

SAUMYA SHUKLA NEW DELHI

day after registering a A case on doctored videos of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Delhi Police on Monday asked Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to join the probe on May 1 and record his statement.

Chief Meanwhile, Assam Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma wrote on X, informing the arrest of Reetom Singh by the Assam police. Singh is reportedly the War Room Coordinator of the Assam Congress

Flagging the issue in a public rally at Bagalkote (Karnataka), Prime Minister Narendra Modi said there is a habit among people to forward certain information that comes on various platforms without verifying.

"Those who have lost elections or have lost (while being in) the fray are using technology to make fake videos. Misusing artificial intelligence they put out wrong things in my voice in social media — this is creating a big threat." Appealing to people to inform police or the BJP about such fake videos and legal action will follow, the PM said the law of this country will not allow people to play such games with anyone," the PM alleged. The BJP on Monday lodged a

complaint with the Election Commission against the Congress, alleging that it circulated a "deep fake and morphed" video of Shah to derail the poll process, and demanded strict action against



Delhi Police personnel (L) visit to serve a notice under section 91 of CrPC to Congress' Social Media in-charge Manne Satish in connection with a doctored video of Home Minister Amit Shah over reservation, at Gandhi Bhavan, in Hyderabad, on Monday; and Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy (R) PTI

comprising Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and the party's national media department in-charge Anil Baluni also complained against the Trinamool Congress (TMC), alleging that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee-led party has been using violence as a weapon, and demanded that the poll panel ensure a free and fair election in the state. The Special Cell of Delhi Police

had registered a case under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and Information Technology Act following a complaint that doctored videos of Shah were being circulated on social media platforms. According to sources, a team of Delhi Police is expected to visit

the party. A BJP delegation the Congress office in Telangana by Monday evening. Sources said the police have served notices to five people, including Reddy, who posted the video on X. Reddy has been asked to appear with his mobile phone allegedly used for posting the fake video on X. According to sources, top MHA officials held a high-level

meeting with top cops of the Delhi Police regarding Minister's Home doctored video. Sources said that Reddy had shared the video on 'X' (formerly known as Twitter). He has been asked to bring his

electronic devices, including his phone, from which the video was posted. Around half-a-

dozen people, including Congress leaders, who shared the doctored videos are also being summoned by Delhi Police.

The Special Cell had on Sunday registered an FIR after the Cyber Indian Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), which is under the Ministry of

Home Affairs, filed a complaint about the doctored video of Shah where he is seen giving a commitment to abolish quota for Muslim community on religious ground in Telangana were

changed to make it seem that he was advocating scrapping of all reservations.

The complaint filed by Sinku various sect Sharan Singh, DC, Indian the IT Act.

Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) claimed that some doctored videos are being circulated on social media with "the intent of creating disharmony among communities which is likely to to affect public tranquility and public order." Singh also shared links of videos with the police. The Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations (IFSO) unit of the Special Cell has now approached social media platforms to identify the source of the video and those who have spread it. "We have formed many different teams to investigate the matter properly and arrest the main culprits. We have written to X, formerly known as Twitter, and other social media regarding the video. We are investigating both the source of the video and those responsible for its widespread circulation," said the sources.

The Police has asked Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to join the probe on May 1 and is headed to the state, according to sources. The authorities have served notices to five people, including Reddy, who posted the video on X. Telangana CM, who also happens to be Congress Telangana Chief, has been asked to appear with his mobile phone allegedly used for posting the fake video on X. The police will also likely go to the grand old party's office in Telangana.

The case was registered under various sections of the IPC and



Bagalkote, Karnataka, on Monday

Congress planning religion based quota, says Modi

he added.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE BAGALKOTE (KARNATAKA)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday accused the Congress of planning religion-based reservation in the country for the sake of vote bank politics, but asserted that he will not let it happen. He said this Congress proposal is to appease minorities as the SC/ST and OBC community is now with the BJP. "In Karnataka, Congress has started

a campaign to change the Constitution and to snatch away the rights of SC/ST and OBCs. Our Constitution does not accept religion-based reservation. But the Karnataka Government has given part of OBC reservation to Muslims,"

Modi said. Addressing a mega election rally the PM said, "They (Congress) will not settle with this. They had earlier too in their manifesto said about coming out with a law to provide religion-based Veteran BJP leader B S Yediyurappa, BJP candidates and MPs from Bagalkote (Bagalkot) and Vijayapura (Bijapur) — P C Gaddigoudar and Ramesh Jigajinagi, respectively — were among those present at the rally Noting that most of SC, ST and OBC MPs in the Parliament are from BJP, Modi said, "So they feel that as SC, ST and OBC are with BJP. To gain the

reservation. There is a similar signal

"I want to make my Dalit, SC/ST and OBC brothers and sisters

aware about Congress' intentions. These people on the basis of

religion, to keep their vote bank

safe, are planning to loot your right

which was given by Babasaheb Ambedkar and the Constitution,"

in their manifesto this time."

trust of minorities, they want to loot from SC, ST and OBC and give it to minorities. Will you let this happen.

Congress jolted with Surat replay in Indore PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

INDORE/ NEW DELHI

In a major blow to the Congress in Madhya Pradesh, its Indore Lok Sabha seat candidate Akshay Kanti Bam withdrew his nomination on Monday, fore polling stituency. After withdrawing his nom-ination, Bam reached BJP office to join the party and later in a photo released on social media, Bam was seen along with MP Deputy Chief Minister Jagdish Devda, State Cabinet Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya and other party leaders. Monday was the last day for withdrawal of nomination in the Indore Lok Sabha seat, where polling will be held on May 13. Indore Collector Ashish Singh confirmed that Bam has Singh withdrawn his nomination. Bam, accompanied by local BJP MLA Ramesh Mendola, reached the collector's office and withdrew his papers. "Congress Lok Sabha candidate from Bam is welcome to the BJP under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, party national president JP Nadda, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and State president VD Sharma," Vijayvargiya said. Police have been deployed outside the house of Bam in Patrakar Colony. Congress had fielded Bam (45), against sitting BJP MP Shankar Lalwani (62) from the Indore Lok Sabha seat, which is a stronghold of the saffron party. Bam has not contested a single election in his political career so far.



Baripada hottest in State at 44.8 degree 1 more sunstroke death in

Dhenkanal BHUBANESWAR PNS

 \mathbf{A} s the heat wave continued to throw normal life out of gear, the maximum temperature soared up to 40 degree Celsius of more in as many as 32 stations in the State on Monday. As per the Regional Office of the India Meteorological Department (IMD here, Baripada in Mayurbhanj district turned out to be the hottest place recording a maximum temperature of 44.8 degree.



degree or more in at least four heat wave would continue to

been hospitalised due to sunstroke or heat-related illness in different parts of the State.



PNS LUCKNOW

Union Ministers Rajnath Singh and Smriti UIrani on Monday filed their nomination papers for Lok Sabha elections.

Rajnath filed his nomination papers from the Lucknow seat, seeking a third consecutive term from the prestigious Lok Sabha constituency. Accompanied by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and his Uttarakhand counterpart Pushkar Singh Dhami, the Union Defence Minister reached the collectorate for filing the nomination

paper. Union Minister and prominent BJP leader Irani filed her nomination papers from the Amethi Lok Sabha

constituency. Accompanied by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and several other leaders, Irani led a spirited roadshow from the BJP office in Gauriganj before formally submitting her papers.

Before filing his nomination, Singh offered prayers at the Dakshin Mukhi Hanuman Temple and at the Hanuman Setu Temple here. Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajyapee had in the past represented the prestigious Lucknow constituency.

Irani's decision to contest from Amethi, considered the stronghold of the Gandhi family, comes on the heels of her historic victory over Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in the 2019 elections.

"After filing my nomination today, I am committed to serving the people of Amethi," Irani told reporters. "Over the past five years, significant strides have been made in Amethi, including the construction of 1,14,000 houses under the PM Awas Yojana, the provision of electricity connections to 1.5 lakh families, and assistance to over 4 lakh farmers through the PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme. I am confident that the people will once again bless Modi and the BJP." While the Congress has yet to announce its candidate from the seat, speculations abound that Rahul Gandhi will opt to contest from Amethi once more.

The Congress offered him the opportunity to contest from Indore at a time when several party workers, including three former MLAs of the party, have switched sides and

joined the BJP ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. Indore, the largest constituency in the state in terms of number of voters, has 25.13 lakh electors. The BJP has expressed confidence of winning the seat

by a margin of eight lakh votes this time.

Asked about the development, Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinate said, "The gentleman in question has multiple universities and colleges in the state that we spoke about. One of the charges slapped against him was of murder. It is not natural, normal or ordinary that somebody just withdraws their candidature and joins the BJP?

She said those who question the party on where is the threat to democracy, signifies that there is a "threat to democracy".

44 degree.

by Angul at 44.3 degree, Boudh 44.1 degree and Talcher

Capital city Bhubaneswar recorded 41.2 degree and Cuttack 42.5 degree. The weather agency has

singe the State till May 3, places and a minimum of 12 places recorded 43 degrees or during which the day temmore. Baripada was followed perature is likely to remain 3 to 6 degree above normal in some districts.

> Meanwhile, as per the Health Department, a sunstroke death was reported from Dhenkanal district. With this, the death toll in

> > asked why the BJP

went ahead with its

alliance with the

JD(S) when a BJP

leader had written to

The highest 60 health-related cases have been reported from Sundargarh district followed by 40 in Mayurbhanj and 36 from Khordha. Of the total 36 cases reported from Khordha district, 18 persons are undergoing treatment at the Capital Hospital in Bhubaneswar.

sunstroke rose to two in the

State. Earlier, the first sunstroke death was reported in

Health officials said that as

many as 257 persons have

Baleswar district.

Gowda grandson's scandal sparks outcry

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU/NEW DELHI

The alleged sea dealers involving the grandson ¬he alleged sex scandal of JD(S) supremo and former Prime Minister HD Deve to India. Gowda has led to a massive political uproar across the issue and Congress sought to country with Opposition know who helped Revanna parties seeking explanation from Prime Minister from Prime Minister The Oppositio Narendra Modi who was in sharpened their attack Karnataka on Monday and the BJP which has an alliance with JD(S) in the ensuing Lok Sabha polls.

While there was no headway in the matter involving alleged accused Prajwal Revanna, demand has been made for his immediate arrest and bringing him back

The BJP is yet to react on this issue and Congress sought to escape to Germany.

Opposition as Modi was in his election campaign schedule in Karnataka and hence

the party's Karnataka unit president, exposing the presence of a pen drive full of "sleaze videos of Revanna". A case of sexual harassment and stalking has been registered against Revanna. The case was registered on a complaint by their cook, who alleged that four months after she started working for them, Revanna used to sexually harass her and used to make video calls to her daughter and have "vulgar conversations" with her.

Measures mooted to help zoo animals beat heatwave

ARCHANA JYOTI NEW DELHI

temperatures soar and Aheatwaves become increasingly common and unbearable in various pockets of the country, the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) has issued urgent advisories to State zoos nationwide to help the resident animals beat the heat and stay calm.

These measures encompass a of preventive and range emergency actions, from providing electrolyte-rich fluids to installing cool shades, misters, and sprinklers, and offering frozen treats with fruits or vegetables in ice to captive animals

With extreme summer heat expected to intensify across with Bihar, Jharkhand and

various regions in the coming days, the CZA, an autonomous body under the Union Environment Ministry, has already raised alarms, warning that the current heat wave conditions pose a significant threat to zoo inhabitants, putting them at risk of heat stress, dehydration, and other heatrelated illnesses.

They cited the latest advisory from the India Meteorological Department stating that severe heat wave conditions are forecasted to affect extensive areas of eastern India and the Gangetic plain of West Bengal in the upcoming days, potentially surpassing temperature records set in 2023 and making this year the warmest on record. Ditto is



Telangana among few other States

"It's crucial to prioritise the wellbeing of zoo inmates during extreme weather conditions like heat waves," emphasized officials. The proactive steps

being taken to ensure the safety and comfort of captive animals aim to mitigate any potential harm caused by the heat wave. Heat stress in animals is considered to be a violation of animal welfare and rights.

An official from Sepahijala Zoological Park in Tripura's Sepahijala district mentioned that they have already initiated several measures to ensure the well-being of their animal residents while an official from the Delhi Zoo said that depending on the species, extreme heat can cause significant stress on animals, from tiny reptiles to large livestock like elephants. "So, we look at all the individual animals, at their natural behavior, their history, and even if they are very old or young to determine how they'll handle the heat. And then we make adjustments to make it cooler for them," he said.

The CZA has emphasized the importance of providing

multiple water sources with fresh, cool water in shaded areas and ensuring frequent refills to maintain constant availability. "Handling or manipulation of animals should be restricted to the cooler part of the day. Nocturnal animals should not be disturbed during the daytime. Electrolytes should be added to drinking water, especially for vulnerable animals or those on restricted diets," stated CZA Member Secretary Sanjay Kumar Shukla in the advisory issued to all zoos in the country.

Authorities have been advised to improve enclosures with shade cloths, tarps, or trees for natural shade and provide shallow pools for animals to wade and splash in, ensuring safe depths.



BJD retorts against Modi, Nadda's jibes

Says BJP has taken in its fold a 'criminal' like Panigrahi PNS BHUBANESWAR

The BJD on Monday reacted sharply to the criticism against it by Prime Minister Narnedra Modi and BJP president Jagat Prakash Nadda at different programms on Sunday

In a statement, BJD Brahmapur MP candidate Bhrugu Baxipatra said, "I was shocked to see Shri Nadda and Pradeep Panigrahi in the same dais. Shri Panigrahi is a chargesheeted criminal who cheated people in the cash for jobs scam. He was in jail for months together;

Rahul to campaign in R'gada; Priyanka in N'rangpur



and the court has framed charges against him. Baxipatra said, "I was in BJP for

23 years. I had joined BJP because I thought it was a party with a difference. We had all agitated against Panigrahi for his misdeeds including money for jobs scam. I was shocked and dismayed when the party took a criminal like Panigrahi with open arms. It has shocked the

BJP cadres and demoralised them." Nadda had targeted the BJD government terming it corrupt and called on his party workers to remove the government and install a "double-engine sarkar" for the development of the State.

While addressing a Vijay Sankalp Samabesh in Brahmapur, Nadda said Naveen Patnaik's BJD is attempting to bring in outside leaders in Odisha, which is a matter of concern for the State.

"The BJD government's corruption has led to 160 chit fund companies swindling Rs 32,000 crore from 20 lakh people, which the gov-

In Cuttack

CUTTACK

ernment is refusing to return," he said.

On Prime Minister's comment on Odia Asmita (self-pride), Bxipatra said criminal people like Pradeep Panigrahi and Prashant Jagdev, who were thrown out by the BJD for their misconduct, have been warmly welcomed by the BJP. Is this symbol of Odia Asmita? he asked.

In a national TV interview, Prime Minister Modi had said Odisha's identity, pride and its language are under threat and people of the State would not tolerate this any longer. "In such a situation, we think we

should get a chance to serve Odisha. If we get the chance, we will take Odisha to the pinnacle of development," he added.

Interview of the week Gandhi advised people to settle their matters instead of litigating



SUGYAN CHOUDHURY

llustrious son of an equally il lustrious father Late Durga Prasanna Patnaik, Justice Pramath Patnaik had an academic career of excellence. After having had his graduation from BJB College, he entered into the precincts of Delhi University and pursued his PG course in Political Science. Thereafter, he had his LLB degree from Utkal University Law College and subsequently got himself enrolled as a Member in Orissa State Bar Council and thereafter was appointed as a Standing Counsel in Odisha Administrative Tribunal. Then, he was appointed as Additional Standing Counsel in Orissa High Court. He was again appointed as Additional Government Advocate in High Court. He was further appointed as a Govt. Advocate in Principal Bench, Odisha Administrative Tribunal. He was elevated as a Judge of the Orissa High Court in 2014 and took oath as Permanent Judge of Jharkhand High Court in. He staged a comeback to Orissa High Court as a Judge. Currently, he is Chairperson of Odisha Real Estate Appellate Tribunal. He has delivered many epoch-making judgments.

In an interview to The Pioneer, Justice Patnaik spoke to Sugyan Choudhury on the prevailing legal scenario.

Could you please tell your experience as a Judge in the High Courts of Orissa and Jharkhand?

I am privileged and blessed to have been appointed as a Judge of my parent High Court where due to my close proximity with my se-



Judges and legal luminaries both from the Bench and the Bar in Orissa and Jharkhand. My tenures as Judge in both Orissa and Jharkhand High Courts have been very gratifying, satisfying and fulfilling ones since our judicial system is very robust and fiercely independent, giving space to judges and judicial officers to discharge duties diligently and empathetically without fear or favour, affection or

ill will. What are the landmark judgments of the apex court having far-reaching consequences safeguarding the larger interest of the State of Odisha?

The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has delivered many landmark judgments; some of them have wider ramifications pertaining to retrieval of government land. Off hand, I can recall the decisions such as (1) State of Orissa Vs. Brundaban Sharma, (2) State of Orissa Vs. Nityananda Satapathy & Others and (3) State of Orissa Vs. Fakir Charan Sethi. All these judgments emanate from an Act of Odisha, 1951 How has the Indian Constitu-

tion been able to champion the cause of the common man?

In this regard, I shall suggest that the book authored by Rohit De shall provide the insight to your query. The relevant cases cited in his book are: The case of the Constable's Nose: Policing Prohibition in Bombay. The case of the Excess Baggage: Commodity Control, Market Governance and the Making of Administrative Law. The case of the Invisible Butchers: Economic

Character is destiny. It is said that charity begins at home. The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. My parents advised me not to be moved by the vices of making fast buck. My father advised me to maintain ethics and rectitude with a vertical mind and not to be swayed away by temptations. I remember him saying, "If the bottom is crowded, you should aim at the top. If you aim at the stars, you would land on the Himalayas." Hence, I thought of climbing the ladder as an advocate with a humane face and have ended up as a judge with a humane face. I remember the great MK Gandhi, the father of our nation, who looked upon advocates as mediators and not as conductors in the procedure of law.

What is Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)? What is your considered opinion relating to the above when dilatory judicial procedure is ruling the roost everywhere in justice delivery system? I should say that the Gandhian

concept in this regard is a true pathfinder for all legal practitioners till today. In this regard, the following dictum of Mahatma Gandhi serves as a ray of hope in the blind alley. "I realised that the true fiction of a lawyer was to unite parties...A large part of my time during the 20 years of my practice as a lawyer was occupied in bringing out a private compromise of hundreds of cases. I lost nothing thereby, not even money, certainly not my soul." Mahatma Gandhi and Abraham Lincoln who were lawyers first, advocated and supported the culture of settlement. They also advised the people to settle their matters instead of litigating. It has undergone a phenomenal metamorphosis, growing from the grassroots stage up to resolving the disputes to the stage gaining a statu-

tory recognition. Whom do you think to have shaped your world outlook during your chequered judicial career?

Th Delhi University days, specifically sojourn in Ramjas Hostel (1979-81) were very much rewarding, impregnated with unforgettable experiences. My colleagues and compatriots in Ramjas Hostel have landed up as big bureaucrats, bankers, entrepreneurs and Senior Advocates. We all prosecuted our PG in Political Science. Professor Randhir Singh, a renowned Marxist theoretician, Leftist thinker almost revolutionised our young minds. Professor Randhir really shaped our future world outlook and life philosophy by his following dictum: "Command nature by Obeying nature; The more you have, The less you are". Randhir's ignited revolutionary fire was smouldering within my primitive ribs. With that hangover, I have sincerely tried to be an advocate with a humane face and later on also a Justice with a humane face.

PNS policemen.

BHUBANESWAR

With electioneering gaining momentum as the first phase of dual elections in Odisha comes closer, Congress leaders Rahul Gandh and Priyanka Gandhi will join the party candidates in the campaign in the State in May.

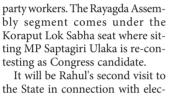
Speaking to mediapersons on Monday, Odisha in-charge of Congress Dr Ajoy Kumar and chairman of party campaign committee Bhakta Charan Das said Rahul would attend a public meeting in Rayagada on May 3. He would be accompanied by Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy.

Rahul would address a mega rally to be attended by 1 lakh locals and

2 more teachers axed for attending election rally party in violation of the Odisha

PNS BHUBANESWAR

T wo more schoolteachers in Odisha have been suspended for violating the Election Commission's directions for the



tions. He had kick-started the Congress campaign for the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections at Salipur in Cuttack district on Sunday.

Addressing a public meeting there, he had claimed that though BJD and BJP are fighting the electoral battle against each other, in reality, they were working together. Similarly, Priyanka will attend a

public meeting in Nabarangpur on May 5 or 9. The exact date would be finalised later, said Das.

PNS SAMBALPUR

upon the 8th MBA batch (2022-24) and the first batch of Executive MBA (2021-23).

Bandhan Bank, Chandra Shekhar Gosh presided over the event as the chief guest. Chairman, BOG, IIM Sambalpur and Chairman and CEO, Salesforce India Arundhati Bhattacharya graced as guest of honour.

Block Education Officer, the Col-

3 members of Irani gang arrested also recovered from their possession.

 $T_{
m hree\,members\,of\,the\,inter-State}$ Irani gang were arrested by the Commissionerate police in Cuttack for allegedly looting by posing as According to sources, the three looted gold ornaments and cash of Rs 3 lakh from two places in the Badambadi area in Cuttack.

After receiving complaints from the victims, police formed a special team to nab the trio. Following investigations, the team arrested the three accused. Two motorbikes were

Impersonating as police officials, the three accused looted people on

the pretext of pre-election checking. They allegedly looted Rs 2.73 lakh from the house of a businessman in the Aul area of Kendrapada district also. While two of the arrested are from Maharashtra, another is from Madhya Pradesh. There are at least 14 cases pending against the trio. Further investigation was in progress and a team of police personnel would visit Maharashtra to undertake further investigations, police said.

IIM Sambalpur Convocation held

236 degrees conferred upon 8th MBA batch, first batch of Exe MBA

vocation ceremony which witnessed the conferral of 236 degrees

Founder, MD & CEO, of

Government Servants' Conduct Rules. Following a probe by the Bhattacharya said, "Self-management is of paramount impor-

lector suspended both teachers. Earlier this month, two teachers

The IIM Sambalpur, held its con-

ceived by Priya Pant from Uttar

tance for achieving progress in all aspects of life and is the cornerstone



the day. A total of five medals were awarded to the meritorious students

In the MBA programme, the

prestigious Chairman's Gold Medal

for Scholastic Performance was re-

Pradesh for securing the 1st rank

based on the highest CGPA and the

Director's Gold Medal for Scholas-

tic Performance was awarded to

Aditya Kumar from Bihar for se-

curing the 2nd rank based on the

second highest CGPA. The IIM

Sambalpur Gold Medal for the best

all-round performance, based on

scholastic achievements, extracur-

ricular activities, and institutional

building activities, was received by

Devashish Malkani from Uttai

of the graduating class.

capital 02

government servants during the elections by attending a meeting of a political party.

The two teachers are serving at two primary schools in Papadahandi block of Nabarangpur district. One of them, Hautam Charan Behera is a teacher in Upper Primary School at Pitariguda while the other teacher, Manoj Kumar Hatra is serving at a school in Pujariguda.

