



# TG likely to receive thunderstorms till Friday

Gadwal district records 41.6°C, Monday's maximum temperature in the state; Hyderabad likely to see partly cloudy skies



PIC | VINAY MADAPU

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Hyderabad

THE state recorded a slight dip in maximum temperatures on Monday. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD)-Hyderabad, Telangana is expected to receive thunderstorms till Friday.

As per the Telangana State Development Planning Society (TSDPS), Jogiulamba Gadwal district recorded 41.6°C on Monday, the maximum temperature in the state.

The maximum temperature recorded across the state on Sunday was 44.5°C.

## Govt school teacher held for sexual harrassment



EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Nalgonda

A Madava Reddy, a 61-year-old teacher at a government primary school in Gundala mandal headquarters of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, has been booked for sexually harassing

three minor girl students. The incident came to light on Monday when one of the girls called in sick. The parents of the three students lodged a complaint against Madava Reddy at the Gundala police station. Cops filed a case under the POCSO Act and are investigating the matter.

According to police, Madava has been teaching in the primary school for the last eight years and was supposed to be retiring in December.

He allegedly offered chocolates and biscuits to the three victims. Of them, one is a Class 5 student and the other two from Grade 3.

Madava has allegedly been sexually harassing the girls for the last few months.

## EXPRESS READ

### Man declares daughter dead for marrying lover

Rajanna-Sircilla: A man placed a banner on his compound wall declaring the death of his 18-year-old daughter in Sircilla town on Monday, after she eloped and married a young man. Anushna, 18, a first-year engineering student, reportedly married the man without informing her parents or her family. Chiluvuri Murali lit a lamp and incense sticks in front of the flexi that had his daughter's picture.

### Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

**09 April** I mentioned Saturn yesterday. Well, the current Sun-Saturn pattern is a sure sign that traditional values must be respected. In fact, babies born today (and yesterday and tomorrow) will have strong conservative instincts. It's also pretty certain that they'll be very unpredictable as well - real live wires!

## ARIES

(Mar 21 - Apr 20)

You're one to set the rules, rather than obey them! Consider the course of action that is correct for you, rather than just going along with the crowd. Distant places may beckon, and on the most mundane level this is a useful day for fixing travel plans.

## TAURUS

(Apr. 21 - May 21)

Social connections could involve legal complications. Just how or why this should be so is not clear, but you can help matters along by making sure that you know exactly what is your responsibility - and what is a partner's. Mind you, they might not agree with you!

## GEMINI

(May 22 - June 21)

Your very personal business could appear to be someone else's problem, but you shouldn't believe everything you hear. At work there are ways to boost your income, but only if you approach the issues from a radically different direction. You may have to drag colleagues into the present, though!

## CANCER

(June 22 - July 23)

As soon as one relationship is ended another will begin, which must be good news. Yet, it may be said in haste or in anger recently, and you should now find ways to recharge your emotional batteries. Try to find imaginative means of increasing your earning power, but remember to consult others at every step.

## LEO

(July 24 - Aug. 23)

Sometimes the right words come out in the wrong way. Too much has been said in haste or in anger recently, and you should now find ways to recharge your emotional batteries. Try to find imaginative means of increasing your earning power, but remember to consult others at every step.

## VIRGO

(Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)

One particular emotional involvement is now passing through a curious phase. What once seemed so true may now seem like a waste of time. You may feel free to speak your mind and put your foot down, and shouldn't be intimidated by others' ability to confuse the issues.

## LIBRA

(Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)

You're coming up to a critical moment for home and family relationships, and any and all positive changes ought now to be encouraged. There should soon be good news for those planning a move, and while financial matters look uncertain, you may need to reach the best agreement you can.

## SCORPIO

(Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)

You may still have to consider long-term investments, but it's immediate cash concerns which need sorting out first. You're at your most persuasive, so you may try presenting proposals which have already been rejected, giving them an entirely different gloss.

## SAGITTARIUS

(Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)

The climate is still much too volatile to settle on long-term plans. The current feeling that everything is up for grabs should suit your temperament, so you'll be tempted to put aside any lingering fears for your security. Keep partners informed as and when you feel it's necessary.

## CAPRICORN

(Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)

There is intense pressure for constructive change across the board. You may be prompted to keep a dialogue going at home, all the more so if you want to keep parents or children on your side. If you try to go alone, then you'll almost certainly come unstuck.

## AQUARIUS

(Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)

What you do up to your private life is up to you. However, others may disagree! It's especially important to keep a dialogue going at home, all the more so if you want to keep parents or children on your side. If you try to go alone, then you'll almost certainly come unstuck.

## PISCES

(Feb. 20 - Mar. 20)

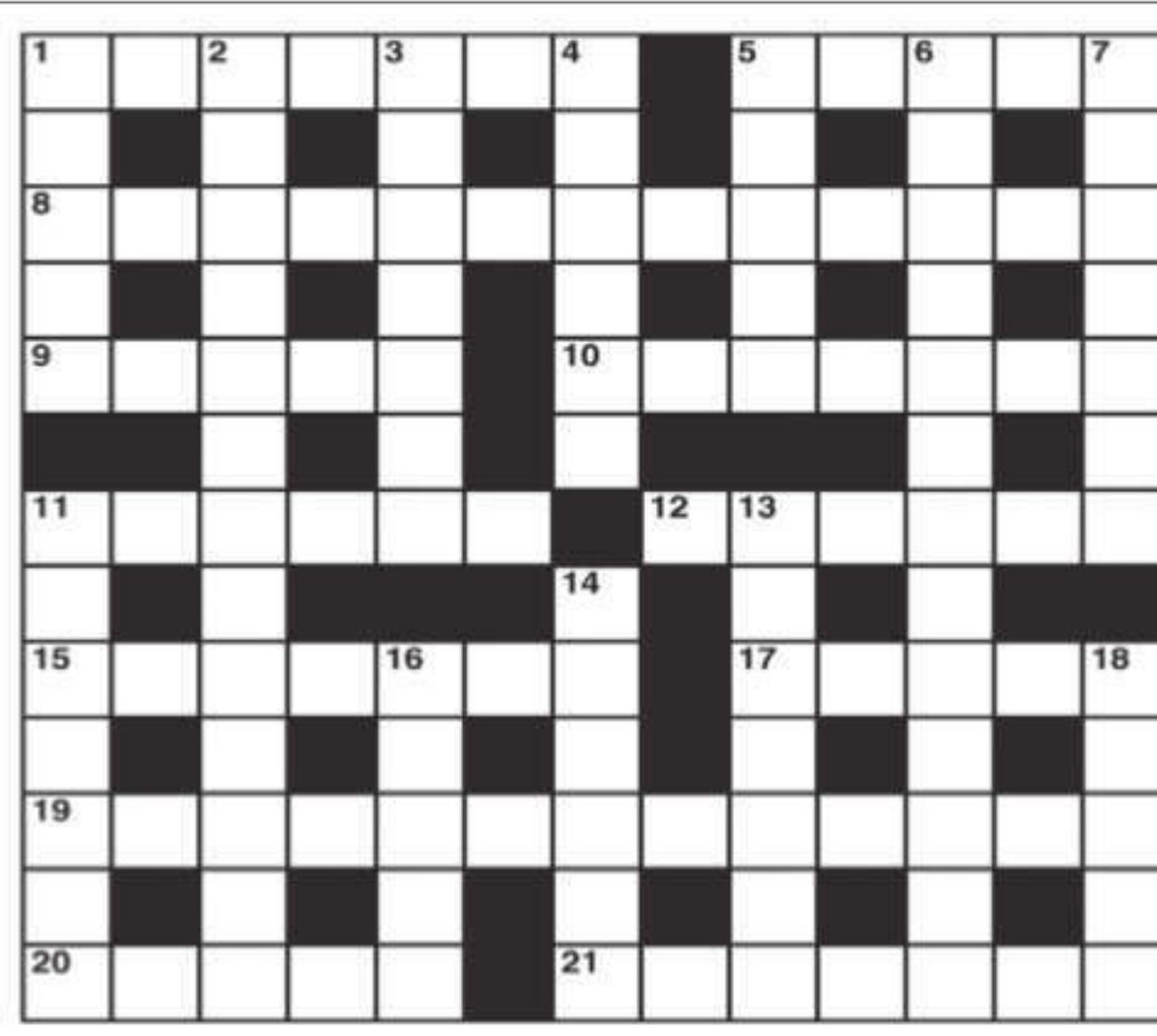
You will be tempted into rash decisions and impulsive actions, a tendency which although strong today, may continue all week. The final decision must always be yours, but do be aware of the likely consequences: there is no substitute for careful planning.



## SU DO KU MEDIUM

TEST YOUR NUMBER CRUNCHING SKILL WITH OUR UNIQUE PUZZLE

Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3x3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



## CROSSWORD

## ACROSS

- I'm set on frenziedly but give a licking? (7)
- They are used for cheating and lying (5)
- Important resolution of where to put the body? (5,8)
- Spirit used in petrol lighters (5)
- Savage blast that is dispersing (7)
- Strain to find way about the ship (6)
- Climbs on the weighing machine (6)
- Out of bed with a jump - he's only just made it (7)
- Scene of combat a long time back (5)
- Trial marriage? (8,5)
- Unusually dry around central Greece - piping required (5)
- Ordains an arrangement for smoothing things out (7)

## YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: Hitch, 8 Safe seat, 9 Stamp, 10 Hell-bent, 11 Lemon, 12 Ocr, 15 Linear, 17 Aglom, 18 Cam, 23 Hoist, 24 Lights up, 25 Right, 26 Grimated, 27 Agate.

## DOWN

- Synonymous with right? Could be (5)
- Miserable and penitent (2,1,5)
- The gardener likes to see it overgrown (7)
- It's a necessity to want to exist (4,2)
- Firm measures briefly making money (5)
- It's always first, and may need capital (7,6)
- Tennis players may play them for one point (7)
- A runaway affair on ship? (7)
- What an obliging snake may be to entertain (7)
- Rhubarb jams? (6)
- Possibly play about half of it appropriately enough (5)
- Drained of blood - like poultry (5)

Down: 2 Hitch, 8 Safe seat, 9 Stamp, 10 Hell-bent, 11 Lemon, 12 Ocr, 13 Ram, 14 Lighting, 15 Smash hit, 19 Amused, 20 Slugs, 21 Again, 22 Attar.

## JUMBLE

BY DAVID L. HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK



UNSCRAMBLE THESE JUMBLES, ONE LETTER TO EACH SQUARE, TO FORM FOUR ORDINARY WORDS.



Please! I only need to use your phone!  
Great! I almost hit some trees on the roadside.  
Most people would have stopped to help the motorist, but he wasn't that...  
Get More JUST JUMBLE! Sign up on Twitter.

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(Answers Monday)  
Yesterday's Jumbles: ELECT FEIGN ATTACH MADDER  
Answer: His custom, open-topped bottles made for pouring beverages were "HAND-CARAFE-TED".

## Former Bodhan MLA's son arrested in accident case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Hyderabad

In the wee hours of December 24, 2023, a BMW car, reportedly driven by Raheel in a reckless manner, crashed into a traffic regulation barricade in front of Praja Bhavan at Somajiguda. He was allegedly driving under the influence of alcohol at the time of accident. While the police initially arrested Raheel, it later came to light that some police officers helped him flee to Dubai. In his place, Raheel's driver was presented as the accused in the case.

However, upon further investigation, Durga Rao, the then-SHO of Panjagutta was suspended for allegedly shielding Raheel by implicating another person as the main accused in the case. Facing similar charges, a circle inspector from Bodhan, Prem Kumar, was also detained by the police.

In fact, so far in this case, the police have arrested 15 persons, including Raheel and two police officers.

Raheel was also reportedly involved in an accident at Road Number 45 of Jubilee Hills, in which a toddler was killed in March 2022. Following the accident case in Panjagutta, the Jubilee Hills police reopened the case a few months back.

## ED attaches properties worth ₹25 cr in Sun Parivar ponzi scheme

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Hyderabad

THE ED has attached immovable properties worth ₹8.99 crore and movable properties worth another ₹16.20 crore in the form of bank balances and shares belonging to Methuku Ravinder, his family members, close aides and associates under the provisions of PMLA, 2002 in Sun Parivar ponzi scheme case.

The agency initiated investigation on the basis of various FIRs registered by the Telangana police under various Sections of the IPC and Andhra Pradesh Protection of Depositors of Financial Establishments Act, 1999 against Ravinder and his close associates for cheating gullible investors in the garb of offering high returns on investments made in Sun Pariwar Group. Ravinder and his associates cheated and defrauded more than 10,000 people and collected around ₹158 crore from them which are the proceeds of crime in this case.

The collected money was syphoned off to purchase various movable and immovable properties in the name of Ravinder and his family members and associates.

The agency investigation also revealed that after Ravinder was released on bail in Telangana police case, he established new entities — Padumi Agro Farm Lands, Padumi Infra Projects (India) Ltd and Divine Infra Developers — in the names of his close associates and again launched new ponzi schemes wherein the funds collected were utilised to acquire properties.

During the course of investigation, various movable/immovable properties worth ₹25.20 crore were identified and have been provisionally attached under the provisions of PMLA, 2002.

# 'UNLIKE B'LURU, HYD WON'T FACE DRINKING WATER ISSUES'

Says with a supply of 2,610 MLD, city giving 1,100 MLD of more water than Bengaluru

S BACHAN JEET SINGH  
@Hyderabad

UNLIKE Bengaluru, which is suffering from a drinking water crisis, Greater Hyderabad and its peripheral areas are in a much stable position in terms of availability of drinking water. Hyderabad is better placed than Bengaluru in providing drinking water to its water consumers, especially during summers, as water levels in reservoirs that supply drinking water to Hyderabad are sufficient to meet the water demand.

The Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSB) is presently supplying 2,610 Million Litres of water per Day (MLD) to a population of about 13 million, whereas Bengaluru Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BMWSSB) is supplying 1,460 MLD of water to about 12.90 million population. This variation in the quantity of supply demonstrates that Hyderabad is giving 1,100 MLD or more water than Bengaluru, IMAUD Principal Secretary M Dana Kishore said during a review meeting on drinking water supply and water tankers, with officials of different departments on Monday.

Water is supplied to as many as 14 lakh houses, covering an area of 1,450 sqkm in Greater Hyderabad and city outskirts by the HMWSB, whereas the BMWSSB is supplying water to 10.15 lakh houses covering an area of 575 sqkm in Bengaluru. Hyderabad is recording an av-



erage per capita supply of 150 Litre Per Capita per Day (LPCD) as against 108 LPCD in Bengaluru. Hyderabad has 440 service reservoirs as against 93 in Bengaluru, the principal secretary stated.

As per data compiled by WELL Labs, Bengaluru's demand for fresh water stands at approximately 2,632 MLD. It is reported that in addition to the 1,460 MLD of Cauvery water supplied by the BWSSB, the city presently utilises an estimated 1,372 MLD of groundwater, which fell due to depletion of ground water table. Due to rainfall deficit this year, 6,900 of the 13,900 borewells have dried up.

Demand for water tankers has increased from areas like Gachibowli, Madhapur, Kondapur, Jubilee Hills, Khairatabad, Banjara Hills, Kukatpally, Sanjeewa Reddy Nagar, Manikonda, Shaikpet, Nizampet as more than 31,000 consumers whose borewells have dried due to large scale extraction of groundwater are now dependent on HMWSB water tankers.

As per a survey report of 1,700 houses, about 65% of the consumer borewells have dried up and 15% of the consumer borewells' yield has reduced in the Western parts of the city. The groundwater depletion had started to take place from the last week of February/ first week of March, 2024. In these areas, a large number of vertical multi-storied apartments and buildings have come up resulting in the depletion of groundwater tables.

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## Online cricket betting racket busted, 4 held

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Hyderabad

THE Cyberabad SOT, with the RC Puram police, apprehended an online cricket betting bookie, a sub-bookie, two punters and seized property worth ₹37 lakh.

The bookies — Ramakrishna Goud and Upender Goud — are brothers and have been collaborating to organise online cricket betting, the police said. The duo operated a website — www.nice7777.pro — to facilitate bets for the ongoing IPL matches. They then engaged known punters and collected money from them through UPI or cash for every match.

Based on credible information, the police discovered that they were organising bets for the Sunday's matches. Thereafter, the police apprehended Ramakrishna Goud and the two punters.

Based on Ramakrishna's confession, the cops then apprehended Upender and seized cash worth ₹18.50 lakh. The police also confiscated ₹18.37 lakh that the brothers had received from punters. The bank accounts used for online betting have now been frozen, the police said.

The main bookie, Sonu, is, however, along with other punters involved in Sunday's betting, currently absconding, the police said.

### EXPRESS READ

#### 'Musi devpt govt's priority'

Hyderabad: Chief Secretary of the Musi Riverfront Development Corporation, Santhi Kumari, on Monday said that the state government is giving top priority to development of the Musi Riverfront, which will be developed on a public private partnership (PPP) basis.

## 700 tankers operational

### TANKER SUPPLIES

Presently, over 700 tankers are in operation. As many as 7,772 trips were made on Sunday. The tanker trips are being provided during day and night time.

### TANKERS IN OPERATION

Further 67 additional tankers will be added from April 10. Total tankers that will be in operation during April 2024 will be 750. Another additional 100 tankers would be added in May 2024. Total tankers will be in operation in May 2024 will be 838.

### TANKER TRIPS

Total Tanker Trips provided in March 2024 was 1.69 lakh. Projected Tanker

Trips in April 2024 (2.50 lakh),

Projected Tanker Trips in May 2024 (3 lakh) and projected tanker trips in June 2024 (3 lakh)

### TANKER SUPPLIES

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### NEW MS TANKS (SHELLS) BEING PROCURED BY HMWSB

HMWSB procured 365 MS tanks from manufacturing companies. These will be stocked in the Central Stores Division. They will be issued to the new vehicle providers from the 3rd week of April so that the total tankers operation will be 1,203 tankers resulting in all tanker demands being met preferably within 12 hrs. Around 22 filling stations have been proposed in addition to 78 existing ones.

### EMERGENCY PUMPING ARRANGEMENTS

#### NAGARJUNASAGAR:

Today's total available water: 133.71 TMC

Available water at dead storage: 131.66 TMC

Water available above dead storage: 2.05 TMC

HMWSB&B requirement during summer : 5.60 TMC

#### SRI PADA YELLAMPALLY:

Today's total available water: 7.38 TMC

Available water at dead storage: 3.31 TMC

Water available above dead storage: 4.07 TMC

HMWSB requirement during summer : 3.33 TMC

A comparison between Bengaluru and Hyderabad		
Item	Bengaluru	Hyderabad
Present Water Supply	1460 MLD	2610 MLD
Population Served	12.9 Million	13.0 Million
Service Area	575 Sq.km	1450 Sq.km
House Service		
Connections	10.15 lakhs	14.0 Lakhs
Length of Pipe		
Network	8746 kms	12000 kms
Range of Pipe Size	100 to 1800 mm	100 to 3000mm
Number of Service		
Reservoirs	93 nos	440 nos
Water Tankers	210 nos	705 nos
Average per capita		
Supply	108 LPCD	150 LPCD

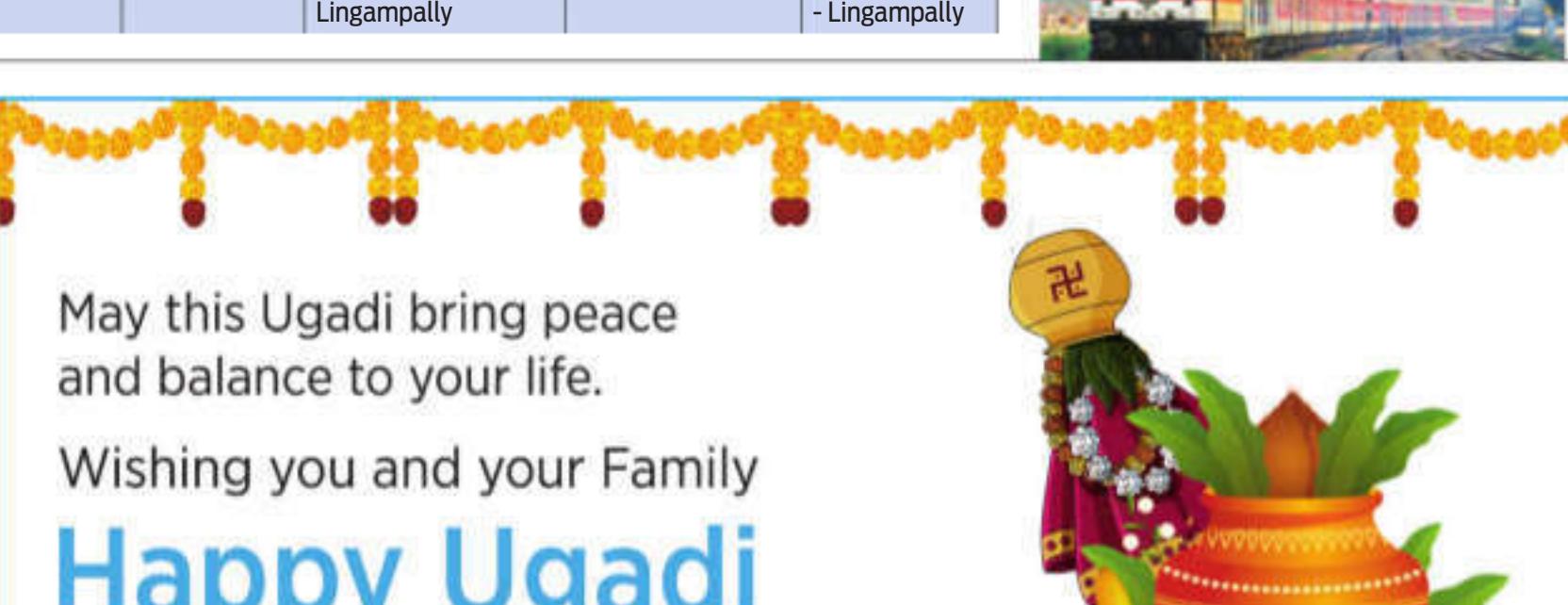
## Two special trains from Secunderabad to Nagarsol

In order to clear the passenger rush, the South Central Railway (SCR) will run two special trains from Secunderabad to Nagarsol in Maharashtra and vice-versa.

Sl. No.	Train No.	From-To	JCO	Remarks
1.	47125	Hyderabad - Lingampally	09.04.2024	Cancelled
2.	47193	Lingampally - Secunderabad	09.04.2024	Cancelled
3.	47167	Falaknuma - Lingampally	09.04.2024	Cancelled
4.	47194	Lingampally - Umdanagar	09.04.2024	Cancelled
5.	47195	Lingampally - Secunderabad	09.04.2024	Cancelled

Sl. No.	Train No.	From-To	JCO	Partially canceled between
1.	47203	Umdanagar - Lingampally	09.04.2024	Secunderabad - Lingampally

Days of Run	Date of service
Wednesday	17.04.2024 to 29.05.2024
Thursday	18.04.2024 to 30.05.2024



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## 4 kill man, celebrate murder on Instagram

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
@Hyderabad

said Bachupally station house officer (SHO) J Upender Rao.

The victim, identified as Teja (26), was one of the accused in the murder of Tarun, the police said. Teja was arrested and imprisoned in the murder case, which was registered at the Sanjeeva Reddy Nagar police station in October 2023. However, two months ago, he was released from jail.

Based on preliminary investigation, the inspector said, "After his release, it seems that Teja feared some consequences and he shifted from Borabanda along with his mother to Pragathi Nagar."

On Saturday, Teja organised

a party at his house where he invited some of his friends and they consumed alcohol, the police said. "Sivappa was one of those who participated in the party," the inspector added.

Soon after the party, around 3 am on Sunday morning, the assailants, including Sivappa, attacked Teja with knives and stones. When the police found Teja's body, there were 12 stab wounds and severe head injuries. The Bachupally police have registered a case against the accused. "We are currently checking the previous records of the accused persons. They have been named in petty cases before," the inspector said.

## Pax unhappy as charges of portable toilets at Sec'bad station not uniform

AJAY TOMAR @Hyderabad

WAITING FOR his train inside the premises of Secunderabad railway station, Karan Bhindekar, a passenger travelling to Nagpur, used the makeshift toilet facility at Platform number two and started leaving.

Just then, the supervisor reminded him to pay. Contending with the supervisor, Bhindekar told TNIE, "I thought the washrooms were free of charge to use as the station is government-operated."

As the station's administrative buildings are undergoing renovation, old washrooms have been shut down and the new ones - at least five - are operating out of chargeable porta cabins displaying South Central Railways' banners at least for the past six months.

Two of the five washroom facilities are at the far ends of platform number one, and one each at platforms two, three, four, five, and 10. While there is a common contractor for the maintenance, the charges levied by them are not uniform, as found by TNIE. Remarkably, the prices of these two washrooms running on platform 1, one of the busiest of the ten platforms at the station, vary from each other.

Male passengers at one of these two washrooms - right in front of the crew booking lobby and running room - are asked to pay ₹10 for urinals and ₹20

for toilet facilities. On the con-

trary, women have to pay ₹10 for both facilities. These charges resonate with the rates of the sole concrete-structured facility on platform 10, another bustling platform on the station.

"₹10 is quite a high charge as compared to usual washrooms. It should be free of charge as many commuters belong to lower income groups," Marri Amma, a passenger from West Godavari district, told TNIE.

Notably, for the same purposes, the rates of the second toilet facility on platform number one, located near the exit towards the TSRTC bus stand, come down to ₹5 and ₹10 for men. For women, it remains the same - ₹10.

