effects, stars Prabhas, Deepika Padukone, Disha Patani, Kamal Haasan, Amitabh Bachchan, Rajendra Prasad, and others in significant parts. It is scheduled to open in theatres on June 27, 2024, and will be available in 2D and IMAX formats. With support from Vyjayanthi Movies, Santhosh Narayanan is in charge of the soundtrack for this production.



Premgi Amaren married his long-time partner, Indu

Celebrity singer-actor Premgi Amaren recently tied the knot with his lifelong partner, Indu. The small ceremony was a celebration of love and unity, attended by close relatives and friends. The nuptials happened on June 9.

Renowned filmmaker Venkat Prabhu, Premgi's brother, broke the happy news on social media by sharing a number of endearing photos from the wedding. An X account named Happy Sharing by Dks also shared a ton of pictures.

Premgi Amaren, a well-known actor and musician, looked smart in a traditional costume, and Indu exuded beauty in her bridal gown. Every moment that was photographed showed the couple's love and happiness, and this resonated with fans and well-wishers who showered social media with congratulations.



Vidyut makes comeback to Tamil film with *SK 23*

Previously, reports claimed that actor Sivakarthy and director AR Murugadoss would be collaborating on a movie tentatively named *SK 23*. On Sunday, the makers announced actor Vidyut Jammwal would be a part of the movie too. Actor Vidyut Jammwal has joined the sets of the film, which stars Sivakarthy in the lead role, the directors said on Sunday. A new video featuring behind-the-scenes footage from the filming location was released by the makers. Vidyut soon appears on the sets, arriving in his vanity van. It should be noted that Vidyut will be returning to Tamil cinema with *SK 23* after a ten-year hiatus. The actor last appeared in Tamil in the 2014 film *Anjaan*, starring opposite Suriya. Vidyut rose to fame in the Tamil film industry when he portrayed Vijay's antagonist in AR Murugadoss' action drama *Thuppakki* (2012). The last Hindi movie Vidyut appeared in was *Crakk*.