Nabarangpur Collector Kamal Lochan Mishra had received a complaint that both the teachers had attended the meeting of a political of government schools in Boudh district had been suspended on similar grounds.

ber of or be otherwise associated

with any political or communal

party or organisation which takes

part in politics or communal ac-

munal movement or activity.

Gosh gave a piece of advice say-According to the order of Elecing, "First, try to find the people tion Commission of India on March who are the best fit for the job, rather than requiring everyone to 15, and Odisha Government Servants' Conduct Rules, 1959, no be highly skilled." government servant will be a mem-

of success.

In the welcome address, Director IIM Sambalpur, Prof Mahadeo Jaiswal shed light on the achievements of the premier institute over nine vears

tivities, nor will he/she take part or Out of 236 graduating students, subscribe in aid of assist in any 190 graduating cohorts received their MBA degrees, while 46 Exother manner, any political or comecutive MBA students graduated on

Pradesh. Additionally, for the Executive MBA, the prestigious Chairman's Gold Medal for Scholastic Performance was awarded to Roma Dash from Odisha, recognising her as the 1st Rank holder with the highest CGPA, and the Director's Gold Medal for Scholastic Performance was received by Binaya Bhusan Panda from Odisha, who secured the 2nd Rank with the second-highest CGPA. The ceremony was moderated by CAO-In-Charge, IIM Sambalpur Amrut Mohanty.

nior and erudite Judges, I was able to discharge my duties without any hassles. After my transfer to Jharkhand High Court in December, 2014, contrary to my initial apprehension, due to unstinted cooperation of my colleagues and staffs, I struck profound chord from the day one which stood me in great stead throughout my career as a Judge in Jharkhand High Court. I have memorable experience as a Judge having rendered more than four years of service and discharged my Constitutional obligations most diligently to my utmost satisfaction. I have had the opportunity and privilege of interacting with many erudite

Rites and Religious Rights. The case of the Honest Prostitute: Sex, Work, and freedom in the Indian Constitution.

These issues epitomise how the Indian Constitution is a people's Constitution and how the Constitution actually transformed the daily lives of citizens in profound and lasting ways. The Constitution comes alive in the popular imagination so much so that ordinary people of marginalised communities attribute meaning to its existence.

How were you influenced to maintain ethical standard in your legal career both as an advocate and as a judge?

Rs 9.6-cr cheque cloning case disha EOW arrests accused from MP

BHUBANESWAR

L he Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Odisha police arrested one Pomesh Tembhare alias Pomesh Temtre of Bangalitola under the Kirnapur police station in Balaghat district of Madhya Pradesh in connection with a bank cheque cloning case.

After arrest, Pomesh was produced before the Court of CJM, Balaghat in Madhya Pradesh and was brought to Bhubaneswar on the strength of transit remand. Later, he was produced before the Court of PO, Designated Court unde ther OPID Act in Baleswar on Monday.

Earlier, a case was registered on the written allegation of Sujata Kanungo, Chief Manager, Bank of India, Baripada that illegal transactions of Rs 9.57 crore has been made from the account of District

Mineral Foundation Trust of Zilla Parishad, Mayurbhanj maintained with Bank of India Baripda Branch by producing four cheques on April 2024

During investigation, it was found that the saving account of Zilla Parishad, Mayurbhanj is being maintained with Bank of India Baripada Branch in the name of District Mineral Foundation Trust. The fraudsters by producing forged or clone cheques managed to transfer Rs 9.57 crore in total to two different accounts in the name of PT Constructions and Supplier maintained with Bank of Maharashtra and SK Enterprises maintained with Punjab and Sind

During investigation, the abovementioned amounts were found further diverted/transferred to many other accounts from the ac-

Bank

counts of PT Constructions and Supplier and S K Enterprises. Out of the illegally transferred amount, Rs 5 crore was blocked and Rs 13.37 lakh lying in 33 accounts frozen.

The arrested Pomesh was found to be the owner/ signatory authority of PT Constructions and Suppliers to which more than Rs 2.68 Crore was illegally transferred. Out of this amount, the arrested accused being the signatory authority has transferred or diverted the amount to many other accounts apart from self-withdrawals. After the incident, he was hiding keeping his mobile phone switch off in a Maoists-infested village.

The EOW team with the help of local police and CAPF arrested the accused. His firm PT Constructions and Suppliers is functioning at Raipur. However the firm is a sham firm and created only for fraud. This

accused is a member of a larger gang having complex network in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha.

After this arrest, the EOW has got important clues about the entire gang. They are doing these scams for at least four years. They have been doing it through wellplanned and meticulous methods from cheque cloning to multi-layering of money transfers, creation and operations of multiple mule bank accounts, withdrawal of money, information network, local touts.

During investigation, many incriminating clues have been arrived at which are under investigation to reach out to the other fraudsters including the boss of this gang. The investigation of the case is ongoing

State's 40% households still to get drinking water: BJP

Terms 25-yr-old BJD rule as an era of failure in all spheres PNS BHUBANESWAR

L erming the 25 years of BJD rule

in Odisha as an era of failure in all

spheres, the BJP on Monday

claimed that over 40 per cent of

families in the State are yet to get

Hitting out at Chief Minister

Naveen Patnaik over the 'dismal'

show of his government, BJP State

vice-president Golak Mohapatra

claimed that the BJD government

drinking water facilities.

has failed to ensure drinking water facilities for the people in last 25 years

He said that out of the over 88 lakh households in the State, 24 lakh families are yet to get drinking water facilities because of the BJD government's inefficiency and apathy.

"It is a sign of gross failure of a government that has remained in power for 10,000 days," the BJP leader said at a Press meet here.

Mohapatra said the Centre had provided Rs 10,000 crore to the State under the Jal Jeevan Mission, but only Rs 834 crore of the fund has been spent by the BJD government as it is not bothered about people's problems but only wants to win elections by making false promises.

While no pipe water is provided in villages, particularly in districts like Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur and Kandhamal, over 30 per cent of schools are still devoid of water supply, he claimed.

In view of such a pathetic situation, the Chief Minister must explain as to where transformation is taking place in the State as claimed by his government, he said.

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Four bikers killed in separate road mishaps over-bridge in Jajpur district

• 2 die as tanker hits bike in Sambalpur

• 2 killed as bike hit by unknown vehicle in Jajpur

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR/JAJPUR Deogarh road.

 ${f A}$ s many as four persons lost their lives in two separate road mishaps in the State on Monday.

In the first incident, two youths going on a motorbike were killed after their twowheeler was hit by a speeding tanker on the Sambalpur-

PALLAHARA

 ${
m A}$ 'Mishrana Parva' of the

BIP was held at Khamar

weekly market under Pallahara

block recently. Under the lead-

ership of MLA candidate

blocks.

The identities of the two The incident occurred at youths were yet to be ascer-Cane Ghat on the road, retained. Police seized the bodports said. The identities of the ies and sent them for postmortem to the Barchana Commudeceased were yet to be ascertained. nity Health Centre.

A case has been registered In another incident, two more bikers were killed when in this connection and police their motorcycle was hit by an have launched a hunt to trace the unidentified vehicle inunknown vehicle on National Highway-16 near the Barchana volved in the mishap.

In Baripada Fire breaks out in Bank of India branch

BARIPADA PNS

A major fire broke out at the Bank of India's zonal office branch in Baripada of Mayurbhanj district on Monday. The fire first broke out in the canteen located on the third floor of the bank and then spread to other parts.

As it was the zonal office of the Bank of India, there were a lot of employees and other people in the building, said sources. Three persons, including a woman staff, were trapped inside the bank when



the fire was reported and later all of them were rescued. As smoke engulfed the en-

NIT ROURKELA ALUMNI SHINE AT CIVIL SERVICES EXAMINATION

tire building, it created problems in carrying out rescue

operations. Two Fire Service teams were pressed into service to douse the flames. The reason behind the fire mishap was yet to be ascertained.

INBRIEF

GAJAPATI BJD VP VIJAYKUMAR JOINS BJP

Paralakehmundi: In a setback for the BJD in Gajapati, its district vice-president R Bijaykumar resigned from the party and joined the BJP. He along with his supporters joined the

capital 03



saffron party on Sunday in the presence of BJP national president JP Nadda. Known as a good organiser, Bijaykumar alleged that he was not given importance in the BJD and he was repeatedly ignored. He was dissatisfied with the selection of the BJD MLA candidate for Mohana. A political observer said with Bijaykumar quitting the BJD, the party has lost 10,000 votes of the Telugu community.

DULAL PRADHAN QUITS CONGRESS

Bhubaneswar: Dulal Chandra Pradhan resigned from the primary membership of Congress on Monday. Ngendra Pradhan has been nominated in place of Dulal Pradhan in the Lok Sabha elections from the Congress in the Sambalpur seat.



Dissatisfied with taking back the Congress ticket, Dulal Pradhan quit the party.

RANENDRA SWAIN FILES NOMINATION IN ATHAGARH

Athagarh: Cabinet Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain filed nomination papers as the BJD candidate from the Athagarh-Tigiria Assembly segment in Cuttack district on Monday. He went



in a huge procession along with a large number of supporters by riding a scooter and submitted the nominatios to Returning Officer and Athagarh Sub-Collector Prasant Kumar Tarai.

220 KG GANJA SEIZED IN K'MAL; WOMAN ARRESTED

Phulbani : Excise officials conducted a raid on the house of one Babita Kanhar under the Gocchapada police station in



Kandhamal district and seized 220 kg of ganja, which was hidden in a banana plantation. The team seized the contraband which was stored in 11 bags and was kept for transportation. The accused woman was arrested and forwarded to court on the relevant sections of the NDPS Act, said excise officer Purna Chanda Behera. The raid was conducted on the instructions of district Excise Superintendent Jhasaketan Behera.

30 STUDENTS INJURED IN BEE ATTACK IN DHENKANAL

Dhenkanal: About 30 students of a private school were injured in bee attack near the Sapua Dam at Baligorada in Dhenkanal district on Monday. The incident took place when 90 students of the Sanskar Public School at Rahani were visiting the dam over the Ramial river in morning during a summer camp. "The injured students have been admitted to the Sub-Divisional Hospital, Kamakhyanagar, and the conditions of two among them were stated to be critical," school principal Shantanu Chatterjee told the media.

NITR-R honours alumni for UPSC feats Thousands from BJD join BJP in Khamar



 T_{he} NIT Rourkela organised a felicitation ceremony in its premises to celebrate the outstanding achievement of NIT Rourkela alumni in the UPSC Civil Services Examination 2023.

The incident occurred while

the duo was on their way to

Chandikhole from Cuttack.

The unknown vehicle ran

over the duo after they fell off

the bike, crushing them to

death on the spot.

2023 which was declared on April 16. They are Animesh Pradhan, Rank 02, Computer Science and Engineering, Batch of 2021, Padmanav Mishra, Rank 176, Electrical Engineering, Batch of 2018, Biswajit Panda, Rank 343, Electrical Engineering, Batch of 2016, Anushka Sarkar, Rank 426, MA in Development Studies, Batch of 2019 and Kallul Hazarika,

Rank 992, Mechanical Engineering, Batch of 2016. Director, NIT Rourkela

Prof K Umamaheshwar Rao

free thought.

wright William Shakespeare with Madam Swapna Bijayini

in the chair.

Shakespeare has been well expressed in all his writings, opined FPI general secretary B Ramchandra CST Voltaire. As to the importance of books in human life, he said that there are certain books in human history like the Gita, the Bible,

the Koran which are totally against human freedom and

Books like the Ramayana

Shaw, On Liberty by IS Mill,

Rehab of rape victim NHRC seeks report from Kendrapada admn **RAJESH BEHERA**

KENDRAPADA

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) recently directed to the district Magistrate and SP of Kendrapada to submit a report regarding compensation to be paid to a rape victim along with the proof of payment

within four weeks positively. The DM and the SP have

to the notice of the Commission alleging that a woman was raped and the act was filmed to blackmail her by the ac-

said that these outstanding

individuals have not only

made their alma mater proud

but have also set a shining ex-

ample for current and future

students of NIT Rourkela to

aspire to greatness and make

meaningful contributions in

cused. The unfortunate incident occurred in November, 2021. The accused had arranged a feast near the victim's neighbourhood during which he spiked her food and when the woman became unconscious, the accused raped her

gross violation of human rights, complainant Jena had requested the Commission to intervene. Later, the Commission

any field they want to work.

It's their hard work, persever-

ance and clarity of thoughts

from an early age that has to-

day given remarkable results.

tremely thankful to the NIT

Rourkela fraternity for giving

Animesh said that he is ex-

sought an action taken report from the officials on 22.09.2022 .Since no report was received, reminders were sent on 10.02.2023 and 16.03.2023 to the concerned authorities.

In response to the notice of

IPC against four accused persons. One accused was arrested by the police on 30.8.2022 and forwarded to custody. The DSP, Kendrapada has super-

him the opportunity to share

his happiness and gratitude. He

owes a lot of his success to NIT

Rourkela for the kind of eco-

system it has, he added. Other

successful candidates also ex-

pressed their gratitude to NIT

Rourkela

vised the case. A letter was sent to the District Legal Service Authority ,Kendrapada, requesting financial assistance to the victim.

Despite lapse of considerable time period, the district authorities had not submitted

State VP Lingaraj Das, apart from presidents of Mandals under Pallahara and Kaniha Pradhan attacked the BJD joined the BJP.

'Shakespeare was great champion of love'

FPI, AMOFOI hold English poet's 461st birth

day PNS BHUBANESWAR

L he Freethought Party of India (FPI) in collaboration with social re-

form organisation "AMOFOI" celebrated the 461st Birthday of the world-famous play-

and the Mahabharata that glorify war and destruction, create widowhood, render many children as orphans must be totally abandoned. Books like Candida written by Bernard

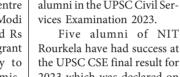
The International Books Day that has been synchronized with April 23, the Birthday of Shakespeare, was also observed keeping in mind the importance of good books. Stressing the importance of the writings of Shakespeare who was a great champion of love marriage.

Ashok Mohanty, the event was attended by Union Minister utilised the funds, he charged. Dharmendra Pradhan as chief Pradhan urged the voters to guest, Dhenkanal Lok Sabha vote for the BJP to form a double- engine Government candidate Rudranarayan Pani, coordinator Chandan Swaraj, in Odisha.

On the occasion thousands of workers of BJD of 46 gram panchayats under Pallahara Assembly Constituency

Government in the State for misutilisation and bungling of funds provided by the Centre in the name of 5T. The Modi Government sanctioned Rs 10,000 crore as special grant

for pipe water supply to Odisha, but the State mis-



The humanistic wisdom of

The Little Man by John Galsworthy, Gone With the Wind Mitchel and all those written by John Locke and Bertrand Russell must be read and reread, stressed Voltaire.

On the occasion, five love marriages were held by exchange of garlands.

also been directed to submit the additional/complete reby Margaret port in the matter latest by June 3 before the Commission. Acting on a petition filed by a rights activist, Sagar Jena

of Kendrapada, the NHRC passed the order. The complainant brought

from the victim. Even, the accused threatened her and raped her multiple times. The victim on January 5, 2022 finally lodged a complaint. Being a serious matter and

and recorded the act. After the Commission, a report that the accused blackmailed dated 2.5.23 was received from and demanded Rs 1.5 lakh the SP of Kendrapada. As per the report, it was informed to the Commission that a case bearing Marshaghai PS case No-331 dated 25.8.2022 was registered under Section 323,506,376(D), 307, 34 of

conclusive report with respect to the payment of the mon etary compensation to the vic tim.

The investigation of the case was stated to be pending, but no subsequent report had been submitted on the final outcome of the case.

MADHUBABU BIRTHDAY HELD IN PARALAKHEMUNDI

Paralakhemundi: Literary organisationUtkal Hiteishini Samaj observed Swabhiman Divas on the birth anniversary of Utkalgaurav Madhsudan Das here on Sunday. The speakers cited the contributions of Madhubabu for the formation of a separate State of Odisha and development of the State in



different sectors. In the function presided over by scholar Purnachandra Mahapatra, Principal of the Binodini Science College Manoj Kumar Patnaik was chief guest, Itishree Mahapatra was chief speaker and Sweta Patnaik guest of honour. The welcome address was delivered by Asalata Panigrahi. Among others, Bharatbhusan Mahanty, Gourahari Patnaik, Prajyoti Choudhry, Narasingha Gouda spoke on the occasion. Sneha Behera offered a vote of thanks.

In Dhenkanal — Notorious criminal held in encounter

PNS DHENKANAL

 $\mathbf{P}_{ ext{olice arrested a notorious}}$ criminal, Subash Khuntia (30) alias Bhubana, after an encounter in Dhenkanal district on Monday

According to sources, police raided the Khuntaposi forest following inputs that a gang led by Bhubana was planning to commit a crime.

On spotting the police, the criminals hurled bombs and fired at them. In the retaliatory firing by the cops, Bhubana suffered bullet inju-

Finding right manpower biggest challenge for MSMEs

ust about two decades back, an MSME used to pay about Rs 100 a day to a workman. He used to deliver a production worth about Rs 200. From the balance Rs 100, the unit used to meet other overheads like bank interest, electricity charges, maintenance cost, etc. Surplus if any, it used to be the profit for the unit

Today, the productivity remains almost the same, we need to pay around Rs 500 / day to a workman! When the productivity is not even adequate to pay the wages, the question of survival for an MSME remains the biggest challenge for the nation.

Not all MSMEs can adapt to automation, firstly because of constraints of sourcing the required funds and more significantly, an MSME being the biggest industrial employer, employing about 92% of the industrial workforce, if MSMEs through automation cut down on employment, unemployment will further rise in the country.

Not that the workforce is not available in the country, the population has been growing, but the work culture is di-



HARENDRA N MAHAPATRA

minishing in the country. Healthy, young men and women are sitting idle at home, thriving on freebies or from parental pensions and savings, etc. The farmers, who are sup-

posed to be working in the fields, are playing cards and whiling away time. As a result, the fields are remaining barren and most MSMEs are working on reduced capacities for non-availability of suitable hands sible mainly through develop-

neers, who are qualified but not educated, are opting to be engaged as a labourer. This is severely damaging

the economy of the nation. In the similar way, when the State or the country borrows money, it has to be deployed in projects for generation of profits rather than in building non-productive assets or spent in distribution of freebies. Investing a part of the borrow-

ment of MSMEs and agricul-

ture. For all these, a trained and

willing workforce is a must.

Living on Government aids,

working for the Government

or only for branded compa-

nies, is preferred by the candi-

ing in infrastructure is fine, but

the focus has to be on manufacturing and agriculture. These are the two sectors which generate value addition. The rest of the sectors mostly regulate the funds. When it is already settled

that MSMEs are the backbone of our economy, we do not see practically the MSMEs being prioritized? If India wants to be the third economic power in the world, we have to generate wealth by focusing on value addition which is pos-

The situation is especially grave with our labour force, who are gradually getting extinct, not because they have graduated to the higher level, but because of availability of their needs without work! Even graduates and diploma engi-

is strange but true. Our culture needs to change. The society must encourage and appreciate small entrepreneurs. Profit is no longer a stigma! It is a necessity for sustenance.

dates and the society today. It

The paradox is that, an MSME has to perform under many odds such as sourcing finance, obtaining approvals, licences, and the latest one is, sourcing of right manpower. Even a manager takes up a job in an MSME as an alternative to finding no better option, and ready to abandon his job at any moment, he only has to switch off his mobile or not to respond to any calls. This is most prevalent after receipt of salary. Unfortunately, an MSME is neither equipped nor has the time to initiate legal action, being bogged down by day- to-day activities for its survival

Such irresponsible acts are many, and collectively, it hampers the productivity of the State / nation. What is the recourse

India is the most populated country in the world today, and population , if channelized in the right direction, can certainly turn around

the economy of the country. In 1947, when we received our Independence, one rupee was equal to one dollar, and today 83+ rupees are equal to one dollar. This can change mostly through development of MSMEs. Even agriculture depends on MSME for processing its produce for its viability. Everyone needs money today, but they do not wish to encourage or recognize an MSME entrepreneur, who generates money for them! Association viewpoints:

The mindset of the society must change for MSMEs, and they must learn to support and encourage entrepreneurship. Freebies may be provided to only handicapped persons and even better if they are shifted to Shelter Homes which can be run by State funds. Strict disciplinary action must be provisioned for executives and managers for abandoning their services and not serving the notice period or handing

over charges. The Government must ensure proper training and impart of education before issuance of any certificate. Especially for technical staff, practical training must be provided

undertaken. Education should not be treated as business, especially by some private institutions. Piece rate and productivity linked salary should be en-

and stringent tests must be

couraged and legalized for ensuring higher productivity. Migration of labourers to other States should be monitored to ensure that the migration is not for independent and indiscipline living rather than for finding better opportunity

Deployment of the right manpower is more important than finance. With non-productive, insincere and noncommitted staff, even with adequate or excess investments, the project is bound to fail. It is the team which delivers. Everyone must be committed and loyal to their organisation, which has to gradually develop in our society.

(Capt Mahapatra is working chairperson, EFCAI and former chairman, Orissa Assembly of Small & Medium Enterprise; Mob: 9437057659; Efcai12@gmail.com)

ries in his leg while trying to flee and was overpowered.

He was initially admitted to the District Headquarters Hospital and later shifted to the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack. "At least 18 cases, including murder, extortion and dacoity, are pending against him," a police official said.

A country-made pistol, live ammunition, crude bombs, a sword and some cash were seized from the spot. However, two of Bhubana's associates managed to escape from the scene



nation 04

Third phase polls: Nine per cent of total 1,352 candidates women

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DEI HI

Only nine per cent of the 1,352 candidates contesting in the third phase of the Lok Sabha elections are women while 18 per cent have declared criminal cases against them-selves, the ADR said in a new report.

Seven candidates have also declared prior convictions, according to an analysis of details of candidates contesting the elections in the third phase by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and The National Election Watch. The third phase of the elections will be held on May

Among the 244 candidates with criminal records, five face charges related to murder while 24 have been booked in cases of attempted murder. Additionally, 38 candidates have been linked to crimes against women and 17 declared cases related to hate speech.

The analysis, based on the self-sworn affidavits of the 1,352 candidates, has shed light



on trends in criminality and wealth accumulation among political aspirants.

The prevalence of criminal cases varies significantly across major political parties, with figures highlighting concerning trends among candidates from prominent parties such as the the BJP, Congress and the Samajwadi Party. The report also highlighted the dis-parity in the candidates' financial backgrounds. It disclosed that 29 per cent or 392 candidates are "crorepatis",

with the average assets per candidate standing at a substantial Rs 5.66 crore

The top three candidates in terms of declared assets possess wealth ranging into hundreds of crores, with the highest declared assets surpassing Rs 1,361 crore. Since filing of the nominations and the affidavits, the Congress nominee from Indore has withdrawn his candidature. The analysis also delves into the educational and demographic backgrounds of the candidates. The report

al, with even his Finance

Minister praising it publicly.