However, the facilities running on the rest of the three platforms charge ₹2 and ₹3 for men using them for different purposes. For women, it stays at ₹3. Most of the toilet facilities do not even display the designated rate charts prescribed by the SCR authorities.

Ensuring action, officials of

the commercial department,

which supervise the sanitation facilities, told TNIE, "According to the prescribed rates, urinals can be used for free of cost, toilet facilities for ₹3, and bathing for ₹5. However, the staff escapes from displaying it in order to overcharge."

The officials added that they regularly impose penalties on 'pay and use' toilet facilities in cases of overpricing and irregular charges.

"Apart from counselling, we regularly impose penalties on overcharging, with a minimum of ₹2,000 and a maximum of ₹10,000. But still, the vendors resort to the same practice after some time," added an official.

A staff member of the 'pay and use' toilet facility told TNIE, "We have to complete our own daily targets and sublease agreement. After all this, whatever is left is our earning."

The contractor, Padmaja Reddy, also assured TNIE of looking into the matter and resolving it at the earliest.

Meanwhile, B Charry, a passenger, told TNIE, "The washrooms aren't cleaned properly, and mostly a foul smell is coming from them. It can lead to some health hazards for passengers." The leakage from taps of one of the facilities on platform one made the entire floor damp.

Besides, the washrooms in the four waiting halls of the station were found to be well maintained by the housekeeping staff, who claimed they clean them nine times a day.

## XPRESS FOCUS

### REMARKABLE OPPORTUNITY



Irrespective of where I am and what I am, my heartbeat is Kodangal. I chose to contest only from Kodangal, even when I had the opportunity to select any other constituency — A Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister

# Raghu asks ED to book BRS rival on PMLA charges

Plaint says Venkat shifted cash in 2023 polls

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Hyderabad

BJP candidate for the Medak Lok Sabha seat M Raghunandan Rao on Monday lodged a complaint with the Enforcement Directorate (ED) against his BRS rival P Venkatram Reddy, accusing the latter of being involved in transporting cash in the last Assembly elections.



The former MLA filed the complaint with the office of the ED joint director at the Hyderabad zonal office.

Speaking to the media later, Raghunandan Rao alleged that as MLC, Venkatram Reddy collected crores and sent the money to Siddipet and other places with the help of former Task Force OSD Radha Kishan Rao. The BJP leader alleged that Radha Kishan as-

signed sub-inspector Sai Kiran, who was a member of his team, to escort the cash.

The former MLA also accused Venkatram Reddy of engaging one Shiva Charan Reddy to help transport the cash along with Sai Kiran. He claimed that Radha Kishan confessed that Venkatram Reddy transported the cash from his residence located in Tellapur to places where elections were to be held.

Raghunandan Rao said that the ED should register a case under relevant Sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act against Venkatram Reddy, along with former chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, former ministers KT Rama Rao and T Harish Rao and other police officers based on the confession of Radha Kishan Rao.

## BRS candidate booked for violating campaign rules in Siddipet

Siddipet: III-Town police in Siddipet late on Sunday registered a case against Medak BRS candidate P Venkatram Reddy after he allegedly met employees of the various departments of Indira Kranti Patham, MNREGS and power utilities without permission at a private function hall and sought support to win the election. Getting wind of the meeting, Congress leaders reached the function hall and objected to Venkatram Reddy's campaigning. Police soon arrived at the scene and dispersed both the groups while registering a case against the BRS candidate as well as former Siddipet Urban Development Authority chairman Ravinder Reddy under Sections 188, 171-B read with 171-E IPC.

## Vinod's wife cornered over 'BRS corruption'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Karimnagar

BRS Karimnagar candidate B Vinod Kumar's wife Dr Madhavi faced a bitter experience during her campaign on behalf of her husband on Monday.

Dr Madhavi approached MGREGS workers working at

Satavahana University in Chinakunta on the outskirts of Karimnagar city and urged them to vote for her husband.

However, they started grilling her about the alleged corruption that prevailed under BRS watch.

They said that under the BC Bandhu scheme, beneficiaries

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Hyderabad

CHIEF Minister A Revanth Reddy on Monday accused the BJP and BRS of collectively conspiring to lower his dignity by polarising votes in Kodangal Assembly constituency, ahead of Lok Sabha elections.

Revanth, who represents Kodangal in the state Legislative Assembly, accused the BJP of provoking communal strife in Kodangal for electoral advantage.

"If something goes wrong, Krishna — Vikarabad railway line will not be implemented, Kodangal Cement Factory will not become a reality, Narayana-pet and Kodangal Lift Irrigation Scheme will be halted, and national status to Palamuru Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme will not be given," Revanth said. Some of these projects were recently sanctioned.



Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy addresses Congress activists and leaders during a pre-election meeting in Kodangal Assembly constituency on Monday

The chief minister was addressing his constituents from Kodangal after holding mandal level coordination meetings with the party's mandal level leadership. Leaders from all the seven mandals in Kodangal participated in the meeting also attended by Congress Mah-

bubnagar Lok Sabha candidate Ch Vamshi Chand Reddy.

Keen to secure a huge mandate from Kodangal which comes under the Mahabubnagar Lok Sabha segment, Revanth held a detailed meeting with the local leadership, patiently hearing their grievances.

Addressing the gathering, Revanth sought to know why he should be defeated in the election. "Is it due to giving special funds which would have not even been sanctioned in some 100 years? Would Kodangal get water and employment if someone else wins from the segment?" Revanth asked. He appealed to his constituents to give a majority of at least 50,000 votes in the constituency.

"Irrespective of where I am and what I am, my heartbeat is Kodangal," Revanth said, maintaining that he chose to contest only from Kodangal, even when he had the opportunity to select any other constituency.

He recounted that he has sanctioned a medical college, engineering college, veterinary college, nursing college, degree college as well as ₹100 crore to lay roads to tandas within 100 days of coming to power.

He asked Kodangal constituents to not fall for the false illu-

sions created by BJP leaders.

Coming down heavily against BJP Mahabubnagar candidate DK Aruna, Revanth said that she succeeded in the post of BJP vice president for herself but failed to get national status for the Palamuru Rangareddy project.

He also accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of not doing anything for the Kodangal region in the last 10 years. "Will Modi become a king of the moon if people vote for him one more time?" Revanth asked.

"Should Congress be defeated for passing a resolution and releasing funds to undertake a caste census to ascertain the BC population? Should Congress be defeated for giving free bus travel to women, for giving free electricity up to 200 units, for providing LPG cylinders at ₹500, for sanctioning Indiramma houses?" Revanth asked. He appealed to the people to reject the conspiracies against him.

## EXPRESS READ

### Cong lost control over administration: Aleti

Hyderabad: Accusing the Congress government of cheating farmers, BJP leader Aleti Maheshwar Reddy on Monday alleged that there was no control over the administration and water management. Speaking to the media here, Maheshwar Reddy referred to IT Minister D Sridhar Babu as the "de facto CM" and accused him of ignoring north Telangana by diverting 8 tmcft water from the SRSP. Recalling that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, as the TPCC chief, demanded ₹20,000 per acre, the BJP leader said that it is unfair to announce ₹10,000 per acre as compensation after becoming CM,

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Hyderabad

ACCUSING AICC leader Rahul Gandhi of passing derogatory remarks and levelling unsubstantiated allegations against former chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, the BRS on Monday lodged a complaint with the Election Commission of India (ECI), urging it to ban the Wayanad MP from campaigning in the Lok Sabha elections.

In a letter to the ECI, BRS leader Karne Prabhakar said that as part of his speech, Rahul alleged that KCR was involved in the phone-tapping case and misused the police and intelligence officials.

"Making such unverified unsubstantiated allegations against KCR when the model code of conduct is in force is a clear violation of MCC," the letter said.

"It is categorically stated that

### Plaint against Konda Surekha too

Hyderabad: In another complaint, the BRS urged the Election Commission of India to impose a ban on minister Konda Surekha from campaigning "as he levelled baseless allegations that BRS working president KT Rama Rao was involved in the phone-tapping case and that he would be sent to jail".

KCR has no relation with or knowledge of the ongoing phone tapping case. While the investigation is ongoing ... a derogatory comment on the case implicating that KCR is guilty of the said offence is nothing but a character assassination and distortion of facts," the BRS said in its complaint.

### KCR's image damaged: BRS

"It's nothing but an attempt to damage the reputation of KCR and exploit the situation to garner more votes from the public," the BRS letter said.

"This is clearly an attempt to disrupt the level playing field

for the political parties. We request the ECI to intervene to exercise its powers under Article 324 of the Constitution and initiate immediate action by ordering an inquiry into the matter and ensure that the ruling party does not misuse its powers to violate the election laws and MCC. We request you to immediately ban Rahul Gandhi from campaigning for the upcoming Parliamentary Elections, 2024. Initiate action against Rahul Gandhi and Indian National Congress for violation of Model Code of Conduct and pass any other order or orders that may deem fit and necessary," the BRS said in its complaint to ECI.

With the Rabi harvest starting, the state government will set up 7,149 paddy procurement centres across Telangana. The government began paddy procurement in the last week of March.

The Agriculture department said that 5,422 centres have already started procuring paddy. Sources in the government said that the remaining 1,727 centres would be opened within two days. They said that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has instructed the Agriculture and Marketing departments to ensure that farmers do not face any trouble selling the paddy.

Officials said that procurement has already commenced in five districts and farmers are bringing the harvested crop to the centres. Soon, procurement will begin throughout the state, they said. The procurement of paddy is expected to be around 75.40 lakh metric tonnes (MT) this year.

Meanwhile, officials said that 31,215 MT of paddy was procured from 4,345 farmers through 443 centres by the Civil Supplies Corporation.

Meanwhile, 18.85 crore jute bags are required for rabi season to procure the paddy. As of now, 14 crore gunny bags are available with the state government are sufficient to purchase around 56 lakh MT paddy. The government is taking steps to procure more jute bags as soon as possible, they added.

## Reeling from poll loss, KCR has become abusive, alleges Sridhar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Peddapalli

CLAIMING that the BRS hasn't been able to digest its loss in the Assembly elections, Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu on Monday said pink party supremo K Chandrasekhar Rao has begun attacking the Congress government and leaders with objectionable language as he is unable to come to terms with his losing the chief minister's post

D Sridhar Babu, IT Minister

gareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL), but the Congress government are focused on solving their issues.

If Vamshi Krishna is elected, a Genco power plant would be set up in the segment, the minister said. Stating that young leaders are entering politics to serve people, he said, "This is not only for Vamshi Krishna. Every activist should feel a part of it and ensure that the Congress wins from Peddapalli."

"Vamshi is the grandson of former MP G Ventaka Swamy who had served the people in this region for a long time. The Congress high command meeting in Godavarikhani.

Taking a dig at KCR, Sridhar Babu said the former CM had claimed that there were no contractual workers at the Sin-

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Social media propaganda that the BRS and BJP are two sides of the same coin negatively impacted the BJP in the Assembly elections  
Eatala Rajender, BJP candidate from Malkajgiri segment

newindianexpress.com

# LIKE KCR, REVANTH TOO UNDERMINING DEMOCRACY: EATALA

TPCC president is also trying to weaken Oppn by inducting other party leaders: BJP leader

**L**IKENING Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to his predecessor KCR, BJP Malkajgiri candidate Eatala Rajender says the Congress' plan to engineer defections will come back to haunt it. On the phone-tapping scandal that has rocked the state, he says his phone too was tapped and believes that the Congress government will face the same fate as BRS if it adopts the methods of KCR. The former minister also said that Revanth, much like KCR, is trying to weaken the Opposition by inducting BRS and BJP leaders into the Congress fold. The BJP nominee said the people will vote for the 'lotus' symbol after witnessing positive change under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

#### Excerpts from the interview

You are doing many road-shows and PM Modi also participated in one of them in Malkajgiri. You are contesting from a segment which was represented by Revanth until the Assembly polls. How is your campaign going on? Revanth has no connection at all with Malkajgiri. After he had lost from Kodangal in the 2018 Assembly elections, he gave a call to keep democracy in balance. People in the segment reacted positively and elected him in the 2019 General Elections. After winning, he never once visited the constituency. He doesn't have any connection with Malkajgiri. He neither did anything for the constituency nor has he ever cared for it. People also never had any feeling that Revanth was their MP. During my campaigning, they were saying how Revanth did not care for them and urged me to stand with them. In fact, they have known me for 20 years since the Telangana movement. As finance minister, I interacted with them. My rapport with them became strengthened further during the Covid period when I was the health minister. Wherever I go, people remember the services that I had rendered and the courage that I instilled in them.

The BRS candidate is projecting you as a non-local in Malkajgiri. What do you have to say to this? Does the BRS candidate (Ragidi Laxma Reddy) ever have any connection with the constituency? He has never fought on public issues. It is unbecoming of a candidate to have such a cheap opinion that politics is all about money. During the Telan-

ga movement, after districts, Malkajgiri saw most agitations. As a minister, I served the entire state and did not confine myself to a single constituency. The perception that I am a non-local is wrong. Some people are doing bad propaganda. From Adilabad to Alampur and from Bhadrachalam to Tandur; everyone sees me as their leader. Ask them (those making non-local remarks) to come to any *chowrasta*. They can see every passerby recognising me.

#### Which is your main opponent — the BRS or Congress?

All the seven Assembly segments under the Malkajgiri constituency have been won by the BRS in the Assembly elections. But after the elections, everything has changed as we expected. Selfish interest is the basis for the relationship between the leadership and cadre in the BRS, not love, affection and loyalty. Even KCR knows that all those around him will desert him once he loses power. The TRS had a sentimental relationship with Telangana people. But by changing the party's name to BRS, KCR alienated the Telangana people. After the Assembly polls, five of nine BRS LS MPs left the party. In this scenario, people are of the view that there is no use in voting for the BRS. As far as the Congress is concerned, it made six promises before the elections without assessing the state's financial position. After coming to power, it realised that it could not implement the guarantees and tabled a white paper in the Assembly stating that the state's financial situation was not good. Recently, when PM Modi visited Telangana, Revanth sought his blessings to bail out the state. All these indicate that you cannot run the state without the support and help of the Centre. You can see how crops are drying up in the northern part of Telangana due to the negligence of the government. In a very short period, the Congress government lost the confidence of people. They voted for the Congress not because of their love for it or out of belief that Revanth would do something for them, but out of anger with KCR. They know that voting for the Congress will be of no use as Rahul Gandhi stands no chance of becoming the PM. After failing to win in UP, the birthplace of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, Rahul is contesting from Kerala's Wayanad. It means the Congress is more or less wiped out in North India

Former minister says people will not respond positively to Congress engineering defections

PIC: SRI LOGANATHAN VELMURUGAN



**Foreign rulers demolished the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. Today, we have rebuilt it. What is wrong? Asking for a right is wrong? Be it communist or rightist, every ideology should seek the welfare of people**

which has 400 LS seats. Then how will the Congress form a government at the Centre with merely 40 seats which it may win in the south? Revanth is a different man after becoming the CM and he is talking as if Congress' victory is a foregone conclusion. He will pay for his reckless talk. On the other hand, PM Modi has won the confidence of all sections of society. Irrespective of caste, religion and culture. People want him to become the PM once again.

**There is talk that the BRS deteriorated after KCR suspended you from the party. What do you think?**

Actually, the foundation for this was laid in 2015. KCR started taking unilateral decisions, without taking the ministers into confidence. By and by, he behaved like a king. If KCR listened to a person like me and made amends for his mistakes, such a situation would not have arisen. During the Telangana movement, people had the freedom to raise their voices. But after the formation of Telangana state, KCR shifted Dharna Chowk to stifle the voice of the people. It was unthinkable for anyone to meet KCR in Pragathi Bhavan. There was a time when even ministers could not go to Pragathi Bhavan without an appointment. Not only our phones but also those of our spouses, children and PAs were tapped by KCR. If you cannot trust even 17 ministers, how can you rule the state? Isn't it unfair? [Former] deputy chief minister T Rajaiah was the victim of phone tapping in 2015 when he was sacked from the Cabinet. If KCR is a real leader

enjoying the support of people, then why did he resort to these dirty tricks? In the 2018 elections, KCR hatched a conspiracy to have me defeated. When it failed, he suspended me from the party on trumped-up charges.

**What evidence do you have to support your allegation that the current government is tapping your phone? When did you find this out?**

Intelligence and counter-intelligence systems should be used to tackle anti-social elements. But unfortunately, nowadays, they are being used against opposition party leaders. It is not a good practice, in my opinion. The previous BRS government purchased tapping equipment through the officers related to the ruling party men to eavesdrop on private conversations and blackmail them. According to media reports, even the phones of drug addicts were tapped and money was extorted. In such a situation, do you think that the current government will not resort to the same tactic? The government will go the BRS way if it adopts the same methods as the KCR regime. You cannot escape public backlash.

**Revanth and other Congress leaders are alleging that KCR and Modi are colluding to topple the government. What is your opinion?**

Aaya Ram Gaya Ram' culture is not new in this country. Former PM Rajiv Gandhi implemented the anti-defection law to curb party-hopping by elected representatives. Only 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of legislators of one party can join another without attracting the provision of the law. By using the provision, KCR,

even after winning 88 seats in the 2018 elections, engineered the defection of the Congress MLAs by offering money and contracts. He undermined democracy by conspiring to ensure that no opposition existed. Now, Revanth is following KCR's example. Every day, the CM visits the houses of other party MLAs and is spreading rumours that 24 BRS MLAs are in touch with them. He should concentrate on fulfilling the promises made before the elections and problems the people face, rather than encouraging defections. Recently, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said that eight BJP MLAs were in touch with the Congress. Being a minister, he cannot talk like that. This prompted our leaders to claim that 60 Congress MLAs are in touch with the BJP. It's not correct to threaten to topple the government. People are watching every development. We have only a pair of eyes, but people have lakhs.

**How sure are you of the Revanth-led government completing its full term?**

Congress leaders should answer this question. But the one clear thing is that the government has failed to implement the promises even three months after coming to power. During the previous government, KCR used threats and inducements to force the leaders of other parties into joining the BRS. Now, Revanth is also doing the same thing. Recently, the Congress admitted BJP leader Kuna Srisailam Goud and a few corporators into its fold. Engineering defections won't go down well with the people.

**Will BRS MLC Kavitha's arrest benefit the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections?**

Investigative agencies are independent entities. So, the BJP has nothing to do with Kavitha's arrest. The agencies carry out their duty based on evidence and in accordance with rules.

However, the social media prop-

Rajender alleges KCR didn't trust even his ministers, also tapped phones of their spouses and PAs

aganda that the BRS and BJP are two sides of the same coin negatively impacted the BJP in the Assembly elections.

**There is allegation that the BJP is using Central agencies to create trouble for opposition leaders. What is your view on this?**

If people vote for you and give you the power, why are you using that power to make money? AAP was born out of the anti-corruption movement. Now, what is that party doing? Look at the BRS which has more than ₹900 crore in its bank account. How is it possible for a party to get so much money in 10 years? In the Huzurabadi bypoll, it spent approximately ₹600 crore. If anyone seeks a ticket to contest in the LS elections, some parties are directly asking the aspirants if they can spend ₹100 crore. For example, the Chevella Congress candidate said he had enough money to fund the election, as did the Malkajgiri candidate. Where did they get so much money from?

For ₹25 crore, an MLA is ready to shift loyalty and for ₹5 crore a corporator. Is this democracy?

**How much money will a candidate spend in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections?**

As per ECI norms, a candidate should not spend more than ₹95 lakh in the LS poll and ₹40 lakh in the Assembly election.

But, in reality, a candidate cannot fight an Assembly election without spending a minimum of ₹2 crore and ₹10 crore in a Lok Sabha election. Believe it or not, the BRS splurged hundreds of crores during Huzurabadi and Munugode bypolls. People demand money to vote. Even activists, sarpanches and other leaders want money from candidates to vote. This is the sad part of our democracy.

**How many seats will the BJP win in the state this time?**

The BJP is getting positive response throughout Telangana. If we can do effective election management, we can expect excellent results. As per our expectations, we will win at least 12 seats. If we make more efforts in the remaining seats, we can expect to come second. Though the Congress is trying to misuse its power, the people are with the BJP and PM Modi.

**In Malkajgiri, most of the voters are cosmopolitan in outlook. How will you win over such voters?**

Though it is a cosmopolitan city, a large number of people came from Telangana districts and settled in the Malkajgiri constituency. It is a newly expanded

area with people from districts living here. Though some North Indians are there, I am confident everyone has a positive opinion of me and the BJP.

You associated yourself with KCR for a long time. There is speculation that the BRS may form alliance with the BJP after the elections. What is the future of the BRS and KCR? I don't know. But one thing is clear: If the Congress fails, then the BJP will become an alternative political force in the state. The BJP will come to power if the Congress government falls.

**KCR, even after winning 88 seats in the 2018 polls, engineered the defection of the Congress MLAs by offering money and contracts... Now, Revanth is following KCR's example**

**You came from PDSU, a leftist outfit, and joined the BJP. How are you able to adopt the BJP ideology?**

Working for the welfare of people and the development of the country without any selfishness is the philosophy which I believe in. For example, if Modi decides to construct toilets across the country, is it against Communist ideology? Will the Communist party oppose it? Foreign rulers demolished the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. Today, we have rebuilt it. What is wrong with it? Asking for a right is wrong? Be it communist or rightist, every ideology should seek the welfare of people.

**Telangana is facing a drought-like situation. The BRS and the Congress are blaming each other. How do you see it?**

If drought is because of natural causes, no one can do anything. Though there is water in some reservoirs, the government is not managing it systematically. People are saying that crops have dried up due to the negligence of the government, with which, I too agree. There is enough drinking water available to endure at least two droughts, but the government has utterly failed in water management.

**TNIE team:** Kalyan Tholeti, Prasanna RS, Irreddy Srinivas Reddy, S Bachan Jeet Singh, B Kartheek, Manda Ravinder Reddy, Ajay Tomar and Navya Parvathy

#### CRUNCHY DEETS

**Why a priest is sought after at Gandhi Bhavan**

Exactly a year ago, a priest at Gandhi Bhavan predicted that Revanth would become chief minister on the occasion of Panchanga Shravam on Ugadi, the Telugu New Year. There is now a huge demand for the same priest in certain circles and the Gandhi Bhavan staff have invited him again. With LS elections around the corner, Panchanga Shravam has become important for contestants and leaders who want berths in the government.

**Denied again, and again, and again ...**

Where is Addanki Dayakar? The Congress leader expected the Thungathurthy ticket but was denied. Then once the party formed the government, there was strong speculation that he would be picked for a nominated MLC seat, only to face disappointment again. Later, he expected an LS ticket from Warangal, which was given to another turncoat. Now, the Secunderabad Cantt Assembly ticket too has been given to another turncoat. Why has he not even been given corporation/nominated chairman posts? Rumours are that a minister has not forgotten an abusive word that Dayakar allegedly used during the Munugode bypoll, in which the senior Congress leader's brother also contested.

**Inputs:** B Kartheek and Irreddy Srinivas Reddy

#### REACTION TO MANIFESTO

**Kishan: How many promises made by Rahul have been implemented?**

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
@ Hyderabad

TELANGANA BJP president G Kishan Reddy on Monday declared that Narendra Modi will take oath as India's prime minister for the third consecutive term on June 8 or 9.

Addressing a BJP's booth-level cadre meeting at Chevella, Kishan demanded to know how many promises made to Telangana by Rahul Gandhi from Tukkuguda have been implemented.

The state BJP chief called upon the people to vote for the country and its development. He said, "Hundreds and thousands of crores were looted during the Congress regime. During the last 10 years of BJP rule, not a single rupee was misused."

Kishan said that terrorism and communal riots were commonplace in the country 10 years ago. "When we came, the bulldozer government came," he added.

The BJP leader said that



while there was a "puppet prime minister" in the past, Modi became the world's "numero uno prime minister". The Union minister said that the BJP abolished Article 370 as promised and replaced Muhammad Ali Jinnah's constitution with the Constitution drafted by Dr BR Ambedkar. "Rahul Gandhi says that he will bring Jinnah's constitution back," Kishan alleged.

The Union minister also alleged that the Congress party's manifesto — Nyay Patra — was "anti-Hindu". He accused the Congress of destroying Hindu temples in the guise of secularism.

While the Congress ignored the destruction of the Ram mandir, the temple was completed during Modi's regime, he alleged.

Referring to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's promise that farm loans will be waived in December, Kishan asked how many loans were waived. "Where will the funds come from?" he asked.

**To win 14 seats, Cong classifies segments into groups**

B KARTHEEK @Hyderabad

TO achieve its target of winning 14 of the 17 seats in Telangana in the Lok Sabha elections, the Congress has embarked on categorising constituencies for allocating resources and focusing attention based on perceived difficulty levels in each of them.

With Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy at the helm, the party is hopeful of securing victory, even though there is stiff competition from rival political factions.

The planning involves the classification of Lok Sabha segments into three distinct categories: easy-winning seats (A), constituencies with tough contests (B), and those deemed hard to win (C). This allows targeted allocation of efforts, specifically on bolstering support in the more challenging 'B' and 'C' categories.

Party sources said the Nalgonda, Bhuvanagiri, Khammam, Mahabubabad, Peddapalli, Nagarkurnool, Zaheerabad and Warangal Lok Sabha segments fall under the A category while Adilabad, Nizamabad, Chevella, Malkajgiri, Secunderabad and Mahabubnagar are classified under B, and Karimnagar, Medak and Hyderabad come under the C category.

Presently, the Congress is focusing its attention on the B-category constituencies, be-

#### Mapping the voter landscape

**THE CONGRESS HAS CLASSIFIED LOK SABHA SEGMENTS INTO THREE DISTINCT CATEGORIES BASED ON THE PARTY'S CHANCES OF WINNING:**

■ Easy-winning seats (A)

■ Constituencies with tough contests (B)

■ Seats deemed hard to win (C)

#### CATEGORY-WISE CLASSIFICATION

Category & Lok Sabha segment

A: Nalgonda, Bhuvanagiri, Khammam, Mahabubabad, Peddapalli, Nagarkurnool, Zaheerabad and Warangal

B: Adilabad, Nizamabad, Chevella, Malkajgiri, Secunderabad and Mahabubnagar

C: Karimnagar, Medak and Hyderabad



lieving that strategic efforts in these areas could substantially ease the path to victory.

#### Buoyed by recent inductions

For instance, the recent inductions into the party, such as Kuna Srisailam Goud and N Sri Ganesh from the Malkajgiri Lok Sabha segment underscore the party's commitment to strengthening its position in segments where Congress showed poor performance during the Assembly elections.

The TPCC chief has been actively engaging party leaders from B-category constituencies, emphasising the importance of unity and collaboration, particularly with the new leaders brought in from other parties before the elections.



DECIDE

LS POLLS '24

## Five cops among 20 injured in Ballari clash

Scuffle over idol installation at temple, 24 held

KIRAN BALANNANAVAR @Ballari

MORE than 20 people, including five policemen, were admitted to hospital after a clash between two communities over construction of a temple at Kolagallu village in Karnatak's Ballari district on Sunday evening.

Twenty-four people were arrested in connection with the clash. Prohibitory orders under Section 144 were imposed at Kolagallu.

According to sources, a scuffle broke out between members of the two communities when some of them tried to install an idol at Yeriappattappa temple. It turned ugly when the



## Telangana HC reserves order on bail petitions in Viveka murder case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Hyderabad

THE Telangana High Court on Monday extended the interim relief granted to former Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Mandra Sivananda Reddy, along with his wife Mandra Uma Devi and son Mandra Kanishka Reddy. The trio have been accused of encroaching upon 26 acres of government land in Budvel village of Rajender Nagar mandal, and subsequently selling it.

The trio had approached the high court seeking protection from coercive measures by the CCS police. During a previous hearing, the high court had directed the Hyderabad Central Crime Station (CCS), which was responsible for investigating the land grabbing offence, not to arrest the petitioners. Additionally, the court had also instructed the CCS police to issue notices to Sivananda Reddy and other family members under Section 41A of the CrPC.

TELANGANA High Court has reserved its orders on the bail petitions filed by accused Y.S. Bhaskar Reddy and others in the YS Viveka murder case. The petitioners argued that apart from the statement of Dastagiri, there is insufficient evidence to implicate them as accused.

Justice K Lakshman presided over the proceedings on Monday, wherein bail petitions were filed by YS Bhaskar Reddy, father of YSR Congress party Parliamentarian from Kadapa YS Avinash Reddy, and Gajjala Uday Kumar Reddy, regarding the murder of former Andhra Pradesh Minister YS Vivekananda Reddy in March 1999.

During the hearing, Bhaskar Reddy's counsel T Nirajan Reddy contended that besides Dastagiri, who turned approver, there is no substantial evidence against the petitioners. Nirajan Reddy argued that until the second supplementary charge sheet, the names of Avinash Reddy, Uday Kumar Reddy, and Bhaskar Reddy were not mentioned by the CBI anywhere.

It was mentioned that respondents had approached the Supreme Court seeking the cancellation of bail granted to Avinash Reddy, but they supported the convicted killer, the counsel added.

On the other hand, the CBI counsel countered by asserting that there exists ample evidence to establish Bhaskar Reddy as a co-conspirator in the murder of Vivekananda Reddy.

The prosecution elaborated on the potential for Bhaskar Reddy to tamper with evidence and influence witnesses.

After a lengthy hearing wherein arguments from both sides were considered, the court reserved its orders on the bail petitions.

## Forest officials nab six poachers in Khammam

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Hyderabad

Forest officials nabbed six poachers in the Sathupally village in Kanakagiri Reserve Forest, when poachers, armed with guns and knives, were attempting to hunt in deep forest areas on Saturday night.

On receiving reliable information, a team of senior forest officials led by deputy Range Officer KV Rama Rao went on a patrolling round and found the poachers, who were in search of wild animals for hunting.

The poachers were driving a Honda Jazz, which was also seized by the officials.



They were also in possession of a local-made sniper rifle and knives.

Four of the accused were from West Marredpally in Hyderabad, while two were from Bhadravati-Kothagudem district.

The poachers have been arrested under the Wildlife Protection Act.

Khammam District Forest Officer Siddharth Vikram Singh said, "This is a very rare case where forest staff has apprehended the accused before the commission of the offence. Also, the poachers were carrying a gun, which made the operation risky for the team".

Though AP sought time till the end of June to file the SoC, the tribunal refused the same and directed the state to file a statement before April 29 in a case relating to giving additional terms of reference to the tribunal under Section 3 of Inter State River Water Disputes Act, 1956.

Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-2 chairman Justice Brijesh Kumar, members Justice Ram Mohan Reddy and Justice S Talapatra heard the argu-

ments on Monday in Delhi.

On behalf of Telangana, CS Vaidyanathan and on behalf of Andhra Pradesh Jayadeep Gupta submitted the arguments.

Telangana submitted its Statement of Case (SoC) on March 20, 2023 as per the time limit stipulated by the KWDT-2. However, Andhra Pradesh did not submit it by that date and on April 4, 2024 AP submitted Interim Application (IA) for extension of time till June end. Telangana filed a counter to AP's IA on March 5. Hearings on the IA of AP took place on Monday.

The main argument of AP was that since the model code of conduct came into force from April 16, they could not file the SoC which declares policy decisions. And as such they could

not file it in stipulated time and sought time till June end when election results would be declared.

Telangana vehemently opposed it stating that it was only a delaying tactic. They were aware of the elections as early as late December 2023/early January 2024, Telangana said. Evidence was produced from AP government orders and Election Commission of India proceedings. The code of conduct does not bar filing pleadings in pending cases and even TS is facing Lok Sabha elections but has not violated the Code of Conduct by filing its SoC. When AP asked for treating this as a last chance, TS stated that AP had asked for a last chance last time which expired on March 20, 2024.

SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket from

## Chiranjeevi donates ₹5 cr to JSP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Vijayawada

FILM actor Chiranjeevi donated ₹5 crore to his brother and Jana Sena Party (JSP) president Pawan Kalyan when the latter called on him in Hyderabad on Monday.

Chiranjeevi gave the cheque as a donation to Jana Sena's party fund. The JSP chief was scheduled to resume his campaign on Monday in Andhra Pradesh, but did not as he was suffering from fever.

Chiranjeevi, who dotes on his brothers, gave his blessings to his youngest brother and gave the donation for use for election purposes. His brother Naga Babu was around when Chiranjeevi gave the donation. Chiranjeevi was on sets for Viswabhara in Muchintal near Hyderabad when Pawan Kalyan called on him.

When the three brothers met at one place, an emotional scene unfolded, with Pawan Kalyan touching the feet of his eldest brother and seeking his blessings.

"Jana Sena Ku Vijayosthu,



Vijayee Bhava", said Chiranjeevi, blessing him. He wished victory for his brother in his endeavours. Chiranjeevi's donation to the Jana Sena comes as a shot in the arm for the party. The gesture is perceived to have sent a message that Chiranjeevi, who has considerable clout and respect among the Kapu community, is with his brother's party, though not directly involved.

The development would not only boost the image of JSP among the Kapu community, but it might also help to improve the poll prospects of his brother, who is contesting from the Pithapuram constituency, dominated by Kapus. The developments have come at a time when Pawan Kalyan has been facing criticism from Kapu leaders like Mudragada Padmanabham.

## 55-year-old man held for dacoity after 29 years

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Hyderabad

A team of CID officials apprehended a 55-year-old man for his alleged involvement in preparing to commit dacoity in 1995 and thereafter evading police for the past 29 years.

The accused, Narra Chandu, was named accused number 27 in a 1995 dacoity case in the outskirts of Perkapally village of Karimnagar district.

According to the police, Chandu, along with other accused had assembled in a dilapidated house in the outskirts of the village and were preparing to commit dacoity with dangerous weapons like fake pistols, knives, rods, stones and sticks.

### EXPRESS READ

#### Gig workers union launches 'No AC campaign'

Hyderabad: Amidst the soaring temperatures in the state, the Telangana Gig and Platform Workers Union (TGPWU) launched a "No AC campaign" on Monday, stating that drivers using aggregator apps say that if they have to turn on the AC, it leads to higher fuel costs.

## Girl hangs self an hr after returning from vacation

SWETHAVIMALA M @Hyderabad

A 13-year-old girl allegedly died by suicide by hanging herself from a bunker bed in Dundigal here on Monday afternoon, police said.

The minor, who was reportedly staying in a dormitory and attending school, had returned to school only on Monday afternoon after a five-day vacation. "She had gone to her uncle's house for her cousin's marriage," Dundigal Station House Officer Shankaraiah said, adding, "She took her life within an hour after she returned to the dormitory."

As soon as other students noticed her hanging, they alerted the staff and the girl was rushed to a nearby private hospital.

However, she was declared dead on arrival. Her body was later shifted to Gandhi Hospital for postmortem, the police said.

After receiving the complaint, Dundigal police registered a case and started the investigation. "No suicide letter was found. We are trying to find the cause of her death," the inspector said.

#### COUPLE DIES BY SUICIDE IN RAJENDRANAGAR

Hyderabad: A married couple allegedly died by suicide after consuming poison at their residence in Rajendranagar here on Sunday. They also reportedly made their three-year-old son consume poison, the police said. Rajendranagar police said there was no suicide letter found in the house. However, the police suspect that the couple decided to take the extreme step due to financial problems. The police have registered a case and are investigating the cause of the death.

## 'Traditions safeguarded by Endowments Act'

FROM PAGE 1

Echoing similar sentiments, Hariharan highlighted the provisions of the Endowments Act, asserting that all customs and usages are safeguarded as rights under the Act. Senior counsel L Ravichander, representing the impleaded petitioner KE Sthalasai, emphasised that the controversy surrounding Lord Rama and Lord Vishnu introduces an unnecessary dichotomy in 'Santana Dharmam'.

Ravichander emphasised that the customs and usages of the Bhadrachalam temple are prescribed by relevant Agama-shastra, and any allegations of changes to the gotra and pravara lack substantial evidence. He stressed that invoking the HC's jurisdiction on such matters is misconceived.

In response to the arguments, Justice Shravan Kumar asked the senior counsels to explore the possibility of referring the matter to an expert.



MANGO BITE

Women pick out the best raw mangoes on the eve of Ugadi in Karimnagar | EXPRESS

## Regularise stipends for junior doctors: T-JUDA

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Hyderabad

The Telangana Junior Doctors Association (T-JUDA) submitted a representation to the Director of Medical Education (DME) Dr N Vani to address the issues related to pending stipends for the junior doctors working in government medical colleges across the state.

In a letter written addressed to the DME, the T-JUDA demanded the regularisation of the stipends and release of the pending stipends for the month of February. The group also demanded the implementation of a green channel to regularise the stipend.

The T-JUDA also raised concerns regarding the security of doctors in the light of recent attacks on doctors in the government hospitals and medical colleges and said that measures must be taken to avoid any future incidents.

The association said that hostel facilities in government medical colleges and hospitals was inadequate and stressed that there was a need to develop new hostels in various GMCs across the state.

Regularising hostel fees and a new building for the Osmania General Hospital were some of the other issues that the junior doctors association sought concrete actions for.

## KWDT sets April 29 deadline for SoC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Hyderabad

THE Brijesh Kumar Tribunal on Monday directed Andhra Pradesh to submit State of Case (SoC) by April 29. The Tribunal posted the next hearing from May 15 to 17.

Though AP sought time till the end of June to file the SoC, the tribunal refused the same and directed the state to file a statement before April 29 in a case relating to giving additional terms of reference to the tribunal under Section 3 of Inter State River Water Disputes Act, 1956.

Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-2 chairman Justice Brijesh Kumar, members Justice Ram Mohan Reddy and Justice S Talapatra heard the argu-

## Satellite assembled in K'taka launched SpaceX rocket

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

IN another achievement of India's commitment to indigenous satellite manufacturing in the private sector, Space X—a satellite communications company, owned by technocrat Elon Musk—launched the Indian assembled satellite into space. Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL), which works in the domain of aerospace and defence solutions and is headquartered in Hyderabad, and Satellogic Inc. (SATL) a company that works in sub-metre resolution Earth Observation (EO) data collection from Uruguay, announced the successful deployment of TASL's TSAT-1A satellite aboard the Bandwagon-1 mission into space.

The mission was launched by SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket from Launch Complex 39A at Kennedy Space Centre, Florida, USA, on Sunday. The TSAT-1A has been assembled in TASL's Assembly, Integration and Testing plant at the Vemagallu facility in Kolar, Karnataka. The satellite will deliver high-resolution optical satellite images with increased collection capacity, dynamic range, and low-latency delivery through its multispectral and hyperspectral capabilities. This technological advancement is also expected to significantly benefit both government and enterprise sectors by providing tailored satellite data for various applications.

Sukaran Singh, chief executive officer and managing director, TASL, said, "This milestone

shows TASL's commitment to the space sector. This is a first step. Our partnership with Satellogic has enabled us to deliver an assembled and tested in India, best-in-class, sub-metre optical satellite which was launched by SpaceX. We are grateful for the support we have received from various Indian Government authorities for required permissions."

This achievement follows the collaboration signed between TASL and Satellogic, which was signed in November 2023. The mission leveraged Satellogic's expertise to develop and integrate an advanced EO satellite in India and TASL's capability to undertake complex system integration.

According to reports, efforts are also underway to establish a ground control centre in Bengaluru, in collaboration with SATL, to facilitate guidance and image processing. This development will help the country be self-reliant in satellite technology, reducing reliance on foreign vendors for crucial data used in many sectors.

Congratulating both teams on the efficient collaboration that brought TSAT-1A to life and ready for launch, Emilio Kargieman, CEO at Satellogic said, "This illustrates the flexibility of Satellogic's Space Systems program, offering governments and enterprises the ability to tailor a proven satellite model for their specific needs, and reach orbit within a favourable timeframe."



I have been in Gujarat since yesterday. An atmosphere in favour of the Congress is building up in Gujarat. Some people are saying 'abki baar 400 paar'. But there is no substance in this claim. Congress candidates will emerge victorious in Gujarat

Ashok Gehlot, Former Rajasthan CM

# STATUS CHECK

An analysis of the self-sworn affidavits by 1,618 of 1,625 candidates in the fray for the first phase of LS polls shows 41% seats have 3 or more candidates with criminal cases



**102**  
TOTAL SEATS  
IN 1ST PHASE



## CRIMINAL CASES

**6.1%**  
seats have 3 or  
more candidates  
facing criminal  
cases

**7 HAVE  
MURDER CASES**

**19 IMPLICATED**

**18**  
have cases of crimes  
against women,  
with one of them  
facing rape charge  
under Section 376  
of IPC

## DESPITE COURT MANDATE...

The directions of the Supreme Court have had no effect on the political parties in selection of candidates in the Lok Sabha Elections 2024 Phase 1, as they have again followed their old practice of giving tickets to around 16% candidates with criminal cases. The Supreme Court in its directions dated February 13, 2020 had specifically instructed political parties to give reasons for such selection and why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates.

## RED ALERT

**41**  
or 41%  
of 102  
seats

Red alert constituencies are those where three or more contesting candidates have declared criminal cases in their affidavits

## DISCREPANCIES ACROSS PARTY LINES

- More than ₹1 crore assets for 4 RJD candidates
- 35 or 97% of 36 candidates of AIADMK
- 21 or 96% of 22 candidates of DMK
- 69 or 90% of 77 candidates of BJP
- 49 or 88% of 56 candidates of Congress
- 4 or 80% of 5 candidates of TMC
- 18 or 21% of 86 candidates of BSP

## MOST WEALTHY

**₹716 cr**

**₹662 cr**

**₹304 cr**



## Educational qualifications

Around 639 (39%) candidates have declared educational qualifications between Class 5 and 12, while 836 (52%) have declared qualifications of graduate or above. 77 candidates are diploma holders. Thirty six candidates have declared themselves to be just literate and 26 candidates are illiterates.

(Compiled by Mukesh Ranjan)

## BIHAR TICKET ROW

RAMASHANKAR @ Patna

# What's common between INDIA & NDA? The rebels



Pappu Yadav takes out a bike rally after filing nomination from Purnea | FILE PHOTO

IN the emerging battle between the opposition Grand Alliance and the ruling NDA, a threat common to both sides is looming: rebels. From the RJD-led front, which is yet to announce its full list of candidates, two dissidents have already gone their ways. First is MP Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu Yadav, and second Rajballabh Yadav.

In the NDA camp, BJP MP from Muzaffarpur Ajay Nishad has resigned from the party and joined Congress. The buzz is that Congress may field him from Muzaffarpur. Another party MP from Buxar and Union minister Ashwini Choubey is questioning the leadership why he is replaced. "I want to know the offence that I have committed for which I have not been given the ticket from Buxar," he said on Monday.

Bihar will have seven-phase polls. Jamui, Nawada, Gaya and Aurangabad are going to the polls in the first phase.

While Pappu is a serious threat to the GA's official candidate Bima Bharti in Purnea, RJD rebel Vinod Yadav is also adding to the headache of the RJD's official candidate Shrawan Kumar in Nawada.

Pappu is likely to cut into not only the Yadav and other castes' votes but also a substantial number of Muslim votes in Purnea. Pappu has not withdrawn despite warnings by the Congress leadership. So, RJD candidate Bharti faces a tough battle. JD(U) candidate and MP Santosh Kushwaha appears to have an edge in the given situation. Purnea goes to the polls in the second phase on April 26.

Similarly, RJD official candidate Shrawan Kushwaha is grappling with the challenge from rebel candidate Vinod Yadav, brother of rape convict and

muscleman Rajballabh Prasad alias Rajballabh Yadav.

In 2019, Rajballabh's wife Vibha Devi contested as an RJD candidate. She was pitted against Lok Janshakti Party's Chandan Singh who was elected.

Similarly, former RJD MP and muscleman late Mohammad Shahabuddin's wife Hena Shahab is contesting from Siwan as an Independent. Although she never demanded the RJD ticket, she is likely to eat into Muslim votes and would mar the prospects of RJD nominee Awadh Bihar Choudhary.

The NDA, too, is beset with the rebel threat. BJP MP from Muzaffarpur Ajay Nishad has quit the party and joined Congress. He hopes Congress would field him from Muzaffarpur.

## HARYANA

# Birender Singh quits BJP, likely to join Cong today

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

A month after his son Brijendra Singh joined the Congress, former Union minister Birender Singh on Monday said he has resigned from BJP and will be joining the Congress.

His wife and former BJP MLA from Haryana Prem Lata has also quit the saffron party.

In another major setback to the Janayak Janata Party (JJP) in the state, its state president Nishan Singh is all set to ditch the party for Congress.

Announcing his decision on Monday, Birender Singh—who had joined the BJP in 2014—said, "I have resigned from the primary membership of the BJP and sent my resignation to

party chief JP Nadda. My wife Prem Lata, who remained an MLA from 2014-19, has also quit the party. Tomorrow, we will be joining the Congress."

Singh had said that he would part ways with the BJP if it continued an alliance with the JJP of deputy chief minister Dushyant Chautala. Just two days after Singh's son joined Congress, the BJP on March 12 snapped ties with the JJP.

Meanwhile, JJP general secretary Kamlesh Saini and Haryana unit chief Nishan Singh resigned on Monday. Another leader, Mamata Kataria, former JJP state women secretary, said she has also quit the party, dealing a big blow to the five-and-a-half-year-old party.

## QUOTE CORNER



*The anti-CAA movement was based on lies. So many days have passed, only one application is filed to date*

Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam CM



*...The BJP wants to mislead people and amend the Constitution... They want to end elections and democracy*

Govind Singh Dotsara, Congress leader

# Cong moves EC on PM's Muslim League remarks

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

AS the political showdown escalates over PM Modi's allegations regarding the Muslim League's influence on the Congress manifesto, the party approached the Election Commission on Monday and submitted a complaint against such remarks, which violate the model code of conduct.

A delegation of Congress leaders, including Pawan Khera, Mukul Wasnik, Salman Khurshid, and Gurdeep Sappal, met with EC officials and raised several issues, including the public service broadcaster Doordarshan airing *The Kerala Story*, pointing out that it is a work of fiction that vilifies a religious community.

During his election campaign, Prime Minister Modi attacked the Congress, stating that its manifesto for the upcoming general election smacks of the "politics of appeasement" and carries the imprint of the Muslim League, with "every page reeking of breaking India."

"Every page reeks of breaking India into pieces. The Congress manifesto reflects the same thinking that was prevalent in the Muslim League during the freedom movement. It completely bears the imprint of the Muslim League, and whatever is remaining is completely dominated by the Leftists," Modi said.

Responding to the PM's claims, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the party has filed a complaint against Modi for making the comments, alleging that its manifesto attempts to divide the country and impose the pre-Independence ideology of the Muslim League.

The party also reiterated its complaint made on April 5 against Doordarshan for airing *The Kerala Story* and said it is "a work of fiction that vilifies a religious community and lends credence to the idea of Love Jihad being writ large in the country."

Publicising such propaganda films could polarise the voters, resulting in communal discord on the lines of religious identity, totally against the spirit of free and fair elections, it said. The Congress also filed another complaint against the use of armed forces in the election campaigning by the ruling BJP, in violation of the MCC.

Unrecognised political parties are in the poll fray in Jharkhand, according to a list released by the Election Commission ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.

According to the EC list, registered unrecognised political parties include Aam Awaam Vilas Morcha, Aapka Hamara Party, Aap, Jharkhand Party, All India Jharkhand Party, Bahujan Sadan Morcha, Bharat Vikas Morcha, Bharatiya Azad Sena, Bharatiya Jan Jagran

Gandhiwadi Party, Bharatiya Janmuktii Party, Bharatiya Janatan Morcha and Bharatiya Manava Nirman Party. The list further names Hindustan People's Party, Hindustan People's Party Democratic, Hum Kisan Party, Jan Sadharan Party, Jharkhand Azad Dal, Johar

## ELECTION 2024



### Cyclist to be Himachal's 'election icon'

Cyclist Jaspreet Pal was roped in as Himachal Pradesh's 'election icon' on Monday. Pal, a resident of Upper Samkhetar in Mandi district, will encourage the youth to vote in the Lok Sabha elections. A document in this regard was signed by chief electoral officer Maneesh Garg and Pal.

## Punjab Cong MLA quits as chief whip

Congress's Phillaur MLA Vikram Singh Chaudhary resigned as Chief Whip of the party in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha. He said that he was the loyal soldier of the party but resigned as he was busy in his constituency. This development took place after he expressed resentment over the candidature of former CM Charanjit Singh Channi being considered for the Jalandhar seat.



BJP workers try to break open Binapani Devi's house in Thakurnagar, West Bengal, on Monday

# Tussle over Matua matriarch's house

SULAGNA SENGUPTA @ Kolkata

UNREST erupted in the Thakurnagar area of West Bengal on Monday as supporters predominantly from the Matua community, backing BJP MP Shantanu Thakur, clashed with those supporting TMC MP Mamata Bala Thakur. The confrontation occurred over control of a house previously inhabited by the community matriarch Binapani Devi, commonly referred to as 'Boramama,' until her demise five years ago.

According to TMC sources, the incident unfolded when Shantanu Thakur, accompanied by his supporters, allegedly attempted to forcibly take possession of Boroma's former residence, where Mamata Bala currently resides.

Shantanu, who is Binapani Devi's grandson, claims rightful ownership of the property, while Mamata Bala Thakur, her daughter-in-law, occupies it. "TMC alleges BJP's hooliganism is at its peak. Shocking footage emerges from Bongaon showing BJP candidate and leader Shantanu, accompanied by armed individuals, planning a violent incursion into the residence of our RS MP Mamata Thakur," TMC said.

## Mandatory declarations

The EC has made it mandatory for registered unrecognised political parties to attach a declaration with their application for allotment of common poll symbol, confirming that they have filed their contribution reports, annual audit accounts for the last three financial years, and election expenditure statement for the last two polls contested.

Gandhiwadi Party, Bharatiya Janmuktii Party, Bharatiya Janatan Morcha and Bharatiya Manava Nirman Party. The list further names Hindustan People's Party, Hindustan People's Party Democratic, Hum Kisan Party, Jan Sadharan Party, Jharkhand Azad Dal, Johar

Party, Lok Jan Vikas Morcha, Manav Mukti Morcha, Navajivan Sangharsh Morcha, Navayug Progressive Morcha, Rashtriya Desh Party, Rashtriya Jaihind Party, Rashtriya Jankranti Morcha, Rashtriya Jan Sangharsh Swaraj Party, Rashtriya Mazdoor Kisan Prajatantrik Party, Rashtriya Single Party and Sadan G Vikas Party.

The EC has delisted Bahujan Shakti, Jharkhand Jan Morcha, Jharkhand Jana-dhikar Manch and Jharkhand Vananchal Congress.