"Now one of his top economic advisors has said he is in

favour of an income distrib-

ution survey but after the

indicates that 47 per cent or 639 candidates have educational qualifications from classes 5 to 12 while 44 per cent or 591 are graduates or possess higher educational qualifications.

Agewise, 30 per cent or 411 candidates fall within the 25-40 vears bracket while 53 per cent or 712 are aged between 41 and

The report also highlights gender disparity in candidate selection with only 9 per cent or 123 women contesting the elections in the third phase. In response to these findings the ADR has proposed stringent measures to address the criminalisation of politics, including permanent disqualification of candidates convicted of heinous crimes and cancellation of tax exemptions for political parties fielding "tainted" candidates.

The report underscored the pressing need for accountability and transparency within India's political landscape, emphasising the importance of electoral reforms to uphold the integrity of the democratic process.

Feudal lords raising fear of threat to Constitution: Naqvi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Taking a swipe at the Opposition, senior BJP leader Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Monday claimed that demoralised by the tremen-dous success of a non-Congress Government, "feudal lords" are raising fear of threat to the Constitution and the

democracy. Addressing "Samajik Samrasta Sammelan" organised by the Bharatiya Bauddh Sangh in the national capital, Naqvi said this clearly reflects their "political inheritance of untouchability and intolerance" towards the BJP and deliberate designs to create instability in the coun-

The BJP and Modi have been the "biggest victims of political untouchability and intolerance" of the "feudal fraternity", the senior leader charged. The Congress-led "clan" and its companions want a "remote-controlled government on rotation, dictation or deputation at the Centre" but the "dream" will fizzle out, he



Nagyi said the country has not forgotten the "policy paralysis, highjacking of constitutional values and the era of cut, commission, corruption, communalism under the deputation government of the dynasty". Modi has proven to be a "tried and tested leader" of good governance, inclusive empowerment and credibility with stability, he said. "Dynastic despondency" cannot dominate the democratic determination of such a mass leader, he added.

Naqvi said by defeating the deceit of political appease-ment with the determination to development with dignity has strengthened India's glory and stature across the world.

Modi condoles death of BJP MP Prasad

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday condoled the death of BJP MP V Sreenivasa Prasad, describing him as a champion of social justice who devoted his life to the welfare of the poor, downtrodden and marginalised. He said on X, "I am extremely pained by the passing away of senior leader and MP from Chamarajanagar, Shri V. Sreenivasa Prasad Ji. He was a champion of social justice, having devoted his life to the welfare of the poor, downtrodden and marginalised."

He was very popular for his various works of community service, Modi said, conveying condolences to his family and supporters.

The 76-year-old Lok Sabha member from Chamarajnagar in Karnataka and former Union Minister was ailing for some time and passed away at a Bengaluru hospital. On March 18 this year, Prasad had

announced his retirement from electoral politics. The six-time MP from Chamarajanagar and two-time MLA from Nanjangud in Mysuru district was ailing for some time. He is survived by his



wife and three daughters. He started his political career with the erstwhile Janata Party in 1976 and joined the Congress in 1979. He also had a stint with the JD(S), JD(U), and the Samata Party before joining the BJP.

Prasad served as the Union Minister of State for Consumer Affairs Food and Public Distribution in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government from 1999 to 2004. He joined the Congress later, got elected as an MLA in 2013 and became the revenue and religious endowment minister in the Siddaramaiah government.

In 2016, Prasad resigned from the Karnataka Assembly and rejoined the BJP. He contested the 2017 Nanjangud bypolls on a BJP ticket but lost. He then successfully fought the Lok Sabha election from Chamarajanagar in 2019.

Modi's motto has always been |Two held as Indian Asatyameva Jayate: Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of taking inspiration from Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels while speaking about the party's Nyay Patra for the Lok Sabha elections. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said, "For his MA in Entire Political Science, Narendra Modi must definitely have read Joseph Goebbels on the value of propaganda and taken inspiration from him."

He noted that Goebbels had stated that "If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it."

Ramesh said he also wrote in the principle that when one lies, one should lie big and stick to it."

Goebbels was the propagan-da minister of German ruler Adolf Hitler.

"In his latest interview to a TV channel, which is being



brazenly and shamelessly lied beaters, party social media figures and corporate per-sonalities advocated it," he about the Congress's Nyay Patra. It once again proves that Modi's motto has always said in his post. The Congress leader claimed been 'Asatyameva Jayate.' Truth is slaughtered every time he speaks," the Congress that between 2017 and 2019 the Modi Government seriously considered the propos-

leader alleged. The Congress later used the Hindi saying, "Jhooth Bole Kauwa Kaate" to attack the Prime Minister and alleged that the he stands completely exposed on the inheritance tax issue.

elections! Wow.Come on out-'The Congress's Nyay Patra going PM. At least in the closdoes not contain any mening few days of your miserable tion, direct or indirect, of an tenure shock the country by has yet again blatantly, hand - His ministerial drum- Ramesh alleged.

fishing boat with narcotics seized



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

In a coordinated effort, Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and the Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) seized an Indian fishing boat in the Arabian Sea carrying 173 kg of narcotics and arrested two perpetrators on board, Defence Ministry said

here on Monday. Acting on specific and credible intelligence provided by ATS Gujarat, ICG strategically deployed its assets ensuring comprehensive surveillance to

intercepting the boat conthe involvement of the fishing boat and its two perpetrators in smuggling drugs. Further investigation into the crew's involvement is underway.

The operation marked the twelfth such seizure by the ICG in the last three years, including recent detention of a Pakistani fishing boat with a substantial quantity of drugs on board, highlighting the commitment of both agencies to safeguard the maritime borders

Congress misleading Dalits, Hindu groups against Modi Government on quota: BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DEI HI

The BJP on Monday claimed that it is the Congress and its allies which intends to change the Constitution to give reservation to Muslims on religious grounds, as the ruling party accused them of misleading Dalits and other disadvantaged Hindu groups against

the Modi government. Levelling this charge, BJP MP Brij Lal said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has reiterated time and again that no one can change the Constitution, as envisaged by Bhim Rao Ambedkar.

The former IPS officer, who comes from the Scheduled Castes, told reporters that it is the Congress which has amended the Constitution the most number of times and even suspended its provisions to impose the Emergency in 1975.

The Congress and its allies are spreading this narrative to mislead people, especially Dalits, that the BJP will end



which the two main contenders for power have been targeting each other during the ongoing Lok Sabha polls. Brij Lal, who headed the parliamentary panel that scrutinised the three criminal laws later passed by Parliament, cited comments of Jawahar Lal Nehru to claim that the first prime minister was not a votary of reservation and added that Rajiv Gandhi had argued that the Constitution can be changed if needed.

It is the Congress that pro-vided reservation to Muslims in undivided Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka on religious grounds, in violation of the Constitution, he said.

The Rangnath Mishra commission appointed by the then-Congress government Lal said speaking on an issue over favour of including those Uttar Pradesh chief minister.

Muslims who were earlier in the Scheduled Castes for quota benefits meant for Dalits, he said. He said the Modi government's decision to repeal Article 370 was most beneficial for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes, while the Congress has spoken against

its removal. The Congress has always been anti-reservation and against BR Ambedkar, Brij Lal claimed. Dalits believe that a Congress government will include Muslims in the reservation meant for them, he said, adding that the party, when it was in power, ensured that disadvantaged Hindu groups did not get reservation benefits in government-funded institutions such as Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia

Millia Islamia. Congress allies such as the Samajwadi Party has been most opposed to the interests of Dalits, Brij Lal alleged, noting that more than a lakh Scheduled Caste government employees were demoted Akhilesh

firmed the accuracy of the intelligence inputs, establishing

ercept the suspected boat mi of lies, Subsequent investigations upon at sea.

nd combating illicit activities

Brij ration,

Five of ten patients face delay in discharge due to medical insurance claims process

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

 $F^{\mathrm{ive}}_{\mathrm{delays}}$ in discharge due to the time taken to process medical insurance claims, according to a new study from healthcare provider Pristyn Care. The study indicates that over 40 per cent of individuals attribute delays in health insurance claims in India to hospital administrative processes, while 25 per cent cite a lack of coordination between hospitals and insurance providers.

Complex documentation procedures also significantly contribute to these delays. Furthermore, the survey underscores various challenges

encountered by patient fami-lies throughout the insurance

claims process, with nearly 4 out of 10 respondents reporting difficulties with customer support regarding the claims process. The study also found that 6 out

of 10 individuals never initi-ated the health insurance claim process. Among those who did, 34 per cent expressed did, 34 per cent expressed dissatisfaction with the paper-work, while 40% faced chal-lenges in receiving timely responses from their insurance providers.

Roughly 3 out of 10 patients encountered discrepancies between pre-approved and final claim amounts. Additionally, around 38 per

that the discharge process took over 8 hours, with hospitals requiring a similar timeframe to process claims. Approximately 4 out of 10 cent of respondents reported individuals lacked clarity on

their policy's terms and conditions.

Furthermore, about 18 per cent expressed dissatisfaction with the communication received from their insurance providers regarding claim statuses.

Commenting on the findings, Dr Vaibhav Kapoor, Cofounder of Pristyn Care, said, There is a huge gap between the intended ease of cashless health insurance and the reality experienced by policyholders.

Despite 75 per cent of survey respondents having cashless insurance, a significant number still face challenges during the claim process.

"This creates additional stress for patients and families

already dealing with a medical emergency. However, it's encouraging to note that insurance providers have already started digitizing and using tech to make the process quick and smooth. By embracing technological innovations, insurance providers are not only addressing the current challenges faced by policy-balders but also paying the holders but also paving the way for a more efficient and customer-centric insurance ecosystem.

"As digitisation continues to evolve, it holds the promise of further enhancing the accessibility and effectiveness of health insurance, ultimately benefiting patients and their families during times of medical need."

The organisation cited a report from the IRDA, claiming that currently, cashless settlement services are accessible in 49 per cent of hospitals in India. Both general and health insurance companies update their roster of affiliated hospitals in response to costly medical bills and false claims aimed at increasing payouts from insurers.

To address these challenges, the insurance regulator, in collaboration with the General Insurance Council, aims to establish a nationwide common cashless hospital network

This initiative aims to expand and streamline the health insurance claims settlement process, it noted.

NEET aspirant found hanging in hostel room, parents suspect murder

PNS KOTA (RAJASTHAN)

A²⁰-year-old NEET aspi-rant was found hanging from the ceiling fan of his hostel room in Kunhari area here, with his parents suspecting he was murdered, police said on Monday. This is the eighth coaching student in Kota since January. The number of student suicides in Kota stood at 26 in 2023. Sumit Panchal, who hailed from Harvan's Pohtak hailed from Haryana's Rohtak, had been preparing for NEET at a coaching institute here for over a year, the police said. His parents have demanded the registration of a murder case against unidentified persons and an impartial investigation into the matter.

parents, a medical board was constituted to perform the autopsy, said Assistant Sub-Inspector Kaptan, who is inves-

tigating the case. The body was handed over to the family after the post-mortem, they said. The student had allegedly

hanged himself around 9 hours before his body was spotted by the hostel staff, the ASI said. Panchal's body was found hanging from the ceiling fan of his room at the hostel in Landmark City under the Kunhari police station limits on Sunday night, they said. However, his parents suspect-

ed Panchal was murdered, citing that the injury on his neck from the rope was too deep to be caused by hanging, the

On demand of the student's police said.

Majority of marginalised women still face high maternal mortality, lack of emergency care

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

 $U_{\rm link}^{\rm nderscoring \ the \ essential}$ progress and women's health, Surgeon Vice Admiral Dr Arti Sarin on Monday expressed concerns that the majority of women in marginalized communities across the country continue to have limited emergency care access and high maternal mortality rates.

"The health and wellness of a nation are not only a matter of human rights but also crucial to its progress. Women in our nation continue to face specific challenges that we actively

discuss and strive to resolve. Maternity health, nutrition, reproductive health, and mental health are among the key health concerns. Additionally, issues such as lack of access to emergency care, cultural barriers, and maternal mortality rates of 97 to 100,000 births are pressing concerns," said Dr Sarin at the Women's Health India (WHI 2024) Conference held here. Attended by an array of health experts and researchers besides policy makers, the event provided a platform for discussing evidencebased strategies and collaborations that could mitigate the impact of diseases on women.

.Dr. Madhu Goel, Director -Obstetrics and Gynecology, Laparoscopy Surgeon and Infertility Specialist, Fortis La Femme, Delhi, spoke about maternal health and environmental factors. "Air pollution, water pollution, and noise pollution not only impact the health of the mother but also affect the next generation. Whatever a mother is exposed to can influence her child's health. It's crucial to take proper care beyond just diet. Factors like using mobile phones, laptops, and microwaves can also have an impact on the child." When asked whether access to healthcare for women is chang-



ing and evolving?' Dr Goel access to hospitals in rural opined that while physical areas has indeed improved, financial access has not improved.

She emphasized the absence of health insurance in rural health sectors, highlighting its neces-sity. Furthermore, she lamented the lacking attitude towards investing in women's health. Although digital access has seen advancements, its practical implementation on the ground remains deficient. Dr. Madhu also pointed out persistent pre-existing stereotypes and the enduring male gender bias that continue to pose challenges despite efforts to overcome them.

While addressing the agenda on 'Empowering women's Health through Innovations and Connectivity', Dr. Urvashi Prasad, Director, NITI Aayog said, many women, including those from tribal areas, with disabilities, less education, above 60 years of age, and wid-ows, often remain unheard in mainstream discussions due to cultural and social reasons. "Addressing their issues requires substantial effort. While progress has been made in impacting women's lives, certain factors still need attention, such as sanitation, personal care, and awareness. However, socio-cultural barriers and limited access to healthcare continue to hinder

progress. Agencies must step up efforts to educate women about health, financial empowerment, and other important aspects?

Devika Bhatia, Product Manager at the National Health Authority (NHA), Dr. Prachi Sambhaji Sharda, Mental Health Consultant at WHO, Dr. Reena Valecha Balani, Wellness Manager for Corporate Health at TATA Motors, Dr. Charu Sharma (PT), Physical Rehabilitation Project Manager at the International Committee of the Red Cross was among the speakers who shared their views on women's health.

They studied abroad, have little understanding LDF convener Jayarajan of country: Dhami slams Rahul, Akhilesh

PTI LUCKNOW

Uttarakhand Chief Minister and BJP leader Pushkar Singh Dhami on Monday attacked INDIA Bloc leaders Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav, claiming that they have little understanding of the country as they have studied abroad.

In an interview with PTI-Bhasha here, Dhami also alleged that the Congress wants give reservations to a "particular community" from the quota meant for Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC).

On Congress leader Gandhi and Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Yadav alleging "misuse" of central probe agencies such as the ED, the CBI and the Income Tax Department to target leaders of opposition parties, the BJP leader said, "These agencies are of the Congress era."

Dhami was in the Uttar Pradesh capital for the filing of nomination papers of Defence Minister Rajanth Singh who is contesting the Lok Sabha polls from Lucknow.

Asked about the alleged sex scandal in Karnataka involving JD(S) supremo H D Deve Gowda's grandson and Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, he said the law will take its course against anyone who violates it. Dhami also targeted the INDIA bloc, formed by opposition parties to take on the ruling BJP in the Lok Sabha polls, saying, "This is an alliance of people promoting family causes, corruption and appeasement ...?



is why the country does not believe them, he said.

To a question on Gandhi and Yadav alleging that the BJP is seeking more than 400 seats in the Lok Sabha to change the Constitution and end reservations, Dhami said, "They have studied abroad. Hence, they have no proper understanding of the country." ^ePrime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP are supporters of reservations for SC, ST and OBC. The two have studied abroad. They have little understanding of the country," he said.

The Uttarakhand chief minister exuded confidence that the BIP will win all the five Lok Sabha seats in the state.

"We don't have to fight with anybody This alliance of opposition parties is for five Lok Sabha seats in to safeguard their existence and that Uttarakhand. Our fight is with

ourselves as to who wins with the maximum margin," Dhami said.

On the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), he said it has become a legislation in Uttarakhand and "we feel happy that the BJP has taken a vow in its 'sankalp patra (manifesto)' to implement it across the country"

The Uttarakhand assembly on February 7 passed the Uniform Civil Code Bill. The Bill got the president's assent in March, making Uttarakhand the first state in the country after Independence to take a decisive step towards implementing the common law on marriage, divorce, land, property and inheritance for all citizens, irrespective of their religion. On the arrests of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha leader and

former Iharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren, Dhami said that Prime Minister Modi has said "na khaunga na khana doonga". The law is taking its course, he said, referring to the BJP-led Centre's zero-tolerance

towards corruption policy. The AAP and the JMM are also members of the INDIA bloc.

On forest fires in Uttarakhand, Dhami said, "We are moving towards controlling the fires". These have been controlled to a great extent, he said and added that in some districts, "we

have controlled the fires". Holidays of forest department personnel have been cancelled and responsibility fixed to control the fires, the chief minister said and added that the help of the army is also being taken.

"Such incidents happen every year. This time it is more. We have taken action... Taking strict action by filing cases (against the guilty). The environment should be preserved," Dhami said while responding to a question.

Ōn Sunday, forest officials in Uttarakhand capital Dehradun said efforts have been intensified to extinguish the raging forest fires in the state, especially in the worstaffected areas of Nainital, Haldwani and Ramnagar forest divisions.

The forest fires are gradually being controlled with flames already doused in many areas. The fires in Marora and Khanana civil areas in the Maniknath range of the Narendranagar forest division have been completely extinguished, the officials had said.

gets a reprieve

Congress wanted to divert the

attention from real issues and

they blew the news about the Jayarajan-Jawadekar meeting out of proportion. "We have

also asked Jayarajan not to

have any more contacts with

"Dallal" T G Nandakumar,

who reportedly played a

major role in facilitating the

Dallal Ňandakumar, the Delhi

based Keralite is credited with

facilitating and finalizing underhand dealings and

contracts between people in

high places and favor seekers

He has been described as a

dubious character and

persons dealing with him are

looked down by civil society.

Political observers like A

Jayasankar are of the view that

there are string reasons

for a price.

meeting," said Govindan.

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN **KOCHI**

The State Committee of the CPI(M) which met on Monday to discuss the ramifications caused by the meeting between LDF Convener EP Jayarajan and the BJP's Prakash Jawadekar gave a clean chit to the former and said that there was

nothing unusual in it. Briefing the media after the State Committee meeting, M V Govindan, Kerala secretary of the CPI(M) said that Jayarajan explained the situation that led to the meeting and clarified all issues raised in the meeting. "It has been found that the hype about this meeting was created by a certain section of the media which is not friendly with the CPI(M) and they had some intention to put the party in a dilemma. Based on the explanation given by Jayarajan, we have asked him to take legal action against those media which spread falsehoods about the meeting," said Govindan.

The party secretary also said that there was nothing unusual in two leaders belonging to different political parties and pursuing different ideologies meeting each other. "Such meetings are not uncommon so long as the agenda is confined to personal relayions," said Govindan.

behind the State Committee opting out of taking any action against Jayarajan. "This He also alleged that the opposition led by the



REPORT

canteen," said Jayashankar. Jayasankar also said that if the CPI(M) is serious about taking action against Javarajan for meeting Jawadekar, the only body capable of doing the same is the polit bureau of the party because Javarajan is a member of the high power central committee, a body of intellectuals and intelligentsia like Sitaram Yechury, Prakash and Brinda Karats. Govindan charged the BJP's national spokesperson Sanju Verma for spreading "blatant lies" about Kerala.

"This lady was heard alleging in a media that the CPI(M) was distributing 98 pr cent of the income generated by temples in Kerala to the Muslim community. The truth is that temples in the State survive because of the generous fund released by the Government," said Govindan.

Top leaders of INDIA Bloc will scramble for PM post if it comes to power: Shah

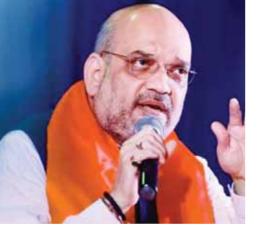
PTI JHANJARPUR (BIHAR)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday warned that a victory of the opposition INDIA bloc, "even by mistake", will lead to a scramble among top leaders of the alliance for the prime minister's post.

Addressing a rally in Jhanharpur Lok Sabha constituency of Bihar, Shah claimed that leaders like M K Stalin, Sharad Pawar, Lalu Prasad and Mamata Banerjee may agree to a year each of premiership, by turns, and "Rahul baba (Rahul Gandhi) will have to settle for whatever is left of the tenure".

In contrast, he said, "a third term for Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lead to elimination of corruption from the entire country, including Bihar, and eradication of casteism in the state".

"Modi's return to power is certain. But, suppose, even by mistake, if the INDIA alliance comes to power, what will happen? Who will be the prime minister? Will it be Stalin, Sharad Pawar, Mamata Banerjee or Rahul Gandhi? They will all settle for sharing the top post for a year each. Is it how the country can be run?" Shah said.



India wants a "mazboot" (strong) PM, not a "majboor" (weak) prime minister, the senior BJP leader asserted.

Slamming Gandhi for his "new-found concern for OBCs", the home minister said "the Congress party has always been against the Other Backward Classes. It had opposed the Mandal Commission. Modi has emerged from among the OBCs and the community has been empowered during his tenure as never before".

He also showered encomiums on Modi for abrogation of Article 370 and strong counterterrorism steps like surgical strikes in contrast with the previous Congress-led UPA regime, "when for 10 years, terrorists struck at will".

Attacking the opposition for alleging misuse of central agencies, Shah said, "Should there be no action against the corrupt? Whoever is found guilty of swindling money meant for the poor people of the country, must be in jail".

He also said the opposition camp had neither leaders nor resolve, alleging "Sonia Gandhi's sole concern is making her son the prime minister, while Lalu Prasad wants to make his son the chief minister of Bihar".

Shah alleged that the Congress and the RJD supremo did not give due respect to former Bihar CM Karpoori Thakur, but the BJP recognised his contribution and conferred the Bharat Ratna on him.

Lok Sabha polls are churning of Constitution: Akhilesh Yadav

PTI ETAH (UP)

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav Monday termed the ongoing Lok Sabha elections as manthan" "samvidhan of (churning the Constitution) between the protectors and destroyers of democracy and said the Constitution and democracy will be saved only if INDIÁ

bloc wins. Yadav alleged that the BJP will not only take away reservation by abolishing the Constitution but will also take away the right to vote from the people comes to

Rahul: If voted to power, **Congress will conduct** caste, economic survey

PTI PATAN (GUJARAT)

ongress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday said if his party is voted to power, it would conduct a nation-wide caste and economic survey on priority to enhance participation of Dalits, tribals, poor for the general category and OBCs.