In the court of justice, both parties know the truth; it's the judge who's on trial

J.R.  
Midha

newindianexpress.com

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— Ramnath Goenka

## COURSE CORRECTION NEEDED TO REVERSE SLUMP IN FDI INFLOW

**S**LUGGISH growth in foreign direct investment is the latest concern for the Indian economy. Despite being the fastest-growing large economy in the world, India's FDI has been falling, suggesting a change in the global investment outlook. While several emerging Asian economies continue to attract foreign investment, some in the developed world—particularly the US—have also seen their FDIs grow. But things have played out differently for India despite the common thought that investors' China + 1 strategy would mostly benefit us. Instead, ASEAN countries such as Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand have been attracting large amounts of foreign investment in greenfield projects. Meanwhile, India continues to suffer from policy uncertainties that discourage foreign investors.

The FDI slump has been playing out over a few years. In 2022-23, FDI equity inflows declined 22 percent to \$46 billion. In 2023-24, till December 2023, FDI equity inflows fell 13 percent year-on-year to \$32 billion. The number looks slightly better when reinvested earnings and other forms of capital are added to the FDI equity inflow; in 2022-23, total FDI declined 16 percent to \$71 billion, compared to a 3 percent increase to \$85 billion in the previous year. Even as the finance ministry has blamed the trend on a global investment slowdown in recent times, India's case seems more long-term in nature—setting in since 2016-17. In the 10-year period to 2022-23, India's FDI grew at a compounded rate of 6.6 percent, compared to 27 percent in the previous decade. Total FDI as a percentage of the country's nominal GDP was 2.1 percent in 2022-23, compared to 2.7 percent in 2021-22; the highest of this measure that India ever achieved was 3.5 percent in 2008-09.

So, instead of blaming our FDI contraction to a global slowdown, the government must look elsewhere for answers. Foreign investors continue to be wary of India's bureaucratic hurdles, uncertain tax policies and difficulties in enforcing contracts. The government has announced many incentives for investment in the manufacturing sector, but it is also true that disbursal of those incentives is often marred by delays and at times even refused because of seemingly minor reasons. The competition for attracting foreign investment is getting tougher with many smaller developing economies playing their cards better. India needs to run faster if it wants to board the investment bus again.

## INDIA'S DOPING SHAME A WORRY IN OLYMPIC YEAR

**N**DIA may not figure at the top of the world in Olympic sports. However, when it comes to doping, the country remains on top. This is another ignominy for the country after the World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA) Operation Caroussel found discrepancies in the testing system of the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA), especially on the whereabouts of athletes. According to the latest WADA report, India topped the world in the percentage of doping positives against the number of samples tested. In 2022, NADA returned 125 positives, which was about 3.2 percent of the total number of samples collected. South Africa, among the nations that had collected more than 2,000 samples for the year, followed India with 2.09 percent samples testing positive. India was on top in 2021, too—with 2.3 percent samples testing positive.

This is doubly embarrassing in an Olympic year. It is disconcerting that Indian athletes continue to dope and the numbers suggest the practice is quite rampant. Before the Olympics, the authorities need to tread a cautious line because one doping failure is enough to tarnish the country's reputation. NADA, too, needs to be more vigilant. The number of tests needs to increase. Through the total number of samples tested increased from 1,794 in 2021 to 3,865 in 2022, it is nowhere near China's testing figure of 19,222 samples, which returned 23 positive cases. The US Anti-Doping Agency, too, had a high number of positives at 84 from 6,782 samples. In 2019, before the pandemic, NADA had tested 4,008 samples and the positives stood at 225 or 5.6 percent. In 2022, there were some high-profile cases as well, which indicates that NADA had been targeting top athletes.

If Operation Caroussel was not enough to sully the image of the country's anti-doping system, in another disturbing WADA report, India figured among the top three nations for doping among junior athletes. The 10-year study showed India was second after Russia to have the largest number of minors testing positive and getting sanctioned. This is disturbing especially because of the fact that the juniors' overall development, both physical and mental, is at stake. All stakeholders, including NADA, the national sports federations, the Sports Authority of India and other related NGOs must come together to stop this menace.

### QUICK TAKE

#### NO N-CLOUD, PLEASE

**S**UNDAY'S drone strikes on the Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant in Ukraine is a worry for the world. It's down the Dnieper, on which the Chernobyl plant was located. When the Chernobyl blast happened in 1986, though contamination was concentrated over a 150,000 sq km area in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, the radioactive fallout was scattered by wind over much of the northern hemisphere. In the dangerous brinkmanship between Russia and Ukraine, one is blaming the other for the strikes. The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency bluntly said, "This cannot happen." Whoever is to blame, all countries should work to avoid another radioactive fallout.

**A** You read this today, we are in the midst of preparations going around—spearheaded by the Election Commission of India—to host the world's biggest election ever. The Lok Sabha polls begin on April 19 and conclude on June 1. It is a routine that runs for weeks, culminating with the results day on June 4. So now, India is charged with election fever.

As this unduly hot summer of 2024 scorches on, politicians of each and every party are out there in the sun, campaigning their way into the hearts and hearths of the voter. There are helicopters in the air; flags of every party colour out there, and there is the din and noise of the election on television, print and every other media there is to consume.

All of a sudden, the great Indian voter is feeling very special and in control. This is one season where the voter is boss and everyone else is nothing much. This season comes once every five years. One might as well enjoy its fleeting moments.

Coincidentally, as many as 64 countries go to the polls in 2024, but none of their efforts even match what's happening in India. 96.8 crore eligible voters are being wooed in India this election. This is four times larger than the US election (24.4 crore eligible voters). Add 10.5 lakh polling stations, 1.5 crore officials on duty and 1.82 crore first-time voters, and the numbers game is in the face. This is bigger than ever before.

Electoral fever has many dimensions. At one end, it is a fever that grips every candidate, every political party and every party worker who sweats it out in the field. At another end is the intermediary media. These are the months when television news viewership peaks. There is breaking news literally every half hour. Newspapers are filled with constituency-level analyses put together by pundits of every kind. Controversy is matched by a counter-controversy.

The school of scandal is really in full flow. Bad-mouthing one another seems the norm. Negating the word of one with the word of another is a well-honed science.

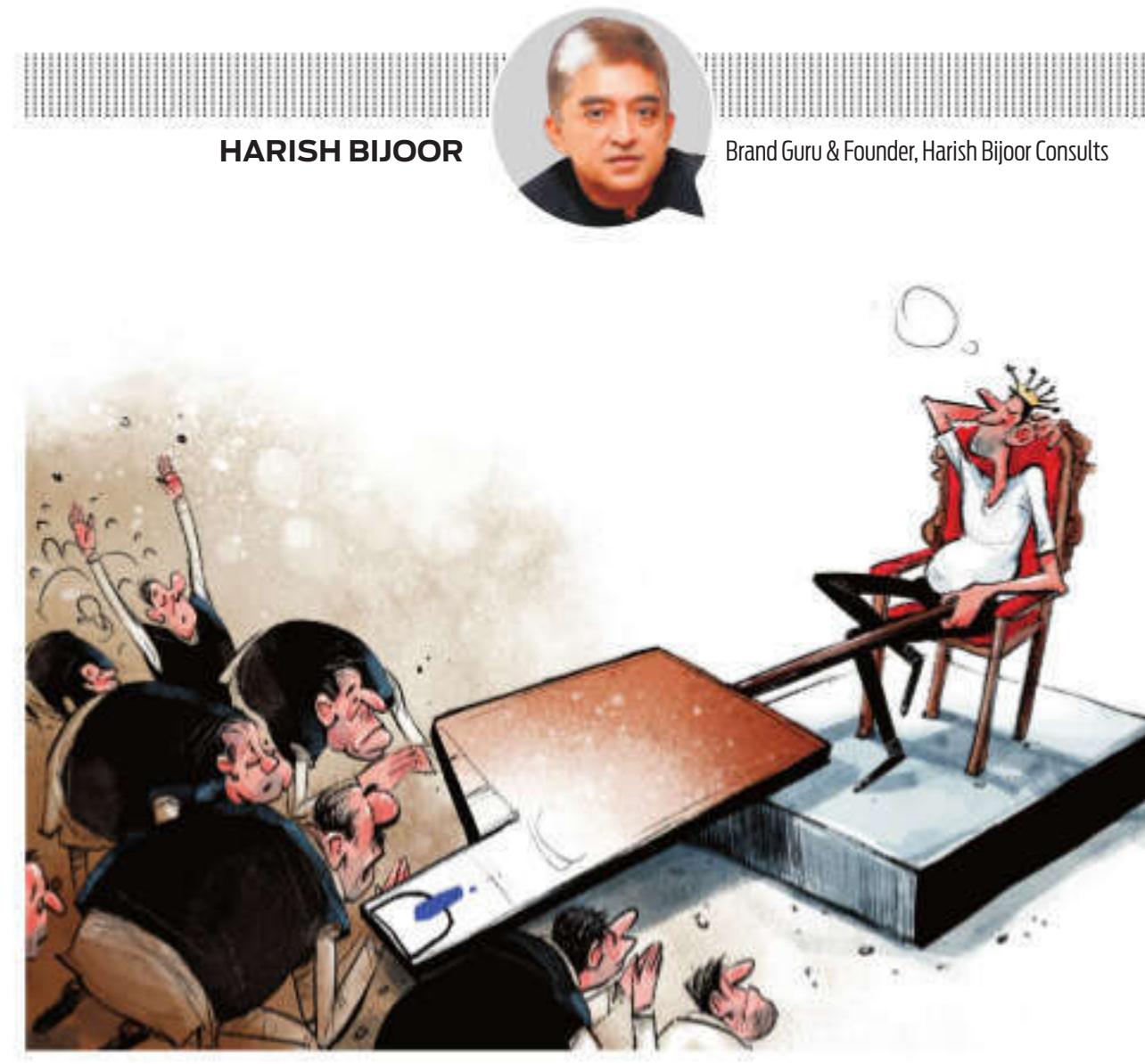
Rumour and conspiracy theory are friends and enemies that float in our midst every moment. Each one of us is so used to it that no one is really surprised. While a small set of us discount it all as part of the great election game

Every election is an opportunity to say yes or no. Your vote is a right as well as a duty. By voting, you say, "I belong." Do you?

## THE WEIGHT OF EVERY VOTE IN THIS ELECTION

HARISH BIJOOR

Brand Guru &amp; Founder, Harish Bijoor Consults



SOURAV ROY

at play, many really swallow the bait. Advertising, event management, PR, propaganda and brand building are the positive forces in full flow. The negative forces of rumour, the planted lie and the planted conspiracy are all tools used by many. Every breaking event is watched keenly at the constituency level by political parties in the fray and fed back to their election war rooms to act and counteract.

Therefore, the overall environment is quite charged. The yen to win is with every candidate and every political party. As of today, the BJP and NDA seems to be totally charged with the "Ab ki baar 400 paar"

sentiment, the INDIA configuration of parties seems to be hoping to reap a tumult that is quiet, indiscernible for now, but decisive.

The battle has clearly demarcated lines of the incumbent Goliath being battled by not one David, but possibly many fragmented ones. The INDIA alliance is hoping for an upset, just as the ruling NDA with the BJP in the forefront is hoping for a decisive victory, and a third-time return of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the helm of affairs. While the National Democratic Alliance is depending on the stellar performance of PM Modi and his governance (as overt

## HOLDING LEGAL VALIDITY UP BY A STRONG PIGTAIL

SAAI SUDHARSHAN SATHIYAMOORTHY

Advocate, Madras High Court

Many countries have sought to justify the validity of their legal systems on an accepted truth or precept. Countries such as India, Bangladesh and Uganda have justified their systems on the basis of certain foundational principles of their constitutions they accept as axioms or *grundnorm*, which Hans Kelsen claimed as being the highest-ranking presupposed norm.



cial rule that differentiates between those norms that have the authority of law and those that do not. That apart, legal sociologists have sought to contend the validity of law is due to ability to maintain itself, thereby resorting to logical circularity.

The Basic Structure doctrine, developed by our Supreme Court in a series of cases in the 1960s and 1970s, is a legal doctrine that the constitution of a sovereign state has certain characteristics that cannot be erased by its legislature. In the famous *Kesavananda Bharati* case, the SC propounded the doctrine, holding that certain fundamental features of the Constitution—such as democracy, secularism, federalism and the rule of law—could not be amended. Over the years, the court has confined the doctrine to encompass only those standards that are cognates of the *grundnorm*, that is, the Indian Constitution.

In *M Nagaraj vs Union of India*, the court, while refusing to accord principles relating to service law the status of constitutional norm, observed the "source of these concepts is in service jurisprudence. These concepts cannot be elevated to the status of an axiom like secularism and sovereignty". In other words, there's a judicially accepted conception that the Constitution possesses an intrinsic quality providing resistance to change beyond specific boundaries. The doctrine broadly advocates that there exists underlying moral principles that are independent and intended to be represented by the Constitution's text.

Since its introduction, the Basic Structure doctrine has often been criticised as illegitimate. One of the primary criticisms asserts that it lacks justification within the constitutional text. These critics claim the Constitution itself can be changed to suit the times. The judges, according to them, openly adopted a political stance and there is nothing inherent in the Constitution that resists change. However, having been constructed in the context of the broader constitutional mandate, the doctrine has stood the test of time, proving it is stronger than the Baron's pigtail.

(Views are personal)

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ly defined by public sentiment seen and expressed), the INDIA team is hoping for an upset on the basis of the silent majority and its unexpressed sentiment, which are secrets not revealed till the counting day comes.

The beauty of the election ahead of us is this secret ballot that is protected and respected. A ballot that has had the ability to tell the biggest of the big to walk. A ballot that has humbled the mightiest in the past. A sacred ballot even.

As we near the polling dates, it is very important for all of us as Indian citizens to understand the value of the vote and respect it for what it is. This is a voluntary vote, not a compulsory one.

This vote, however, represents our right and, importantly, our duty. While we can abdicate our right, how can we abdicate our duty? Perform it we must.

A data point important to remember is that the 2019 election to the 17th Lok Sabha had 67 percent of the eligible voter list of 91.2 crore people casting their ballot. Some 33 percent decided not to vote.

Why vote then? Many reasons. Those of us who do vote, participate. Those who don't, outsource. Those of us who vote walk-the-talk, even as others talk-the-talk. Every election is a mandate-seeking event. If you and I don't vote, this mandate has the ability to get hijacked. A mandate is meant to be a majority mandate. Do you want it to be hijacked by a minority that turns up to vote?

Every election brings with it consequences, social, economic, political and religious. Do you want to hold control on these consequences at all? If you do, you need to turn up and vote. Every vote is really a voice tapped onto an EVM. The result is but a collective set of these voices expressed in every nook and corner of the country by real people like you and I. Would you like to give up your voice by not turning up? By voting, you say, "I belong." Do you?

Every election is an opportunity to say yes or no. You vote for the status quo or you vote for change. Both important items that come up for review once in five years. Why miss the bus? Let's board the bus on your or my polling date. A date to remember. A date to keep.

(Views are personal)

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### MAIL BAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

#### Dignified campaigning

Ref: *Poll roasting welcome but respect model code red line* (Apr 8). It is regrettable that the festival of democracy has many fireworks erupting from the mouths of leaders. It is time for intellectuals to appeal to political leaders to be dignified in campaigning.

Jayaprakash Reddy, Nalgonda

#### Democratic decency

Poll campaigns of the party in power have to be undertaken only with the objective of highlighting its strengths. The opposition parties should predicated their campaigns on their poll promises, the ruling party's shortcomings, etc. But no party is entitled to an extenuating ground for violating the canons of decency by using intemperate language, polarising tropes and intimidating innuendoes.

S Balu, Madurai

#### Losing battle

Ref: *Persistence of the prime minister's detractors* (Apr 8). PM Narendra Modi, who seems all set for a third term in office, has a legion of admirers across the country. But he has no dearth of detractors either. They seem to be fighting a losing battle as the PM has shown enough dexterity to deflect all the accusations flung in his direction.

CV Aravind, Chennai

#### Aloof saint

Ref: *The value of solitude and concentration* (Apr 8). I may add that King Yudhishthir happened to watch a wandering ascetic who never reacted to any situation. The king humbly queried how the saint was so aloof. The ascetic answered to have learnt 24 precious lessons from 24 gurus. A virgin girl was among them whose bangle-clanking taught him that if there is more than one person, there is scope for quarrel.

Hullasa Behera, Bhubaneswar

#### Exaggerated promises

The Congress in its manifesto has made attractive promises, like an annual grant of one lakh to poor women through the Mahalakshmi scheme, minimum prices for farmers and 30 lakh jobs to young Indians. Like all parties, it has not uttered one word on raising resources for these schemes. The electorate should beware of empty promises on either side.

S Venkatakrishnan, Bengaluru

#### Communal amity

BJP's Kerala *prabhati* Prakash Javadekar's claim that the BJP will win at least five seats in the state in the general election is an exaggerated statement. Kerala is a land well known for its communal amity. The people in the state, by and large, are averse to the divisive politics of the BJP.

Sudhakar Cherukunnu, Kannur



# 'BJP tactics – Saam, Daam, Dand, Bhed'

Cong severely crippled by I-T dept's action on its accounts, says former U'khand CM and Union minister Harish Rawat

**H**ARISH Rawat is often described as the patriarch of Uttarakhand politics. With six decades of experience in politics as a Congress leader — a block pramukh to chief minister and a Union minister — he knows the political pulse of the state. While it remains to be seen how the Congress will perform in the elections due in the state on April 19, Rawat candidly spoke to Narendra Sethi on a range of issues affecting his party and the state. Excerpts:

#### How do you see a series of defections by Congress leaders in Uttarakhand?

BJP is working on three fronts in these elections. One is luring the adversaries by money and position; second is misusing government machinery and the third is pressure tactics. Let me tell you about a very big leader who illegally built a resort on the land of 52 Nali Gram Sabha during the Congress rule. Today his farmhouse is in the 'danger zone', so he was forced to join the BJP.

I received a call from a former state minister that he was offered ₹10 crore. There are individuals and leaders whose businesses are being affected and they are unable to sustain themselves, so they are reluctantly joining the BJP.

What is driving this significant migration? The enforcement agencies should not be held responsible



alone. The BJP has embraced Chanakya Niti, employing tactics of 'Saam, Daam, Dand, Bhed'. The significant influence and coercive capabilities of these agencies are being blatantly utilized in the electoral process. Democracy appears to be under siege, with a palpable sense of suffocation prevailing. For the first time in Uttarakhand's history, a climate of intense political rivalry is overshadowing the celebration of democracy.

Why are your star campaigners missing? The BJP has already held rallies of PM Modi and party chief JP Nadda...

After consulting our colleagues, it has been felt that Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, and national president Kharge ji are our most valued campaigners.

The logistics of their visits to various locations remain uncertain, but I am optimistic that these prominent campaigners will soon be in Uttarakhand.

I can only empathise with some of the Congress leaders who left the party to join the saffron camp. One of them is Dinesh Agarwal. He once held a dominant position in the Dharampur assembly constituency and wielded significant influence. He was the unchallenged leader in that region. It was disheartening to see him

**Verbatim**  
The Congress has a huge problem of money in the election. What are the obstacles you are facing?

This is a very big issue; we are

struggling badly due to re-

source crunch. The ruling par-

ty is creating pressure on all

those industrial houses who

supported Congress. The sealed

accounts of the party make it

difficult to function in the time

of elections.

In the current elections, Kumari Selja, the Congress in-charge of Uttarakhand, is a notable absentee from the campaign programmes. Why?

Not at all, Selja is completely updated on every issue of Uttarakhand. Yes, it is definitely a matter that she is also contesting her election, so time can be a factor with her. But she is keeping an eye on every aspect of Uttarakhand.

Many Congress stalwarts, including Pritam Singh, Yashpal Arya and yourself, chose to remain detached from contesting in these elections. What led to this decision?

I opted not to contest due to physical discomfort from a recent accident. I suggested my son Virendra as a potential candidate. Regarding other prominent leaders like Yashpal Arya, Karan Mahara, and Pritam Singh, media reports have misconstrued their absence as a personal choice. In reality, it was a strategic decision made at a higher level for them to oversee election coordination across Uttarakhand.

What major challenges do Congress candidates face in their respective Lok Sabha constituencies in Uttarakhand?

The BJP is employing various strategies to exert pressure on our candidates in all five Lok Sabha constituencies in Uttarakhand. For instance, the Income Tax Department recently issued a notice to Ganesh Godiyal, a prominent Congress candidate from Pauri, seemingly with the sole intention of causing mental distress. However, I am confident that the discerning citizens of will respond resolutely to these oppressive actions by the ruling party on April 19, ensuring that democracy prevails.

Do you think the electoral challenge has become very difficult?

I can only emphasize that the Congress, in its lone battle against the BJP, is doing everything to win. These challenges have collectively created a complex electoral landscape for the Congress, necessitating a focused and strategic approach to surmount the obstacles and secure a positive outcome.



A ten-member TMC delegation comprising Derek O'Brien, Dola Sen, Saket Gokhale, Saragika Ghose, among others met the ECI bench in New Delhi on Monday | PTI

## TMC seeks change of agencies' chiefs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

The delegation, conveyed, "We implored the EC to intervene in the spirit of parliamentary democracy to uphold the integrity of elections. Cease the actions of ED, CBI, NIA, and the I-T Department against the opposition. They are functioning as the BJP's twelfth man."

Ghose made these remarks during the dharna while her party members displayed posters demanding changes in the directors of "NIA DG, ED and CBI".

Among those detained were TMC MPs Derek O'Brien, Mohammed Nadimul Haque, Dola Sen, Saket Gokhale, and Ghose herself, along with MLA Vivek Gupta, former MPs Arpita Ghosh, Santanu Sen, Abir Ranjan Biswas, and Sudip Raha, the vice president of the party's students' wing in West Bengal.

## Two months on, return of 8<sup>th</sup> naval veteran from Doha remains uncertain

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

NEARLY two months after Qatar's Interior Ministry released eight Indian naval veterans, uncertainty shrouds the return of the eighth naval veteran, Commander Purnendu Tiwari, who faces a travel ban.

Seven naval veterans have returned home following the release of the eighth on February 12 after being in captivity for over 16 months. "There was optimism that the travel ban imposed on Commander Tiwari would be lifted and he would return home by Eid; however, since holidays have begun, nearly all establishments are closed so any decision would come only after the break gets over," said a source.

There are certain impending formalities for which he needs clearance without which he cannot head back to India, sources said, adding that until Qatar's Interior Ministry lifts the ban, he won't be permitted to return. He is living in his own house in Doha.

India hasn't officially confirmed on when Commander Tiwari would return but the Ministry of External Affairs



had said on February 29 that "the eighth Indian national has certain requirements to fulfil; he will return as and when those are completed."

Commander Tiwari's 85-year-old mother is among those eagerly waiting for her son's return. Continuous requests have been made to the authorities for over a month on behalf of his family. The eight naval veterans were employed for a company, Dhara Consultancies, owned by an Omani Emir. The eight were picked up from their homes on August 30, 2022 in Doha by Qatar's Interior Ministry. Charges framed against them were not made public, however a death penalty was announced for them which was later commuted to jail terms.

### Former Maldives minister says sorry for post

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

FORMER Maldives minister Mariyam Shiuna apologised on Monday after a controversy arose over a social media post she made against the opposition party for using a symbol that resembled the Ashoka Chakra.

"I would like to address a recent social media post of mine that has garnered attention and criticism. I extend my sincerest apologies for any confusion or offence caused by the content of my recent post," Shiuna wrote on X.

"It was brought to my attention that the image used in my response to the Maldivian opposition party MDP bore a resemblance to the Indian flag.

I want to make it clear that this was entirely unintentional, and I sincerely regret any misunderstanding it may have caused," she said.

"Maldives deeply values its relationship and the mutual respect we share with India. In the future, I will be more vigilant in verifying the content I share to prevent such oversights," the ex-MP added.

Mariyam Shiuna belongs to the People's National Congress, the party of Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu.

## PMLA case against C'garh IAS officer, son quashed

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY  
@ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Monday quashed the money laundering case against former IAS officer Anil Tuteja and his son Yash Tuteja in the alleged ₹2,000 crore liquor scam in Chhattisgarh, saying there were no proceeds of crime.

A two-judge bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhattacharya quashed the case being probed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), after noting that since no ex-facie scheduled offence (main offence) exists against the accused, no offence was made out by the probe agency under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

It pronounced the order after hearing a batch of writ petitions filed by six accused, including IAS officer Tuteja, his son and some other personnel. Monday's court order has come as a major blow to the ED, which failed to gather evidence against the accused.

"As there is no scheduled offence, there cannot be any proceeds of crime as defined under clause 2(u) of the PMLA. If there are no proceeds of crime, the offence under PMLA is not made out," the bench of the top court said in its order.

The court also made it clear

that it was quashing the case,

### ALSO IN TOP COURT

#### Maha reply sought on ex-cop's bail

In a relief to former Mumbai Police officer Pradeep Sharma, the Supreme Court on Monday said he need not surrender till further orders to undergo the life sentence awarded to him in a 2006 fake encounter killing case. The apex court also sought a response from the Maharashtra government on his bail plea in the case.

#### SC favours release of lifer in terror case

The Supreme Court favoured remission to an ailing 96-year-old convict who is serving life term in the 1993 train blast case in Rajasthan and is currently on parole, saying continued incarceration is "like capital punishment". Habib Ahmed Khan had moved the SC seeking permanent parole given his deteriorating health condition and age.

as the complaint and case filed by the ED, was based on an IT act offence, which is not a scheduled offence as per the PMLA. "There is no predicate offence, therefore there cannot be proceeds of crime," the SC said in its order.

In its complaint the probe agency claimed that a person named A Tiwari was the mastermind behind the multi-crore liquor scam. The ED has named around 50 people, including the then excise minister Kawasi Lakhma, former IAS Vivek Dhandh, Congress leader Anwar Dehbar, IAS officer Anil Tuteja, his son Yash Tuteja and others.

The ED has in its complaint,

alleged money laundering in the case in which it has named Anwar Dhebar — brother of Congress leader and Raipur Mayor Ajit Dhebar; Managing Director of Chhattisgarh State Marketing Corporation Limited (CSMCL) Arupati Tripathi, liquor businessman Trilok Singh Dhillon, hotelier Nitesh Purohit and Arvind Singh as accused.

The probe agency maintained that the accused persons' pleas for quashing of the case, could not be maintained, in view the 2022 apex court verdict which upheld the ED's power to search, seize and arrest. Section 50 gives ED the power to summon people.

### RIGHT TO PRIVACY

## Supreme Court seeks 'pin-point' response from Google

### DELHI HIGH COURT'S BAIL ORDER

The Supreme Court was hearing a plea against an order of bail granted to a Nigerian national by the Delhi High Court in a case registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act. The order required him to share his location with the investigators while on bail

advice, the Supreme Court had on February 23 asked Google India to file a detailed affidavit explaining the technical aspects of pin-location feature on Google Maps.

"The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has given an affidavit and has suggested that as far as working of the Google pin is concerned, it's appropriate if the information is sought from Google India Pvt Ltd," the court said.

However, during Monday's hearing, a counsel for Google India said since the product was developed by US-based

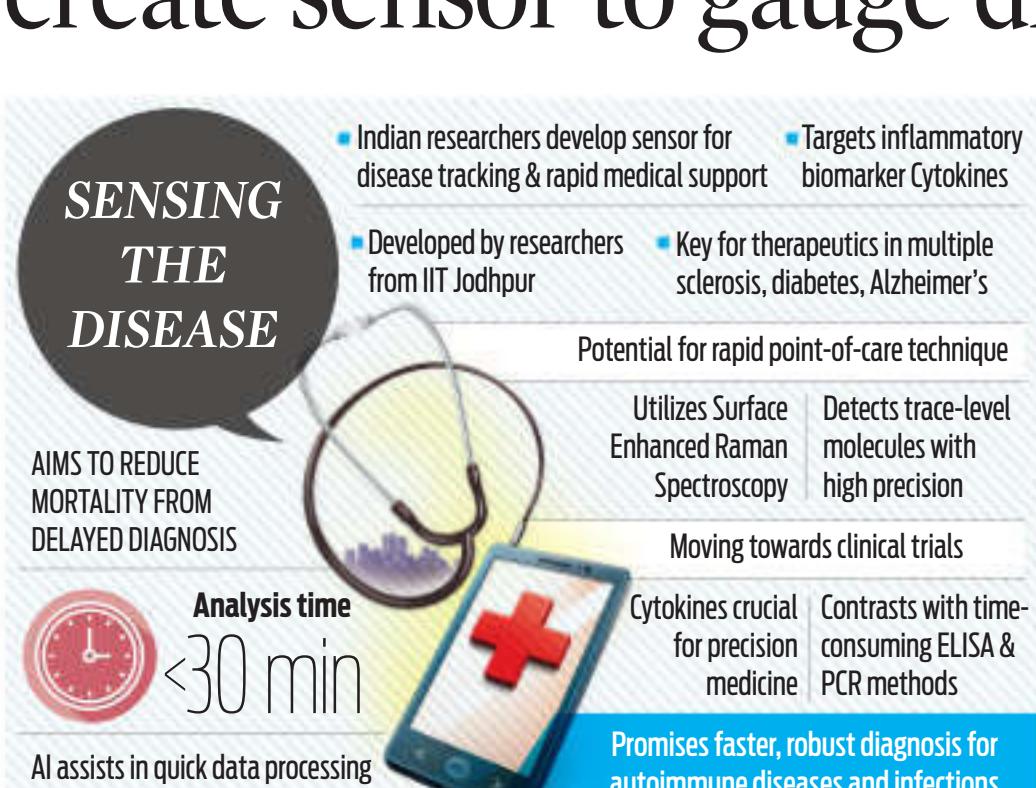
Google LLC, it would be the appropriate entity to explain how the pin-location feature works.

The court took notice of the submission and issued a notice to Google LLC.

The top court had earlier remarked that requiring the accused to share their Google pin location with investigators prima facie violates the right to privacy of the accused.

It had also observed that when an accused has been enlarged on bail by courts with the conditions set by them, it might be improper to know and track his or her whereabouts, as it could hamper their right to privacy.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi



tracking," researchers added.

Cytokines are among the many biomarkers of inflammation used for diagnosing diseases and tracking their progression. They play crucial roles in tissue damage repair, cancer development and progression, and modulating immune reactions.

Researchers said that this development aims to reduce mortality rates due to delayed diagnosis and lack of early warnings. "The technology has immense potential to be used as a rapid and point-of-care technique for health monitoring, disease diagnosis, prognosis, and immune response

ous conditions such as oncology, infectiology, and rheumatological diseases.

Prof. Ajay Agarwal, Department of Electrical Engineering, IIT Jodhpur, said, "This technique has provided encouraging results for three key pro-inflammatory cytokines: interleukin-6 (IL-6), interleukin-8 (IL-8), and TNF-α, released by inflammatory cells."

On the Union government's

A litmus test for all parties as it is the first major polls after abrogation of Art 370 & bifurcation of erstwhile J&K

FAYAZ WANI @Srinagar

FOR Jammu & Kashmir, 2024 will not be just another election year but a litmus test for all the parties as it is the first major polls after the abrogation of Articles 370 and bifurcation of erstwhile J&K state into two Union Territories.

According to the EC's poll schedule, elections in the five LS seats in J&K will take place in five phases. While Udhampur goes to polls on April 19, voting in Jammu will be on April 26, newly carved Anantnag-Rajouri on May 7, Srinagar on May 13 and Baramulla on May 26. A total of 87,89,233 voters, including 44,86,261 males and 43,02,812 women, are eligible to exercise their franchise, of which about 3.4 lakh are first-timers. About 8,930 polling stations have been set up across the UT for smooth polling.

With the campaigning picking up, especially in the Jammu region, the parties have announced their candidates for the five seats. A day after Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) announced its candidates, the Congress and the National Conference (NC) on Monday sealed a seat sharing pact in J&K and Ladakh in which both parties will be fielding three candidates each.

Announcing the seat sharing agreement at a joint press conference in the capital, former J&K CM and NC vice president Omar Abdullah said the Congress would contest in Udhampur, Jammu and Ladakh seats while the NC would field candidates in Anantnag, Srinagar and Baramulla.



GHULAM NABI AZAD



MEHBOOBA MUFTI



FAROOQ ABDULLAH

around 11 lakh are in South Kashmir, while Rajouri and Poonch districts have over 8 lakh votes.

So far, the BJP has announced candidates for two Jammu seats – Udhampur and Jammu. It has retained both sitting MPs – Union MoS PMO Dr Jitendra Singh for the Udhampur seat and Jugal Kishore for the Jammu seat. Of the 19,25,450 votes of the Anantnag-Rajouri seat,

Nabi Azad, and NC's Gujjar leader Mian Altaf Ahmed. The BJP in all likelihood would field its J&K president Ravindra Raina in Rajouri. In Kashmir, the regional parties – NC, PDP and People's Conference Party – would contest on Article 370 plank.

The main thrust of Congress, DPAP and the Apni Party will be to restore statehood. For the two Valley seats, NC and PDP will be engaged in a friendly battle.

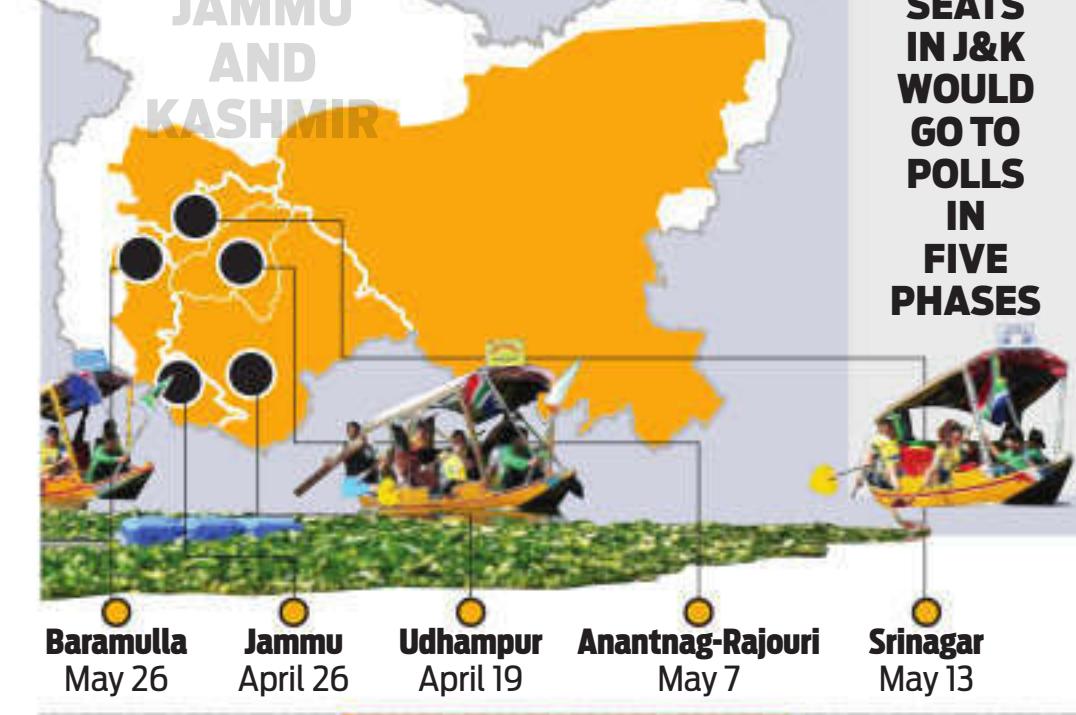
**KEY ISSUES:** ARTICLE 370, GRANT OF ST STATUS TO PAHARI AND 3 OTHER COMMUNITIES, POST ARTICLE 370 DEVELOPMENT, OUTSIDERS GIVEN WINE SHOP VENDS & MINING CONTRACTS, DROP IN MILITANCY, UNEMPLOYMENT

angular contest between NC, PDP's youth president Wahid Para and Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari in Srinagar and NC versus Peoples Conference chairman Sajjad Lone in Baramulla.

The NC is yet to name candidates for Srinagar and Baramulla seats. NC would be dropping all three sitting MPs and has given the mandate to Mian Altaf from Anantnag. NC's Omar Abdullah may contest from the Srinagar seat, and the party may field a young leader from Baramulla.

The fate of three former CMs, Mehbooba Mufti, Omar Abdullah, Mehbooba Mufti, J&K Apni Party chief Altaf Bukhari, Peoples Conference chairman Sajjad Lone and J&K BJP president Ravindra Raina, will be at stake. A political observer said the NC, PDP and Congress would focus their campaigning on the drawbacks of Article 370 abrogation and restoration of statehood. The NC and PDP have been calling for the restoration of Article 370, and two parties are part of the five-party Gupkar alliance on Article 370 restoration and INDIA bloc.

Of the five LS seats, the INDIA allies NC and PDP have not fielded candidates for two Jammu seats and Congress in turn will not field candidates for Valley seats. But for three Valley seats, NC and PDP will be engaged in a friendly battle.



#### PROMINENT CANDIDATES

**Anantnag-Rajouri:** Mehbooba Mufti (PDP), Ghulam Nabi Azad (DAP), Mian Altaf Ahmed (NC)

**Udhampur:** Dr Jitendra Singh (BJP), Lal Singh (Congress), G M Saroori (DAP)

**Jammu:** Jugal Kishore (BJP), Raman Bhalla (Cong)

#### PAST RESULTS

	WINNER	LOSER
Total electorate	87,89,233	
Udhampur	2019 ● Dr Jitendra Singh (BJP) ● Vikramditya Singh (Congress) 2014 ● Dr Jitendra Singh (BJP) ● Ghulam Nabi Azad (Congress)	
Jammu	2019 ● Jugal Kishore (BJP) ● Raman Bhalla (Congress) 2014 ● Jugal Kishore (BJP) ● Madan Lal Sharma (Congress)	
Anantnag	2019 ● Justice (Retd) Hasnain Masoodi (NC) ● Ghulam Ahmed Mir (Cong) 2014 ● Mehbooba Mufti (PDP) ● Mehboob Beg (NC)	
Srinagar	2019 ● Farooq Abdullah (NC) ● Aga Syed Moshin (PDP) 2014 ● Tariq Hamid Karra (PDP) ● Farooq Abdullah (NC)	
Baramulla	2019 ● Mohammad Akbar Lone (NC) ● Raja Ajiaz Ali (PC) 2014 ● Muzaffar Hussain Baig (PDP) ● Sharif-ud-Din Shariq (NC)	

#### MADHYA PRADESH

## In 'ideological battle', Rahul rakes up Adivasis Vs Vanvasis debate

ANURAG SINGH @Bhopal

FORMER Congress chief Rahul Gandhi launched his party's campaign for the first phase of Lok Sabha polls in Madhya Pradesh, with twin rallies in tribal reserved Mandla and Shahdol constituencies on Monday.

He termed the contest an ideological battle between those who've always believed the tribals being Adivasis versus those who consider the tribals Vanvasis.

"The Congress has always believed in the concept of Adivasi (the original residents/owners of the country and resources), while the RSS-BJP furthers the concept of Vanvasis (those living in jungles, but not having ownership/rights of the resources there). This election is the battle between these two ideologies," Rahul said.

"The Congress regimes brought the PESA law, land acquisition and tribal bills to render rights of tribals to them. On the contrary, the BJP works to snatch away land of tribals and give it to wealthy industrialists —Rahul Gandhi, Congress MP



**Q** The Congress regimes brought the PESA law, land acquisition and tribal bills to render rights of tribals to them. On the contrary, the BJP works to snatch away land of tribals and give it to wealthy industrialists —Rahul Gandhi, Congress MP

gress's LS polls manifesto.

"Once our government is formed at the Centre, we'll implement the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution in all those areas, where tribals constitute 50% or more of the total population," he said.

"We will ensure that tribals run their areas through their own government and not through Delhi or Bhopal. The scholarships for the SC/ST and OBCs will be doubled, forest rights claims (including land rights) will be given to the tribals within a year," Rahul added.

"Our manifesto also mentions transferring Rs 1 lakh into (bank) accounts of women belonging to SC and ST categories, backward classes, and for women from poor families. This way we will provide thousands of rupees later in the day at Dhanora under the Mandla Lok Sabha seat.

#### BJP minister's picture on banner in Gandhi's rally

The Congress was left red-faced after a video surfaced on social media, showing a picture of Union Minister and BJP candidate Faggan Singh Kulaste on a banner at Rahul Gandhi's rally in Madhya Pradesh's Mandla Lok Sabha seat on Monday. While the Congress termed the goof-up a "human error", MP Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said the opposition party had accepted defeat even before the elections. The purported video showed a picture of Kulaste on a banner serving as a backdrop of the stage at the rally scheduled later in the day at Dhanora under the Mandla Lok Sabha seat.

#### CHHATTISGARH

## From Maoist terrain, Modi says govt working for welfare of poor



**Q** The priority of a stable government of BJP was the welfare of the poor. After independence, the Congress ignored the needs of the poor for decades and never bothered about their problems or existence — Narendra Modi, PM

#### 'Welfare schemes enable poor to save money'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said his government's welfare schemes enabled the poor people to save their money for a better, as he sought their support saying every vote for the lotus symbol will strengthen Modi's power to develop the nation as a 'Viksit Bharat'. He listed welfare programmes, such as Ayushman Aranya Mandir, Jan Aushadhi centres, Eklavya residential schools, MSP for nearly 100 forest produce, Mahtari Vandan Yojana, said his government after coming to power at the Centre in 2014 has cancelled the Congress' 'licence to loot'.

EJAZ KAISER @ Raipur

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said his government remained committed to the empowerment of the poor, and targeted the Congress over corruption. Addressing the BJP's 'Vijay Sankalp Shankhnad' rally at Narayanpur district of Bastar which will go to polls on April 19, Modi said that as a "son of the poor" he can better realise their pressing needs.

He said his government's welfare schemes enabled the poor people to save their money for a better, as he sought their support saying every vote for the lotus symbol will strengthen Modi's power to develop the nation as a 'Viksit Bharat'. He listed welfare programmes, such as Ayushman Aranya Mandir, Jan Aushadhi centres, Eklavya residential

schools, MSP for nearly 100 forest produce, Mahtari Vandan Yojana, and separate ministry for tribal welfare.

The PM said his government after coming to power at the Centre in 2014 has cancelled the Congress' "licence to loot". "When I initiate action against corruption, some people get upset and protect the corrupt. But Modi's guarantee will ensure that the corrupt individuals will have to go to jail," he said.

"The priority of a stable strong government of BJP was the welfare of the poor. After independence, the Congress ignored the needs of the poor for decades and never bothered about their problems or existence," he alleged.

In reaction, Chhattisgarh Congress president Deepak Baij asked, "Why PM Modi is silent on rising inflation, unemployment, and problems faced farmers and tribal?" Citing the upcoming Ram Navami, the PM drew the attention of the people towards the Ram Temple built in Ayodhya. "Instead of a tent for our Ram Lalla, now there is a magnificent temple. The Congress and the INDI Alliance expressed discontent over the temple's construction that shows Congress' inclination towards appeasement. The Congress manifesto carried the imprint of Muslim League," he said.

He added it was natural for people of Chhattisgarh, the "nanihal" (birthplace of maternal grandparents) of Lord Ram, to be most happy on this dream (of a grand temple) being fulfilled after 500 years.

Reiterating his guarantee to ensure a better life for tribal families, Modi said, "It was the BJP that not only facilitated a tribal woman to become President of the country but also appointed the state's first tribal chief minister."

#### NEED OF THE HOUR

## No more a taboo, Marxists take to glamorous world of virtual media

PARVEZ SULTAN @New Delhi

IT took a decade to register a perceptible presence on various social networking and interactive digital platforms, though the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPM) decided to foray into the glamorous world of social media in 2014.

The party, which was once regarded as holding a conservative approach to computerisation, is successfully competing with its rivals in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections.

The party's multiple handles and social media pages in states have managed to generate a buzz around the election campaign; notably, the West Bengal unit is leading from the front.

In the state, the CPM has already made a debut in using artificial intelligence (AI) as a

campaign tool for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Last month, it unveiled an Artificial Intelligence (AI) avatar named 'Samata' which means equality. She will read the news bulletin twice a week in English and Hindi.

According to the social media team leaders, Samata is an attempt to convey West Bengal narrative to comrades in other states.

Visible change in the determined functioning of social media teams—being run solely by the volunteers and comrades of the CPM—can be gauged with the fact that dozens of updates including visually appealing info-graphics, campaign videos, reels, short documentaries and candidates' electioneering programmes are being posted on different platforms regularly.

**REDEFINING  
BATTLEFIELD**

Daily posting of  
**30-40**  
updates across  
multiple  
platforms



**50-60** individuals operate from West Bengal office and remotely

Volunteers from SFI and DYFI handle social media content creation

NO INVOLVEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL

Central team of five volunteers operates from the national capital

Two volunteers per state appointed for coordination with central team

every day. Besides conducting live-streaming of major events and press conferences, updates are posted on social media platforms in real-time.

"We started very late in comparison to other political parties. It was very tough to make new things happen because of the understanding of the party. The money was also a constraint. We actually set up new offices and engaged volunteers and comrades. Paradigm shift took place in the party's rank and file," said an associate of the social media team of CPIM, privy to the matter.

The CPM decided to use social media in 2014 during the party Congress held in Vizag. Despite a slow start, the CPM's social media team ran a reasonably well campaign on digital platforms in 2019 elections, privy to the matter.

however the volunteers suggested West Bengal assembly elections in 2021 was a good show.

Prakash Karat, senior member of the CPM Polit Bureau said that use of social media and innovative technology is the need of the hour.

"Today, the majority of youth are using different social media tools. They read and consume news also through social media," he added.

Seminars and conclaves were conducted to explain the functioning of digital platforms, and volunteers and comrades were given training.

The efforts bore fruits and West Bengal has a dedicated social media team in all 22 districts except one. It has booth-level volunteers on 50 percent of booths.

#### ELECTION 2024

## 204 candidates for 8 Maha seats

A total of 204 candidates are in the fray for eight Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra that will go to polls in the second phase on April 26, an official said. Monday was the last date for the withdrawal of nominations, he added. "There were 299 valid nominations. Of these 204 remain in the fray in Buldhana, Akola, Amravati, Wardha, Yavatmal-Washim, Hingoli, Nanded and Parbhani," he said on Monday. The main contest will be between Baburao Kadamb of the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and Nagesh Patil Ashtikar of the Shiv Sena.



2000

US and Philippine army forces in June will join  
for long combat drills in a jungle setting

**GLOBAL WEATHER**

LR: Light Rain	WI: Windy	HR: Heavy Rain	SN: Snow
TDS: Thundershower	LC: Light Cloud	SNY: Sunny	



Israeli soldiers rest on top of their tank on the border with the Gaza Strip, in southern Israel on Monday | AP

## Date set for Rafah ground assault, says Netanyahu

U.S. says the military invasion would ultimately hurt Israel's security



### GAZA TOLL SO FAR

**33,200**

### Woman shot dead for stab attempt

The Israeli army said its forces shot dead a Palestinian woman in the northern West Bank on Monday, after she attempted to stab a soldier at a checkpoint. The army said the incident took place at the Tayasir checkpoint near the northern West Bank town of Tubas. Knife attacks by Palestinian women are rare.



# Tata to take over Pegatron iPhone mfg unit in Chennai

Taiwanese company will provide technical support to Tata Electronics

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

AFTER taking over the iPhone assembly plant of Wistron in 2023, Tata Group is all set to take control of another iPhone manufacturing facility owned by Pegatron in the country.

Tata is reportedly planning to hold at least a 65% stake in a joint venture that will operate the Pegatron plant near Chennai. The report, citing two sources, mentioned that a Taiwanese firm, Pegatron, will provide technical support. Tata, one of the largest conglomerates in India, will operate the joint venture through its Tata Electronics unit. The deal is said to get the backing of Apple Inc. The talks between Tata and Pegatron for the factory are expected to close in six months and will see all Pegatron India employees move to the joint venture entity.

In India, iPhone is manufactured by three contract manufacturers: Foxconn, Pegatron Corp, and Tata Group (earlier Wistron Corp). Currently, the Pegatron India factory has nearly 10,000 employees and makes 5 million iPhones annually. It is the last such facility operated by the firm after it forfeited control of an iPhone plant in China last year to rival Luxshare in a \$290 million deal.

Last year, Tata Group had acquired Taiwan's Wistron plant in Karnataka, and the company is also building another plant in Hosur in Tamil Nadu. The



Tata likely to hold 65% stake in joint venture

Tata is reportedly planning to hold at least a 65% stake in a joint venture that will operate the Pegatron plant near Chennai. Tata, one of the largest conglomerates in India, will operate the joint venture through its Tata Electronics unit

report noted that Tata has been building another iPhone factory at its Chennai campus, and the Tata deal talks include taking over that facility as well.

The American tech giant is trying to diversify its production from China to India due to geopolitical tensions between Beijing and Washington. Last year, Commerce minister Piyush Goyal said Apple will start 25% of total iPhone production in India by 2023. Meanwhile, Apple's market share in India grew from 4.6% in 2022 to 6.4% in 2023, a 38.6% increase. Tata has partnered with Apple to launch 100 retail stores for its products across the country.

Tata Group, which is also setting up two semiconductor plants in the country, is report-

edly looking to rope in top talent from Taiwan. Taiwan currently produces over 50% of the world's semiconductors and chips. Tata Electronics will conduct a roadshow in Taiwan on April 13. The two semiconductor plants are coming up at Gujarat's Dholera and Jagirod of Assam.

Tata Electronics invited Taiwanese professionals with 5 to 16 years of experience in various semiconductor manufacturing roles. It said candidates must be willing to relocate to India and will undergo 18 months of initial training in Taiwan.

Tata's fab facility will produce mostly 28 nanometre (nm) chips, apart from 50 nm, 55 nm and 90 nm ones.

# Gold hits all-time high; crosses ₹71K mark

MONIKA YADAV @ New Delhi

GOLD prices hit a record-high level on Monday, touching ₹71,080 for 10 grams in India. The spot gold was at \$2,343.89 per ounce amid weakening dollar, speculative buying and geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

"Factors like the weakening dollar, accumulation of gold by central banks, elections in the US, geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and Russia-Ukraine crisis are driving this surge," said Jigar Trivedi, senior

analyst with Reliance Securities. According to him, the gold prices may reach ₹76,000 per 10 gram by December this year.

"The uncertainty surrounding the Federal Reserve is making gold more appealing. This makes holding gold cheaper compared to other investments," Trivedi added.

The experts say gold prices will keep going up but may see correction soon. According to Ajay Kedia, director, Kedia Ad-

visory, the gold prices may touch ₹73,000 per 10 gram around Diwali this year and silver may touch ₹50,000 per one kg. "In last 40 days, market has rallied very sharply. Technically, market is in overbought zone and traders are not ready to take long position at current level for gold," Kedia stated.