Gandhi, who was addressing a poll rally in Patan town of north Gujarat in support of the party's Lok Sabha candidate Chandanji Thakor, also said the BJP and RSS planned to change the onstitution after retaining power. 'Ninety per cent of the country's population comprises SCs, STs and OBCs, but you will not find their representation in the corporate, media (sectors), private hospitals, private universities or as bureaucrats in government. We will first do a caste survey and economic survey after coming to power," he said. These communities are working as farmers, labourers, small traders or are simply unemployed, he said, adding that only three of the 90 IAS officers at the helm of affairs at the Centre are from the backward classes, and they too have been given insignificant posts. Accusing the BJP of bringing about wealth inequality in the country during its 10-year rule, Gandhi said just 22 individuals possess as much wealth as 70 per cent of the population. "Our solution is that the Congress will first conduct a caste census and economic survey after coming to power to find out the exact population of Dalits, OBCs, tribals as well as the poor from general category. Then a survey will be held to find out their participation in media, government sectors, private colleges and universities etc



which protects the poor and the downtrodden. Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants only 22-25 people to control all wealth, power and natural resources. That is what happened in their 10-

Jabalpur BJP leader, anti drug crusader injured in stabbing

PTI 📕 JABALPUR

Jabalpur-based BJP leader, Awho is also an anti-drug crusader, sustained grievous wound after he was stabbed by three men here apparently over an old enmity, police said on Monday.

The condition of BJP leader Mangal Siddique (42) was out of danger and all three assailants were arrested on Monday, Adhartal Police Station in-charge Vijay Kumar Vishwakarma told PTI. The incident took place around midnight on Sunday under the Adhartal Police Station area of Jabalpur city, police

Congress, BJP spar in MP over quotas, Muslim appeasement

PTI BHOPAL

Mav 7

The ruling BJP and the Congress in Madhya Pradesh on Monday indulged in a war of words over quota for Other Backward Classes ahead of the third phase of Lok Sabha polls on Monday

While the BJP claimed the Congress wants to give some part of the quota meant for SCs, STs and OBCs to Muslims, the opposition party hit back saying the ruling dispensation will change the Constitution and scrap reservations after retaining power. The character of BJP has

always been anti-reservation. During my tenure as Chief Minister in Madhya Pradesh, 27 per cent reservation was

given to OBCs. But the BJP government, which was formed after toppling the democratically elected government, conspiratorially abolished the 27 per cent reservation given to OBCs in MP," senior Congress leader Kamal Nath said on X on

The BJP was making baseless allegations on the issue against the Congress, which, after Independence, implemented the quota system and from time to time expanded its scope for the deprived communities, Nath asserted. MP Congress chief Jitu Patwari also released a video in which he charged the BJP of wanting

to change the Constitution and scrap quotas. On Sunday, Madhya Pradesh

BJP minister Prahlad Patel

claimed the hidden agenda of the Congress-led INDIA Bloc was to snatch the rights of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and OBCs and to give them to "their favourites". "The Congress wants to give the share of reservation for Dalits, tribals and backward classes to Muslims.

The Congress' intention is Muslim appeasement and its opposition to the majority community has become evident to the public. This conspiracy of the opposition party will weaken the country and shatter constitutional values," Patel had said The National Commission for

Backward Classes was formed in 1993 but it got constitutional status only in 2018 under the Modi government and it was the Congress' ploy (to not give

constitutional status) to ensure such commissions could be formed at the state level and to allow them to work arbitrarily, Patel had alleged.

State BJP secretary Rajneesh Agrawal told PTI the Congress has attacked the social justice system by including Muslims under the other OBC list to provide them religion-based quota, adding the party wanted to implement its "Karnataka model" in the entire country and curtail the existing quota for the OBCs, SCs and STs. Earlier on Sunday, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, while addressing a function in Hyderabad, had asserted the organisation has always been supportive of reservation, and advocated for its implementation as long as "discrimination exists".

power for the third time. Everyone knows that every promise of the BJP has turned out to be false, he said while addressing an election rally in Etah.

'These are the same people who had once said they will double the income of the farmers, give the right price to the farmers for their produce and make them happy. But none of these things were done," he said. About a thousand farmers were martyred in the farmers' movement against the three 'hlack laws". he said.

Without taking names, Yadav referred to the RSS as "the most dangerous family in the world" and alleged that the family which intended to end reservation is now talking against it for getting votes in polls. The SP president alleged that the BJP wanted to end reservation as part of a major conspiracy by putting everything in the private hands but, he said, the "samajwadis" (socialists) will not let them succeed.

> said. After this exercise, India will have a fair idea of everyone's proportion in population, their participation details, money in their hands and institutions they are working in, Gandhi claimed. Hitting out at the RSS and BJP, he said the ruling dispensation is against the system of reservations and it also wants to change the Constitution, which is the basis on which people received their rights, facilities like education, health care, water, as well as

and also financial status," he

rights. "BJP leaders are saying they will change the Constitution,

year rule," Gandhi said. They waived Rs 16 lakh

crore of those 22-25 persons but refused to write off loans taken by farmers. Just 1 per cent population in India controls 40 per cent wealth. The BJP wants to shut schemes which are beneficial to farmers, the poor and downtrodden," he added.

The Congress believes in distributing wealth and power without any injustice, he said, adding that reservation guarantees participation of Dalits, poor, tribals and the backward classes. and Privatisation the Agnipath-Agniveer military recruitment scheme are two tools of this Government to end reservation, and the Congress will ensure the Agniveer scheme is scrapped when it comes to power,

Gandhi asserted. "Agniveer scheme is an insult to our soldiers. It was brought in by the PM. The Army never wanted it. We will scrap it, protect each soldier and given them pension," he asserted.

The situation of farmers is desperate, inflation and unemployment are at record levels but the media will only show Modi, billionaires and their wedding ceremonies and Bollywood stars and celebrities, Gandhi claimed. "After the Congress comes to power, we will waive farm loans, give legal status to MSP, give Rs 1 lakh per year to poor women under the Mahalakshmi scheme and a yearly stipend of Rs 1 lakh to graduates and diploma enrolled holders apprenticeship in private and government sectors," Gandhi

announced. On the occasion, Gandhi hailed Maharaja Krishnakumarsinhji Gohil, the last ruler of Bhavnagar princely state, who as per the official records, was the first to merge his state with the Union of India on the request of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

LS poll: 36 out of 266 candidates in Gujarat face criminal cases, says ADR data

PTI AHMEDABAD

Thirty six out of the 266 candidates for the Lok Sabha polls in Gujarat have criminal cases against them, with some also facing attempt to murder and dacoity charges, as per an analysis of their affidavits by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR).

Elections to 25 out of the 26 Lok Sabha seats in Gujarat will be held on May 7. The BJP candidate from Surat seat has already been declared elected unopposed. "Out of the 266 candidates, 36, or 14 per cent, have

criminal charges against them, as per details provided by them in the affidavits. Out of them, 21, or 8 per cent,



have serious criminal cases rape, kidnapping, bribery, assault, causing loss to the against them," ADR's Gujarat coordinator Pankti Jog told exchequer, crimes against reporters here on Monday. women, hate speech, and Serious criminal cases are offences under the Prevention those which attract a of Corruption Act, she said. maximum punishment of 5 Among the major parties, out years or more, are non- of the 25 BJP candidates, four, bailable, related to murder, or 15 per cent, have criminal

cases against them, with two facing serious charges, as per the data of ADR, which is an electoral reform advocacy group

Out of the 23 Congress candidates, six, or 26 per cent, are named in criminal cases, with three facing serious charges, showed the ADR analysis of the Election Commission data.

Tribal leaders Anant Patel and Dilip Vasava, contesting from Valsad and Bharuch seats respectively, are facing cases on charges of attempt to murder.

the Congress Patel is candidate, while Vasava is the Bharat Adivasi Party nominee.

Aam Aadmi Party candidate Chaitar Vasava and

independent nominee Ismail Patel, both constesting from Bharuch seat, have the highest number of 13 criminal cases each against them.

The cases against Chaitar Vasava include of dacoity, sexual harassment, abetment of suicide and hate speech, as per the ADR data. Ismail Patel is facing various

charges including dacoity, and voluntarily forgery causing hurt. Out of the total 118

independent candidates, 18 have criminal cases against them, with 11 facing serious charges, the ADR said showed.

Anant Patel is also accused in cases of attempt to murder, has a dacoity and voluntarily abetr causing hurt. In one case, he data.

was also convicted and fined Rs 99.

> Dilip Vasava, who is facing the charge of attempt to murder, was sentenced to three years imprisonment in 2016. He has filed an appeal against the court order which is currently pending, the data showed.

Chaitar Vasava was sentenced to 6-month imprisonment and fined Rs 1,000 in one of the cases.

Independent candidate from Kheda seat, Hitesh Parmar, is facing charges of stalking and intimidation, criminal according to the data.

Congress' Banaskantha seat candidate Geniben Thakor has a case pending related to abetment of suicide, said the BHUBANESWR | TUESDAY | APRIL 30, 2024

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

North by Northeast

Internal strife, insurgency and a sense of alienation plague the Seven Sisters, much like the Kashmir of yore

India's Northeastern region has for long experienced insurgency, internal conflict and unrest and the challenges have often been exacerbated by its complex history, geographical isolation and perceived neglect by the Central Government. One of the most prominent facets of the restive Northeast is the internecine wars within its borders, fuelled by a variety of factors ranging from ethnic tensions to resource disputes, leading to cycles of violence and displacement. The region's strategic importance, owing to its proximity to China and Southeast Asia, has made it a battleground for competing geopolitical interests, thus complicating the situation. Traditionally, the conflict in the Northeast has been fuelled by a lack of identity with the Indian mainland, the role of external powers like China, Myanmar and Bangladesh, tribal/communal differences among its inhabitants and fault lines in the subdivision of Assam which led to the creation of other Northeastern states. Indeed, the region's woes stem from several factors, which are



reflected in its turmoil. Economic underdevelopment and lack of infrastructure exacerbate feelings of marginalisation and deprivation, providing fertile ground for insurgent movements to recruit disaffected youth. Moreover, the region's porous borders, particularly with Myanmar and Bangladesh, help insurgent groups set up base and launch attacks on our security personnel. Cross-border infiltration and support to insurgent groups by external actors have been persistent challenges for India's security establishment.

The Army's long presence in the region Delhi's apathy has been a recurring theme in the Northeast. The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), enact-

ed in 1958 amidst the Naga Hills 'uprising', is a constant irritant that the locals feel reflects New Delhi's deliberate attempt to strip them of their rights and dignity. It is one of the most despised Acts in the region and stands between the Centre's goodwill and the Northeastern people. Currently, the AFSPA is enforced fully in 31 districts across four Northeastern states and partially in 12 districts. The alienation has manifested in various forms, including widespread boycott of elections, as communities express their disillusionment with the political process. The latest manifestation has been in Manipur, bordering Myanmar, where violence began on May 3 last year when hill tribal groups clashed with the ethnic majority Meitei over economic benefits and job and education quotas. Regrettably, since Independence, this area has not been fully integrated into the mainstream. Not only have many insurgent groups representing various communities been waging war against the Indian Union, internal strife and communal differences have also not been reconciled. The lack of inclusive approach to addressing the root causes of the unrest, coupled with sporadic attempts at peace talks and development initiatives, has led to instability that shows little sign of abating. Only through sustained efforts and genuine political will can the region hope to achieve peace and stability.



Why are the young not joining politics?



PRAFULL GORADIA

A large number of voters belongs to the younger generation; their apathy towards the electoral process is a cause of concern

he country belongs more and more to its younger citizens. It is, therefore, all the more disturbing that the youth who have lately crossed the age of 18 and have registered themselves as voters in fewer numbers. The country belongs more to the younger ones whore 18, on an overage, the country for say, sixty years more, or probably twelve general elections. To a fifty-year-old, in terms of time, he might get to see five, possibly six more general elections.

In Uttar Pradesh, our largest state only 25 per cent of the eligible youth have registered themselves as voters. What could be the reasons for this lack of desire to have a say in the running of their country? Do most young people expect Government representatives to approach them in the old maibaap fashion? Or do they feel that there isn't likely to be much competition among the political parties for their votes? Could it also be that the younger generation has come to nurse an indifference towards the entire political process and the institution of democracy itself? Over the years, a large body of the youth of the country has come to believe that whoever comes to power, won't make any difference to their lives, as the country's politicians are perceived to be a class that acts only in its interest. However, in this cynicism, the youth forget that by their indifference, they abdicate their right to have a say in the running of their nation.

At the other of the age spectrum, the necessary interest in entering the political arena and playing a meaningful role in the life of the country has not been there to the extent required. Public life of a political nature had existed for some fifty years before independence. It began with the founding of the Congress by a retired British bureaucrat, Allan Octavian Hume, in 1885. The Muslim League was founded in year 1906, the Hindu tessionally qualified Mahasabha in 1916 and the Communist Party in 1925. Indians, therefore had the oppor-But clearly, there is a long way tunity to have a feel of political to go in this regard.

public life. The motivation wasn't power, but an idealismdriven desire for the country's freedom. Soon thereafter, there might have been disillusion; the earlier idealism began declining rapidly. With the decline was seen a fall in ethical and social values in the country.

Could the disillusionment have been due to disappointment with the quality of politicians? Not all parties indeed have members hailing from the most educated or knowledgeable sections of society. Although the current central Government is not a rough and tumble of the hitherto political dispensations that have ruled the country, it has still not been able to overcome the cynicism about politicians and politics in general, which continues to hold sway in the minds of a large section of the people. This is not to say that good people are disinterested in

politics. We have in recent years, seen many academically and pro-

ETTERS

One great discouragement is the number of people in a constituency, as well as the high cost of electioneering. Hopefully, some answer to this problem should emerge from the delimitation of electoral constituencies, which would be set to increase, by (approximately) 50 per cent. ANOTHER REASON No ordinary entrant can

afford to spend astronomical WHY WEALTHY sums of money to cultivate nearly two million voters per CANDIDATES ARE seat. Delimitation and increased seats alone will not solve the ATTRACTED TO POLITICS IS THE problem of election expenses. Another reason why wealthy TRADITIONAL BELIEF candidates are attracted to THAT ONCE ELECTED. politics is the traditional belief

that once elected, the candi-THE CANDIDATE date would be able to earn back the money spent on WOULD BE ABLE TO electioneering and thereafter generate much money. Once EARN BACK THE the doors are closed to cor-MONEY SPENT ON ruption, the attraction for opportunists to become can-ELECTIONEERING didates would be much AND THEREAFTER diminished. This also applies equally to any new avenue for **GENERATE MUCH** making money.

Compulsory voting is a way of not only upgrading the system MONEY but also reducing the cost of electioneering. It would also eliminate the perpetuation of

vote-bank politics. For example, there was a time when the total voting used to be 50 per cent or less. Therefore, if the candidate had a secure vote bank, it wasn't difficult for him to win.

With the rise in the percentage of voting, the power and effect of a committed votebank is reduced. For instance, in an electorate of a lakh people, a committed vote-bank of a particular candidate is say, 25 per cent, i.e., 25,000 voters out of a population of one lakh. If the normal voting is no more than 50 to 55 per cent for that seat, this captive vote bank is assured victory for that candidate. However, if the voting percentage is 100 per cent, such a vote-bank will be of no decisive advantage. The role of freebies has to be curbed for any meaningful participation in the political process. Freebies reduce the exercise of elections in a democracy to nothing more than bribing voters. It is then futile to talk of democracy, or why the young don't participate in it in greater numbers. (The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha; views are personal)



Members of a dance group perform on a road on International Dance Day, in Nadia

Reflections on rituals from around the world



SANJAY CHANDRA

From the tranquil Nyepi Day in Bali to the vibrant street celebrations in Japan, rituals surrounding life's milestones offer glimpses into cultures

e had lunch in the resort restaurant during a vacation to Thailand a few months back. There was a slight drizzle as we walked along a narrow walkway hemmed in by walls and tastefully planted beds of flowers, vines and shrubs.

I remember a late evening in our beach resort in Bali a few years back. The day after our arrival was Nyepi Day, a public holiday. It is a day of silence, fasting and meditation. No lights are lit in the evening. It is believed that spirits roam in the evening on this day. Any loud sound or bright light may attract them to come down to explore and some of them may cause harm.

We had walked to the resort restaurant along walkways at the back, which were lit up with muted lamps placed along the path to guide the guests. Even the lighting in the restaurant was subdued. We were also caught up in the spirit of the local folklore and walked silently along the dimly lit narrow path, surrounded by flowers, vines and shrubs,



a few days later. There was

laughter all around as we all

recounted the happy times

that we had spent with the

apprehensive of catching the fancy of an evil spirit. offered, followed by meals specially prepared. What A few decades back, I was in Japan for a study tour. surprises me, though, is There was a public holiday, the fact that these 15 days, which was celebrated as in honour of our ancestors the day of the ancestors. are considered inauspicious Groups of people were out for any new purchases, or dancing on the streets, any other auspicious work, moving from one house to even though we are because the other. Each household they were. had set up a table in the A very close Parsi friend front, loaded with beer and passed away a few years back. The family invited us other alcohol and savouries to be partaken by the dancfor a celebration of her life

celebrations. We have a fortnight-long annual ritual, called Pitru Paksha, to honour our lady over drinks and food.

ing people. I also joined the

The gracious hostess, her daughter, had prepared a special Parsi-style chicken dish, which haɗ been both a speciality and a favourite of the departed soul.

We also have the thirteenthday ceremony in our Hindu religion which is formally the close of the mourning period. Guests are intimated to join prayers and then partake of our special food prepared for the occasion. Though sometimes tearyeyed, everyone remembers the time spent with the person who has joined the supreme being.

Why mourn death, which is only the passing away to another life? When my time comes, I hope my near and dear ones remember me, not for my beliefs, but for the happiness that I gave them

A life led to spreading happiness all around is to be celebrated. Thomas Campbell rightly said, "To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die!" (The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railwavs and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)

PAKISTAN'S AFGHAN DEBACLE

Madam - Apropos the news article, "Pakistan paying for its misplaced priorities," published on April 29, this is my response. Ambassador Asif Durrani's acknowledgement of Pakistan's failures in Afghanistan reveals a stark reality: the cost of tensions along the Durand Line surpasses all wars with India combined. The fixation on India as the primary adversary stems from historical wounds and institutional agendas. However, the Afghan debacle exposes the fallacy of such fixations and challenges the 'two-nation theory'. The resurgence of Taliban attacks and Afghan nationals participating in strikes against Pakistan signal a seismic shift in regional dynamics. Pakistan's strategic ambitions in Áfghanistan have backfired, eroding trust and isolating it on the global stage. Despite efforts to rewrite the narrative, Pakistan remains entangled in its past missteps, with Afghanistan looming as a permanent fixture in its regional calculus.

As the world watches with scepticism, Pakistan's plight underscores a fundamental truth: religion alone cannot sustain a nation. Bangladesh and Afghanistan stand as testaments to the folly of such notions. It's a sobering lesson for Pakistan to reassess its identity and recalibrate its foreign policy away from religious rhetoric towards pragmatic diplomacy.

Rohit Kapoor | Kolkata

ENVIRONMENTAL MANIFESTO

Madam - Apropos the news article, "Political parties must prioritise environmental preservation," published on April 29, this is my response. As an avid reader of daily news, it's disheartening to witness India's political landscape during election time fail to address pressing environmental concerns. Despite lip service in manifestos, concrete actions are conspicuously absent. The proliferation of plastic waste during political campaigns exacerbates the crisis. Plastic pollution poses a grave threat to ecosystems and human health, with marine life suffering the brunt.

Bihar on progress path



propos the news article. "Chronicle of Bihar. Beyond Elections," published on April 28, this is my response. Deepak Kumar Jha's narrative in The Pioneer paints a vivid picture of Bihar's rural landscape, where traditional thatched homes have given way to brick dwellings amidst agricultural abundance. Yet, glaring issues persist: healthcare and education

Political parties wield considerable influence and should champion sustainable practices to combat plastic pollution. Yet the lack of urgency is alarming. With the planet reaching critical thresholds, we can't afford complacency. The need for immediate action to safeguard our only home, Earth, is paramount. It's high time political will transcended rhetoric to enact meaningful change. We must remember that there's no Plan B for our planet.

Aditya Mehta | Mumbai

CULINARY ESCAPADES

Madam - Apropos the news article, "Feast of hot summer menus," published on April 27, this is my response. Reading through these descriptions feels like leafing through a gourmet guidebook. Each venue promises not just a meal but an experience, a journey through flavours and cultures. Olly offers a tranquil haven from urban chaos, serving up classics with a twist amidst a serene ambience. The China Kitchen tantalizes with its immersive dining experience, bringing Chinese culinary traditions to life. Viet: nom adds

lag, despite decades of political promises. The narrative exposes the complexity of Bihar's socio-political fabric.

While leaders tout progress, caste-driven politics remain entrenched. Migration continues, disillusioning locals with governance. Jha's storytelling captures the essence of Bihar's electoral fervour, where political discourse blends with everyday life. Amidst discussions over leaders, the grassroots yearns for tangible change. The article's depth extends beyond politics, delving into healthcare woes. The anecdote of the patient's struggle highlights systemic failures, contrasting with Bihar's rich cultural tapestry. Ultimately, Jha's piece is a poignant portrayal of Bihar's struggles and resilience. It underscores the urgent need for holistic development and the preservation of its cultural heritage amidst the political clamour

Vishal Kumar | Delhi

a modern flair to Vietnamese classics, while L'Opéra delights with French finesse, especially with its seasonal mango collection. Café Delhi Heights, ever-evolving, captures the essence of Delhi's vibrancy through its diverse offerings.

The must-try dishes read like poetry, each a symphony of flavours designed to tantalize taste buds. From crispy sweet potato skins to succulent Peking duck, from vibrant summer rolls to creamy Alfredo pasta, there's something to suit every palate. Akanksha Dean's culinary journey adds a personal touch, showcasing a deep passion for food and an impressive resume. Her influence undoubtedly enhances the richness of each dining experience. As a regular newspaper reader, these culinary adventures beckon, promising not just a meal but a story to savour, making the dining experience more than just a necessity but a delightful escape.

Sneha Patel | Ahmedabad

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FIRSTCOLUMN THE POWER OF THE HUMAN MIND

Settle your mind and clear accumulated dust, only then it gets purged



RAVI VALLURI

eons ago lived, Suddhodana, chieftain of the Sakyan republics. He was captivated with the thought of perpetuating the dynasty. However, his battle fatigued son Siddhartha, was not ensnared by the Mara of trappings of power, carnal pleasures and a family life.

Siddhartha eschewed violence, cast away royal clothing and adorned ochre robes in search of the quintessential truth and was to become Buddha after intense tapas. Upon attaining enlightenment, the Compassionate One dissected the bewildering characteristics of the human mind. He was soon to quantify in a plain sailing manner, "We are what we think and our thoughts shape our lives."

The human mind is not resplendent with ennobling thoughts if the prana levels are low. The prana level increases (through yoga, pranayama, meditation and Sudarshan Kriya) and at that moment an individual realises the magnetic potential of the human mind.

Once there was a Good Samaritan, Sudhakar. He happened to read the maiden effort of a civil servant called the Magic of the Mind. This gentleman, with trepidation, became a 'Facebook friend' of the mandarin and persuaded him to be interviewed by a few T.V. channels.