"We see some corrective pullback in gold prices from current levels keeping intact long-term bullishness. A pull-back of \$50/\$60 can't be ruled

out, which means ₹68,000 on the domestic market," added Kedia.

As per him, silver seems a better investment with industrial consumption increasing. "If someone has missed the gold rally, then silver is still looking attractive," he further said.

Experts say gold acts as a hedge against inflation and helps diversify portfolios, providing stability when other assets underperform. They say it's essential for investors to evaluate their portfolios and allocate a portion to gold, typically around 10% or less.



## Tata Group-owned Air India to develop B'luru as aviation hub for South India

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

TATA GROUP-run Air India has selected Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) to develop Bengaluru as an aviation hub for southern India. Air India said on Monday that they (along with other Tata Group airlines – AIIX and Vistara) and BIAL will collaborate to enhance international connectivity, operational efficiency, and passenger experience over the next five years.

The partnership, as per a statement by Air India, includes strengthening the group's presence at Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru (KIAL or BLR airport) through an enhanced network and establishing a dedicated domestic lounge for premium and frequent travellers of Tata Group

airlines Air India and Vistara. Air India has also signed a

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Government of Karnataka to establish comprehensive Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facilities at BLR airport. This partnership will stimulate the MRO ecosystem and is projected to generate over 1,200 new job opportunities for highly skilled individuals in the state, the statement noted.

Air India's plan to make the IT city an aviation hub comes as it has set up an ambitious target to achieve 30% market share in the next few years. As

per DGCA data, Air India and Air India Express had a combined share of little less than 20% in the international air traffic (to and from India) during the October-December period. IndiGo had a share of 18.2% and Vistara held 3.6% of the international market.

"Airline-airport synergy is key to elevated customer experience and efficient operations, while Bengaluru is highly attractive as an origin and destination market as well as a connecting hub," said Campbell Wilson, CEO & MD, Air India.

While Fimmida is the Fixed Income Money Market and Derivatives Association of India, the PDAI is the Primary Dealers Association of India and NDS-OM is the negotiated dealing system-order matching system, which is an electronic, screen-based, anonymous, order-driven trading system for dealing in government securities.

Noting that the divergence in pricing in forex markets for the small and large customers are wider than what can be justified by operational considerations, Das said banks may need to do more to facilitate the use of the forex retail platform of the RBI.

He also asked banks to ensure that unauthorised dealers are not active in the market, saying the RBI still sees banking channels being used by certain persons or entities to fund activities on unauthorised forex trading platforms. This warrants enhanced vigilance by the banks, Das said.

On the derivatives market, he said participation of domestic banks in derivative markets remains limited with only a small set of active market-makers.

Participation of domestic banks in global markets is growing but it is quite small.

## Mkt defies global slowdown, adds more trillion

Domestic market, now equivalent to 1.33 times the size of India's GDP, continues to defy global slowdown and add more trillions to its kitty at a record pace.

It took only 9 months, the shortest interval ever, for combined m-cap to add last ₹100 lakh crore as the valuation of BSE-listed companies had breached the ₹300-lakh-crore mark in July 2023.

It had taken about 2 years and 5 months for the m-cap to grow from ₹200 lakh crore to ₹300 lakh crore and 6 years 11 months to advance from ₹100

## M-cap tops ₹400L cr, adds ₹100L cr in 9 months

ARSHAD KHAN @ New Delhi

DESPITE last month's warning by market regulator Sebi that a "froth" is building up in Indian equities, the market capitalisation (m-cap) of BSE-listed companies crossed the ₹400 lakh crore mark for the first time on Monday. This valuation milestone was accompanied by a sharp rally in benchmark indices as the BSE Sensex traded in close vicinity of the 75,000 mark, while the NSE Nifty50 surpassed the 22,600 level.

Domestic market, now equivalent to 1.33 times the size of the country's GDP, continues to defy global slowdown and add more trillions to its kitty at a record pace.

It took only 9 months, the shortest interval ever, for the combined m-cap to add last ₹100 lakh crore as the valuation of BSE-listed companies had breached the ₹300-lakh-crore mark in July 2023.

It had taken about 2 years and 5 months for the m-cap to grow from ₹200 lakh crore to ₹300 lakh crore and 6 years 11 months to advance from ₹100



lakh crore to ₹200 lakh crore. BSE's combined m-cap hit ₹100 lakh crore for the first time in

March 2014, right before the general election when Narendra Modi became Prime Minister for the first time. Experts believe there is still some steam left in the market as favourable election results, normal monsoon and expected rate cuts by the Federal Reserve may prompt another round of fresh buying in the coming months. The long-term growth opportunity, however, remains intact.

The market on Monday touched fresh peak as the NSE Nifty50 ended 147.25 points, or 0.65%, higher at 22,660.95 while the BSE Sensex rose 494.28 points, or 0.67%, to close at 74,742.5. Intraday, Nifty50 hit an all-time high of 22,697.30, and Sensex touched a new life-high

of 74,869.30. The m-cap of BSE-listed firms also reached an all-time high of ₹4,01,16,018.89 crore (\$4.81 trln) during the session.

"The buoyancy in sentiment continued, led by sectoral tailwinds and Q4 earnings growth expectation... On the global front, after the release of robust US job data, investors are awaiting release of US CPI data, ECB policy, and UK GDP data this week," said Vinod Nair, head of research, Geojit Financial Services.

As per Nair, the up-move was largely broad-based, with out-performance by auto, realty, oil & gas, and consumer discretionary, while IT was tepid owing to insipid Q4 growth expectations due to a slowdown in spending.

## Non-banks' co-lending book nearing ₹1 lakh cr mark

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Mumbai

DESPITE the continuing decline in the share of personal loans, the co-lending assets of non-banks is on a song and is nearing the ₹1 lakh crore (₹1-trillion-mark), five years after the model gained popular currency, and the segment will notch up 35-40% annualised growth rate over the next few years, says a report.

The growth optimism is based on rising interests of non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) as well as commercial banks in the co-lending model that began a little over five years ago, and is likely to grow 35-40% over the medium term and go past ₹1 trillion mark, the report says without disclosing what is the current AUM size. The partners in the ecosystem are likely to focus less on personal loans given higher risk weights and increase their focus on other asset classes such as loans to SMEs and home loans.

In his mail, Delaporte said that he was proud of what they have achieved over the last four years, growing revenues by 35%. "We've generated 25% more profit in the last four years than in the previous 4-year period."

Thierry Delaporte, ex-CEO and MD of Wipro

contributed to the poor performance relative to rest of the industry that Wipro has experienced," he told TNIE.

Delaporte's significant achievements in bringing new capabilities, and streamlining the organisation are balanced by slower growth, and below industry profit than other industry peer companies and continued execution issues with deteriorating morale. He is clearly leaving Wipro better positioned and with the start of a strong foundation. However, he will be disappointed not to have finished the transformation and got Wipro back to its old position as an industry leader, the CEO of Everest Group said.

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Jadeja, Deshpande take three wickets apiece before Gaikwad's timely half-century as hosts pull off dominating win

## Ball dance: CSK bowlers turn on the heat

ASHOK VENUGOPAL @ Chennai

RAVINDRA Jadeja and Tushar Deshpande's three-wicket hauls came in handy for Chennai Super Kings as they restricted Kolkata Knight Riders to 137 for nine in the first innings at the MA Chidambaram stadium here on Monday night. Captain Ruturaj Gaikwad then sealed their third victory in front of the home crowd with a half-century.

Chasing 138 for another win Chennai managed the same without much fuss in the 18th over. Although Ravindra could not get many runs, he laid foundation for the batters to come, Daryl Mitchell, promoted at three, combined with Gaikwad to keep the scoreboard ticking. Mitchell was harsh on Narine, scoring boundaries off the West Indian at will. However, the duo found it hard to score runs against local boy Varun Chakravarthy. Chakravarthy was quicker through the air and bowled tidy lines not giving the width for the batsmen to play the shots. Gaikwad played a captain's role from the other end and scored a half-century off 45 balls. A sudden rush of blood



CSK's Tushar Deshpande (centre) celebrates with teammates | PRAVIKUMAR

prompted Mitchell to step out to play an ambitious shot, but he missed the line only to be castled by Narine. Shivam Dube took Chennai close to the target and then Gaikwad sealed the win with a boundary.

Earlier, put into bat KKR had a disastrous start losing Philip Salt the very first ball of the match to Tushar Deshpande.

Mustafizur Rahman, who was sharing the new ball, was a bit rusty and Angkrish Raghuvanshi slowly built a partnership.

Ruturaj kept shuffling his bowlers to break this partnership but the pair kept piling runs and added 56 runs in the powerplay. That is when Gaikwad brought Jadeja, his most experienced spinner, in and he answered by striking twice in an over. First, he trapped Raghuvanshi who went for a reverse sweep and missed it completely. Later in the same over, Jadeja foxed Narine into playing a false shot to Theekshana at long off. Suddenly CSK were back in the game with KKR at 60 for three. Now a lot depended upon skipper Shreyas Iyer and the remaining batters to have a go at the CSK attack and post a challenging total.

Jadeja put his experience to effective use and varied his

of the game was shortlived. In his second over, Sunil Narine carted the Mumbai pacer all over the park for three boundaries and a six.

Thereafter, the left-right pair of Narine and Raghuvanshi slowly built a partnership.

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## Gukesh holds Caruana; Vidit and Humpy lose

AGENCIES @ Toronto



R Praggnanandhaa in action during the fourth round on Sunday | PRAVIKUMAR

D GUKESH did well to hold Fabiano Caruana to a draw but Vidit Gujrathi suffered another defeat at the hands of Ian Nepomniachtchi in the fourth round of the Candidates chess tournament here.

On a day when R Praggnanandhaa played out an uneventful draw with Hikaru Nakamura of the United States, Nijat Abasov of Azerbaijan fought hard to split the point with Alireza Firouzja of France to stay in contention in the eight-player double round-robin event that decides the challenger for the next Worlds. Nepomniachtchi became the first sole leader on three points, following his second victory with white pieces. He is now followed by Caruana and Gukesh on 2.5 points apiece. Praggnanandhaa is not far behind on two points holding the fourth spot.

In the women's section, R Vaishali made sure her streak matches with that of younger sibling Praggnanandhaa and played out a draw with rating favourite Aleksandra Goryachkina. But Koneru Humpy succumbed to her first defeat at the hands of Nuryul Salimova. Zhongyi Tan maintained her sole lead on three points following a draw with Kateryna Lagno while Tingjie Lei of China signed peace with Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine. Gukesh faced the in-vogue Italian opening as black against Caruana and the players battled it out in

**RESULTS**  
Results round 4 (Indians unless specified): Ian Nepomniachtchi (Fide, 3) beat Vidit Gujrathi (1.5); Hikaru Nakamura (USA, 1.5) drew with R Praggnanandhaa (2); Fabiano Caruana (USA, 2.5) drew with D Gukesh (2.5); Nijat Abasov (Aze, 1.5) drew with Alireza Firouzja (Fra, 1.5). **Women:** Aleksandra Goryachkina (Fide, 2.5) drew with R Vaishali (2); Nuryul Salimova (Bul, 2) beat Koneru Humpy (1.5); Kateryna Lagno (Fide, 2) drew with Zhongyi Tan (Chn, 3); Anna Muzychuk (Ukr, 1.5) drew with Tingjie Lei (Chn, 1.5).

the main variation. Gukesh was under some pressure in the middle game but came up with a fine pawn sacrifice leading to trade of many pieces.

The ensuing endgame still gave Caruana some optical chances but the Indian remained on his guard for 72 moves to ensure the draw. Gujrathi had won his second-round game using the Berlin defense against Nakamura so his choice of opening was quite predictable against Nepomniachtchi.

GOMESH S @ Chennai

WHEN both Ruturaj Gaikwad and Shreyas Iyer admitted that they wanted to bowl first — the former won the toss — at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Monday, they knew what to expect. For starters, the contest was being played on the same surface where Royal Challengers Bengaluru played. The heat and humidity meant there was going to be a significant amount of dew, with the conditions becoming easier to bat later.

For the home team, however, the stakes were high. They had lost two games on the road, and the batters' intent was questioned. They were back at their fortress with a sea of yellow cheering them on, but the task was not going to be easy.

KKR have one of the best batting line-ups (in terms of intent) and CSK's bowling was not exactly firing. And without Mathesha Pathirana, they had the task cut out. One can only imagine what went on Tushar Deshpande's mind when Phil Salt slashed at the length delivery — the very first ball of the match — that was there to be hit. For a moment, everyone thought this was going to be yet another match where Salt and Sunil Narine would end the contest in the powerplay. But then, a hand intervened as the ball was on its way to the ropes. Ravindra Jadeja, at backward point, made a slight jump to grab it with both hands as the entire stadium erupted. It was a dream start.

R Jadeja (L) was the standout bowler with figures of 3/18 for CSK | PRAVIKUMAR

Little did anyone know then it was a sign of Chennai's match MVP.

Over the next 5.5 overs, Narine and Angrish Raghuvanshi nullified the effect of the first-ball wicket as KKR finished the powerplay with 56/1. Narine, in particular, was looking dangerous while Raghuvanshi was taking on spinners. It seemed like CSK needed another intervention and Ruturaj Gaikwad turned to Jadeja. His first ball was a length delivery which pitched on middle-and-leg before hitting the pads of Raghuvanshi who was looking for a reverse sweep. The umpire's finger immediately went up.

Four balls later, he drifted one outside off-stump and Narine sliced it up only to be caught by Maheesh Theekshana. The danger man was back in the pavilion as KKR lost two wickets in an over. CSK was back in the game as Jadeja had played his

second act. Over the next seven overs, with Maheesh Theekshana and Rachin Ravindra for company, Jadeja tightened the screws. Between overs 6-13, they hit just two boundaries and 25 runs. By the time Jadeja was done, he had also dismissed Venkatesh Iyer, finishing with 3/18 in his four overs.

It was no surprise that Jadeja nailed his role to perfection at Chepauk. He has always been capable of that. What stood out with the spell was that he was up against Indian batters, including Shreyas, who can hit spin at will. That the KKR batter could only manage a run-a-ball ten against Jadeja summed up how efficient Jadeja was with the ball. "There was slow turn, after pitching on the surface, the ball wasn't coming at all and it comes difficult," the CSK all-rounder said after the first innings.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

### Arsenal vs Bayern Munich

The last three times the North Londoners faced the Bavarians, it finished 5-1 for the Germans. However, this new Arsenal side is made of very stern stuff, especially at the back. They do not concede a lot of chances and have put an onus on maintaining control.

For the Bundesliga outfit, Harry Kane, who enjoyed a very productive scoring rate against Arsenal during his Spurs days, will be key, especially because they don't concede a huge volume of chances.

In terms of battles, Jamal Musiala and Declan Rice could have a huge bearing in which way the match progresses.

**2** Arsenal have only advanced to the semifinal stage twice before (last came in 2009).

### MOUTH-WATERING CLASHES

The Champions League returns with two bumper first legs in the quarterfinal phase on Tuesday. A look...

#### Real Madrid vs Manchester City

At the semifinal stage last year, Manchester City streaked ahead, winning 4-0 at home. Expect a much tighter affair. City, holders who are in with a shout of an unprecedented double treble, will again believe they have it in them. But Real have grown as a team. Sitting comfortably atop La Liga, they can also afford to concentrate their efforts in securing the win here. Man City are battling some injury concerns but most of the usual expects — Kevin de Bruyne, Erling Haaland and Rodri and John Stones — should start. The absence of Kyle Walker will be a blow as Vini Jr. could be a handful. Another battle will be the midfield tussle between Rodri and Jude Bellingham.

**3** This is the third year in a row that both these sides have faced each other in the knockout stages.

ENS/AGENCIES @ Mumbai

MUMBAI CITY FC edged Odisha FC 2-1 in the Indian Super League at the Mumbai Football Arena (MFA) on Monday. Jorge Pereyra Diaz (22') and Lallianzuala Chhangte (61') scored for Mumbai.

With 47 points in 21 games, the Islanders are a step closer to

Nagal stuns World No 38 at Monte Carlo Masters



India's top singles player Sumit Nagal shocked world number 38 Matteo Arnaldi in a grueling three-set contest to earn his maiden main draw win at an ATP Masters event in Monte Carlo on Monday. The top Indian singles player, who entered the ATP Masters 1000 event via qualifying route, posted a memorable 5-7, 6-2, 6-4 win in the first round.

newindianexpress.com

## IOA chief Usha feels 'sidelined' by rebel EC members

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

The attrition within the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) is taking another intriguing turn. IOA president PT Usha's letter to the Executive Committee indicates that there is a breakdown of trust between members in the Executive Committee (EC) that also includes herself.

On Monday, Usha responded to some of the EC members who had signed and pasted a notice asking 'unauthorised persons' not to enter the IOA Bhawan. In a letter to the EC, she called it arbitrary and reminded the rebel members that they have bigger responsibilities than this. She also said that the IOA office staff should take directives from her office. "It is directed to the IOA staff to remove any copies of the notice posted within the IOA Bhawan. Further, the IOA staff is instructed to follow guidance and directives from my office via my executive assistant," said the letter.

The IOA president felt slighted by the nine EC members who had signed the document and felt that they were trying to sideline her. She also defended her executive assistant Ajay Narang's appointment and said the EC does not have the authority to terminate him. Majority of the EC members had claimed that they had removed Narang from the post. She also said that only she can remove her executive assistant.

"It is disheartening to see that we are still not able to work as a team and each of your acts is an attempt to sideline me," Usha wrote to the rebel EC members. What seems interesting is that senior vice president (VP) takes charge as president during her absence or unavailability. Ajay Patel, who is the senior VP, apparently is in the forefront in the rebellion. The letter also points out that the senior VP or the vice president can discharge duties of the president only in his or her absence. "I am left with no option but to remind you all that the day-to-day administrative functions including hiring and firing of staff is not the job of the Executive Council. As the EC, we should be using our powers and rights for much more important aspects of taking the IOA to heights."

"The termination documents are an absolute nullity. The appointment of the executive assistant to the president is not within the jurisdiction of the Executive Council and thus the termination is non est and bad in law." The CEO (Raghuram Iyer), who the EC claimed they were coerced to appoint, and Narang have been working and discharging their duties.

### EXPRESS READ

#### Shelton clinches US Clay Court title

MIAMI: Ben Shelton defeated 2023 champion Frances Tiafoe in three sets to clinch the ATP US Clay Court Championship in Houston on Sunday. The 21-year-old Shelton triumphed 7-5, 4-6, 6-3 in the all-American final to become the youngest winner at the tournament since 19-year-old Andy Roddick in 2002. The title is the second of Shelton's career and his first on clay — the left-hander had arrived at Houston with a 2-7 record on clay in ATP events.

#### II core probables for upcoming Pro League

BENGALURU: Seasoned campaigners like goalkeeper Savita Punia and forward Vandana Kataria were on Monday included in Hockey India's 33-strong list of core probables with some new faces also finding their way into the pruned group that will train here till May 16 for the FIH Pro League fixtures, which begins on May 22.

#### BAC: Sindhu & Co seek fruitful campaign

NINGBO (CHINA): Indian shuttlers, including PV Sindhu, will face a tough test against some of the world's best when they begin their medal hunt at the Badminton Asia Championships which will start with the qualifiers here on Tuesday. In the absence of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, the onus on the singles stars to put their hands up during the continental individual championships. The fact that it is the last major event to award Olympic qualification ranking points adds another layer to the competition.

## 2026 CWG venue may be revealed next month

AP @ London

THE Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) plans to announce a new host for its 2026 event next month, saying it has "multiple proposals" to replace Australia's Victoria state.

The CGF on Monday said it was keeping the proposals confidential. Victoria state lawmakers last July withdrew from plans to host the 2026 Games in three regional hubs, citing escalating costs.

"Significant progress has been made and we are excited by the early concepts, which aim to reset and reframe the Games," the CGF said in a statement following its April meeting. "We are working collaboratively with the relevant (members) to undertake further detailed assessments, and aim to announce the 2026 Commonwealth Games host in May."

Victoria state agreed to a

compensation package with the CGF, which will help offset costs for the next hosts. Australia's Gold Coast, which held the 2018 Commonwealth Games, was flagged as a potential host for 2026 but couldn't get state or federal funding.

The CGF said it was focusing on transforming the Games to reduce costs and make the events more sustainable. The Commonwealth Games, established in 1930 as the British Empire Games, are open to 74 nations and territories and have been staged in Australia, Canada, England, India, Jamaica, Malaysia, New Zealand, Scotland and Wales.

Last month, an Australian inquiry into the Victoria government's decision to cancel announced it cost the state A\$589 million and the price estimate that resulted in it being shelved was "overstated and not transparent."



Man City's Erling Haaland (L) talks to club manager Pep Guardiola during a training session in Manchester on Monday | AFP

12.30 AM on Wednesday • Sony Sports Network

## Odisha out of race for League Shield

ENS/AGENCIES @ Mumbai

MUMBAI CITY FC edged Odisha FC 2-1 in the Indian Super League at the Mumbai Football Arena (MFA) on Monday. Jorge Pereyra Diaz (22') and Lallianzuala Chhangte (61') scored for Mumbai.

With 47 points in 21 games, the Islanders are a step closer to

defending their title this season, and can only be beaten to that by the second-placed Mohun Bagan Super Giant (MBSG), who have accumulated 42 points from 20 matches so far.

Meanwhile, Odisha FC are stuck at 39 points from 21 encounters, and will be aiming for a top-two finish that can guarantee them a semifinal place

when they take on NorthEast United FC on April 13 for their final league game of the campaign. For the Islanders, the entire equation boils down to their last league match, which is incidentally against the Mariners on April 15. Additionally, FC Goa (39 points) are also out of the race for the League Shield after Mumbai victory.

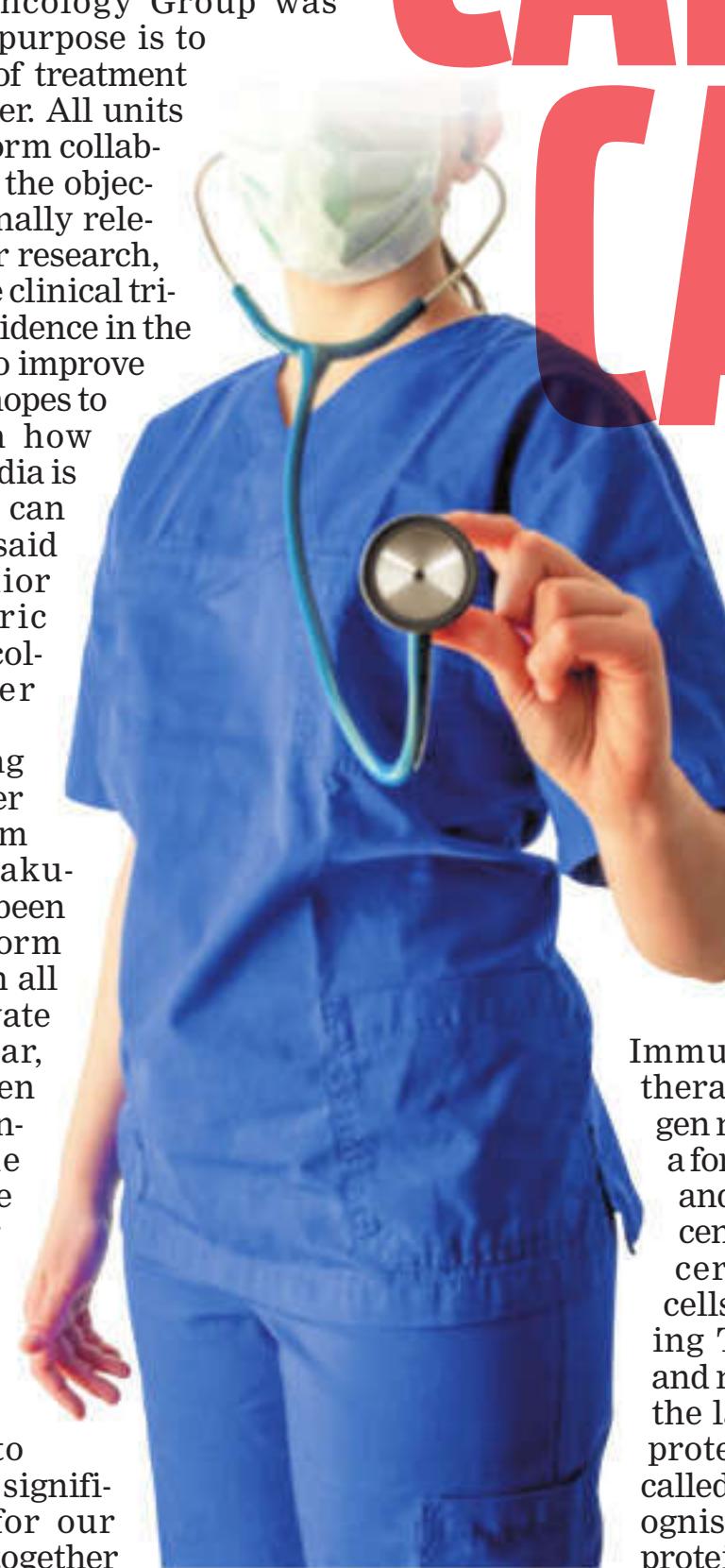
epaper.newindianexpress.com

SINDUJA JANE @Chennai

**A**S the burden of non-communicable diseases like cancer in India is increasing at an alarming pace, surpassing global rates, various researches are underway at the institutional and industrial levels across the country to improve treatment, survival rates and also make anticancer drugs affordable. The studies include immunotherapy, cellular medicine, targeted therapy focusing on genetic mutations in cancer cells and identifying and validating biomarkers.