However, the thought process of the public functionary- who was a recovered alcoholic- doubted the sincerity of the Facebook friend. In disgust, he 'blocked' and then 'unblocked' the gentleman, perhaps more to quell the pangs of his own conscience. Finally in sheer vexation he gave in to the entreaties of the 'Facebook friend'. Soon an amazing pattern emerged and the administrator was invited by several media houses and estimable institutions to deliver lectures as to how he combated and conquered the battle against the bottle. Only much later did he realise that Sudhakar had lost some close relatives to the perils of alcoholism



The autarchic mind of the bureaucrat was ossified and looking at life through the prism of tunnel vision. One day, after a series of interviews, the functionary received a distress call from a lady, who had happened to listen to one of his interviews and was also reading the book penned by the bureaucrat, which captured his triumph over alcoholism.

On receiving the call, he could empathise with the woman's husband who was fighting a grim battle against alcoholism. There was a sudden transmutation in the mind of the public servant and went on to guide the husband on how to attain sobriety.

Challenges loom ahead of July Union Budget



analys \$ 07

SHIVAJI SARKAR

The incoming Government would face the uphill task of navigating through a myriad of fiscal hurdles to foster sustainable growth



espite it being too early to discuss the union budget to be presented in July, it is cer-tain whichever combination comes back to power it would have to majorly review the February interim budget given the

debates generated during elections. The election is veering around more on economic issues than the religion or Ram temple, though in certain regions these remain a potent issue and so the brands Narendra Modi and Yogi Adityanath. A larger section is concerned with the core economy, unemployment, farmers' issues, irrationally high prices, medical and health care costs, school and university fees, shooting costs of houses, high toll-jacked inflation and similar other issues.

Even showcasing of Indian economy as the fifth largest economy is not being accepted by a large section as reality. The farmers and citizens wonder while cars and tractors are allowed to run for 40 ears like aircraft across the world, why a pro-people Government should be in a hurry to send these to junkyards in India, particularly when household debts are skyrocketing. The rural wisdom calls it weird and tries to locate the linkages of Government functionaries with the car makers. Questions are also raised on the Rs 16.87 lakh crore debt repayment in the 2024-25 budget. This effectively cuts the actual budget of Rs 47.65 lakh crore to about Rs 31 lakh crore. The repayment burden in 2025 is slated to be higher. The opposition's sharp angling on core economic issues is being rebutted by the ruling combine by charging that if the opposition gets to power it would sell "mangalsutras" and delve into divisive politics. The Election Commission has issued warnings to the ruling party for its wry comments. Low voting in 190 constituencies in major States like UP, Bihar and Maharashtra raises concern among all parties. The voter is apathetic despite

many moves by the Election Commission. Is that a reflection on governance?

This has not put the issues on the back burner. According to RBI, inflation rises at 5.5 per cent a year and has shot beyond 55 per cent in compounded terms caus-ing a huge rise in prices. Nobody has got such a raise in their salaries, not even Government employees.

The new Government would have to take drastic steps to bring down the prices of edible oil, food grains, vegetables, potatoes and onions as well as school fees and expensive health care, milk and other commodities. People are unwilling to buy the argument that inflation is built into the system. They rather equate it with corporate electoral bond doles to parties. The Government accepts the petrol

THE NEW

GOVERNMENT

TAKE DRASTIC

DOWN THE

PRICES OF

WOULD HAVE TO

STEPS TO BRING

ate drastic changes and reorient policies. The major reason for joblessness is attributed to ad hoc decisions. Such constructions erode Government finance and build little assets. Southeast Asia tried it in the late 1990s and got into trouble in 1997. It would be wise on the part of the new Government to revive PSUs and ask the private sector to compete with them. It would create jobs, add to the national economy and create a fair playground

A new Government has to initi-

People question the rationale of parting a part of Indian Oil to a private giant or giving out ports to private players. At least one such port has become notorious for being a smugglers' den. The universities, IITs and Government institutions have

been given a mandate to raise

tuition fees every year. The pri-

says that the global slowdown is on. However India projects its march to a \$5 trillion economy and it is not easy. The West has become more protectionist and keen on imposing a carbon tax. The West needs to protect its bread.

Lower productivity can result in reduced job creation within the manufacturing sector, leading to unemployment or underemploy-ment. The International Labour Organisation finds low pay and

wages as serious challenges. When productivity declines, the incentives for firms to invest in research and development or adopt new technologies diminish, leading to a slower pace in the manufacturing sector. However, the challenge of rising household debt and falling savings could weigh on long-term growth sustainability.

The FDI flow is low at \$ 17.96 billion. Despite a supposed buzzing market, it has not risen much. The new Government also has the challenge to cut personal income-tax rates from 39 per cent to 22 per cent in tune with the corporate tax. High taxation hits the purchasing capacity and concomitant market problems. In short, the new Government has to stress issues regarding taxes, education, health, livelihood, low tolls and better deal with farmers. Both manifestos of the BJP and Congress speak of too many doles and caste-related benefits. If the Government can address the basic issues and make it one of the most affordable economies, India's journey will be smooth. It is a dream, if comes true it will be the most liveable country

Realisation and awareness are two iconic qualities that shine the light on the amazing power of the human mind. Several centuries ago, Gautama Buddha was travelling with a group of disciples. The Compassionate One felt thirsty and desired some water to quench his thirst. He asked a disciple to fetch some water from a nearby lake. The enthusiastic disciple rushed to the lake but was horrified to find the water turgid as a farmer had just crossed the lake on his bullock cart.

He returned back remorsefully as he could not fulfil the wish of the holy Master. Buddha sent the disciple a couple of times to fetch water to quench his thirst. But to the dismay of the tutee on each occasion the water remained dirty and turgid. While the devotees were fidgety and distraught, Buddha remained patient. Eventually, the devotee animatedly brought fresh water from the lake and offered it.

Buddha smiled and drank the water. He was to say, "You did nothing. The mud settled down and the water was purged of the impurities. Let your mind settle all the dust accumulated over a period of time." This is the amazing power of the human mind. Just let it settle down.

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

rices are high, cut it by Rs 2 just EDIBLE OIL, before the polls. It has no impact on the voters' psyche. FOOD GRAINS,

The voter is not happy with the so-called demonstrative develop-VEGETABLES, ments like demolition and con-POTATOES AND struction of large office buildings, rail stations and rampant con-ONIONS, AS WELL struction of roads or metro. AS SCHOOL FEES Constructions devastate the hills Himachal, Kashmir, AND EXPENSIVE Uttarakhand and the North East. Kisans who became millionaires HEALTH CARE, overnight with the acquisition of MILK AND OTHER their land for roads are not happy about losing their livelihood. COMMODITIES Most villagers rue the roads that divide their habitats and relation-ships for a road they can't use without paying a toll. It is a serious issue because the Kisan also pays Rs 30 per litre petrol cess toll introduced with the promise of ending the toll. All these benefit bulk profiteers and the least of

vate ones nike far more. Schools and universities need financing from the Government and education costs must be cut down. Congress promises apprenticeship to every graduate. Looks good but it is not practical. The scheme has failed several times. India's overall exports fell by 8.1 per and exports to its free trade partners shrank by 18 per cent in the first half of 2023. The country's trade deficit ballooned to \$78.2 billion in the last financial year. India's export values across all commodities declined to \$351 billion during April-January from \$366 billion a year ago, underlining the impact of the global economic slowdown and tightening of interest rates in Western countries. These numbers have emerged amid India's push to sign free trade deals with the UK and the European Union. The International Monetary Fund

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

Celebrating the universal language of dance

From traditional Indian classical dance forms to contemporary global dance phenomena, dance continues to inspire, heal and unite communities

n April 14 last year, history was made in Assam, India, as a Guinness World Record was set for the largest gathering of Bihu dancers. Over 11,000 dancers from different communities and backgrounds came together to perform the traditional dance of Assam, watched live by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It was a spectacular display of cultural diversity and unity. This event was a shining example of how cultural diversity can bring people together and foster a sense of emotional bonding and appreciation of one another's culture and traditions. More recently as part of the 'Raag Seva' in a breathtaking display of timeless grace and unwavering passion, the 90-

year-old actor-dancer and



RAJDEEP PATHAK

Padma Vibhushan awardee Vyjayanthimala Bali, enchanted spectators with her ethereal Bharatanatyam performance in Ayodhya. İn this rich mosaic of human expression, dance emerges as a timeless gem, casting its spell across generations and captivating hearts through the ages. Beyond mere movement, it embodies a symphony of creativity, infusing the soul with unbridled joy. A graceful interplay of rhythm and influential figures will

and emotion, it offers solace from the burdens of modern life, intertwining threads of happiness into the fabric of existence. Welcome to the rhythm of life,

as we celebrate the 'International Dance Day' on April 29th every year, since 1982. Dance helps to change lives. The 'Navras', which is

community.

dance and extend support towards its cultivation. We are all aware of Yo-Yo Ma's 'Silk Road Ensemble', a musi-

cal group founded by the cellist Yo-Yo Ma, where musicians from China, Iran, India and Spain come together and use their music to create a bridge between cultures and proused to express joy, sadness, mote understanding between love, anger and many other people from different backemotions, is a way of celebratgrounds. Through cultural

ing life and creating a sense of collaboration, this is a forum for the exchange of ideas, tra-This Day serves as a platform dition and innovation across aimed at fostering awareness borders. regarding the intrinsic value of dance and facilitating the wide-

Also, the 'OneBeat' initiative, which brings together musispread promotion of the dance cians from around the world community's endeavours. to collaborate and create new Central to its mission is the music - was funded by the U.S. Department of State - aims to aspiration that Governments promote cultural exchange

recognize the significance of and create a global community of musicians. 'OneBeat' has brought together musicians from countries such as Syria, Russia and Cuba, to name a few, not only providing a platform for musicians to share their music but also creating new collaborations that transcend cultural and linguistic barriers. Dance also helps in promoting

intercultural dialogue. Dance companies worldwide come together to create new works that reflect their cultural traditions and explore common themes. One such example is the 'Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, which has been promoting diversity and inclusion through dance for over 60 years. The company's performances celebrate the African-American cultural

experience and explore universal themes such as love, loss and identity.

Not only this, the 'National Ballet of Cuba' is a dance company that promotes intercultural dialogue through its performances. Founded in 1948 by Alicia Alonso, one of the most famous ballerinas of the 20th century, it is known for its unique style that combines elements of classical ballet with Afro-Cuban and

Spanish dance traditions. Back in India, 'The Kalakshetra Foundation, - of the many foundations and institutions that exist to popularize Indian classical dance forms - Chennai-based dance school, founded by Rukmini Devi Arundale in 1936, sought to revive and promote Indian classical dance forms and is today a leading institution that trains students in various forms of Indian classical dance, including Bharatanatyam, Kathakali and Kuchipudi.

Similarly, the 'Nrityagram Dance Village, near Bangalore, which was founded in 1990 by Protima Gauri, a renowned Indian classical dancer, is a unique institution that offers a holistic approach to dance training, focusing not only on dance techniques, but also on aspects such as yoga, meditation and Indian mythology. The institute has gained global recognition and has collaborated with many international dance companies to create new works that blend Indian classical dance with contemporary dance forms. We cannot miss Bollywood

dance, which has become a

global phenomenon and has created a platform for people from different backgrounds to come together and celebrate India's vibrant culture. Using different dance styles from Indian classical forms to ballet; to cabaret; to hip-hop, break dance and so on - each step encompasses a unique rhythm and style involving different generations tap to the beats.

As we celebrate the universal language of dance and its ability to unite people, it is also important to acknowledge the Guru-Shishya Parampara and celebrate the beauty of dance and its ability to create a better world for all.

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti: *views are personal)*



'Israel must boost more humanitarian aid for Gaza'

AP WARSA

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Monday that Israel must still do more to increase the flow of humanitarian aid into the besieged Gaza Strip and that he would use his current Middle East trip — his seventh to the region since the Israel-Hamas war started in October — to press that case with Israeli leaders.

Speaking to Gulf Cooperation Council foreign ministers in Riyadh, Blinken said best way to ease the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza would be to conclude an elusive cease-fire agreement that would release hostages held by Hamas. But, in the meantime, he said it was critical to improve conditions now. "The most effective way to address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, to alleviate the suffering of children, women and men, and to create space for a more just and durable solu-

tion is to get a cease-fire and the hostages out," he said.

"But we're also not waiting on a cease-fire to take the necessary steps to meet the needs of civilians in Gaza," Blinken said. He said that because President Joe Biden do more, including in his phone call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday, there

had been improvements, although not nearly enough. 'We have seen measurable progress in the last few weeks, including the opening of new crossings and increased volume of aid delivery to Gaza and within Gaza, and the building of the US maritime corridor, which will open in the coming weeks. But it is not enough. We still need to get more aid in and around Gaza," he said. 'We need to improve deconfliction with humanitarian assistance workers. And we have to find greater efficiency and greater safety and



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is welcomed by Saudi Foreign Ministry Director of Protocol Affairs Mohammed Al-Ghamdi as he arrives in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia Monday. AP/PTI

Yousaf resigns as Scottish First Minister

deconfliction is at the heart of that. And, finally we have to make sure that we're focusing not just on inputs, but on impact.

Scores of relief workers have been killed since the conflict began, and a deadly Israeli attack on a World Central Kitchen aid convoy in Gaza this month only highlighted the dangers and difficulties of protecting them. Israel has said the strike was a mistake and has disciplined officials involved.

World Central Kitchen says it would resume operations in Gaza on Monday after a four-

week suspension. The war has ground on since Hamas' deadly Oct 7 attacks on Israel with little end in sight: more than 34,000 Palestinians have been killed, hundreds of thousands more are displaced and a humanitarian crisis in Gaza is worsening.

The conflict has fuelled mass protests around the world that have spread to American college campuses. US support for Israel, particularly arms transfers, has come under particular criticism, something the administration is keenly aware poses potential problems for Biden in an election year.

Blinken's trip comes amid renewed concerns about the conflict spreading in the Middle East and with oncepromising prospects for İsraeli-Saudi rapprochement effectively on hold as Israel refuses to consider one of the Saudis' main conditions for normalised relations: the creation of a Palestinian state. Meanwhile, the Biden administration has been warning Israel against a major military operation on the southern Gaza city of Rafah, where more than a million Palestinians have fled to escape fighting further north. Israel has not yet launched such an offensive, but Netanyahu has repeatedly said that one will take

place, asserting that it is the

Israeli officials

only way to wipe out Hamas Both topics were discussed during the Biden-Netanyahu phone call on Sunday, according to the White House and US officials.

world 08

During his trip, Blinken said he would also underscore the absolute importance of not allowing the Israel-Hamas conflict to engulf the region.

The danger of conflagration was underscored this month when a suspected Israeli attack on an Iranian consular building in Syria prompted an unprecedented direct missile and drone response by Iran against Israel. An apparent retaliatory Israeli strike on Iran followed.

Although the tit-for-tat cycle appears to have ended for now, deep concerns remain that Iran or its proxies in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria or Yemen could act in such a way as to provoke a greater response from Israel or that Israel might take action that Iran feels it must retaliate for.

Netanyahu

hold talks

Tel Aviv (AP): The White House on Sunday said US President Joe Biden had again

spoken with Israeli Prime

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

as pressure builds on Israel and

Hamas to reach a deal that

would free some Israeli

hostages and bring a cease-fire

in the nearly seven-month-

The White House said that

Biden reiterated his "clear

position" as Israel plans to

invade Gaza's southernmost

city of Rafah despite global

concern for more than 1 mil-

lion Palestinians sheltering

The US opposes the invasion

on humanitarian grounds,

straining relations between

the allies. Israel is among the

countries U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will visit as he returns to the Middle

Biden also stressed that progress in delivery of human-

East on Monday.

tained and enhanced

long war in Gaza.

there.

UK's new laws to keep smart devices secure over internet

PTI LONDON

ll internet connected smart Adevices will be required to meet minimum security standards under what the UK government has dubbed as "world first" laws, effective from Monday to protect consumers and businesses from hacking and cyberattacks.

Under the new regime, manufacturers will be banned from having weak, easily guessable default passwords like "admin" or "12345" and if there is a common password, the user will be prompted to change it on startup. An investigation conducted by the Which? consumer group found that a UK home filled with smart devices could be exposed to more than 12,000 hacking attacks from across the world in a single week, with a total of 2,684 attempts to guess weak default passwords on just five devices. "From today, consumers will have greater peace of mind that

their smart devices are protected from cyber criminals, as we introduce world first laws that will make sure their personal privacy, data and finances are safe," said UK Minister for Cyber Viscount Camrose, Jonathan Berry. The UK's Department for Science, Innovation and Technology said under the new legal requirement, manufactur-

ers must protect consumers from hackers and cyber criminals from accessing devices with internet or network connectivity – from smartphones to games consoles and connected fridges. It said the new laws are part of the British government's GBP 2.6-billion National Cyber Strategy to protect and promote Britain online. "Our pledge to establish the UK as the global standard for online safety takes a big step forward with these regulations, moving us closer to our goal of a digitally secure future," said UK Data and Digital Infrastructure

Minister Julia Lopez.

continue in office

priorities.

Spain's PM Sánchez to

Humza Yousaf, the Pakistani-origin Scottish National Party leader who heads the devolved government in Scotland, announced his resignation on Monday, after days of political turmoil for the devolved SNP-led gov-

PTI 🗖 LONDON

ernment. Yousaf, 39, took over as Scotland's first Muslim and also the region's youngest First Minister in March last vear.

Last week, he ended a powersharing agreement with the Scottish Green Party amid growing policy differences and plunged his leadership of a minority government into crisis. His former Green Party allies then teamed up with the Opposition Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties to back two non-confidence motions - one in Yousaf's leadership of Scotland and the second regarding the Scottish government as a whole. "While a route through this week's motion of no confi-



dence was absolutely possible, I am not willing to trade my values and principles or do deals with whomever simply for retaining power," said Yousaf.

Therefore, after spending the weekend reflecting on what is best for my party, for the government and for the country I lead I have conclud-

one else at the helm," he said. In his speech delivered at Bute House in Edinburgh, he noted on an emotional note: "I am sad that my time as First Minister is ending, but I am so grateful, I am so blessed, for having the opportunity that are afforded to so few to lead my country and who could ask for a better country to lead than Scotland." Yousaf, of Pakistani and Kenyan her-itage, paid tribute to the UK's diversity and also referenced Rishi Sunak as Britain's first Hindu prime minister in his resignation speech. He added: "People who

looked like me were not in positions of political influence, let alone leading governments, when I was younger. We now live in a UK that has a British Hindu Prime Minister (Sunak), a Muslim Mayor of London (Sadiq Khan), a black Welsh First Minister (Vaughan Gething), and for a little while longer a Scottish Asian First Minister

ed that repairing our relation-ship across the political divide can only be done with someism has failed across the UK, I would suggest that the evidence is quite to the contrary and that is something we should all celebrate." Yousaf will remain in his post until a replacement First Minister is chosen in the Scottish Parliament, Holyrood. It marks a time of upheaval for the pro-independence SNP even though the outgoing leader claimed Scottish inde pendence "feels frustratingly close"." The last few miles of the marathon are always the hardest and we have run this race as a team and will now prepare to pass the baton to a successor who I am absolutely certain will lead us over the finish line," he said.

The Opposition parties welcomed his resignation, with the Scottish Tories saying Yousaf had averted a "humiliating defeat" at a vote of no confidence later this week and the Labour Party demanding a UK-wide general election soon for a "fresh start" across the country.

concerned over ICC arrest warrants Truce: Biden, AP JERUSALEM

Israeli officials on Monday appeared to be increasingly concerned that the International Criminal Court may issue arrest warrants against the country's leaders, as international pressure mounts over its war with Hamas

in the Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, Israeli airstrikes on the southern Gaza city of Rafah overnight and into Monday killed at least 22 people, including six women and five children one of whom was just 5 days old, according to hospital records and an Associated Press reporter. The ICC launched a probe

three years ago into possible war crimes committed by Israel and Palestinian militants going back to the 2014 Israel-Hamas war but it has given no indication such warrants are imminent. There was no comment from the court on Monday.

Israel's Foreign Ministry said late Sunday that it had informed Israeli missions of "rumours" that warrants might be issued against senior political and mil-itary officials. It was not clear what sparked the Israeli con-cerns. "We expect the court to prevent the issuance of arrest warrants against senior Israeli officials," Foreign Minister Israel Katz said, adding that such

At least 40 die in Kenya after dam collapses

AP NAIROBI

AP MADRID

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez on Monday ended days of speculation about his future by saying he will continue in office "with even more strength."

Sánchez shocked his country last Wednesday by taking five days off to think about his future, following the decision by a court to open preliminary proceedings against his wife on corruption allegations."I have decided to continue on with even more strength at the helm of the government of Spain," he said in a televised speech after informing King Felipe VI of the decision earlier Monday His resignation would have deprived Europe of a prominent Socialist prime minister ahead of European elections in June and at a time when the center right increasingly holds sway. "It is a decision that does not

mean a return to the status quo,

this will mark a before and after, I promise you that," Sánchez The group, Manos Limpias, or "Clean Hands," acknowledged said, without detailing what that the complaint was based on steps he could take to curtail newspaper articles. Spanish prosecutors say it should be "the smear campaign" he says he and his family is facing. thrown out. The expectation Monday was The eurozone's fourth-largest

such that Spain's state broadeconomy had been in suspense caster had put up a 10-minute countdown clock before his since Sánchez, prime minister since 2018, posted an emotional letter on X on Wednesday announcement on the screen before he holed up in his during their morning news Moncloa Palace, the prime minister's residence in Madrid. talk show

Speaking from the steps of Moncloa Palace, Sánchez said In it it he said the moves that he and his wife "know that against wife were too personal an attack on his family and he this campaign to discredit them won't stop" but that he has needed time to decide on his decided that he couldn't give his In that letter, where he declared adversaries the satisfaction of

giving up. Rallies by his supporters over himself "deeply in love" with wife Begoña Gómez, he said the past few days played a part that he could no longer just in his decision, he said. stand aside and watch her being Essentially Sánchez had four targeted by a legal probe brought by allegations by a right-wing platform that options: resign, seek a parlia mentary vote of confidence, call a new election or remain in accused her of using her position to influence business deals. office.

dam collapsed in western Adam compset in western Kenya early Monday, killing at least 40 people after a wall of water swept through houses and cut off a major

road, police said. The Old Kijabe Dam, located in the Mai Mahiu area of the Great Rift Valley region that is prone to flash floods, collapsed and water spilled downstream, carrying with it mud, rocks and uprooted trees, police official Stephen Kirui told The Associated Press.

Vehicles were entangled in the debris on one of Kenya's busiest highways and para-medics treated the injured as waters submerged large areas. Ongoing rains in Kenya have caused flooding that has already killed nearly 100 people and postponed the opening of schools. Heavy rains have been pounding the country since mid-March and the Meteorology Department has



warned of more rainfall. Kenya's Interior Minister Kithure Kindiki ordered the inspection of all public and private dams and water reservoirs within 24 hours starting Monday afternoon to avert future incidents. The ministry said recommendations for evacuations and resettlement would be done after the inspection. The Kenya National Highways

Authority issued an alert warning motorists to brace for heavy traffic and debris that blocked the roads around Naivasha and Narok, west of the capital, Nairobi.