"For the first time in India, the Indian National Paediatric Oncology Group was formed this year. Its purpose is to improve the outcome of treatment in children with cancer. All units across India will perform collaborative research with the objective to promote regionally relevant paediatric cancer research, including multi-centre clinical trials so as to generate evidence in the local population and to improve outcomes. The group hopes to provide answers on how childhood cancer in India is different and how we can make things better," said Dr Revathi Raj, senior consultant, paediatric haematology and oncology, Apollo Cancer Centre.

"A registry is being created with all cancer diagnosed patients from Kashmir to Kanniyakumari. The group has been formed to make uniform treatment available in all government and private hospitals. Every year, around 40,000 children are diagnosed with cancer. In high income countries, the cure rate for childhood cancer is around 80%. Sadly, in India, the current survival is only 40%. The collaborative group is planning to take the cure rate to 60% by 2030. This is a significant advancement for our children, as working together



**MYTHS  
BUSTERS**

**Dr Hisham Ahamed** clears myths on cholesterol

Associate professor (cardiology), project lead, Amrita Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Centre, Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences and Research, Kochi

**Myth:** Cholesterol can be managed solely through diet and exercise, without the need for any medication

**Fact:** While diet and exercise play essential roles in managing cholesterol levels, they may not always be sufficient, especially in cases of familial hypercholesterolemia or severe cases of high cholesterol. Reasons include:

**Genetic factors:** In some individuals, high cholesterol levels are primarily driven by genetic factors. Familial hypercholesterolemia, for example, is an inherited condition that causes very high levels of LDL (bad) cholesterol from birth. These individuals may require medication, such as statins or other cholesterol-lowering drugs, in addition to lifestyle changes, to effectively manage their cholesterol levels.

**Resistant cases:** Some people may have cholesterol levels that are resistant to dietary and lifestyle changes alone.

**Co-existing health conditions:** Individuals with certain medical conditions, such as diabetes or hypertension, may have difficulty in managing their cholesterol through diet and exercise alone.

**Efficiency and time:** Medications like statins can provide immediate and significant reductions in cholesterol levels, helping to lower the risk of heart disease and stroke.

**Individual variability:** Cholesterol management is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Some individuals may require a combination of lifestyle changes and medication to achieve optimal cholesterol levels and reduce their cardiovascular risk.

**Myth:** All food items labelled "zero cholesterol" are inherently healthy for the heart

**Fact:** While it's true that dietary cholesterol can contribute to elevated blood cholesterol levels in some individuals, there are other factors to consider when determining the overall healthiness of a food product. Food products labelled as 'zero cholesterol' may still contain high levels of saturated and trans fats, which can raise LDL (bad) cholesterol levels, and may be highly processed or contain added sugars, excessive sodium, or other unhealthy additives.

- COMPILED BY ANNA JOSE

# RESEARCH AND OUTREACH TO IMPROVE CANCER CARE

is the first step," added Dr Revathy Raj.

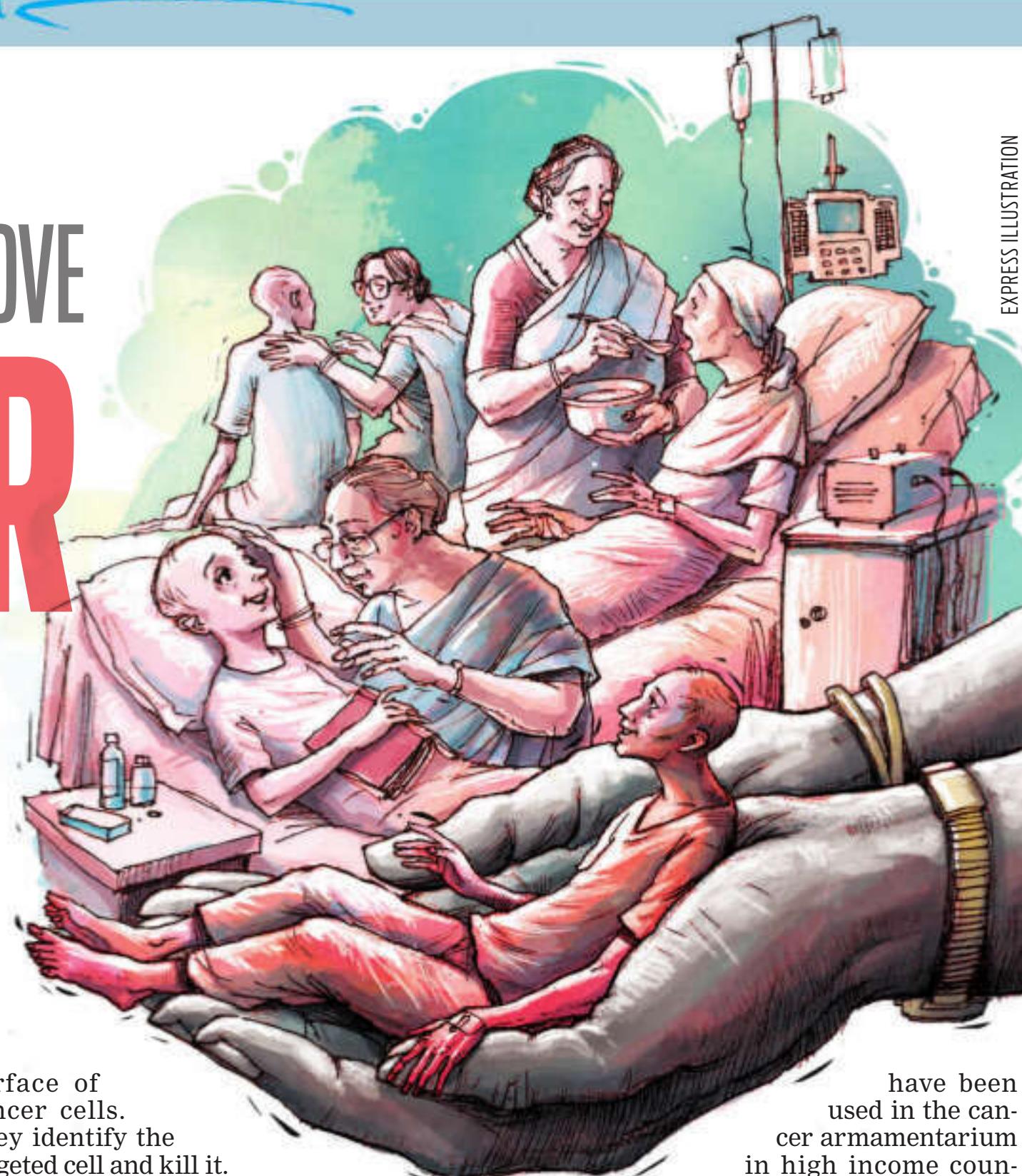
Recently, President Droupadi Murmu launched India's home-grown gene therapy (CAR-T cell therapy) which was developed by IIT Bombay and Tata Memorial Hospital, in association with industry partner ImmunoACT. CAR-T cell therapy, or chimeric antigen receptor-T cell therapy, a form of immunotherapy and gene therapy is a recent advancement in cancer treatment. CAR-T cells are made by collecting T cells from patients and reengineering them in the laboratory to produce proteins on their surface called CARs. The CARs recognise and bind to specific proteins or antigens on the

surface of cancer cells. They identify the targeted cell and kill it. CAR-T cell therapy was first developed in western countries and approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Immunotherapy is mostly used in the treatment of blood cancers, not solid cancer tumours. "Immune cells are removed from the body, genetically manipulated in a controlled setting and used for treatment because they can recognise and kill cancer cells. After mass production, the modified cells are pumped back into the patients, where they multiply and work," said Dr Preethika Ananda, assistant professor, Centre for Clinical Trials and Research, SRM Medical College Hospital and Research Centre, Kattankulathur.

Fighting cancer cells using the patient's own immune system is unique and does not carry the short and long term side effects of chemotherapy, said Dr Revathi. CAR T-cells

Asthma attacks actually damage the airways, new findings show, and preventing that damage could be the focus of new treatments, researchers say. Although primarily considered an inflammatory disease in which the immune system attacks the tissues, asthma is also known to involve bronchoconstriction – the tightening of the smooth muscle that surrounds the airway



EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

## MILES TO GO

- The fourth edition of Apollo Hospitals' flagship Health of Nation Report on World Health Day highlighted the alarming rise in cancer cases in India compared to global numbers, making India the 'cancer capital of the world'

- The National Cancer Registry Programme Report 2020 released by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research (NCDIR), Bengaluru, had estimated that in 2020 cancer cases in the country will be at 13.9 lakh and may increase to 15.7 lakh by 2025 based on current trends

- According to Global Cancer Observatory (GLOBOCAN) estimates, there were 19.3 million cancer cases worldwide in 2020. India ranked third after China and the US

- GLOBOCAN predicted that cancer cases in India would increase to 2.08 million in 2040

checkpoint inhibitors (ICIs) for solid tumours, has become a popular oncologic treatment. The ICIs can increase survival without interruption and produce long-term, durable remission in some tumours, such as non-small cell lung cancer. Even advanced tumour patients can benefit from immunotherapy."

Research over the last five years on CAR T-cell therapy has resulted in India's own indigenously developed CAR T-cell therapy, which has higher potency and the cost is reduced by 50-70%.

"Surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy were standard treatments for cancer. Immune checkpoint inhibitors and CAR-T cell therapy are now advanced treatment modalities in cancer care. CAR-T cell therapy is effective in patients treated with immunotherapy. Apollo is also planning to expand the treatment to its centres," said Dr Suvadip Chakrabarti, consultant in surgical oncology at Apollo Cancer Centre, Kolkata.

Dr Preethika Ananda said efforts are being made to develop targeted therapies tailored to specific genetic mutations found in certain cancers, such as breast and colorectal cancers. "Immunotherapy, especially immune

breathing, is a simple method of focusing on your breath which involves sitting or lying down in a comfortable position with closed eyes. Breathe deeply through your nose for a count of a few seconds. Feel your lungs expand followed by holding the breath for another count of a few seconds then, exhale slowly through your mouth. Repeat the same cycle till you feel relaxed. This is one of the commonly practiced

deep breathing/relaxation exercises which may help manage mild stress/anxiety, which can be practiced by individuals of any age/ sex in any setting.

### What are the other ways to de-stress?

With the four As of stress management - avoid, alter, adapt, accept - stress can be reduced.

Avoid unnecessary stress - learn how to say no, avoid people who stress you out,

take control of your environment and avoid hot-button topics (religion/politics).

Alter the situation - change the way you communicate and operate in life, communicate your concerns in an open and respectful way, be more assertive, find a balance between work, family, social activities and solitary pursuits and daily responsibilities and downtime.

Adapt to the stressor - re-frame problems, view stressful situations from a more positive perspective, look at the big picture and adjust your standard.

Accept the things you can't change - some sources of stress are unavoidable, focus on things you can control, for example, the way you choose to react to problems, seek the positive side - opportunities for personal development and forgive, share your feelings.

A few other effective techniques of stress management are - exercise regularly, a balanced diet, mindfulness techniques, relaxation techniques and social media time.

## Bottling up stress can result in maladaptation

Stress beyond a certain point can negatively affect the health of an individual. It not only affects health but also directly affects mood, productivity, the individual's relationship and also his or her quality of life. **Dr Harsha GT**, consultant psychiatrist, Manipal Hospital, Yeshwanthpur, in an interview with Akinrise Karthik delves into the causes and the steps one can take to relieve stress. Edited excerpts:

### What is stress and what are the common reasons for stress?

Stress represents the effects of anything that threatens homeostasis. Stress can be physical, psychological or psycho-social. Everyday stressors include everything from daily commutes to paying our taxes. A few of the common stressors in daily life are injuries, infections, major transitions in life, death of a loved one, work/financial troubles, problems with family, unsafe environment and others.

### Is there any simple exercise to de-stress?

Box breathing, which is also known as square de-stress? Acute stress response can cause increased blood pressure and spike fight response (increased heart rate, tremors, palpitations etc). The acute stress response may become maladaptive when it is triggered repeatedly or continuously. The consequences of chronic stress include heightened substance use, increased likelihood of accidents, sleep disturbances and development of eating disorders. It can also lead to cardiovascular issues, problems in the respiratory system, increases the chances of infections and faster progression of the disease. It also slows wound healing and recovery from surgery and individuals might have poor antibody response to vaccination.

### What are the health implications of stress? What happens if we do not

breathing, is a simple method of focusing on your breath which involves sitting or lying down in a comfortable position with closed eyes. Breathe deeply through your nose for a count of a few seconds. Feel your lungs expand followed by holding the breath for another count of a few seconds then, exhale slowly through your mouth. Repeat the same cycle till you feel relaxed. This is one of the commonly practiced

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### INTERVIEW

DR HARSHA GT

### DR SHIVALINGASWAMY SALIMATH

**A**STHMA is a chronic respiratory condition that affects the airways in the lungs. It is characterised by inflammation and narrowing of the airways, which can lead to symptoms such as difficulty in breathing, coughing, wheezing (a whistling sound during breathing) and chest tightness.

Asthma can be triggered by various factors, including genetic predisposition, respiratory infections during childhood, occupational exposure to irritants, smoking, obesity and exposure to allergens like tobacco smoke, usage of smoke-producing fuel (firewood/cow dung/kerosene) at home or air pollution. These factors can increase the risk of developing asthma or exacerbate existing symptoms. Additionally, asthma can manifest in different types, each with its own triggers and symptoms. These include exercise-induced asthma, occupational asthma and allergy-induced asthma, each requiring tailored management approaches to effectively control symptoms and improve overall respiratory health.

With the allergy season in full swing, we take a deeper look at allergic asthma, to understand the condition better.

### What is Allergic Asthma?

The most common type of asthma, allergy-induced asthma typically flares up when exposed to allergens like pet dander, mold, dust mites or during specific times of the year when common allergens like pollen are most prevalent. For example, spring (around February to April) brings with it an abundance of pollen in the air, which when inhaled can trigger inflam-

## SNIFFLES, SNEEZES AND WHEEZES: UNDERSTANDING ALLERGIC ASTHMA

mation and irritation in the airways, making it difficult to breathe. This irritation causes asthma symptoms like shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing and chest tightness. However, in some instances it can also be accompanied by symptoms more closely related to allergies like a stuffy nose, itchy or watery eyes, rashes and hives.

### Diagnosis & Management

Early detection and diagnosis are the foundation of effectively managing any chronic respiratory condition. To diagnose allergic asthma, multiple tests can be employed which include allergy testing like blood tests or skin-prick tests, that can provide valuable insights into allergen sensitivities. Asthma-specific tests, such as spirometry or FeNO can be employed to understand lung function

or measure the amount of exhaled nitric oxide in an individual's breath. Depending on the test results, the next most crucial step is seeking medical intervention as early as possible where inhalation therapy is the cornerstone treatment. This is due to its precise delivery, dosage, and duration of relief. Furthermore, adhering to doctor prescribed treatment and strategies becomes the next pivotal step. Typically, this may involve a blend of rescue and maintenance medications. Rescue medications, used on an as-needed basis, provide rapid relief during sudden asthma exacerbations. On the other hand, maintenance medication is taken daily to prevent potential flare-ups.

*(The author is a consultant pulmonologist at Trustwell Hospitals, Bengaluru)*

**Dr Shivalingaswamy Salimath**



## QUICK TIPS

- Keep a symptom journal to track triggers, such as pollen exposure or pet interactions. This will assist healthcare providers in devising personalised management plans
- Take extra precautions like staying inside when the pollen count is high as they break up and lodge themselves into the airways, causing asthma exacerbation
- Control indoor humidity using a dehumidifier or air conditioner. This will ensure the air remains dry and that there is no growth of mold, cockroaches and house dust mites
- Creating an asthma action plan to list potential triggers, manage exposure, list down medications and emergency contacts
- Choose air filters wisely as they remove smoke and other small particles (like pollen) from a room
- Be careful while doing outside work as gardening and raking can stir up pollens and mold
- Keeping one's surroundings allergen free is essential for managing allergic asthma. Dust mites, mold – especially during the rainy season – increased pollen count, pet dander and cockroaches can trigger asthma
- Pre-empting seasonal change is also important to manage asthma as each season has specific allergens which are characteristic to it



# Hyderabad Express

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09.04.2024  
TUESDAY



## DAY'S DIARY

### First recording



In 1860, Edouard-Léon Scott de Martinville made the first known recording of an audible human voice singing 'Au Clair de la Lune'

### ADVANCED STEPS

Edouard-Léon Scott de Martinville invented sound recording 20 years before Thomas Edison invented the phonograph. It was a technological breakthrough, ahead of its time



### BOOK RELEASE

In a self-published memoir in 1878, he railed against Edison for "appropriating" his methods and misconstruing the purpose of recording technology



### MORE AUDIOS

In 1860, Scott made a number of recordings using this arrangement. He sang songs, and recited excerpts of poetry and plays in several languages

**'I've pushed myself way beyond what I thought was my limit'**

PG 4

## EMBRACING UGADI JOY & FERVOUR

Ugadi is a festival symbolising new beginnings, marking the onset of the spring-summer season with a myriad of life's flavours. Celebrated with diverse traditions and cultural expressions, each of us commemorates this day uniquely. In the Telugu states, it's observed as Ugadi, while in the North, it's known as Gudi Padwa. **Shreya Veronica** speaks to prominent personalities and celebrities, who share their plans and perspectives on this auspicious occasion.

### Hamsa Nandini, actress

I am a Maharastrian and I celebrate Gudi Padwa, it's the same thing as the season of harvest. We have the *neem patti* and it is something that I don't look forward to and I know it is used for cleansing. Apart from that, for me it is more about spending time with family. I look at the change of season as refreshing. The whole energy shifts, you're entering into summer and it is the mango season. I am looking forward to that sort of time with my family because there are a lot of holidays coming up. Ugadi and Gudi Padwa actually depict the starting of summer and a change and shift in the energy and overall atmosphere. This

time it is a little special for me because I am coming out of this disease and I am also marking this as two years of being disease free. It is a big deal for me and my doctors and family as we are celebrating this Gudi Padwa.



### Geetha Madhuri, singer

I am performing this year in a show, I love *Ugadi pachadi*, especially made by my mother. I finished three to four cups of it today. I remember my photo getting published on the front page of the newspaper 15 years back and that is the most memorable thing about this festival.



### Manchu Lakshmi, actress

This Ugadi is extra special for reasons beyond explanation. One, this being my first Ugadi in Mumbai. I am excited to embrace my tradition here. It will be a quiet affair with Apple and me but filled with love, gratitude and joy.



## 'I TRULY LOVE CHALLENGES'

### VENNAPUSALA RAMYA

REGARDLESS of the storyline, Meenakshi Chaudhary captivated the hearts of audiences with her impeccable portrayal of a 'Telugu Ammai' in the recent film "Guntur Kaaram". A former Miss India Runner-up, she embarked on her acting journey with the Telugu film "Ichata Vahanamulu Niiluparadu" and garnered acclaim for her remarkable performances in "Khiladi" and "HIT 2". Recently, she graced the launch of Kalyan Jewellers' special Ugadi collection, exuding charm and elegance. CE had the privilege to delve into her fashion choices, upcoming

projects, and more.

Draped in a beautiful yellow designer saree and a stunning diamond necklace, she flaunted the traditional look. When asked about her go-to style in terms of fashion, she said, "I am a very laid-back person. This is not just me. It's an entire team effort. I love wearing very comfortable clothes. And that makes you confident and look good."

Defining her perspective on jewellery, she is said, "I think jewellery is something that defines who you are as a person and

A former Miss India Runner-up, she embarked on her acting journey with the Telugu film "Ichata Vahanamulu Niiluparadu"

what connects with you. Because every piece will speak to you. I'm sure all the jewellery pieces are beautiful, but you'll pick one that you like the most. And that is a reflection of who you are and what truly defines you and your taste. I love having a very simple gold chain pendant and when I'm going for occasions like these, I love what I'm wearing right now. It's very understated, but it's speaking for itself. And it's not overshadowing, but it's also not overwhelming."

Apart from being an actress, model, beauty pageant titleholder, she is also a state-level swimmer and badminton player. Additionally, she has a bachelor's degree in dental surgery. Indeed, she is a multi-talented actress. When asked about her source of inspiration, she said, "What doesn't kill you, makes you stronger. I

### Nilofer Haidry, former model and founder, Get HyperSocial

Eidi - it's the cash or any precious gift given to the younger members of the family on the occasion of Eid. The best Eidi I have received is not just a gentle rustle of paper (money) but the love and blessings showered upon me by the entire family. Since I was the first child in the family I have always been lucky and been over pampered and over showered with presents. Eidi for me is an emotion, weaving tales of love, generosity and cherished moments. Still remember the days we would go back to our hometown to our grandparents and the entire house would be oozing with happiness and excitement. Me and my cousins would just be frolicking around, excited, discussing what we want, wishing for gifts and eagerly waiting to wake up on the day, put on new clothes, greet everyone around and gather blessings and Eidi. It is something that makes me want to go back in time, wishing we would never grow. Most importantly growing up my father always made sure that we give Eidi and new clothes to the needy and helpless. After all it's a festival of spreading love and joy. Nevertheless, giving Eidi is a beautiful feeling too.

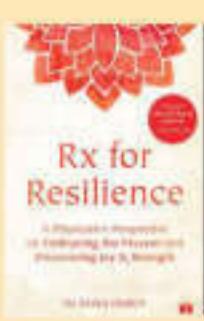


Pics: Sri Loganathan Velmurugan



think I've always believed in that quotation. And for me, what's important is to always try and push myself and challenge myself and see how I can get over it and how I can learn. I truly love challenges because they truly unveil and unravel a new version of me that I did not know I could be. And that's why it's very important for me to just keep experimenting and trying whatever it is, no matter what skill set. It's very important to keep trying new things and pushing yourself to be a better version."

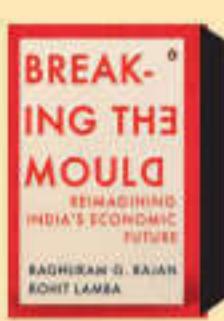
Shedding light on her upcoming projects, she said, "We are almost done with the shoot of Vijay's Tamil film. And I am almost finished with the Dulquer Salman film, which is in Telugu and I am shooting for 'Matka' right now. And Vishwak Sen's project is also ongoing. So there are like four to five projects going on right now. And many more are in the pipeline, which I am having narrations for and will get to know soon."



## Rx For Resilience

By Dr Saroj Dubey

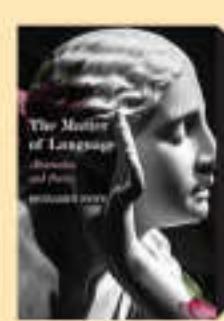
This book is a physician's perspective on embracing the present and discovering joy and strength despite facing unexpected challenges or treading the corridors of high-pressure careers. A roadmap to joy, fortitude, self-discovery, and the gift of presence.



## Breaking the Mould

By Raghuram Rajan, Rohit Lamba

Where is India headed? Is it going forward, or is it floundering, unable to provide jobs for the millions joining the labour force? What should it do to secure a better future? The book tackles these critical questions that revolve around India's growth and progress in the 21st century.



## The Matter of Language

By Benjamin Noys

Working between theory and poetry, Noys reconceives notions of alienation and class struggle as essential modes of reading and analysis for our fractured present. Language, as a site of struggle, is intimately bound to the material but is also crucial in formulating and expressing the material and the abstractions that shape the matter.



## ALL FOR A GOOD CATCH

Fishermen out for a hunt at Ibrahimpatnam lake on the outskirts of Hyderabad | VINAY MADAPU

## QUICKFIX

## ROOH AFZA COOLER

## INGREDIENTS

- Rooh Afza: 2 tbsp
- Soda: 1/2 glass
- Crushed ice: as required
- In a glass pour Rooh Afza and add soda. Mix it.
- To it, add Sprite and crushed ice.
- Mix the liquid well.
- Add in lemon slices and garnish it with mint on top.
- Your chilled Rooh Afza cooler is ready.

- Sprite: 1/2 glass
- Lemon slices: 2
- Mint leaves: for garnish

## METHOD

- Turn your palms downwards on the floor and place them closer to the body.
- Here, breathe in slowly and raise your left leg while the right leg rests straight on the floor.
- Raise your left leg to an angle of about 90 degrees from the floor. Do this gently without jerking bending the knees while practicing. Exhale.
- Hold your leg in this position for 2-3 breaths. During the initial stages, one may not hold it beyond a few seconds.
- You will feel a lot of pressure on the abdominal muscles, which may not be strong enough to hold your leg straight for long. Gradually, increase the duration of keeping your leg straight, raised above.
- Try for your leg to be in the raised position for even a minute with constant practise.
- Exhale and gently bring the left leg down. Realign to Supta Tadasana.
- While practising on the other side, raise the right leg, resting the left leg on the mat following the same procedure. Be aware of your breath.
- Release, realign to Supta Tadasana and finally relax in Savasana (Corpse Pose).



Contributed by Sheba, Secunderabad



## Gift

Feel the essence of togetherness with VAHDAM India as you gather for communal prayers, fasting, and the giving of gifts and charity to mark the end of Ramzan.

WHERE: <https://www.vahdam.in/>

## WHAT WHEN WHY WHERE



## Decor

Let's mark the beginning of this sunny season with The Green Collective's extensive range of sustainable and artisanal decor pieces, that align with a minimalist and boho-chic aesthetic illuminating your indoor and outdoor space.