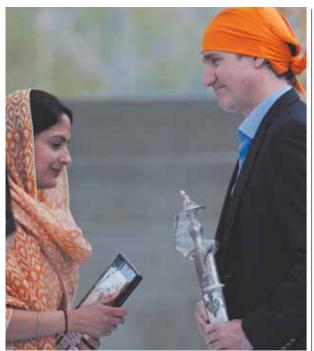
The wider East African region is experiencing flooding due to the heavy rains, and 155 people have reportedly died in Tanzania while more than 200,000 people affected in neighbouring Burundi.

warrants would "provide a morale boost" to Hamas and other militant groups.

A series of Israeli announcements in recent days about allowing more humanitarian aid into Gaza meanwhile appears to be aimed in part at heading off possible ICC action. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Friday that Israel "will never accept any attempt by the ICC to undermine its inherent right of selfdefence.""The threat to seize the soldiers and officials of the Middle East's only democracy and the world's only Jewish state is outrageous. We will not bow to it," he posted on X, formerly known as Twitter. It was not clear what prompted the post. The ICC investigation covers allegations going back to the 2014 war in Gaza as well as

Israel's construction of Jewish hostages But in a sign of frustration, Oatar this month said that it

was reassessing its role.



Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, right, reacts after receiving a ceremonial talwar as a special gift from the Ontario Sikhs and Gurudwara Council after speaking during Khalsa day celebrations at City Hall in Toronto, Sunday AP/PTI

Top Chinese scientist expelled over corruption allegations

of state-owned Sinopharm

vaccine, China's first coron-

avirus shot approved for gen-

pandemic of the century and

According to a statement by

NPC, Yang is already being

investigated by the party dis-

Commission for Discipline

The Sinopharm shot and

Sinovac Biotech's CoronaVac

were the most widely used in

China and the leading

claiming millions of lives.

eral use.

Inspection.

AP BEIJING

hina's top scientist, who Undeveloped the first inac-tivated COVID-19 vaccine at the height of the pandemic in the country in 2020, has been dismissed from Parliament for alleged corruption. Yang Xiaoming, the chairman China

of China National Pharmaceutical Group's vac-cine subsidiary China National Biotec Group (CNBG), has been stripped of his membership in the National People's Congress (NPC) due to serious disci-pline and law violations, official media reported here on Monday.

The charge of serious discipline and law violations is a common euphemism for corruption under the ruling Communist Party of China

COVID-19 vaccines exported (CPC) disciplinary practice. Yang, 62, is a veteran researcher who headed the by the country. Yang's dismissal comes amid

CNBG - a vaccine subsidiary the biggest crackdown on China's healthcare system, and led a team that developed Sinopharm's BBIBP-CorV expanding a sweeping anti-corruption drive launched by President Xi Jinping in the last few years The crackdown aims to root

Coronavirus first surfaced in out widespread corruption in the Chinese city of Wuhan in a system plagued by kick-March 2020 and later spread backs. to the world, becoming the

It targets hospitals, drug com-panies and insurance funds, with dozens of hospital chiefs detained since last year, Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported. Another former Sinopharm senior executive, Zhou Bin, ciplinary body - the Central who once served as the company's deputy general manager, was placed under investi-

gation by the CCDI in

January.

Solomon Islands pro-Beijing PM won't keep his job following polls

AP MELBOURNE

Solomon Islands pro-Beijing Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare on Monday withdrew from the contest to remain head of the strategically important South Pacific island nation's government following general elections two weeks ago that are central to the US-China

rivalry in the region. Sogavare has been reelected to the parliament. But he told a press conference in the capital Honiara on Monday he would not be nominated as a candidate when the 50 newly elected lawmakers vote on Thursday for the prime minister, Australian Broadcasting Corp reported. Sogavare had hoped to become the first than any other party. The

Solomons prime minister to maintain power in consecutive four-year terms follow-ing the April 17 election.

During his previous term, China's influence increased more in the Solomons than anywhere else in the South Pacific. Sogavare switched diplomatic allegiances from Taiwan to Beijing and struck a secret security pact that has raised fears of the Chinese navy gaining a foothold in the region. Sogavare said in his press conference he had been "vilified by media" and his family had been subjected to "unprecedented abuse," the ABC reported. Sogavare's Ownership, Unity and Responsibility Party, known as the Our Party, won 15 seats in the election, more

party's candidate to become prime minister will be Foreign Minister Jeremiah Manele.

A prime minister needs the support of at least 26 lawmakers in the 50-seat chamber.Observers expect China to have secretly backed more candidates than Sogavare at the election in a bid to ensure the government change does not diminish Beijing's influence. Sogavare could again return to power during the current four-year term. He was elected prime minister after the last election in 2019.

But he has served as orime minister three times before 2019 because his predecessors had quit or were ousted by fellow lawmakers in a precarious political system.

settlements in occupied territory that the Palestinians want for a future state.

itarian aid to Gaza be "susing to the statement.

The call lasted just under an hour, and they agreed the onus remains on Hamas to accept the latest offer in nego-tiations, according to a U.S official who spoke on condition of anonymity because the official wasn't authorized to comment publicly.

There was no comment from Netanyahu's office.A senior official from key intermediary Qatar, meanwhile, urged Israel and Hamas to show "more commitment and more seriousness" in negotiations.

Qatar, which hosts Hamas' headquarters in Doha, was instrumental along with the US and Egypt in helping negotiate a brief halt to the fight-ing in November that led to the release of dozens of



world 09

led the finance ministry from

2013 to 2017 and then from 2022 to 2023. He has also

served the country as minister

for industry and investment

from February 1997 to July

1997 as well as commerce from

December 1997 to October

S Korea's opp leader urges prez to accept probe against wife, officials

AP SEOUL

 $E^{mboldened\ by\ his\ party's}_{recent\ election\ win,\ South}$ Korea's opposition leader pressured President Yoon Suk Yeol to accept special investigations into allegations involving top officials and his wife, as they met Monday for talks on bipartisan cooperation.

The meeting was their first since Yoon took office in 2022 after defeating Lee Jae-myung in the country's closest presidential election race. During their 2022 campaigns, Yoon, Lee and their supporters demonised each other and filed dozens of lawsuits against one another.

Yoon proposed the meeting as he faces growing calls to coop-erate with Lee's Democratic Party, whose victory in the April 10 parliamentary election allows it to extend its control of the single-chamber National Assembly until after Yoon's single five-year term ends in 2027

In his lengthy opening remarks, Lee said the election results mean "the people's stern demand for correcting wrong government administrations addressing economic troubles and restoring democratic rules. Lee urged Yoon to accept independent probes into the 2022 Halloween crush in Seoul that killed 159 people, and the 2023 death of a marine who drowned during a search-andrescue operation for flood victims. Lee's party has accused Yoon of ignoring public demands and retaining top officials and military commanders responsible for the deadly incidents.

Lee also asked Yoon to resolve "diverse suspicions involving his family" that "poses a big burden on government operations." That was apparently a reference to first lady Kim Keon Hee, who faces an allegation of involvement in a stock price manipulation and other scandals. "I'd say it would be good for you, as president, to respect the National Assembly and consider the opposition party as a partner for govern-

ment operations," Lee said. While listening to Lee's statement, Yoon nodded several times and said he had expected Lee to make such comments



South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, right, shakes hands with main opposition Democratic Party leader Lee Jae-myung during a meeting at the presidential office in Seoul South Korea. Monday, AP

direct communication with

Yoon would still be meaning-

ful. No agreement was reached,

but Yoon's office said the pres-

date for their next meeting.

In one positive news for bipar

Yoon that his party would sup-

stakes push to increase medical

tors say they can't accept any

Yoon has said South Korea

it has one of the world's most

increase in students.

but didn't elaborate. In a briefing after the meeting, senior presidential adviser Lee

Do-woon said that Yoon told Lee that he won't oppose a special law to investigate the Halloween deaths but noted some potential legal concerns over an ad-hoc investigation committee. He didn't mention Yoon's responses to demands for other probes.

During the meeting, Lee also asked Yoon to accept his contentious idea of the government giving 250,000 won (about USD 180) to all South Koreans as a way to boost the economy, a step that Yoon's party has called a populist measure. Lee Do-woon, the presidential adviser, said Yoon said that he prefers selectively supporting those in need.

In a separate briefing, Democratic Party spokesperson Park Sung-joon accused Yoon of lacking the resolve to revive public livelihoods. Park cited Lee as suggesting he was disappointed at the meeting's

results though the start of can't deal with a too steep increase in students, but critics say they simply worry the supply of more doctors would eventually result in lowering ident and Lee agreed to meet their income.

The parliamentary election was frequently without setting a seen as a litmus test of Yoon who has been struggling with tisan cooperation, Lee told low approval rating and an opposition-controlled parliaport the government's highment that has limited his policy agenda since his inauguraschool students, which prompttion. Critics say the election defeat was largely attributable ed thousands of young doctors to walk out of the job in February. The government to the government's failure to suppress rising prices and other economic problems and Yoon's recently suggested it's open to halving its target medical personal management and school enrollment increase to leadership styles. 1,000 per year from the previ-ously proposed 2,000, but doc-

Despite the election defeat Yoon's major foreign policy agendas will likely remain unchanged as they mostly don't require parliamentary endorseneeds to create more doctors as ments. Yoon has pushed hard to boost trilateral cooperation with the United States and rapidly aging populations and Japan to cope with North Korea's evolving nuclear threats and other challenges. its doctors-to-patient ratio is among the lowest in advanced economies. Doctors say schools

Dar's surprise elevation as deputy PM a 'pre-planned' move: Report

PTI 📕 ISI AMABAD

The surprise elevation of Pakistan Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar — a close confidant of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif — as the deputy prime minister was in reality "pre-planned" and is reportedly a move to "compensate" the PML-N supremo for the loss of the finance portfolio, it emerged on Monday.

Dar, 73, a chartered accountant and a veteran politician from the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party, was appointed as deputy prime minister by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday "with immediate effect and until further orders" Shehbaz Sharif and Dar are cur-

rently in Saudi Arabia for the World Economic Forum's (WEF) special meeting. According to the Dawn newspaper, Dar's new appointment took many by surprise, but drew hardly any criticism from its allies". Dar being "awarded"

4 suspects involved in Chinese engineers' killings arrested

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan authorities claimed on Monday that they have arrested four suspects involved in the killing of Chinese engineers in a dead ly terrorist attack last month. Five Chinese nationals and a Pakistani driver were killed in the attack on March 26 when a vehicle-borne suicide bomber targeted a convoy escorting Chinese engineers in the remote Besham area of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province. No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack, but officials said that the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was involved in the attack. The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province said that a probe by a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) exposed the network of terror ists, claiming that the "key actors" of the network involved in the attack have been identified. "Four accused have been arrested ... efforts are underway to capture the entire network. the CTD Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa said in a statement.

the "rarely filled" slot of deputy prime minister has raised many

questions, the report said. The main talking point is that PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif wants to have his "confidant" in a key position in the federal cabinet to "compensate him for the loss of the finance portfolio", it said.

The move was also seen in the context of Nawaz Sharif taking over the reins of the ruling PML-N party as its president, a position he had lost following his conviction in the Panama Papers case, the report said. Dar is considered close to Nawaz Sharif due to matrimonial links between the two families, as his son is the son-in-law of the elder Sharif.

An insider claimed that the move to appoint Dar as deputy prime minister was "pre-planned", the report said. At the time of the formation of the coalition government, it was decided that Dar would become the Deputy Prime Minister.

ramped-up role for economics

in the nation's diplomacy as the

cash-strapped country tries to

secure another International

Monetary Fund (IMF) Deal

and shore up external financing

Dar served as finance minister from 1998 to 1999, then from March to May 2008. He again

from foreign capitals.

1999. According to the Dawn report, when Nawaz Sharif was the prime minister, Dar was acting as the de facto deputy prime minister, heading dozens of government and parliamentary committees as its chairper-However, according to a Geo son. Although there is no pro-News report, the appointment of a four-time finance minister as foreign minister suggested a

vision for a deputy prime minister in the Constitution, Dar is the second lawmaker to hold the post. Chaudhry Parvez Elahi served as Deputy Prime Minister when the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was in power from June 25, 2012, to June 29, 2013. His role at that time was mostly symbolic as he was rewarded by then-President Asif Ali Zardari for supporting the PPP-led government.

News. According to the state-

run PTV News post on X, this

was the first meeting between

the prime minister and

Georgieva since his re-election

last month. They last met in

Paris in June 2023 on the mar-

gins of the Summit for New

The IMF Executive Board is

expected to meet on Monday to

decide on the final tranche of

USD 1.1 billion under SBA, the post said. IMF chief Georgieva

appreciated the leadership of

Sharif for timely securing SBA

last year, according to the state-

During the meeting, the prime

minister said that he had

directed his financial team to

carry out structural reforms,

ensure strict fiscal discipline

ment.

Global Financial Pact.

Pak Sharif discusses new Ioan programme with IMF chief

PTI ISLAMABAD

 $P_{\mathrm{Shehbaz}}^{\mathrm{akistan}}$ Prime Minister IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva and discussed a new loan programme for the cash-strapped country to put the economy back on track.

In a meeting on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Special Meeting in Riyadh, the premier thanked Georgieva, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director, for her support to Pakistan in securing the USD 3 billion standby arrangement (SBA) from IMF last year that was now nearing its completion.

Pakistan secured the USD 3 billion IMF programme in June last year, which helped it avert a sovereign default. Pakistan is seeking a new long-term Extended Fund Facility (EFF) after the current SBA expires this month.

"Both sides also discussed Pakistan entering into another IMF program to ensure that the

gains made in the past year were consolidated and its economic growth trajectory remained positive," according to a statement issued by the PM Office on Sunday

Sharif reiterated his government's commitment to put Pakistan's economy back on track. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has said Islamabad could secure a staff-level agreement on the new programme by early July. Islamabad says it is seeking a loan over at least three years to help achieve macroeconomic stability and execute long-overdue and painful structural reforms, though Aurangzeb has declined to detail what size of the programme the country seeks. If secured, it would be Pakistan's 24th IMF bailout. The USD 350 billion economy

faces a chronic balance of payments crisis, with nearly USD 24 billion to repay in debt and interest over the next fiscal year - three times more than its central bank's foreign curren-

cy reserves, according to Geo

and pursue prudent policies that would ensure macro-economic stability and sustained economic growth. The IMF MD shared her institution's perspective on the ongoing programme with the premier, including the review

Attack in Russia's Indonesian, Singaporean North Caucasus for not being quicker to help Ukraine leaders hold annual talks, leaves 2 cops, 5 gunmen dead AP KYIV

Ukraine's army chief said recent weeks edged forward, Sunday The Russian Defense especially in the Donetsk

NATO's chief chides alliance countries | Thailand FM resigns after being dropped as deputy prime minister

process

joined by successors

AP BOGOR

Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Indonesian President Joko Widodo on Monday celebrated the countries' continued cooperation at their seventh and final Leaders' Retreat in Jakarta, an annual meeting between the two Southeast Asian leaders that was also attended this year by their successors

Lee's visit to Indonesia is one of his last working trips before he hands over the reins of his administration to a new leader. The eldest son of Singaporean founding father Lee Kuan Yew announced his resignation earlier this month after two decades at the helm. His deputy prime minister and finance minister, Lawrence Wong, will succeed him in May

Widodo, Indonesia's first president from outside the traditional Jakarta elite who is widely known by the nickname Jokowi, will be succeeded by Prabowo Subianto, who takes office in October

All four top officials met Monday at the colonial-style Presidential Palace in Bogor, just outside Jakarta, as the retreat became a passing of the

guard for both countries. "I'm glad that President Jokowi and I are handing over the bilateral relationship in good state to our successors," Lee said at a joint news conference with Widodo after the meeting. "I have every confidence that Mr. Prabowo and DPM Lawrence will continue to bring the relationship to greater heights."

Singapore's Prime Minister's Office said in a statement ahead of Lee's visit that the two leaders would take stock of the significant progress made in bilateral cooperation during their tenures.

Previously, the two countries ratified three milestone agreements, including a defense cooperation agreement and

separate treaties on extradition

and airspace. The agreements were signed during the 2022 leaders' retreat and came into effect this year. shootout in the Karachay-At this year's retreat, the leaders oversaw the signing of sev-Cherkessia region late Sunday according to the regional branch of Russia's Interior eral agreements, including an update on defence cooperation which Lee said reflects the two Ministry. The Investigative Committee, the country's top countries' robust defence ties. A similar defense agreement state criminal investigation was first signed by the two countries in April 2007, but agency, said the same gunmen had raided another police didn't to go into effect after checkpoint in the region a opposition in Indonesia's week before, killing two police and injuring another. It didn't Parliament. describe the attackers' affiliation

The defence cooperation agreement will significantly boost Singapore's ability to carry out naval and military exercises amid regional tensions over China's growing military strength. The island city-state lacks mar-

itime, land and airspace to effectively train its military. Indonesia, which holds huge land and maritime areas, has agreed to let Singapore carry out naval exercises with other nations in the Bravo area of the South China Sea four times a year — terms that previously faced criticism from

Indonesian lawmakers. 'We completed these agree-

ments, and they went into force last month," Lee said. "This shows that when we work together in a spirit of friendship and openness, we can address even the most complicated issues in a pragmatic and mutually beneficial manner." Widodo said they also discussed regional and global issues.

We agreed to continue to encourage peace in the Middle East region and vowed to strengthen ASEAN centrali-Widodo said, referring to the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations. He added that Indonesia and Singapore agreed to cooperate on food security, energy transition, digital economy and healthcare.

Moscow (AP): A group of mil-TATO countries haven't N delivered what they itants attacked a police checkpromised to Ukraine in time, point in Russia's North Caucasus region, killing two the alliance's chief said Monday, allowing Russia to press its batofficers, officials said on tlefield advantage while Kyiv's Monday. Four other officers were wounded and all five depleted forces wait for attackers were killed in the Western military supplies to arrive

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said that "serious delays in support have meant serious consequences on the battlefield" for Ukraine.

"NATO allies have not delivered what they promised," Stoltenberg said at a news con-ference in Kyiv with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, referring to delays by the U.S. and Europe in sending weapons and ammunition. Ukraine's troops were has stabilized under the rule of compelled to make a tactical Kadyrov after two separatist wars, violence linked to Islamist retreat from three villages in the eastern region, where the Kremlin's forces have been ed in other parts of Russia's making incremental gains against their weaker opponent,

Ministry claimed Monday its forces had also taken the village of Semenivka. The lack of ammunition has

allowed the Russians to push forward along the front line. Lack of air defense has made it possible for more Russian missiles to hit their targets, and the lack of deep strike capabilities has made it possible for the Russians to concentrate more forces," Stoltenberg said. Ukraine and its Western partners are in a race against the clock to deploy critical new military aid that can help check the recent slow and costly but steady Russian advance across eastern areas, as well as thwart drone and missile attacks.

Zelenskyy said new Western supplies have started arriving, but slowly. "This process must be speeded up," he said. Though the 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line has shifted little since early in the war, the Kremlin's forces have in tary analysts say.

region, by sheer weight of numbers and massive firepower used to bludgeon defensive positions.

Kyiv's Western partners have repeatedly vowed to stand with Ukraine "for as long as it takes." But vital U.S. military help was held up for six months by political differences in Washington, and Europe's military hardware production has not been able to keep up with demand. Ukraine's own manufacturing of heavy weapons is only now starting to gain traction. Russia is a far bigger country than Ukraine, with greater resources to draw on. It has also received weapon support from Iran and North Korea, the U.S. government says. Drawn-out Ukrainian efforts to mobilize more troops, and the belated building of battlefield fortifications are other factors currently undermining Ukraine's war effort, mili-

Bangkok (AP): Thailand's foreign minister abruptly resigned in dissatisfaction over a Cabinet reshuffle that removed him as one of the country's deputy prime ministers. Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin on Monday confirmed the report of the resignation of Parnpree Bahiddha-Nugara, saying that he respected the decision, and that he has already started looking for a replacement.

Srettha said it was normal that some people would be upset by the reshuffle, adding that he already sent a message to Parnpree, apologising and thanking him for his work. 'For his work that has been in the good interest of the country, I believe that the new minister will continue these good efforts," he said, but did not say when the next appointee would take up the post. On Sunday, Srettha's government, which took office less than a year ago, announced its first Cabinet shuffle. Shortly afterwards, the media circulated a document said to be a letter of resignation from Parnpree, dated Sunday, indicating his dissatisfaction that he was removed from the position of deputy prime minister and only remained foreign minister.

Ministers in Thailand are allowed to hold multiple Cabinet positions, and it is common for senior ministers to also be appointed as deputy prime ministers. Srettha said that the intention behind Parnpree being dropped as deputy prime minister was to allow him to concentrate on his role as foreign minister. In an interview with the pub-lic broadcaster Thai PBS on Sunday, Parnpree said the letter was authentic but denied that he was unhappy.

China nod to Tesla cars as Musk lobbies in visit to Beijing

PTI BEIJING

or motive. While Chechnya

Moscow-backed leader Ramzan

groups has occasionally erupt-

volatile North Caucasus.

n a big relief for Tesla, its L vehicles passed the key test of compliance with China's data security rules as its billionaire CEO Elon Musk who air dashed to Beijing on Sunday met Premier Li Qiang to press for all clear approval for his cars which faced stiff competition from local rivals.

Musk's Tesla, which in recent months faced entry bans in Chinese government-affiliated buildings besides military bases due to security concerns over data leaks, "passed" the security assessment by a stateowned Chinese industrial association on Monday

The China Association of Automobile Manufacturers and the National Computer Network Emergency Response Technical Team/Coordination Centre of China on Monday published a list of 76 models of

intelligent connected vehicles that meet the country's auto data security requirements,

including those from Tesla. The list was released after security tests jointly conducted by the two organisations clearing models of local Chinese electric vehicles, including Li Auto, Lotus, Hozon New Energy Automobile, and NIO besides BYD and Tesla, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. In tests starting in November 2023, cars were assessed to see if they met four compliance requirements — the anonymisation of facial and other information from outside the car, the default non-collection of incar data, the in-car data processing, and the conspicuous notification of personal information processing.

The tests were carried out according to related laws and standards, and the carmakers submitted their models volun-

tarily, according to the association.

The association said the test aims to help regulate auto data processing, protect the rights of car users, and build a sound environment for auto data security and the industry. Significantly, Tesla was includ

ed in the list that was released as Musk air dashed to Beijing on a surprise visit and met Chinese Premier Li Qiang and other officials. This is Musk's second visit to

China which is Tesla's secondbiggest market. Built and put into operation in 2019, the Shanghai factory, Tesla's first gigafactory outside the US, delivered 947,000 vehicles last year, which was 33 per cent more than in 2022.

His visit came amid reports that Tesla car drivers in China faced entry bans in government-affiliated buildings as security concerns with the US reported.

increased

Chinese electric vehicles and its popular social media app TikTok faced restrictions and bans in the US over security and data breach concerns. Reports said Tesla vehicles faced restrictions in China in an increasing number of meeting halls and exhibition centres across the country besides military bases.

Even highway operators, local authority agencies, and cultural centres reportedly began restricting the Tesla vehicles which began impacting its sales in China.

Musk arrived in Beijing on Sunday at the invitation of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade Automobile company as Tesla has been in negotiation with the Chinese authorities about the lifting of all restrictions, the state-run China Daily

Tesla said in a statement that the endorsement of its Model 3 and Model Y vehicles assembled at the Shanghai Giga factory would lead to an easing of restrictions on its cars' access to certain statebacked entities, airports and motorways

"The result of the review will give Tesla car owners and other fans of its cars a lot of confidence in driving them on the streets of China," Chen Jinzhu, CEO of consultancy Shanghai Mingliang Auto Service, said. "Since the CAAM is a government-backed auto industry association, the review certainly will have an influence on relevant authorities' policymaking," Chen told the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post.

The endorsement also bodes well for the approval of Tesla's Full Self-Driving (FSD) system, its autonomous driving soft-

ware, in China for which Musk reportedly is lobbying. In his meeting with Musk, Premier Li said Tesla's operations in China represented a successful example of an economic tie-up between China and the US as he encouraged more cooperation between the

two countries. Musk's visit to Beijing aims to bring the Austin, Texas-based carmaker's autonomous driving technology to China amid intensified competition with local competitors in an EV market that accounts for about 60 per cent of global sales, the Post reported on Sunday.

Calling Tesla's development in China a successful example of trade cooperation between Beijing and Washington, Premier Li Qiang expressed the hope that the US will work in the same direction as China to promote the stable development of bilateral ties.

corporate travel.



BSE shares tank nearly 19 per cent

After Sebi directive on regulatory fee

PTI NEW DELHI

Shares of BSE tanked nearly 19 per cent on Monday as the exchange is expected to shell out more regulatory fee after markets watchdog Sebi asked it to pay the fee based on the "notional value" of its options contracts rather than on the premium value.

The stock plummeted 18.63 per cent to Rs 2,612.10 on the NSE.

About 103.10 lakh shares of the exchange were traded on the NSE in intra-day trade. In the broader market, the

NSE Nifty traded with a gain of 205.10 points or 0.91 per cent to 22,626.65. "BSE is hereby advised to pay

the regulatory fee based on annual turnover to Sebi considering the notional value in case of options contract, the exchange said in a filing to the National Stock Exchange (NSE) on Friday.

Also, the exchange has been asked to pay the differential regulatory fee for the past periods along with an interest of 15 per cent per annum on the remaining unpaid amount.

It has been directed to pay the amount within one month of receipt of the letter, the filing noted premium turnover, opting for notional turnover as the basis

Sebi's letter mentioned that



since the introduction of derivative contracts, BSE has been paying the regulatory fee on "annual turnover" to the regulator considering premium value for option contracts, instead of the notional value.

Notional turnover represents the overall strike price of all contracts traded in derivatives, whereas premium turnover is the sum of premiums paid on all contracts traded. As the notional value exceeds the

entails a higher fee outlay In a disclosure on Sunday, BSE said it is currently evaluating the validity of the claim as per Sebi communication. In case it is ascertained that the said amount is payable, the total differential Sebi regulatory fees for the period from FY 2006-07 to FY 2022-23 would be Rs 68.64 crore plus GST, which includes an interest of Rs 30.34 crore. Further, the differential Sebi regulatory fees for FY 2023-24, if liable, could be around Rs 96.30 crore plus GST, BSE

India Inc revenue growth weakest since September 2021: Crisil Report

PTI MUMBA

India Inc is likely to log 4-6 per cent revenue growth in the January-March quarter of 2023-24, marking the slowest quarterly growth since recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic which began in September 2021, said a Crisil report.

The report is based on an analysis of 350 companies which exclude financial services and oil and gas sectors firms.

PTI NEW DELHI

The escalating geopolitical tension may have implications for the country's

exports in the first quarter of

2024-25 as it is likely to

impact global demand, apex

The global uncertainties

caused by continuing war

between Russia and Ukraine

has impacted India's outbound shipments in 2023-

24, which recorded a decline

of 3.11 per cent to USD 437

billion. Imports too dipped by over 8 per cent to USD

"If the global situation

continues to be like this, it

would impact global demand.

In the first quarter numbers, the demand slowdown may be visible," FIEO Director

677.24 billion.

exporters body FIEO said.

The moderation follows stronger growth in previous years, the report said, adding among the 47 sectors



growth both sequentially and monitored by CRISIL, only 12 are expected to have clocked on-year for the quarter." an improvement in revenue Consumer discretionary

products and services are expected to have led the show the January-March in quarter.

discretionary Among products, the automobiles sector was steered by healthy growth in passenger vehicles on the back of higher volumes and price hikes in the past year. The organised retail sector,

the report said, grew for the thirteenth quarter in a row, on healthy urban demand.

Discretionary services, such airlines and hotels benefited from MICE (meetings, incentives,

subvention support," Sahai

He asked for continuation of

interest equalisation scheme.

On December 8, 2023, the

Union Cabinet approved an additional allocation of Rs

continuation of the scheme

The scheme helps exporters

from identified sectors and

all MSME manufacturer

exporters to avail of rupee export credit at competitive

rates at a time when the

global economy is facing

headwinds. Exporters get

subsidies under the 'Interest Equalisation Scheme for pre-and post-shipment rupee

enhanced to 3 per cent and five per cent," he said.

He added that technology

and knowledge-based sectors

like electronics, electricals,

telecommunication,

machinery, auto, pharma,

medicine and diagnostics would help achieve USD one

labour intensive sectors like

apparel, footwear, and gems

and jewellery as our market

share is going down,' he said.

trillion exports by 2030. 'But we have a problem in

for

should be

the

crore

said

2,500

up to June 30.

export credit. "The rates

general

essentially on account of a high base of the fourth quarter of fiscal 2023 that saw construction companies achieving their highest quarterly revenue. The report further said that the cement sector, despite steady demand momentum

weddings and rebound in

On the other hand, it said,

revenue from construction-

linked sectors is expected to

have grown at a tepid pace,

during the quarter, recorded moderate revenue growth as prices remained under pressure amid higher supply and intense competition.

conferences and exhibitions),

Indegene ₹1,842 crore IPO to open on May 6

funds for longer period. Exporters also need interest PTI 🗖 NEW DELHI

> ndegene Ltd, a healthcare Ltech firm focused on the global life sciences industry, on Monday said it has fixed the price band at Rs 430 to Rs 452 per share for its Rs 1,842-crore initial share-sale offer that opens for public subscription on May 6. The initial public offering (IPO) will conclude on May 8. The bidding for anchor investors will open for a day on May 3, the company announced.

The company's IPO comprises a fresh issue of equity shares worth up to Rs 760 crore and an Offer For Sale (OFS) of up to 2.34 crore equity shares aggregating Rs 1,082 crore, at the higher end of the price band, by selling shareholders. This takes the total IPO size to

1,842 crore. The OFS would see sale of shares by existing investors CA Dawn Investments, a Carlyle group entity, Vida Trustees in its capacity as partner of Group Life Spring, Brighton Park

Fund I SPV Ltd, and BPC Genesis Fund I-A SPV Ltd, and individual investors Manish Gupta, Rajesh Bhaskaran Nair, and Anita Nair.

Capital's entities BPC Genesis

Dish TV launches service for customers in Delhi to access TV, OTT content

PTI NEW DELHI

PTI NEW DELHI

Direct-to-home service provider Dish TV on Monday said its existing as well as new customers in Delhi can now access TV and OTT content from popular apps without paying an additional cost. With the 'Dish TV Smart+' service, all Dish TV and D2H customers can access to content on popular OTT apps, along with their chosen TV subscription pack, through the 'Watcho' App on any screen from anywhere.

H^{CL} Technologies' FY25 guidance of 3-5 per cent "similar" to FY24. The deal

"We are giving a facility to customers whereby they can switch to different apps with the same subscription without paying anything extra," Dish TV India Ltd CEO Manoj Dobhal told PTI.

said

He said the company has already launched the new service for customers in Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai while the Delhi edition is being launched on Monday.

Sharing the company's expansion plans going ahead, he said, "We are collaborating with global giants on the

General Ajay Sahai said. He added that despite all the challenges, freight rates are softening and it is giving an indication that demand may domestic be impacted in the times to

come. He cautioned that further escalation of the current situation could have serious implications on the world trade. "Besides geopolitical uncertainties, high inflation and high interest rates are also crucial reasons for



Increasing global uncertainties may

impact demand, India's exports: FIEO

demand slowdown," he said, adding certain advanced economies like Europe may witness more slowdown.

He also said that India's currency depreciated only about 1.3 per cent during 2023-24 as against Chinese Yuan's 4.8 per cent; Thai Baht 6.3 per cent and Malaysian Ringgit's 7 per

cent. When asked about the impact of Israel-Iran war, he said exporters certain from engineering sector have

goods that are going to the UAE and then to Iran has come down. Jewellery demand may also come down, he said. The director suggested the government to

front.

'Due to demand slowdown,

take certain steps for exporters at the liquidity

offtake of goods will be low so foreign buyers will also take a longer period to make payments. So we require Good growth, cloud migration, GenAI gaining traction: HCLTech CEO

> data, cloud migration to because we've had a stellar headcount is growing. And by GenAI are showing a good significantly dustry some headwinds like some deals will transition to an offshore model. And then some deals like State Street...We have divested the JV...So that will have an impact on the revenue. So financial services will have these dynamics, but all other verticals will grow," he said. HCLTech added 2,700-plus employees in March quarter, which the top honcho said should not come as a surprise given the company's overall growth numbers. The headcount addition should not come as a surprise, because we had a good growth of 5.4 per cent (for FY24) in the current environment, so that obviously needs good talent to execute, and that's why our

hyperscalers and building growth for two years in coming to FY25, of course, a Force. The platform helps private AI stacks, all catalysed financial services, lot will depend on how the end-to-end lifecycle of the tly ahead of year shapes up. At this point, software development and So there will be we've planned at least 10,000 product engineering. So I freshers to be hired during think we're very this year," he said. The lateral hiring numbers depend on how the year pans out. The US accounts for 64 per cent of the company's revenue and the company is very positive about outlook for the market.

platform called HCLTech AI

positioned," he said.

well

current environment, CEO C Vijayakumar said, adding cloud migration and GenAI projects are gaining traction but financial services vertical could face 'headwinds' Vijayakumar told PTI in an

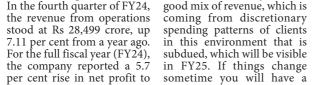
HCL interview that Technologies (HCLTech) is keen on acquisitions in areas semiconductor, automotive, and of platforms that drive strong annuity revenues or geographies such as Japan.

He asserted that the company is poised to capitalise on generative AI opportunities, and that 50,000 people are expected to be fully trained, leveraging GenAI, this year. The top boss of India's third largest IT services company said discretionary spends

pipeline looks and the company expects to convert some large opportunities soon, which will "definitely help in delivering the growth this year"

environment "continues to be

The company reported nearly flat year-on-year net profit for March quarter at Rs 3,986 crore amid a global environment marred by weak client spends, geopolitical shocks, high inflation, and macroeconomic uncertainties. On a sequential basis the net profit was down 8.4 per cent. In the fourth quarter of FY24, the revenue from operations stood at Rs 28,499 crore, up 7.11 per cent from a year ago. For the full fiscal year (FY24),



previous fiscal.



Rs 15,702 crore. The much better outcome, if company posted Rs 1,09,913 things remain similar to what it was in FY24 then you will crore in revenue in FY24, up have subdued growth in FY25," Vijayakumar said. 8.3 per cent from the

"Across the industry there is HCLTech's projected revenue growth of 3-5 per cent for FY25 is a "good growth" in current environment and probably highest guidance among the tier-one providers, according to Vijayakumar. Areas like cyber security,

Efficiency-driven programmes are being conduced in a timely-manner both in decision-making and timelines for execution. the "But some of transformation programmes, I think customers are either taking a slightly slower pace or they're cutting down on some, pausing them for a few quarters or a few months, and then reinitiating it," he said. Technology, telecom and media verticals will continue to do well based on the bookings done, Vijayakumar said, but called out financial services as a space that could face some headwinds, after

now,

Delhi

demonstrating a stellar growth for a couple of years. Financial services will have some headwinds

"We've done very well. We've done 6.8 per cent growth in the US market and it continues to be a very strong good geography, with mindshare, presence in a lot of big clients. And so we are very positive about the outlook for US," he said.

The company is wellequipped to capitalise on GenAI opportunities, and "expects things to scale up". "In fact, we launched a

He went on to add: "We've got good talent, we have already trained a significant number of people, more than 25,000. This year, we expect at least 50,000 people will be fully trained, leveraging generative AI. We are focused on AI developer community, and already have 2,000-plus people who are focused in this area. And there are many small projects, which are all sub-USD 10 million," he said. On acquisitions, Vijayakumar semiconductors

said automotive, or platforms that drive strong annuity revenues with clients and geographies like Japan are areas where the company continues to look for buys.

Rupee falls 10 paise to settle at 83.48 against US dollar

downside.

PTI MUMBAI

The rupee declined 10 paise to close at 83.48 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, as investors remained cautious ahead of the US Federal Reserve's monetary policy decision.

A robust sentiment in the domestic equity market and softening crude prices in the international market, cushioned the however, downfall in the Indian currency, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened weak at 83.39 and touched the intra-day low of 83.51 against the greenback during the session. The domestic currency finally

settled at 83.48 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a loss of 10 paise compared to its previous closing level. well



On Friday, the rupee had declined 10 paise to close at 83.38 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six

currencies, fell 0.26 per cent to 105.53. The weakness in the dollar was attributed to investors' cautious approach ahead of the US Federal Reserve's monetary policy and global as domestic rupee at lower levels," as

Choudhary said, adding, "USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.20 to Rs 83.70." macroeconomic numbers to The Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting

Brent crude futures, the will begin on Tuesday and the interest rate decision is benchmark, global oil declined 0.53 per cent to USD expected to be announced on 89.03 per barrel.

Anuj Choudhary Research "Crude oil demand is expected to face challenges Analyst, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said the Indian rupee from the US due to renewed fell on Monday on positive US dollar in early trades and sustained FII outflows. inflationary fear," Mohammed Imran, Research Analyst, Sharekhan by BNP However, positive domestic Paribas. equities and softening crude

On the other hand, he said, the geopolitical risks appear oil prices cushioned the to have eased considerably, We expect the rupee to trade removing some of the risk premium priced into the with a slight negative bias on selling pressure from foreign market.

On the domestic equity investors and expectations of a recovery in crude oil prices. market front, Sensex jumped However, improved global 941.12 points, or 1.28 per risk sentiments and contained cent, to settle at 74,671.28, and Nifty soared 223.45 points, or 1.00 per cent, to geopolitical tensions in the Middle East may support the close at 22,643.40.



Tata Power Distribution Limited (Tata Power-DDL), a leading power

utility supplying electricity to a populace of 7 million in North Delhi, hosted the

second edition of Urja Arpan

journey of Tata Power-DDL

along with raising awareness

responsible and

electricity

among

Power

PNS NEW DELHI

∎ata

Earth Day.

about

efficient

consumption

organisations.

said

Urja Arpan

Infant food formulation done on global basis, racial stereotype charges unfortunate: Nestle

PTI 📕 GURUGRAM

Nestle India Chairman & Managing Director Managing Director Suresh Narayanan on Monday asserted that the company's infant food formulation for children below 18 months is done on a global basis and the allegation that "it is racially stereotyped is unfortunate" and untrue.

Addressing reporters here, he said the amount of sugar content in infant foods is determined by the capability to meet the nutrition profile of a particular age group and that is universal.

Nestle India's added sugar content in Cerelac is much Conclave on April 24, 2024, to commemorate the World lower than the upper limit prescribed by FSSAI, he The conclave focused on the added. Demand Side Management

"There is nothing in this product that makes it a product that is potentially of any risk or any kind of harm to the child," he said.

As far as Nestle is concerned,



International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), Nestle sold baby products with higher sugar content in less developed South Asian countries including India, and in African and Latin American nations compared to its markets in Europe.

Countering the allegations, Narayanan said that every formulation for child food below 18 months is done on a global basis.

There is no local kind of approach to making a nutritional adequacy study...Globally, the recipes are engendered in an age where energy dense products are needed by growing children. So there is no distinction that is made between a child in Europe and a child in India or any other parts of the world, Narayanan said, adding the Codex requirement is fully followed up for Cerelac.

he said a majority of sugars present in the product are natural sugars. As per the Food Safety & Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), the permissible level of added sugar is 13.6 grams

per 100 grams of feed. Nestle is 7.1 grams, which is well below the standards and the maximum limits set up," Narayanan asserted.

Earlier this month, Swiss FMCG major Nestle was accused of selling products with more sugar content in less developed countries. According to findings by Swiss NGO, Public Eye and

sports 11



THOMAS CUP



India seal quarterfinal berth with 5-0 win over England An own-goal from Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg and further strikes from Saka and Kai Havertz put Association

PTI CHENGDU (CHINA)

champions efending India sailed to the knockout stage of the Thomas Cup with a 5-0 rout of England in a Group C contest here on Monday. India, who defeated Thailand

4-1 in their opening tie, a second notched up consecutive win to qualify for the quarterfinals.

HS Prannoy returned to winning ways, defeating Harry Huang 21-15 21-15 to give India a 1-0 lead.

"To give a start to the team is really important, it gives a good boost to the team to go ahead. It is really important to finish off the matches clinically, you saw against Thailand one match was bad

AP MADRID

win.

clinically," Prannoy said after

his match. The star pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty was stretched to three games by Ben Lane and Sean Vendy in the first doubles fixtures before 2022 world champions bronze medallist picked up a 21-17 19-21 21-15 win in one

hour five minutes. Former world number one Kidambi Srikanth recorded a 21-16 21-11 victory over Nadeem Dalvi to give India an unassailable 3-0 lead.

"Happy with the way both the matches have gone for me (in the tournament). There is a lot of pressure on players to win games. I feel I have played little easier opponents so far. But

for us. So it's important to from now we will face better finish off the matches opponents and I have to be my

best," Srikanth said. On his recent form, Srikanth said "I'm playing well but not able to pull off the matches. Obviously people will compare how I was playing from 2021-2022. I was in my 20s then." The second doubles pair of

MR Arjun and Dhruv Kapila then brushed aside Rory Easton and Alex Green 21-17 21 - 19. In the final match, 24-year-old

Kiran George prevailed 21-18 21-12 over Cholan Kayan to wrap up the fixture. India will take on group toppers and record 14-time champions Indonesia in their final group fixture on Wednesday.

own at relegation-fighting Forest. With Liverpool's title hopes

AP LONDON

0 at Nottingham Forest.

biggest tests in the title chase.

nice, but it was worth it,"

Arsenal forward Bukayo Saka said afterward. "We know it is a

big derby and they don't want

to lose 3-0 at home.

Momentum shifted their way,

but I am proud of the boys - we managed to get the three

Havertz put Arsenal into a

commanding position at the

break. But in the face of a

potential rout, Tottenham

responded in the second half

through Cristian Romero and a

penalty from Son Heung-min

Under pressure, Arsenal held

on and remains one point clear

at the top, having played a game

The advantage is still with Pep

Guardiola's team, which will

clinch a fourth-straight title if it

wins its remaining games this

season and responded to

Arsenal's win with victory of its

in the 87th minute.

more than City.

'The last 20 minutes wasn't

nervous

points



Arsenal and Man City both win to keep it

further diminishing after dropping five points in two games this week, it is down to Arsenal to challenge City's domestic dominance.

Having collapsed late on in last season's title race, Arteta's players look more capable of going the distance this time around. An away fixture against its

fiercest rival, Tottenham, was a major test of its credentials at this stage of the campaign. And while Arsenal was guilty of letting Spurs back into a game that should have been killed off much earlier, victory when tension was high was a test of character "Maybe last season that could

have ended in a draw and we showed we have the experience," Saka said. "We know City are an amazing team, but they are not perfect, we just need to do our job." MAN CITY WINS: Ársenal's

win meant the pressure was on City to keep the heat on its title rival.

It was always favorite to beat a Forest team that is desperately fighting for survival but without Phil Foden, who was

ill, and Erling Haaland on the bench, Guardiola was without two of its big match-winners in the starting 11.

An injury to goalkeeper Ederson also forced City into a change at halftime. But Guardiola's team looks to

be in unstoppable form and a 2-0 win extended its unbeaten record in the league to 19 games, dating back to a 1-0 loss to Aston Villa at the start of December. Back then there were questions about Citv's ability to win a sixth title in seven years. While Arsenal may lead the way, City's titlewinning know-how could make the difference.

So could Haaland, who stepped off the bench to score the goal that effectively killed off Forest's challenge. Josko Gvardiol headed City in

front in the first half, but Chris Wood had two clear chances from close range to score for Forest.

Haaland missed City's last two games through injury, but was quickly back on the scoresheet with a clinically taken goal just nine minutes after coming on as a substitute.

Among those in the crowd to watch were his father, Alf-Inge, and rock star Noel Gallagher. The goal saw Haaland move

clear of Cole Palmer as the league's top scorer with 21 goals. "It's an important win, it does not matter how we do it, and it is good to be back," Haaland said. "We knew it was going to be a fight, and the pitch was not the easiest to play on but we cannot complain, it is about winning and that is exactly what we did."

B O U R N E M O U T H RECORD: Without a win in its first nine league games this season, Bournemouth is now in the top half of the table and has set its own Premier League points record.

A 3-0 win against Brighton moved Andoni Iraola's team up to 10th and on 48 points. Bournemouth's previous best in the top flight was 46 points in the 2016-17 season under former manager Eddie Howe. Goals from Marcos Senesi, Enes Unal and Justin Kluivert secured victory against a Brighton team that is going in the other direction after six games without a win.

6-7 (5), 6-4. Sabalenka is trying to become the second woman to win three Madrid titles

after triumphing in the Spanish capital in 2021 and 2023. Petra Kvitova won the Madrid Open in 2011, 15 and '18.

Sabalenka will next face American Danielle Collins, who rallied to defeat Jaqueline Cristian 3-6, 6-4, 6-1 for her 15th straight victory. Collins went into the tournament having won the Charleston Open. And Miami Open.

said Friday when asked about a fan

petition begging the club to keep him. "Even if in this case it is a

The injuries that have plagued

Bayern this season are easing off, too. Tuchel predicted Friday that

Serge Gnabry would recover from

his latest problem in time to play

and score - against Madrid on Tuesday, while fellow forward Leroy

(WEDNESDAY): PSG won another

French league title on Sunday - after

second-place Monaco lost at Lyon -

but the Champions League is the

trophy the Qatar-backed club is

desperate to finally get its hands on.

And there would be no better way

for Kylian Mbappe to sign off at the

end of the season than by leading

PSG to victory in European club

SAINT-GERMAIN

Sané could also return. BORUSSIA DORTMUND

pleasant issue for me."

PARIS

Teenager Sara Bejlek beat Ashlyn Krueger 6-3, 6-1 while 16-year-old Mirra 1 draw with Strasbourg. Two years ago, there was a similar disconnect between 16 for a second straight year the supporters and the club. with a 7-5 6-1 supporters over protesting at Parc des Princes seventh-seeded Marketa Vondrousova, the reigning by giving their team the silent treatment.

tight at top in race for Premier League title BERALDO

PSG wins record extending 12th French league title

AP 📕 PARIS

Daris Saint-Germain has won the French league in Kylian Mbappé's last season at the club after Monaco lost 3-2 at Lyon.