WHERE: <https://thegreencollective.in>



## Grooming

KAI Tsumekiri (Nail Clipper) has a sleek and ergonomic design, ensuring effortless nail trimming. Its reinforced lever guarantees optimal functionality and ease of use.

WHERE: [www.kaiindiaonline.com](https://www.kaiindiaonline.com)



## Shopping

MISS JO, a luxury brand synonymous with elegance and quality, is set to capture the Indian market with its breathtaking silver jewellery.

WHERE: <https://essentials.missjo.com/>

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## FITBIT

EKA PADA UTTANA PADASANA  
(ONE RAISED LEG POSE)

It is a beginner-level supine practice. The practitioner lies on the back in this pose, with arms close to the body, keeping one leg straight and lifting the other. This is an excellent exercise to strengthen the abdominal muscles and the lower back. It is relatively easy to practise. It is a preparatory pose to Uttana Padasana Variation Hands-On Floor or Ardha Halasana. It helps in aligning a displaced Manipura (Nabhi) Chakra and stimulates the Swadhisthana (Sacral) Chakra.

## STEPS

- Lie on your back in Supta Tadasana (Reclined Mountain Pose). Relax the whole body and breathe normally.
- Turn your palms downwards on the floor and place them closer to the body.
- Here, breathe in slowly and raise your left leg while the right leg rests straight on the floor.
- Raise your left leg to an angle of about 90 degrees from the floor. Do this gently without jerking bending the knees while practicing. Exhale.
- Hold your leg in this position for 2-3 breaths. During the initial stages, one may not hold it beyond a few seconds.
- You will feel a lot of pressure on the abdominal muscles, which may not be strong enough to hold your leg straight for long. Gradually, increase the duration of keeping your leg straight, raised above.
- Try for your leg to be in the raised position for even a minute with constant practise.
- Exhale and gently bring the left leg down. Realign to Supta Tadasana.

- While practising on the other side, raise the right leg, resting the left leg on the mat following the same procedure. Be aware of your breath.
- Release, realign to Supta Tadasana and finally relax in Savasana (Corpse Pose).

## LIMITATIONS

- People with hamstring and lower back injuries, weak ankles, knees, and wrists, musculoskeletal frames, dislocation of joints, herniated disc, spinal ailments, uterus tumours, avoid this.



By N Elumalai, PhD Scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

## Wellness

For those in need of a seriously refreshing treat, The Body Shop's Lather & Slather British Rose Gift Bag will love their beautiful body-head-to-toe.

WHERE: <https://www.thebodyshop.in/lather-slather-british-rose-gift-bag-l-p/p/p152012>



## Ugadi

One of the most common aspects of preparing for Ugadi in Indian households is through a cleaning spree. To make your festive cleaning hassle-free, Dyson V12 Detect Slim Submarine™ - Dyson's first all-in wet and dry vacuum cleaner is the perfect companion.

WHERE: <https://www.dyson.in/dyson-v12s-detect-slim-submarine-yellow-nickel>



## Fragrance

Cult luxury fragrance brand Rabanne launches its luxurious 1 MILLION GOLDEN OUD fragrance in India.

WHERE: All Shoppers Stop outlets



## Comedy

A stand-up comedy show by Gaurav Gupta will be held.

WHEN: April 14, 5 pm & 7.30 pm

WHERE: KLN Prasad Auditorium, Red Hills



## Wedding

Warp 'n Weft is India's first GI (Geographical Indication) authorised Banarasi handloom fashion brand that will take you to the enchanting world of handwoven Banarasi craftsmanship.

To ace your summer wedding style, turn to these heirloom-worthy styles by the brand.

WHERE: <https://warpnweft.in/>



## Fashion

Shobitam, a leading global direct-to-consumer (D2C) ethnic fashion and jewellery brand, renowned for its celebration of India's cultural heritage, proudly announces the launch of its latest addition: Zardosi by Shobitam's House of Blouse.

WHERE: <https://www.houseofblouse.com/collections/zardosi>



## Eid

Swiss Arabian's Musk Oud is a luxury fragrance for the musk connoisseur. With the unique vibrancy of the cool Elemi resin, the tempting top notes are sweetened and spiced with tart pink pepper and invigorated with sparkling bergamot, perfect for Eid.

WHERE: <https://in.swissarabian.com/products/oud-malaki?variant=44394019127613>

## ART CORNER



## SYNTHETIC LIFE

A vibrant artwork by Hyderabad-based artist Gangadhar M., represented by Sri Sri Art Gallery.



RESHMI CHAKRAVORTY

**T**HE new financial year has arrived, heralding the annual ritual of meticulous money planning, savings strategies, and prudent spending. In this pursuit of financial wisdom, Ankur Warikoo, an entrepreneur and influential content creator, effortlessly commands attention. His latest work, 'Make Epic Money' published by Penguin Random House India, serves as an invaluable resource, offering holistic financial counsel on assets, liabilities, credit card management, and beyond. With 3.85 million subscribers on YouTube, Ankur Warikoo not only educates but also inspires his audience by candidly sharing his life's trials and tribulations. Through his platform, he encourages viewers not only to enhance their financial acumen but also to navigate life's challenges with resilience and determination. He has worked in the corporate world, and also built two startups — Nearbuy and Groupon India. CE gets in touch with Ankur while he was in the city to launch his book and interact with the students and alumnus at ISB.

Excerpts.

**Tell us about your new book, Make Epic Money.**  
It's a book that I wish I was given in my 20s, when it comes to money. No jargons, simple to read, practical — this is for everyone who wishes to make their money work hard for them.

**Tell us about your connection with Hyderabad.**  
I studied at ISB Hyderabad and have been coming to the city

# 'I AM A STUDENT OF PROCESS'

Entrepreneur, author & ISB alumnus, Ankur Warikoo was in Hyderabad to launch his book, *Make Epic Money*, a national bestseller, at The Quorum. CE speaks to him about his business, being a motivational speaker and more

ever since, for the past 20 years. Have seen the city transform into the most liveable city in the country, in my opinion.

**What inspired you to become an author?**

I have always loved writing. Translating that hobby into a book wasn't something I consciously worked towards. Just happened, as my public profile grew.

**How do you approach failure and setbacks? What role have they played in shaping your entrepreneurial journey?**

For me, failure and setbacks are opportunities to reflect and

learn. As long as I don't make the same mistakes again, I am happy to make new mistakes, because the lessons tell me something about myself that I didn't know before.

**What were the challenges you faced?**

I haven't faced a lot of challenges in life — been very lucky that way. And if at all I have, those have been my doings, from which I have (hopefully) learnt, not to repeat them again.

**As a motivational speaker, what are the core principles you emphasise when speaking to aspiring entrepreneurs?**

For me, failure and setbacks are opportunities to reflect and



market, and the market never lies.

**What trends or developments in the e-commerce and technology industries do you find particularly exciting or promising?**

I am excited about the mix of AI and education and how that will lead to more personalised learning for everyone out there.

**Beyond entrepreneurship, you're known for advocating personal development and work-life balance. How do you prioritise your time and maintain a healthy balance between your professional and personal life?**

I have a wonderful team that takes care of a lot of things,

leaving me time to do the things

market, and the market never lies.

**Can you share some memorable experiences or lessons learned from your interactions with customers or clients?**

The best ones are where they tell me "this is what I wanted to hear today". Because in my head I am just a guy doing my thing. But for someone to believe that this was what made the biggest difference to them that day, is quite baffling and humbling.

**What are your thoughts on the future of e-commerce, especially in the context of emerging technologies like AI, AR/VR, and blockchain?**

I feel blockchain is the future, where decentralised unalterable records will be the way to authenticate. That creates massive opportunities across the board.

**How do you leverage social media to connect with your audience and build your personal brand?**

For me social media is all about generating trust. I have been creating content for 10+ years now and this purpose hasn't changed.

**What are your future plans?**

No plans, I am a student of process. I show up and do the same things every day. Where it takes me is not something I plan.

your teams?

By giving the space, holding them accountable and showing them objectively how they are doing.

**What advice would you give to young entrepreneurs who are just starting their journey in the business world?**

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## VIGNESH MADHU

**I**HE year was 2009. Prithviraj Sukumaran was shooting for *Pokkiriraja* when director Blessy approached him to discuss the possibility of adapting a novel released the previous year. Benyamin's 'Aadujeevitham' had by then started to make ripples in the Malayalam literary sphere. The actor was just 26 then—a bachelor heartthrob, starting to find his footing as a star.

Cut to 2018, Prithviraj is the father of a four-year-old. He has successfully established himself as a superstar headlining some of the industry's biggest hits and most daring experiments. He is also a producer harbouring directorial dreams. After eight years of discussion, Blessy and Prithviraj finally manage to get *Aadujeevitham* rolling, but...

Then comes 2020, the year of Covid. Prithviraj has reduced close to 30kgs for his character and along with him, the entire team is in Jordan for the crucial desert schedule. A global pandemic declared, forcing the world to shut down. Uncertainty, the project's permanent companion, held the

film's production in its cold embrace for the next few months.

And now it's 2024. Prithviraj wears multiple hats—actor, director, producer, distributor. He is collaborating with the who's who of Indian cinema, and his films are pushing beyond the traditional markets of the Malayalam industry. *Aadujeevitham* has finally been released and as claimed by the makers, it is the fastest Rs 100-crore grosser from the language. So much has happened in these 16 years and yet, one thing remained constant—perseverance.

"I know people are now raving and celebrating the film, but during all these years of trying to make it a reality, we had to overcome tons of hurdles. During the first nine years of discussions, almost the whole world was pushing us to give up and move on. We persisted, but I still can't take any credit. It's all because of Blessy *chetan*. His conviction and determination did not allow him to let go of that vision. It's an invaluable life lesson for me. So, *Aadujeevitham*, in its truest sense, is a once-in-a-lifetime experience," says Prithviraj, as we discuss more about the film, some of its creative choices, and the challenges en route.

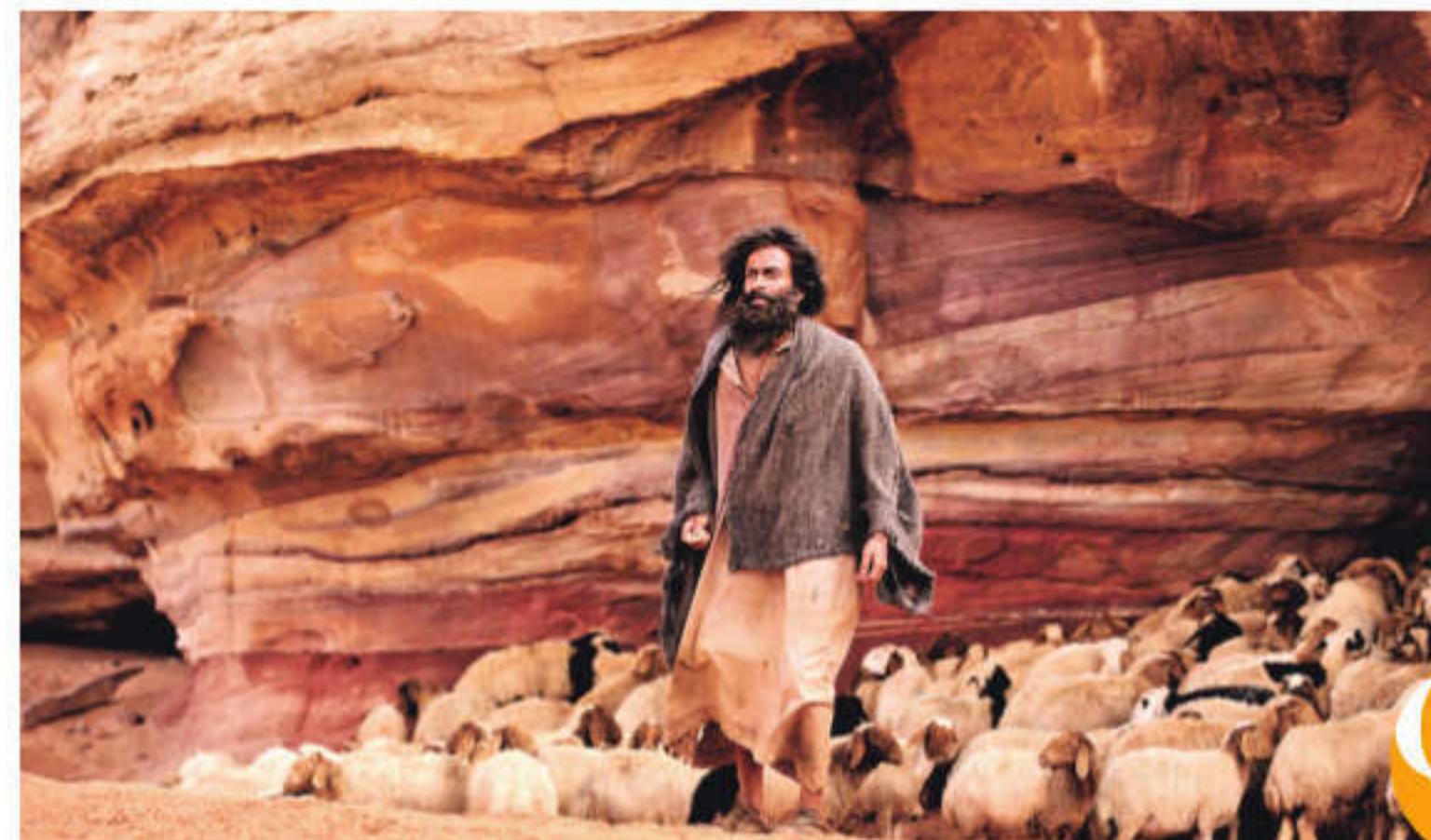
## Excerpts

The first time you read the *Aadujeevitham* novel, you must have envisioned it in a certain way. Was it anything close to the film we see now?

It was. However, I have to admit that it was Blessy who gave me the book to read for the first time after the end of a meeting where he took me through his vision for the

# 'I've pushed myself way beyond what I thought was my limit'

Prithviraj Sukumaran talks about *Aadujeevitham*, the experience of living a 16-year-old dream, and more



what I thought was my limit.

Physically, you must have been extremely weak while shooting that scene, but how was your mental state before it? Were you able to process what you were doing?

I was fasting for 72 hours and dehydrating myself for 48 hours before we shot that scene. We wanted to shoot it in a single day; mainly for two reasons—we were waiting for a particular light and it was a complicated movement, so Blessy didn't want to make me go through it again. Since I hadn't even had water for almost two days, I was famished when I came to the set. I was unable to even stand properly and focus, but on a subconscious level, I knew what I had to do. When I saw the footage two days later, I was surprised at myself.

With the introduction of de-ageing and other state-of-the-art technological advancements, do you think actors need to push to such levels of risk anymore?

I'm sure I won't dare to do something like this again. But in the future, if some other actor gets an opportunity like this, I would still like to see them doing it the way I did it. We can resort to VFX and other technologies if we want, but will it be as good as this? I don't think so. Many people asked why we didn't shoot this film in a studio, but I can guarantee that it won't feel the same as it is today. We travelled to real deserts, shot in testing conditions, and captured organic interactions between humans and animals. You can now experience it from the big screen, but you can never recreate that in a simulated environment. We're all people working with cutting-edge technology and know what we can tap into, but I can assure you that there will never be a point where technology can match what's real.

The greatest example of that is Christopher Nolan, who still believes in shooting everything in real.

Definitely, right from the onset, we were conscious that the bare body scene should not be included just for the sake of a visual shock value. The withered physique is a screenplay instrument that helps the viewers realise the struggles this man has gone through. When they witness such a drastic transformation, they would be able to imagine a lot more about Najeeb's suffering than what we have shown in the film. That was the brief for me when I started reducing weight. I didn't have a predetermined goal to achieve, I just thought I'd lose as much as I could. But I still never believed I could shed around 31kgs. I pushed myself way beyond



Truth be told, all the emotional scenes were easy because they were well-defined and we all had a clear vision of it. For a completely different reason, I found the vulture scene very challenging. Obviously, we didn't shoot it with the real vultures, unlike the ones with the snakes. We had the CG team on set to help me with the motion arc of the vultures, but it was still tough to conceive it. I had to imagine the vultures were attacking me and act accordingly. I'm assuming the Hollywood actors must be familiar with this technique, but it was a first for me.

When Blessy was narrating all these spectacle-heavy scenes then, like the ones with the vultures, snakes, and the desert storm, I asked him how we were going to shoot them. He didn't have an answer, but he assured me that we would figure out a way. So, when we set out to do this, we only had the imagination, not the process. But over the years, we stuck to the imagination, discovered the process, and managed to execute it.

As a performer, there are numerous challenging scenes for you in the film, but was there a particular scene that was the hardest to crack?

In the novel, one of Najeeb's biggest regrets is

that he doesn't have a photo of himself from that malnourished phase. While going through the rigorous physical transformation for the film, did such thoughts add more responsibility and push you further?

Definitely, right from the onset, we were conscious that the bare body scene should not be included just for the sake of a visual shock value. The withered physique is a screenplay instrument that helps the viewers realise the struggles this man has gone through. When they witness such a drastic transformation, they would be able to imagine a lot more about Najeeb's suffering than what we have shown in the film. That was the brief for me when I started reducing weight. I didn't have a predetermined goal to achieve, I just thought I'd lose as much as I could. But I still never believed I could shed around 31kgs. I pushed myself way beyond

the scale or the degree of challenges endured, survival dramas ultimately triumph through

emotional resonance. With *Aadujeevitham*, some feel that the film doesn't delve deep into the personal and the psychological layers because of its ambition to be an epic spectacle...

I completely respect that opinion. We've never claimed that we've made a perfect film. If someone feels that the film did not emotionally resonate the way they hoped it would, I completely respect their opinion. To each their own.

So, was it a deliberate choice to emphasise more on the spectacle part?

Not really, the film that we wanted to make based on the novel is what you're seeing today. I'm sure another filmmaker would have had a different perspective. That's the beauty of cinema, each person can have their own vision. So, someone saying the film didn't work for them is as important as someone calling it the best film ever.

Similarly, the film doesn't focus much on Najeeb's bond with the goats, one of the most striking chapters in the novel. As a result, when he leaves the 'masara' after bidding adieu to the animals, we are more relieved about his escape than feeling emotional about them parting ways. Were there discussions to establish their bond further?

One of our primary intentions was to ensure that the film was not longer than three hours. So, Blessy stitched together a narrative within that framework and tried to accommodate all that he could in the best possible way. This is the film we made and we are happy with the way it's being received, but it doesn't mean you can't make a better film than this based on the novel.

You've spoken about how Najeeb is almost a part of your life now and his thoughts refusing to leave you. Has it ever come in the way of any of your other performances?

Now that you've seen the film, I think you'll be in a better position to tell that. I've done quite a few films after finishing *Aadujeevitham*, and maybe the audience can tell me if they saw shades of Najeeb in any of my other portrayals. I haven't been able to spot it, yet.

## Jagapathi Babu joins the cast of *Mr Bachchan*

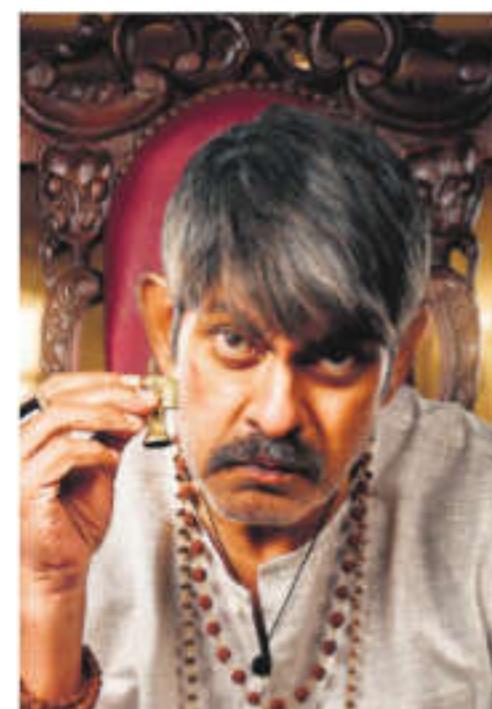
THE makers of Ravi Teja's upcoming film, *Mr Bachchan* shared a new update about their film with filmgoers. Jagapathi Babu is officially a part of the film's cast.

*Mr Bachchan* is produced by TG Vishwa Prasad under the banner People Media Factory. Taking to their social media page on Sunday evening, the production banner posted, "Welcoming the ever versatile Jagapathi Babu on board for *Mr Bachchan* in a powerful role. Get ready for an epic

clash on the big screens." The production banner also updated that the film has been on the shooting floors for 50 days now and that 80 percent of the talkie portions are completed.

*Mr Bachchan* marks Ravi Teja's third collaboration with Harish Shankar after *Shock* (2006) and *Mirpakay* (2011). Bhagyashri Borse will be playing the female lead in the film making her acting debut.

Jagapathi Babu was recently seen in Vijay Deverakonda starrer *Family Star*, which released on April 5. Meanwhile,



Ravi Teja was last seen in the action-drama *Eagle*, directed by Karthik Gattamneni, which released on February 9.

## Ayelet Zurer to return to Marvel Cinematic Universe

AYELET Zurer will make a comeback in the Disney+ follow-up series *Daredevil: Born Again*. According to a recent behind-the-scenes photo shared on social media, Ayelet Zurer is starring alongside Vincent D'Onofrio as The Kingpin of New York.

In December 2022, it was reported that Sandrine Holt (*Hostages*, *Better Call Saul*) had been cast as Vanessa in *Born Again*, replacing Zurer who had taken on the role in the first and third seasons of the

Netflix series. However, she has returned to don the role once again.

Charlie Cox and Jon Bernthal are also returning as Matt Murdock and Frank Castle. Elden Henson and Deborah Ann Woll will also be reprising their roles as Foggy Nelson and Karen Page. Other



cast members include Margarita Levieva, Michael Gandolfini, Genneya Walton, Nikki M. James, and Clark Johnson.

The upcoming Disney+ Marvel Cinematic Universe show, which is set to premiere in 2025, is a sequel to *Daredevil*, which ran on Netflix for three seasons between 2015 and 2018 as part of the Defenders universe that also included Jessica Jones and The Punisher. The show is written by Matt Corman and Chris Ord, who will also serve as executive producers.



## 'Had to leave my emotions behind while writing *Bharathanatyam*'

BH HARSH

SURYA Teja Aelai made his film debut with the crime comedy *Bharathanatyam*, which was released in theatres on April 5. However, Surya, who is also the scriptwriter of the film, clarifies that his foray into acting happened by accident. He says, "I had no intention to become a hero. I just wanted to be a part of the film industry, perhaps join film direction. It's only in my college years that I developed an interest in writing stories."

Talking about how the project took off, Surya describes his meeting with producer Hitesh Saraf as yet another happenstance. He explains, "Hitesh Gaaru and I would often meet at the gym. He once mentioned that he was planning to make a film and asked if I had any plans. I gave him a 30-minute narration and handed my script over to him. Once he okayed the script, I told him that I would assemble the team." The writer-actor then met filmmaker KVR Mahendra for a narration, followed by a joint meeting with Hitesh and Mahendra two days later. Recounting memories from the pre-production phase, Surya adds, "We opened the office on July 16, within 20 days of that meeting. The pre-production phase took a little time, and we began shooting only on October 10 last year."

Surya describes the story of *Bharathanatyam* as 'fictional but relatable.' He explains, "It's a story about what happens



when a man decides to take

shortcuts in life to succeed. It can happen to us. I then borrowed from the struggles I personally faced in the industry and gave them a comical angle." At the same time, Surya clarifies that the film does not try to push any 'message' in the movie and that *Bharathanatyam* is a pure commercial entertainer.

While Surya always wanted to be a director, the editing sessions of *Bharathanatyam* were a great learning experience for the writer-actor. The debutant elaborates, "When I was writing, I had to consciously leave my emotions behind and think from a more commercial perspective. So I expanded on the comedy track while ensuring story progression at the same time. And yet, when we sat in the edit room, we had to trim a lot of the comedy."

Further talking about his learnings, Surya adds, "A lot changes from the script to the final cut. If you achieve even 30 percent of your original idea, it's great. And I believe we have that with *Bharathanatyam*."

Pondering his equation with

director KVR Mahendra, Surya states that he shares a very

comfortable rapport with the

filmmaker. He adds, "Despite

being a much more senior film-

maker, he never tries to com-

mand. There is a sense of free-

dom with him. On sets, we

never had egos between us."

When asked whether he ever

considered directing *Bhar-*

*athanatyam* himself, Surya is

quick to clarify, "My produc-

ers had suggested the idea, but I

said no. If everyone comes to-

gether, that's when it is cinema,

because cinema is always a col-

laborative process."

The debutant also registers

his gratitude to the produc-

ers, Hitesh and Payal Saraf, for

their support. He says, "Payal ma'am is very interested in cin-

ema. She was also very sure

about casting well-known faces

without going over budget."

Talking about Hitesh's uncon-

ditional support, Surya states,

"Before making a film together,

you have to trust someone as a person first, then as a creative professional—Hitesh sir did that for me. If such a small film is getting such huge publicity today, it's all because of them."

Surya, who took courses both in acting and filmmaking before entering the film industry, says that he finds writing much easier. Recalling the experience of getting used to acting, Surya adds, "In the initial days, I was totally clueless about the frills of acting, like how to fix your hair and make-up for a shot. Even now, sometimes, when I watch myself on screen, it feels a little weird."

Surya also lightheartedly quips that he has yet to learn the 'politics' of the industry. He elaborates, "I am still getting the hang of the industry. In a commercial and glamorous place like this, there is a certain way to conduct yourself. I am still learning it."