PSG has an unassailable 12point lead over second-place Monaco, which has three games left.

The Ligue 1 triumph is PSG's third in a row and a record-Mapping a row and a record-extending 12th overall. Mbappé has been involved in six of them, but comes off

contract at the end of the season. He's expected to be signed by Real Madrid.

PSG is on course for a potential historic treble as it will play at Borussia Dortmund in the first leg of the Champions League semifinals on Wednesday and face Lyon in the French

Cup final on May 25. In coach Luis Enrique's first season at the club, PSG produced one of the most dominant seasons in league history with just one loss in

31 games so far. PSG could have secured the title a day earlier but was held 3-3 by Le Havre on Saturday. "Our fans are incredible. We were losing 1-0, 3-1, and they kept supporting us," Luis Enrique said after the draw. We managed to draw later on and effectively win the league thanks to the supporters, thanks to their

positive attitude." That was quite a contrast with the past couple of

seasons. Last season, PSG supporters were booing Lionel Messi even though the soccer great was the player who helped the club clinch an 11th league title by scoring in a 1-

Alcaraz earns another comfortable win in Madrid arlos Alcaraz continues Cto make a successful return from injury at the

the end, at 5-0 and then serving at 5-3. I am really Madrid Open. The two-time defending champion cruised happy to get it at the end." past Thiago Seyboth Wild in The second-seeded Alcaraz the third round on Sunday to had made his debut at the earn another comfortable tournament with a 6-2, 6-1 win over Shevchenko.

Alcaraz won 6-3, 6-3 for his second straight victory in his first tournament after skipping Monte Carlo and Barcelona because of an arm injury

"I think I played at a really good level," Alcaraz said. Open next month. Coming into this match I was nervous a little bit because I didn't know how my forearm was going to be. Thiago has big shots He is



No. 3-ranked Alcaraz is trying to become the first Alexander player to win three straight Madrid Open titles. He will Alcaraz had been scheduled next face Jan-Lennard Struff, to play at the Monte Carlo his opponent in last year's

final in Madrid. Masters and he also missed Andrey Rublev continued his Barcelona to try to fully recover ahead of the French return to form with a 7-6 (10), 6-4 win against "I think I'm in a good shape Alejandro Davidovich Fokina. The world No. 8 right now. I'm not feeling arrived in Madrid coming anything in the forearm, and I played good tennis," the 20off a four-match losing before Alcaraz said stre really strong. I am really "Obviously I'm not hitting Facundo Bagnis in his happy with the performance. my forehand on my 100% ... opening match. It was difficult a little bit at But I'm just focused to Tallon Griekspoor got his



first top-20 win on clay on Sunday by defeating world No. 12 Holger Rune 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 to reach the fourth round at an ATP 1000 event for just the second time.

American Taylor Fritz, coming off an appearance in the final in Munich, defeated Sebastian Baez 6-2, 6-3, while Francisco Cerundolo picked up his first top-20 win of the season by beating 15th-seeded Tommy Paul 6-7 (7), 6-4, 6-2.

SABALENKA ADVANCES: Andreeva made it to the last Second-ranked Aryna surviv i tourgh test against 19-year-old American wild card Robin Montgomery, prevailing 6-1, Wimbledon champion.





Archer Deepika Kumari reinducted into TOPS

PTI NEW DELHI

Former world number one archer Deepika Kumari, who won a silver medal at the just-concluded World Cup in Shanghai, has been re-inducted into the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) core group ahead of the Paris Games, the Sports Ministry announced on Monday. Deepika, who missed the

entire season last year after becoming a mother in December 2022, recently made a comeback and has been doing well both at the domestic and international stage.

The 29-year-old recurve archer, who is a three-time Olympian, had also medalled at the Asia Cup earlier this year. So far, only Dhiraj Bommadevara has qualified for the Games in the men's individual event owing to his silver medal at the Asian Qualifying Tournament in Bangkok last year.

Only one qualifying tournament is left to be held and it will take place in Antalya, Turkey on June 15 and 16.

Another archer, Mrinal Chauhan, has been added to the TOPS Development group, while Pravin Jadhav has been moved from Development to Core group and para-powerlifter Ashok has been inducted in TOPS Core group, the sports ministry said in a statement.

The Mission Olympic Cell (MOC), during its 133rd meeting, also inducted squash players Anahat Singh, Abhay Singh and Velavan Senthilkumar to the TOPS Development group, to help them prepare for the Los Angeles Olympics, that will take place in the year 2028. In October 2023, the LA

organising committee had include squash in the 2028 edition of the Games. "Looking "Looking at India's performance in Squash in the India's

past two decades, especially at Commonwealth Games and Asian Games, MOC decided to induct three squash players in their TOPS Development group, with the aim to help them provide all required assistance to prepare for the global event," the ministry

release stated.

Bayern, Dortmund seek Champions League glory

AP MUNICH

t's shaping up to be quite the few Lweeks for German soccer.

The country is preparing to stage the European Championship over June and July, with Germany's national team taking a nicely timed upturn in form.

Before that, Germany might yet be celebrating having a European champion once again, with Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund making up half of the lineup for the Champion and League antifinals Champions League semifinals beginning this week.

The last time Bayern and Dortmund both reached the Champions League semifinals was in 2013 and they went on to meet in the title match at Wembley Stadium, with Bayern winning 2-1. As fate would have it, Wembley will be hosting the final this year, too.

Setting up a repeat of that 2013 final would mean upsetting the odds. Bayern is up against another European heavyweight in Real Madrid, the record 14-time champion and king of the

competition. Dortmund faces Paris Saint-Germain, whose star striker Kylian Mbappe is looking to lead the French team to its first ever Champions League title in his last season there before a likely move to Madrid.

Germany didn't have a single semifinalist in each of the last three seasons. In the 2019-20 competition, it had two - Bayern and Leipzig - and Bayern was the eventual champion. This season, Bayern and Dortmund have mounted impressive European campaigns while underperforming on the domestic front.

Bayern has relinquished its Bundesliga title to Bayer Leverkusen after an 11-year hold on the biggest prize in German soccer, and needs to win the Champions League to avoid a first trophy-less season since in the second leg of the quarterfinals

BOTH CLUBS KICK OFF BIG SUMMER OF SOCCER FOR GERMANY



2012.

Dortmund, meanwhile, is in fifth place in the league so its deep run in Europe has come as something of a surprise.

Here's a closer look at the two games: BAYERN MUNICH vs. REAL MADRID (TUESDAY): Madrid should arrive well rested after the Spanish league moved its game at Real Sociedad to Friday. Madrid won 1-0.

With Madrid set to win Spain's domestic title, coach Carlo Ancelotti kept Jude Bellingham, Vinícius Júnior, Eduardo Čamavinga, Toni Kroos, Federico Valverde, Antonio Rudiger and goalkeeper Andriy Lunin on the bench at the start of the league game in San Sebastian. Forward Rodrygo did not travel with the team because of flu.

All started against Manchester City

and are expected to be back in the starting lineup against Bayern. Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel is leaving at the end of the season, and the Champions League - which he won with Chelsea in 2021 - offers depart, he seems more popular than ever among sections of the Bayern support. Part of that is down to the calm, controlled way Bayern knocked out Arsenal in the second leg of their quarterfinal. Partly it's a reaction to Bayern's failure to hire top coaching targets like Bayer Leverkusen's Xabi Alonso or Germany's Julian Nagelsmann. As Tuchel nears the end of a

troubled tenure at Bayern, he's often seemed more upbeat than ever.

"If people want me to stay, it is still an issue that has no priority," Tuchel

soccer's elite competition. The club is already planning for life without its superstar striker, who is set to walk away as a free agent, with players like Randal Kolo Muani, Ousmane Dembele and Goncalo Ramos expected to help fill the void in his absence. But Mbappe could still have a big say in the Champions League and he scored two goals in PSG's 4-1 comeback win against Barcelona in the quarterfinals. PSG drew 3-3 at home to Le Havre

on Saturday after coming back from 3-1 down and needing an equalizer from Ramos in the fifth minute of stoppage time.

It's been a strange season for Dortmund and that was underlined by Saturday's 4-1 loss against top

four rival RB Leipzig. Dortmund has certainly saved its best performances for the Champions League, none better than the comeback win over Atletico Madrid in the quarterfinals.

Striker Sebastien Haller scored in the first leg against Atletico but injured his ankle in Dortmund's next game and hasn't played since. Forward Donyell Malen has been struggling with pain, too. Much could depend on which version of Jadon Sancho turns up to face PSG. Sancho, who scored against Leipzig,

has shown glimpses of his obvious talent since returning to Dortmund in January on loan from Manchester United. The issue is whether the former England forward can consistently play at his best.

"Both I and Jadon have noticed he isn't at the peak of his performance yet, but that's totally OK. That's something we were aware of when we decided to bring him back, but we know that he's able to reach that maximum very quickly," Dormund coach Edin Terzic said Friday. 'Every training session, Jadon has a moment that shows his incredible talent and we see how hard-working he is with the team.

him the chance to go out on a high. Two months on from Bayern's announcement that Tuchel would



FOCUS ON RAHUL DURING LSG, MI CLASH

PTI LUCKNOW

with T20 World Cup selection round the corner, KL Rahul will have one final chance to stake claim on the second wicketkeeper's spot in the Indian team when Lucknow Super Giants host Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League here on Tuesday. Rahul's strike-rate in T20 cricket has always been a bone of contention. Despite the advantage of field restrictions in the Powerplay, Rahul has often started his innings on a slow note in the IPL. However, the LSG captain has managed to change gears this season.

In the 2024 edition, he has scored 378 runs at a strike rate of 144.27 but it is still less than that of Rishabh Pant (160.60) and Sanju Samson (161.08). While comeback man Pant has all but sealed the first wicketkeeper's spot in the marquee event in the Caribbean islands and the USA in June by displaying some sharp work behind the stumps and sensational knocks with the bat, Samson has also made a strong case for himself by playing match-winning knocks for Rajasthan Royals at a brisk pace.

In such a scenario, Rahul needs to play more fearlessly and exploit the

PTI CHENNAI

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m T}^{20}_{
m favoured}$ format has always favoured the batters and that has gone to a 'whole new level' in this Indian Premier League, feels Sunrisers Hyderabad skipper Pat Cummins.

The Australian gave his thoughts following SRH's 78-run loss to defending champions Chennai Super Kings here on Sunday.

IPL 2024 has witnessed six 250 plus totals already with 200 no more a safe total. Prior this edition, 250 was only breached twice in the history of IPL.

"T20 is always on the batting side, and it has gone to a whole new level this season. The way we set up, we had the best chance if we got some really aggressive batters, and that's the way to win the tournament," Cummins said at the post-match press conference.

"Frankly, we don't have much (bowling) options. It's not Test cricket, with the ball swinging



field restrictions not only to strengthen his Indian team selection prospects but also to help his side score in in excess of 200 runs, which has become a norm in this edition

LSG were handed a seven-wicket loss by Rajasthan Royals, who chased the 197-run target with six balls to spare. The onus will also be on the team's big hitting troika of Quinton de Kock, Marcus Stoinis and Nicholas Pooran to hit those towering maximums and get

match-winning totals as the race for the playoff heats. They will fancy their chances against a struggling Mumbai bowling unit which was carted all over the park by the Delhi Capitals batters the other day. MI bowlers struggled to find answers against young Jake Fraser-McGurk, who

wreaked havoc in the Powerplay. Even the world class Jasprit Bumrah conceded a 19-run over before returning to his frugal self while the likes of Luke Wood and skipper Hardik Pandya were pummelled into submission. They would look to do better.

Mumbai Indians find themselves in a precarious position sitting ninth on the points table. They need to win all their matches to

stay alive in the competition. The five-time champions need to fire as a unit and the likes of Indian skipper Rohit Sharma, premier T20 batter Suryakumar Yadav would be like to get into the rhythm and churn out some

hasn't really come off yet. So

yeah, it is something (we need) to

'There was definitely dew there;

haven't seen so much at any other venue across the country. But, we

work on," Cummins reckoned.

consistent performances ahead of

consistent performances ahead of the World Cup. All-rounder Pandya has flopped with the bat and ball this season. He did get his highest score this season the other day but more would be needed to make it to the World Cu squad. **SQUADS: Mumbai Indians:** Hardik Pandya (c), Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yaday, Dewald Brevis, Jasprit Bumrah, Piyush Chawla, Gerald Coetzee, Tim David, Shreyas Gopal, Ishan Kishan (wk), Anshul Kamboj, Kumar Kartikeya, Akash Madhwal, Kwena Maphaka, Mohammad Nabi, Shams Mulani, Naman Dhir, Shivalik Sharma, Romario Shepherd, Arjun Tendulkar, Nuwan Thushara, Tilak Varma, Harvik Desai, Nehal Wadhera, Luke Wood. Lucknow Super Giants: Quinton da Kotk KJ Babul (e Sp. wid)

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

Gaikwad is one step ahead of bowlers more often than not: Hussey

PTI CHENNAI

The ability to remain one step ahead of the bowlers has allowed Ruturaj Gaikwad to flourish in this Indian Premier League, reckons CSK batting coach Michael Hussey

After an unbeaten 108 in the previous game, CSK skipper Gaikwad was on the cusp of another century on Sunday but fell two runs short of the milestone against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

"Gaikwad is such a wonderful player. He is a brilliant timer of the cricket He is a brilliant timer of the cricket ball. I've been asking him what his secret is in terms of his placement since he always finds the gaps," said Hussey after the win over Sunrisers. "He is a smart batsman as well. He knows when to attack and when to soak up pressure. He plays spin and seam well. He can score all around the ground

ground. "He's almost one step ahead of the bowlers a lot of times. He is wonderful to watch. Very thankful that he is in our team."

The 27-year-old was announced as the new skipper of the defending champions a day before the IPL Dhoni.

all time in this country," he said.

batting averages in the T20 format but at CSK, that aspect of the game is not discussed much. We don't talk about it (S/R) much at

all. We talk about each player since they need to assess the conditions out in the middle as quickly as they can. The batter needs to take up the responsibility and the ownership in the middle," he continued.

"Sometimes, as coaches, we put too much into the players' heads. I am trying to take as much out of their heads as possible, let them be as clear as they possibly can, see the ball and react accordingly.

The strike rate keeps changing, depending on the way you play and the conditions."

Hussey was delighted with Daryll Mitchell finally delivering for the Yellow Brigade at number three. He scored a 32-ball 52 against SRH, which also happened to be his maiden IPI half century IPL half-century

"It's not easy. He's a new player who comes to the team, even Rachin Ravindra, for that matter, and we expect them to come in and fit in right away and go out and perform. But in reality, it's not that easy," he explained. "This is the IPL, the best T20 competition in the world. So sometimes, it takes time. We feel like he's been playing well. Although not

'He has been moving up and down the batting order, which can be destabilizing for him, but he has found a nice role in number three, and he can feel comfortable at it. Hopefully, it is the start of some consistent form moving forward."

T20 has always been a batters game and that has gone to a new level this IPL: Cummins

openers

commendable,

needs to step up.

around. There's not much sideways movement, and there's not much on the wicket either. 'So, a lot of times, the best way to get a wicket is to try and defend. get a wicket is to try and defend. Batters are getting better at hitting the ball out and even getting confident. It challenges you as a bowler. But, if you have a big total like 270-280 and if you can go at 9.00 as a bowler and make an impact, it could be match-winning," said the Australian. Analysing the reason for the loss to CSK, he admitted that the side has some work to do while chasing. while chasing.

"Hard to put a finger on it. Nothing really went (according to) to plan tonight. We're pretty well-suited to chasing, but it



OTHER SPORTS

"Different batters have stepped up throughout the tournament, and you need two or three guys to make an impact. But tonight, we never really got going, unfortunately.

boys have been going about it.

ball. It doesn't have as much gone off (to score), it's been swing as before, maybe because match-winning and crazy. In a the wickets are drier. It's a tricky few chases, we felt that we set up really well," he analysed. format, and I don't think there's a lot with the new ball," he said.

"I am really happy about how the 'GOAT'.

failed to make the most of it, and they bowled well as well. So, it (dew) didn't really factor in this Even tonight, there were not too opener, replacing the legendary MS match as much as we would have liked." Of their four losses, three many reckless shots? As for the struggles for the Talking about how Gaikwad has bowlers this season, Cummins felt that it could be possibly due adjusted to the leadership responsibility, Hussey admitted that it of them have come chasing. getting the big score, he has been contributing down the lines well. Cummins said while their to the wickets being drier. have has been challenging to succeed the been middle-order "Haven't really seen too much of a difference with the (new) white "It has been challenging for him as "Whenever the openers have

well. He has taken over as captain to which you have to take your hat off to him. He is succeeding the greatest of Strike rate is more important than

Video reviews have changed Bayer Leverkusen late escapes are keeping face of European soccer Xabi Alonso team unbeaten this season One country is holding out "We've scored so many goals "There's no explanation why it Leverkusen's next game is

AP STOCKHOLM

s the Swedish league got Aunderway this spring, yellow-and-black-clad supporters of Stockholm club AÎK held up an enormous banner containing a long, vivid story about the dark forces of modern soccer conquering the world.

"The whole world? No!" read the words on the giant display. "There was, in fact, a small area that successfully resisted the intruders, surrounded by modern football's smoldering ruins.

The intruder in this case is VAR — the high-tech video review system formally written into the laws of soccer in 2018 to help referees make the right calls in the biggest moments. While most leagues around the world are now using this technology, Sweden is an outlier in holding out and, in its view, retaining the game in its purest form.

The Swedish league is the only one of Europe's top-30 ranked leagues yet to have rolled out the system. It won't be happening anytime soon, either.

"VAR is a symbol of modern, commercialized-to-the-point-of-destruction football," says Ola Thews, vice-chairman of AIK's largest organization, ASK. supporter

Thews is more than just a diehard AIK fan. He played a part in mobilising anti-VAR sentiment among Sweden's top clubs and helped push through a motion at AIK opposing the introduction of the technology, before the Swedish soccer federation had the chance to bring it in. because That's possible Swedish clubs are majority-

controlled by members essentially, supporters under a regulation that states members should control at least 50% of their club's shares, plus one.

Although the federation initially appeared to want VAR in operation — the technology is, after all, used at European and international level - it will not go against the wishes of its member-run clubs. As a result, the federation has held off on further discussions about adopting VAR and said last week it doesn't envisage any in the foreseeable future. That's a big win for Swedish match-going fans who are proud of their rebel status in European soccer. No VAR. No out-of-touch

American owners or oil money from the Middle East. A culture where fans matter. Soccer as it should be, in their view

VAR "ruins the euphoria" that soccer can bring, Thews says. "The absolute happiness and passion, or grief and sadness, that comes from a goal being conceded or a goal being scored if you're not sure what has happened until it has been reviewed and decided in a VAR room."

Compared to other sports, soccer is a latecomer to video replays. In the United States, the NFL introduced instant replays in the mid-1980s but scrapped the system in 1991 after widespread discontent. They returned in 1999 and have spread to other major North American leagues and international sports, such as cricket and rugby. In soccer, pausing for video

reviews can appear more Norwegian supporters' disruptive. Not least because alliance, told The Associated the VAR system has its Press.

imperfections.

In the English Premier League, a communications mix-up between the official running the video review and the onfield referee cost Liverpool a valid goal in a loss at Tottenham in October. Weeks later, a Tottenham-Chelsea match had a total of 21 minutes of stoppage time added on largely because of a

raft of video reviews. this Earlier month, Nottingham Forest put out an inflammatory statement, questioning the integrity of a match official, after being denied what it perceived to be three clear penalty shouts overlooked by the video referee.

In Spain, Barcelona threatened legal action to force a replay after a VAR-related controversy in the recent "clasico" against Real Madrid. Meanwhile, across the Swedish border in Norway, fans already unhappy at VAR being adopted by the country's federation last year before its member-run clubs could establish a unified position have become increasingly disillusioned with the technology after just one season. In one match, it took seven minutes for VAR to decide on an offside call -FIFA's original vision was that it should take no more than six

seconds. Throughout the season, after seeing VAR in full effect, opposition has grown a lot and there's been a lot of disgruntled supporters, football staff and coaches, and players as well," Anders Kjellevold, chairman of the



AP BERLIN

ust call him Xabi Houdini. Bayer Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso has seen his team pull off several scarcely believable escapes from defeat this season as it remains unbeaten across all competitions.

which has Leverkusen, secured already the Bundesliga title, is on a 46game run without a loss - a record across Europe's "big five" leagues. It has been achieved in

extraordinary fashion. Robert Andrich scored with the last kick of the game for a 2-2 draw with high-flying Stuttgart on Saturday. The goal came in the sixth minute

in stoppage time this year," Adli said after the latest drama on Saturday.

"But we should score earlier. It would be better for us." Andrich's equaliser against Stuttgart was the 16th goal

that Leverkusen has scored in the 90th minute or later across all competitions this season, and the 21st that was scored from the 86th.

"It's not easy to explain what we did again after last week -again in the last minute," Alonso said.

happens so often, but it's good for us.

Those late goals helped Leverkusen clinch the Bundesliga title ahead of 11time defending champion Bayern Munich with five rounds to spare.

"We've already reached our main target - to be champions - but we want to keep going, we don't want to stop. There are still three games (in the Bundesliga). We want to stay unbeaten for the rest of the season," Alonso said.

against Roma in the first leg of their Europa League semifinal on Thursday. The teams met at the same stage last season, when José Mourinho's team eliminated Alonso's thanks to a 1-0 win in Rome. They drew the second leg 0-0 in Leverkusen. "From the first Europa League game against (Swedish team) Häcken, we spoke about our experience in Rome and now we're back in the same situation, semifinal vs Roma," Alonso said.

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of stoppage time when there	02	Berhampur Sri Saurav Dubey, IRS 20-Berhampur P.C. Expenditure Observer	9692201530	eopcberhampur@gmail.com
was only supposed to be five. Stuttgart had won seven of its nine games since losing to Leverkusen in the German Cup and led 2-0 against	03	Ms. Kanchi Gupta, IRS(C&CE) 20-Berhampur P.C. Expenditure Observer	9692194157	expenditureobserverberhampur@gmail.com
Leverkusen, but even that wasn't enough of a cushion to prevent Alonso's team from coming back and extending	04	Ms. Chandrika Garg, IRAS 134-Digapahandi A.C. Expenditure Observer	8144214486	observerdigapahandiac@gmail.com
its unbeaten record. The previous weekend, Josip Stanišic scored in the seventh minute of stoppage time for a 1-1 draw at Borussia	05	Sri Ajaya Linda, IPS 20-Berhampur P.C. Police Observer Office Place is BeDA, Berhampur	9692185164	biswajrautray1975@gmail.com
Dortmund. And in Leverkusen's previous game, Amine Adli scored in the 90th minute for a 1-1 draw at West Ham in the Europa League.	06	Sri Gandam Chandrudu IAS 20-Berhampur P.C. 134-Digapahandi A.C. General Observer	8144211205	gandam.chandrudu@ias.nic.in
In all, Leverkusen has eight draws this season to go with 38 wins.			·	Collector-cum-DEO Ganjam